



BOOK REVIEW

Book Title	Under Ordshaw
Author	Phil Williams
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Stars	

Under Ordshaw is a fun, thrill-a-minute urban fantasy full of unique characters, exciting action and wonderfully comic moments that made me laugh out loud.

The premise is a simple one; the supernatural threat exists beneath the urban sprawl of a city, accessed via abandoned factories and rarely used underground stations. The combatants are many and varied – from the conflicted and mysterious Ministry for Environmental Energy, to the Fae (more of them shortly) and the individuals who get caught up in all the hostilities.

The ministry offers that touch of reality that leads you to imagine how the civil service would react to fantastical creatures found in their domain. There are the obvious attempts at being politically correct and diplomatic overtures towards creatures who don't qualify as human and so need to be handled 'sensitively'. Anyone who crosses these boundaries can expect disciplinary action and getting trapped in a desk job dealing with all the red tape.

But the fun doesn't stop there. For me, the best part of the story is the author's invention of an alternative form of fairy. They're still small and winged but there any traditional comparisons end. These Fae are violent menaces, mercenaries with guns and an eagerness to inflict as much pain and damage as possible. *"The next step's a bullet through your ovaries!"* Letty, the main source of this pocket-sized belligerence reminded me of Carol Kane's Ghost of Christmas Present in the film Scrooged, where she regularly smacks Bill Murray around while talking in a squeaky little voice. Letty is inspired characterisation.

I also loved the consistently high threat level that is maintained against the main protagonists. There are so many dangers, all of them irrational and unpredictable, and those are the ones *above* ground! Go below and the monsters are not only highly dangerous but incredibly original in their inception.

All in all, a light-hearted but thrilling story, packed with action that never takes its foot off the pedal but also manages to maintain a well-crafted balance between fantasy and reality, as all good urban fantasy should do.

This is the first book in the series. I've already bought the second!