



License Invoked

Robert Lynn Asprin , Jody Lynn Nye

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Irish rock singer Fionna Kemare is set to play her first concert in the U.S.--but something unseen has been attacking her. Her only hope is two offbeat government agents: Liz Mayfield, special agent for the British Office of Occult & Paranormal Sightings Investigation, and her FBI counterpart, Beauray Boo-Boo Boudreau.

License Invoked Details

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Barry says

This book started out hilarious and suddenly became serious, which wasn't what I expected from the synopsis on the back cover. I was disappointed. If he stuck with funny, he would have been brilliant. Instead, the story was fairly well written with a few developed characters, a shallow plot, and overblown dangers. It's still worth reading, but nothing special.

Kenya Starflight says

I hadn't read anything by either Robert Asprin or Jody Lynn Nye before picking up this book, but both have sizable reputations as fantasy/sci-fi writers, and good ones at that. The premise of this book, a mystery-thriller involving magic and the supernatural, was intriguing as well, and I figured if nothing else I could enjoy the magical mayhem. Even the fact that it was a collaboration didn't bother me -- both these authors have collaborated on novels before, so I figured they had to know what they were doing. Unfortunately, while this book did keep me reading to the end and there were some enjoyable parts, it never really gelled together well or led me to grow invested in its characters.

"License Invoked" follows Elizabeth Mayfield, an MI5 agent who specializes in magic. When OOPSI, the branch of the British intelligence agency that specializes in the supernatural, sends her to act as a bodyguard of sorts to Fiona Kenmare, lead singer of the Irish acid-folk band Green Fire, she's just hoping to get this over with so she can get home and hopefully get promoted. But not only does Liz discover that she has a startling link to Fiona, she realizes that Fiona's insistence that something magical in nature is plaguing the band isn't her imagination -- she's really being targeted by sinister magic forces! As the band prepares for a big concert in New Orleans, Liz ends up teaming up with an American FBI agent named Beauray (though he prefers the nickname "Boo"), and the two must use all the magical means at their disposal to protect Fiona, Green Fire, and an entire stadium of fans from a black magic conspiracy that could destroy them all...

When this book found its groove and was at its best, it was an enjoyable read. Liz is a somewhat neurotic character, but believable and with her own quirks and flaws, and I found myself growing to like her and rooting for her. Her relationships with other characters felt believable, and when she was the focus of the book I greatly enjoyed the read. Boo is a curiously flat character, simply written to ooze Southern charm and provide handy exposition when needed, but his banter with Liz was enjoyable and fun. And the author's depiction of New Orleans made it seem like a colorful and exhilarating place to visit... though these descriptions were bittersweet, as the book was written before Hurricane Katrina hit and devastated so much of it.

The other characters are pretty much stereotypes and caricatures -- the snotty rock diva, the harried and fussy band manager, the overprotective bodyguard, etc. Even Liz's partner Boo, as stated above, feels curiously flat and underdeveloped. And the villains are so over-the-top evil that they're just flat-out cartoony and laughable, falling back on Hollywood depictions of Satanism that ceased to be scary decades ago. Said villains also seem to have no real motivation behind the destruction they're plotting beyond being as evil as possible -- there's talk of creating a surge of black magic power, but no indication on what that power is going to be used for.

The plot is fairly by-the-numbers, and at times it can't seem to decide whether it wants to be a sharp comedy or a bog-standard police procedural. I know Asprin in particular was capable of writing witty humor along with his magical antics, but here attempts at humor largely fall flat. And the police-procedural thriller is livened up a little bit with magic but is otherwise fairly predictable... and it doesn't help that the rock star whose safety is so central to the plot is seriously unlikable for much of the book, spoiled and ungrateful.

I'm willing to give both Asprin and Nye another chance, as it hardly seems fair to judge two authors by one lackluster collaboration. But "License Invoked" definitely doesn't seem like their best work, and while entertaining at points is an uneven and cliched read. It bears a few signs that it was meant to be the start of a series, but reading this book, it's easy to see why said series never panned out.

Matt Kimery says

This was a quick read. Entertaining, but lacks on details in a few sections. Overall a nice little story.

Cheryl says

Loved it, are you ready to go save an Irish Folk rock star & New Orleans from black magic? Another fun book from Robert Lynn Asprin and Jody Lynn Nye.

Marilyn Fontane says

Strange book. Not a comic fantasy, but a black magic thriller. Irish acid rock group, Green Fire, plans to begin their US tour in New Orleans, but the lead singer believes she is the recipient of black magic. So the Brits send one of their special forces agents along, and the Americans add Boo-Boo, a special agent of the FBI to guard against such activities. The group is in fact being demonized by a tele-evangelism church, who is paying top dollar to topple the group. It sounds like it should be a comic romp, but in fact turns more thriller oriented. It is however engaging; a fast page turner that keeps you reading once you're in to the story.

Kathy Sebesta says

Dumb. Don't bother.

Jack says

A whimsical look of what might happen if the government ever decided to take "magick" seriously and create a bureaucracy about it. Of course, anyone that "knows" or "believes in" magic knows that this stuff in the book is pure fiction. Magick doesn't work that way because it's internal, not external.

Even so, this is one of Asprin's better attempts away from either the Myth, Phule or Thieves World series.

That doesn't mean it's his best work, though.

This book has its slow spots where it tends to drag a bit and loses my attention. The main characters, though, are entertaining in their stereotypical ways.

Brett says

I really liked this book at the start but midway through it changed direction and the enjoyment factor decreased. Sort of the reverse of *The House that Jack Built* which took a while to get into before enjoying to its conclusion.

Danie says

Silly story about an acid-folk rock band whose lead singer is being targeted by Satanists. Yeah you read that right. Their protection is an uptight Brit lady-agent and a "N'awlins" freelancer both natural magickers who both work for secret government departments that deal in The Magic. My biggest take-away was wondering whether Green Fire (the band in the novel) and their Irish green-haired front woman weren't a thinly veiled stand-in for Garbage and their Scottish pink-haired frontwoman. Hope not as Shirley Manson seems infinitely cooler than Fionna/Phoebe. I kept waiting for the twist that would make the read worth it. It never came.
