



Unleashed

John Levitt

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Mason is an enforcer, keeping magical practitioners on the straight and narrow. His "dog" Louie, is a faithful familiar who's proven over and over that he's a practitioner's best friend. But this time, Louie's in the line of fire when practitioners in San Francisco accidentally unleash a monster into the world.

Unleashed Details

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From Reader Review Unleashed for online ebook

Tiffany says

This series is so much fun! It's a nice change of pace for me to read a male author with a male main character. I love how he's a little self-deprecating with his weaknesses. And of course, Lou rocks! :)

Josh says

I'm still enjoying this series. The story of Mason, a magic enforcer in the SF community who would rather just be a jazz musician, is still a pretty good one and I enjoy the focus around the Ifrits, which are essentially magical companions in the tradition of a familiar, which is a fantasy trope that's being handled in a different and interesting way.

Basically, who wouldn't want a "dog" like Louie?

It's not a perfect narrative, however. Mason, for all that he's a likable sort, has a pretty serious lack of motivation/ambition (to the point that even the character admits it) and it puts a certain aimlessness into the book as well. Things happen to Mason rather than him being an active person too often. There's also a little repetition to the plot going on here, where the same kind of mistake are made by Mason and his friends, which is a bit irritating.

Still pretty good stuff with definite potential. The cast has gotten fairly well established and the Ifrits are pretty nifty. There's also an interesting aspect to the magical law enforcement aspect here where it's fairly clear that there really aren't any well-defined rules and laws behind it, so the potential for abuse is pretty high.

Julia says

Mason's having girl-trouble in this third book in the series that started with New Tricks. One ex-girlfriend returns from a year away in another dimension. Another ex-girlfriend lost her last boyfriend in the last book, and is leery of Mason. He meets a new girl, who seems nice, but she has her own baggage.

I prefer this one to book #2, New Tricks, because Mason and his allies don't feel so at odds.

MB Taylor says

Finished reading Unleashed (2009), the third in John Levitt's Dog Days Series. (The previous titles in the series are Dog Days (2007) and New Tricks (2008)).

So far this is a fun little urban fantasy series. The stories take place in a contemporary San Francisco where magic works; a fact most citizens are blissfully unaware of. The main characters are Mason, a practitioner,

part-time jazz musician and part-time monster hunter; his dog (sort of) Louie and an assortment of other magic users.

There are a lot of urban fantasy books out now, and it's hard to pick and choose between them. Charles de Lint is probably my favorite writer in the genre, and my favorite series is Jim Butcher's *The Dresden Files*. The lines between urban fantasy, vampire and zombie fiction aren't all that rigid. I've sampled a few other series: Rachael Meade's *Succubus* series, Simon R. Greene's *Nightside* series, Mario Acevedo's books about Felix Gomez, L.A. Banks' *Vampire Huntress* series and probably a few others I can't remember.

For some reason John Levitt's series pleases more than the others. The stories seem gentle somehow, although the subject matter certainly isn't. *Unleashed* has blood and dismembered bodies aplenty (most of the actual dismembering happens offstage), scary monsters and even a zombie. Perhaps it's just that Levitt makes me care about his characters. I want them all to survive and I want most of them to be happy.

Linda Welch says

A good plot, a fun read, but not quite up to the standard of the first two books in the series. I had to remove a star due to mistakes made far too often by novice writers. There is a misconception that an author sends his work to a proofreader and copy-editor, who take care of his mistakes. It doesn't work that way. The proofreader and copy-editor MARK his mistakes and send it back to him for revision. Obviously, Levitt either used a lousy proofreader and copy-editor, or he skipped over revisions and omitted much he should have corrected.

Anita says

I gave up on this one after 101 pages - so about 1/3 in. The writing just wasn't good. I've never loved the musician/magician hero in this series, but this time I just couldn't take it. I've seen no development of his character in 3 books and the writing sounds like an inventory rather than an emotionally evocative story. I'm just fed up - get a decent editor, damn it! There's only so far a cute dog side-kick can take a story.

I have no idea what the real point of this book is, but in the first third, there are some bad creatures lose and Mason, Eli, and Victor thing that maybe Sherman got sucked into a different dimension rather than dying a couple books ago. Maybe they'll get her out.

JC says

This was the third book in the series and seemed to suffer from third-movie syndrome in that the author put too many bad-guys in and wound up glossing over much of the story just to have time for each.

The first baddy, despite tearing up Victor in the first chapter is quickly forgotten and its final appearance seemed to be too much of stretch. More like, "oh yeah, I forgot this thing was still running around until I re-read the first chapter."

The second baddy is one of those where we're not sure if it is a baddy or not, and ultimately, I think it was handled pretty well.

The main baddy didn't get enough screen-time to be truly evil. I wasn't sure how I felt about it, and wasn't sure how I felt about the ending because of that.

The best parts of the book are the passages where Mason and Lou just get to chill out. I could tell that John Levitt just wanted to spend time writing about what he's passionate about, music.

JK says

I may all it quits with the series after this book. Each one has been the exact same thing. I especially get sick of reading about how much like a dog Lou is, but don't forget he's not really a dog. And oh look at Lou not doing something like a dog, but that's okay because he's not a dog. Oh hey, in case you forgot LOU IS NOT A DOG. Lou's. Not. A. Dog. :|

Seriousl, Mr Levitt, at this point in the series I think we all understand that the thing isn't a dog. I also know that Victor is just so uber powerful and awesome. That Eli is a genius and knows the answer to everything. And that, yes, Mason has a lot of talent, but just doesn't know technical crap. Yes, I understand all of these things and don't need to be told every other chapter.

Also, stop with the old flings and black practitioners. Just stop. Please.

One last thing - for once make it a mystery what's happening or what the bad guy is. One super small detail that could be shared amongst many people/creatures shouldn't point people in the right direction every single time. Something having hair doesn't automatically mean it's a werewolf. (no, that's not what happens in this book or any of the previous ones, it's just an example to show what i mean) There are plenty of monsters (and people) that have hair. Oye.

Andrew says

With this latest addition to the "Dog Days" series, I am officially a fan. "Unleashed" is my favorite so far. Levitt did a great job of building suspense, creating vivid images of the paranormal, and keeping the reader guessing.

The second book in the series, "New Tricks", was fine, but did not grab me as much as the first book, "Dog Days." "Unleashed" just seems more put together as a story and is definitely more creepy. I wish I could comment in more detail, but I don't want to give anything away--however I was glad to see some characters from earlier in the series back and I am interested in seeing what Levitt does with them in future editions.

There is one issue in this novel that the author addresses, but ultimately leaves unanswered. I suspect it will be part of the next book, and I am looking forward to seeing how it is handled. I can say I was pleased how this story ended.

If you are a fan of Butcher's "Harry Dresden" or Brigg's "Mercy Thompson" series, you will probably enjoy Levitt's stories.

Joseph Teller says

I have a love for how John Levitt uses the city of San Francisco and its landmarks heavily within this series of books. It makes the city, its cultures and its landscape come alive in a wonderful way,

This book starts off with Mason and Louie dealing with some loose ends from the previous novels, and he finds out that things are never simple, never solved by ignoring them and that everyone around him is gonna have to take risks if they want to be near him and his fellow magical world enforcers.

The plot twists are good, and effective along the way with a problem that starts small, gets bigger and gets nasty. Magic is rarely the answer around Mason, and this storyline is another case of just that until nearly the end.

Overall a decent book, but the series is getting a bit on the dark side for me, like the Dresden books, and it worries me that it will step into a level of urban horror that is just too far for my tastes.

4fabelines Cox says

Mason has got trouble. The fake Ifrit that was let loose in New Tricks from the shadey practitioner is causing a lot of problems. People are getting killed and torn apart in the city.

Mason goes to his street friends to get information and finds a vortex of power that had not gone away after the last magic confrontation.

Mason meets a psychic named Morgan, she does a reading for him.. prompted by her parents. She sees a danger in the woods and warns Mason. Of course Mason goes to the woods and finds what is waiting for him. He and Louie discover another menace is in town. It is much worse than they originally thought.

Angela says

I swung into *Unleashed*, Book 3 of John Levitt's *Dog Days* series, pretty much on the heels of Book 2. This was a very good way to read it, given that certain events from Book 2 have immediate ramifications for Book 3; in fact, *Unleashed* opens with Mason and Victor having to hunt down one of those dangling plot ends.

Much of this book's plot, in fact, is dealing with ramifications of what happened in Book 2. A portal has been opened, you see--and the Ifrit Gone Wrong is not the only thing that's come through. Something else has shown up in the city, and it's able to imitate anyone. Even magical practitioners.

This time around as he's trying to fix what's gone wrong, we get to see Mason meet a pretty young psychic who is understandably shocked that there are people who can actually work magic in the world. She's even

more shocked when she starts having visions with troubling suggestions indeed for what's about to happen to Mason, too. We also get a couple of new side characters we haven't seen before, and you can probably guess from that what sort of role they'll have in the plot; this was handled well enough, though, that I didn't mind the obvious pointers in their directions.

What's got the biggest possible ramifications for further books in this series, though, is the return of a character we'd thought dead as of Book 1. I won't say who to avoid spoilers, but I'm hoping that what I read as hints that this character has also gone Wrong will bear fruit.

We'll just have to see, because after two satisfying reads in this series, I'm definitely coming back for more. Four stars.

Loren says

Levitt hits his stride with this book. His increasing familiarity with the characters leads to deepened characterization. San Francisco continues to be the centerpiece of the story, as much a character as any of the others. This time our heroes wander the Presidio, the redwoods at Muir Woods, and (my favorite) the Neptune Society Columbarium off of Geary. I was so absorbed in this that I got on the wrong train and almost missed the reading of my own book I was hosting that night.

Kendra says

Another enjoyable read. It almost immediately follows the end of book 2 and continues from there. Thoroughly enjoying all the twists and turns, the interactions with the "archetypes", the tastefully done Victor and boyfriend Timothy, and of course Lou. I enjoy the magic, and the mundane weaving together, showing that one can't just survive on only one thing. The humor is infectious, and I love the musical chat throughout.

James says

This is a definite improvement on its predecessors by a long shot, it was as if a piece of the puzzle finally fell into place with the series and everything just flowed and flowed and before I knew it I had finished the book.

It is a vast improvement in the way that it flows, the character development and interaction and the plot was interesting to the last with twists and turns to keep you guessing.

However there were a few things that niggled at me;

1. His damned tattoo. What does it all mean? I know that it is a series plot, but this is the third novel and all I know is that it's from his youth and there was a monster who recognised it in the previous book.

2. It seems that a lot of characters are introduced just so that they can be used in the plot and then killed off. It would be nice to see a steady flow of characters, say someone who was introduced in this book and then did nothing major until book eight where he turns out to be an evil twat keen on taking over the world - you

know, something to shock us. Every time a new character is introduced in this series I can't help but think 'how is this one going to be used, manipulated and/or killed?'

Despite that though this a serious step up in writing ability and plot line, and with this book Levitt has ensured that I will continue to try all his books now that I know he has this in him.

I advise you read this, although it will make more sense if you read the series in chronological order - and if you do, don't be overly put off by the first two, they're not bad, just not amazing.

Have fun reading.
