



When Demons Walk

Patricia Briggs

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Sorceress. Lady. Mistress. Thief. Just call her an overachiever.

To survive, Sham has spent most of her young life stealing from Southwood's nobility. Now, as the city's nobles fall prey to a killer, Sham is called on to help, and must use all of her magical wisdom to send the demon away.

When Demons Walk Details

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From Reader Review When Demons Walk for online ebook

Elena says

This was better than I remembered. A fun, uncomplicated sword and sorcery tale. The denouement felt a little abrupt, especially the romantic resolution, but other than that this was an enjoyable read.

? BookAddict ✍ La Crimson Femme says

I read this a while ago when I first started reading Ms. Briggs. I gave it a four star yet I can't remember the story. How is that possible? I think my ratings are harder now than before. :/

Erin says

It was a good read even though I got distracted. I love the world. I can't wait for more!

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

Decent beginning with an ending that deserves a better book. In between is a glorified mess that is the hallmark of an early writer - a half-@\$\$ed "romance", a shoddy mystery, a wandering plot.

This "summer of love" is turning out to be a miserable bust.

Full Review:

Shamara "Sham" is a wizard apprentice thief who makes her living off tweaking the men who tortured her master, Maur. One day, she comes back to his cottage and he is being killed. He whispers the words "Chen Laut".

Fast forward two months or so (like seriously, because it happens between chapters) and suddenly the Reeve, Lord Kerim, needs help stemming the tide of blood from dead nobles. Enter Shamara, Kerim's Mistress sent to spy (offscreen) on the court.

I like need to NOT pick out my own books to read or something. I am ATROCIOUS at this whole "Summer of Love" thing. I started it to reignite my love of reading and I don't think I've rated anything higher than 2 stars.

Patricia Briggs became a favorite with "Moon Called" and "Steal the Dragon". I snapped up pretty much all of her available books when Borders was around, so sure I would love anything she did.

And then I read "Hob's Bargain".

But you know, that was an early book and I liked "Steal the Dragon" so SURELY I would ADORE "When Demons Walk"! So that's how the book ended upon Summer of Love.

For quite a while, I was heartily enjoying myself. Sham has Briggs' lead female way of talking - being snarky and somewhat naughty in a delightful way. She is fully competent in her skills and respected without having an argument about how she's just as skilled as "the boys".

But the flaws of early Briggs writing popped out more and more. The skipping of important scenes and instead filling in the information JUST BEFORE it becomes a key plot point. The weak romance between Kerim and Sham (when you hear that one "loves" the other, you wonder how because they never really have been shown to act that way towards each other). The "quirky" characters. How all the good guys laugh at Lady Shamara's shenanigans. (The number of times Kerim could barely contain laughter at one of her tricks made me want to spit vomit all over the place.)

When it comes down to it, the book's biggest flaw is its size. Rounding out at a mere 272 pages, we don't have near enough time for Sham to do ANYTHING remotely "investigate-y" and "spy-y". There were times she mentions at the end of a chapter how she will be snooping - and we never see it. We don't see the crucial scene where Sham learns a key element about another character. And at the end, we learn in a massive infodump a bunch of deus ex machina, retconning magic mumbo-jumbo. How a book can be too short and yet feel so long is beyond me.

The climatic showdown with the demon was fantastic once these jokers FINALLY "figured it out" (more like stumbled into it like running into a lamppost while walking). As the scene went on, I pondered over the characters' actions and the magics, I finally started to "get" what was going on. Even the ending, which does not end in a wedding (shock, but a pleasant one!), was a nice one.

I went into this with no other expectation than to have fun. At the end, I felt only so glad to be done, regardless of the beginning excitement and the acceptance of the conclusion. And that's kinda sad, especially since I knew this was a fluffy read.

I would be remiss to say I am not wary of Patricia Briggs, that I am kinda nervous about reading any of her other books, for fear they will be disappointments like "When Demons Walk" and "Hob's Bargain". Hell, I'm scared to reread any of the books I liked, for fear I won't like them anymore. This isn't to say I won't try again, but for this Summer of Love, I'll switch to a different author.

ETA: OMG I completely forgot something! There's also this "plot point" that Briggs has Sham notice MULTIPLE TIMES: how Sham's trunk ends up open or unlocked. Is this EVER explained? Was Sham a moron or was it a demon or was it someone else? We NEVER learn! It's a mystery even at the end, begging the question: why note it multiple times if you won't make use of it later?!

Susan says

read 7/5/1999

sometimes I pick up a book JUST because of who did the cover -- and this Luis Royo cover was no exception. I've now been enjoying Patricia Briggs since 1999

re-read 3/27/2015

Katie says

The 3rd book by Briggs set in this particular world, it's ok. I think I would have enjoyed this more if I hadn't read the 2nd book in the series. This book introduces a completely new set of characters, which would be ok, but it references large-scale events from the previous book...but doesn't really address what had happened from book 2 to book 3. Since book 2's plot pretty much revolved around this event (the gathering of information about an impending war & the identity of the enemy's army), it seemed really odd to have skipped completely to the end of the war, and fast forwarded several years beyond it. The fact that it was also about the typical street-wise girl getting the young prince didn't excite me. IF you're already a fan of Briggs & IF you don't really have much else to read, then pick this one up. It won't piss you off to have read it.

Miki says

It's a good thing I did not read *When Demons Walk* before I discovered *Mercy Thompson*. With due respect to Patricia Briggs, this is *not* her finest moment. If a *Harlequin Romances* had a Paranormal line, this book would be in it.

Consider: A spunky heroine, not classically beautiful but striking, meets a slightly older man in authority. She is a master of magic, he is steeped in reality. She goes undercover as his mistress, wears some stunning clothes, they have adventures together, she wears more stunning clothes, they vanquish the bad guy but she plays a leading role in said vanquishing, and they fall in love while she wears stunning clothes. End of story. Sound familiar??

It's not contemptible, but I'm very happy to say that Ms. Briggs got a WHOLE lot better! Unless they just happen to fall into my hands when I'm dying for something to read, I doubt if I'll read the others in the series.

Lisa Denn says

Patrica Briggs' *When Demons Walk* was good but it lacked the 1,2,3 punch I experienced after reading *Masques* and *Steal the Dragon*.

When Demons Walk follows the adventures and missteps of the story's main characters Sham, a mage and thief, and Lord Kerim, the Reeve of Southwood. Hired by Kerim to pose as his mistress, Sham uses her knowledge of magic and skills as a thief to slip in and out of rooms in the Castle as well as the homes of Southwood's upper class to find information about the elusive demon running amuck in the Castle known as Chen Laut.

In my opinion if the author had put as much effort into developing her magic system as she did her characters the story would have been much more enjoyable. When compared with other books I have read *When Demons Walk* lacks the action and drama I've come to expect and love in this genre.

Vicki says

I just love Patricia Briggs!

Seth Kenlon says

Sham is a low-ranking mage, female but sometimes mistaken for a young male in part for her rogue-ish penchant for petty thievery. She returns to her master only to find that he has been slaughtered by who-knoweth-what. So it becomes Sham's job to find the killer, and this leads her to a wide variety of smaller tasks, resulting in a pretty good ending.

I quite liked this book. Could have been a little more graphic and I would not have minded, but as it is, it's suitable for any age. It's a good fantasy with many of your classic fantasy set-ups, with just a few turned on their heads. The leading man, for instance, is crippled for all but maybe the last few chapters. The leading character, obviously, is a female who is both a mage and a rogue, but for her investigation she has to play the part of a laey of the court for a while. There's a lot in here, very subtly, dealing with perception, image, and identity. But it's all subtle and you can make of it what you will (or ignore it).

The murder plot does sometimes wander a bit, but the characters are good enough to make you want to follow nevertheless.

I recommend this book.

Anna says

I love you Patricia Briggs.

Everything in this book was awesome. In fact, it was so awesome that it was awesomer (not a real word, I know) than the other books in this series, which are also awesome. I tried to find a picture of what I imagine Sham looks like, but I couldn't find anything that would work, so have some happy minions instead.

Marsha says

One of the things I enjoy most about the writing style of Patricia Briggs is she takes average females and makes them heriones by their cunning, personality, empathy, self-discovery and sheer determination. Briggs is a master at weaving an alternative reality and making you feel like you are there. Sham (Shamera) has entered a life of crime when her island was invaded and taken over by Cybellians. She formerly lived in the palace with her servant parents. However, they were killed and she now is an apprentice to a wizard and steals from the people who enslaved her master. They think she is a boy.

When the Reeve rescues Sham from an overzealous guard, she feels bound to accept his request to help him discover who is killing aristocrats in his kingdom. She enters the world of the kingdom by playing the role of his mistress. Together they discover the culprit while discovering they have more in common than they first believed.

While this is not Briggs at her best, it is a good read.

Elizabeth says

Shamera is a wizard, she has been a thief for the last 12 years protecting and caring for her Master the Wizard Maur, who was blinded and tortured 12 yrs ago when the kingdom was overrun. Her father and mother were murdered then also. Now she is just Sham the thief.

Kerim is Reeve of Southwood. He rules from the palace where Sham used to live. One night while he rides through Purgatory he sees Sham and speaks to her at the docks. By the time she gets home it is to find Maur in a battle for life with a demon, who is invisible. As Maur dies, Sham collapses and holds his body. The watch finds them and intends to torture and kill her.

Kerim intervenes and dispatches the Lord of Law and his lackeys. Later after more killings, some among the courtiers, Sham is persuaded by a friend to help Kerim find the killer. She has been searching on her own. The only problem is Kerim doesn't believe in magic or demons. I guess Sham will just have to convince him and somehow discover how to kill something that is unkillable.

Beanbag Love says

I can't say I was *disappointed* in this book, but I think it's much weaker than Briggs's later efforts.

The world is interesting (although this is the third in a trilogy, apparently, it's the only one I've read), but the story itself is uneven. Toward the end the explanation of the magic was complicated and, after reading one segment about three times I decided to trust it would all work out and moved on. That's not to say it's bad, perhaps just a bit technical and convoluted. It led to a very exciting climax so the confusion was forgivable.

The heroine, Shamera aka "Sham", is a thief who's also a wizard in hiding. The laws of the land do not tolerate magic, so she hides in the slums amongst the rabble who were likewise put out by the invaders who took over the land many years prior.

Kerim, the noble and controversial ruler aka "the Reeve", of the region enlists Sham's aid in identifying and ridding the castle and environs of a serial killer. He brings her in as a thief, not believing in magic, but he's about to get an education.

There are some seriously creepy parts to this story, moments of suspense and a mild romance. The romance was the most disappointing, although I realize Briggs is not a romance writer, it could have used more attention.

There were several moments where I wondered how Sham had stayed alive so long being so obtuse, but she still managed to be incredibly brave, as all Briggs heroines tend to be. She's extremely cheeky, which was amusing, also a Briggs trademark.

The Reeve reminded me of Adam from the Mercy Thompson series. Being reminded of Adam is a good thing. A very good thing.

But there were still unanswered questions. It ends with a quicky chapter that doesn't really give us much insight into what might happen in the future. I want to know how certain things work out, not the least of which is the romance.

Fans of Briggs's "Mercy Thompson" and "Alpha and Omega" series will probably enjoy reading this work from her backlist, but those just starting out might want to jump ahead to those current hits.

Jacey says

This gives the impression of being a slight book (slighter than it actually is) from Patricia Briggs early work (1998). It's set in the Sianim universe though with no crossover characters from Steal the Dragon except for the Prophet of Altis (who's mentioned but doesn't appear on the page). It's slight but it's absorbing, a crossover between fantasy, murder mystery and romance. Sham, sorceress and thief was exiled to Purgatory (the bad part of the bad part of town) when the hated Cybellians invaded Southwood and killed her family (minor nobles). When her mentor is killed, she accepts a job to tackle the demon responsible on behalf of Lord Kerim, the Cybellian Reeve of Southwood, now ensconced in the castle where her parents were slaughtered during Southwood's last defensive action. Despite their differences Kerim is not at all what she expected and suddenly the fact that the demon is sucking the life and health out of him makes it a lot more personal.

Briggs misses some opportunities for angst and conflict. Sham seems to put the past behind her very quickly, once she gets inside the castle and gets a sniff at Kerim's testosterone, but that's only a slight quibble. This fairly rolls along, making each page a pleasure to turn. It may be early Patricia Briggs, but she's already got a sure touch.

Paula says

reread, still enjoyable

Marina Finlayson says

Really enjoyed this fantasy from Patricia Briggs. I didn't know she wrote anything besides urban fantasy. It was a fun, demon-hunting, murder mystery cum romance, so a little bit of everything! Would love to read more with these characters, but sadly it seems to be a one-off.

Miranda says

So far of Patricia Briggs AU medieval fantasy books that I've read, I'd say this was her weakest. The characters didn't seem to go through much development which is normal for a medieval fantasy because they

grow throughout the series, but as far as I can tell these characters aren't getting another book. The previous books in this world, the characters actually seemed to face tough choices that helped them grow instead of just going through the plot as they seemed to in this one. Personally, I am not as impressed with her medieval fantasy books as much as her urban fantasy.

Meep says

I love this book; it's not as polished as Brigg's later series (this is the third book in the verse though they all read as standalones) but it's light easy reading.

The story is Sham's. Sham is very self-assured and enjoys her dressing up and shocking people. I liked Kerim's enjoyment of her mischief, there's no great romance or sparks but more a warm playful appreciation of each other, I could see these two getting together amongst a lot of laughter. Their both strong independant people. It would have been nice to see more of them having got together but then what's shown is enough for what the book is.

There's some mystery and even a demon. The villian you could actually pity at the end, I prefer stories where there's a glimpse beyond the black/white of good/evil.

It's got a firm place on my comfort-read shelf. Deserves to be considered for it's own worth rather than compared to Brigg's later books.

Estara says

Still on my comfort rereading trip this book holds up extremely well on a second reread. You have the mystery, lots of great characters, lovely descriptions of sexy wardrobe ^^, a nicely understated romance and a villain who is so alien that you can eventually feel sorry for it. Not to mention that at least the setting of Purgatory and the Shadow Tides come alive.

We get two more memorable women in this one, other than the heroine, which is better than usual for P. Briggs. Also this is very much the heroine's book, so another plus.
