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Midnight Riot: Peter Grant, Book 1



Synopsis

Probationary constable Peter Grant dreams of being a detective in London's Metropolitan Police. Too bad his superior plans to assign him to the Case Progression Unit, where the biggest threat he'll face is a paper cut. But Peter's prospects change in the aftermath of a puzzling murder, when he gains exclusive information from an eyewitness who happens to be a ghost. Peter's ability to speak with the lingering dead brings him to the attention of Detective Chief Inspector Thomas Nightingale, who investigates crimes involving magic and other manifestations of the uncanny. Now, as a wave of brutal and bizarre murders engulfs the city, Peter is plunged into a world where gods and goddesses mingle with mortals and a long-dead evil is making a comeback on a rising tide of magic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I loved this book. I enjoyed Peter's character, him being a novice to magic and the supernatural. Peter can see ghosts, but he is having to learn magic - his new knowledge and the skills he has developed as a policeman is what he uses to tackle the cases that involve the supernatural. He offers up self-deprecating comments and sharp observations of people and the world around him. Peter and his friends and many of the characters have a sense of humor or are witty and I enjoyed the interactions between all the characters. I also enjoyed the history explored, discovering London, both old and modern, and the exploration of the relationship between science and magic. I totally appreciated that so many of the characters, including Peter, came from varied and mixed cultural,

religious and ethnic backgrounds, which felt more real to me, more grounded in the world I see around me. There are a lot of interesting and different female characters who have significant roles to play in the story, which I liked. Class and the 'new age of media' are explored and woven into the story and yet it's not in your face/preachy/aggressive. This is a well-written book, written in a refreshing style, which had a great many wonderful things to offer in terms of characters, setting, tone and story. I look forward to the next book.

Urban Fantasy - Public employee Magic User If you like Charles Stross's "Laundry" series, you should like this book. I do and I did. This book has the elements of magic meets British bureaucracy, except that where Stross plumbs the line between eldritch horror and spycraft, Aaronovitch places his story in the line between supernatural story and police procedural. Police Constable Peter Grant is the neophyte introduced to the supernatural world by his apparently native gift for perceiving the supernatural and by a chance encounter with Detective Chief Inspector Thomas Nightingale. DCI Nightingale is the lone wolf head of a Metropolitan Police unit that specializes in the occult and supernatural. Nightingale's specialty is appreciated by some and despised and mistrusted by others. Nightingale decides to bring Grant on as an apprentice, and from there is a quick and hurried introduction to the supernatural world of London and the craft of magic. In Aaronovitch's world, there is magic and ghosts and vampires, sort of, and gods, sort of. The last element is represented by a confusing and complex set of semi-deities that represent the "rivers of London," including the lost rivers of Tyburn and Fleet and barely known rivers, all of whom are personified by individuals with interests and powers. There is a conflict between "Mother Thames" - representing the estuary portion of the Thames - and Father Thames - representing the upriver, rural river - over turf. This is important because a daughter of Mother Thames - Beverly Brook - seems slated to be a recurrent character/love interest of Grant. I liked the London setting. I got a work out searching for background on the various places mentioned by Aaronovitch. The Macguffin of the story involves unexplained, senseless murders, that we learn are tied into the "Punch and Judy" story. Aaronovitch does a good job of setting up the mystery, following the clues and resolving the story. The story moved along at a good clip. Aaronovitch has a light, engaging style which is often delightful. For example: "Ever since mankind stopped wandering around aimlessly and started cultivating its own food, society has been growing more complex. As soon as we stopped sleeping with our cousins and built walls, temples and a few decent nightclubs, society became too complex for any one person to grasp all at once, and thus bureaucracy was born." And: "The original house had been replaced by an indoor flower market with an arched iron-and-glass roof. Eliza Doolittle, as played by

Audrey Hepburn in *My Fair Lady*, would have bought her violets there before moving off to display the worst cockney accent this side of Dick Van Dyke. When they rebuilt the Royal Opera House in the 1990s, it swallowed up most of the surrounding block, including the flower market."Nice observations. Grant is apparently half West African and half white. His father was a jazz musician and a heroin addict. These are details that play into the story to add dimension to Grant's character. Other than that he seems to be a fairly typical introverted nerd that people who read this kind of book, who are, I believe, typically introverts and nerds themselves, can identify with. Aaronovitch also introduces Grant's fellow-PC and unrequited love interest, Leslie May, who was badly used by the Punch ghost in this book, and whose future was left open by the end of the book. In addition, we meet Grant's mentor, boss, master, the wizard Thomas Nightingale, who will undoubtedly play a role in future volumes, and the maid of Nightingale's house, "the Folly," named Molly, who may be a vampire. This is a fun book. The series should make a nice alternative to the Laundry.

I very much enjoyed this book at first, largely due to the author's or narrator's gift for an unexpected and delightful turn of phrase. I buttonholed various family members, urging them to listen to this line or that. The worldbuilding and plot didn't fit my tastes quite as much, though both are well constructed. (I did get a bit lost on occasion as the book and characters wound their way through and around London.) I did, however, enjoy the juxtaposition of a very everyday police department with the occasional intrusion of dangerous magic, and the nonmagician officials' way of paying just as much attention to the magic as absolutely necessary. One reader in my book group described this and subsequent books as horror, which would not have occurred to me -- but there is a dark tinge to the magical fantasy. Be prepared for some gore.

I loved this first entry into the Peter Grant/Rivers of London series. The book combines the best bits of police procedural, urban fantasy, and a touch of Harry Potter (well, at least of an adult learning about magic). I enjoy the way that Aaronovitch has integrated magic into the streets of London, that the magic has aspects of nature divinity (a la Shinto and the like), but that it is unseen to most people and much of the magic done by humans is largely subtle and practical (and takes practices). Our protagonist, Peter Grant, is engaging and funny, and the surrounding characters are interesting and leave the reader curious about their backstories (which I hope is included in one of the other five books already published in the series). A nice mix of action, discovery, detection, and humor. Recommended.

Funny, fantastical, solid mystery. Two police officers are finishing training and their final case before being assigned actual posts is a weird one. Weird how you say, Peter Grant meets a ghost who gives him an excellent witness statement. At first he is thinking hes gone round the bend, but it saves him from a life of paperwork and instead gets him an apprenticeship with the branch of police dealing with magical things. His friend Lesley gets a gig in Murder Squad. Oh and soon he discovers Mother and Father Thames are both real, with children named for the smaller river offshoots both current and lost of the THames. They come in handy in his investigations. Bummer ending, but seems to conclude on an up note. Excited to read next entry.

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