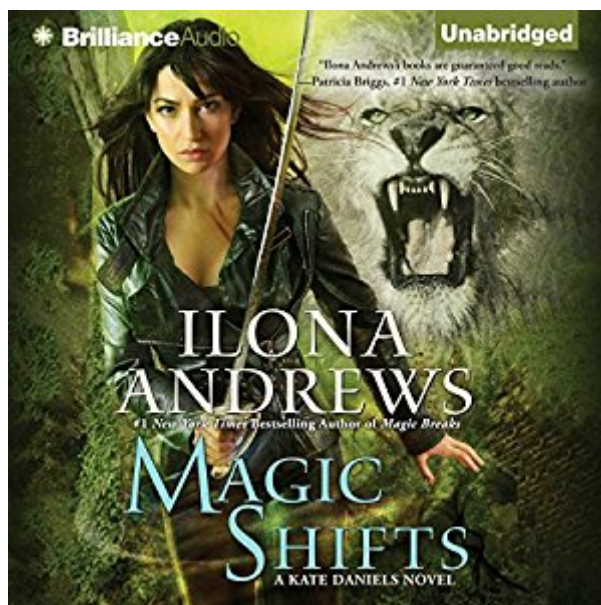


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Magic Shifts: Kate Daniels, Book 8



Synopsis

In the latest Kate Daniels novel from #1 New York Times bestselling author Ilona Andrews, magic is coming and going in waves in post-Shift Atlanta - and each crest leaves danger in its wake.... After breaking from life with the Pack, mercenary Kate Daniels and her mate - former Beast Lord Curran Lennart - are adjusting to a very different pace. While they're thrilled to escape all the infighting, Curran misses the constant challenges of leading the shapeshifters. So when the Pack offers him its stake in the Mercenary Guild, Curran seizes the opportunity - too bad the Guild wants nothing to do with him and Kate. Luckily, as a veteran merc, Kate can take over any of the Guild's unfinished jobs in order to bring in money and build their reputation. But what Kate and Curran don't realize is that the odd jobs they've been working are all connected. An ancient enemy has arisen, and Kate and Curran are the only ones who can stop it - before it takes their city apart piece by piece....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although this is technically the 8th installment to this series, this truly is a new beginning to a story arc that I'm very much looking forward to reading about. With all of the wonderful Urban Fantasy stories out there, the Kate Daniels series has been my favorite because not only does each book have an intriguing, fun, often emotional and action packed story to tell, but each book also contributed to an overarching storyline that makes you that much more crazed to get your hands on the next installment. I'm thrilled to say that this book continues that legacy, however for a while there, I actually had my doubts. As readers journey into the next chapter of Kate, Curran, and the

gang, it was anyone's guess as to where team Andrews were going to lead us, but once again, they do not disappoint. The story starts with Kate and Curran adjusting to "normal human life" living in a Pleasantville neighborhood and making a living with Cutting Edge, however dreams of peace and quiet are immediately and constantly interrupted in this book as Kate and Curran are deeply embroiled in the after effects of leaving the pack and trying to help their friends. Through a deeply intriguing and unique investigation, Kate and Curran come up against a power more dangerous than they've ever dealt with before and after the first 100 pages or so, the action is nearly non-stop. What I loved most about this installment is that the story has shifted to Kate and Curran as a team and you get to see them working together more than ever and growing more in love and respecting one another. I'll admit that historically, I haven't felt there was enough Curran, or many other characters for that matter, that I wanted to read about. Now that Kate's secret is out of the bag, we pretty much get a glimpse of everyone's reaction to that juicy morsel and no characters were left behind, although I wasn't thrilled with some of their reactions. There is a lot more humor and especially sarcasm with Magic Shifts and I found myself laughing out loud several times as well as dealing with an added depth and emotion to the story. I can only speculate, but it does appear there is an overarching story arc that I loved so much in the first seven books, but only time will tell how it develops. So why only four stars overall? It all comes down to the first 100 pages, where much of the previous events were recapped and all the characters were described as if we didn't know them. Although thought provoking, I did find the beginning rather slow, especially in having to read every character's physical descriptions and bios as if I hadn't already read 7 books about them before. Even with the release of Magic Breaks, they inserted bios about the characters so it didn't necessarily take up story time, but alas a fresh start apparently means revisiting their roots for new readers of the series. I for one, would not recommend starting with this story, however, if you choose to do so, this is still a great standalone and you'll eventually find yourself at the beginning wanting to learn more. The series remains extremely clever, action packed, and addictive and I'm already looking forward to the next.

I was actually surprisingly disappointed by this book. I still enjoyed it, but it didn't meet the standard I've come to expect from the excellent Ilona Andrews team. The plot got to be a bit repetitive (giant! victory. giant! victory. giant! victory), except for the shocking twist that came right around the halfway point... Mild spoiler with no details: it could have been very interesting, and it was filled with some heart-wrenching scenes, but within a chapter or two, it might as well never have happened for all the impact it had on Kate or the plot or the climax. The plot, though... This series is winding down, I

know, and the authors struggled with writing this one. For a book that ultimately sets up the endgame (well, at least looks in the direction of the endgame), the rather straightforward main plot (with the repetitive giants) should have been resolved a lot quicker with more time for pre-endgame movements. At the 99% complete mark in the ebook, that main plot still hadn't quite reached its climax. The minimal endgame stuff that's mentioned comes in the epilogue in that last 1% of the book. That is terrible pacing. The characters also seemed off. Kate was suddenly ignorant of things she probably should have known, like some details in Pack law or that more people chanting = faster magic-car starts (if she didn't know that-- and how couldn't she-- why did earlier in the book mention both she and Curran working on starting the car?). Her interactions with Curran were extra-gushy and she seemed a little extra-domestic. Major secondary characters barely made an appearance and mostly felt like they were included as cameos. Mahon regressed from the previous book, then (again, in that last 1% or so of book) suddenly dropped his big protests that had been an underlying obnoxiousness all book long.

I am happy to have Kate, Curran and Julie living outside the fortress walls of the Keep. Kate never wanted to live there, and she had no privacy or autonomy even living above the fray at the top of the stairwell with the guards and nannies. Now the Lennart family is separate but accessible to people such as nosey neighbors and surprise drop-ins (friendly and threatening, such as the 35-foot flaming grass-fed angus bull) (yum). I like Curran's prospects. Curran likes to problem-solve and arbitrate, but he also loves to get his hands dirty, as in the first chapter, where he and Kate fight a gaggle of ghouls at the border of the city. (It is interesting that Curran cannot feel the territory boundary.). I was concerned his new life might leave him at loose ends, and isolated, but that is not the case in Magic Shifts. Here are some characters I was happy to see return: a bouda driving a Ferrari, Derrek finding the scent trail, Nick Feldman the Knight feeling hostile (I am not sure why? He knows Kate), Saiman declining all assistance (maybe we have seen the end of him). I love the new alliance with the PAD and the forensic magician! Some characters I would have liked more from: "Dad" (still overbearing, still a threat, and not reassuring -- I hope he will be patient with Kate); Ghastek (still pale and gaunt, holding his coffee mug from Kate -- I wish prosperity and a promotion were treating him better); Rowena (saved by Kate but no follow-up); Christopher (he has the most refreshing, erudite, normal conversation with Kate, I loved it.) What I didn't love: the djinn. He seemed like an over-the-top character from the Houston Urban Legacy series. His connection to Kate was tangential -- she could have used a lot more back-up, sooner. I look forward to more information about Julie and Roland, maybe my favorite moment from the dinner scene at

Applebee's.

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