



## Shadow Study

*Maria V. Snyder*

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# Shadow Study

*Maria V. Snyder*

## **Shadow Study** Maria V. Snyder

New York Times bestselling author Maria V. Snyder wowed readers with *Poison Study*, the unforgettable story of poison taster Yelena. Now she's back with a new tale of intrigue.

Once, only her own life hung in the balance...

Oddly enough, when Yelena was a poison taster, her life was simpler. But she'd survived to become a vital part of the balance of power between rival countries Ixia and Sitia. Now she uses her magic to keep the peace in both lands—and protect her relationship with Valek.

Suddenly, though, they are beset on all sides by those vying for power through politics and intrigue. Valek's job and his life are in danger. As Yelena tries to uncover the scope of these plots, she faces a new challenge: her magic is blocked. She must keep that a secret—or her enemies will discover just how vulnerable she really is—while searching for who or what is responsible for neutralizing her powers.

Yes, the days of tasting poisons were much simpler. And certainly not as dangerous...

## **Shadow Study Details**

Date : Published February 24th 2015 by MIRA

ISBN :

Author : Maria V. Snyder

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Magic, Romance

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## From Reader Review Shadow Study for online ebook

### Maria V. Snyder says

Of course I'm going to give my own book 5 stars! I recently listened to the audio book, which is narrated by the fabulously talented Gabra Zackman. Listening to a book is a different experience than reading it and I listen to all my books because it helps me be a better writer. I can hear the clunky dialogue and try to avoid it in future books - the rhythm and cadence of the words can sometimes sing and other times....jar. And the humor either hits the mark or not. I was laughing at something Janco said and my daughter asked me, "You're laughing at your own book? How is that possible?" I replied that it's funnier when Gabra reads it :).

For those who are audio book fans, Night Study was just released in audio and I had the pleasure of being in the studio with Gabra during one session - it took her 5 hours to record about 2.5 hours of the book - it's harder than it sounds! Here's a link: <http://amzn.to/1PCnhhQ>

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### Johnzel Babijes says

OMG. OMG. OMG. This is one of the books that I'm waiting for! \*GASP\* Like, seriously, I thought its only a trilogy but when I heard that there will be a fourth book, I almost fainted!

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### Anne says

I read (and liked) the Study books, but I never went any further with The **Chronicles of Ixia** and read the **Glass** stuff.

Maybe I should have.

Or maybe I should have at least re-read the original books with Yelena and Valek, because I was sort of lost during Shadow Study.

Having said that, I'm still feeling pretty generous about those 3 stars.

This story was just choppy and strangely written. I didn't mind the POV switches, but I did mind that only Yelena's POV was told in first person.

It was incredibly jarring.

And maybe it was like this in the other books, and I just don't remember, but half the time everyone seemed to be all *Days of Yore*, and then (abruptly) they would switch into *Surfer Dudes*.

Valek's flashback sequences wore on my nerves, as well.

First, because the transitioning sequences were so damn cheesy that it felt like Snyder would have been better off doing something like this:

**{insert wavy lines here}**

And second, because it didn't make Valek *more* sympathetic to me, it made me want to crack him in the head.

Also, he seemed like an old fart that didn't deserve Yelena.

Get excited, there's a **BIG HUGE LIFE CHANGING SECRET TWIST** at the end!

*Don't worry, you'll see it coming from a mile away.*

I thought I would really like this one, but either my tastes have changed dramatically or this is a sub-par addition to the series. I hope it's the former, and I'd love to hear the opinions of die-hard fans of these books. If you are a big fan of Snyder and her *Chronicles of Ixia*, you may really enjoy this one. I wouldn't recommend anyone else jump into this series here, though.

*Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for a digital review copy.*

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### **Fatimah Alfareed says**

**THAT ENDING!!**

**I HAVE SO MANY FEELINGS !**

Alright.. So, I wasn't planning on picking up this book originally. The reason for that was, that to me, the ending of 'Fire Study' was more than satisfying as an end to the trilogy, and I was afraid that the rest wouldn't be as good and that continuing on with the series would ruin my fondness for the original trilogy. The fact that there is another trilogy taking place between the end of 'Fire Study' and this book wasn't helping either.

However, considering that I already have all of the six books, I decided to give it try, on the ground that at the first sign of a downfall, I'd call it a quit and forget that the extra three books ever existed. And **THANK GOD** for that decision!

I loved this book so much <3

It's worth mentioning, that I've skipped reading the glass trilogy, and that didn't, in any way shape or form, hinder my understanding nor my enjoyment of this book.. So, there is that.

*"Dead air surrounded me.*

*My magic was gone."*

In terms of plot, there wasn't much happening when compared to the previous books, but that didn't make it any less enjoyable.

Instead of the single POV of Yelena that we had in the original trilogy, this book switched between 3 different POVs:

Yelena, Valek, and Janco.

Oh, my!! Valek's chapters were the highlight of this book, I loved them so frickin much <3

As for the commander!!

I don't even know what to say.. Like, What's up, dude!

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### **Soph - Lock&Key says**

This fantasy world is one that I have always loved...and always will love. It's lush history and beautiful setting, the simple yet exciting social structure and the wonderful mystical elements it possesses are something that I have always latched onto. I never wanted to say goodbye to this world, and now thanks to the Soulfinder series I don't have to.

I convinced myself that I could not wait to get my hands on a copy of this. I talked about it all the time, counted down the days and bought my copy the day it came out. However it took me a long time to physically open up the book and start reading. At first I couldn't figure out why; but when I thought about I realized that I was scared....scared that I would not love this and as a result not love poison, magic, and fire study as much as I used to. This did not happen, though, and for that I am so glad! Shadow Study was action packed, full of adventure and humor, and that little hint of romance that warms your insides. I was so happy to read about some of my all time favourite characters again, I have missed Yelena so much! Her kickass nature and always moving personality has always pulled me in and this book was no different. Her chapters were full of depth and I enjoyed her thought process so much.

There is something about Maria V. Snyder that I cannot get past and that is her inclusive writing style. She wheels you in and makes it impossible for you not to love her characters even if you don't relate to them at all, you feel connected to them all and her descriptive writing and rich world building only adds to this. Her writing is always a joy to read and makes me adore everything that she writes and that hasn't changed.

However something did change and for a long time I could not figure out what it was because this had all the fantastic elements of the Study trilogy that I adored, however it was missing some as well... I didn't commit to the book like I did with the Study series, and I think it's because of the different perspectives. While I enjoyed the humor and finding out more about Valek's past it made the novel a little disjointed. Something exciting and magical would happen to Yelena and then BAM it would move to a different perspective, and the novel lost some of its flow because of this. I did like the addition of the new Miss assassin, and her banter with Janco was funny as hell, but again because of the constant change of perspective I found it hard to commit to that as well. To be honest: I really just wanted more Yelena. Her perspective is the one I connected with the most and while the others were interesting and funny, I found it hard to connect to them all at once.

In terms of the love story I did have a slight love hate relationship with it. Because it's Yelena and Velek I will always love every little bit of romance I get, I just I didn't feel a pull entirely. However it was still complex and there were hints of what was to come. The silly, girly part of me wanted Valek to be all protective, chase after her and go all alpha male however that is not him, it's not his character and the characters is something I have always loved in this series because the author crafts a characters fears and dreams and stays true to that. She doesn't change them to please, she instead molds them and defines them and I really can't fault that.

In the end there was a new dynamic I had to get used to and by the end I had. I have mentioned my criticisms, however as a whole I really loved this novel and cannot wait to see what is next for everyone!

*UPDATE:*

**OH MY FREAKING GOD!**

**THERE IS GOING TO BE FOUR MORE BOOKS !**

**DID YOU HEAR ME?**

**FOUR MIRE BOOKS!**

**FOUR MORE BOOKS!**

**FOUR MORE BOOKS!**

**FOUR MORE BOOKS!**

*I just died and went to book heaven.*

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**Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says**

It took me a long ass time to read this book, because I had to take my time to savor every single word. At one point, I considered DNFing it because I didn't want it to end. I'm weird. I know.

*Poison Study* is one of my favorite high fantasy of all time, but even I I have to admit, the second and third book sucked. I read them, and loved them, and rated them highly anyway because I absolutely adore the characters and the world. Valek and Yelena are my favorite couple of all time, if I had an OTP, they would be #1.

I am happy to say that this, the highly unexpected 4th book in this series, does not disappoint in any way. There is a special place in my heart for the first book, *Poison Study*, but my bias aside, this may be my favorite Maria V. Snyder book ever, and I've read almost every single one of her books.

Why do I love this book? As with the entire series, the world building is immense, amazing, incredibly well-meshed and believeable. From the emerging technology to the system of magic, I can't think of a single element that didn't fit well together.

The main characters are a fantastic couple. They're what I aspire towards, if I ever get into a long term relationship. Valek and Yelena's love for each other knows no bounds. They are soul mates, heart mates, friends...as well as co-workers and co-conspirators. They are partners, equals. There is so much mutual

respect for one another.

Their trust in each other is a beautiful thing to behold.

Valek is an assassin, highly-skilled. Yelena is a liaison, a fighter as well a magician. Valek trusts in her ability to defend herself, and she trusts him.

Their job comes first. They may worry about one another, but **their fucking job comes first**. I love that. They know their priorities. They don't spend much time together, and that's fine, because their love exists beyond that. They don't need to be thinking about each other fucking 24/7 in order for us to know that they're still in love.

Valek's unwavering loyalty lies, not with Yelena, but with his Commander, the ruler of Ixia. He knew the Commander first, before Yelena, and though he loves Yelena, it is his duty and loyalty to his country and Commander that comes before their relationship. Yelena knows that, she relates to that, she understands that. She doesn't become a whiny little bitch.

The other characters are actually OTHER CHARACTERS. Unlike other books, side characters do not disappear into the background. Other female characters are positive models, strong. There is no sexism here. I've gotten to know and love the side characters throughout the series, and I am happy to say that they all play prominent roles here.

It was a hard book to read at times, bad things happen to people I love, and it was rough for me reading about them suffering. Yelena, particularly. But I know her, and I know she can (and does) take care of herself without anyone's help. I only suffer this much when I'm highly attached to characters.

See why I love this book?

Oh, and the main reason: more Valek. SO MUCH MORE VALEK. Valek as a child is pretty fucking terrifying. BWAHAHAHAHA.

If you haven't read this series, this is a great time to start.

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## Marie says

Maria V. Snyder has been contracted for three more Study books!

\*\*\* Update 3/6/14 \*\*\*

- “*It is tentatively scheduled to be released early January 2015...*
- *Yelena and Valek's POV will alternate chapters, starting with Yelena. (There may be sections of Janco's POV.)*
- *The reason the book is titled, **Shadow Study** is because during Valek's chapters, there are a number of*

*flashbacks to his past and the place where he learned how to be an assassin is called, The School of Night and Shadows.*

*(The second of the new set of Study books is tentatively titled, Night Study.)*

*• As for the story - it starts soon after the events in Spy Glass. Valek is returning to Ixia because the Commander has ordered him home - seems crafty smugglers have found a new route into Ixia and he needs Valek and Ari and Janco to investigate.*

*• After an all too brief vacation with Valek, Yelena has to deal with an increasing anti-magician sentiment from the Sitian Council and she goes on a mission to find Ben Moon (Owen Moon's brother). Ben escaped from Wirral prison. Ben had tried to kill Yelena after Owen was executed in Ixia. To read the story about Owen Moon's nefarious deeds go [here](#) (in fact, Ben has a pretty big part in **Shadow Study** so you may want to go and re-read the story (Ice Study) before January).*

*• Familiar characters that are in **Shadow Study** - Leif, Mara, Opal, Devlen, Reema, Bain, Irys, Maren, and Kiki of course!*

*New characters - Onora (young hot shot female assassin), Gerik (new soldier for the Commander's detail), Ben Moon, Hedda (Head Mistress of the school of Night and Shadows), and Arbon (a fellow assassin trainee that was in school with Valek)."*

Maria's announcement

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### **Katerina says**

**How am I supposed to go on with my life after *that* ending??** I'm pretty sure my squeals woke the dead (along with my not-particularly-happy parents)!!

Shadow Study was as **tasty** as a steaming mug of caramel flavored cappuccino with loads of sugar accompanied by chocolate brownies! It felt like going home after a rainy day and finding dry clothes, a warm fire and an even warmer smile by the person you love the most! I savored each word, I welcomed the endearing feeling of returning to a world so cherished and characters so beloved and adventures that made my heart uncontrollably pound! If I could, I'd give Maria V. Snyder a tight hug!

**"Dead air surrounded me.**

**My magic was gone."**

As you can imagine, after losing her Soulfinder powers Yelena is vulnerable to every single person who hates her and believe me when I say it, they're many. She has to let other people protect her and find out how to survive with an assassin at her heels and the possibility of war between Sitia and Ixia becoming greater and more tangible each day, while Valek tries to balance his loyalty to the Commander and his love for Yelena. Not knowing who to trust and who to kill, afraid and on the run, Yelena might be the key to stop the impending war. Or be the cause of it.

The truth is, at some points I had a hard time following the story because I haven't read the Glass series yet and I doubt I'll do so any time soon. But my lack of background knowledge did not prevent me from inhaling

Shadow Study or slowly becoming aware of the things at stake and the motivation of the villains!In fact,I loved Shadow Study more than Magic Study and Fire Study, and I am content that Maria V. Snyder decided to continue Valek and Yelena's story!There wasn't a dull moment,I was constantly on the edge of my sit,each chapter ended in a cliffhanger and I swear there were times my frantic heartbeat was the only thing I could hear!

I loved the sarcastic touch of each narrative that made me snicker even when things got serious, and Janco's chapters were pure delight! **Action,mystery and suspense,secrets and espionage,assassins and dubious characters,Shadow Study was a blend of everything you could ask for!** But the book's highlight was **Valek's POV.**

*“Valed stared at the dead man.No regret pulsed inside him.Just a deep feeling of satisfaction.”*

How can you not love this man?He's not someone who broods over the ugly things he's done,he accepts them and moves on.He's cold and calculative,cunning and self-aware, but he's not immoral.I've always wanted a glimpse to his past and thoughts and I must admit his chapters were the part I enjoyed the most in this book! I was frustrated he had only a few scenes with Yelena but being inside his head,witnessing his struggle between his duty and his devastating love for her,knowing that he would do anything to save her was enough to tame my frustation!

*“I'd like you to stay with me forever.”*

The most refreshing thing about Valek and Yelena is that despite loving each other to death they're independent,they follow their path,they accept that they have different responsibilities and still they make their relationship work! **Their trust,their devotion,their passion and their warmth make them one of my all time favorite couples**,a couple I shipped since their first meeting and I'll ship until I'm an old toothless cat-lady reminiscing the glorious days of her youth,when a ruthless assassin stole her heart and never returned it!And I suspect that he owns a collection of missing hearts...

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### **Helen says**

Wait.. WHAT!!!! HOLY BUTTERFLYING HORSES!!!

Just decided to reread this and I see three more, **THREE**, added to this series!

\*cue deep breaths\*

\*squeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!\*

Valek <3

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**Katie says**

**I found out that this was a thing last year in 2013, and I was so excited!**

**Then I saw this again today and I realized that this is 2014. The book is possibly coming out THIS YEAR!!!!**

**I just really hope it's as good as the first three! The Study Series is one of my favorites and I really don't want to be let down! Granted, I'll probably read all three anyway, but it would be nice if they were just as good as the others. Please don't let me down!**

**UPDATE**

**JANUARY 2015?!?!**

**NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!**

## UPDATE

### 4.5 stars

I'm so glad I wasn't let down! While Poison Study will always be my favorite in the series, I really enjoyed Shadow Study. I loved having multiple perspectives and they were very well done (I especially enjoyed learning about Valek's past and how he became an assassin). Each chapter would end in a cliffhanger and left me hungry for more. It was hard to put this book down! While many people have said that the book was fairly predictable, this wasn't the case with me. Having not read the other books for a while, I didn't remember most of the things that could have made this book predictable. Besides, I was just glad to be immersed in my favorite series again, instead of trying to predict what would happen, I just enjoyed myself and went along for the ride!

Thinking about this book from a critic's point of view, it wasn't the best book in the world, but I certainly enjoyed it and am excited for the next 2 books!

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### Caitlin says

*"We're stronger together."*

Well, that was crazy. I'm so so glad that Maria decided to continue on with Valek and Yelena's story because I had not seen enough of them in only 3 books. I think this book was set up the best purely because of the alternating points of view. I loved that we still stayed with Yelena in first person, but we still got to see Janco and Valek's point of view too in third person. I'm really looking forward to seeing if more POVs are added - especially Leif and Ari because I'd love to see what they're up to all the time.

Seeing Valek's POV was the best part of the book. I adored seeing his backstory and how his journey went from random child to King killer. Obviously my favourite part was 17 year old Valek dressing up as a woman working in a salon in disguise in order to sneak into the castle and kill the royal family for the Commander. My problem will forever remain that we don't see enough of Yelena and Valek together. However, it's also really good to see a relationship so strong when the couple is basically in a long distance relationship. After that ending though, I feel like we'll be seeing way more of their scenes together.

Janco and Ari have also become main characters and I couldn't be happier! I loved the power twins together again and seeing them have a more prominent role. I just love them both and they're honestly both such a mess that I can't help laughing to myself when they converse.

I have so many mixed feels on the Commander right now. I thought he was a good dude but like ???? what the fuck is he doing? I'm so conflicted and confused and **I need answers**

Okay, let's talk about that ending (which I was spoiled on). (view spoiler)

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### Christal says

### 2.5 stars

This is definitely a hard review for me to write because I loved Poison Study so so much. **Shadow Study** just did not have the same magic for me. It was slow and boring and hardly anything worthwhile happened in this book at all. The spark that Yelena and Valek had in the previous books was missing, probably because they were apart for the whole book. Yelena herself burned like a flame in the previous books, but here she was barely an ember. She's always been a bit brash and quick to act, but she made some terrible decisions several times throughout **Shadow Study**. After the initial set up with Yelena and her powers and the assassination attempt/attempt to steal Valek's job, the rest of the book consisted of a lot of talking (three different POVs!), a lot of recapping, and everyone going to investigate things. There is no real resolution to any of the plot lines. In my opinion, Maria V. Snyder probably had an idea for one more Yelena book and her publisher convinced her to make it a trilogy. Even though the other two books haven't been written, based on this first one, I think they probably could have been condensed into a single volume. I just cannot recommend this book, but I appear to be in the minority as it currently has a 4.19 average on Goodreads.

*Thank you to Mira and Netgalley for providing an ARC copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Helena ☆ FC says**

Once more, Maria V. Snyder has done it again!!! This is the first instalment of the second trilogy, telling the story of **Yelena and Valek's epic tale** in the *Ixian Chronicles*...and it was *AMAZING!* Needless to say, this series has cemented itself onto my **favourite series of all-time** list!!! I absolutely adore *the characters and the world* that Snyder has created. It is such a well-crafted believable world, and I found the mixture of magic and technology to be utterly fascinating.

Do I admit that some books are better than others? *Yes*. Will that stop me from giving all of these ridiculously high ratings? *No!* :P Also, I do think that this book comes in as my **second-favourite Ixian Chronicles book** (with *Poison Study* firmly at #1, of course).

It's very strange to think that Yelena's life was so much simpler when she was a mere food taster for the Commander. Now, no matter what she does, not only does her life consistency hang in the balance, but there are political implications in regards to Ixian-Sitian relations, as well. The stakes are **SO HIGH**. Yelena typically uses her *cunning intellect and powerful magic* as a liaison between the two countries...until now. As dissent is rising as to the involvement of magicians on the political stage, Yelena is attacked and awakens to find her magic either blocked or completely gone. **POOF. ...UH OH.**

**PSA:** Before reading this book, you *MUST* have read *Ice Study* beforehand because that is the *prequel* to this book. If you have not read that, you will be completely unaware as to who *Ben Moon* and *Owen Moon* are, and why Ben Moon wants Yelena and Valek dead. In this instalment, Yelena is sent to locate Ben Moon, who has recently escaped from the high-security Wirral prison and is seeking **vengeance** for his brother's execution.

*Valek pulled the glass from my grip, set it on the table, then took both my hands in his. "When we're apart, I worry about you. Even when I know you're fine and doing some boring research for Bain or visiting your parents, I worry. Even though you are more than capable of taking care of yourself, I worry."*  
?"*I was capable.*"?

“You still are. Owen couldn’t break you.”?

“If it wasn’t for you, he would have. Your voice gave me the strength.”

?“You used your own strength. I just reminded you that it was already within you.”

Now, onto **my OTP, Yelena and Valek**, aka one of the *best YA power-couples EVER*. It is such a wholesome and genuine relationship that actually *FEELS* real. It doesn’t feel like some YA couples, who couldn’t possibly have worked in real life. They are truly equal partners. By the time that this novel begins, they have been together for **eight years** (longer than even some marriages, haha), and it really feels like it, too. They both act like a married couple. They are so loving and supportive of one another, but remain their own people. Their **duties and jobs are their first priorities** (in fact, Yelena even specifically stated that she recognised that Valek’s loyalty to the Commander came before her), and they do not sit around, moping about each other’s absence and thinking about one another. They are true soul mates (or **heart mates**, as it is termed in this world) and their trust in each other knows no bounds. Talk about unwavering loyalty! I aspire to have a relationship like this, one day.

May we have *more couples like this*, please, dear authors of the YA community??? I’m begging you!!!

“Yelena?”

?“Hmm?”?

“I’d like you to stay with me while we figure out how to unblock your magic. We’re stronger together.”

?“All right.”

?He laughed. “I thought I’d have more of a fight.”?

“I’m too tired to argue.”?

“Then I should take advantage of the situation.”

?I cracked one eye open. “And?”?

“I’d like you to stay with me forever.”

<3 <3 <3 <3 **I NEED A MAN LIKE VALEK IN MY LIFE**. Talk about swoon-worthy!!! Does anyone know where I might find one? ;)

?There is a new addition to this series’ cast, by the name of **Onora**. She was a very interesting character, who gives Valek a run for his money. Having said that, this second trilogy is now told in **three points of view** (rather than Yelena’s solely): *Yelena* (so brilliant), *Valek* (so amazing), and *Janco* (so hilarious). I’m not even ashamed to say that *OF COURSE* Valek’s POV was my **favourite!** :D During Valek’s POV, I was especially fascinated by his past and the time that he spent at the *School of Night and Shadows*, training to be the assassin that he is today. Also, Valek as a child was **TERRIFYING**. He’d have killed me in less than 2 seconds...if he were ever sent to assassinate me, that is!!! And if I had *one complaint* about this book, it would be that **Ari** has unfortunately faded into the background because he is constantly overshadowed by **Janco**.

?I’m now going to read *Night Study*, as soon as humanly possible because **THAT ENDING OMG!!!** (view spoiler)

And to anyone who (*only Heaven knows, why*) hasn’t gotten to this series yet...**READ IT! READ IT! READ**

**IT!**

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## **Lizbeth Perez says**

### **\*UPDATE #2\***

From Maria V. Snyders Facebook:

"As promised, here are a few more details about the SHADOW STUDY - yes, it's a new book with Yelena and Valek (if you didn't know - where have you been?).

•It is tentatively scheduled to be released early January 2015 in the US, but I'm sure the UK and AU will be releasing the book very close to the US date.

•Yelena and Valek's POV will alternate chapters, starting with Yelena.

•There may be sections of Janco's POV (working that out with my editor)

•The reason the book is titled, SHADOW STUDY is because during Valek's chapters, there are a number of flashbacks to his past and the place where he learned how to be an assassin is called, The School of Night and Shadows

•The second of the new set of Study books (3 planned in all) is tentatively titled, NIGHT STUDY. No title for #3 yet!

•As for the story - it starts soon after the events in SPY GLASS. Valek is returning to Ixia because the Commander has ordered him home - seems crafty smugglers have found a new route into Ixia and he needs Valek and Ari and Janco to investigate.

•After an all too brief vacation with Valek, Yelena has to deal with an increasing anti-magician sentiment from the Sitian Council and she goes on a mission to find Ben Moon (Owen Moon's brother). Ben escaped from Wirral prison. Ben had tried to kill Yelena after Owen was executed in Ixia. To read the story about Owen Moon's nefarious deeds go here (in fact, Ben has a pretty big part in SHADOW STUDY so you may want to go and re-read the story before January). <http://www.mariavsnnyder.com/IceStudy.php>-- Familiar characters that are in SHADOW STUDY - Leif, Mara, Opal, Devlen, Reema, Bain, Irys, Maren, and Kiki of course!

•New characters - Onora (young hot shot female assassin), Gerik (new soldier for the Commander's detail), Ben Moon, Hedda (Head Mistress of the school of Night and Shadows), and Arbon (a fellow assassin trainee that was in school with Valek).

I hope that satisfies some of the curiosity (or did I make it worse?)"

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From Maria V. Snyder's News Letter:

## **SUPER, FANTASTIC, AMAZING Thrilling NEWS!!!**

"This is especially exciting for all my readers who have been BUGGING me about more Yelena and Valek books! Well guess what? I've a new contract with my publisher for four more books. One is the last book of the Healer series, TASTE OF DEATH due out December 2013, and the next three will be...more Study books!! Yes, I'm returning to Yelena, Valek, and the gang with a new series of adventures. Yay!

The first book will probably be out the Fall of 2014 - key word probably! I'll know better next year. Is everyone happy now? Yes? Good - you can all stop bugging me! ;>"

This is so exciting! I can't wait but in the mean time. . .

---

### **Sarah says**

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to Harlequin (UK) Limited and NetGalley.)

First, apologies to Harlequin (UK) Limited that it took me so long to get around to this book! And now, the book, well, it was... slow.

I liked that we were back following Yelena in this book, and yay... Valek!! Lots, and lots of Valek! However, there wasn't enough of Yelena and Valek together, which as it turns out, are the bits I like.

Anyway, the storyline in this reminded me a bit of the books focusing on Opal, as this time Yelena lost her magic, similarly to Opal losing hers. We also got lots of flashbacks of Valek when he was first training to be an assassin, which I found a bit boring. There wasn't much romance either, and the pace was way too slow for me.

The ending to this was okay, but I didn't feel like much was resolved, I was also expecting that cliff-hanger.

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6 out of 10