



# The Snake Charm

*Laura Lam*

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Laura Lam

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Untold centuries ago, the Archipelago was ruled by the Alder—mysterious beings who vanished, leaving behind only scattered artefacts of unknown power, called Vestige. Sometimes, a person will be lucky or unlucky enough to discover that each piece of Vestige has its own tale to tell...

## The Snake Charm

*“To most, Drystan was just another buffoon in the collective of clowns. But behind the inane grin, he saw everything, keeping the secrets he discovered close, like precious gems to barter.”*

Mutiny is brewing in R.H. Ragona’s Circus of Magic. When Linden, the leader of the clowns steals one of the ringmaster’s most prized possessions, Drystan, the white clown, finds himself caught in the middle. Tasked with retrieving the Lethe, he’s forced to betray Linden or risk his troubled past coming to light. But the Vestige artifact has its own history and its own power. Drystan will learn what it can really do, and who it can hurt.

**Vestigial Tales** are stories set in the world of the award-nominated Micah Grey series. Step behind the circus ring from Pantomime, the theatre of Shadowplay, and more...

## The Snake Charm Details

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Author : Laura Lam

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# From Reader Review The Snake Charm for online ebook

## Emma says

\*throws ALL THE STARS at it\*

THE SNAKE CHARM IS SO GOOD. It's like a smaller scale version of "Pantomime", a quick read (maybe 2 hours) but with the same twists, turns, atmosphere and fight scenes.

It's also completely standalone, and if you haven't read Laura's "Pantomime" I'd read this first -- it adds even more depth to the circus members.

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## J.B. Rockwell says

Fans of 'Pantomime' and 'Shadowplay' will love this story and the chance to get some backstory and a standalone adventure involving one of the central characters of both books. And if you haven't read the books, you'll want to after you read this. Can't wait for the next 'Vestigial Tale' so I can gobble it up!

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## Lisa says

Laura Lam can write about a clown and make me not throw my Kindle away in fear. That, my friends, is a skill and a half.

Not only that, but with The Snake Charm (and indeed, with the first two full-length books in her Pantomime series, if you haven't read them do it now) she's given me that most lovely joy of joys – a character I love. Drystan Hornbeam won me over pretty much at once, and over the course of two books I've swooned, cheered and declared my grabby-hands desire for more of him. So, naturally, I grabbed this short story at the earliest opportunity and devoured it likewise.

Now I've got the bookish equivalent of a happy belly.

Everything I love about the Pantomime books, with the exception of their protagonist – this is a prequel story – is here. The circus setting, caught in some intriguing place between romantic and enthralling, and grimly realistic, swept me up just like it did the first time out. The Alder magic, in the form of a Vestige artifact called a Lethe – and if you know your magical lore, you can guess at what its power involves – is as wonderfully mysterious as ever. And then there's the assortment of shady characters, most of them sympathetic in some way, but still managing to be the types you don't want to meet in a dark alley or with a lot of money in your wallet. It's a short story, but there's so very much contained here, and Laura pulls it all together into a tasty reading treat that left me happy with what I'd feasted my eyes on, yet wanting more badly enough that I can't wait for the next story!

And if there's ever other purchasable merchandise made available, I dare say I will be all over that. \*Raises hand\* I am a fangirl.

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## Leontii Cristea says

I was lucky enough to read a very early draft of this - and it is a wonderful story. I'm excited to buy it and read it in all its polished and shining glory. I'm eagerly anticipating more Vestigial stories from the very gorgeously-named "Penglass Publishing".

Excited!!

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## Lucy-May says

I love it when authors write short stories or novellas to accompany their books but I **always** wish they were longer!! I was really getting into this story, & I was being reminded of how much I fancy Drystan, & then it finished so now I'm sad.

This was a fab little story though & really reinforced how I already felt about the characters! Sometimes I really wish I could escape to the world of this series because I love it so, so much.

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## Joseph says

You'll need to read Lam's Pantomime to appreciate the skilled characterization and interplay in this short novella. Both are worthwhile.

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## Andrew says

Review Taken From The Pewter Wolf

In a prequel (of sorts) of Pantomime (if you haven't read it, Read it! It's SO GOOD!), we discover the events at R.H. Ragona's Circus of Magic that happened before Micah Grey joined. The white clown, Drystan, acts like an idiot, but it watches. Behind the smile, is a man who knows and hides secrets. So when the leader of the clowns, Linden, steals something precious from the cruel ringmaster, Drystan finds himself caught in the middle and he must face a choice: betray Linden or have his own dark secret revealed...

Now, I loved Pantomime so I got excited to read this and, while it has been a while since I read Pantomime and it took me a good few clicks of my Kindle before I remembered who and who, I found this addictive reading and fun. It's Laura's making her world bigger - which is a good thing seeing as Pantomime's publisher, Strange Chemistry, is no more and Laura had always planned to write a third book in the series...

But with this four novella series, I think I need to read these and Shadowplay very VERY soon. I mean, I have too! And so should you as this world that Laura Lam has created is one of the most unique I have read in quite some time.

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## Cynthia says

(Find the original review and more at Jellyfish Reads.)

### Actual rating: 3.5 stars

*The Snake Charm* is a little prequel story to *Pantomime*. It stands well on its own, so you can read it even without reading *Pantomime* first, but you'd probably be able to enjoy it a lot more if you have read both *Pantomime* and *Shadowplay*.

I liked this a lot! You all know how much I loved *Pantomime* and *Shadowplay*, and the universe of these books. This was an interesting look at a powerful and potentially terrifying Vestige artefact (I think it's pretty cool that these tales are all going to be centred around different Vestige artefacts, because they're fascinating and I can't wait to learn about other artefacts!), and I liked getting to know Drystan a bit more. What he was like at the circus, before Micah came along; the touch of loneliness in him. The way he quietly observes, and always keeps his true self hidden. It makes me all the happier that I got to see him the way he was in *Shadowplay*, so much more open, all the trust he showed in Micah in that book (and the trust that Micah showed in him!).

I also liked the glimpses of Frit that we got in *The Snake Charm*. If you know her story from *Pantomime*, you'll know that it is a very sad one, and that's the case here too, somehow sadder for the hint of hope that still lingers in her.

I only wish this story had been longer! I really want to spend more time with Drystan. I just am not very used to reading short stories most of the time and I feel like with a short story of this length, by the time I'm really getting into it, it's already over. I like to have more stuff to sink my teeth into. The *Vestigial Tales* are going to be of varying lengths though, and some will be longer, so I'm really looking forward to the rest of them!

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## Ashley Ferguson says

I love *Pantomime* and *Shadowplay*, and I was so excited to learn that Laura was writing a series of short stories to tell the background stories of some of the other characters! Especially since the first one, *The Snake Charm*, is about Drystan. He's my favorite character in the series so far, and I loved learning more about him!

*The Snake Charm* takes place before Micah joins the circus, so it introduces a couple of characters that weren't in the circus when *Pantomime* starts. It was fun to learn about them even if they don't make it to the books, and to see how the circus ends up the way it does. There are also parts of Drystan's past that are discussed that are not mentioned in the other books, and it totally makes sense why when you read this story.

I think my favorite part of this story was learning more about the Vestige though. They're kind of talked about in the books, but it's always very mysterious and there's never very much detail about any of the Vestige. I mean, there are a couple that play a huge part in the books. But the Lethe is by far the most

interesting one so far! It's dangerous and aptly named, and I love that it looks like a snake charm since many of the people in the circus possess serpent-like qualities.

If you've read *Pantomime* and *Shadowplay*, I would definitely recommend this story to you. It expands the world of Ellada and the characters a little bit more and is short enough that you can read it fairly quickly. I'm looking forward to more *Vestigial Tales* to hold me over until the next book, and especially to learning more about the *Vestige* artifacts and some of the minor characters! Laura Lam's writing is absolutely gorgeous, and *The Snake Charm* is another example of her brilliant work. A 5/5!

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### **David Macarthur says**

Can you imagine a dwarf knocking out a mammoth? That's what *The Snake Charm* is; small but packs a punch. You get sucked in right away with character descriptions that make you feel like you know them but that you have more to find out and more importantly leaving you wanting to find out more.

I still need to read *Pantomime* (I know I'm a bit behind right?) but was told this would stand fine on its own and even as a bit of an introduction and it's certainly done that, leaving me wanting to get back to *Pantomime* soon.

You'll not take two sittings to read through it, well worth your time.

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### **Laura Lam says**

This story is now PERMAFREE on Kindle! Please give it a download if you fancy reading about a Circus of Magic.

This is the first in my series of short stories and novellas set in the same world as the Micah Grey novels. As with my other "reviews" on Goodreads, here's some pictorial hints...

It stars Drystan, the white clown from *Pantomime & Shadowplay*, but can be read even if you haven't picked those up.

It's set in R.H. Ragona's Circus of Magic before Micah Grey joined

It features a *Vestige* artefact called a *Lethe*, which looks like a Snake Charm. Many other characters in the stories are serpents in other ways...

I hope you'll enjoy returning to R.H. Ragona's Circus of Magic, or discovering it for the first time.

Images from my Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/micahgrey/>

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## Sarah says

You can currently download this for free from Smashwords [here](#) or read it online via Wattpad [here](#)

I'm a huge fan of **Laura Lam's** Micha Grey series, she created such an interesting world where magic is no longer a constant thing but instead lives on in rare artefacts known as Vestige. These artefacts often have dangerous powers but you never know what will happen until you actually try to use one. Laura has created this spin off series to tell the stories of some of these Vestige items, some of the stories will feature characters we've already met in the main series while other stories will introduce new characters but I'm sure they'll all be interesting to read.

**The Snake Charm** is kind of a prequel to **Pantomime**, it's set at R.H. Ragona's Circus of Magic and told from the point of view of the white clown Drystan who is one of the main characters in the series. It's set before Micha joins the circus and I really enjoyed seeing a different side to Drystan. While I do think you can still read and enjoy this even if you've not read the full length books set in this world I personally think you'll enjoy it much more if you've at least read **Pantomime** so are already familiar with the characters.

We already know that Drystan is keeping secrets but this shows what an impossible position those secrets put him in when he is torn between helping one of the other clowns or the circus ringmaster Bill. I'm not going to say more so you'll just have to read the story to find out what happens but I really enjoyed revisiting this world and I'm looking forward to reading the remaining Vestigial Tales.

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## Michelle (Fluttering Butterflies) says

When I first heard about Laura Lam's decision to self-publish a collection of Vestigial Tales, I was incredibly excited. I love the world she created in Pantomime and Shadowplay. I loved the characters and Vestige and I couldn't wait to read more and find out every bit of new information about this world that I could...

And The Snake Charm did not disappoint. This story focuses on Drystan, the White Clown, before Micah Grey shows up at RH Ragona's Circus of Magic. It tells this story of unrest amongst the clowns and how Drystan finds himself in the middle of this fight between one of the other clowns and Bil, the ringmaster involving an incredibly powerful piece of Vestige.

I think what The Snake Charm does so well is that not only does it show us the dangers and consequences that come with owning this particular piece of Vestige but it also gives a bit fuller of a back story to a really well-loved character. Drystan has always been one of my favourite characters from Pantomime and Shadowplay and I loved that he gets the full spotlight in this novella. It was fun to see his role in the circus a little better and to see his perspective on some of the other key players in the circus before Micah Grey shows up.

I thought The Snake Charm was a wonderful addition to this world. It was a fun adventure and I can't wait to read the other Vestigial Tales, The Fisherman's Net, The Tarot Reader and The Card Sharp.

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## Tom Loock says

Clearly an event cut from *Pantomime* that was edited out for a reason. If it serves any purpose than it is a bit of background on Drystan, one of the main characters from the trilogy.

I have read and enjoyed the trilogy and had hoped the 'Vestigial Tales' would enrich the books, but this one was lukewarm and disappointing.

The other four volumes are apparently 20 - 78 pages long and I'm not tempted to spend (the current asking price of) £2 for them, sorry!

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## Nikki says

Another review of this said that you can read it without having read *Pantomime* and *Shadowplay*, but I'm not sure of that; I think I might've preferred to start with those two, after all. Still, it gives a nice taster of the world and some of the things that're out there -- and, I gather, some of the characters. I'm looking forward to seeing more of Drystan, and exploring this world more.

I did feel like I was at a disadvantage, though, not knowing the world already. You can pick up on the key terms/concepts -- Vestige, Lethe, Drystan being the son of some high-class family -- and maybe it's just my love of world-building, but I felt like I wanted to know more *before* reading this, to appreciate it more, and maybe how it fits in with the novels.

Ah well, definite impetus to get on with it and read *Pantomime* and *Shadowplay*!

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