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Crimes Against Magic (The Hellequin Chronicles Book 1)



Synopsis

Book 1 in the Hellequin Chronicles. How do you keep the people you care about safe from enemies you can't remember? Ten years ago, Nate Garrett awoke on a cold warehouse floor with no memory of his past—a gun, a sword, and a piece of paper with his name on it the only clues to his identity. Since then, he's discovered he's a powerful sorcerer and has used his magical abilities to become a successful thief for hire. But those who stole his memories aren't done with him yet: when they cause a job to go bad and threaten a sixteen-year-old girl, Nate swears to protect her. With his enemies closing in and everyone he cares about now a target for their wrath, he must choose between the comfortable life he's built for himself and his elusive past. As the barrier holding his memories captive begins to crumble, Nate moves between modern-day London and fifteenth-century France, forced to confront his forgotten life in the hope of stopping an enemy he can't remember.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book because it was on sale for \$2, along with the rest of the series to date. I thought if

I don't like it, I only spent \$2, but if I do like it, then I can get the whole series hella cheap. I have to say that I liked it. A few things to note for those who care. There is lots of violence. It is an action book, and though there is some sex, it isn't too graphic, and though the main character is a man who is attracted to beautiful girls, this is not a romance. So if you want a 'they got to know each other and talk about their feelings' book, then this is not for you. There is mild cussing, but only when it is called for. Ex: if a truck almost hits me kind of thing. Though I try not to cuss, especially in front of my kid, when a semi came into oncoming traffic to pass and almost hit me last week.. some words were said.

Outstanding action and momentum kept me reading, and within pages, I bought the sequel. You'll find werewolves, vampires, sorcerers, evil overlords and quite a few fight scenes. Genre-wise, it straddles historical, horror, fantasy, and thriller, but the overall effect is urban fantasy. Nate Garret's skills and proclivities make him something of an urban fantasy James Bond. McHugh skillfully juggles parallel medieval and contemporary stories, no mean feat--especially for a first novel. Dialogue is well done and quite clever and the characterization is strong. One disappointment: the contemporary story is set in London but he makes little use of the setting, perhaps because of the mostly indoor scenes that could be anywhere. The narrative voice 'sounds' very American. (American spellings are used in the Kindle edition.) I was jarred at every mention of London because except for a few bits of dialogue, it just didn't feel very British. Highly recommended to readers of Ben Aaronovitch, Jim Butcher, Carrie Vaughn, Benedict Jacka, and Ilona Andrews. Note: Some of the lower-rated reviews complain about editing. I was intrigued by the positive reviews, but poor editing (something I do professionally) is a red flag for me. I downloaded the sample, thinking this might be a candidate for the "Shelf of Shame" I use in writing classes. For sure there are some glaring gaffs, but not many more than what I see in many "professional" books from major publishers. The character, pace, and story are so compelling I breezed right along without a lot of editorial turbulence. Proper editing would've gotten it another star from me.

I was looking for something new in my genre and came upon this book/author. Having no previous knowledge of him, I read many of the reviews to decide whether I wanted to chance it. This 1st book has some scathing negatives as well as satisfied readers. In for a penny, in for a pound I purchased all four (to-date) Hellequin novels. One of advantages I have, is as somewhat of a speed reader, most spelling errors and such go past me. This book is a reissue, so mayhap they were caught or I really am oblivious. I like that there is precious little physical "romance", I also like that there is less

British idiom & topography than many other books set in and around the United Kingdom. Some books are just too detailed on place names and explicit driving instructions for this Yankee. What is a little tiresome are the endless fight scenes where everyone seems just a little too indestructible. All in all though, I like the characters and the storyline and would recommend them to fans of Felix Castor, Harry Dresden, Bobby Dollar, Peter Grant and so on

First of all, I must say, the title is wicked cool. I also have to give hats off to the cover artist because I could not have pictured a better embodiment of Nate than what is on the front cover of *Crimes Against Magic*. Second, the novel was a quick and fun read. It has been awhile since I read an Urban Fantasy that didn't focus on werewolves, vampires, and witches. Perhaps that is my own fault, but none the less, reading about badass sorcerer Nate was a pleasure! I especially liked the action scenes. Even though most of the novel is action upon action upon action, it never felt repetitive or drawn out. I was able to see each fighting scene clearly in my head. I dare say, this novel would make a good movie script. *Hint hint to all you screenwriters out there!* :) Steve also does a good job weaving in Nate's old life with his new life as his memories unfold and the danger to Nate's loved ones heightens as the novel progresses. I was also particularly intrigued by Steve's decision to weave historical France with the ancient Greek legends of mythology. Nate's life of magic relates to each of these time periods effortlessly as he travels the world in search of defeating the "bad guys". Who shall remain a mystery. Guess you will have to read the book to find out what happens!

Most of the stories you know about ancient gods and heroes are at least partly real. Even King Arthur, yep, he existed and he's still around if kind of out of the day-to-day activity of Avalon (the world's covert magical authority) right now.. Or that's what we are told by narrator Nate Garrett in a sequence of scenes set in the France of 1414 where he gradually reveals that he is Merlin's enforcer. In the scenes set in our present, he doesn't remember any of this, having woken up ten years ago knowing nothing but his name. It's a device used famously by Laumer and Zelazny and it works pretty well here. Current day Nate is a thief for hire who has learned to use enough of his forgotten magic to be tops at his trade. Now, his latest job has brought him in contact with people who knew him when, and unless he can remember, it will be his last job. Garrett is a fairly engaging character, a bit of a player, but a man of his word who stands by friends and his coming back online makes an entertaining story. Interestingly, there is no mention of or explanation for "Hellequin" anywhere in the book.

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