



Owl and the Japanese Circus

Kristi Charish

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Ex-archaeology grad student turned international antiquities thief, Alix—better known now as Owl—has one rule. No supernatural jobs. Ever. Until she crosses paths with Mr. Kurosawa, a red dragon who owns and runs the Japanese Circus Casino in Las Vegas. He insists Owl retrieve an artifact stolen three thousand years ago, and makes her an offer she can't refuse: he'll get rid of a pack of vampires that want her dead. A dragon is about the only entity on the planet that can deliver on Owl's vampire problem – and let's face it, dragons are known to eat the odd thief.

Owl retraces the steps of Mr. Kurosawa's ancient thief from Japan to Bali with the help of her best friend, Nadya, and an attractive mercenary. As it turns out though, finding the scroll is the least of her worries. When she figures out one of Mr. Kurosawa's trusted advisors is orchestrating a plan to use a weapon powerful enough to wipe out a city, things go to hell in a hand basket fast...and Owl has to pick sides.

Owl and the Japanese Circus Details

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From Reader Review Owl and the Japanese Circus for online ebook

Kaora says

Pigs are flying, hell is frozen, and Kaora read and enjoyed an Urban Fantasy.

What the hell is going on?

Owl and the Japanese Circus follows Owl, a socially awkward thief with a heart of gold. On the run from vampires, Owl is offered the chance to escape her hunters in exchange for finding an artifact. The only catch - he is a dragon and Owl doesn't work for the supernatural. But the offer is one that is too good to pass up...

I have a strict policy. No magic, no monsters, no supernatural clients. Ever. I stumbled into what I like to call "supernatural shit" on my third job. Completely by accident, I might add. If you were wondering what drove me off the grid into living in a Winnebago, using disposable phone and hijacked satellite internet, that was it.

I really liked Owl as a protagonist. She was sarcastic, and smart, although she had an issue with throwing herself into bad situations without thinking. I thought she provided a unique voice.

Yup, that's me, along with the passport that said I was a Canadian archaeology student named Charity Greenwood. I mean, Charity Greenwood - the name reeks of wholesome goodness. No one is oing to stop Charity Greenwood at a security checkpoint or at a middle-security digsite.

The story was intriguing with a cast of supernatural characters. An incubus, a naga, vengeful ghosts, vampires and even a dragon. I thought it was an interesting world and the story kept me hooked.

I was hoping that it would be romance free (ha yeah right UF without romance), but it wasn't. While I didn't care much for the love interest. I thought he was nothing special and really couldn't understand the draw (other than looks *eyeroll*). Thankfully it took a backseat, and didn't distract from the main story too much.

While I am no means an expert on this genre, as I'm relatively new to it, I thought this was a great start to a series that I look forward to.

Cross posted at Kaora's Corner.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Owl, ex-archaeology grad student turned international antiquities thief gets an offer she can't refuse from Mr. Kurosawa, a red dragon. If she retrieves an artifact stolen thousands of years ago will he get rid of a pack of vampires that want her dead. She agrees to the offer, not only because of her vampire problem but because dragons like to eat thieves.

This is the first book (of many I hope) about Owl and a very good first book. I liked Owl from the beginning. She's a smart mouth thief with a knack for finding trouble and a faithful companion by her side; Captain a vampire-hating cat. Owl has been laying low for months now hiding from vampires after a deal gone sour.

So an offer from a dragon to get rid of her problem is perfect even though she usually tries to stay the hell away from supernaturals.

Beside Owl and the Captain, we also get to meet Nadya, her best friend, Rynn, bartender and also the guy she's been shunning since he kissed her. Oricho and Lady Siyu that works for Mr. Kurosawa and are the ones that Owl has to report to. But the guy I liked the most is actually the one that we hardly get to meet, Carpe, Owl's online gaming partner. Yeah, Owl likes to play an online game called World Quest when she's not out stealing...eh, I mean retrieving artifacts. Of course, old enemies show up, like Alexander a vampire that really don't like her.

Of course, finding the artifact isn't a piece of cake and soon Owl, Nadya, and Rynn are in deep trouble and they have to fight vampires, Nagas and other creatures along the way.

I liked the book for its adventure, its action, and its humor. It was a fun and a pleasant read and I truly recommend this book to anyone that likes adventure books with a strong female character. Owl is great, she's not perfect. For instance, she has a tendency to talk when she should keep her mouth shut. I even liked the relationship between Owl and Ryan and I'm extremely picky when it comes to romance.

Now I'm just looking forward to the next book!

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!

XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says

? **DNF at 15%**. Because there is only so much complete, total, utter stupidity I can take.

My collection of **Stupidly Stupid Pieces of Crap** (SSPoC™) is on the rise! Go me! I feel so special right now, and so lucky to have come across such an **amazing gem**! What a wonderfully crafted, beautifully told story! I **blissfully enjoyed** every single minute I ~~wasted~~ spent ~~DNFing~~ reading it. This, ladies and gentleman, is the **Marvelous Magic of Books** (MMB™). You know, when you get so ~~aggravated by~~ lost in the tale you are reading that ~~you want to smash your Kindle against the nearest wall~~ the outside world disappears, and all of your troubles with it? Peace, serenity, fulfillment and stuff. **It really is a thing of beauty.**

Get it? Good. It looks like there might be hope for you yet, my Little Barnacles. Wow. Who would have thought?!

Okay. Time to cut the Stupid Crap and get right to the Stupid Point. What is so Stupidly Stupid about this particular PoC™? The **delightfully entertaining and superiorly witty heroine!** I love her. What an amazing mc she is. But just how amazing is she, you ask? Well, our dear girl Owl has **so many stellar qualities** I'm not sure where to begin, but I will try and make a short list for you (because I am really nice and thoughtful and stuff). Let's see...**stupid lovely Owl** is (check all that ~~apply~~ apply):

▲ Stupidly Named.

But you probably didn't need me to point that out.

▲ Stupidly Full of Herself.

Yeah, she's pretty awesome. It's just that **she's the only one who knows it**. Okay, that's not really fair. To be honest, our Silly Girl in residence can be pretty talented: she can *read and write ten languages, including Japanese, fluently. Two of them are even dead*. **Bloody hell, the girl's a genius**. More or less. I mean, she's super fluent in TEN freaking languages, but she *just can't speak or understand a word of any of them*. And that makes perfect sense. Told you the girl was a genius. Watch out, Stephen Hawking, Owl is **out to get you!**

▲ Stupidly Immature.

Silly Owl is so refreshingly juvenile that reading her Silly Adventures make me feel like I'm 12 again. It's absolutely **delightful**.

▲ Stupidly Annoying.

But that might just be me. I am, after all, quite allergic to **idiotic nitwits**.

▲ Stupidly Stupid.

But, who knows, it may be nothing but a cunning act on her part. Yeah, that's probably it. Silly Owl must be an **Undercover Airhead** (UA™). I mean, no one can really be that stupid, right?

▲ Stupidly Filthy Rich.

We **kind of** got that she had truck loads of money the first **200 times** you mentioned it, Kristi Charish. But hey, you can never be too careful. Your readers are probably as **superiorly intelligent** as ~~Ms Einstein~~ Owl here, so it's better to play it safe and rehash a little bit to make sure they get your point. That **brand dropping** thing is quite the genius idea, by the way: by naming Chanel, Versace, Vuitton and Ralph Lauren about 225659 times, I think there is a **slight possibility** that your brain-dead readers might understand that Silly Owl has tons of doe. And that she might be Stupidly Superficial. Which takes us right to ↓↓

▲ Stupidly Superficial.

Damn, that girl is so good she makes Kim Kardashian look like a **total amateur**. Owl, you are my hero. Forget Lady, forget Kate Daniels, **I want to be you when I grow up**. Oh yeah, that would definitely be a **dream come true**.

By the way, do you know what else makes Owl super stupid special? She manages to get the hots for a blond, Caucasian (and obviously good-looking) guy in Tokyo. Because, come on, who would fall for a yucky, brown-haired (and obviously ugly as hell) Asian guy?! In Tokyo, of all places?! **Ew. Ew. Ew.** Okay, it seems that I'm being unusually unfair again (must be some weird virus I caught). Apparently, *you see a lot of blonds in Japan, Japanese and Caucasian*. Oops, my bad, I stand dutifully corrected. I guess this means Dear Owl is not so **stupid special** after all. I guess it just means she has **crappy taste in men**.

Oh, and guess what else? Owl is pretty stupid, too. Yes, absolutely. I kid you not.

And the rest of the characters of this book? They are so paper-thin and decaffeinated that they make the Kings and Queens of Decaf (aka the Chicagoland Vampires) look like **potential Nobel Prize recipients**.

And the story? Well, let me think for a second there...I know it was pretty fascinating, and that there was something **crucially important** I wanted to say about it, but I can't quite recall what it was right now...Oh wait, I know!

► **And the moral of this non-review is:** this was such a pathetic SSPoC™ that it made me want to pick up The Blade Itself again. Yes, it's that bad. But hey, **everyone else** seems to think this book is pretty awesome. Which probably means ~~everyone~~ I read the book wrong. **Again.** Well, either that or ~~their~~ my Stupidity Detector is broken. **Again.**

Sh3lly (grumpybookgrrrl.com) says

Best part of the book: Captain, the Egyptian Mau!

This was an urban fantasy that had some fresh ideas. The world-building was excellent. Owl is an archaeology student turned acquirer of artifacts (okay, she's a thief). She gets hired to find some ancient scrolls (for a dragon, no less!) and all hell breaks loose. Vampires are after her, she doesn't know who she can trust, everything's crazy.

She's got this cat who is bred to hunt and kill vampires. It's a really cool idea. That was a total win. I liked the author's take on vampires and dragons and incubi and other paranormal creatures.

What I didn't like: Owl is annoying. We know she has "people" issues. She doesn't do well in relationships or have many friends. I like this in theory, but it's an issue that comes up repeatedly and gets a little old as an excuse for Owl to be irritating and do and say dumb things. I seriously hope there is growth for her character in the next book or I will be angry.

Owl is prejudiced regarding supernaturals to a fault. That got old too. She views them as inferior then gets mad when they do the same thing about humans.

However, I do like how she is **not** a Special Snowflake.

I LOVED Rynn. **New Book Boyfriend!** It did seem like he swooped in and saved Owl too much, though. Owl was annoying in her interactions with him. I didn't like the angst and drama, but it seemed to be resolved fairly quickly so I won't get ragey about it. I'm glad the author didn't stretch the mystery about him out to the next book. That would have seriously ticked me off.

I feel like this book could have been shorter. I found myself just wanting things to pick up. Not sure I'm a fan of the side plot about her online gaming, but at the same time, it sort of intrigues me?

Once again, there was some great world-building and supporting characters in this book. I liked the world, the premise, and it has a lot of potential as a series. I think I would have given this 4 stars if not for Owl grating on my nerves a little too much. I'll still give book 2 a try.

Buddy read in March 2016 with the MacHalo group.

Also read this for the 2016 MacHalo reading challenge. 7. A book with non-human characters

Sanaa says

[4.5 Stars] So pretty much if you like vampire hunting cats, a reckless antique thief who is a bit socially awkward and likes online role playing games, an underground supernatural world that you learn about here and there, an action packed indiana janes-esque plot, japan, and dragons, you should probably read this one!

Wasn't expecting to love this much as I did, but here I am really freaking loving it. The only reason this doesn't get a 5 star rating is because Owl did something really grating in the book, and then it was offhandedly referenced throughout the book in a joking way. It kinda put me off a little. Everything I loved though! The characters are super intriguing, and I can't wait to learn more about them. The world building is really subtle with no huge info dumps or anything, but what we did learn was unique and exciting. I know we are going to learn a ton more in later books, and that ending!? Carpe is the character I am MOST interested in.

Yodamom says

Loved this nerd infused urban fantasy action filled romance touched tale. It hit all my fun times buttons, dragons, incubuses, vampires, elves, ghosts, all kinds of para-things plus gammers, hackers and archeologists. I never had a meh moment, I enjoyed the heck out of this one. Fun.

Owl is a thief, she is a good thief which is how she got into her present predicament working for a dragon. She was a promising archeology student till something went bad. It got worse she did a job for some vampires and well now they want her dead, permanently. She lives in her van driving from place to place with her smart kitty trying to stay off the grid. Then one day she gets an offer she can't refuse from a dragon who offers to get the vampires off her back if she works for him, or he'll just end her. She does what anyone would do she takes the job, and drags her friends in for fun and adventure. They have to find something so hidden it just might be impossible.

Owl is smart but she is not the most observant when it comes to spotting the others in the world. She seems to suffer from TSTL moments but she really doesn't, she just didn't see it. She's not good with people and overlooks the elephant right in front of her sometimes. She is a major gammer, has a need to unwind at her controls daily but even that has some big surprises for her. This poor girl has her world shaken violently not stirred.

Great side characters, interesting unusual and full of snark. Captain, her cat stole scenes away from all of them. He is a rock star of the cat world !

Cliffhanger soft ending. I can't wait for the next book.

Allison says

It was refreshing to read an Urban Fantasy that wasn't a mystery, but rather an archeological adventure. Even

more refreshing was a heroine who, although not inclined to think before acting or speaking, does learn from mistakes and begins listening when her friends ask her not to rush in without a plan. There's also a vampire-hunting cat that offers some comic relief, and a bit of romance where the two involved actually speak to each other like mature adults when they're upset... so all around refreshing.

Sarah says

3.5 stars

Owl used to be an archaeology student but now she's an antiquities thief and a very good one at that. If there is treasure hidden in a tomb somewhere and you want to acquire it Owl is your girl but at the moment you might find she's a little distracted by the vampires that are trying to murder her in revenge for an unfortunate accident. Staying one step ahead of the vampires is exhausting and not likely to be something she can manage for any length of time without help but there isn't really anyone she can turn to. Until she is approached by Mr. Kurosawa, a dragon shifter who owns a popular Las Vegas casino, that is. Mr. Kurosawa has a small task for her and if she can find an artifact that was stolen from him 3,000 years ago he has promised to deal with her vampire problem permanently. Either way he'll keep them off her back while she's working so it's not really an offer she can turn down.

Owl and the Japanese Circus is a promising start to **Kristi Charish's** first series, there are definitely a lot of things to like about the world she has created and I enjoyed this enough to want to pick up the sequel. I really liked the author's take on vampires, it can be hard to come up with something different in such a saturated market but she managed it, and the whole supernatural underground has a lot of potential, we've already met several different species and I'm sure there are more to come as we continue to explore the world with Owl. I also really enjoyed the Indiana Jones feel to the treasure hunting parts of the story, I actually would have liked to see Owl spending more time exploring ancient sites searching for clues but I was satisfied with what we've had so far.

Where things went slightly wrong for me was actually with Owl and that's a potentially huge problem. I liked her a lot in the beginning but the more time we spent with her the more she seems to come across as stupidly stubborn and a little childish. She makes quite a few stupid mistakes and I was incredibly annoyed with the way she treated the people closest to her, especially her kind of boyfriend Rynn (more on him later). I absolutely hated the names she called him, particularly when the first time it happened she really hurt him but then she continued to use the same names deliberately as a "joke". It wasn't funny the first time Owl so it sure as hell wasn't funny the second, third or fourth time either. I get that Owl doesn't spend much time with people, she's always been a loner and even though she is fairly close to her best friend Nadya they don't spend much time together so she's more than a little socially awkward. That excuse holds up to a point but when you keep making the same mistakes over and over again then the excuse starts wearing very, very thin. Learn from your actions and change them next time please. I do have hope that Owl will grow as the series continues, after all it's no fun if main characters start out perfect, the whole point of reading a series is that we get to see the characters improve, but she's going to have to make a few big changes fast or I doubt I'll get beyond book 2 and that would be a real shame.

Now I've got that little complaint out of the way let's get back to the positives. First and foremost I absolutely loved Owl's main sidekick, her Egyptian Mau cat called Captain. Captain has been trained to hunt and kill vampires and he just added so much fun to the story. I actually have a bit of a soft spot for feline sidekicks so that's definitely an easy way to get bonus points from me! I also liked Nadya who I think must have the

patience of a saint to put up with Owl sometimes. Then you have Rynn, now he is a character I want to spend more time with! As far as book boyfriends go Rynn is pretty much spot on, he's hot, he's protective, there is a lot more to him than meets the eye and he has that bad boy charm that comes from being dark and mysterious. I love that we've already uncovered a few of his secrets but I'm sure there is a lot more to come from his character too.

Overall, I do think this was a positive start to the series and I'm definitely planning on reading **Owl and the City of Angels** to see what happens next. If Owl can just make a concerted effort to be a bit nicer to the people around her then I think I'm going to end up loving this series.

Buddy read with the MacHalos starts 1st of March (although I may be a bit late starting!)

carol. says

The problem with cats as side-kicks:

“He fainted back and pulled on the leash in an attempt to break my hold and get back to Charles. Nope, not desensitized. Getting better at manipulation.”

A quick archeological romp through dig sites, casinos and couple of world-class cities. It's a fun ride and with enough spark to distinguish itself in a genre full of stereotypes. I'll have to admit; at the beginning I was struck by the resemblance to Indiana Jones. Not because of the amazing character charisma; actually, Owl is generally short on people skills. More because the plot sped along with so many entertaining events, I didn't mind a couple of logic or character derailments and focused on just enjoying the ride.

In brief: Owl has become an archeology thief after being bounced from her graduate program for political reasons. Constantly on the move because of vampires seeking revenge for a job gone bad, she gets an offer she can't refuse, no matter how much she would like to. Success— she gets paid and the vampires off her trail. Fail—she'll be eaten by a dragon. She takes the assignment to find and translate a missing scroll, discovering she has competition.

The setting is standard modern urban fantasy: a supernatural world concealed from the normals, with supers living largely intermingled and an international squad designed to keep the magical on the down low. Personally, I'm never troubled by the ins and outs of the secret underworld scenario, and it helps that the supernaturals do not seem so populous as to cause obvious questions. I liked the world building well-enough, and I appreciated the variety of settings. There were a number of “Japanese culture is like this...” and “typical Russian that...” kind of statements, but they largely stood the generalizations on first read—at least, they didn't appear to be condescending, more cultural generalizations.

“People are real happy to make friends with you when a two-thousand-year-old mummy knocks off half their team, but returning the favor always pisses them off. No one likes to pay up out of the goodness of their heart; that's why I usually get cash up front.”

Owl is a largely familiar type, an outsider, fractious woman who keeps everyone at arms' length and focusing on the financial rewards of her work. She reminds me most of Rachel from Kim Harrison's Hallows series, with all of Rachel's bravado and lack of reflection. Personally, I ran into a couple of moments where I

found myself disliking Owl, but the writing and plotting pulled me through. I think by the end of the story, she experienced some appropriate and logical character growth, and at least she had people that called her out on her decisions. For me, the slight shifts towards reflection made it more rewarding than other UF series such as Morning's Fever books, where the main character was so consistently unlikeable, I couldn't get past book one.

The plot moved swiftly and kept me engaged. The archeological sequences were fun, and the setting changed enough to provide variety in what was essentially a series of quest steps. For some people, I suspect a number of *deus ex machina* solutions will possibly annoy. At critical moments, others prove to have unusual sets of skills that save the day. While it is certainly refreshing not to have a superpower/undiscovered skills—and I have to admit, there are many who do—in this case Owl has more than a little help. Her main trait, and one that most seems to resemble Rachel, is a dogged persistence. I usually end up irritated by the typical head-blind stubbornness. More than once, Owl's refusal to do some small thing prevents an easy out/rescue/solution. However, it's also worth noting that this book has a clear ending, while paving the way for future developments.

There are a few moments that push my boundaries of my personal UF acceptability and push it into PNR; descriptions of applying make-up, although at least here it's a deception strategy; a preoccupation with labelled clothing, particularly a fascination with Chanel and Ralph Lauren (which are actually labels for an older age group, not the twenty-year-old too hip to see over my hips); an unholy obsession for Corona beer; an addiction to drinking that includes at least a couple drinks a day while a friend complains she "can't hold her liquor;" and relationship obstacles based on unrevealed truths. Those tropes bother me, but are likely part of the development of the teen-twenty something demographic that many UFs are aiming for. There's also some more maturely conceived PNR developments with a potentially blossoming relationship, but without enough of primary focus to move it into full PNR territory.

Very rarely, there is a tiny bit of writing that could be smoothed out—for instance, what convenience store 16 year-old clerk would be surprised at ringing up four bags of chips, diet soda, Corona and cat food? Or saying someone is "hard to read" while complaining, "I still didn't know where he was from." Because emotional expression is equivalent to past? One final discordance for me was a chapter that focuses on a gaming sequence. I see where it played an overall role, and perhaps part of a character trait, but I don't know that it fit with the tone of urgency/chase.

That said, I found the writing to be above average for the genre. Overall, it proved a pleasure, and I was glad of its diversion. I'd recommend to fans of Kim Harrison's *Hollows* and Faith Hunter's *Jane Yellowrock*. Currently projected to sell at \$1.99, it's a bargain price for a quality book. Here's hoping that Charish is hard at work on the next installment, because I'll be sure to give it a read.

Many thanks to NetGalley and Gallery Books for providing me an advance copy to review. Quotes are taken from a galley copy and are subject to change in the published edition. Still, I think it gives a flavor of the writing.

Choko says

*** 3.85 ***

A buddy read with the Urban Fantasy fans at the MacHalo group!!!

To be honest, I was not expecting much from this book, since I thought the title was kind of goofy... And the truth is, it is a bit difficult to find a good new Urban Fantasy series - there are a lot of underwhelming examples out there... However, I am here to report that in this silly named series I actually found a very entertaining and well written entry into the world of UF. !!!

Owl is an antiquities with a supernatural lean thief with very poor communication skills. She has been kicked out from her archeology masters program due to stumbling onto a dig with unnatural mystical creatures. This unfortunate event lead to her discovering that supernatural beings exist and cohabit with us, and her life as she knew it had come to an end - she was on the run and off the grid, hiding for her life.

For the last year she has been running from some pesky vampires but somehow got blackmailed into a job for the very powerful Red Japanese Dragon in Las Vegas... I know, fun, right?!

Well, needless to say, things get messy! There are plots interweaving with intrigues, crossed by friendships and betrayals and topped with fascinating creatures galore!!! Owl constantly runs into trouble, or more correctly, throws herself head first into it. It is a good thing she has loyal friends, because she should have been dead many times over... However, she is bright, quick and decisive. Even when she is wrong, she doesn't waiver. When in difficulty she usually runs, not very brave but hey, she is a survivor! When cornered, well, that is when she becomes stupid and lashes out at friend or foe - not an endearing quality for sure! She even bugged the heck out of me in those situations! But just like every human, Owl is flawed and imperfect, and I like her more for it!!!

So, I would definitely recommend this book to all my Fantasy and more precisely Urban Fantasy fan friends! Yes, it is not a perfect read, but I think it is a good start for a series, which I hope get better and better with time! There is no explicit and gratuitous sex or violence, so young readers can also enjoy it. It is worth giving it a try.

I hope you all have a wonderful time reading and may every page be a gift to you!!!

Jessica ✿ ⇒ Silverbow ⇒ ✿ Rabid Reads-no-more says

***checking stupidity detector* Hmm . . . Doesn't seem to be broken . . . *rechecks* . . . NOPE. Def not broken. Must just be A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.**

R u ready to hug it out, Sarah?

PS - I stole your "attempting to give a damn" gif. FYI. MUAH.

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

A lot of you know that Urban Fantasy is my go-to genre--I can go (and have) for a straight six months of reading it and nothing else.

This can be a problem, b/c compared to others, UF is kind of a small genre, and an even bigger problem is that a LOT of the big series have been concluding over the last few years, and while many of those authors are starting new series (eventually), some of the new players often leave something to be desired.

I cannot tell you how many times a new series has caught my eye in the last eighteen(ish) months, only to leave me feeling MEH on a good day, and downright frustrated or misled on a bad day.

Enter OWL AND THE JAPANESE CIRCUS by Kristi Charish:

Fans of Kim Harrison, Jim Butcher, and Linda Hamilton will flock to the kick-ass world of Owl, a modern-day "Indiana Jane" who reluctantly navigates the hidden supernatural world.

Let's take a minute to dissect this claim.

1. I have no idea who Linda (Laurell K.?) Hamilton is, but Kim Harrison and Jim Butcher . . . those are mighty big shoes to fill.
2. The original Indiana Jones movies are (IMO) some of the best movies ever made.

Publicists have been doing this sort of thing a lot lately. I've been lured into reading books by claims of "perfect for fans of insert-Big-Deal-author-here" or "dark debut reminiscent of random-Genre-Defying/Ground-Breaking-novel" and, sadly, these carrots have always left me feeling like a put-upon donkey.

I don't like feeling like a jackass.

So when I saw the above comparison . . . I admit it . . . there were a few squints, and perhaps a snort of disbelief (or three).

BUT "Indiana Jane" was too fantastic a possibility for me to bypass.

Which is a good thing, b/c for the first time ever, a book has actually lived up to its hype.

Owl is a . . . procurer of *rare* things . . . *old* things . . . *artifacts*, if you will.

She got into this line of work after being laughably expelled from her doctoral studies when she discovered things that ought not be discovered, and true to her tenacious nature, refused to bury said discovery.

This made her understandably bitter.

Now most "normal" people in this situation would probably find a teaching position at some third-rate institution. After all, one must complete a Masters degree before starting work towards a PhD . . . but not Owl.

What she didn't realize at the time was that frequently the "people" with the means and inclination to hire her for her services are the same "people" who destroyed her dreams of becoming a legitimate archaeologist, and after one such job goes south, Owl finds herself living on the run, in a Winnebago, with her cat.

As it turns out, an angry vampire is just as tenacious as Owl herself.

SO. No working for supernaturals. Ever.

Unless a dragon sends his goons to track you down to the parking lot of an abandoned service station, toss you unceremoniously into a helicopter, and deliver you to his Las Vegas doorstep for a face-to-face chat . . . then, you know . . . you do as you're told. B/c DRAGON.

If you missed my **Interview with Kristi Charish** , my first question was "is Owl really 100% human?" b/c humans don't tend to hold up well in the supernatural world. BUT through a combination of cleverness, tech savvy, and friends (supernatural and otherwise), Owl does quite well for herself.

I have two concerns. The first is (like the Special Snowflake MC) the Human-among-Creatures character has a list of stereotypes they can easily fall into, the foremost being serendipitously-rescued-by-bigger-stronger-b/c-NOT-human-friends. However, this type of character is typically relegated to sidekick status, and Charish is determined that Owl stand on her own two feet.

The second is habitual use of an extremely offensive term. Owl isn't great with people. She also has trust issues, and the resulting incredibly small circle of friends. When one of these friends reveals previously unknown (and admittedly important) information about himself, Owl is both shocked and hurt, so she lashes out, and says something . . . so far over the line that I had a flashback to adolescence of my mother saying, "Don't speak in anger, b/c once you say something to someone you love, it can never be unsaid."

Stuff happens, and they reconcile, but afterwards that same ugly word is used as a sort of joke. Friend calls Owl something not nice in return, but it's the equivalent of a friend calling you a hot mess, and you calling them a hideous skank or a stupid cow in return. Over and over again. Maybe this is just one of my trigger words (view spoiler), and it won't bother anyone else. Regardless, to me, the "joke" only served as a reminder of the terrible thing Owl said to Friend that can never be unsaid.

BUT of those two concerns, one will hopefully not be an issue, and the other . . . maybe part of Owl's new gig will include a required class on workplace sensitivity that will bleed into other areas of her life. *crosses fingers*

Overall, OWL AND THE JAPANESE CIRCUS is the surprisingly good first installment of an Urban Fantasy series that has made my inner cynic shut her mouth about publicity plugs in book blurbs. Charish is the cool new kid you don't want to miss, and Owl just might be the human to make the creatures sit up and pay attention. Highly recommended.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

I just can't get into this book. Owl is a former archaeology student who was disgraced and wiped her past clean. She takes up stealing artifacts for whomever has the most money. She crosses some vampires and ends up on a vamp hit list.

She is offered protection from the vamps by a Dragon but he has an agenda of his own.

It sounds good, but I'm just done with it. Owl is just a bland character. The most exciting thing I've read about her is she has a cat that can sense vampires.

I hate dn'ing books..but too many books are looking at me to spend the time on one that isn't getting it for me.

I'm giving it 2 stars because it wasn't horrible..just wasn't for me at this time.

I received an arc copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Emma says

Hmmm..a low 3 stars. I enjoyed the first half of this but, despite the fact it's an action packed read, was starting to lose interest by the second half.

There's some good stuff in here, but it's eclipsed by the sheer precociousness and wilful recklessness of Owl. This is quite entertaining to start with and I made the mistake of thinking this was feisty assertiveness, but it turned out it was just plain (and repetitive) stupidity.

I feel I need to say something specific about the romance...I like a bit of romance in my paranormal fantasy, I do - as long as it's not too saccharine. No danger of that whatsoever here....the actual romance is quite sweet but do they really need to call each other what they call each other?! (Read it for yourself if you don't know!)

I liked Captain, fantastic and original sidekick. I like the fact that Owl never recognises the supernaturals for what they are, even though her life is full of them.

That may seem like quite a lot of likes. But even combined, they can't make up for the hot mess of a convoluted plot. In the end, this book seemed far too long. Possibly I'd read the next one, but only if it was part of a kindle daily deal!

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.com/2015/01/09/b...>

UPDATED: GIVEAWAY of OWL AND THE JAPANESE CIRCUS (print copy US/Canada, digital copy International) ends 1/21/15, details here: <http://bibliosanctum.com/2015/01/12/g...>

Kristi Charish is an author after my own heart. First, her book Owl and the Japanese Circus stars Alix “Owl” Hiboux, a former archaeologist turned international antiquities thief. Having been an Archaeology student myself, I can’t in good conscience say I endorse the character’s tomb raiding and thieving ways, but heck, anything to do with archaeology will inevitably catch my attention – and consider me on board with Owl’s whole “Indiana Jane” persona! Second, much of the novel takes place in fabulous Las Vegas, one of my favorite cities in the world. And third, Owl is a hardcore gamer and lover of RPGs, and it greatly intrigues me that her favorite online game World Quest might be more than it seems...

It doesn’t end there. There’s a lot more here that urban fantasy readers will really get a kick out of, from vampires and naga and nymphs to more exotic supernaturals like Kami spirits. Mr. Kurosawa, a red dragon masquerading as a human that first summons Owl to his lavish Japanese Circus Casino in Vegas to make her an offer she can’t refuse – retrieve a priceless artifact for him, and in return he’ll help Owl take care of a pack of vampires that have been dogging her steps for months and making her life a living hell.

Of course, things are never so simple. And this is why Owl hates working supernatural jobs. Together with her best friend Nadya and the charismatic and hunky ex-mercenary Rynn, Owl stumbles into one disastrous problem after another in the course of her world-wide treasure hunt, and it's going to take all her wits to simply stay alive.

Thing is, Owl may have the brains, but her problem solving abilities are often hindered by her temper, impatience, and a trigger-happy mouth that has the unfortunate tendency to spout foul insults at anyone – friends and enemies alike – when she feels they have her up against a wall. As a result, Owl feels a lot less idealized when compared to a lot of her urban fantasy heroine counterparts, making her come across more flawed, real and human. That said, I doubt it'll be easy to get through the book without feeling multiple urges to throttle her for being so foolhardy and bullheaded, or for not thinking things through and always charging head-first into danger without a plan. Still, while it might take a while for Owl to grow on you, her spunky personality also makes this one a fast-paced, energizing read.

The story is also a lot of fun. It doesn't take itself too seriously, the plot constantly moving from one action scene to the next, thundering along like a runaway freight train. There are a lot of moments where you have to suspend your disbelief, but nothing so extreme that it prevented me from enjoying myself. Also, as is the case with a lot of debut novels, there's a rawness to the storytelling, some plot inconsistencies that cropped up every now and then (like, given the dangerous nature of the scroll Owl was tasked to find and the fact Mr. Kurasawa knew all about it, why would he even seek to find a translation?) and some minor contradictions (early on in the novel, Owl mentions looking forward about getting plenty of time to sleep on the plane, but later when on board, admits that she can't ever sleep on planes) but since I read the advanced copy, I imagine many of these hiccups will be ironed out in the final.

All told, this is a great start to what looks to be a very different kind of urban fantasy. I'd like to see more of the archaeology and gaming angle, and I'm definitely interested in continuing Owl's future adventures if the books keep up with the heavy action and fun.

Monty Cupcake ? Queen of Bloodshed ? says

How the fuck does this girl remain alive through the entire book? She is supremely TSTL. Her POV was that of an immature child telling me about their day in minute detail - repeatedly, with the exact same phrases over and over. Besides Owl being TSTL, she's also just plain dumb. She notices nothing of a supernatural nature, despite knowing of their existence. I doubt she'd notice a unicorn even if it trampled her obviously dumb ass.

Nayda got on my nerves with her attitude and Rynn (is this a fancy & girly looking way to spell Ryan? Rin? Like Rin Tin Tin?) is some lukewarm hotness. I picture him as a vacant eyed underwear model type. Seriously, barely a pulse on the attraction levels between the leads.

The plot, the whole finding antiquities/treasure/artifacts was interesting enough & kept me reading + I'm sick and I don't like to read excellent books when I'm ill. I prefer to read mediocre to crappy books when I'm ill, suffer in reading along with body. I can't enjoy good books when I feel like the living dead. This book fit that crappy requirement. I should've DNF-ed it, because I hated Owl & everyone minus Oricho, but poor judgement right now.

I have more to rant about all the ways I hated Owl later. Examples: her lack of useful knowledge, no fighting

skills; it's really a long list.

Buddy Read with the MacHalos
