



## Speculative Faction Book Review

Book Title	<b>Dyer Street Punk Witches</b>
Author	<b>Phil Williams</b>
Date	<b>August 2022</b>
Stars	

Regular readers of my reviews will know I am a fan of Phil William's urban fantasy novels. They bring engaging and credible characters into a world of magic and monsters with thrills a-plenty. There is no greater writer of urban fantasy in my opinion. My justification is simple. Fantasy in a modern setting must be located in the possible, in the very real likelihood of such things existing. World building must have its roots in what we already know and extend into what might be possible. Just read the author's acknowledgements to find out how he achieves this element of credible realism.

Phil Williams has nailed it yet again in this new departure in his Ordshaw series. It introduces us to new characters, new threats. In my opinion, darker ones too. This book explores the dark, criminal underbelly of the city of Ordshaw. The violence, whilst never defined in graphic terms, is ever-present. The gangs are brutal. Consequently, the stakes are raised for our heroes in this story. What's equally important, the ethical considerations appear in shades of grey, regardless of how many there might be.

This is a story of magic which is at the opposite end of the scale to what you'd find in a Harry Potter story. The "Deep Dark" is as it sounds, malign and shadowy. Only to be touched if you're ignorant, stupid or desperate. Three factors that draw in the witches in the events which lead up to the events in the book. We're drip-fed these events in references at the opening of each chapter. It serves to alert us to the bad news waiting around the corner.

Kit Hawley, the leader of the punk band and editor of the local newspaper, is just such a character. Conflicted, impetuous and with guilty secrets, she is likeable only because she's trying to do what's right. Those caught up in her slipstream often suffer as a result. Notably, Aaron. A character who I cheered on from the moment he had his first panic attack. Frightened, rabbit-like, his character arc grows into a fascinating mix of reluctant hero and rampant coward. **(Collect his trading card too!)** As with every Phil Williams novel, every single character is well-defined and credible, they fit into the context of the story perfectly.

The inherent darkness, in the characters and the type of magic, pervade every aspect of the story. It sits there, daring you to notice it. Yet you try to imagine it isn't so dark as to be dangerous. It is. The narrative arc proves it. You just keep telling yourself it won't get that bad. That's what I loved about the story. It's a cat and mouse tale. Where the cat is definitely black, vicious and with mega-sharp claws.

Highly recommended. It looks like the start to a new series. I can't wait to see where it goes.

**Remember to collect my Dyer Street Punk Witches trading card!**