



Trace of Magic

Diana Pharaoh Francis

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Even the most powerful tracers can't track you if the magical trace you leave behind is too old. But I can track almost anything, even dead trace. That makes me a unicorn, the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny, and the Lock Ness Monster all rolled into one. In a word, I am unique. A very special snowflake. And if anyone ever finds out, I'll be dead or a slave to one of the Tyet criminal factions.

Riley Hollis has quietly traced kidnapped children and quietly tipped the cops to their whereabouts one too many times. Now she's on the radar of Detective Clay Price, a cop in the pocket of a powerful magic Tyet faction. When he blackmails her into doing a dangerous trace for him, Riley will have to break every rule that keeps her safe. Or become a Tyet pawn in a deadly, magical war.

Trace of Magic Details

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From Reader Review Trace of Magic for online ebook

Jeffrey says

'Trace of Magic' by Diane Pharaoh Francis hits the sweet spot between romantic urban fantasy, detecting and action is a fast paced exciting read imbued with both wit and humor. Her main character Riley Hollis is a quick thinking firebrand who rocks her world and this fusion of magic and mayhem is nearly unputdownable. Coupled with some extensive world building, this first book in a brand new series is a fast paced exciting read.

Riley is a tracer, who uses her magical ability to follow the magical trace left by people who disappear. Hiding beneath the radar and keeping her superior magical abilities a secret, because the Tyet, the local mob killed her mother, she ekes out an existence finding the lost.

Now Clay Price, a cop, who also works for the hated Tyet, comes to her with an assignment because he wants someone outside the usual channels. Price thinks Riley is a hack, a minor league talent, that he can use without alerting others. Meanwhile, Hollis's sister wants Riley to find Josh, her on again boyfriend who has disappeared. Riley is forced into helping Price because she does not want to reveal her power and they join forces, but Price soon discovers that Riley is much more powerful than he or anyone else knew.

The fireworks between the two characters is only matched by the fireworks and action. Riley proves her mettle and gradually reveals her power to Price and others. But besides the romantic sparks between Riley and Price and the action, Francis is quick with an artfully turned phrase and humor.

This book is the real deal.

Excellent urban fantasy read.

Ami says

3.75 stars rounded up

I love it when I pick up a new-to-me series (with several books already released) and then enjoying it so much. Because that means I have sequels to catch up and it always excites me. YAY!

That what happened here... I had this book for a while now but never picked it up until this weekend. Took a random decision out of so many to-read books on my list. I think I tend to have good experience with stories involving magic! Because I got immersed immediately into the story.

Started with a "simple" premise: Riley's almost brother-in-law disappearing, blood in his apartment. Riley had to work together with Clay Price, a handsome-grumpy detective (who, by the way, also part of the criminal organization in charge of Diamond City, which made him sort of Riley's enemy) to find him. Of course there were more to it, including guns and sinister FBI agents, and Riley having to decide whether she succumbed to his feeling towards Price or to trust him with her life.

The world-built of Diamond City -- and having the players introduced one by one -- INTRIGUED me. As well as the powers that these characters have: tracers, haunters, dreamers, travelers, healers... Of course the

sizzling tension between Riley and Price helped too; can't help it, I love this kind of set-up *lol*.

Despite the quick timeline that happened, Francis seemed to make it like Riley and Price had done the mating dance for a long time ... like this book was culmination of so many unresolved tensions between the two. LOVED it ^^

I did think that Riley spent a little too much time either fainted, losing blood, or vomiting though. But maybe it was because she hadn't been able to use her power too much, or to control it to the best of her ability. I look forward to see how she deals with it.

There are already three books released after this, I can't WAIT to read them all!!

Lucy at Rain and Cupcakes Book Blog says

The heroine Riley Hollis was supposed be the most powerful tracer yet. But somehow I still have my doubts. Sure, she seem to be able to do things that "supposedly" that other tracers cannot do. But in reality Riley Hollis have spend majorly of the book being hurt, a lot. Which seriously undermined her supposed powerfulness, let along uniqueness.

At the beginning I have this horrible image of Clay Price, which was base on Riley's own description. Riley didn't trust any legal authority, but she thought Clay was not a dirty agent. After some situation she decided to team up with Clay. Then somehow once they started interact with each other, all I am read was how much she lusted after Clay. And even thought Riley and Clay were suppose be on the quest of finding Josh, their romance kind of take over it. Something else really bother me was how Clay has the most weird, but at the same time lack of dialogs in this book.

Overall I was expecting a decent world building, and actions. Instead the clichéd romance seem to be the main focus of the book, not to mention, very little character building. Sure, the magics were interesting, but after reading this book, I still haven't got a clue of this world. With the way this book was left off, I am not sure if I would be reading the next one.

Happy Reading! XO

Stacy says

Riley has been hiding her skills forever and it was really easy to see why as TRACE OF MAGIC played out. It was hard to know what to think about Clay. He was a huge mystery and every time you think you know him another wrench is thrown out there. I really enjoyed their tension and slow romance. The flow of the story was great and it was easy to fall into it.

I hate to say it, but I hated the ending. It was a huge bummer after all that the characters went through and sacrificed to stay alive and solve the mystery that was thrown out there. I will be reading book 2 JUST to make sure things get back on track and throw the book across the room if it doesn't.

* This book was provided free of charge from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Maria V. Snyder says

I really really wanted to love this book! The magic system of tracers and haunters and dreamers, etc... was very unique and the setting was super cool - a caldera for heaven's sake! And the world building was so well done - plenty of conflict and problems! But I just couldn't connect with the characters.

The book is an urban fantasy written in first person POV and the main protagonist has some seriously powerful skills. However, there's too much telling and not enough showing. And then there's the guy and I didn't feel any chemistry between the two - it was awkward and forced and, if I didn't know any better, I'd think this was a first book. There is such a difference between the expert world building and the clunky characterization. I'm guessing that this is Francis' first urban fantasy.

And what bugged me the most (view spoiler)

D.B. Reynolds says

The first book of Diana Pharaoh Francis's new Diamond City Magic series. An excellent story of magic, action and attraction. If you love Urban Fantasy, you should definitely check this one out.

Flowerscat says

[To summarise

Chapter 1 - kick-ass heroine fall for bad-ass-good-guy cop

Chapter 3 - She sleeps with him

Chapter 4 onwards - she goes on a guilt trip about sleeping with the enemy

The end.

(hide spoiler)]

Melindeeloo says

3.5 stars - I enjoyed this new series starter, the magical world at the mercy of crime syndicates was setup well. And I liked the leading lady, who can do more with her talent for tracing people and had spent her life helping to find missing people while trying to avoid catching notice of those gangs.

To be honest, there are things associated with the romance part of the story that I normally wouldn't forgive: sexy times when the heroine is healing after being wounded, 'I love you's' that come within a day or two of the leads actually getting to know each other (they needed to have started out with a bit more history) but for some reason I was able to let that slide past and still enjoy this. My willingness to allow some leeway is probably that I came in expecting UF, and I wasn't expecting a lot from the romantic elements - and since she doesn't really have reason to trust the black hat (or at best gray hat) leading man it just adds another

conflict to keep our heroine off balance.

So I liked this and may have to pull the author's other series off the pile while I am waiting for the next book.

ARC via NetGalley.

Veronique says

Any UF following *White Hot* was going to pale in comparison. However, this was a really good, entertaining, read, with an interesting world, magic system, and characters. Might even read the next one :0)

Gwen says

**** WARNING: REVIEW CONTAINS SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES ****

I admit to being a huge fan (subtext: Groupie) and have been waiting for a new book in the Horngate witches series for ages, so when I saw she had started a new series (BUY THE BOOK) i ran out to get it as fast as my little legs could carry me.

So were we disappointed NO WE WERE NOT !! it was fabulous (BUY THE BOOK) action packed read.

Set in a city that has a wild west feel, we meet Riley Hollis (BUY THE BOOK) who is hiding her true powers from the gangs that control the city, while trying to help others. I don't want to give too much away but as the story goes (BUY THE BOOK)when you try hide something the chances are you will be forced to reveal all. Anyway Riley lives up to her potential meets a guy who she shouldn't love and generally kicks butt (BUY THE BOOK) just my kind of read.

What more can I say but BUUUUUY THE DAMN BOOK !!!!

Bunnycore says

Binders, Tinkers, Dreamers, Walkers, and Tracers.

These are the five base magical users in Diamond City.

We meet Riley a tracer and more.. She is a very special snowflake and she is trying to keep hidden from the Tyate. (a Mob gang type thing) she tracks people stolen and kidnapped by the Mob making sure that they get away. She uses her gift and well she calls in Anonymous tips. We then meet Clay Price and may I just throw this out there..

He is a cop and also an Enforcer for Touray.

Okay so that is about all I am going to give you there. I loved this story, The relationship between Clay and Riley was wonderful. The ending makes your jaw drop and well it makes you swoon all over again. Francis does an amazing job on the world building and the romance. There isn't any fade to black but the one sex scene all I can say was that it was very classy. I enjoyed reading about Riely and Clay's adventures. I have

the second book coming in the mail and I can not wait to continue these twos adventures. I fully recommend this series because it is not like anything I have read. It is very suspenseful as well as heartwarming.

The only moments I had that were aggravating was when Riley kept throwing it in Clay's face that he is part of the Mob and she couldn't trust him. Even when he did things for her that would prove she could. But those I could get over. I am ready to move on!

Anyways, enjoy!

Beth says

Interesting magic setup and world premise.

Not the most likable couple though. Pretty grim with semi humorous snark interspersed.

Lanie (Lanies Book Thoughts) says

Strong start to a new series! I'm split between calling this an urban fantasy, but it's got a lot of the paranormal romance elements as well. You have very strong world building along with great mystery that usually you only find in an urban fantasy. However, you've also got a good deal of romance which is more PNR. It's just a good mash-up, the storyline always stays in focus though. The world building was pretty awesome, from the inventiveness of the talents, to the bad guys and beyond it had a very original feel to it.

Riley is a strong heroine with a smart@ss streak I do appreciate. She has a bit of a tragic past which of course fuels her to save children from monsters, and keeps her stuck in the city. Clay is a detective that plays both sides of the fence, he's not really good or bad, but lingers in the middle. He irked me, he was kinda a jerk the entire book so he didn't win any points there. I think the most interesting character would have to be Price, he's got a twisted past and serious mob connections which ranks him up there.

Altogether, I really enjoyed this story. I thought it was a great start to a series and look forward to reading the upcoming books. I'd recommend it to fans of Jaye Wells and Kim Harrisons, and those who like a kick of romance.

I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Melanie says

My review and an extended sample of the audiobook are posted at Hotlistens.com.

I've heard great things about Diana Pharaoh Francis for a long time from Berls from Fantasy is More Fun, so when I finally got a chance to review one of her audiobooks, I jumped at the chance. I didn't really know much about this book going it. I had not read any reviews, only the blurb from Goodreads. I will say, that I really enjoyed it. I really enjoyed it.

This is a world where you have people with different magical abilities. Riley Hollis is a Tracer. She can follow someone's trace and see where they've been in the past. She is much stronger than she lets on though.

If some of the powerful people figured out how powerful she really was, she would become a target. Most people can only track someone's trace for a short time. Riley can track someone's trace back forever and even after they died.

Detective Clay Price is known as a dirty cop. He is in the pocket of the mob as an enforcer. However, when he isn't doing the mob's work, he is actually a pretty good cop. He needs someone to do a trace for him, but doesn't want it to be on the record with the police or the mob, so he comes to Riley. He makes her an offer she can't refuse to work for him. Then her sister calls in hysterics because her boyfriend's place is in disarray. Price and Riley work together to find out what happened to the boyfriend. They find out it is all tied together.

I really enjoyed this story. It was full of action. I liked the magic. Riley is a great character that is full of sass. Price is decent character, better than I thought he would be, seeing that he was part of the mob and all. I was a little surprised that Riley gives in and sleeps with him as quickly as she did. She also starts to reveal more and more about herself to him faster than I would've thought, even after sleeping with him. There are also some really great side characters in this story that I would like to learn more about.

It was a pretty good start to the series. I would like to see the second book and see where this series goes. It has promise. The second book isn't available on audio yet. I don't know if it will be or not. I'll have to wait a bit and see.

Narration

This is my first audiobook with Elizabeth Phillips. I will say that I thought she did a great job. I has no issues with any of the voices, male or female. I was always able to distinguish between the characters. I did listen at an increased speed, but that is normal for me. I would recommend her for more books.

Mara says

Update: Has someone noticed their **reviews disappearing** from the feed? I noticed that if I don't log in, my review of trace of magic disappears from the list (at the moment 3 pages long) of ratings/reviews. It's nowhere. Only if I filter the reviews with the ratings or the text-only it appears again. (I wonder if it's because the one star or the dnf status...)

Dnf at 40% and run back at Amazon for a refund.

I like my books hard and gritty, and the sample had convinced me that this book was it. Unfortunately after a few chapters the story went downhill or rather down the Himalaya. ..for how steep was that road...

The author decided that she was writing a romance after all, not UF, and the worst kind of: where the women don't think, they are the stupidest around. They have a vajajay and she rules! So she keeps lusting after him in all situations, including the scene were a friend has been tortured, full of blood, in front of his fiancée, who happens to be her sister. classy and realistic.

So after hitting the readers on the head telling them she's unique, she has to hide, she's running from the mob...what does she do in the first frigging chapters? She shags him of course, never mind he is a crooked cop in the payroll of the mafia. Never mind he has blackmailed her, tagged her like a dog with a magical gps...twice, the second time after sex. And what does this heroine do? Shags him again of course! Who cares?

But then character coherence doesn't work here. Her family has hidden her all her life, and what does her sister? An half-assed attempt to convince to let it go, followed the morning after by a push in the other direction.

I don't know, maybe this book was going to be really great in its second half. But I need a heroine I can root for or at least respect. Above all if the hero is an asshole. Moreover as a reader I need an author's respect, some one who writes, even romance, without forgetting the rules. Some one who doesn't take shortcuts.

Mystery and romance rarely work together, above all when romance is the name of the game. It takes one hell of a story to keep both on. This isn't.

Mystery needs tight story, good red herrings in the other characters, some serious plotting (actually romance might too..), but here we have very few of this. The rhythm is slashed by the lust (as I said in the middle of harsh situations she thinks of his ass or such). The description of the FBI agents, above all the woman, is both unprofessional and difficult to accept. We are told that the city is corrupted, not that the world is. If the rest of the world is "normal" (in terms of this world-building), then I would expect it to work normally. They are caricature.

Moreover, we are constantly repeated that she's not stupid at all. (Well of course it's her pov :D). The problem is: she is. Not only she sleeps with the enemy, but she doesn't think. Her sister's ex-fiancée went missing, kidnapped after being tortured. It's crystal clear that the break-up was fake, but even if not, it's shouted that she's still in his life. It can be detected easily both through magical and mundane means. Well, I don't know you, but after it's clear both the mob and the FBI want the man and seem to have no scruples I would have tried to protect my sister in some way.

Neither the heroine nor the hero thought to warn her or protect her. Maybe later in the story this has a meaning. Here - tough -it made me think poorly of the plot. Again, focus on shagging, not on sleuthing.

Notice there is a couple of missing words.

I'd like to remind you all that this review tells you my experience with the book, not its real worth :)
