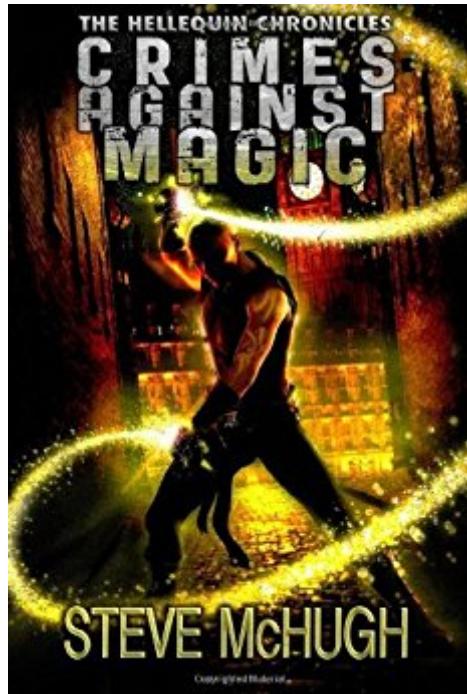


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Crimes Against Magic (The Hellequin Chronicles Book 1)



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

'Crimes Against Magic' is the first debut novel I have had the pleasure of being asked to review. It's author Steve McHugh has obviously spent a massive amount of time building the world of the story.

The plot without spoilers, is about a magic user named Nathaniel Garret. An amnesiac thief for hire, whose past comes to catch up with him after a job goes bad. This is nothing new, most stories you will read are just that, nothing new. With this being said the way, an author handles tropes and used subject matter, is the difference setting apart books and stories being told in this changing world of publication. Steve McHugh in this debut novel sets himself apart in the urban fantasy genre. The main character to me is like James Bond with magic being directed by John Woo. He takes some very well known creatures of the fantasy genre and makes them savage, brutal, beings putting an edge back onto the fantastical. This makes 'Crimes Against Magic' a hugely exciting journey. This is not a flawless masterpiece but as I said before this is his debut novel. There are some newbie author habits/mistakes in the novel. One of these I picked out was character diversity, as he uses a lot of blond female characters. Another is Nathan himself. He is untouchable, taking out werewolves and other supernatural beings with relative ease. Very Bondish indeed. I must say the MC does take one savage beating at the hands of a well crafted villain. All in all this is a well written and put together story with well done flashbacks to give you a movie like quality. I typically HATE flashbacks, but McHugh gives you exposition and character development amidst supernatural action. The action is well crafted and choreographed sequences.

This book is a really good example of why self-publishing shouldn't be an author's first choice (as opposed to actually submitting it to a publisher). There's a genuinely interesting story here. But it's undercut by small-but-persistent grammatical errors and the author's inability to resist turning his "hero" into a Gary Stu. An editor's discipline could have turned this into a good book instead of a "meh" book.
What I liked: The mythos was intriguing, and the author has a nice flair for storytelling. So I didn't feel that my time was utterly wasted. But I'm also glad I borrowed this from the lending library instead of buying it (which I was tempted to do on the basis of the reviews).
What I didn't like: The grammatical errors (such as changing between past and present tense in the same sentence) and occasional spelling and punctuation errors were jarring. Then there were the "wtf?" errors--little assertions (like having to avoid major cities during a walk that lasted just a few *hours*) that simply made no sense. Again, these are things that any good editor would have fixed. But the most annoying aspect of this book was the tendency of almost every character to be either an implacable enemy or Nate's loyal friend (to the extent of being willing to die for him, within days of meeting him!!!). Women he's never met before can't wait to get into his pants (with the accompanying porn-like descriptions). And of course he's the most amazing fighter ever--he even comes equipped with "cool" Chinese weapons. Some reviewers have compared this to the Harry

Dresden books, but while this book has a similar kind of wild magical combat, it lacks Dresden's moral conscience and his essential underdog nature.

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