



## Frivolous Pursuits

*D.C. Farmer*

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Darren Trott has a job, a feisty girlfriend (with plans) and a house with potential. Oh yes, he's living the dream. It just isn't the dream he applied for.

You see, Darren likes taking photos of plastic models in real world settings. He calls it art. His girlfriend Amanda calls it a frivolous pursuit. She wants him to give it all up and turn his garage studio into a nail bar. Trouble is, his 'art' won't let him. Every time Darren takes a picture, something very peculiar happens. Something amazing, and weird, and genuinely out of this world.

Psychopathic relatives, aboriginal demons, warrior queens, and a Brownie called George (with claws, a pork-pie hat and an attitude bigger than a banker's wage), all want a piece of Darren. But they'll have to form an orderly queue because there's the small matter of an impending apocalypse to sort out first...

DC Farmer cordially invites you to join him in exploring the next white-knuckle case report from the Hipposync archives, following on from the highly received, The 400Lb Gorilla.

## Frivolous Pursuits Details

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Author : D.C. Farmer

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## From Reader Review Frivolous Pursuits for online ebook

### Julie Baswell says

After Darren's mother died, his self-centered girlfriend moves in with him, and takes over. Not only does she make him miserable, but her overbearing father is Darren's boss, making his work hours unbearable too. His only bright spot is when he can be alone with his hobby of photographing action figures against off-handed backdrops. But after one of the action figures starts talking to him, Darren is suddenly drawn into an unbelievable world of his own creation.

I felt this plot has all the right ingredients; interesting backstory, loveable characters, villains, and a promise of more adventure to come. I felt sorry for Darren, even though he could have changed his home circumstances at any time. This type of photographing hobby sounds intriguing. I wouldn't mind having that talent. But to be able to make things come alive, I don't think I would like that. I look forward to reading more of Darren's expeditions.

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### Pamela Scott says

I was given a free copy of this book in exchange for a review from the author in exchange for a review via Books Go Social.

Frivolous Pursuits is a really enjoyable read. I thought the plot was very original. I had a lot of fun reading the book. I loved the idea of Darren's special power. This is executed really well. The characters were well-written. Amanda was a horrible person and her family were just as nasty. I loved the fact the author gave then the surname 'Cray', a bit tongue-in-cheek. The Cray's provided an interesting contrast to everything else taking place and some light entertainment. I'd highly recommended Frivolous Pursuits and intend to read more of this series.

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### Brandi says

I received a copy of this title through NetGalley for review.

I don't read much sci-fi/fantasy because I find that they're TOO fantastical for my taste in certain cases. This wasn't true for this title, which I ended up enjoying quite a bit. The beginning of the book did leave me with a sort of 'huh?' feeling, which quickly dissolved after giving the book a chance. I appreciated the wit, the adventure, and I detested the antagonist, which means Farmer completed his job.

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### Justine Wach says

Where do I start? The book deserves 4 star rating in my opinion. It is so good and reading it is such an enjoyable experience.

The beginning of the book is so good. The author tells us about the

first Darrens encounter or incidents with the magical thing when he was 9.

It was so good because I really like it when the author start a book by explaining the story first so us the reader dont get lost or confuse about the book. Moreover, if the book is something fictional and sci-fi. I admit, sometimes when the author explain to us later throughout the book and get straight into the story about magical world right at the first page, it could make things interesting but most of the time the author cant explain it in the best way so us the reader get lost right at the first chapter. So by explaining the first Darrens encounter and memory, worked out really well because I like it. It remind me of Sorcerers Apprentice a little bit which made me even eager to know what happened next. Is it as good as the movie or not?

The uprising part in the story is noticeable. I was so impatient to know what happened next! I always thought the uprising part in the story should be the strongest so it could cover up any flaws of the climax may have.

The climax is spectacular. I mean I do have some expectation but that doesnt mean the climax is not good. This is the only reason I couldnt give 5 stars rating to this book. Because I could expect what the climax would be.

The ending of the book, well, everything solved. There is no little missing piece or flaws and I love it. It is like an amazing solution for everything that happened and it is the best for everyone. Even those in Moldarrenovia. Let me tell you what, reading this book is a constant suspense and for that, I love it!

About the characters:

We have a lot of important character that made the whole story complete. There are Darren, Sanjay, Amanda, Malcolm and of course Vivette. Lets not forget Kylah and Matt too. But Kylah and Matt are minor characters that I dont think I should talk about them.

Darren is the main character of the story. Everything happened evolved around him is the whole book is about. I think I like Darren just enough. At the beginning of the book, we get the ignorant Darren. The doormat Darren. Throughout the book plots, his character evolved more and become better. I could feel how his character grow into something better and that is the most amazing thing because well, we all want our main cast to grow up and made a wise decision right? I like how he used to be ignorant at the beginning and finally become the Maker that everything respect at the end of the book. Such a development.

Sanjay is like the greatest friend someone could ever asked. He is the real encourager and supporter of Darren and lets not forget he is the main reason how Darren and Malcolm and Vivette met. I felt sorry for

his dad but still, he never be mad at Darren even though Darren said it was his fault and for that I love Sanjay.

Amanda. Where do I even start? I know she is like the biggest asshole here but I never expect such a juvenile character she could be. I am totally shocked and surprised with her. Well, that is a good thing ok because I usually could expect what a character someone would have. I dont expect her to be that evil, period. And I hate everyone in her family since the beginning of the book. The falling action for everything that she has done, is well, lets just say she deserves it just right.

Overall, reading this book is so much fun and I really like it. I would read the sequel in no second.

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## **Clayton says**

Come check out my Book Blog for more fun stuff and reviews!

### **A Copy of this Book was given to me in exchange for an honest review, by Netgalley**

So let me start, right here, by saying this. If you read nothing else about my review, if you want to go in with just my recommendation: Go read this book. If you have any interest in Urban Fantasy you need to read this.

Lets start of course, with the blurb:

"Darren Trott has a job, a feisty girlfriend (with plans) and a house with potential. Oh yes, he's living the dream. It just isn't the dream he applied for.

You see, Darren likes taking photos of plastic models in real world settings. He calls it art. His girlfriend Amanda calls it a frivolous pursuit. She wants him to give it all up and turn his garage studio into a nail bar. Trouble is, his 'art' won't let him. Every time Darren takes a picture, something very peculiar happens. Something amazing, and weird, and genuinely out of this world.

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So that blurb does not do this story justice. First, and foremost, this book is exceedingly well written. It has a dry British styled humor throughout for one. Every word has its place and nothing is wasted.

Further, the story is just plain engrossing. I could not stop reading, and after a certain point I had to finish. I just had to. I needed to see where things went.

Next, I wanted to talk about the characters. Our protagonist, nay our hero, is Darren. A man in his late 20's, he has a boring but easy job, an inheritance from his dead mother, a hot girlfriend, and very little motivation other than to take pictures of what basically amount to Dioramas. Kinda like this one here only less fantasy

oriented and more realistic. He finds it almost zen like to get the perfect image with a combination of figures and sets that he has hand crafted.

Of course, his girlfriend Amanda does not like this at all, this Frivolous Pursuit, and does her level best to have him trash his stuff so she can turn the garage into a nail salon.

But that's only part of the whole story. You see, when poor Darren was a child, at age 9...an event happened that caused him to basically have a breakdown. Doctors, psychiatrists, and constant bullying followed him along with a nickname.

This made him VERY human to me, and I could not help but feel empathy towards him. I was, growing up, very much like him, minus the strange supernatural event. I was the loner, the fat kid, the one bullied and made fun of. I retreated into books and video games, personally. He went into diorama making. Creating fictional stories and worlds in his head.

The rest of the cast consisted of Amanda the superficial celebrity obsessed girlfriend, Sanjay his stalwart and really only friend, and Amanda's family the Crays. I won't go into too much about any one of these other then the fact that Amanda is a prime example of the superficial celebrity obsessed culture we have, and Sanjay is a sheltered nerd who just wants to love what he loves, like Darren. Which is building a complete recreation of Mesopotamia just as an fyi.

What threw me off however are some of the tonal changes. Be aware that the story starts rather lighthearted and humorous...and then gets dark, and then depressing, and then violent, and then hopeful. My emotions, my feels, the roller-coaster they were on, just damn.

And the ending was perfect.

I give this a solid 4/5. If you have any interest in Urban Fantasy, you should check this book out in a heartbeat.

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## **Bex Montgomery says**

This book was quite the theme-park ride. I think if I had to sum it up in one word it would be quirky. I like quirky. Give me another word. Witty. I know quirky, witty, urban fantasy, doesn't really go together, but stick with me... I don't read much urban fantasy, and even less adult urban fantasy at that, so I'm never quite sure what I'm going to get when I do pick one up. It all hinges on how they sell the magical in the mundane world. Is it going to have that absolutely rolling my eyes unbelievable forced feel, or is it going to be more of a sense of wonder and awe, can't wait to immerse myself more in this universe pull?

Although it deals with some pretty fantastical concepts; Fae immigration, dream-hopping brownies, and travel to plastic-doll universes made real through photography for starters; This book spends quite a bit of it's time in the mundane world with mundane characters. More than half of the book, with the main character trying to convince himself for much of that time that the events in the other realms weren't even real. It's a story, not so much about the character IN the magical world, but in how he has to fix his life in the mundane world before he can be of much use as a savior in the magical one. And he has plenty of life lessons to learn. The book definitely gets points for character growth, but it loses just a few for being such a dunce in the first place and taking so long to get to some of these things that he should have already known.

I really liked quite a lot about this book. The characters were all so richly imaginative, vivid and strong, that

they colored the narrative rainbow. Darren, the protagonist was helpless, hopeless, bumbling, funny, fierce and lovable from page one. And I loved that for once this was not really a romance, but it was a bromance between Darren and his best friend since childhood Sanjay and the relationship they have was just so fantastic to see portrayed. The rest of the cast of characters are all larger than life and reveal themselves over the course of the story to be either variously lovable or loathsome. I'm quite willing to sign up to read his first book as the two main characters from Gorilla play rather charming cameos here in Frivolous. It's really quite an interesting and limitless playground the author has set himself to play in for this series.

This is Brit lit, so it also had that witty British banter that I love so much. Mostly in the dialogue between Darren and Sanjay where it was parried with pitch perfection, and sometimes more funnily in the failed attempts at humor by Darren aimed at his girlfriend Amanda, who chooses to ignore him every time, only causing him to try harder.

There were a few moments of real stop, pause and laugh out loud humor in this as well. The author has a great imagination and sense of humor. And overall, it's very creative, and very well written. The prose is tight, but also quite lovely and thought-provoking. It all feels like a very strange trip to be taking. And that's really the only fault I can find with it is that it is a very strange book indeed, at various times I felt like I was in some adult version of Harry Potter, Alice in Wonderland, Gulliver's Travels and something much much stranger, but then again, do I call that a fault or a wonderful surprise?

This review originally appeared at Aurelia {lit}{geek}{chic}

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## Janis Hill says

3 out of 5 stars.

I would like to thank Xpresso Book Tours for allowing me an ARC of this book via Netgalley for an open and honest review.

This book was a tough one to score and I'm really concerned people are going to see my review as more negative as it is intended. Yes, I can see the "dislike" ticks piling up on Amazon as I type!

So let me start with the positives this book greatly deserves. It is a wonderful, brilliant and fresh new look into Urban Fantasy. Really quite an original and well thought out idea and, quite honestly, some of the best Young Adult/ New Adult reading I've done of late.

Maybe being married to someone who goes on endlessly about his Chaos Dwarves, who parries my Monty Python quotes (and similar sarcastically funny comments) with some of his own and being a proud 'she-nerd' myself helped me enjoy this story so much. Who knows? All the same, it is a great yarn and one I highly recommend to lovers of YA/NA Urban Fantasy.

But now to the nitty gritty. Please take this as the constructive criticism it is intended to me. As in, I'm not meaning to be negative, but do hope what I say helps.

As much as I found the interaction between Darren and his friends enjoyable, the puns did start to get to me at times. Though I do wonder if that is more from my inner old fogey getting in the road of my inner YA/NA reader? As in, maybe I was just a little too old for it at times, but the story itself was still good.

I also found myself wondering if YA/NA readers who are actually YA/NA aged would get some of the jokes

and puns. As in, they seemed more from my generation and why I found them funny... but would the younger people reading it get it as much? I have to say here and now that I think my cultural dialect got in the road a bit too. Yes, I did have to google that word spelt out in the dishwasher... and then regretted it. Good insult though!

The biggest problem I had with this book, and why I scored it as low as I did, was actually down to the editing. Or, as I saw it, lack of it. Near the end of the book there was almost a spelling or grammatical error on every page and it got to me. Yes I know this was an ARC and they are often sent out before final edit and therefore not perfect. I get that and tried to excuse the book for this... but as they got so frequent it just got me frustrated as it was ruining a good tale. I know, this comment is a bit of the kettle calling the pot black as I am known for my typos and grammatical slip ups. I guess I just expect other authors to be better. ;-)

Also – and this isn't meant to be a spoiler – when they first left for the other planet, they were in the lock-up and Sanjay talked to Matt, looked at the damage to his landscape done in a burglary (that had never been mentioned before) and then Darren and co left for the planet via the bedroom door... When they had been in the lock-up!

With the events that followed and the flaws in the timeline that came from it... I really got disappointed in the story as this was a glaring proof reader/ editor mistake that really should have been fixed up. And I really, REALLY hope it has been before the book was published as it did spoil it for me and cause me to drop a star off the score.

Okay, enough of the constructive criticism – not negatives, critiques! This really was a great, original and addictive story that had me reading it every chance I got. From the cover to the blurb the story itself it stayed true to what it offered and was, mostly, well worth a read.

Would I recommend this book to other? I would, though I would voice my misgivings about the editing and ask them to tell me it was all sorted when they read it. Any fan of YA/NA Urban Fantasy would enjoy this book.

Would I buy this book for myself? Possibly. But I'm more likely to borrow it, and others by this author, from the library to read in the future. It was good, but didn't grab me enough to become a permanent member of my physical or virtual libraries.

In summary, it was an enjoyable read, entertaining and something fans of this genre will enjoy. I just really hope all the issues I've mentioned are fixed up in the final version. And, despite them, still a book I would recommend.

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### **Stacie Williams says**

Great book for fantasy lovers. It's got art and magic.

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### **Andy says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this Hippoventure. An excellent addition to the Archives, without plodding the standard sequel methodology. New characters and storyline allowed to develop before teasing back to the Gorilla.

I have previously won a goodreads giveaway of 400lb and put the sequel on my wishlist as soon as I knew about it.

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### **MLE says**

I received this book as an ARC through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I really enjoyed this book. Even though it was on the lighter side there was enough serious discussion, and consequences that kept it from being too silly or fluffy. The characters were interesting, and well developed, and I liked that their eccentricities were only a part of who they were. They were all real people, and not a joke. For me Darren's friendship with Sanjay was the highlight of the book, and I loved how much they supported each other. Darren's girlfriend Amanda was truly nasty, but not in a terribly over the top sort of way, and, judging by her family, she comes by it naturally.

The plot was well thought out, and engaging. I liked how things came together, and how everyone had a role to play. There were elements, both in plot and character, that were a bit larger than life, but it fit the mood of the story well. The writing was witty, and fun without feeling like it was trying too hard. I appreciated that the author was able to get across the message of the story without it feeling too heavy handed or preachy. Overall a fun, and engaging read.

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### **Dr susan says**

Frivolous Pursuits continues DC Farmer's entertaining Hipposync Archives with another main character who doesn't quite fit the heroic mold. But Darren is endearing and brave when it counts. Farmer's books are a fresh take on urban fantasy.

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### **Seregil of Rhiminee says**

Originally published at Risingshadow.

Frivolous Pursuits is the second novel in the delightfully quirky and humorous Hipposync Archives series. It wonderfully continues the series and adds freshness to it.

Because I enjoyed reading the author's previous Hipposync Archive novel, *The 400lb Gorilla*, I was eager to read *Frivolous Pursuits* and could hardly wait to hold it in my hands. I was positively surprised when I noticed that it was everything that I hoped it would be, because it was an entertaining and fresh novel with good ideas, and just like its predecessor, it was something a bit different.

In my opinion, *Frivolous Pursuits* is just as funny, entertaining and unpredictable as *The 400lb Gorilla*, because it contains plenty of happenings and the story is coated with deliciously quirky, satirical and sharp humour. I can honestly say that it's one of the best and funniest urban fantasy novels I've ever read. It's easy for me to praise it, because I enjoyed reading it and found myself chuckling and laughing out loud at certain points.

I think it's good to mention that although *Frivolous Pursuits* is a sequel to *The 400lb Gorilla*, it can be read

and enjoyed as a standalone novel. By the way, if you haven't read the first novel yet, trust me when I say that you'll definitely want to read it, because it's worth reading (if you like this novel, I urge you to read the previous novel as soon as possible).

I've often mentioned that I'm difficult to please when it comes to urban fantasy, because I've been more or less disappointed by the low quality and poor entertainment values of contemporary urban fantasy novels (most authors tend to recycle well-known elements in a boring and repetitive way). Too many authors choose the easy way out and write stories that have little or no originality at all. That's why finding good authors like DC Farmer is difficult.

DC Farmer has managed to impress me with his writing skills, originality, humour and imagination. He has more imagination, style and sense of humour than many other authors combined. I especially enjoy his sharp and stinging humour, because he delivers sarcastic humour in a genuinely amusing way (there's something charmingly British about his sense of humour that I find compelling). He also has a thrilling way of blending urban fantasy with quest fantasy elements.

After reading this novel, I can mention that DC Farmer is one of the best and most talented urban fantasy authors. He has found a place for himself among other authors and uses his own voice to tell stories. In my opinion, he deserves to be read by readers who love humorous urban fantasy and appreciate good entertainment.

Frivolous Pursuit is a satisfyingly told fantasy story about a young man called Darren Trott and his life. Darren is a normal young man who suddenly finds himself in the middle of strange happenings.

Because there's quite a lot going on in this novel, it's slightly difficult for me to summarise its contents with a few sentences. This novel contains so many happenings that what you find below is only a small glimpse into its exhilarating contents.

Here's a bit of information about the story:

In the prologue, Darren Trott is nine years old and experiences something strange in the bathroom. He sees how a tiny figure of a man comes alive and tells him to "warn the others". This frightens him... After the prologue, the focus shifts to a grown-up Darren who takes photos of miniature models in various positions and settings. He enjoys his hobby, but his girlfriend, Amanda, doesn't like it and thinks it's not a proper hobby for him. Amanda feels that Darren should spend his time doing something else and calls his hobby a frivolous pursuit. One day Darren receives a model by mail from Hipposync Archives. The name of model is Roxana and she seems to be able to speak. Roxana tells Darren of the great threat that is coming to her land and asks for his help. Soon Darren meets Kylah and Matt Danmor from the Department of Fimmigration and learns that Moldarrenovians are in great trouble...

This is the beginning of a well written urban fantasy story that contains plenty of humour and intriguing surprises.

It was nice to read again about Matt Danmor and Kylah, because I enjoyed reading about them in *The 400lb Gorilla*. When they make an appearance in this story, Darren is pulled into quite an adventure and a whole new side of the world and other dimensions is revealed to him.

It was interesting for me to read about what happened when Darren and his companions arrived in Moldarrenovia, because they found themselves in a strange land where things were different and where strange and dangerous beasts roamed the land because of the evil Ysbaed. The author wrote well about how Darren and his companions explored the world and helped its inhabitants.

Worldbuilding works well, because Moldarrenovia is a fascinatingly different kind of a world. I'm not going to go into details about Moldarrenovia, but I can reveal that Darren is quite smitten by one of the inhabitants and her sensual appearance. He also has a fascinating connection to Moldarrenovia and its existence.

Characterisation is exceptionally good and fluent in this novel, because the protagonist is realistic and endearing while the supporting characters are interesting and wonderfully quirky and vivid.

Darren is one of the most realistic and interesting protagonists ever to appear on the pages of urban fantasy novels. The author writes fluently and engagingly about Darren's life and his problems. The readers get to know him and come to care about what happens to him, because he's an easily likeable protagonist.

Darren has a relationship with Amanda Cray, but their relationship isn't very happy, because Amanda and her nightmarish family cause quite a lot of stress to him. There are times when Darren thinks about their relationship and what's going on between them, because Amanda is different from him.

What makes Darren an especially interesting protagonist is that he has an ability to communicate with the things that he photographs. This special ability separates him from normal people, because there aren't many who can do something like that.

Amanda is a well-created character, because she's completely different from Darren. She has many plans and she systematically tries to change Darren's life, because she has her own vision of how things should be. She's a determined and nasty young woman who has her own opinions. Her relatives have clearly had a huge effect on her personality.

There are many colourful supporting characters in this novel, including Sanjay Bobal (Darren's best friend), Malcolm Burns (a semi-pro gamer) and Vivette Campbell-Fripp (an owner of a fashion house). It was wonderful to read about these characters, because they added depth and humour to the story. All of them are vivid and have their own characteristics and eccentricities that define them.

George Hoblip, a brownie, deserves a special mention as an unforgettable supporting character with a big attitude. He's a charmingly different kind of a character who's difficult to forget once you've read about him.

The relationship between Darren and Amanda is handled surprisingly well, because the author writes fluently about how they feel about each other and how Amanda tries to change Darren. Their relationship feels almost like a relationship from hell, because Darren doesn't have much to say about certain things. Amanda seems to be the boss and wants to control Darren all the time. What makes Darren's situation worse is that Amanda's nasty relatives are anything but normal and he has to endure them.

One of things that I like about this novel is that the character interaction works perfectly. It was a pleasure to read the dialogues, because they were full of funny and sharp comments about the world, people and relationships.

I also have to mention that the author seems to have an inborn ability to write humorous prose. His approach to such delicate issues and themes as relationship problems, love and sex feels fresh and exciting because he gives a humorous treatment to them.

It's great that the author has plenty of imagination and he doesn't repeat himself. I was impressed by his way of delivering surprises and writing about ordinary life in a delightfully quirky and funny way. He seems to understand what good and clever humour is and how it can be used to entertain his readers (his humour has a delightfully sharp edge to it).

Just like in the previous novel, the author plays nicely with the idea of what's real and what's not and how a

person's life can be affected by happenings that can't be explained. What happened to Darren when he was a child had an enormous effect on his life, because he had to learn to accept that it wasn't real. His whole life changes when he finds out that he actually didn't imagine anything and learns new things about himself and the world around him.

With this novel, DC Farmer proves that it's possible to write fascinating contemporary urban fantasy novels without resorting to using overused elements (vampires etc) that cause clenching of teeth and almost allergic reactions to many readers who are fed up with reading about them. I think that many readers will notice how easily the author avoids using clichés and creates something new from well-known and ordinary elements. To be honest, I think that many urban fantasy authors could take a few lessons from this author.

Frivolous Pursuits is a genuinely funny romp with plenty of humour to satisfy the needs of those who want humour from their fantasy novels. It manages to be both entertaining and thrilling, and it easily captures the reader's attention from the very first page and makes the reader want to read the whole story as soon as possible to find out what happens to the protagonist. I seldom find myself almost skipping pages to find out what happens at the end when I read urban fantasy novels, but in this case I had to read the story as soon as possible, because I enjoyed it.

I sincerely hope that DC Farmer will soon write the next Hipposync Archive novel, because this kind of entertainment is the best possible kind of escapism to fantasy readers who want to read good and well written stories. There's a short and intriguing preview chapter of the next novel at the end of this novel. Based on it, I can mention that the next novel seems to be worth waiting for.

If you're a fan of humorous fantasy, DC Farmer's Frivolous Pursuits should be on your reading list. It's essential reading material for those who love Terry Pratchett-like humour and enjoy well written humorous stories. I'm sure that all who read this novel will have this question on their minds when they've reached the final page: "When will the next Hipposync Archive novel be published?"

My final words are:

Frivolous Pursuits is wonderful entertainment to fans of humorous urban fantasy. It's something a bit different and deserves to be read by readers who love good stories.

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