



Pushing Luck

Elliott James

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This is the third in a series of short stories by debut author Elliott James. The first of his novels, *Charming*, will be out in September 2013.

Trying to make money off the grid, John Charming discovers an underground poker tournament where the hors d'oeuvres are made of human flesh and the players are gambling with much more than their money. All bets are off.

Other Short Fiction by Elliott James:

Charmed I'm Sure

Don't Go Chasing Waterfalls

Pushing Luck

Surreal Estate

Dog-Gone

Pushing Luck Details

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From Reader Review Pushing Luck for online ebook

Sha says

1. I have to say, I like the non-romance stories in the Pax Arcana way more than the romance based ones.
2. Also, the Rakshasa is an excellent villain. Creepy, and fascinating.

Robin (Bridge Four) says

I really enjoy Elliott James writing in this series. I like the way the character talks to the reader during the book. It draws me into the story. Again this is a very short story and will only take about 40 min to read but I liked this one the most out of all the novella's so far.

Charming has entered into a high stakes poker game that seems to be run by Rakshasas and the horderves leave a lot to be desired. I loved the delve into yet another new lore as we explore the Rakshasa's briefly. There isn't a lot of time to jump into the history but it made for an interesting read and I do love a good poker game.

Again not sure it is worth \$1.99 and I'm also not sure why all 5 novellas weren't put into a book but if it goes on sale or you like me are just waiting for the next book to come out give it a go. (Maybe they will go on sale with the release of the new book next month)

Melindeeloo says

3.5 stars - I liked it. This third prequel short was my favorite so far. The mythologically based villain what suitably creepy evil and John's plan to save the day was clever. This was the best developed of the shorts so far, but I still think these work best for those who've at least read the first full book, Charming.

Matthew says

I didn't mind the woman in this story. And the villain was interesting. The poker playing. Perhaps not believable. But... whatever. A kinda desperate situation for our hero Charming and perhaps well-handled? Although part of his plan seemed like a desperate, impossible gambit.

Sonja says

Lots of questions

Several questions are left unanswered at the end of this story. I like John, though, so it's all good. Keep

reading.

Tonya Nardi says

Bringing in legends from India is a nice change and getting more of John's back story in this is fun.

Bisquit says

We learn more about demon-like monsters and old friends :) I'm curious whether we'll meet Jamie again later on in the main stories!

Kristen says

This is vignette #3 in the prequels to *Charming*. It centers around another monster - called Rakshasa - that is Indian in origin and feasts on human flesh. Yummy. John stumbles across it while trying to build up his \$\$ stash in a poker tournament.

You can probably read this in 30-45 minutes. It does not give you any new insight into John Charming, so it is not necessary to read this in order to enjoy the first book. But it further builds the monster world around him, and honestly, is simply a time-filler for you while you wait for book #2 to be released.

Nichole says

Still hiding from The Knights, John has to earn some money. He decides to enter a high stakes poker game. Things have changed since he was at one of these tournaments. The guy putting on the tourney is now under the control and influence of a Rakshasa. I love these shorts, always a new monster to learn about.

Alison says

Another short story which pre-dates Charming.

John is invited to a private (illegal) poker game but the host and the canapes aren't all they seem!

I love the way that Elliott James weaves unusual monsters into his stories, I really like something other than the same-old, same-old vampires and weres.

Also John has some cracking one-liners.

Carmel (Rabid Reads) says

This novella felt more complete than the previous two, closer to a short story than one long extended scene. The author continues to impress me with his obscure mythology, and clever problem resolution. The Rakshasa was by far the creepiest supe we've encountered to date, well aside from the Bakaak that pops up in DARING. I enjoyed discovering that this series is extra wolf-y when John gets mistaken for a loup-garou, and the additional lore that ensued as a result. The conclusion was a tad too open-ended for my tastes, but for all I know it gets resolved in SURREAL ESTATE, time will tell on that one I guess. Again, not worth the \$1.99 price tag.

Aya says

Pax Arcana: 0.7

Another short story, independent of the previous works. This one has a whiff of plot, but like the others, is pretty much all action. It also ends abruptly ... does the story continue in the next short?

Becky says

In "Pushing Luck" John infiltrates a high end and highly exclusive poker game with an eye to bringing in a bit of income. Turns out this game has higher stakes than just cash when John realizes a Rakshasa is running the whole thing.

The mythology used in this series is super cool! I mean you've got fairy rings in the first story, a Norwegian water spirit (a fossegrim) in the second, and a being from Hindu/Buddhist lore in the third. I haven't even touched on John's story at all either, which you get in more detail in the actual book Charming, but he's a former member of the Knights Templar and a werewolf, and a descendant of the legendary Charming family.

In these shorts he travels around a bit Jack Reacher like, using his skills and strengths to bring down supernatural baddies. In Charming he's tapped to help bring down a vampire ring or risk his anonymity. These three stories each serve as great extras if you've already read Charming or as cheap intros to the series if you haven't. They all come with a teaser chapter from the book as well.

Kim Howard says

This is a short story in the Pax Arcana Series and not a standalone book. Lots of action but due to the length of the story the details are left to your imagination. It was still a good read and well recommended if you're into this series.

Angela says

I love how we're delving more and more into the world and getting more details about John along the way in

each of these stories.

The mythology of the rakshasha is fascinated and detailed. I also, especially, liked how John is mistaken for a loup-garou and the further world we get shown because of that.

I liked how poker was incorporated into the story, it wasn't just a backdrop for the plot to take place against. It was an intricate part of the plot.

I'm beginning to get really excited for this series.

Overall Prequels Thoughts (0.1-0.7)

While most of these stories stand alone well, I would recommend reading the 1st and 2nd together, and the 6th and 7th together as well (and don't expect everything, or even the main thing, to be tied up and resolved in these last couple). They're snapshots in John Charming's life, and a moment in time while he deals with a new monster. I'm intrigued and pulled in, while still being somewhat frustrated, and am looking forward to reading the first full-length novel, *Charming*.

I'm really excited to learning more about the world, the knights, John, and what the hell is going on with the open-ended stuff left hanging from these last two short stories!
