



Fireproof

Gerard Brennan

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Equal parts crime fiction, dark urban fantasy and black comedy.

Hell hath no fury for Mike Rocks. He's fireproof; an anomaly caused by a slip-up in afterlife bureaucracy. Lucifer bundles him off as an embarrassing problem with a mission to introduce Satanism to Northern Ireland. And while he's at it, Mike can exact revenge on the men who took his life.

Fireproof Details

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From Reader Review Fireproof for online ebook

Peter says

Heavenly and Hellish in equal measure.

Lots of laugh out loud moments but also times when I nearly put the book down unfinished. It will not go on my list of books to read again but glad I persevered with it.

Ms J Linney says

A great new story

Fun innovative as a great read. Meet Mike Rocks a man who returns from Hell again and again, all to set up The new church of Lucifer. Excellent. Hope there's a sequel.

Jennifer Thomson says

A book for fans of US TV show Reaper

Fireproof marks a departure for Gerard Brennan. It's not about the mean streets of Belfast, although they do feature as the backdrop.

The main character is murderer Mike, dead and in hell. But Mike doesn't scare easy. He uses his scything wit to keep himself sane, in between sewing his limbs back on when the demon he rooms with rips them off.

When he has a chance to leave hell by Lucifer, by 'becoming a civil servant for Satan' in exchange for a mortal body, that's when the real fun starts.

Brennan favours strong female characters and Fireproof is no different. Step forth, Cathy who wants to be a hired killer. You don't get much more kick ass than that. It's because of characters like Cathy that Brennan's books will appeal to women as well as men.

Fireproof isn't as bleak as Brennan's Wee Rockets or The Point, and is written in a light hearted way that makes you like both Mike and Cathy, despite their violence.

It's an enjoyable romp, with authentic dialogue and is the ideal read to have on your Kindle when you're travelling and fancy some escapist fiction.

I won't give away the ending, but it leaves you satisfied.

Kevin Grigg says

Fun bit of chewing gum for the eyes. Nothing to dislike about this story, nice twist on the whole heaven and hell subject.

Col says

I was lucky enough to get a copy of this from the publisher.

Does that mean I'm expected to praise it to the hilt?

No, I doubt it.

I will start by saying I'm an inexperienced book reviewer, though I do tend to rely a lot on what other people say about books before purchasing most of the time. I find it difficult to determine how much of the story to discuss without giving away too much of the plot and how the finale unfolds. (Spoiler alert!)

Previously, I've found myself re-hashing the synopsis on the back of the cover, and what's the point in doing that? If the book has piqued someone's interest then typically they will have picked it up in store, or read the same information on the author or publisher's website.

I suppose my reviews will contain a lot of box-ticking,

Salient points then,

Did I enjoy it, was I entertained? Yes, yes

Would I read more from the author? Yes

Did it drag? No

Was it un-put-down-able? No

Did I laugh or cry, or feel some empathy or connection to the characters? Yes

Would I want to read more about them in the future? Hmmm....maybe

Would I recommend it to others? Yes

Was it memorable, will it haunt me or stay with me? No

Will I find myself thinking about it in the next week or two? No

Did I feel like I'd wasted xxx number of hours from my life that I will never get back? No

Would I re-read it again at some point in the future? No

Would I want my money back? No, irrespective of the fact I didn't pay for it.

On the scoreboard then probably7.5 out of 12, which seems low considering that I really enjoyed it. Some of the plus points above must carry more weight than some of those that scored negatively.

Overall then - 4 out 5.

Well worth a look if you have a sense of humour, don't take religion too seriously, and enjoy fine writing that isn't preachy or pretentious.....literature it ain't.

<https://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2012/0...>

Josh says

Similar yet distant enough to be a unique take on the occult brand of Satanism. Switching up the fallen angel angle to have a more human feel, Brennan's 'Fireproof' is more than a story of Hell and it's dark angels. Aside from the main plot lies a love story, albeit misguided (and partially built on a common interest in murdering people); the allure of the unnatural combined with a fatal attraction of sorts (fatal by means of the mortal bodies Mike occupies) adds another element to the reincarnated hit man.

The opening stanza is funny, horrifying, disgusting, overly violent and graphic yet down right entertaining. It really sets the tone for the novel.

I love the way Brennan regenerates the lead character, Mike, by pulling the reader in through the bowels of hell to ashy mist to present day Earth. The hazy fog like realization of reincarnation Mike feels is conveyed to the reader in startling realistic fashion - it doesn't read as over-to-top, yet unnervingly believable.

The characters are vivid, unique and well rounded. From the hell-ish concocted residents of the 'Price of Darkness' abode in Lucifer himself, the Imp, and Cerberus, to Mike Rocks "the charismatic, reincarnate

rebel", Cathy (a murderous vixen intent on exercising her blood lust), Cadbury (a mysterious homeless man), to the band of Hoods and Goths that make up the religious followers, each bring a new perspective and dynamic to the story.

Adding to the core plot elements which consist of the formation of a new religion to worship His Darkness, hit man vengeance, and a romantic coupling, is a pressing message stating the divide between right and wrong and the resulting consequences, 'Fireproof' is a true multi-layered story. Readers will also be treated to the familiar, in that Brennan institutes the same feel to his brand of hoods in 'Fireproof' as he does those in 'Wee Rockets'.

I really enjoyed 'Fireproof'. It's humourous, dark, violent and something a little left of centre. 5 stars.

View more on my blog: <http://justaguythatlikes2read.blogspot...>

Sean says

I started reading this with a flourish thinking blurb sounded really interesting,

Woah, I was really quite disappointed as 25% through I am thinking that I am just not feeling this and wondering where it is going to go.

The premise sounded really good and I was so looking forward to it. But It got really slow and I hate to say quite boring and I could go no further.

I don't know if it was just the writing style or whether the author was just trying too hard to be funny;dark and unsettling. But to have a dead guy come back from Hell and get revenge and also set up a Satanist Cult was way too silly for me, I could not take it any longer.

I really am disappointed with this.

Benoit Lelièvre says

I liked FIREPROOF. Can't say I loved it, but I liked it and can definitively get behind its ideas. It's the form that bothered me. Like for WEE ROCKETS, Brennan took a starting point and developed from there instead of having a complete story bottled. While it worked wonders and fit WEE ROCKETS perfectly (WEE ROCKETS being a social novel), but here it hampers the satirical potential of the novel, or at least I thought it did.

But it would be unfair to severely punish FIREPROOF for that since it's a novel of ideas and not prose-party. It's a courageous 180 degrees turn from crime fiction from Gerard Brennan and quite the bold pick to go bizarro on religion. It could've been more bizarro, you can feel sometimes that Brennan puts the breaks on the spectacular stuff in order for story development and I could've used stranger stuff. But as long as the novel stays on the ideas it vehicles, it makes a strong statement on religion without dismissing spirituality

and that kind of nuanced and textured argument won me over. Brennan used a wacky, over-the-top approach to make a serious point and he did it with style.

Bottom line, read it.

Edward says

I had always heard that Gerard Brennan was a crime writer. So imagine my surprise when reading the first chapter of Fireproof. It came off a lot more like Bizarro (a genre of humorous, weird and absurd fiction) than traditional crime fare. The rest of the book doesn't stay as crazy as this first chapter but still continues to be weird. In a good way.

Mike Rocks is a guy sent from hell by Lucifer to start the True Church Of Satanism. Then he dies. He's sent back again and, well, dies again. He finally keeps a body and gets the ball rolling along with his murderous girlfriend, a homeless man turned assistant with strange powers and his High Priest. Not only does he have a job to do for Lucifer, but has his own plans of revenge. Revenge against the men that killed him in the first place.

Fireproof is full of dark humor and bizarre creatures like The Imp and Cerberus and a worm-like thing who's name I can't pronounce. It's a unique novel without a cliché in sight and plenty of believable characters. Although I was a little disappointed in the ending (I would have liked to see where the Church Of Satanism plot could lead to) it's a twisted book that horror and crime fans would both enjoy.

Karren321 says

I liked this book and most fantasy these days bores me

I thought the ending was a little too lovey dovey for the nature of the book

Researcher-a says

Well, fuck me sideways! What a bloody excellent book! Really. It's brilliant!

some slight hint-y-type spoilers below

It's packed brim(stone)ful with dark, violent humour and gittish little demons that fully deserve to be stuffed inside hand dryers and electrocuted. I loved this book and found myself giggling aloud through most of it.

There's some great characterisation and storytelling. The plot is fairly fluid and fast-moving, never lingering on one scene for too long. It's very intelligently written.

Only a couple of errors that I spotted – e.g. an effected instead of affected and a comma or two out of place

(not exactly enough to complain about!). The writing wasn't high English, but it was good, solid prose.

However, the part where everyone inexplicably fancies the pants off seppuku Mike was a bit jarring. Sure, he's supposed to be charismatic and BIG, but I thought that section was born of a touch of male ego overgrowth.

I was a touch annoyed that Cathy seems to use her attractiveness to seduce and then take advantage of people repeatedly. She seemed intelligent enough to be far more cunning and wily than that.

That said, I'm pretty much nit-picking. At one point I was doubtful that Brennan could wrap this up in any way that justified the main body of the book, but he did. The ending was perfect.

This book definitely deserves its five stars.

Ian Ayris says

Gerard Brennan is one of those names in the circles I have come to know that oozes quality. Having read his WEE ROCKETS a short while back I was keen to have a look at his next outing - FIREPROOF - as quick as I could.

I was not disappointed.

Mmm . . . 'equal parts crime fiction, dark urban fantasy, and black comedy' - well there's a thing, eh. And I'd have to say it's a pretty accurate description.

FIREPROOF begins with Mike, a former Belfast bad boy, in Hell, being swallowed by his room-mate - a demon of horrific proportions, and somewhat unpleasant odours. Mike is no ordinary denzien of Hell, however. He has . . . powers. A bargain is struck twixt Mike and Lucifer, and Mike returns to life charged with spreading the word of Satansim, as only he can.

Let me say this first. I did not know what to expect from this book. I suppose I expected it to be similar to Wee Rockets, set as it is in Belfast, written by Gerard Brennan, noted for his Crime Fiction. But FIREPROOF is like nothing I've ever read before. Sure, it has it's crime-fiction elements. A vicious torturing gang, revenge killings, bank jobs, and numerous odious characters. But it is also a story of redemption, of hope, of the nature of religion, and of the spirit of man. And any story that includes Cerberus the three-headed dog of Greek mythology, a foul-mouthed imp, and a clairvoyant tramp called Cadbury, has my vote.

FIREPROOF is, like WEE ROCKETS, set in modern day Belfast. Brennan writes Belfast like his heart beats and bleeds for the place in equal measure. FIREPROOF is as much a social statement as anything else; a chilling indictment of the modern day world we live in - a tale of the lost and the dispossessed, the broken and the weary.

But like I said, it is also surreal and hilarious. Amongst the hilarity, however, and the darkness, there is a gentleness that shines through in Brennan's writing. Every character has feelings. Every character is vulnerable - even the imp. The central character, Mike, is brilliantly written, and the way he changes

throughout the book, the way his vulnerability is exposed, is so subtle as to be almost imperceptible - until the end.

Just little touches, you know. And little touches make a great writer.

And through it all, beneath the surface, and above it, there is the constant dialogue regarding the very nature of belief itself.

FIREPROOF has many levels. It will make you laugh, it will make you shudder, and it will make you think.

A brilliant, stunningly original, book by a very talented author.

Top stuff, sir.

Keith Nixon says

Mike Rocks is, literally, in Hell. He's given a choice by Lucifer himself – stay in the nether region for the rest of eternity or return to earth and set up a Satanic religion in Belfast. Mike takes the latter path, in part because he has his own unfinished business, getting revenge on the people that sent him to Hell in the first place. Before long, Mike's mission is well underway, but then Cathy Maguire, wannabe contract killer, crosses his path and things start to get complicated.

This is a unique story, I don't think I've read anything like it previously. At first I was asking myself, what's this all about? The opening scenes of Fireproof are of Mike in Hell being tortured by a strange creature before receiving his mission and getting on with his own. Then Cathy appears, she seems quite a normal girl besides her desire to murder people, starting with her boss.

However, once I was in a few chapters I found it to be a good read, very well written, entertaining (if you can put aside the 'religious' elements) and in places funny. There is a good sense of place and the dialogue is sharp. The characters can be distinctly peculiar, for example, there is Cadbury, a tramp who appears and squats in Mike's flat whilst he's on a brief respite in Hell. He has a number of very unusual qualities including the ability to read minds. Sounds odd? Yes, but it does fit well in the story.

Towards the latter part of the book, the tone changed somewhat as Mike builds the religion and follows his own plan, but primarily because he grows much closer to Cathy. Fireproof becomes more a story of redemption and relationships.

Overall, I enjoyed Fireproof. It's a very good read if you enjoy something a bit different.

Originally reviewed for Books & Pals blog. May have received a review copy.

Richard says

This is a wonderful piece of modern day fantasy. Gerard Brennan writes with dark humour reflecting on the blackest aspects of violence in Northern Ireland. He doesn't marginalise the troubles, deaths or senseless

violence he brings fresh eyes and subverts it with comedic situations.

This is a challenge to the many words used to justify a position and in allegorical symbolism and almost parable like narrative he helps the reader take a fresh perspective.

The result is a novel that will help you smile and think in equal measure.

The premise is absurd but it is written so well you are enfolded into the story and enjoy its outworking as the fantasy plays out.

Our hero Mike Rocks is brutally killed and ends up in hell by error; sufficient that he cannot be suitably tortured and perpetually punished. In effect he is as the title suggests Fireproof.

The novel is based on the premise that he returns to Belfast on an evangelical mission to promote Satanic cult worship at the Devil's bidding. He is motivated to comply as he has his own scores to settle with those who brought about his untimely death.

His recruitment drives, mistakes that cause Lucifer to lose patience with him and the values he learns makes this a great book that examines religion, sectarianism, love and commitment amongst other ideas. Loved it, as it does not devalue but informs.

Paul says

The story opens with Mike in Hell. Literally. Mike's bored. He has a very high pain threshold & his Personal Tormentor, or as Mike likes to call him/it, his roomie, Astheiziachial (Mike likes to call him "Wriggly Worm") just doesn't terrorize him any more, if he ever did. Mike suggests WW ask the Boss for a transfer. WW sulks. But concedes it's the only course of action. After all WW has his rep as a vicious tormentor of damned souls to consider.

I'm paraphrasing;

In due course Lucifer summons Mike & makes him an "offer he can't refuse".

"What if I refuse the assignment?"

"I will make you my personal pet project. Astheiziachial's efforts will seem like affectionate foreplay & of course, I have eternity to refine & perfect my technique.

"What's the assignment?"

"We give you a new body, send you back to Earth with unlimited funds & all you have to do is establish a religion founded on Satanism."

"Hmmm... where do I sign?"

Mike picks up various side-kicks in his new life & one of his side projects is tracking down the 4 characters who tortured & beat him to death & the fellow who ordered the hit on him.

Cerberus (a 3-headed hell dog) & an obnoxious imp are 2 of Lucifer's messengers (to Mike). Mike rarely misses an opportunity to wind them up, in his own inimical way.

Mike pulled the nunchaku from his waistband. He twirled it in a slow circle. Six doggie eyes watched its lazy spin.

"What are you going to do with that, Mike?" the middle head asked. "You want to try & attack us again?"

"Oh no. I'm not THAT slow. I've something else in mind."

"What are you smirking at?" said the head on the right.

"Fetch."

“You bastard.”

Mike tossed the weapon over the dog[s] heads. It sailed through an open window into the car park. Cerberus couldn't resist. It chased the numchaku through the window, taking the frame & a fair amount of brickwork with it.

This is a really fun read & will like appeal to fans of Joe Lansdale & Adam Howe.
It's an easy 4 out of 5 stars from me.
