

## Bound Kria 2 Megan Derr

Prince Istari has spent his life reviled: his parents wish he had never been born, the royal court of Belemere avoids him for fear of angering the king, and everyone else is kept away by his notorious reputation as a deadly sharpshooter. Now a hostage of peace in Tallideth, he is subjected to their hatred as well—even that of Regent Vellem, who once considered him a comrade in arms. Unexpected solace comes in the form of Lord Teverem, a sad, quiet lord who assumed the title when his brother was killed in the explosion for which Istari's father is to blame. He is kind and sweet and a sorely needed bright spot in Istari's life—until Istari meets his family and learns of a dangerous family secret with unexpected ties to Istari's past, a secret that could drag Tallideth and Belemere right back into war...

Lord Demir has spent his life trying to appease a brutal, selfish king, and keep the concubines under his care alive—and now he is on the verge of losing everything. The council wants to abolish the harems, there are no heirs to the throne, and the foreigners control the Steward. One wrong move will tip tensions into civil war. Crown Prince Ihsan returns to find his home in turmoil, and the royal court so full of vipers it's impossible to say which of them will strike first. Removing his father from the throne, one way or another, should be a simple matter. Staying alive and proving himself a worthy king will be far more difficult. Crown Princess Euren has spent the last five years in hiding so that she could not be used against her father or Ihsan. But she is the daughter of a

soldier, never meant to wear a crown, never trained to fight battles where words are the weapon of choice. If she hopes to keep herself and her loved ones alive, she'll have to learn fast.

At the age of nine, Johnnie lost his parents when they were killed by a blood-crazed vampire. He was then adopted by the husband of the vampire who killed them, and raised in a world to which he was never meant to belong. An adult now, he is the cold, beautiful Johnnie Desrosiers, and spends his days translating old grimoires and solving mysteries. Then his friend Rostislav asks his help in solving a mystery that proves simple enough, but leads Johnnie down a path that reveals mysteries about his life he was never meant to solve...

A young king manipulated by evil hands becomes a champion of justice when a magical pretender to the throne challenges his sovereignty For six years, forces of evil and repression have ruled medieval Gwynedd after eliminating two rightful kings of the Haldane line.

Keeping the current young liege, King Rhys Michael, weak with wine, the council of regents and its fanatical allies in the church have been virtually unstoppable in their quest to dominate and destroy the mystical Deryni who share their land. But now a credible threat has arisen: A Deryni claimant to the throne has taken up arms against the cruel oppressors of his magical race. With a mighty army at his command, Prince Marek—the bastard son of King Imre, Gwynedd's last Deryni ruler—has challenged the Haldane reign, and Rhys Michael's masters realize the young king must be

roused from his stupor to confront the interloper. However, the young Haldane monarch is not the malleable, drunken puppet the regents imagine—and when his long-dormant arcane powers are awakened, Rhys Michael will put his own clandestine plans in motion to right the wrongs of recent history no matter what the cost. The fourth trilogy in Katherine Kurtz’s magnificent chronicles of the Deryni concludes with awesome power in this stirring tale of war, faith, magic, and justice. Populated by a large cast of unforgettable characters, the thrilling history of an alternate medieval world unfolds in all its epic splendor and tragedy, strongly reaffirming Kurtz’s well-deserved place among the finest storytellers and world-builders in all of fantasy fiction.

Even in a world of secrets and misfits, Chris stands apart, an unusual product of black magic that left him born half-ghost. Long used to being bullied and maligned for his strangeness, he spends his days helping the paranormals that everyone else forgets about. The people he hunts and the mysteries he solves take him along unusual paths, many of them dangerous. But Chris has never been a fan of running from a fight—even the fight that takes him to the door of the most dangerous man in the city.

Lynn is a kraken shifter in every way: detailed, tenacious, resilient, and hard-working. Also possessive, vain, arrogant, and demanding. It makes him an excellent agent for the Federal Bureau of Paranormal Security and Investigation—and impossible to work with, as the long list of partners who have transferred away from him will

attest. His newest partner is a unicorn, possibly the worst type of paranormal for work that often turns ugly and violent. Everyone knows unicorns are too delicate for such things. Then Anderson proves to be a unicorn like no other, the kind of partner Lynn has always wanted—the kind of partner he wishes was more. But if there's one thing he's learned, it's that the only thing harder to keep than a partner is a lover.

"A new star is rising in the fantasy firmament...teems with magic and spine-chilling amounts of skullduggery."—Dave Duncan, author of *The Great Game*

When young Alec of Kerry is taken prisoner for a crime he didn't commit, he is certain that his life is at an end. But one thing he never expected was his cellmate. Spy, rogue, thief, and noble, Seregil of Rhiminee is many things—none of them predictable. And when he offers to take on Alec as his apprentice, things may never be the same for either of them. Soon Alec is traveling roads he never knew existed, toward a war he never suspected was brewing. Before long he and Seregil are embroiled in a sinister plot that runs deeper than either can imagine, and that may cost them far more than their lives if they fail. But fortune is as unpredictable as Alec's new mentor, and this time there just might be...Luck in the Shadows.

Jackie is a sorcerer of no small skill, from a family of renowned sorcerers. He is frequently called upon to track down lost items or deal with paranormals others can't, and those that don't fear his magic do fear the alchemist-made revolvers at his hips. Tired of living several states away from his lover, Roman, Jackie decides to surprise

him with a move to Roman's city—only to find himself the victim of an unhappy surprise, and suddenly alone in the city he'd wanted to call home. Then he's unexpectedly hired by a paranormal detective who could use his help, and finds himself dragged into a fight that started in the midst of the Civil War.

The castle is cursed. The servants are losing their humanity and memory. Crow, a young man surprisingly resistant to the curse, is their only connection to the outside world, observing as a bird. Helene is the latest girl obtained for breaking the spell. Her belligerent brother, Roi, is being held hostage to keep her obedient. When Crow is assigned to help care and keep watch of the brother, he regards it as a sort of punishment... with the exception that he finds Roi quite pleasing to look at. Initially keen to make the other miserable, prisoner and servant reluctantly align to seek an alternative way to break the spell. But this is no simple task with time running short, increasing abuse from the senior staff, and so few to be trusted. Furthermore, Roi's own interests in Crow grow increasingly apparent, and Crow has no idea how to handle this zealous man. This mature story features a slight twist and different perspective on a classic fairy tale.

Castle Rehm is at the ends of the earth, a remote region known for the vast quantities of alcohol it produces and the collection of misfits who reside there, including a fierce captain who wasn't good enough for his ambitious mother, a clumsy mage with a sharp tongue and quick temper, a monk thrown out of his monastery for illegal magic, and a duke who was exiled for daring to defy his king by saving the life of his mortal enemy. Unfortunately, not everyone is content to leave

these misfits to the peace and solitude they have found.

Some come seeking revenge, others power and glory. It will take every skill and trick the residents of Castle Rehm possess to hold fast and drive their enemies back.

The House of Ferro has dominated the city-state of Verona since its creation, made mighty by their magia del ferro, financial acumen, and ties to the imperial throne. The House of Ishikawa arrived on Verona's shores a few years later, made powerful and wealthy by way of their rare, priceless magia d'acqua. A short time later, murder and vengeance exploded into a feud that has lasted for generations—and by decree of Hardegyn-principe, will end now or else. Royal decrees cannot so easily quell generations of hate and bloodshed, but ancient feuds cannot stop love. Determined to be together, young Ferro Carac and Ishikawa Arata decide to run away and leave their families behind. But on the night they depart, Arata is murdered, and Carac is wrongfully blamed for it, betrayed by everyone he trusted. Fifteen years later, Carac is long dead of disease while in prison, and Verona is abuzz with nervous excitement over the betrothal of Ferro Selinah to Ishikawa Naoki. Unhappy with the pending marriage, Naoki spends most of his time drinking and sleeping. On the way home from a bar one night, accompanied by the sister come to drag him home, they are attacked by a bandit—and saved by an intriguing man who goes by the name of Dante...

When his sister falls ill, Kristof is ordered to assume a duty never meant for him: become the Duke of Stehlmere and marry a notorious Prince of the Blood. It is one of the oldest honors and duties undertaken by his family, but Kristof feels only resentment that he must leave behind all he knows to serve an arrogant half-demon. His resentment must be set aside, however, when evil is found lurking far too close to the castle—an evil that has many pieces, controlled by someone

they cannot find and who always seems one step ahead of them. Someone who seems to think that demons are little more than toys ...

When women and children begin to vanish, the people of Edge village summon a Huntress. Though she is long due for a break and exhausted from her previous assignment, Adamina accepts the assignment and heads for Edge. But when she arrives, the simple assignment she anticipated proves instead to be complicated—complicated enough she must consult with a witch. A beautiful, compelling witch that makes Adamina sharply aware of her own lonely life, and tempts her to make it less lonely. Assuming the forest doesn't kill them first.

Tales of brothers, swords, and the men they most desire...

Main Gauche—Though he was born to nobility, the loss of first his father and then his mother has left Dagger a peasant. His stepfather is cruel and greedy and refuses to claim Dagger as his own. Instead of living the life for which he was meant, Dagger spends his days as the apprentice to a blacksmith. He spends his days sharpening the swords of others, rather than practicing with his own. He pines for the life he does not have—and for the handsome lord who frequents the smithy. Then the King calls for a tournament to show off his son, the Crown Prince. The chance to be a duelist again, to see the lord he so admires but can never have, is more than Dagger can resist... 1000 Victories—Epee loathes the noble life: his heartless father, his overbearing brother, the hypocrites he must call peers. He wants the simpler, ordinary life of a peasant. It is a life he is slowly working toward, and soon to hold in his grasp, no matter the consequences. All that holds him back is Lord Sharp, the man he has long loved but never been able to win. But he is very close to winning his thousandth victory over Lord Sharp in the dueling ring. With that 1000th victory, Epee hopes to win at last the man he

loves more than even freedom... The Perfect Son—Sabre has always lived according to the wishes and desires of his father, to the exclusion of everyone and everything else. His father's eldest son, he strives to be what his father wants. He is affluent, educated, a talented duelist, respected, and feared. He is everything he is supposed to be. Except happy. All Ramsay wants is to live in peace and quiet. Desperate to find solitude and to escape personal tragedy and those who betrayed him, he settles in the country of Tavamara, in a remote little house far from everything. But returning home one day after a trip to market, he winds up saving a young boy and suddenly is introduced to a world he never knew existed and which tempts him from the solitude he thought was all he wanted...

Ingolf von Dirchs is all that remains of the royal house of Kria. The bastard son of the dead Kaiser, he barely escapes the winter palace before it is overtaken by the armies of Salhara, Kria's oldest and bitterest enemy. In a last desperate attempt to combat Salhara's deadly magic, Ingolf flees to the country of Illussor, there to steal the sword of a man who once betrayed Kria to side with Illussor. But stealing the sword gains him something he did not expect—the descendant of that long ago Betrayer, an intriguing man with the pale features of an Illussor but the fierce heart of a Krian... Erich von Adolwulf is the proud descendant of the Holy General, a man who helped Illussor break free of the loathsome magic upon which they once so heavily relied... When the sword of the Holy General is stolen, Erich goes to reclaim it, and finds himself dragged into the country his ancestor once betrayed and wanting to protect the new Kaiser of war-ravaged Kria, who stirs in him things he has not felt since the death of his lover...

Upon the request of Queen Marianna, Joss has traveled home with her to analyze the small group of men who are her



closest friends. The men immediately resent the presence of a stranger intent upon asking personal questions, especially as Joss bears the title of Matchmaker and they are all quite available for matching...

Reyes O'Bannon lives a fairly quiet life, despite his role as the King's secretary. His days are filled with appointments, paperwork, and avoiding the romantic attentions of Kinnaird, the Duke of Keyes; attentions that become harder to ignore with each passing day... Then the Kingdom is attacked, and the nature and location of the attacks make it painfully clear there is a traitor in their midst. The attacks are further compounded by the sudden arrival of a man who claims to have a legitimate claim on the throne, a bastard prince who knows things from the King's past that no one else could know. As the problems increase, both within the palace and across the Kingdom, Reyes can only watch as Kinnaird is sent out to unravel the mystery and the King begins to fall apart.

### BoundLess Than Three Press, LLC

Annia was happy being a humble miller alongside her stepbrother—but her stepbrother prefers that Annia agree to be his wife. When she refuses, he brutally cuts off her hands, and Annia flees when he falls asleep. With no one to turn to, and nowhere to go, she leaves the only home she's ever known in hopes a new one might be out there somewhere.

Terrell believes strongly in an ordered, practical life.

Nothing good ever came from following reckless impulses. Nearly finished with school, it is time to focus on the next step in his life—settling down at his estate, Fivecoats, and marrying a suitable spouse to oversee it while he pursues his scholarly studies. When his father

sends word that he has found the ideal suitor, Terrell can only be pleased—despite the misgivings of his best friend. Marriage, after all, is perfectly practical; he has no need for nonsensical things like romance. Kirian wants nothing to do with reasonable. His parents chose to be happy over being practical, and he refuses to settle for less, no matter what everyone around him says. Then his brash behavior catches up to him, and he is forced into a marriage that seems to be in all ways practical, but in no way happy. But beneath the icy surface of his new spouse, Kirian sees something warm and appealing, something he realizes he desperately wants—but which seems to belong to another man.

In a kingdom ravaged by the beasts and terrors of an ancient war, the only hope against them is the army of mixed-blood beings known as the King's Legion: dragoons, shadowmarch, sorcerers, titans... and the Princes of the Blood, nigh-invincible warriors of fearsome magic and strength, their only weakness a need for pure human blood. When his brother runs away, Raffé agrees to undergo the Blooding, but he is a pale imitation of his strong, capable brother. No one expects him to survive and become a Prince, merely to die to save the rest of his family and preserve honor. But runaways and weaklings are the least of the kingdom's concerns when an ancient evil returns with new tricks, and their only hope lies with knowledge long lost and a fierce bond forged in darkness...

After she is caught behaving obscenely with another woman, Sophia is left abandoned. Her friends pretend not to know her, her family is trying to decide the best

place to banish her, and Sophia wishes that running away was as easy in fact as it was in theory. She is saved from scandal, if not her suffocating life, by way of an unexpected marriage proposal from Lord Everett Dobson, the most coveted bachelor in the city. Not in a position to refuse, Sophia accepts his offer and agrees to visit his home at Mermaid Cove for three weeks.

Mermaid Cove proves to be as beautiful as promised, complete with endless beaches, glittering waters, a castle that looks like it was made of sand... family curses and local legends... and two beautiful, mysterious women who cannot talk, but seem to have secrets they want to share...

Fairytales never grow old, because there is never an end of new ways to tell them, new ways to see them. In this first volume of many to come, see what happens when a humble blacksmith fights a duel, a prince conspires with bandits, and a lonely thief seeks shelter in a lone tower. See a goblin try to save his brother, and a tutor watch over his perfect princess, while a shy prince braves a mountain in the name of love. See what happens when a runaway prince must be tracked down, when dark rumors surface a gloomy castle, and when a young man saves a little girl, and a lonely soldier hunts down a band of robbers. See a stable boy save his best friend, and a prince save his mother, while a humble gardener faces down a terrible beast and a poor young man befriends a troll. Watch what unfolds when a sad young man is bound to a toad, and a prince confronts an evil witch, and a quiet mage seeks to break a terrible curse.

Marcum sacrificed much to be the greatest alchemist on

the continent and a master of poisons rivaled by precious few. Power and standing in his father's court. The chance to build friendships, find romance. His beauty, which was once considered noteworthy, but now is ruined by scars and burns. He is regarded with wariness at best and fear at worst. Though a recent move to the kingdom of Blodwen, far from his home of Roseberry, offers something of a fresh start, still his ravaged appearance and eccentric ways do him no favors—especially not with Goulet, the handsome, infuriating goblin who will clearly never see Marcum as anything but an ugly, bothersome know-it-all unworthy of the tattoos Goulet inks into all their friends. Then a goblin is murdered, and Marcum's laboratory mysteriously destroyed, opening the doors on a nightmare that should have ended for good more than a decade ago, but now seems to have returned with vengeance in mind...

More than seventy years have passed since Neirin du Lac was banished from the dragon clans he called home. Though he misses them, he and his dragon Troyes have built a happy life with his lover Barra, and their friends Devlin and Midnight. It is a not a life he would ever trade, not even for a chance to return to the clans. Then the very last person he ever expected to see again comes begging for help: Prince Avalon Pendragon, ruler of the clans, a man Neirin once called friend, once wished to call lover. When Avalon tells him why he needs Neirin's help, it's not a request he can refuse, nor can his friends refuse to help him. But the people bold enough to steal from the clans are not to be trifled with, and in the midst of fighting for their lives Neirin also finds himself caught

between the man he loves now and the man he never truly left behind...

Tallant is an elf astray--he's been disowned by his family, has dared to battle bond with a human, and has no desire to ever see his homeland again. He is, in fact, vastly more excited to finally be seeing the home his battle-bonded, Milton, is finally returning to after twelve years of exile. But instead of the joyful place Milton spoke endlessly of, they find a land rife with deadly dragons, where fifteen women have gone missing, including Irene, the woman Milton loves. Even Milton's brother, Cecil, is not what he used to be. Instead of the scholar Milton talked about, Cecil is a hardened soldier who keeps company with thieves. He is also beautiful and intriguing--but contemptuous of Milton and Tallant. Worse, he's also married to Irene, making it clear that Milton and Tallant have arrived far too late to matter. Author's Note: This story was first published by Less Than Three Press in *Fairytales Slashed* Volume Three. It has not been significantly changed for re-release.

A man whom all men fear... General Dieter von Adolwulf has led the Scarlet Army of Kria to victory for the past decade, holding the bitterly contested, blood-soaked territory known as the Regenbogen against Kria's hated enemies--the deceptive Illussor and the ruthless Salharans. War has waged between the three nations for longer than anyone can remember, but no one has held the Regenbogen longer than the notorious Wolf of Kria and his fearsome army. A man who fears nothing... Returning home at the end of the year, the

Scarlet Army is attacked in the dead of night by a single man who manages to kill hundreds before he is finally captured. A Salharan soldier with no name, no purpose but to kill, he refuses to bend to the Wolf who takes him prisoner and forces upon him a despicable Krian name. A man with nothing to lose...When the rest of the Scarlet Army is slaughtered by Illussor soldiers desperately seeking their Salharan prisoner, Dieter determines to hold fast, no matter the cost. He wants answers, and revenge for his slaughtered comrades. But answers and revenge are hard to come by when surrounded by secrets and treachery, and the man least likely to kill him is the prisoner who most wants him dead.

Sidney has quietly loved twin brothers Brook and Colby for years, watching and pining as they came to his house for the summer every year. Painfully aware that they have each other, have no reason to notice the unremarkable duck they grew up babysitting. Then the twins and their mother are attacked days before an important meeting that will change the shifter world forever. When the twins come to stay with Sidney's family until the attackers are caught, Sidney learns that all things have their season, and even violent protests will not keep two rabbits from the man for whom they've been patiently waiting...

Shanna has spent her whole life waiting-waiting to be old enough, waiting for the day she must pick a consort, waiting for a chance to finally overcome her despicable stepfather... and waiting for someone to finally banish the loneliness that comes with being a queen-in-waiting one step away from being murdered. On the eve of the two-

week event during which she must pick a consort from a bevy of suitors, two strangers arrive claiming to have been invited—though she knows full well they did not receive any such invitation. But the handsome, mischievous Prince Kallaar is too intriguing to resist, and his quiet bodyguard too compelling to ignore... But she's learned the hard way never to let anyone get too close, and on the verge of gaining true independence her stepfather will stop at nothing to see she never gets it. Lord Vellem is desperate to escape. His father hides from his problems in alcohol, his mother hides from her misery in drugs, and his brother fled to the relative safety of the royal palace. Vellem found solace in the Royal Army Corp of Engineers, but true escape from a life of violence remains out of reach. Then his brother provides him with an unexpected chance: marriage to a prince of their country's oldest enemy to help bring about peace once and for all. The marriage promises Vellem not just a fresh start in a new land, but a challenge to his famed skills in building roads and bridges. But before he can settle into his new life, tragedy strikes, and Vellem isn't certain he's up to rebuilding the ruin left in its wake. Deceived—Rae cannot stand his job as secretary to Prince Benedict, and the feeling is entirely mutual. In the aftermath of yet another fight, Rae lights upon the idea of giving Benedict a taste of his own seduction throughout the three day masque about to take place. But a deception meant to put a rakish prince in his place reveals a man Rae never expected, and a secret he never anticipated... Scandalous—Since the death of his parents, who lived and died scandalously, Gideon has

tried to make up for their mistakes by leading a strict, quiet life, and giving his little brother the stability he never had. On a journey home, he is waylaid by a storm—and distracted by a handsome man who proves to be more temptation than he can resist... From Afar—Pierce has all that anyone could want in life: a doting brother, the fame and adoration from being an accomplished fencer, and his best friend. What he wants most, however, is to know the identity of the person who leaves him ardent love letters and why his admirer will not step forward... Lessons—Bored and alone one night, Jude chances upon Crispin, who despairs of ever catching the eye of the man he loves because he's too innocent to be appealing. Jude, a notorious rake, impulsively offers to teach him all he needs to know... Seconds—Called to be the second to a brash young man, Alexis seeks out the appointed second of the challenger. But the man he encounters has Alexis considering things he swore off long ago, when he decided one broken heart was more than enough. The Wager—While serving as ambassador on his mother's orders, Prince Lazare spends most of his time either confused and frustrated by his peers, or struggling uselessly against his growing feelings for Maitland, appointed to be his guide and assistant throughout his stay. Neither situation is improved when he learns of a mysterious wager concerning Maitland and a dead man... Runaways—Addison hates the city, and he really hates spending all his time dancing attendance upon his brat cousin. When his cousin falls sick, Addison seizes the rare chance for solitude and flees to the park. But he is



not there long before he is accosted by a stranger who is like no one Addison has ever met, and who shows him a world he actually enjoys—a world to which he will never truly belong.

The country of Tavamara is renowned for its famous Market, its decadent wines, the harsh climate in which it manages to flourish. It is also well known for the harems kept by the royal family. King Shahjahan's harem is especially infamous, for his concubines are comprised of an unusual, many say dangerous, assortment... This volume also contains three additional stories. The Jewel of Tavamara Fahima has always been the lesser sister: younger, plainer, too smart and independent. Then her sister commits the ultimate taboo, putting their lives in danger. In order to save her family, Fahima must take her place, though she is painfully aware Shahjahan will never see her as more than a paltry substitute... Knight to Rook Displaced by war, Rook makes a home in the Desert where his cousin Cordelia has become Princess. A famous, highly-regarded strategist back home, in the Desert he is regarded as useless and held in contempt for his inability to fight. Adrift and alone, he can only watch and wait for a chance to prove he belongs amongst the Sons of the Sands. Everything You Need Though he left the Desert years ago and is set to become the next Advisor to the King of Tavamara, Ikram spends most of his days feeling out of place, living a life of civility and calm that is nothing like the Desert he left behind. Eager to get away from the palace for a time, he braves the famous Market...

Lord Devlin White, Duke of Winterbourne, is the last in a

long line of powerful witches who assist the Demon Lord of London by solving mysteries and settling problems amongst nightwalkers. With his proud family line all but ended, considered eccentric even by the standards of his strange world, Devlin is kept from despair by his unusual ward, Midnight. Murdered as a child, turned into a draugr in death, Midnight is a nightwalker like no other. Neither alive nor dead, sustained by magic and a bond to Devlin, he is happy to spend his life by Devlin's side, though he longs for the day that Devlin sees him as more than a ward. But now a powerful figure seeks the secret of Midnight's making—a secret that Devlin will die to protect. On a journey to meet his fiancé and begin wedding preparations, Prince Diggory is betrayed by his bodyguard, who intends to steal Diggory's life. Left for dead in a river, the last thing Diggory expects is to live. But surviving is only half the battle, and Diggory will have to figure out how to work around the constraints of a terrible curse if he hopes to stop the man who betrayed him and gain back his life.

When High Paladin Sorin discovers the brutally dismembered body of his cousin Alfrey, a much loved priest in the royal palace, he is left baffled as to who would do so terrible a thing to so good a man. But to find the answer to that question, he must cooperate with one of the highly despised necromancers, men who practice black magic, sleep in graveyards and feed upon souls... The necromancer Koray, however, is far from what he expected. He is beautiful, stubborn, and possessed of a tongue sharp enough to cut down even the High Paladin himself. Koray is also possessed of a strength like

nothing Sorin has ever encountered, and the power of the Goddess herself. It does not take them long to realize that solving a murder is the easiest challenge they must face, and in order to save a kingdom they must first unravel centuries of lies and misunderstandings.

Skylar is used to the way people think of him as frightening, mean, and dangerous. Snakes are not the most popular shifters around and the fact he grew up wild doesn't help. He knows the way he's chosen to live alone in the woods only makes things worse, but he didn't think it meant people thought him capable of killing a couple of wolf puppies. Determined to find the real monster who left them to die, Skylar calls up the only wolf he knows, a man he always wished would see him as more than a snake...

Cassidy Monarch had dreams—to sing, to be famous, to tour the world at the head of his own rock band. Then his parents were killed in a tragic accident, leaving him to raise his two siblings. Determined to hold on to what remained of his family, Cassidy settled into an ordinary life, his dreams of fame reduced to occasional nights of singing at karaoke dives. But his careful, ordinary life began to fray with his new job, and the beautiful, charming boss who reminds him of all the things he tried to stop wanting. Malcolm Osborne is a classic rags to riches story, a foster child who wound up with the perfect family and more money than he knows what to do with. He's wealthy, beautiful, successful, and completely miserable. Then he hires a new worker for his office, a young, hard-working man with a sadness in his eyes that Malcolm aches to banish, hoping that in doing so he will be rid of his own loneliness as well.

Four strangers. A shared moment long forgotten. A bond forged in desperation. On the first day of the Festival of

Counting, the beginning of the royal census that takes place every ten years, the royal city is filled to overflowing. Everyone is happy, excited, and proud to be counted amongst those who live in the glorious kingdom of Orhanis. Then a demon strikes, killing thousands in mere seconds and leveling the city. As the royal castle burns, only four men remain to drive the demon away—and in their desperation, accidentally bind themselves together in a legendary Oath, unable to part ways until they find and kill the demon once and for all. Mahzan, the King's Jester, an orphan who clawed his way to the top and hides a fearsome magic... Sule, the notorious North Captain, who sacrificed everything to live as a strong, capable, highly respected man... Cemal, a priest who traveled the continent bent on revenge and now lives lost... and Binhadi, the mercurial shadow mage with a dark history and bloody ties to the throne... Four men used to standing apart, standing alone, who must learn to stand together if they hope to save themselves and all of Orhanis.

Kaeck is a poor, shy, mage, barely able to keep attending University. His life is work and school, leaving him too busy to make friends. Then one day, fetching his mail from his school post box, Kaeck finds a letter from a secret admirer. The letters and subsequent gifts do much to brighten Kaeck's lonely days, but even as he longs to know the identity of his admirer, he finds his own admiration growing for fellow student Bellamy... who in turn is enamored of someone else entirely.

Jack worked hard to obtain a normal life. He might not love it, but it's better than the criminal life he left behind—even if it cost literally everything, and he really does hate being a damned delivery man. On the bright side, his route includes a friendly old lady who makes the world's best cookies and regales him with tales of her hot, jet-setting son. Normalcy definitely has perks. Then he walks in on her and her son

arguing with men at gunpoint.

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