



The Invisible Library

Genevieve Cogman

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Irene must be at the top of her game or she'll be off the case - permanently...

Irene is a professional spy for the mysterious Library, which harvests fiction from different realities. And along with her enigmatic assistant Kai, she's posted to an alternative London. Their mission - to retrieve a dangerous book. But when they arrive, it's already been stolen. London's underground factions seem prepared to fight to the very death to find her book.

Adding to the jeopardy, this world is chaos-infested - the laws of nature bent to allow supernatural creatures and unpredictable magic. Irene's new assistant is also hiding secrets of his own.

Soon, she's up to her eyebrows in a heady mix of danger, clues and secret societies. Yet failure is not an option - the nature of reality itself is at stake.

The Invisible Library Details

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From Reader Review The Invisible Library for online ebook

Lois Bujold says

This was fun. A librarian/secret agent for a library that exists between dimensions (and rather outside of time) is sent in pursuit of a rare edition of the Grimm tales in an alternate steampunk world; hijinks ensue. An alternate Sherlock-Holmes avatar from the local world and the librarian's apprentice who is more than he seems add a lot of interest.

While sequels could obviously go to many alternate worlds if the writer gets bored with this one, I gather the immediate sequel returns to this first one.

I have a personal interest in the author; earlier in her career when she was developing her chops doing freelance work, she wrote the excellent text for the *GURPS Vorkosigan* role-playing book.
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1...>

Ta, L.

Tinka says

“I am a librarian. I am a servant of the Library.”

With great ideas, comes great responsibility. Said no comic book character ever, but probably should have. Think about it as an avid reader. You see a book cover that looks gorgeous, you turn it around and read the summary and it tells you the story of a young woman, working for a secret library that recovers books from alternate realities. Add a *Doctor Who* comparison to the mix and you have one of the most interesting sounding books in a sort of fantasy/science fiction Genre of its time.

Now read that book and tell me what you are feeling when it just doesn't deliver what it promised to you.

I can tell you in advance, you feel disappointed and most likely kind of bumped.

The Invisible Library tells the story of Irene, a young woman who works for a mysterious library that collects precious books through many alternate realities and their librarians act like a kind of spy. There are worlds similar to ours and a lot of ones that are filled with magic and supernatural creatures. Librarians also use a specific kind of magic called 'The Language'. After coming back from her latest mission Irene gets the task to accompany new young librarian Kai to his first fieldwork mission. They are ordered to collect an edition of Grimm's Fairytales from an alternate London, filled with Steampunk elements and mystical creatures like vampires and werewolves. When they arrive the book they are looking for has already been stolen and thus a hunt for it begins and soon the twosome discovers that more than one party is after the book. Things soon get dangerous when an old enemy of the library gets involved.

I'll be honest with you, I went into this wanting to love it. Books about the love for books are a great thing, a celebration even for every passionate reader and throw in some *Doctor Who*-esque elements and a great adventure is guaranteed.

Or rather should be guaranteed.

I'm still trying to wrap my head around what went wrong. First of all let me tell you, this book is probably as *in medias res* as it can get. The reader is literally thrown into the story without any explanation. While this can work very well, as proven countless times by other works of fiction, here the start is already clumsy, jarring and confusing. I was raising my eyebrow a bit, but initial confusion aside I was at least intrigued to find out more about the world and the characters living in it. Confusion also can work in a story's advantage and in the beginning I was convinced this was the case here. Sadly, it wasn't.

Before however I start to pin down what went wrong in my opinion, let's start with the positive aspects first.

The idea of this book is fantastic. The Library is probably every bibliophile's dream place and being an adventurous, alternate world-travelling spy librarian probably a job all of us would like to apply for or at least have an internship. While alternate realities are nothing new to fiction, the idea that they all have several editions of famous and valuable books that need to be protected is. Oh, how I wished this world would have sucked me in. I wanted to get lost into it so bad and go on book-related adventures with Irene. Okay, already starting with the negative I see, let's dive into it.

I think we can all agree that a book rises and falls with the writing. For a book that celebrates the wonderfulness of literature and language the writing was very stern and, excuse my harsh wording here, kind of ugly. There are writers who manage to make every word come alive with sheer beauty, that write with a certain flow and let the reader dive into the prose allowing them to get lost in it and absorb every little detail. Then there are those who want to do that and unfortunately manage the exact opposite. Despite a lot of descriptions it was hard to imagine the world(s) in this book. It was hard to imagine the characters. It was hard to feel anything or connect to anyone. The action fell flat, the pacing was way off and even the dialogue ranged from cheesy and clichéd to very strict and overcorrect. Speaking of dialogue, speech patterns were practically none existent. Irene has a certain overly correct way of articulation and while I thought it was a quirk belonging to her, emphasizing her love for grammar and language, I quickly noticed that most characters in the book talked in a similar manner. There was no clear distinction, apart from very rare moments. I also got the impression that this book is intended for more mature readers (direct references to sex and alcohol, in a very clumsy way) but the writing itself seemed more aimed at young adults.

The second problem comes from the world building. Now I personally firmly believe that creativity knows no boundaries and that it does not need guidelines. Writing however does. If you as a writer create fantastical worlds, do whatever you like with them, but explain how these world work to your readers. Especially if that world considers several kinds of magic. A reader needs to know how a world works and how magic in a world works to understand the limitations of what characters are capable off and to know how high the stakes are. Same goes for magical creatures living in a world. You have vampires, werewolves and dragons? Awesome, but what kind of? Nowadays vampires differ from the image Bram Stoker gave us with *Dracula* and not all werewolves are constantly shirtless and play lacrosse like *Teen Wolf* shows us, so what kind of creatures do live in this world? While there are brief explanations they are a little bit all over the place and are dropped in the middle of action scenes or in rather long, dialogue heavy expositions. In my opinion books like this need at least one character that functions as an avatar for the reader. That is why say *Harry Potter* works so well. The reader discovers the wizarding world through him and with him. There is a sense of childlike wonder and adventure attached to it rather than just loads of exposition between action scenes. Irene is already well-established in the world of the library and knows her way around alternate realities as well, so she is definitely ruled out as an avatar from the beginning. An interesting choice for the protagonist, I might add. When the reader is introduced to Kai it seems like he will become the character for readers to relate to, until it is pretty clear that he has a secret and knows a lot more than he is letting on. Finally we get

the character of Vale, a kind of Sherlock Holmes variation of alternate London who fills in the shoes of reader surrogate in a semi way. Through him the reader will get some needed answers and explanations but not until almost the last third of the book and then, instead of an exciting way, in almost two chapters only containing expositional dialogue and Irene answering questions. Way to go. In the end the world is not really approachable despite interesting rudiments and magic just seems to work the way it is convenient to the plot.

The plot is half fantasy/steampunk adventure and half a classic detective story. It promises fun and action, but never really takes off. There is a confusion up and down between clumsy action scenes and rather uninspiring detective work. Now, I do believe that a good detective story is one that allows readers to connect dots and guess plot twist, but it shouldn't present everything on a silver platter. Everything is far too obvious to make the mystery intriguing. Even the identity of villain (hilariously named) Alberich does not come as a shock or even a little surprise. Like the rest of the story the twists feel almost static

The book also suffers from a feeling of being overstuffed. There is just too much, with too little explanation. I got the feeling that the author wanted to create all these great characters and forms of magic, wanted to have all these different worlds and use every supernatural creature she had ever seen on a CW show and while I do see a certain enthusiasm there, she forgot to develop anything beyond the rough framework. Someone, probably an editor, should have said 'stop'. This, being the first book in a series, should have focused on a slow world building and not on throwing everything there is at the reader without giving him time to breathe or give him a chance to understand how it all goes together.

But all of this is nothing compared to the characters. I have said this in plenty reviews now and I will always repeat it: If you give me engaging and three dimensional characters, I'll probably ignore a lot of stuff that would normally bother me.

Irene caught me on the wrong foot from the beginning. *"But hey it happens, we had a tough start but things can get better if I get to know her better."* Oh what a sweet summer child I was. There was something oddly cold and distant about her from the first chapter that, instead of getting better, actually got worse. I was indifferent towards her in the beginning and started to dislike her probably half way through the book, only to return to my initial indifference in the end. Tell you what, a strong dislike would have been more favorable, at least it would mean I care at all, but indifference is an alarming sign. Irene is somewhat unattainable and irritating to me. We get to know parts of her backstory but never in a way that it makes her remotely interesting, because it is never quite enough. That also results in the fact that her decisions and choices are sometimes odd and don't make much sense. Her personality falls flat due to the lack of detail about her life. I guess Cogman tried to make her more mysterious by actively keeping her past from the reader and only dropping hints now and then, but since there wasn't much to go for otherwise it backfired a lot.

The other characters are not doing much better. Kai is the most interesting in my opinion due to his backstory and heritage but sadly gets sidelined a lot in favor of Irene doing whatever Irene does and sending him off to do whatever she wants him to do. This also brings out another problem in the writing. We have a limited third person, meaning that while the narrator is in fact telling the story from a third person perspective it is still somewhat limited to Irene's point of view, which is really unfortunate here.

Vale is an attempt to create a Sherlock Holmes type of character, but in less mesmerizing and far more average. He is just not as compelling as his famous prototype. Though again, he is more interesting than Irene herself, also due to his hinted and never fully explained backstory (btw I know this is only the first book and not everything gets an explanation just yet, but repeating the same pattern with every single character gets old pretty fast).

The rest of characters stay very one dimensional, which says a lot since the three most developed ones aren't that compelling either.

Irene's rival Bradamant has potential to be interesting, but also suffers from a lack of motivation, backstory and personality. Her feud with Irene is briefly explained in the end and rather laughable and makes both women look very childish and adds to the overall irritation (did we ever learn how old any of these characters are? I literally just finished this book and can't remember it). The supposedly mysterious and sinister Fae ambassador Lord Silver gets a nice introduction, but later on turns a little bit into a parody of himself when he orders his minions around like a mustache twirling villain and never actually does anything impressive. Finally main villain Alberich (seriously that name) is more of an invisible entity during most part of the book and only shows up half way through with somewhat of a threatening entrance. Again, that later falls flat. The 'big twist' is not really a surprise and Alberich quickly turns into 'Monologuing Bad Guy XY' that is quickly outwitted and possibly would have had more success if he had simply stopped talking and just killed the heroes. But whatever. "Join me on the dark side, we can monologue." Don't you hate it when villains do that? Alberich basically fulfills every villain trope there is.

In the end of the day an idea can be fantastic and intriguing, but if not executed well it doesn't become a good book.

I can see why people enjoy this book. I can even see the potential for future installments to actually become better, however I don't have any desire to continue with the series. If there is not one character to truly care about, why should I follow their stories?

Conclusion: A fine idea with the potential to grow, but suffering due to a very clumsy execution.

Recommendation: If you like books about books and fantasy/science fiction adventures with steampunk elements you might as well check it out. Just because I couldn't connect to the characters doesn't mean others can't.

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

3.5 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <https://bibliosanctum.com/2016/06/09/...>

Speaking as someone who loves to read, I just can't help but get these warm fuzzy feelings for books about libraries. After all, what could be better for an avid bookworm, than being immersed in a story about a place filled with books, books, and more books?

Well, Genevieve Cogman's The Invisible Library does one even better.

Oh, this book has libraries, all right—interdimensional libraries, established across multiple worlds, all interconnected and run by a secret society of librarian spies! Collectively, this network is known as the Invisible Library, and their members are tasked with the utmost important mission: to procure and archive important works of fiction from all of the different realities, for the purposes of preservation and research.

Our protagonist is Irene, a junior librarian agent. When the book opens, Irene is just returning home to the Library, having completed her latest assignment in the field and looking forward to some time off. However, no sooner had she reported in than she is given a new mission. This time, her superiors are sending her off to

an alternate London where magic and steampunkish technologies dominate. Furthermore, Irene is given a new assistant, a mysterious young man named Kai. Together, they are to retrieve a rare book of fairy tales and bring it back to the Library before it can fall into the wrong hands.

Yet by the time Irene and Kai arrive at their destination, they find that the book has already been stolen. Tangled in a mystery involving vampires and fae, killer automatons and dashing detectives, it soon becomes clear they are on no ordinary mission.

As soon as I heard the premise, I just knew I had to check it out! This novel ended up being an incredibly fun book which uses the idea of parallel worlds to great effect, allowing the reader to ponder its infinite possibilities. This particular story takes us to an alternate London with magic and paranormal creatures, but then who knows what might come next? The potential here is simply staggering. And of course, the Library itself is also fascinating concept, with librarians who can work magic by using a secret Language. Their order's primary purpose raises some important questions—questions that I was glad to see are ultimately addressed by the main character. For instance, what responsibilities, if any, does the Library have? What good is keeping a vast store of knowledge after all, if you don't ever apply the information you learn? Is it even ethical what Irene and her peers are doing, plundering alternate realities for important books with no thought to what will happen to the worlds and their people? The argument is that a love for books should be good enough, but is it really?

That Irene is willing to consider these questions shows that she is different from a lot of her fellow librarians. Despite being born to life in the Library, she's also not one to follow its rules blindly, making her a flexible agent who can think quickly on her feet. Still, her loyalty is beyond reproach. Even when faced with a competitor trying to steal credit for her work, Irene will never let pride or anything else get in the way of her mission, thinking instead of the greater goal. When the stakes are this high, it's nice to have such a smart, efficient and good protagonist at the helm.

Still, in spite of the interesting ideas and thoughtful themes, the plot of *The Invisible Library* is relatively simple. It's also a light read that has the distinct feel of being the first book a series, with room to grow in terms of character development and world-building. I for one would love to see more of the Library itself, and to learn more about its inner workings. Several of the secondary characters could use some fleshing out as well, including Vale, who is currently shaping up to be a romantic interest for Irene. For all that she is attracted to his Sherlock Holmes-like persona, I personally wouldn't mind seeing Vale's character grow a bit further past the "great detective" archetype. Similarly, the villain feels too lightly sketched at the moment, and needs to become more than just a bogeyman-type character for me to feel like he is a true threat, though by the end of the book I think we're taking a step in the right direction.

While there's no denying *The Invisible Library* is a book more about action than substance, I can hardly complain about that! The story is loads of fun, the characters are great, and the concept holds lots of promise. Any weaknesses I felt were very minor, and I have a feeling subsequent novels in this series will have everything covered. I had an amazing time with this book, which I would heartily recommend to all bibliophiles and lovers of "books about books". Looking forward to the sequel!

Beverly says

A little gem of a fantasy novel, *The Invisible Library* is smart and elegant and bewitching. It has lots of

action, great characters and world building. Irene, the Librarian, with a capital L is tasked to seek out and deliver an important version of Grimm's Fairy Tales to the Library. The Library is the repository of all the best books in all the worlds, and there are many worlds.

The Librarians are a cross between secret agents and holy orders. They are trained not to ask too many questions and to see their task as divine. Irene is fairly new, but with a grit and determination unparalleled, she knows how to get the job done. Unexpectedly, this trip she has to take along a newbie, who is unsettling for many reasons. Oh! I wish I could be a Librarian too. Sigh. . .

Paige Bookdragon says

Reread as of 01/03/2016: Still as good as ever. Now, I'm ready for the book 2.

Dear Invisible Library,

Are you guys hiring?

I saw your book and I was highly interested in the position of a junior librarian. If I was correct, and assuming that I am because I'm rarely wrong when it comes to my obsessions, your job descriptions are as of follows:

1. To be able to retrieve (or steal, whatever) a certain book assigned to a particular mission.
2. To assist The Library at all times.

If so, what are the qualifications? Should one be as awesome as **Irene**? An immortal librarian whose loyalty to the Library is note worthy? Or should one be as cool (or hot) as **Kai**? I should tell you though, I'm not as awesome as Kai, who is a **dragon shifter**.

But I'm awesome if we're talking about how fast can I read a book, or how fast can I change from a timid lady to a raging bitch and how fast can I burn your library if you're not going to hire me as a librarian.

Sorry, I digress.

Attached in this email is my resume for your perusal. If at the end you're still not going to hire my amazing self, I totally understand.

But please bear in my mind that me, my matches and my gasoline are ever ready.

No hard feelings.

Your local psycho,
Paige..

Aristea says

[has an impressive ability to mix so many fantasy themes and make it work. It could have gone horribly wrong yet it was the right combination of a lot of different elements, Fae, dragons, magic, Grimm brothers! The book also (hide spoiler)]

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

THE INVISIBLE LIBRARY is a book that I've been curious to read for a while now and I was quite happy when I got the chance to read it. I mean how can you not, if you are a bookworm, find the description of the book tantalizing? A Library that collects fiction from different realities. The book is intriguing right from the start as we get to know Irene who is on a mission to retrieve or rather steal a book. Finding rare books is what Irene and others that work for the Library do, they blend in and steal books and especially rare books that only exist in one reality or differ in another reality.

READ THE REST OF THE REVIEW OVER AT FRESH FICTION!

Liz Barnsley says

This was absolutely the best fun I've had with a book in ages. Brilliant characters, magical world building and a whole load of adventure.

Irene is sent into one alternate London to retrieve a dangerous book – shadowed by new assistant Kai, this mission is anything but straightforward and what follows is a rip roaring race to find the book, involving Vampires, Werewolves, Fai and, well, alligators....

I absolutely adore the world the author has created here – it is a brilliant mix of mundane and magic, the mysterious “library” having a life all of its own, spreading out throughout the many different worlds that exist. The librarians are an eclectic bunch, although we only meet a small section of that society, I definitely want to find out more in (hopefully) future adventures. The London that Irene ends up in is very different to our own, and the people she encounters there are a heady mix of hero and villain – even those closest to her are not always what they seem and it is highly engaging throughout, with some laugh out loud moments, some edge of the seat thrills, with some real emotional resonance mixed up right in there.

The mythology is intelligently created, it really is beautifully written, a real page turner where anything can happen and often does – right at the heart of it though is Irene and her love of books, which of course for any reader is a magical thing. It makes her highly relatable and you will be with her all the way as she tries to work out who is friend and foe, fights the good fight and maybe discovers more about herself along the way.

Absolutely and utterly sparkling. Highly HIGHLY recommended.

Carolyn says

This was such a fun start to a new series that I know I am going to love (four books so far with the promise of a fifth soon!).

Irene is an undercover librarian in a secret library that exists between alternate worlds. The role of the library is to collect important books from the worlds to compare and protect them. Irene is sent into a dangerous world where chaos is unregulated, steampunk rules and the Fae are attempting to take control. The owner of the book she is to find (a vampire) has just been killed and several unscrupulous and downright dangerous people are now hunting for the book. She's been given an apprentice, Kai, to take with her who fortunately turns out to be more of an asset than a hinderence. (My only gripe - I did hope it would be explained at the end why a junior Librarian and a trainee were sent on such a dangerous mission as I thought there would be a plausible reason, but there wasn't).

I loved the characters in this novel, Irene, Kai, the detective Vale, Irene's Librarian competitor Bradamant and the arch villain Alberich and look forward to meeting them again in the sequel where Irene is to be sent back to the same world to take on the role of Local Librarian. There is also the promise of dragons - how could I resist?

Carol. says

Titles with 'library' and 'bookstore' are irresistible to readers. Add in a cover that looks like faded and cracked leather with gilt lettering and it is like leaving a plate of freshly baked cookies in a work breakroom. Sure, you may have started a January diet, but really, just one won't ruin anything, right? I'm often adverse to YA, but a friend's enthusiastic review (thanks, Mikhail!) had me reconsidering. Plus, there's that cover. I gave it a shot and am pleased with how it went. Like a Pixar comic, there may be quite a bit that is young/new adult, but it is done well enough to be enjoyed by all ages, even precocious younger ones (unlike my recent read of *Wake of Vultures*).

Irene is a resident of the Library, capital intended, a sort of reverse-Plutonian ideal library in which all books reside. Only they don't yet, and so junior librarians like Irene are assigned to retrieve unique books from worlds connected to the Library. Books apparently exist across multiple worlds, so I haven't quite worked out the logistics on that one, but why let petty multiple-world details bother me? After an adventurous opening chapter in which Irene completes a retrieval, she heads back to the Library hoping for time to work on her own projects. Alas; her supervisor has other ideas and sends her with a new apprentice, Kai, Irene to a world that has both technical and magical phenomena to retrieve a particular edition of Grimm's Fairy Tales. Worlds with high levels of 'magic' are subject to be thrown out of balance by the forces of Chaos, unless the draconic race intervenes to help restore order to the magical forces. Before long, Irene and Kai find the situation is (of course) more than they expected and will require some compromise.

Because of the unique confluence of tech and magic, the world Irene and Kai enter feels like a fairly standard Victorian steam-punk setting. Thankfully, Cogman concentrates more on the fun/innovative parts of the world, like robotic centipedes, zeppelins and werewolves, rather than spending endless time describing corsets, top hats, and how gas lamps work.

I often steer clear of the steampunk genre because it seems like authors enjoy the late-Victorian setting as

much as the story, and I'll be honest--I haven't cared for parasols since I was ten, and the sexism inherent in the era inevitably causes me cognitive dissonance. But the parallel-worlds theory allows Cogman to bypass such unpleasantness:

"Irene agreed. 'What's the gender situation here?'

'Women are generally accepted in most trades, except as serving soldiers in the army. They often end up in engineering divisions there. Nothing unusual about a female reporter, though they often end up with the high-society and scandal pages.'

On a related note, there's some nice humor mixed in:

"'I'll be counter-fashionable. Let's just be grateful that corsets aren't required wear any longer.'

'Why should I be grateful?' Kai asked, raising an eyebrow.

'Because you don't have to deal with me while I'm wearing one,' Irene said flatly.'

I thought characterization was decent. Irene is conscientious of her role as Kai's preceptor, tending to think about what she is role-modeling and his possible perspective as student. She has the final say in their mission, and if she occasionally makes too many mental notes to 'apologize to Kai later,' at least we have a nice reversal of the 'older man, younger female wizard/gifted/etc' shtick that I've seen so many times. There are a few times when Irene seemed almost unacceptably naive, missing at least one very obvious situation, but overall I feel okay with how the characterization works. It isn't inconsistent with someone who would have had the in/out world experiences she has had. I like her mostly confident, common-sense attitude.

I enjoyed the way the situation became more complicated with a couple of surprises (rather than the typical 'stay undercover' premise), as well as allowing for a variety of characters to have both antagonistic and helpful actions. I appreciate that kind of complexity. There are a couple of spots where I had to pause and re-read, because something just seemed awkward in phrasing or action, but that seemed in line with a first book. There's also a bit of Kitchen-Sink-Syndrome going on here, which some may find distracting. It means there's a lot of interesting stuff that isn't really explained or necessarily even needed.

Overall, it was a cute story with significant--but again, obvious--potential for a long-term conflict arc. I'll move on to the next, especially as it promises to take place in a difference world than this one.

Three stars books on the technical level, four on the story-telling level.

Cait • A Page with a View says

Think Doctor Who meets The Infernal Devices + that tv show "The Librarians." There are faeries, dragons, detectives, wizards, creepy skin wearers, and werewolves all thrown together in a sort of steampunk alternate world with zeppelins.

So basically the Library exists outside of time & space to house unique fiction books from alternate dimensions, which in turn reinforce the library's links to those worlds. Scientific discoveries are the same in every world while creative works of fiction can change, so the Librarians are these centuries-old badass spies who retrieve rare books. The story starts with the main character and her new sidekick going after a Grimm

book owned by a bibliophilic vampire who was murdered by a catsuit-wearing burglar... aaaand a whole bunch of adventures ensue.

The premise of this story was super awesome, but it fell short in execution. It felt kind of chaotic and I had a hard time connecting to any characters. I think my main problem was there was just *so much* information coming at the reader that it was hard to actually get into any story.

One point of confusion:

There was a lot of stuff about chaos, the stages of chaos infestations that affect reality, and how chaos uses creatures that obey illogical laws logically... and I was never entirely clear on what exactly chaos was. I got that the Librarians have their own language and if they enforce their connection with the Library strongly enough then there's no room for the chaos forces within them and they can then heal or do stuff with their powers. So at first chaos seemed like magic but then it didn't. But then there's a bit about chaos magic being bound into a coherent whole? Maybe I was just tired when I read it.

Ok wait update on that front. I found this passage in response to a character asking if chaos is magic:

"There are lawful and chaotic forces active in all worlds. Sometimes they take on a physical form, appearing as entities - or personifications of law and disorder if you like. The lawful forces support reason and natural laws. The chaotic forces support impossibility and things that are blatantly irrational or disorderly. For example, dragons are lawful forces and the Fae support chaos."

So basically there's a bit of Dungeons & Dragons thrown in there too. In the end the book was fine, but it was definitely hard to get into the story.

Thank you to the publisher for sending me a review copy!

Jessica ☺ ↪ Silverbow ↪ ☺ Rabid Reads-no-more says

9/30/17 - ON SALE for \$2.99:

<http://amzn.to/2xJDGRK>

So I'm only 12% into this thing, but as far as I can tell, it's about librarians. SPY librarians. Spy librarian THIEVES. Spy librarian THIEVES who can travel to PARALLEL DIMENSIONS for the express purpose of stealing books unique to that world.

And depending on how much chaos exists in an individual world, DRAGONS might show up to breathe firey order into said chaos. (<-----I don't actually know yet *how* the dragons correct the balance, just that they do, but WHO CARES?? B/c DRAGONS).

Chaos-filled worlds are also prone to having a variety of other supernatural creatures (like FAE), as well as BIOMUTATIONS and technology that doesn't work the way one would expect.

Richard Derus says

Rating: 4* of five

I want to be a Librarian.

The atmosphere of the place soothed her automatically; the rich lantern lights, the sheer scent of paper and leather, and the fact that everywhere she looked, there were books, books, beautiful books.

She was a Librarian, and the deepest, most fundamental part of her life involved a love of books. Right now, she wanted nothing more than to shut the rest of the world out and have nothing to worry about except the next page of whatever she was reading...

And then they were inside, and out of the wind, and surrounded by comforting walls and walls of books. The rich, delightful smell of old paper, leather and ink permeated the place, washing away the pettier odours of blood and oil and smog.

Need I say more?

A high level of chaos would mean that they could expect to meet the Fae, creatures of chaos and magic, who were able to take form and cause disorder on such a corrupted world. And that was never good news.

A Librarian's mission to seek out books for the Library developed, after a few years, into an urge to find out everything that was going on around one. It wasn't even a personal curiosity. It was a simple, impersonal, uncontrollable need to know. One came to terms with it.

And if she'd been able to choose her options a few hours ago, being trapped in a dead vampire's private study with an angry Fae would not have been one of them.

Irene sighed. "So we have an incredibly glamorous female cat burglar who slinks around in a black leather cat-suit, who kills vampires in her spare time?"

Now. Are you sold? If not, skip it and regret nothing. The rest of us who aren't dead-souled potato heads will be happily reading the five extant volumes for the sheer verve with which Author Cogman lobs twists at us.

Melindam says

I LOVE THIS BOOK! It earned its place on my favourites shelf.

Yes, I am sucker for books about books and/or libraries and this novel very much satisfied my every need in this department. Throw in a bit of steampunk & dragons & sprinkle with detective fiction and an alternate-world Sherlock Holmes type of character & you have me floating on air with happiness.

It struck the same chords as The Thursday Next series by Jasper Fforde and the magical Library of the Unseen University of the Discworld series by Terry Pratchett in a sense that I love both, but kudos to Genevieve Cogman to have created a library-story with its own right.

So there is this secret library, THE LIBRARY -existing between worlds, where space-time-matter rules seem suspended - that harvests books from all possible realities with the help of dedicated librarians(-turned-secret agents).

The protagonist, Irene, is one of them. She is sent with her new, mysterious apprentice Kai to an alternate, chaos-infested, Victorian London (with Zeppelins, Faes, werewolves & vampires) to obtain a copy of Grimms' Fairy Tales, only to find the book missing and others on its trail, and willing to commit murder to get what they want. They get unexpected help from Peregrine Vale (an aristocrat with a penchant and talent for investigating crime) & they meet Irene's former mentor and nemesis, Bradamant, who is also out there to get the book by all means possible. And we have not mentioned the arch enemy of The Library, ex-librarian Alberich, who has an agenda of his own.

The writing is crisp, tight-paced & dryly witty with no superfluous descriptions & Irene, the MC is refreshingly & delightfully "ordinary" (no signs of superspecialsnowflake-ness anywhere). Possibly that is why she is so relatable. She is a level-headed, dependable, composed book-lover who knows her serious library-stuff, but sucks at "sorcery" and has a weakness for detective fiction. And surprisingly there is not a single description in sight of her looks apart from the fact that she is 5.9 and prefers wearing her hair in a bun.

I also like the fact the her assistant, Kai, though a man, is totally OK with Irene being in the lead. He respects her & her authority, trusts and supports her almost from the very beginning.

The alternate London conjures images of the city in Guy Ritchie's Sherlock Holmes movie, which was a welcome sensation, again.

The world-building is very good & promises some more in the next instalments that I hope will not disappoint.

Eilonwy says

Irene is an agent for The Library, a timeless place balanced among many parallel universes. Their goal: to collect all the stories ever put into print, everywhere ... by whatever means it takes. When Irene and a handsome young newly-minted agent are assigned to seek a collection of Grimm's fairy tales from a steampunk Victorian London replete with vampires, werewolves, and Fae, it seems like a standard run -- until the Library's arch-enemy appears, seeking the same book, and chaos ensues, literally.

Oh, *Invisible Library*, where did we go wrong? You're exactly the kind of book I should love. An urban fantasy/steampunk/mystery/magic story, with ninja-wizard bad-ass librarians and plenty of literary winks and nods? We should have been a perfect match. And we had an enjoyable time, I can't deny that. You were

charming and clever. You had an adorably wry sense of humor. Your plot was tight, your pacing good. You managed to be both highly creative and comfortably familiar all at the same time. There was never any doubt that I'd make it to the last page with you.

And yet. Something was missing, that little frisson of chemistry that would have made for a lasting bond, and a rush to my library for your sequels. Was it that perhaps you seemed a little too familiar, some of your plot twists a little too predictable? Was it the way the Language too often served as a deus ex machina, so that too many predicaments seemed too easily resolved? Was it the long sentences full of filter words, so that you had far too much tell and not nearly enough experiencing things? (For instance, “Irene could feel her stomach clench inside her in cold fear, slowly and deliberately.” Unless something has gone horribly wrong, her stomach certainly *should* be inside her, and I assume she can feel it. So could you just say, “Irene’s stomach clenched” and get on with it?) You would make a great movie with all your action sequences, but I only ever felt as if I was watching you, not living the story along with you.

Maybe it’s just me. So many other people love you. At least I know you won’t suffer from my lukewarm affections.

And who knows. Perhaps sometime down the road I’ll get an urge to revisit your literary mashup of a world, and pick up a sequel after all. But until then, I’m content to give you a handshake, wish you a nice life, and walk myself home.
