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Raine Benares is a Sorceress Seeker of average ability until she comes into possession of an amulet that amplifies her powers-and her enemies.

Magic Lost, Trouble Found Details

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From Reader Review Magic Lost, Trouble Found for online ebook

Mark says

I liked this book.

I didn't think I would, and that was because I did indeed fall into the trap of judging a book by its cover - which I seriously dislike, and the font makes me think it's a comedy a la Discworld, from which I run screaming (not Discworld so much but comedic fantasy in general).

In any case I was pleasantly surprised.

The worldbuilding is really good - anyone who can paint a picture so vividly and with so many layers in the readers head in such short a time earns my admiration (given I write pages in my own work to get the same effect). The voice of the main character was strong and nonirritating (the book is in first person and while I don't love that I am getting more use to it) and the pace was fast. So fast in fact it became one of those books I couldn't stop reading.

Up until the last third of the novel.

I am not entirely sure what happened. it feels to me that Shearin may have revised the first two thirds of the book more than the last. I can't explain it any other way.

The characterisation changed. I no-longer recognised the character of Raine, she had become a stranger to me. And the 'romance' in the story, for me, lacked chemistry or romantic tension. It just missed the mark.

It was also in this section that I had issues with the dialogue. It felt to me that the characters started taking in circles; that Shearin was sounding out the plot through the dialogue - and yes, you do use dialog to do this... to a degree; but you never want your readers to notice it ('Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain! I am the great and powerful Oz!').

Maybe I wasn't following the detail as closely as I ought but I also felt that there were some big leaps in plot logic between points A and B.

I was gutted. I really liked this book, the way it started, how the world was built up in the readers mind, the pace and the fluidity of the prose...

What happened? I don't know.

I will read the book two. Lots of authors improve as they go on so and I liked what did work in this novel enough to see where it goes.

Sofija says

I don't know why I didn't like this book. It has everything I seek in good read. Writing was decent and understandable for me. The world building was fine too. I like Raine, she was quite pleasant character. There are romance and love triangle in the book. But apparently this wasn't enough. It just didn't hook me up. I read all this great review, and the book rating is really high. So I just hoped, that it will be better soon, I just

need to read another page, another chapter. On page 195 (it has totally 260) I still wasn't interested in it. It was when I understood that "soon" will never come. So I gave up on this book.

Ann says

I found myself conflicted by this book. There are parts of this novel that I loved, parts that made me read and read because I couldn't put it down, and parts that popped me out of the story and had me saying "Oh, come on!"

The novel is written in a first-person chatty style reminiscent of chick-lit. It's not quite as... dark and heavy as the urban fantasy I've read... but it also has a bit of that kind of modern thief/magician thing... kinda a perky female Harry Dresden without so much angst. Oh, Raine's got angst, but aside from the soul-sucking amulet and the trouble it causes, the angst is mostly in her pants.

The voice is modern, but the setting of the book is not, which caused me a few "Oh come on!" moments when the dialogue drifted into something close to phrases and idioms modern humans would use. At one point, one character even said "Step into my parlor, said the spider to the fly" and that just knocked me completely out of the novel. (It's a common misquote of The Spider and the Fly, a 19th century poem.)

Granted, just because your setting is not modern... in this case the setting is kind of your typical non-industrial fantasy town based loosely on Venice (it's got a lot of canals)... it doesn't mean you characters have to talk forsoothly. I think you can do fantasy with a spunky modern voice without throwing your reader out of the novel or betraying the setting with too much modernity. It's a matter of finding the voice of the character in their world... not ours. Some time's Raine slipped a little to close to ours.

Most of the time, though, the voice was fine. It carried me along, was fun in the fun bits, and edge of the seat in the exciting bits. It was just those few "Oh come on!" places that got me.

There are some things about the world-building that I liked. One was just a little thing: At one point I Raine mentions that no one really put anything valuable on the first floor, because flooding is common. Very very true of Venice, but no one else whose used Venice as a template for a fantasy setting mentions it. The other is the Goblins. Oh... the Goblins. You see, most often Goblins are ugly, little things, and in Raine's world, they're not. Nope. They're talk sexy things with silvery skin and dark hair. And pointy teeth. And they prefer dim light. But did I mention tall and sexy? Yeah. One of the bad boys (as opposed to the evil boys), Tam, is a Goblin and boy, he's good. Ahem.

On the other hand, Raine's an Elf. A twenty-something Elf. Ok, so I'm really into elves as a character type... one of the things I like is playing around with the Other in elves, the long life, the somewhat different senses, mannerisms, thought processes...

Raine's twenty-something. I never get a sense of the elven lifespan in the novel, but there is a mention that 900 years is waaaay long for an elf to live. Unheard of... but, Raine's twenty-something. And aside from the pointy-ears, she doesn't act any different then I would expect a human magic-user in that fantasy world to act. I mean, if you make her an elf.... use it! Somehow!

She also knows everyone. That yummy bad-boy goblin? Powerful sorcerer, related to the Goblin King's family. Now, Ok, her family is a well connected bunch of thieves, so they are going to know a lot of powerful people. But... in her twenties? Umm...

The actual plot is pretty good, though it took me a bit to get into it, since Raine isn't really ever in serious trouble until the end of Chapter 9. Oh, there's conflict, but it's resolved pretty quickly, and Raine even gets in a really nice meal, a soaky bath, and sleep. But once the action takes off, it pretty much had me until the end of the novel. That's the part I couldn't put down.

But the end... Once the climax happens, the book drops back down to no tension. The epilogue-ish chapter (because it wasn't actually an epilogue) nearly killed the book for me. Mostly because it went into "tell" mode. Raine, who's been conflicted between bad-boy goblin guy and hot-elven paladin guy ALL BOOK LONG tells us about bad boy goblin giving her one hell of a going-away kiss... TELLS US ABOUT IT. Way to set up the tension, then drop it like a hot potato. I wanted to see it, feel it, not be told about it in a kind of wrap-up way. That was another "Oh come on!" moment and it pissed me off because it was right at the end of the book. *grump* But...

This was the author's first book. And I think it was fairly successful and enjoyable. I have the second novel and I'll read it, because for all my whining, I liked Raine. And I liked hot-elven-paladin-guy. I really hope to see more of bad-boy-goblin guy. I do hope there's less of what kicked me out of this novel in the second novel.

And most importantly, it's *different* than the other books out there. I think there's a market for a lighter-spunkier fantasy, and it's not been tapped very hard.

Suzanne (Under the Covers Book blog) says

Raine Benares is a Seeker with enough magic to get her by and a close family of smugglers and thieves who taught her every trick they knew. However, that all changes when she finds herself in possession of an amulet, the amulet doesn't look all that impressive...except she now has a psychotic goblin shaman chasing her, as well as an exiled Prince and a Paladin. Raine's sudden popularity has put her and her family in mortal danger; she may have got herself in far more trouble than her street smarts and magic can get her out of.

This book has been collecting dust on my shelf for a while now (years!) and I am so glad that I gave into impulse, dusted it off and finally started reading it. It was fun, exciting and full of adventure with a dash of humour, and kept me eagerly reading to see what would happen next.

If, you are looking for a more traditional fantasy though, I would avoid this one as it did remind me more of a modern Urban Fantasy, maybe because it was set in one city and told from first person POV. It didn't make me enjoy it any less but it is something to keep in mind before you start.

But at its core *Magic Lost, Trouble Found* was a fast paced adventure story full of magic and swords an interesting, though not intricate, plot, a bit of romance and a likable heroine. It has also stated building up a fantasy world of which we have only seen a small part of in this book and I look forward to Lisa Shearin expanding and building up her world in the next book.

A good read, it was a well written and lighthearted fantasy that kept me turning the pages and I can't wait to read more

Kogiopsis says

Okay, let's get one thing straight: this is not the book/series to reach for if you want something deep and thought-provoking. That's not its purpose, and there's nothing wrong with that, but I thought we should be clear before moving on.

What this book is is *fun*. Really fun, in a 'classic fantasy tropes written so solidly you don't care they're tropes' kind of way. Really, the setup here is fairly standard - elves, humans, goblins; everyone's hot and compatible and there's an ancient species rivalry - and honestly the plot isn't exactly groundbreaking, but that's really all part of the book's charm. It doesn't feel like a satire, precisely, but I get the sense that it's supposed to be playing on the fact that the reader knows how all this background stuff should work.

Really, the star of the show here is Raine Benares herself, who absolutely shines. She's a wisecracking elven minor sorceress and from page one it's clear that her primary objectives are 'return to normality' and 'protect friends/family'. One of the first qualities that endeared her to me was the fact that she doesn't want to play a part in a grander story - she's offered power multiple times, always at a cost, and never really has to think about it before refusing. There's something refreshing about a protagonist so comfortable in her principles that she doesn't even angst over the possibilities and the risks. She's also incredibly straightforward about her reactions to the situations she ends up in: "When this is over I'm going to treat myself to a screaming fit. I deserve it, and I'm going to have one."

(it doesn't hurt that her dialogue is hilarious, either - "pointy steel objects that go stab in the night" is my favorite quote from this one.)

I don't know if I'm articulating this very clearly; I just find Raine incredibly refreshing. She's not hugely complex, and that's actually an advantage here; her blunt honesty and absolute convictions run up against the machinations of the antagonists in interesting ways, and above all she's really sympathetic and likable, which is what matters most. (she also gets interesting character growth in the next two books, but that's neither here nor there for this review.)

So yeah - if you're looking for something light, fun, and competently written, I recommend this.

Summer says

It's been a long time since I read a book that was straight fantasy. I've heard so many good things about this book and wasn't disappointed.

Raine, the main character, is an elf with average magical abilities who's current job is as a seeker. Meaning, she finds things that were stolen or lost. In 'Magic Lost, Trouble Found' Raine herself stumbles upon something that was once lost and is sought after by some very bad people. There is a race of goblins in this book, with some that are good and some that are bad. I found it interesting that either way, the race is described as tall and attractive. It took some getting used to, but I like it when authors mix it up a bit. The side characters are also fun especially Tam, a goblin who's got his eye on Raine. The plot isn't the most original but it was good enough to keep me interested throughout the book. I'm definitely looking forward to reading the sequel.

Emma says

3.5 stars.

A fun formulaic read and formulaic in a positive and comfy way. Really enjoyed the fantasy world of elves, goblins, pixies, humans. Magic and spellsongs, start of a love triangle etc. Main character with the feisty attitude of urban fantasy without the urban bit! Probably won't be rushing to the next one in the series, but I'm pretty sure I will read it eventually when I'm in need of something entertaining, light and fast-paced.

Angie says

This series seems to be most often described as regular fantasy with a decidedly urban fantasy heroine, complete with charming (at times self deprecating) sense of humor. I would agree with this assessment. Raine's internal dialogue is very much in keeping with urban fantasy trends. She'll be the first one to tell you, she's one part disreputable imp, two parts defender of all that is good. And she can handle anything that comes her way.

And the excellent part is--all kinds of heinousness comes her way and she handles it with aplomb (and the aforementioned sense of humor). Raine Benares is a seeker, finder of lost things and/or people. Raine's family name is a bit on the infamous side and, for the most part, Raine is just fine with that. In the opening scene of the book, she and her rake of a cousin Phaelan find themselves fighting off goblin shamans in an attempt to protect Raine's sometime partner and thief extraordinaire Quentin. Just what Quentin has stolen remains a mystery, but it soon becomes crystal clear every agent of evil in the vicinity would like to get their paws on it. Turns out the object is an ancient amulet which finds its way around Raine's neck and refuses (rather gruesomely) to be removed. Enter the Conclave Guardians, an elite force of healer-magicians whose job it is to retrieve the amulet and stash it back under lock and key. Stat. Dangerous and colorful characters abound, including the powerful Mychael Eilieson--Paladin of the Guardians--and Raine's friend Tamnais Nathrach--shady nightclub proprietor and former member of the goblin royal family. Oh and, by the way, these aren't your run-of-the-mill goblins. You want these goblins to sit down and stay awhile.

What a pleasant surprise this book was and how well-timed a read. A funny, delectable treat smack dab in the middle of winter. Raine is extremely likeable and I appreciated that she always seemed fully cognizant of her own motivations and never persisted in sugar-coating them or in being stubborn beyond all reason. In that way she reminded me of Kate Daniels from Ilona Andrews' Magic Bites. Like Kate, Raine appears to have a few secrets she's not interested in revealing, even to her closest confidantes. I have a few suspicions and look forward to finding out more as the series progresses. All of the side characters felt fully formed and like people/elves/goblins/what have you that I'd like to have around, and certainly want to read more about. And, while I would really rather the love triangle not drag out anywhere near as long as the whole Morelli-Stephanie-Ranger fiasco has, I have to say I am a hopeless Babe and am therefore (unsurprisingly) firmly in the Team Tam camp. Mychael is nice. Of this there is no doubt. But, aqua eyes aside, there's just no contest. This really is a delightful, addictive debut novel and I am very happy to have the sequel sitting on my nightstand.

Ian says

He said: "Let's go into the office."

*She said: "I don't trust you, let's stay out here."
(5 minutes later, nothing has changed but...)
He said: "Let's go into the office."
She said: "OK"*

Raine finds herself in possession of a magical amulet. It was stolen from a "powerful necromancer" (quoted from the synopsis) and that's about the last you'll hear of him. Everyone wants the amulet because it apparently acts as something like a compass...it will lead the bearer to a dark magical rock that promises great power. Luckily there is a goblin who knows where the aforementioned rock is so the amulet and most of this book is kind of pointless.

Honestly, *Magic Lost, Trouble Found* is a mess...nobody wants to touch the rock which is called "soul stealer" so they spend 3 pages discussing the use of a stick to put it back in its box. Deciding the box is important she goes searching for it...and doesn't find it...and it's not important. Characters randomly disappear from the story with no explanation, dialogue leads nowhere, things happen that don't really have much to do with the story.

The underlying story is OK, maybe even good, but it's written with such a heavy hand that the book becomes almost unbearable. Actually there is one thing that's good...

"My name is Raine Benares. I'm a seeker. The people who hire me are usually happy when I find things. But some things are better left unfound..."

I like that quote...and I get it twice...so I guess there are two good things in this book.

Lynsey (A Bookish Life) says

Edit 2016: I'm currently re-reading this and have to say this series got sooooo good. It was worth learning all those names I was grumbling about 5 years ago. ;)

2011 review: This book was good. However, it was extremely difficult to get into. This was actually my second attempt at reading it; the first time I gave up halfway through in frustration. The reason for my annoyance at the time was that I just couldn't get a grasp on who each character was because they've all got such ridiculously long and hard to pronounce - and remember - names. Three names each in some cases. Here's an example of said stoopid names: Nachtmagus Nigelius Nicabar - that's one guy. Did she fall on her keyboard or what? So I just kept getting completely lost and confused. I decided to try it again though, because underneath all that I could see the story was good and worth persevering with. I just had to wait until I was in a more patient mood. Once you do get to know the characters and the world Shearin has created, I can imagine this is a series that you can get totally engrossed in.

It's fantasy, written in a sort of historical, swashbuckling pirate-type setting. Our protagonist, Raine, is quite likeable. She has a personality that would suit urban fantasy. She's practical, logical and has a good sense of humour. I'm going to read the next one and see if the slight hint of romance I detected goes any further... I hope so.

Ben Babcock says

The word for Lisa Shearin's new fantasy series is "delightful."

Raine Benares' characterization presents a magical world through the eyes of a down-to-earth, capable woman. The passing way in which she remarks, "Oh, by the way ... I've got an amulet that links me to a stone known as the 'Soul Thief' and want it gone" is a typical example of the tongue-in-cheek tone of Shearin's writing--a tone that suits this story.

The way the action progresses, it is hard to imagine that so much can happen in so short a time (a couple of days). I am used to epic fantasy stories that take months, years, generations to complete. Neither approach is necessarily bad; they are just different, and each has its advantages. Shearin handles her pacing well. She packs quite a bit of action into the book, but somehow manages to squeeze enough exposition in there so as to inform us about numerous aspects of her magical world without completely drowning us in an infodump. As someone who also enjoys continent (or world) spanning adventures (*cough* Mr. Raymond E. Feist anyone? *cough*)

Fantasy is as susceptible as any genre to its clichés, and magical stones of power are one of those. However, Lisa Shearin cleverly doesn't tackle this particular stone head-on. Instead, she uses it to give us plenty of time with her main character, who is a delightful, spunky heroine. In that respect, I would think that women can fully appreciate Raine and enjoy her, more so than many books dominated by heavily masculine heroes. That said, I'm male and enjoyed it thoroughly.

The only criticism I could offer is that parts of it seemed rushed or forced. The ending comes very fast after what seems like a very long time, and there are certain scenes where I remember going, "Hmm ... is this really necessary? Couldn't this have been cut?" There are a couple of times where there is a large build-up to danger and tension, only for it to dissipate (such as just after the climax of the book, during the last flight from The Ruins). It doesn't ruin the book, but it makes me feel fidgety while I'm reading it.

That's the great thing about books though. If you get fidgety, you can just put it down, go do something, and come back later.

My Reviews of the Raine Benares series:

Armed & Magical →

Felicia says

I love this book so much. I had so much fun reading it, the characters are lovely and humorous and the plotting is quick and satisfying. I can't say enough good things about this, and I'm eagerly waiting for the sequel!

Wanda says

A charming introduction to a series that is new for me and which I will definitely read to the end. I love Lisa

Shearin's *SPI Files* and picked up the first three books of this series when I found them in my favourite used book store. A good impulse, that.

While not without its flaws, I found this to be an excellent distraction from the boredom of sitting most of a day in an airport in Santiago, Chile. One flight got in at mid-day and the next didn't leave until after 10 p.m. Distraction was definitely necessary!

If you like your elves regal and beyond reproach, set this book aside immediately. Raine Benares isn't that kind of elf. She is the white sheep of a family of pirates, trying to make a living as a Seeker (someone who finds lost objects or people). Fierce, loyal, brave, and funny, Raine is a woman I'd love to have as a friend. And that is one of my only criticisms of the book—Raine needs some female friends to make her a bit more real. All the male characters are just fine and treat her pretty well, but a girl needs someone to really confide in, someone to bitch to, and someone to have her back when things don't work out.

Also, be warned that there is some romance involved—certainly the book doesn't qualify as a paranormal romance, but if romantic attraction gives you the hives, walk away immediately. The romantic elements don't bury the plot, but they are significant. There are also signs of a love triangle to come, so those who hate the trope would do well to stay away. However, it is well set up: Raine (herself conflicted over the whole good/bad dichotomy) is attracted to both a goblin bad boy (Tamnais) and to a white-knight elf (Mychael).

Although a lot takes place and we learn a lot about the world that Raine lives in, not much time passes in this novel and not much progress on the plot line takes place (much the same as *SPI Files*, honestly). But I found that I could cheerfully put up with that because of the delightfulness of the world and the fun that I was having along the way.

Ms. Shearin's sense of humour appeals to me strongly, so I enjoyed this adventure a lot. Also appreciated, the cover depicts Raine fully clothed and of a normal figure (i.e. not some scantily clad, wasp-waisted, busty comic book character).

Mike (the Paladin) says

Well....here I was pleasantly surprised. If you've checked back on my profile often you may have noticed that this book has been on my "currently reading" shelf for a long time. Unfortunately (sort of) I own the book. So, it was continuously having to be put aside so I could read library books that had to be finished and returned.

The book was one I'd purchased from my favorite used books store on a recommendation but I'd left it on my shelf a long time. Let's face it. The cover sports an attractive, red blonde Elf girl clutching a sword and wearing an amulet in her cleavage. It looked like the cover of any number of PNR books I've started that had said they were fantasy. But I finally got around to initiating a read.

Lo and behold...this is a good book. Only a bit of romance that doesn't snuff out the rest of the story we meet here Raine an Elf adventurer and sorceress of modest ability who uses her talent to be a "finder". The city she's in is not one we would call "modern" however there are a few somewhat anachronistic touches and I plan to include this on my Urban Fantasy shelf even though it doesn't take place in a modern day city. Like *The Sword-Edged Blonde* it's a bit of a detective/sword and sorcery tale. While I had to lay the book aside several times (to finish library books) it held my interest and was a fun read.

Yes there are flaws (part of the ending climatic situation I found a bit too silly and my mind wandered off a bit (view spoiler). The book is straight up brain candy with a comedy/drama/action feel. Not as funny or as well told as say the Dresden books it's still good and while I don't plan to run out and snap up the rest of the series (or even the next), I do plan to keep reading these....

Yes more frustration in that I already have more "to be read" books than I'll ever get to.

Still I like it and plan to read more of the series. Hope they hold up.

Lisa says

I wrote it. ;)
