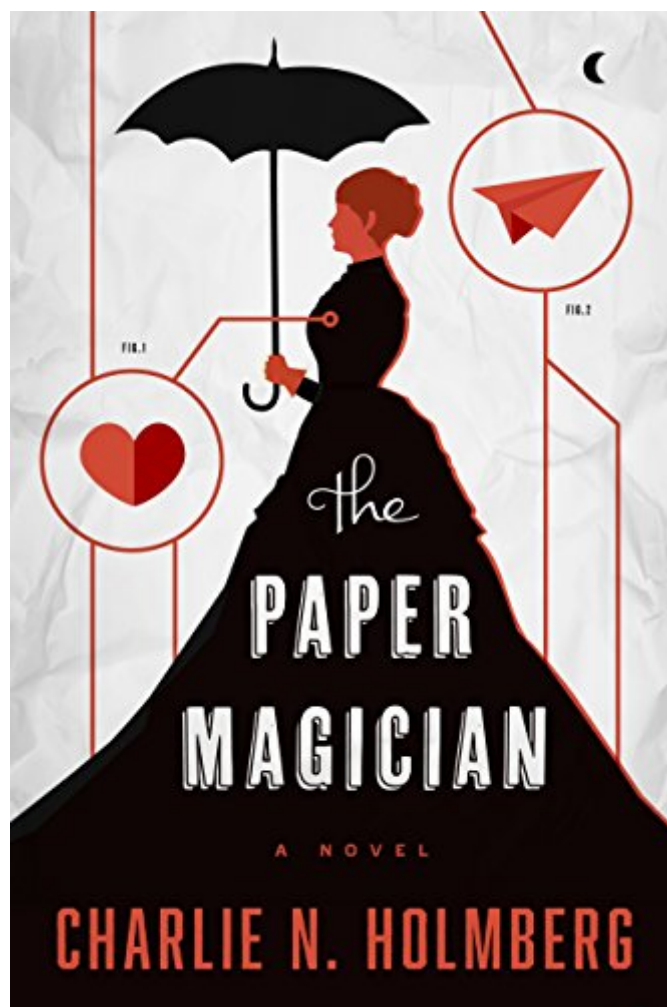


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The Paper Magician (The Paper Magician Series, Book 1)



Synopsis

“Charlie is a vibrant writer with an excellent voice and great world building. I thoroughly enjoyed the Paper Magician.” —Brandon Sanderson, author of Mistborn and The Way of Kings

Ceony Twill arrives at the cottage of Magician Emery Thane with a broken heart. Having graduated at the top of her class from the Tagis Praff School for the Magically Inclined, Ceony is assigned an apprenticeship in paper magic despite her dreams of bespelling metal. And once she's bonded to paper, that will be her only magic forever. Yet the spells Ceony learns under the strange yet kind Thane turn out to be more marvelous than she could have ever imagined—animating paper creatures, bringing stories to life via ghostly images, even reading fortunes. But as she discovers these wonders, Ceony also learns of the extraordinary dangers of forbidden magic. An Excisioner—a practitioner of dark, flesh magic—invades the cottage and rips Thane's heart from his chest. To save her teacher's life, Ceony must face the evil magician and embark on an unbelievable adventure that will take her into the chambers of Thane's still-beating heart—and reveal the very soul of the man.

From the imaginative mind of debut author Charlie N. Holmberg, *The Paper Magician* is an extraordinary adventure both dark and whimsical that will delight readers of all ages. Short-Listed for the 2015 ALA Fantasy Reading List

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Several friends on the book forum like to discuss what we're reading and recommend books we think others would like. When one mentioned that he reads to his 11 year old daughter every night (what a great family tradition!), I added children's books to my "watch for" list. So when I saw a kindle first book promoted as "extraordinary adventure both dark and whimsical that will delight readers of all ages", I was excited to think I might have found something new to recommend. Especially something an 11 year old might enjoy that wouldn't be torture for a very literate Dad. So I went into the book primarily with the mind set of sharing with a child, not as a straight adult read. I read the book off and on throughout the day yesterday. It is fairly short (about two thirds the size of the original Harry Potter) and although the story is set in late Victorian England, the prose is modern so it wouldn't be a tough read for any one. Unfortunately, it didn't quite hit the mark for me either as an adult or as something to share with a child. It seemed to be caught between two audiences and couldn't quite satisfy either. As an adult, the premise was imaginative with an original take on "magic" and it was mildly enjoyable at times. But the characters were one dimensional and attempts to add complexity seemed forced and tacked on. The author went to great length to be descriptive, but rather than finding it evocative, I thought it became rather tedious. I really didn't need to know the details of the heroine's morning primping, what she ate and boring tasks for three consecutive days. This, like much of the description, seemed designed to add length without moving the story forward or creating atmosphere.

As an origami enthusiast and avid reader, I really wanted to like this book. I didn't have especially high expectations to begin with, but unfortunately it still managed to disappoint me. The concept is vaguely interesting, and normally I give a book a token star just for a clever idea, but this one was not well executed. As a competent folder, I was disappointed by the trivial examples used in the book (even many used by the master paper magician). I would expect anyone who chose to write a book dealing with origami to have at least seen something like Robert Lang's masterful work, and understood that incredible models can be created from a single piece of paper. Only a few of the paper sculptures in the book are at all intricate, and those are described vaguely as being crafted from multiple sheets. Setting aside my origami background and evaluating the book purely on its literary merits, my opinion does not improve at all. The characters are so shallow and poorly developed that I found myself disliking them all by the end -- not because they were unlikable, but

simply because they didn't make sense! Their actions and opinions were never backed by any kind of evidence, so I found their decisions jarring and unrealistic. The romance aspect especially seemed contrived and appeared out of nowhere. In fact, it almost felt condescending -- as if one can't possibly read a piece of paranormal fiction with a female protagonist that DOESN'T involve romance. The framework for a lot of the character development seems to be there, but it's never filled out. I kept feeling like I picked up this book in the middle of a series, and I was expected to already know the characters. The author never introduced us, and none of my background questions were ever answered.

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