



Before the Devil Breaks You

Libba Bray

Download now

Read Online [➔](#)

Before the Devil Breaks You

Libba Bray

Before the Devil Breaks You Libba Bray

New York City.

1927.

Lights are bright.

Jazz is king.

Parties are wild.

And the dead are coming...

After battling a supernatural sleeping sickness that early claimed two of their own, the Diviners have had enough of lies. They're more determined than ever to uncover the mystery behind their extraordinary powers, even as they face off against an all-new terror. Out on Ward's Island, far from the city's bustle, sits a mental hospital haunted by the lost souls of people long forgotten--ghosts who have unusual and dangerous ties to the man in the stovepipe hat, also known as the King of Crows.

With terrible accounts of murder and possession flooding in from all over, and New York City on the verge of panic, the Diviners must band together and brave the sinister ghosts invading the asylum, a fight that will bring them fact-to-face with the King of Crows. But as the explosive secrets of the past come to light, loyalties and friendships will be tested, love will hang in the balance, and the Diviners will question all that they've ever known. All the while, malevolent forces gather from every corner in a battle for the very soul of a nation--a fight that could claim the Diviners themselves.

Before the Devil Breaks You Details

Date : Published October 3rd 2017 by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

ISBN :

Author : Libba Bray

Format : Kindle Edition 560 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Historical, Historical Fiction, Paranormal

 [Download Before the Devil Breaks You ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Before the Devil Breaks You ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Before the Devil Breaks You Libba Bray

From Reader Review Before the Devil Breaks You for online ebook

? jamieson ? says

“The land is old, the land is vast, he has no future, he has no past, his coat is sewn with many woes, he'll bring the dead, the King of Crows.”

okay I love this series so much and just thinking about how it could be 2 years until the finale comes out makes me want to check out and live in a cave and this was me favourite of the series, which is an unpopular opinion. But oh my GOD the payoff !! the character development !! the threads coming together !! **THE PLOT THICKENED THE FUCK UP AND I LOVE IT**

So I've already explained why y'all should read this series in my review of both The Diviners and Lair of Dreams. BUT IM GONNA DO IT AGAIN BECAUSE THIS SERIES IS UNDERRATED AND DESERVES BETTER.

“Before the Devil breaks you, first he will make you love him.”

so what is this series about? a group of unique teenagers who unique powers. who become super involved in occult things accidentally. there's demons and ghosts (that are trying to kill people). and it's all set in 1920's america (YES, there's an abundance of flappers, bootlegged gin and jazz age slang) im sorry did you just hear me say it's a ensemble cast of superpowered kids who hunt demons and ghosts IN THE ROARING TWENTIES how does that premise NOT SELL YOU. But also, Libba Bray is sure to remove her rose-tinted glasses when writing the setting. She examines prohibition, Jim Crow laws, the eugenics movement, the resurgence of the KKK, segregation, poverty, racism, police brutality, gang crime and more. And doing so makes this book, overall, so much better. It's much more well rounded, and depicts America as it IS, not as it would have you think it is.

okay so the best thing is the characters.

Evie, a flapper with a drinking problem who's a bit of a mess, but has a good heart. Memphis a black boy from Harlem who just wants to be a poet.

Mabel Evie's best friend, who's overshadowed by her famous socialist parents. Theta a girl with a mysterious past who wants to be an actress

her roommate Henry who's just trying to write songs and live his best gay life.

Ling, a Chinese, lesbian-asexual girl with a disability who's trying to make it in Chinatown. Sam a jewish boy from Russia who'd do anything to find his missing mother

Jericho an ex-soldier with a dangerous secret.

and I love them all SO MUCH. Seriously, if you love character driven stories, or just stories where the characters are really, really well fleshed out YOU'LL LOVE THIS BOOK. Also, they're all SO FUCKING FUNNY. The banter is amazing! Especially between Sam and .. well anyone. But all of them have awesome

one liners and quips and things and oh my gOD I just love them all as a group so much.

“But isn’t that strange and wonderful unpredictability part of humanity? Aren’t all of our differences what already make us a great nation?”

so some thoughts about this book specifically I pretty much enjoyed every single second of this. I LOVE how Libba Bray just feeds us bits and pieces of the puzzle, it made trying to piece the whole thing together so fun and I'M STILL UNSURE WHAT TO THINK.

And I just LOVE how many different plots and subplots are tackled, it keeps it so interesting. the scope is truly impressive. I adored **every.single.subplot**. Mabel's story? LOVE! Memphis and Blind Bill? INCREDIBLE. Theta and Roy? AMAZING. Jericho at the mansion? ENTHRALLING.

This book shattered my emotions too many damn times. ESPECIALLY THE ROMANCE. **and listen, I complain about book romances literally non-stop** because they usually let me down. BUT THIS HAD ME SQUEALING LIKE A BABY. Seriously, everyone is too sweet and I want them to be happy. **I literally said (screamed) "oh my goodddd they're so cuteeeeeee** in my car while listening to this AND THAT SAYS A LOT. I love these romances and that makes me so happy because I never do!

One thing I really loved as well as the SEX SCENES. Which I guess is a weird thing to pick out, but they were just written so, so well. They were so tender and sweet, and kind of awkward but in a good, realistic way. And I just think they were done so well. I'm gonna cry thinking about it.

Okay, but can we also talk about how CREEPY THIS IS. The basement scene??? ruined my life. The scene where you know who appeared to them. Ruined my life again. Libba Bray needs to, stop. FINALLY, WHY IS THIS BOOK SO DEVASTATING. Okay, I damn yelled/whined NOOO when something happened and oh my god, this book seriously destroyed my entire soul like fifty times I'm so upset. AND CONCERNED FOR BOOK FOUR. SO CONCERNED.

“If I have to look through one more of these, I’m throwing myself off that balcony,” he moaned. “Let me know if you need help,” Jericho said.”

Okay, I'm sorry this is so rambly. I'm so emotional I love my kids so much. And I'm literally desperate for book four (@LibbaBray if you're reading this DM me how much cash for the book 4 draft ... I'll send it)

ANYWAY I MADE A POST WITH THEORIES FOR BOOK FOUR SO IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THAT [CLICK HERE](#)

Emma Giordano says

AMAZING FANTASTIC WONDERFUL SPECTACULAR

???????? ?????????? ????? ????? ?????????... ?? ?? ??? ????? ????? ?????????????????????
?????????
??? ????? ?????? ????? ?? ????? ????? ????? ?????????
??? ????? ????? ?????? ?????????? ?? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????
???? ?? ??? ?????? ????? ?????? ??????...????? ??? ?? ?????? ?????? ..??? ??????????...????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??
??...?? ??? ?????????? ????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ??????

?? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ??????... ?????????? ?? ?????????? ?????????? ??????
???? ?????????? ??????????...????????? ?????????? ?????????????? ?????????????? ?????????????? ??????????...????????? ??????????
????????????? ??????????????

?????? ?? ??????? ?????????? ?? ??????????? ??????????? ?????? ??????????? ??? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????
????????????? ?????????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????????? 1926....????? ?????? 1927 ?????? ?????? ?? ?? ?????????? ?????? ??????????
?????? ??????????

~~~~~  
???? ??????

????? ?????????? ?????????? ??????????...????????? ?????? ?????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? "????  
?????" ??? ?????? ?????????...????? ?? ?????????????? ??? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????? ?????????????? ??????????...??????  
????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????????????? ??????????? ??? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ??????  
?????????  
????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?? ??????????...????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????????????? ?? ?????? ?????????????????? ??????????  
????????? ?????????????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????

?? ??? ??????????????

?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ??????????????...????? ??? ?????? ?????? ??????????????  
????????? ?????? ??? ?????????? ??????...????????? ?????? ?????????? ?? ??????????...????? ?????????? ?????????????? ??????????  
????? ?? ?????? ??? ?????? ?? ?????????? ??????????????

???? ??????

???? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ? ?????? ?????????? ?????? ??? ?? ?? ?????? ?????????? ?? ?????  
????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?? ?????? ??????????????...????? ?????? ?????????? ?? ??????????

?????????

???? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????  
????? ?????????????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????????? ?????? ??????????...????? ?? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????  
????????????? ?? ??????????????...????? ?????? ?????? ??????  
????????????? ?????? ?????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????

?????? ??????

????????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?? ?????? ?????? ??????????????...????????? ?????????? ?????? ??????????...??  
????????? ?????????????? ?????????? ?????????? ??????????????

?????

????????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????????? ?????????? ?????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ??????







happened, but what mattered was that **this story was about people striving in their own ways to create a great nation.**

First of all, a warning: I would like to mention that, although they were not graphic in detail, this novel has quite an amount of implied sexual situations. One of them was even uncomfortable to read: Chapter 12. It was disturbing. (view spoiler)

I am so proud of the characters, most especially of Evie, Theta, Mabel, and, of course, my beloved Sam! They've changed a lot, became braver and more transparent to the people that mattered greatly to them.

The only character that annoyed me in this installment was Jericho. There were so many times that I just wanted to push him or punch him. I miss the old him. He should just go back to spending 24/7 with Nietzsche.

*“There was such fear in the world. But love was everywhere if you looked. It was the best thing about humans. That they could stare into the abyss and still open up their hearts. A spit in the eye to fear.”*

~~Sometimes I forget that Sam's not my boyfriend and that he's fictional and that I am still single.~~ The relationships were exquisitely done since the beginning and they were even much better now. More intense and swoon-worthy! (view spoiler) The only relationship that saddened me was the crumbling (view spoiler)

A lot of things were revealed about Project Buffalo, and it was bigger and more dangerous than what they all expected. How could one escape a beast as grand as this? (view spoiler)

I expected more from the Asylum parts but it didn't matter much because of how things wrapped up. But I think it played its part well in the sense of plot development.

Now, let's talk about the reason why I'm not okay and won't be for a while: the ending. That was one long torture. Was it necessary to (view spoiler)

Final thoughts: I highly recommend this book. Here's a new favorite for me. I wish the next book's already here because that was one agonizing cliffhanger.

-----  
-----

OMG IT HAS A RELEASE DATE AND A BLURB. OMGOMGOMGOMGOMGOMG. I LOVE ASYLUMS! I mean, I love stories that take place in such eerie atmospheres, not that I've been to one and found it enjoyable.

But please tell me that the page count is wrong. 336 pages?? Are you kidding me?! I was expecting 800 pages!

---

### **Chelsea (chelseadolling reads) says**

How am I supposed to move on from this?! My heart is broken ????? will post more coherent thoughts when I get over my feels

---

### **Roshani Chokshi says**

This series. Y'all. It's phenomenal. Beautiful, timely, intoxicatingly real and meticulously researched. Libba is a genius. Do not sleep on this series. Though when you start, I'm not sure you'll be able to find sleep anyway.

---

### **Aleksandra says**

First thing you need to know is that **I love this book and it is the best book I've read in 2017.**  
Second thing you need to know that ***Before The Devil Breaks You* is the third book in the series**, I highly recommend to read the series (first book is *The Diviners*, the second is *Lair of Dreams*) and as it's the third book, I won't be saying any detailed thoughts on plot or character development, because spoilers.  
Third thing you need to know that I'll be overusing words like amazing, gorgeous and favorite, because ***Before The Devil Breaks You* is an amazing book with gorgeous writing and storytelling, hands down, my favorite of the year!**

This book is a true masterpiece, it is simply flawless, I always look for diverse books with great plot and lovable characters. This book is it!

#### Plot & storytelling

The book has one of the most complex and multi-layered stories I've ever come across. A lot of the events happening in book 3 were set up in book 1, little scenes and moments came into play in the third book oh did the author delivered a great story. The book is a total page-turner, it's gripping, it's creepy and it makes you think. Moreover, there are 7+ pov plot lines and it wasn't bothersome or overcrowded, I love all main characters equally and the story is so well-balanced between different povs, subplot and major plot line. Libba Bray is a queen of Plotting and Writing.

#### Characters

Diverse characters in historical setting where their marginalization and its influence on their life is addressed and discussed! **The Diviners gang might be my favorite fictional squad.** There are found family and misfits coming together tropes, which are my absolute favorite tropes. All the characters are well-drafted, flawed and real. There are people of color, disabled and queer characters as main characters. I wanted to say

who is my favorite character is but I can't pick one, I just can't, so allow me to gush about all of them for a bit.

\*Evie is Object Reader and she's the star, I love that she's selfish, vain and she loves being in the center of attention, yes, she's flawed, but also Evie is loyal, passionate and she would do everything to protect the people she loves.

\*Mabel Rose is sweet and kind, but that might be her downfall? Mabel was truly shining in this novel. I loved her arc.

\*Sam Lloyd aka Sergei Lubovitch is Russian-Jewish immigrant, he's a thief and he jokes around, but same as Evie, when it comes to protecting his family he would do anything, he has a good heart, I love my sweet Russian boy.

\*Jericho, Jericho, Jericho... I have conflicted feelings about him, but I do believe he has a good heart and I'm looking forward to seeing his further character development.

\*Memphis is black boy in New York, he is numbers runner for local gang and he's aspiring poet, also he's a healer. Memphis is the sweetest, I love him so much! Memphis has a younger brother Isaiah who's also a Diviner. I loved reading their sibling dynamics.

\*Theta, Theta, Theta..she's an actress, dancer and a Diviner. Also she's a survivor of domestic abuse and she's the stronger person in the story imo. Her arc is one of the best in the whole series. She has had such a journey and I'm so proud of who she's become.

\*Ling, my beautiful science nerd from China Town, she's biracial disabled girl and she's homoromantic asexual. She's passionate about science, she's a good daughter and a good friend! Ling is a Dreamwalker and she's the friends with another dreamwalker Henry. (btw there are hints on future romance for Ling, I can't wait)

\*Henry DuBois The Fourth is a darling, he's very talented musician, he has been friends with Theta since before the events of the series. Henry is gay son who runs away from his rich family (it's one of the focuses of Lair of Dreams btw). I love Henry so much.

Honorary mention of Connor whom I'll protect at all cost.

The antagonists and villains of the story are well-written as well. Without revealing too much about the plot, I say they are terrifying and realistic. Both supernatural threats and just plain humans, they were terrifying.

### Themes

*Before The Devil Breaks You* is timely and important book. A book set in 1920s is so relevant today, history repeats itself. Libba Bray addresses a lot of difficult topics with outrage and fury these topics deserve. I loved it. The book isn't a one-issue story, every aspect of the world and that time weaven seamlessly together to create amazing complex story, one I've never read before.

All in all, **The Diviners is gorgeous breathtaking and delightfully creepy series, with every next book better than the previous one.**

***Paranormal + 1920s NYC + ghosts + superhuman abilities + diverse cast + conspiracy + great writing and storytelling = The Diviners series.***

Highly recommend!

**Trigger warning:** bigotry, racism, slurs, abuse, domestic abuse, eugenics, various manifestations of ideas of white "superiority", kidnapping, forced medication, attempted sexual assault (please let me know if I've forgotten something, I'll include it to the list)

---

## Whitney Atkinson says

**\*\*Trigger warnings: depression/alcoholism, attempted rape, domestic abuse/sexual assault, racism/prejudice against interracial relationships, gore**

I will admit that my reading experience of this was a bit tainted because it took me so long to finish. During my listen of this (a 21 hour long audiobook), I was moving out of my dorm and coming home for the summer, and once I was home, I found very little time to sit down and listen for more than an hour at a time, so it was pretty choppy. However, I do think that this book didn't really assist me at all in the department of being easy to listen to. Whereas the first two books in this series flew by and felt like watching a movie, this one almost seemed disjointed.

Firstly, these are books more and more feel like you can read each one as a standalone. Each book focuses on something new and none of the villains or conflicts seem to coincide in a believable, flowing manner. I like each of the conflicts in the series separately, but I just don't understand how they correlate, if they do. It just seems like problem after problem is thrust upon them and they just continue to compile with seemingly no link between.

Secondly, the characters in this began to act so differently than typical. I know it's all just in the arc of their character growth and I think this book definitely challenges each character the most, but I was especially disappointed in how Mabel, Theta, and Jericho seemed to take a step backwards rather than forwards. Libba is such a smart writer that I can sort of understand the grand scheme and what she was trying to do. (view spoiler)

Lastly, this book was just... slow. The end picked up and I listened to the last 6 hours in one night so that's all that's fresh in my mind, but I remember picking this up and barely being able to sit through one chapter because I was bored. Maybe it was me and not the book, but this one just wasn't up to par with the rest of the series plot-wise.

Despite all that, I will say I am LOVING the development of this series. The cast of characters is unlike any I have ever read in a series, and each character shines so brightly. The representation is done SO well and so naturally, and I especially loved conversations that arise about interracial relationships, whether or not Ling would heal her disability (spoiler: no), and asexuality. Libba continues to build a sense of social justice and inclusivity into her books, and this book's message about America being built on ghosts and history being brushed aside or tidied for public viewing is shocking and impressive to expound in a YA book, but also to do it so masterfully. This book continues to paint such a clear picture of life, racism, and prejudice in the 20s, but also how combat those same injustices that still exist today.

I think this book really raised the stakes on seeing more of the characters. This is the book where a lot of the couples finally \*ahhem\* consummate, and I couldn't wipe a grin off of my face the entire time. I love all of these characters, and I'm head over heels for all the different, diverse ships. Besides that, these characters are warriors, both in social justice and with their actual diviner abilities.

I'm so excited for the fourth installment of this series and I continue to highly recommend them!

---

## Cameron Cassidy says

Libba officially announced today DIVINERS #3 is coming out spring 2017!!!! Commence the heavy breathing

Edit-

Fall 2017 NOOOOOOOOOO!! Libba POR QUÉ! PORQUOI! PER CHE! ??????! WARUM! ??????! WHY IN EVERY LANGUAGE!!

---

## Trina (Between Chapters) says

**Content warning:** abusive romance; attempted rape; human experimentation; racism and prejudices toward disability, mental illness, and same sex relationships that are a depiction of the time period. All of these things are quickly challenged and not glamorized.

**Representation:** African American main characters. Jewish main character. Irish/Chinese American, disabled (walks with crutches), asexual main character with a f/f romance. Gay main character with a m/m romance. I believe one main character is said to be half Cherokee. Prominent blind side character.

I recommend this for fans of Ghostbusters, Stranger Things, and Scooby Doo. Or if you love amazing, supportive friend groups. And want lots of ships.

This was an amazing installment in a series that has made its way into my all time favorites now. Definitely better than book 2 (even though I loved that one!) and we are seeing so many more things about the Diviners' pasts come to light. This book made me completely flip my opinion on a few of the characters. It broke my heart a couple of times. And then mended it. It was a full emotional ride.

I can't speak to all the representation, but it's here and I've only heard good things from ownvoices reviewers so far. The only thing I really questioned was the frequent use of lines like "he went into a blind rage" or "they rushed in blindly" (not in reference to the blind character) - and I know some people are bothered by that type of language toward blindness. I can speak to the portrayal of the abusive romance, and I personally appreciated that the book doesn't dwell on it overlong while still showing the victim's mindset and reasons for having stayed very accurately (IMO).

As for the audiobook - it's magic. I simply do not believe this was a single narrator, because January LaVoy carried scenes with 10 characters with such skill that you'd swear it was a full voice cast. The woman is incredibly talented. Definitely listen to this one if you can.

---

## Emily May says

*"He'll be looking for you," the boy said, drawing Henry's attention again. "He's looking for all of us. You should go now. Before he sees you. Before he finds you."*

**Before the Devil Breaks You is such a perfect creepy book for Halloween.** I have been taking a little longer to read this than I usually would, but that is because I have been savouring it (hell knows when we'll get the next one!), wanting to linger as long as possible in the glitzy, jazz-filled horrors of this paranormal 1920s New York City.

In this instalment, the diverse gang of diviners are threatened by a supernatural creature known as the King of Crows. Ghosts haunt each of them - Evie, Memphis, Ling, Sam, Isaiah, Theta and Henry - both through their own personal monsters and the bigger demon they must all face. As the supernatural occurrences and the natural-world's government seem ever more entwined, it becomes clear that the Diviners's problems could be even bigger than first realised.

Bray has, once again, got the atmosphere just right. I felt like I was in 1920s New York. I could feel the air on my face and hear the jazz music. I love how each scene was so carefully crafted. I was right there in the speakeasies with the characters and, so, when the monsters came, my heart was pounding too. I am thrilled to hear that there are more books planned for this series.

However, this *is* 1920s America, and so there is more than ghosts to face. Both *The Diviners* and *Lair of Dreams* included, in many ways, political aspects, but the current political climate lends even greater weight to the issues explored in this novel. As Bray powerfully states in the Author's Note:

*We are a country built by immigrants, dreams, daring, and opportunity.*

*We are a country built by the horrors of slavery and genocide, the injustice of racism and exclusion. These realities exist side by side. It is our past and our present. The future is unwritten.*

*This is a book about ghosts.*

*For we live in a haunted house.*

And she doesn't sugarcoat the horrors of the times. Racism, anti-semitism and the eugenics movement are part of everyday life for our characters. The book's cast includes characters who are black, mixed race (Chinese/Irish), Jewish, gay, a person with a physical disability, and others who are mentally ill. This latter allows the author to explore a particularly horrific aspect of the 1920s - the treatment of mentally ill patients in government institutions. Even several decades after the publication of Nellie Bly's *Ten Days in a Mad-House* (1887), progress was slow-going.

**So many powerful themes all wrapped up in a sinister ghost story.** This is easily one of my favourite and most consistent YA series. It is somehow both a fun, easy read, and a darker, deeper look at humanity. It's interesting how fantasy can be used to reveal very real aspects of human nature.

[Blog](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Youtube](#)

---

**Elise (TheBookishActress) says**

*Before the Devil breaks you, first he will make you love him.*

So earlier this year, just in CASE you've never heard from me before, I spent several weeks this year

dedicating my life to the audiobook narration of Libba Bray's *Diviners* series. and I'm trash!!

I think what I like about this series is **how it makes the personal political**. This is a story set in the freaking 1920s, a time that could easily be whitewashed dry of racism and discrimination. Easy to make unpolitical. But this story is so directly about the issues of the 1920s, the racism, the classism, the homophobia - **the dark side you don't always see**. It is *brilliant*.

For example, did you know that from 1930-1960 in America, 64,000 individuals were forcibly sterilized under state-sanctioned programs?? That several mental health institutes purposefully fed their prisoners tuberculosis-infected milk upon admission, killing 40% of their patients? That these same eugenics programs served as inspiration for the Holocaust? That they were performed almost entirely on nonwhite and mentally ill women? These facts may seem painful. They may also seem irrelevant to some. After all, *we* aren't in the 1960s. But Libba Bray emphasizes here that if we do not come to terms with our past, we are doomed to repeat it. So here's one final question: did you know from 2006-2010 in California, 148 mentally ill women were sterilized by state mental hospitals without their consent? **In my fucking state during my fucking lifetime, 148 women were violated by the state**. History is not one faraway thing; it is a continuum, an endless repeating cycle. And it is something we may never escape.

The villains of *The Diviners* are not the ghosts, scary as they are. The villains of this book are classism, eugenics, racism, **prejudice**. This story gets its true staying power because it is so grounded in reality.

*"The colonizer writes the history, winning twice: A theft of land. A theft of witness."*

I especially don't want to scare people off this book who don't like scary things, because though I think this series is freaking terrifying in places, you *could* ignore those bits and enjoy nonetheless. But guys, **the Diviners is flat-out terrifying in the best way**. I... uh. All I am going to say about this is that **the audiobook bathtub tap scene scared the utter fucking shit out of me**. I have never been less okay in my damn life than after reading that scene.

Okay. So **let's talk why this book is a 4 1/2 and not a fully solid five**.

First of all, **there is a section from about 70%-80% in which nothing happens besides characters hooking up for the first time**. Listen, I know it had to happen, but this section feels a bit detached from the rest of the book - this really could've been two books - and worse, it is so goddamn *boring*. And possibly even worse, this section is incited by a scene in which sexual assault is... sort of used as a plot device to flip a complex situation? I knew exactly what occurred in this scene going in, but I really disliked this - after the attempted assault occurs, it is never brought up again.

And I also think Libba Bray has a penchant for the brilliant middle and then *slightly* lackluster ending - or slightly disjointed final 25%, in this case - as she tries to throw together the setup for her next book. Not that she's exactly alone on that issue, but I remember getting to the point of an hour left in my audiobook and thinking "what else is there?"

I do think that listening to this book too fast was part of my issue - I binged the last 40% of this audiobook all at once after spending a week on the first half, and I think the transition just didn't go as well as it should have. **ADVICE: please slow down on the second half !!**

Second, there's the fact that my two favorite leads, Ling and Henry, both got very lackluster storylines. After Henry's fantastic story in book two, he's relegated to the role of side character. And Ling actually has a storyline - well, a sexuality crisis that we all saw coming - but gets too little pagetime. All right, all right,



Ling is my favorite character and I'm being biased. I'll shut up now. (On a positive note, my other favorite, Theta, got the storyline of the fucking CENTURY— I'll shut up now.)

But overall, I don't think that section could really ruin this book for me? **The first half of this book is actually so brilliant I don't know how to talk about it.** Dark, horrifying, and fun. And **the character work is totally solid throughout.**

*“Because I'm not enough, she thought. That was the terrible echo shouting up at her: Fraud, fraud, fraud. She got drunk and talked too much and danced on tables. She had a temper and a sharp tongue, and she often blurted out things she instantly regretted. Worst of all, she suspected that was who she truly was—not so much a bright young thing as a messy young thing.”*

I've already ranted about the themes, but I think the character work in this book was literally perfect. Evie's character development within this book is my favorite she's gotten so far; I never really loved her, but she's become so good? wow? Mabel's character development offers something very new for the book and series both. And Theta's storyline is something *truly* special - this is the first book where she has really begun to recover from the trauma of her past. And you all know that I love Memphis and Theta, but I think I've actually officially dedicated my entire life to their love after this book.

Listen, if you want even *more* thoughts on this series, maybe try out my reviews of *The Diviners* and *Lair of Dreams*. But **I genuinely hope all of you read this series - it's become one of my new favorites.** And I'll leave you with a quote from the author's note:

*“We are a country built by immigrants, dreams, daring, and opportunity. We are a country built by the horrors of slavery and genocide, the injustice of racism and exclusion. These realities exist side by side. It is our past and present. The future is unwritten. This is a book about ghosts. For we live in a haunted house.”*

Bravo, Libba Bray.

Blog | Goodreads | Twitter | Youtube

---