



## Witches Incorporated

*K.E. Mills*

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**Witches Incorporated** K.E. Mills

**It's a case of espionage, skullduggery and serious unpleasantness**

And it's also Gerald's first official government assignment. He's hunting down a deadly saboteur, and time is quickly running out. Old enemies and new combine forces to thwart him. Once again, innocent lives are on the line. He needs his friends. He can't do this alone.

But Princess Melissande and Reg have troubles of their own. With the help of Monk Markham's brilliant, beautiful sister, they've opened a one-stop-shop witching locum agency, where magical problems are solved for a price. Problem is, the girls are struggling to keep the business afloat. Things are looking grim for Witches Incorporated - and that's before they accidentally cross paths with Gerald's saboteur.

Suddenly everybody's lives are on the line and Gerald realizes, too late, that there's a reason government agents aren't supposed to have friends ...

WITCHES INCORPORATED is the second novel in the Rogue Agent trilogy, from one of fantasy's newest stars.

## Witches Incorporated Details

Date : Published July 1st 2009 by Orbit (first published 2009)

ISBN : 9780316035446

Author : K.E. Mills

Format : Paperback 543 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Magic, Fiction, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal

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# From Reader Review *Witches Incorporated* for online ebook

## Shanna Swendson says

I think I may like this, the second book in the *Rogue Agent* series, better than the first. The first book was setting up the situation, but then this one was more of a fun adventure that got to play with the characters and situations I fell in love with in the first book. Our hero Gerald has been tested and trained to be a kind of magical secret agent, and while he's off doing the testing and training and then going off on his first assignment, he hasn't been allowed to see his friends. In his absence, his best friend Monk has inherited a house that gives him room to conduct his crazy magical experiments, and Princess Melissande (from the first book) has escaped her royal duties to go into business with Monk's kid sister and Reg, the witch queen trapped in the body of a bird, in a sort of "No. 1 Ladies' Magical Detective Agency." A seemingly petty case reunites them with Gerald when their paths cross, and he has to decide between following orders and having success with his case by getting help from his friends.

I LOVE these characters, and after plowing through this book I immediately wanted more. It's usually the guys that get me into a book, and while I adore Gerald as a hero and would love reading any book with him in it, I also would be totally willing to read a book entirely about "the girls" (as they're referred to in the story) because they're the kind of female characters who can carry a book for me. "Princess Pushy" (as Reg calls her) is so delightfully stubborn and practical. Reg is a hoot. And the kid sister, Bibbie, seems like the kind of character I'd hate -- basically a Barbie doll, ridiculously gorgeous and seems like an airhead -- but then she turns out to be something of a mad genius who does not like being patronized.

I was surprised when I went to Amazon to see when the next book was coming to find that the reader reviews were pretty negative. I feel like these books are the closest I've found to being along the lines of my *Enchanted, Inc.* series -- that scratch that particular itch -- without me having to write them. The setting is different, but I think the tone and characters are similar in style. Gerald, Monk and Owen would totally be best friends (and the world might not be safe if the three of them teamed up), and Katie might fit in with the girls, even if she would want to knock their heads together every so often.

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## Carol. says

Three and a half stars; rating it upwards due to it coming together in the last half of the book. Feels like a young adult book; it's overall style reminds me a great deal of Patricia Wrede's *Dealing With Dragons* stories. Overall minimal world-building, with a main focus on how characters interact with each other--lots of jousting dialogue. A common epithet is "Saint Snodgrass," so you quickly get a sense of the silly. I picked this up on a whim, not having read the first book. One of the initial scenes has a main character, Gerald, revisiting decisions made in the past, and as we are introduced to the three other protagonists, they refer to a troubled past as well. I get the sense of it being a moral crisis for Gerald, and occupational turning point for Melissande, but it's not anything that hinders enjoyment of the current story. For the most part, the characters are focused on current issues, but part of the issues involve how they are creating and defining themselves, which includes how they are dealing with past decisions.

The women of the group--three of them, if you count the transformed human Reg--have set up a "witches' service" business, and are trying to improve business. They take on a frivolous case and it soon leads to another case that intersects with Gerald's own investigations.

I didn't rate this book higher because I felt characterization lacking. We are supposed to believe that Mel was a princess and had some responsibility in her prior home, she's the one that's most self-doubting, cautious and worrying, and is hen-pecked by the bird into worrying about the size of her bottom, while the wizardly one is impetuous, unselfconscious and manipulative in her 'cuteness.' I actually kept getting the two mixed up at first, thinking that the princess would be the self-centered, manipulative one.

Far too much of their daily dialogue focuses around deeply embedded emotional issues. It seems to me that one doesn't bring up personal grievances every time one gets a chance, especially with friends. We quickly learn that Mel wears men's clothes for comfort and Binnie feels left out that her uncle didn't think she should be left any inheritance because she's a "gel," which seems to be a derogatory slang for a girl, perhaps working girl (no, not that way). So we're given the premise of a sexist society, yet we witness Mel and Bibbie picking at each other, or the hexed-into-bird-shape Reg, or either of their guy friends. I'm all about consciousness raising, but desire to be treated like a grown up doesn't translate into acting like one, and these two need to act like friends, not competitors. The romance, however budding, between Monk and Mel, and perhaps Gerald and Bibbie, is very circumspect, and we know about it mostly because we are told, rather than shown. I don't particularly mind as I don't enjoy a lot of romance in my books, but it fell flat.

I felt the tone was consistently light and enjoyable. As the characters were given more to learn and do, they stopped picking at each other as much. The plot became interesting as the two cases converged, and the resolution satisfactory. I'll catch the next book from the library.

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### **Amy says**

I enjoyed the first novel in this trilogy, *The Accidental Sorcerer*, and while the action changes location here (from the more traditional fantasy land to an alternate modern-day life), this is still good fun.

I have to admit a soft spot for anyone who dedicates a novel to David Tennant from *Dr Who*, and this does indeed have a very *Who-ish* flavour to the humour and the adventure. Gerald is good value as the anti-hero, and the cast of supporting players are fun, even if they can be a little bit cliched their deliberate rebellion against traditional fantasy roles.

I look forward to the next novel, but in the meantime I will have to get hold of some of her other works (she writes Star Wars universe novels as well as her other books under the name of Karen Miller).

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### **Kathy says**

This is a sequel to *The Apprentice Wizard* which I liked. This one was good too, but in an odd way. I was in the mood for a light book, which this was, sort of. The style and dialogue and even the plot tends to be light, but the reactions of the characters is not. It is like watching James Bond and then having all the spies agonize over the killing. It throws you out of the story and makes you see that all the violence is bad and a normal person couldn't jump into being a spy without some deep soul searching and regrets. It was handled well, not over the top and preachy, nor tear laden and melodramatic, just sincere.

So here we have a light spy/fantasy book with some deep morality issues. I can't decide if I liked the book because of this, or in spite of it.

I like the setting as well. Fantasy books have really started to branch out in the last few years, no more

strictly medieval castles. This one is set in a sort of Edwardian period, lots of rules yet an awareness that maybe the rules should be changed. This time was the real era of suffragettes and progressive government as well as lots of new scientific discoveries. Mills got the feel of the era down well, and then put magic in. I am interested in where the series is going and what she will do with the characters now she has them all working together.

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### **Mike (the Paladin) says**

I wish I could sigh in print...

sigh.

I read the first in this series and thought it was pretty good. We set up a sort of magic spy agency or something like that anyway. it's not something that fits neatly into a category.

Here we're setting up a sort of witch detective agency. It starts out okay but for some reason it just ground down to a stultifying slow yawner. I mean she stays with the humor (though I wasn't as into it this time so much...invisible sprites leaving invisible sprite "poop" all around, including on people, is humorous. Okay).

Still I forged onward bored and wishing things would draw me in. We tell our story, reach our climax (which speeds things up a modicum) and frankly I'm relieved to be able to move on to another boo.

I don't know. I think the problem here is that book leans very heavily on it's cuteness/humor and this time I wasn't drawn in. I wasn't charmed. Too bad.

Will I read the next? I doubt it. I won't be reading it soon anyway. See what you think.

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### **Sbuchler says**

Genre: Urban High Fantasy/Mystery

The adventures continue. I enjoyed this novel as much as the first one (\_The Accidental Sorcerer\_). Again, the cover and blurb text is misleading - the tone of the book is not lighthearted. It's serious, but occasionally funny. This time Gerald shares the point-of-view spotlight with Mel (short for Her Royal Highness Princess Melissande of New Ottosland). Mills continues her habit of making her character's lives difficult: At the end of the first book Mel traipsed off to Ottosland to become a witch. It turns out that she had no aptitude. So instead she opens a business, Witches, Inc. with her boyfriend's sister Bibbie. Bibbie seems designed to be Mel's nightmare - she looks like the beautiful vision that everyone expects a princess to be, and on top of that she's a magical genius (just like her brothers); but despite very realistic twinges of jealous they get along well. Even while the business is having trouble finding it's feet. Unfortunately for them (but fortunately for the reader) their big break leads them on a collision course with Gerald's very first assignment as a very junior janitor (a.k.a. a government spy). Hi-jinx ensues.

Like most high fantasy the plot is full of action, adventure and almost incredible coincidences; however unlike most fantasy novels - the reader is actually \_shown\_ the hero being a surprisingly good guy. We're not

just told he's a good guy: Early in the novel, Gerald is essentially subjugated to the Milgram test (classic psych experiment, one of the results of which was the creation of the U.S. Human Subjects Committee, and requiring a review of almost all experiment proposals involving humans before the experiments can be performed). Gerald refuses to push the button. Looking at the Milgram results, that makes Gerald a very rare individual! He wallows in regret over the bad guys that he couldn't save. Again, a very unusual (but refreshing) character trait for a fantasy action hero! Repeatedly Gerald is subjected to situations with nasty choices; and each time he comes out a true hero, if somewhat battered by having to make the choices. Unlike most authors, Mills allows the reader to see and to trust that Gerald will make the best moral/ethical choices he can. Similarly, Mills shows the other characters also having realistic psychological reactions to violence and such things as discovering that one's brother was a psychopath. Again, I found this refreshing in my fiction - although this is a lot of why the book feels much heavier and more serious to me than the tone of the cover and marketing blurb might suggest.

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### **Deirdre says**

Gerald has survived his first adventures and now is in a secret government agency. He's hunting a deadly saboteur, trying his best to appear harmless and he would love to have his friends helping him. Princess Melissande and Reg the bird from the previous story are working with Monk Markham's sister Bibbie in a witching locum agency. They're not being very successful until they get caught up in a baking competition. They're helped by their social status. When they uncover the truth in the competition they then get asked to investigate more for their employer. This drags them into the same company as Gerald and suddenly they have to investigate things together. Gerald has to combine his job with keeping his friends safe and believing that his friends can help him.

It took a while to get into the stride of this story, and it whizzed past as the story came to its conclusion, I really want to read more in this series. Melissande is a great character and she really comes across as mostly self-reliant but willing to let others help, particularly if she lacks the skills. Gerald has to deal with his conscience a lot and makes hard decisions of the right reasons.

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### **Michael says**

I read the first book in this series, *Accidental Sorcerer*, and didn't love it. But, it had some promise and I was hoping that the series would take a turn for the better. Alas, this has to be one of the most annoying books I've read in a while. If you are someone who enjoys listening to two girls and a female bird incessantly nattering away at each other, then maybe this is the book for you. Otherwise, if you can imagine a fingernail screeching down a chalkboard, that is what the conversations feel like.

Karen, what were you thinking? We loved the *Kingmaker* series, give us more of that! Not this Robert Asprin-esque writing style. The only thing that could have made this book worse is if you threw in some vampires.

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### **Celia says**

Oh. Dear. God. There is such a thing as characters who get amusingly distracted and carry on witty

conversations with each other, and there are characters who spend three pages going back and forth on a single point while trying to get into a car, and constantly interrupting each other. Honestly, all the characters spend so much time telling each of the other characters to shut up and listen to them, or to stop arguing that if you cut all that out, the actual plot would have filled out a short story, perhaps a novella.

I was so irritated by all the characters in *Witches Incorporated* that I was relieved to finally reach the end of this book - which is a pity, because I liked the characters when they were in the first book of the series, and thought there would be interesting stories ahead for them. I suppose not, because they can't stop having pointlessly bickering about things.

The plot itself was fine, and it works well as a kind of fluffy mystery with secret agent elements, but the characters and the endless dialogue ruined the story for me.

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### **Jackie says**

Every now and then I find myself reading a book that I can't wait to finish so that I can read something a little 'meatier'

*Witches Incorporated* is one of these books. On the surface it is a spy novel involving wizards and a secret agency, but there is also a second story involving a detective agency run by a princess, a witch and a talking bird(also royalty but bewitched many years ago)

Now doesn't that sound as if it could be very interesting?

I certainly thought so when I started it but I was very wrong.

The characters are boring... they really shouldn't be, but they spend so much time arguing and bickering with each other, pages and pages of it, that it slows down the story quite alarmingly.

The plot itself was a good one, lots of twists and turns but the denouement was so obvious it quite spoiled it for me. I knew who the baddies were long before the end, and after that it was just a question of reading on , and waiting for the author to let me know if I was correct.

And as for the humour, well for me there were absolutely no 'laugh out loud' lines and very few smiles.

It was all very disappointing.

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### **Denaë Christine says**

Needed more Gerald.

Melissande is interesting, but she gets too bossy and downright mean. I'd blame it on too much exposure to Reg, but she was that way before she met Reg. I guess I can blame it on Lional. Basically, the characters do a bit too much arguing with each other, and blaming each other, and not enough of being humble and saying thanks.

That said, I liked the way this book went, with the Rogue Agent job and idea. I wanted to wring the beaurocrats'/politicians' necks the whole way, but that's normal. I expect KM was trying for that. Really, though, Gerald could have done a few things a bit differently to try and placate them better.

I really like how scared everyone is by Gerald's powers, and I love the fact that the dampener prevents him from using his full potentia. What a great drawback in order to make the story interesting. I also liked his dealings with Errol.

I did not predict the end, who was responsible and why and how and et cetera. Yes, I had my theories, but I couldn't honestly lean toward one with assurance until the book characters found out the culprits. That

surprise was a plus.  
I can't say I like Bibbie much.

Paraphrased quotes:

"Out here, the squirrels outnumbered the humans 5 to 1." What a great way to say "rural."

"Could eyelashes ache?" A vivid way to describe how exhausted one is.

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## **Jenny T says**

Significantly lighter in tone than the first book in the series, I didn't enjoy this one \*quite\* as much, due to what felt a bit like fluffy filler in the middle. That said, I adore these characters, especially Reg, the witty, cantankerous witch-in-bird-form, and Gerald, a rogue wizard who gives the story much more depth and darkness. The humor is delightful, and there's a good bit of drama, as well--the tone shifts often, but it's definitely growing on me.

I'm really looking forward to Book 3, which will focus on Monk Markham, an often-scatterbrained wizardly inventor.

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## **Crymsyn Hart says**

I really wanted to like it, but I had to force myself to get through like the middle 200 pages of the book. I have the third one, but I don't know if I want to read it.

I just think you could have gotten from A to B much sooner.

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## **Tobinsfavorite says**

I keep giving these four stars, and yet I think they are not four-star books, so what am I thinking? I'm thinking that when I'm not reading this book, I'm thinking about this book and planning when I will next get to read some of it. I'm thinking I read it a few pages at a time between making peanut-butter sandwiches and breaking up squabbles, wondering if I should put off the two pages I could read because I want to read more of it at one time. I'm thinking I really like the characters, even though some of my favorites may not be so fleshed out; they seem like real people that you get to know a little at a time. I'm thinking that the stories the characters know about each other, briefly referenced (how Gerald met Reg, for instance, from the first book), don't feel like I'll-tell-you-later hooks some authors use to get you to read the next book (\*coughKimHarrisoncough\*); you know there's a lot more to the story, and you'd like to know it, but it's OK if you never find out. I'm thinking I'm going out to the store tomorrow to buy the third one, which after finishing I will give as a gift to the friend who lent me the first two.

Now I have to bash the editors again. This is a huge improvement over the first book. It still has problems, but they're not a whole lot worse than the current lamentable average. The most egregious example by far was "You will present herself at eight o'clock." I surmise from the rest of the scene that this was written both "you/yourself" and "she/herself" and got twisted badly, perhaps in one of the very portal accidents described in the book itself.



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## **Kat says**

Basic Plot: Gerald takes on his first janitorial assignment, while Melissande and Bibbie start their own business up. Oddly their first case intersects with Gerald's, dropping the ladies into top-secret business.

I understand logical progression of character, and I completely understood the changes Gerald went through in this book. They made sense in light of the events of the first book. All the same, though, I wanted to like this book a lot more than I ended up liking it. It was actually hard to finish, and considering the intrigue in the plot, it shouldn't have been so hard to do. The problem with this book, though, wasn't Gerald's changes. The plot got bogged down in the details associated with the Witches, Inc group. That plotline couldn't decide what it was trying to be: feminist rant, mystery, or some kind of bizarre comedy of errors. It wasn't engaging. The feminist rants about "gels" also just went over the top. I consider myself to be a feminist, but this book's "feminism" was irritating. I'm just irritated in general. It wasn't a bad book, but the bad parts really bogged down the good parts. I'm honestly trying to figure out if the next book in the series is going to be worth the bother of reading it. I don't know.

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