

BEAUTIFUL SERPENT, RESTLESS EMBERS

Character Profiles

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LAUREL ALEANDRI

THE MOONSTRUCK

“They all knew there was something wrong with me. Something deeply disturbing, which cast me out of friendship’s favor.”

Ever since Laurel discovered she was one of the Damica—a special group of women imbued with intuitive gifts—she has lived in terror. Identified as one of the most challenging of the five classes, the Lunare, her connection to the moon gives her strange and uncomfortable empathic abilities: with a brush of her fingertips, she can feel into hearts and minds, sense the energy of places she visits, and know the history of objects she touches.



While coveted among the high court, her power brings with it an affliction: it is a well-documented fact that the Lunare experience frequent bouts of insanity. To curb her destructiveness, Laurel is taken into the Accademia and put under the care

of a prestigious headmistress, who teaches her and her sister Damica to control their powers.

But while the others gain mastery over their gifts, Laurel's gift becomes more intense and unwieldy.

When her power draws the attention of a dangerous visitor to the Accademia, Laurel absconds to seek help. Fleeing deep into the woods, she begins to hear voices whispering to her—their owners long dead. Her new companions call to her, revealing dark warnings about the world she thought she knew—and pleading for her help.

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PHILLIP ALEANDRI

THE PEACEKEEPER

“We have seen the darkness of your gift. Tomorrow, you will learn its light. Even in the darkness, when you stumble madly, blindly—I believe you are drawn to the light.”

When the Order needed somebody to venture beyond the temple in the mountains, Phillip volunteered to become their emissary. With his keen interest in the arts, Phillip’s mission became one of peace and preservation: he traveled the kingdom’s many lands, collecting and archiving the relics, customs, and knowledge of various spiritual practices.



The day he arrived at the Accademia in Cortellion, the kingdom’s capital, he discovered more than just dusty, old books and ancient artifacts.

He found Clare.

After Phillip took the striking Damica as his wife, the pair settled into a humble home just outside of Cortellion, and they soon welcomed a daughter, Laurel. Blissful with the family and

life he had established, he continued his duties as an emissary, but with less enthusiasm and frequency.

But as Laurel discovers she, too, is Damica, she spirals into deeply disturbing behaviors that begin to pose a threat to herself, her family, and the community. Determined to find a cure for Laurel's ailments, Phillip returns to the Order, seeking the knowledge to change fate itself.

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CORCORAN

THE FIRESTARTER

“Honor? What d’ya think ya know about honor?”

Sometimes, Corcoran still dreamed about the first time his foster father passed him a sword from the forge: the smoothness of the steel, the weight of it in his young hands, the way his fingers curled around it.

It was the most natural thing in the world.

Born a farmer’s son, Corcoran loved the open air. He spent his days hollering and chasing his best friend, Roland Brandt, through the fields when they were boys. The best afternoons were spent feeding his fathers’ horses slices of apple and blowing into their muzzles. He grew adept at befriending and handling these creatures and taught Roland to ride with the same ease he did.



After an accident on the farm left him an orphan, Corcoran was taken in by the Brandt family; the town blacksmith, Viktor, became his foster father—and Roland his foster brother.

While Roland spent his days toiling at the anvil, Corcoran delivered goods around town. From the outside, life looked peaceful for the boys, but behind closed doors, Viktor worked Roland to exhaustion in the cramped, dark forge, leaving Corcoran to beg for scraps. Resorting to petty theft, Corcoran was soon spurned as a street urchin.

Corcoran yearned for the days of freedom, sunshine, and horses—and most of all, respect.

Accompanied by Roland, Corcoran set out to make a name for himself on the battlefield. His affinity for swords and horses had been a spark in his childhood—but he would soon set the world ablaze.

ROLAND BRANDT

THE BLACKBIRD

“Death takes on many forms.”

As a blacksmith's son, Roland was accustomed to carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders. Every day, he worked in the darkness of the forge, the steadfast *clang-clang-clang* of his hammer punctuating the hours. Between his aging father's growing demands and the needs of a rapidly expanding town, Roland understood his duty to others and worked tirelessly to fill their needs.



His days in the shop were long and arduous, every muscle in his body aching as he collapsed into bed. Bound by his obligations, he looked forward to visits from his best friend, Corcoran. Cheeky and carefree, Corcoran always turned up with an offbeat joke or wild tale. Much to his chagrin, Viktor discovered Roland

beginning to abandon his hammer to spend a little time in the sunshine with his friend.

When Corcoran's father died, Roland knew that Corcoran would never survive on his own—not with his aloofness and penchant for troublemaking. Convincing Viktor to take Corcoran in was no easy task, but Roland promised to take full responsibility for his new foster brother.

Unfortunately, as metals became more expensive and hours at the forge grew longer, there was little Roland could do to keep Corcoran off the streets—and out of trouble. He had to admit, he was relieved when Corcoran chose to join the military.

Holding true to his promise to protect his foster brother, Roland used the mastery of his craft to forge an impressive shield, and he followed Corcoran into war. Trading his blacksmith's hammer for a war hammer, he quickly earned a nickname with his daunting presence, establishing him as an omen of death.

No one would dare stand against the Blackbird.

VITIS GRIMSTAAD

THE NOOSEMASTER

“A wild hound must be put down.”

Patience. It was all Vitis heard as a child. It was not the rope nor the snares nor the bait that led to a catch. It was patience. With patience, one could trap any animal.

Born into a clan of trappers, Vitis traveled the forests with his kin, venturing into the darkest and most frightening thickets and weaving ropes into nooses until his fingers bled. Life was simple for his clan: set the traps and wait for the prey. Fur was a cherished commodity for the kingdom, and his clan provided a steady supply. Although the others seemed to enjoy the freedom of their nomadic life, Vitis felt he was called to a greater purpose.



He enjoyed the hunt as much as his kin, but still, there was something empty about it. Disappointing. His hands were too idle, dissatisfied by hunting simple woodland creatures. Clever and ambitious, Vitis soon discovered he could use his traps to lure men who had committed misdeeds to meet their rightful end. After exposing a crime within his own clan, Vitis left behind the life of furs and trapping and became one of the kingdom's enforcers—a keeper of the law.

As an enforcer, his life became one of honor: righting the wrongs. Using his wits and skill with rope, he set out to rid the entire kingdom of organized crime.

With a little patience, he would shake out every last thief who thought they were safe, hiding in the woods.

He would punish every last man who crossed him.

All it would take was a little patience.