



The Phoenix Illusion

Lisa Shearin

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The agents of Supernatural Protection & Investigation (SPI) are used to dealing with the weird and the wacky, but even they are stunned when a building from another world suddenly appears on an empty lot in New York...

I'm Makenna Fraser, seer for SPI, and it's just my luck that my birthday party is literally crashed by a building from another planet. And it's not just any building—it's my goblin boyfriend's house from his home world. SPI's mission, to keep the public clueless about the supernatural, has us scrambling to find who did this and why, not to mention how.

The deeper we dig, the more we realize this incident is the opening gambit to a much larger event. Old enemies have combined forces with an even older nemesis to develop the means to kidnap an entire building and everyone in it. But who, or what, is their ultimate target? Finding out and getting to the mark before they do will require all hands on deck, including some extraterrestrial help from the goblin home world. We're running out of time, and if we can't get our act together, we'll have front-row seats for the end of the world as we know it.

The Phoenix Illusion Details

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Author : Lisa Shearin

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From Reader Review The Phoenix Illusion for online ebook

Margaret says

Phoenix Illusion is such an enjoyable read!

I particularly enjoy books similar to the movie franchise Men in Black where supernaturals are everywhere on Earth but the humans can't be allowed to know that they exist! That really adds to the fun, such as when there is a tremendous battle between our side (the good guys) and the other side (the really bad guys) and literally one of our side's job is to explain away what ubiquitous humans holding cell phone cameras caught on video and looks quite impossible to believe!

I also especially enjoy reading books in series. Our main protagonist in the SPI (Supernatural Protection & Investigation) Files is Makenna Fraser. I love it that this series is told in first person, too!

Makenna is a seer. That means she can see through any glamour and while you may see a nondescript human, she sees an elf, a goblin, a vampire, a werewolf, etc. etc. Makenna goes into battle armed with a paintgun because she can tag the bad guys only she can see for the rest of her teammates who have other skills and are often not human.

Early on she meets Rake the goblin (who by the last book before this one in the series had become the Governor of Earth's Goblin Colony, quite an important position). They start dating, it gets more serious, and now they are talking about introducing each other to their families. It's not only Makenna & Rake, too. Other team members are pairing off and are also in the process of meeting their intended's families. (This IS book six, after all!) Which is cool.

But I enjoy that Makenna's & Rake's relationship is allowed to develop at its own pace during each book of the series, in between taking down the bad guys trying to kill you. In each book, the relationship develops just a little more. Just like in real life? So, yes, this is a romance series but the team still gets the primary job done first (protecting Earth from nefarious supernaturals always scheming to make trouble!).

Phoenix Illusion opens with the bad guys teleporting a building onto an empty lot in Manhattan not far from SPI Headquarters. But it is not just any skyscraper. It's Rake's own multistory home from the goblin planet! Worse it immediately catches fire and New York's finest is dispatched to put out the fire! (No worries, quite a few of the upper officers in the fire department are supernaturals themselves and have long worked hand-in-glove with the SPI!)

And the plot takes off from there! Much fun ensues!

Highly recommended for those who enjoy supernaturals in their police procedurals!

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy.

I have previously detailed my love for Lisa Shearin's work, therefore, it's no surprise that I enjoyed THE

PHOENIX ILLUSION. While I have some minor criticisms, it is overall a fun book, and as usual, leaves me wanting more.

First of all, Rake. And Tam. In the same book. Oooo la la. Those two individually are super mischievous, bad boy with heart of gold characters. Together, they make for some entertaining scenes. Tam teaching Ben to use his gem mage skills, Tam during the final showdown, Rake ... well, all the time ... overall, they're probably my favorite characters. Mac is great, don't get me wrong, and I love that she's not the typical urban fantasy heroine - you know the type, "the one" with the special power she doesn't even know she has that she uses to save the world. Amongst the other characters, Mac is almost normal! But, Rake and Tam are just so much fun.

Mac's internal monologue is yet again a low point. It's repetitive and sounds like she's narrating a movie in her head. I mean, I know I sometimes do that when I'm bored with my everyday life, but she's got a lot going on, so why does she keep reiterating to herself who each of the major players are? On the upside, if you don't remember all the details from previous books, or didn't know them to begin with, it's a bonus, since it's a good way to keep up with the action and understand the stakes without having to read all of the books that proceed THE PHOENIX ILLUSION in both the SPI Files and the Raine Benares World series. However, THE PHOENIX ILLUSION is a bit short, and when I think of how much time Mac spends illuminating us on who is doing the bad things, I am slightly annoyed there's not just a little more action. So I have mixed feelings, obviously.

Overall, Shearin doesn't disappoint. As I've said before, her writing is predictable, but to me, it's a good kind of predictable. Mac is sassy, Rake is overprotective, there's some comic relief from lesser characters, and there's some great action (Mac really gets her moment in this one, in my opinion). I will definitely be continuing to read this series, and I can't wait to see what the bad guys come up with next!

Sexual content: Kissing, references to sex

Stephaniec says

A bit disappointing, can't put my finger on it but it was missing something. Maybe that the bad guys just keep getting away and now are stacking up against SPI and the goblins or just not enough forward momentum in the story arc. It might even be because I was hoping that Rake was going to meet McKenna's family which I am very interested to learn more about.

I still zipped through it and look forward to the next

Theresa Derwin says

Magic, Mischief and Missing Buildings

THE PHOENIX ILLUSION

SPI Files Novel (6)

Author: LISA SHEARIN

Publisher: Murwood Media, LLC

Page count: 232pp

Release date: 6th November 2018

If you're new to the SPI Files or haven't read them in a while, I thought it best to summarise the books the easiest way possible. By letting Mac herself tell you about her job.

"My name is Makenna Fraser and I work for SPI (Supernatural Protection and Investigations). In my professional life, I have a skill that eliminates a certain kind of surprise. I'm a seer. I can see through any shield, ward, or spell a supernatural being can use to disguise itself from the human population."

Mac and her partner Ian have been involved in lots of shenanigans (I still need to read the story about the Leprechaun prince stag do) and together they fight Supernatural criminals whilst hiding the existence of these creatures. In the last book, during a giant conference Mac and Ian plus other cohorts dealt with murderers, drunken dwarves and all manner of creatures being trapped together in the Regor Regency hotel by an unseen force.

The hotel was owned by Mac's goblin boyfriend Rake - "Rake Danescu was a very bad boy—in all the very best ways." Think "Jean Claude" from Laurel K Hamilton's Anita Blake series rather than the kind of goblin you'd see in Labyrinth or LOTR. He basically oozes charm, dark moody vibes and sexiness through the text. He's what the PNR crowd call the perfect 'book boyfriend'.

Having recently been appointed governor of the goblin colony on Earth, the trip with Rake to meet Mac's family in Carolina had been delayed, but things had gone from flirtation to serious in the space of five books. Now, Mac isn't one for surprises, so her birthday party this year is at the the local werewolf-run bar 'Full Moon' with co-workers and friends; humans in the know, SPI agents such as Ian's dryad girlfriend Kylie and the furry crowd.

Well, as parties go, this one kicks off with a bang, literally, as Rake's house appears from Regor, Rake's home world - the goblin capitol, out of nowhere. And it's engulfed in fire. Hence, the mystery begins. And it's just the start of buildings disappearing in the human world.

The series as a whole has a great range of diverse characters, who are strong and pervasive.

Dr Anika Van Daal, the MD or Supernatural medical examiner, and vampire, arrived in New York in 1625. As Mac puts it, "She'd gone from midwife to the city's first licensed female doctor." Just as Vivienne Sagadraco, head of SPI USA is a fierce dragon/human shifter who likes like a petite older woman but rules the roost. Despite being a seer, Mac goes out on missions and although she's not a combat veteran she uses her wits and strength to often save the day.

There's also a terrific authorial voice here, through Mac and a laugh out loud sense of humour.

In this book, we finally realise there's a bigger arc at stake and the villains and evil machinations in this novel are part of a bigger game. I expect when book seven arrives, it will all kick off and we'll be looking at a new offshoot arc in the wider story.

Either way, it can be read independently and it's a fantastic - I believe, penultimate - book in this series.

Dana says

I really enjoy the SPI files books. Mac and the SPI crew are back racing to save the world again while trying to keep the supernatural side of things out of the public eye. Goblin Mages, Elves, Werewolves, and Portal keepers working for an extremely old dragon are kept on their toes as abandoned buildings across the US disappear completely. Where have the buildings gone? Who is taking the buildings? An old enemy resurfaces and is hiding in plain sight. Vegas has never been more dangerous than when Mac and company head for the magic show at the Phoenix Hotel. Read this book to get the details. This book is #6 in a series

and you really should read them in order but they are all fast paced action that you finish before you realize you've gotten to the end.

Ariel says

Every word that didn't include Rake and wasn't about Rake and Makenna's boring arsed relationship was perfect.

Review revision 11/21/2018:

I had to come back and change my rating from 3 to 1. This book doesn't even feel like it should be part of the SPI series. It's basically The Rake Knows Everything And Saves The Day Show with little bits of Ian and the others thrown in while Makenna follows Rake around with big puppy dog eyes and drones on and on about how awesome he is and how she's lucky to have him. Ugh.

This is not the series or characters I fell in love with.

Ashley says

I was so excited to dive into The Phoenix Illusion, book six of The SPI Files. It was another fun and action-packed installment. It was great to be back on another adventure with these characters and, like always, Mac was a great narrator who made it feel like I was listening to a dear friend tell me her story. I was instantly pulled in and completely hooked from the start. There was another appearance by a character from Shearin's Raine Benares series which makes me really eager to try those books out. I highly recommend The SPI Files to anyone who enjoys urban fantasy.

Darcy says

I think what made this one so interesting was that everyone was like, WTH, buildings appearing out of nowhere and disappearing, not something even these guys have seen. As they were investigating they found old foes, which sort of made it easier to come up with a plan to defeat them. Of course things went a bit wonky towards the end, but our group was able to stop the big bad from happening and get most of the bad guys.

Beth says

Gah! All I can say is it has the wit and action you should expect by now and you will be impatient for the next book plus the story around the name drop once our special guest arrives. :)

Kathleen says

"The Phoenix Illusion" has everything great about this urban fantasy series - humor, action, interesting characters, a well thought-out plot, and is a very fun read. I recommend reading the whole series to get the most out of it since there are lots of references to earlier adventures, but since Lisa Shearin writes consistently good books that's a plus too. I can't wait for the next one.

Katyana says

2.5

Honestly, there was a lot I didn't like about this one. But let me start with this: I love Lisa Shearin's books, and the Raine Benares series is one of my all-time favorites (the Raine books, not the Raine Benaraes World books) ... and I'm super excited that she said in her newsletter that she's going to write another book with Raine and Mycheal. Yes, I subscribe to her newsletter, because as I said, I love her books.

But I didn't like a main character from that series - Tam - rolling into this one. I thought I would, but I didn't. Look, I love that the worlds are connected, and I love the intersection, the easter eggs dropped about events happening over there. It is freaking awesome. But having a main character pop in ... well, I felt like it undercut the SPI team. By which I mean, honestly, the SPI team became background characters in this book. It felt more like the Tam / Rake adventure that Mac tagged along on (and they treated her like a tag-along, more on this in a moment). Even Ian was barely present (though when he was, he pissed me off ... that's part of the "more on this in a moment" though).

This series has a great cast - with Mac and Ian as the leads - and a rich secondary cast, and I love them ... and resent that they were largely sidelined. And I'm also confused, because Ian seems to not be a lead anymore. He was present, somewhat, in a token way. And Mac mentioned he was her partner, or called him her partner, probably a dozen times. But they didn't **work together**. They'd split up at incident locations, and when Mac gets jumped by the ever-present baddie who wants to kill the seer (a constant goal of theirs, for good reason), Ian is nowhere near ... and comes running when things are over. That happens twice in this book, but more than that, I was struck that they are literally never side-by-side working. They're not partners. They call each other that, but it's stupid. And it is even more stupid because of what happened at the end.

I was furious at what Ian pulled at the end. This is the "more on that later" bit, in case it wasn't clear. Here's the more.

(view spoiler)

This was so infuriating to me that I am undecided whether I'll read more in this series.

Aside from that inexplicable bullshit, this series is stuck in a weird place that it now needs to solve. We used to have Mac and Ian. And while they weren't romantically involved, they were damn good partners - and they used to respect each other - that worked well together. I was cool with them not being romantically involved, I thought it was an interesting change of pace. Then Rake enters, and over the course of the last few books, he and Mac have gotten seriously involved. That's cool, I like Rake. I have a couple problems with their relationship, though. One, he treats her like a child who needs to be coddled. She's a freaking agent, dammit! Further, the coddling seems to have grown some kind of crappy self-esteem issue for her, as

several times in this book she laments that she's not sure she can handle this. Dude, this woman, until now, has always rolled up her sleeves, jumped into the fray, and done what needed doing. Where did this wishy-washy crap come from? Is it because of Rake?

But now the book seems to be rolling Rake into the lead, with Ian contributing nothing (that's not an exaggeration) and being out of character. The bit in the spoiler tags above, that's way out of character imo - Ian has never been that stupid. Further, Ian was always Mac's shadow, because he was going to keep his partner safe (given that seers tend to have a short lifespan in SPI, since they are major targets for the bad guys). Now, he seems to have dropped out of that role entirely, and I don't understand why. I get that we need to have Rake there as her romantic partner, but he doesn't work for SPI and this is still an SPI series, right? Can we please have Ian actually BEING Mac's partner again? I like Rake being there, but it should be Ian alongside Mac when we get down to business or are handling an incident. Either that, or just freaking have Rake join SPI and be Mac's damn partner, because this currently feels like a mess.

Aly is so frigging bored says

This felt like a really short novel... I need Ms Shearin to write bigger books :D

Stacy says

I'm a fan of the SPI Files series, but THE PHOENIX ILLUSION didn't blow me away.

What I liked: I enjoy watching Makenna and Rake's relationship grow. The overall story was interesting. I truly enjoy all the characters in this series.

What I didn't like: There was a LOT of explaining of past events and re-introductions of already known characters.

I honestly don't know 100% why I didn't totally love THE PHOENIX ILLUSION. It didn't grab me like the previous books in the series and had a different feel to it. Hopefully book 7 will draw me back in.

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

Ami says

When Lisa Shearin announced that the original publisher doesn't extend contracts to more books but she will continue the *SPI Files* series via self-publishing route, I was really excited.

This is the SECOND book from the independent publisher, and it's released in the same year as book #5. Which is great -- two books in one year *laugh*. I love this universe. I love the characters in it. Plus, it is nowhere finished with the villains and their plan to overthrow humans ruling Earth.

This book opens with Makenna Fraser's birthday party, which is disrupted when Rake's house -- Mac's goblin boyfriend - is dropped near where they are staying. A house that is originated from another

dimension. Talk about a surprise birthday party ^^. Things rolls out from there, with the SPI agents, Rake, as well as Rake's cousin, Tamnais Nathrach (Tam for short), trying to once again stop the bad people's plan.

The Phoenix Illusion has more of Rake and his cousin sharing the spotlight with Mac, though. I sort of miss having Ian and Yasha to have more pages than they are in this book. It feel like because they're not goblins -- and our big bad villains are pretty much coming from Rake and Tam's part of the world -- they are delegated into the backseat.

However, we also welcome back Dr. Ben Sadler, the cute young man who now works as SPI's new consulting gem mage, whom we previously introduced in *The Dragon Conspiracy*. And not only that, Ben is getting a lot of training in handling magical rocks from Tam, which is fun to read.

In overall, this is another entertaining book. There might be quite a number of info-dump though, probably Ms. Shearin is explaining what has going on to new readers who never read the previous books. I don't really mind this time, because I admit that I've forgotten details. But I imagine the more strong-memory readers will be annoyed by it.

Well, I hope the next book will FINALLY take Rake meeting Mac's family, including her grandmother...

Ly a says

Too much describing of past events.

While all books in a series need to find ways to recap things, I have to admit I spent the first half of this book skipping over paragraphs of descriptions of what happened in previous books. Every time a character was reintroduced, we heard about everything that had happened to them before. Sometimes things that were said earlier in the book were repeated fully again.

I like the general story. The author's writing skill is extremely good. The main characters are interesting. So it gets three stars and I hope the next book does a better job with the balance of getting new readers into the books and allowing those who have liked the books from the beginning to get into the story.
