



## Kestrel's Talon

*Bey Deckard*

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*Novel (135,031 words)*

*Genre(s): Fantasy, Triad, LGBT+/GSM*

Following the Prentish/Nemarri war, Kes is rejected by his homeland under the guise of religious purity laws. Though he's spared execution, the proud Nemarri's fate is only marginally more merciful than death when he is sold into sexual slavery at a prosperous pleasure house.

Despite his stoic endurance, Kes knows he's reaching his breaking point, but there is nothing he can do—there is no path to freedom in the Holy Prentish Empire, only a lifetime of humiliating servitude.

That is, until a beautiful young slave and his formidable master approach Kes in the marketplace and make an astonishing offer to take him home with them. The only problem: "home" is the accursed Horthmont Castle from the scare-stories of Kes's childhood.

Thrown into a world of living myth, powerful magic, and ancient gods, Kes learns the secrets kept hidden by Horthmont's thick blackstone walls. There he discovers something he thought he'd never know again: hope for the future.

## **Kestrel's Talon Details**

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Author : Bey Deckard

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## From Reader Review Kestrel's Talon for online ebook

### JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

**4.5 star** review by The Blogger Girls.

Leave it to Mr. Deckard to provide another fabulous fantasy to love, in addition to another unique threesome. This is the story of Kestrel, or Kes, a soldier who ended up captured and put into sexual slavery, though he has a history of having trouble submitting to his plight.

Kestrel's luck finally changes when he ends up being purchased by a count and his slave, Talon, the dynamics of which really throw Kes off. Things are quite different than Kes was expecting when the dust all settles. There are a lot of interesting little branches interwoven in this storyline, not the least of them being the unslavelike behavior Talon exhibits. Then there is the mystery surrounding the Count, Grimma, who has a close relationship with Talon. However, nothing is what you'd think here. Grimma is asexual, his relationship with Talon consisting of emotional and comfort, not physical. Kes was purchased for the purpose of fulfilling those needs for Talon. As I said, things are quite different in this household.

I'm afraid that to say more about those differences would be giving too much away. Suffice to say that there is a lot going on here consisting of many layers, i.e. the relationship between Kes, Talon, Grim; the secret and history surrounding Grim and his household, as well as the bigger picture of finding allies to help recover land and end slavery. As I said, lots of interesting things going on here.

I loved the growing relationship between Kes and Talon, and then Grimma. Each played an important role and provided something each needed but could not get from the other. Kes and Talon together were hot stuff, and I loved how they involved Grim! This is not your average threesome, and I really enjoyed the differing aspects of it. In the end, they fit like an intricate puzzle, and it just worked for all.

This is a long story, but it never felt drawn out. It quickly pulls you in and envelops you in this feeling of warmth, much the same way Mr. Deckard's other series, Baal's Heart, did. If you enjoyed that, you will undoubtedly enjoy this one. It has the same feel, but is a bit sweeter. Mr. Deckard again gives us unique characters to fall for and I'm really excited this story will continue, as these guys surely have more in store, and I can't wait to see how the rest of the story plays out.

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### Bey Deckard says

A Quiet Moment - Art by Catherine Dair

What to say about this book? Hmm. Well... I like writing triads. I really do. And I love these characters dearly... especially the one not mentioned in the title (you'll see). It's not particularly dark... at least I don't think so. It's mostly a story about trust and hope and healing.

It was going to be a standalone, but as I was writing it, I realized that it would take more than one book to tell the whole story. So this is the beginning... and I think it's a good beginning. :)

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### **Bookishcat says**

I have loved everything I have ever read by this author but this book really took the cake. The characters are so complex that you can help but connect to them. One thing I truly appreciate about this author's book is that the side characters are so well drawn as well. They aren't cardboard one dimensional plot devices. Also I cannot express how much I appreciate this author making strong likable female characters!!! One pet peeve that I see in m/m romances is that female characters are either mysteriously absent or are petty, evil, stupid or all of the above.

I walked into this book feeling a little uncertain I'm not a fan of characters who are former prostitutes, the abuse the characters have suffered with this usually leave me to depressed but, kestrel I adored. He was strong and just so likable. Now for Talon, goodness gracious talon was a sweetie and despite him having an overly promiscuous background (not due to abuse) that I usually avoid I really came to adore him. His desire to have a friend and be loved fully was so sweet and gave me an understanding of his past. Now, but NOT least Grimma oh heavens he's so complex I could write an essay on him and still not crack the depth of character here. He's asexual but this doesn't hinder him from being in a complete, loving, and fulfilling relationship with his two boys. He really is a big lovable teddy bear.

Fantastic Book!!

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### **Lori says**

4.75

I have every intention of coming back and writing a proper review soon... in case I don't though, just know I LOVED this book. Fantasy is a fave genre of mine and this book hit all the right spots for me.

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### **Zuzu says**

Loved this! Bey's imagination is amazing. I liked the three main characters and find their evolving relationship(s) interesting. And while I enjoyed the Baal's Heart series, I'm thoroughly enjoying these kinder, gentler characters. I'm looking forward to the next installment - just glad there wasn't a "real" cliffhanger!

1st read - 5/31/16

2nd read - 8/14/16

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### **Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says**

BR w/Baby!

I hate to do this, I **really** do especially after having been so vocal with my excitement for this book. I've ardently gushed and fawned over BeyBey's writes since reading *Caged*, but this wasn't a win for me. I'll get to what didn't work for me, but first let's start with what did.

*Kestrel's Talon* is another high fantasy with superb worldbuilding. It's told from multiple perspectives non-

linearly. The skill and creativity required to construct a unique world with this scrupulous attention to detail including a distinct language and customs for multiple countries flabbergasts me. The Prentish Empire is nuanced, exquisitely detailed and inventive from start to finish. These characters are also meticulously crafted, though if you've read the Baal's Heart trilogy you will notice similarities.

Kes was forced into slavery and delegitimized by a ridiculous Nemarri law after having bravely served his country as a foot soldier in the military. After being debased in the most heinous way (only referenced) he is rightfully angry and loathes the whole institution of slavery. Talon, on the other hand, was born a slave and has been with Count Strade since he was a boy. He and Kes have an instantaneous connection in the market where Kes is on offer in his cock cage and diamond belly chain.

*\*bites fist\**

Count Strade negotiates a price for him and off they go to Horthmont Castle. There are a few plot twists that caught me off guard and were clever. Some weighty contemporary topics are addressed in the subtext, one being discrimination. The inclusivity of the castle and acceptance of those who would otherwise be deemed societal outcasts was heartwarming. I always like stories wherein a family is created to replace a dysfunctional or non-existent one. All of the inhabitants of the castle were as well constructed as the main characters. As a matter of fact, I liked them better than the main characters with one notable exception.

And that's probably my biggest problem-I didn't really like two of the three MCs. I swear it wasn't that the chastity skedaddled in a blink and this wasn't the slave fic I had envisioned, though I was disappointed by those developments I won't lie. Things started off on the wrong foot for me when Kes hits Talon early on. I've made my thoughts on this known repeatedly so I won't beat the dead horse. Talon forgives him which is his prerogative, but he never redeemed himself in my eyes. There's no faster way for me to disconnect from a character than to have them treat their paramour thusly. Later in the book when he treats Talon "like a slave" after becoming upset over an event those feelings compounded.

Talon is marginally better but both he and Kes are exceedingly jealous of each other's time with Grim. I like possessive but there's a fine line between possessive and obsessive and they tipped over that line. Talon is sweet and playful, has a "gift" which I won't go into, and he is randy, but there's nothing exceptional about him aside from his beauty.

Grim is the only one I really liked mainly for his equanimity and I can't talk about him without spoiling. But the biggest problem with this relationship is I don't know how you can sustain a triad with these sorts of dynamics happening. Maybe it was the pettiness or the fact that I didn't care for Kes and Talon, but something integral to forming a lasting relationship just didn't gel for me. Kes and Talon are hot for each other and they respect Grim; that they all care about each other is clear but forever 'n ever?

The pacing was too slow. I appreciate worldbuilding and character development, but I needed more adventure. Slice of life + high fantasy doesn't work for me. I can only take so much sex (I can't believe I just said that), hunting, chopping wood and piddling around an enormous castle before I start drifting. The last quarter had some developments that helped but left me feeling unfulfilled. It's clear this is the set up book for a series and while I do think the objective for an egalitarian society is a noble one, I just don't know if that's enough for me to continue with the series.

At the end of the day, the worldbuilding alone is worthy of **3 Hearts** from me.

*A review copy was provided in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Riina Y.T. says**

I did it. I gave in and finished it... << crushed that it's over. For now.

This was... Kes... Talon... Grim... Shit. \*shakes head\* Wow.

ONE OF THE BEST DAMN THINGS. EVER. #foreverfavorites.

Thank you, Bey, for a magical and most beautiful (love)story, for creating those wonderful, amazing guys and sharing them with us. Also, for giving us more of them in the future. \*squeee\*

Gosh, your mind is a fucking beautiful thing.

xx

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### **Cadiva says**

#### **Exceptional world building in this fantasy romance**

I loved the amazing world and cultures which Bey created in this fantasy romance and the relationship development between Kes, Talon and Grimm.

There's a lot of story going on, a bit of an adventure, a bit of magic, a little bit of kink, a lot of emotions and a hint of mystery. I loved the unique voices of each man and the different emotional connection they brought to their triad

The setting and secondary characters also brought depth and flavour to the narrative, each helping to create the world and the location in which the story develops.

There were interesting twists, there's a lot of powerful scenes between Kes and Talon, but I also loved how Grimm wasn't a typical third, his lack of sexual desire meaning his emotional connection to the other two was very powerful to read.

Now I need the rest of the series please Bey!

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### **Arch Bala says**

Kestrel's a soldier sold into slavery after his own country did not buy his freedom back because he was defiled during his time as a war prisoner. Abused and dehumanized as a pleasure slave, Kestrel didn't think that he could still escape his agonizing existence until he found himself being sold – yet again – to a fellow

slave named Talon and its master, Count Strade.

I didn't think that I'd enjoy this book immensely given that this was my first book from the author and it is 400-pages plus long. So I was a bit wary because of that but since it was highly recommended to me by a friend (hiya Riina Y.T. !), I thought I'd give it a try and I'm sure glad I did because it is without question one of the best books I've read this year!

I loved the details in this book. You can really see as you go along with the story how the author thought about every minute detail with each character. There are three main characters here given that this was a triad and the chemistry between them was just spot on. One problem I always seem to encounter in stories with ménage à trois is the lack of chemistry between one other character from the other two. There are only few stories with similar arrangement whose characters really jived together and this is definitely one of them.

Out of the three though, Talon has got to be my favorite. I really loved his youthful characterization and his voice just left me yearning for more narrative from his perspective. There's sweet innocence combined with wickedness about his character. Perhaps, it's because he was never treated a slave by Grim and bears a very useful "gift?" I also loved that he's selfless with just about everyone he considers family. I just loved him.

There's Kestrel of course. I feel for what he's been through but at times, he makes me feel a tad bit uncomfortable when he's being rough with Talon. Although Talon's okay with it, I find myself internally cringing whenever he's being that way.

Then there's Grimma! Oh, how I adore this guy! All the history behind his character was well-crafted and I just loved reading his POV!

Together, they make a very beautiful triad! Plus, the sexy time between them was just beyond!

As for the side characters, there are some I totally loved (Moller, Ghost, Hessa) and some whom I want to see in the next installment and hope that they will have a gruesome death (Scalt and Kes's prisonmate whose name I forgot).

As for the story development, I loved how fast the pacing was and the upcoming plot points for the next book clearly established at the latter part of the story was nothing short of exciting and I am very much hoping for a grittier sequel.

I think I covered everything in this review and atm, I am dying with anticipation for the next book! I seriously need to read more of Bey's works while waiting for it!

**Rating: 5 out of 5 stars**

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**Donna says**

I loved this first book in the Stonewalkers series! Grimma, Talon and Kes were wonderful and their love for each other is very sweet and works great for each of them. Hessa and Ghost were very interesting secondary characters and the world building was very well written. I can't wait to see what happens with everyone in the next book of this series.

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## Pianka \*call me PIU\* says

Kestrel's Talon by Bey Deckard is my first read by this author. It is a fantasy work with a gay setting. There is magic, mystery, intrigue and also a completely new language. It is the first book in this series.

There are three major players in this novel:

1. **Kestrel/Kes:** He is a sex slave, who in the start of the story is purchased by a count and whisked away to a castle in the mountains. Kestrel is a captured soldier who has been forced into slavery and he is highly resentful in this situation. Though after being purchased he is treated as an equal and with respect, Kes still harbours resentment towards his status as a **SLAVE**. As the story progresses Kestrel becomes completely vested in overthrowing the current ruler and gaining his **FREEDOM**.
2. **Talon:** He is a beautiful, young, red haired slave of Count Strade. Talon is the one who persuades his owner to purchase Kestrel. Talon have an extraordinary gift which he still has no full control of. He uses this ability to protect his master and every other resident of the Horthmont castle. Talon is quite taken with Kestrel from the start and later on he trusts him enough to reveal their secrets. He is to play a very important role along with Kestrel and his master in the brewing revolution against the Prentish empire.
3. **Count Strade:** Strade aka Grimm Dam Hout is the owner of Kestrel and Talon. He is a war chief of the Miq'lathan tribe and is in hiding. His entire race has been butchered many hundred years ago and now he is the only war chief left. Grimm is under a powerful enchantment which has allowed him to live for a long time and this is **the main secret** of the mysterious and feared owner of the Horthmont castle. He uses Talon to keep his real identity hidden from the authorities.

I was a little confused about the dynamics among the three guys. Kestrel and Talon are attracted to each other from the beginning and their sexual encounters are pretty hot but lacked the love or bond that i was hoping for. Kestrel was a slave who has been tortured and taken advantage of countless times, so you may think that he will be considerate towards another human being, but he treats Talon and uses him in a very slave like way which does not make a great start to a great relationship. Kestrel and Talon are both attracted to Grimm as he is to them. This is where i got really hung up. Grimm has raised Talon and i did not find it a little bit okay that he is attracted to a kid who has literally grown up in front of him. Grimm is like a father to Talon so their apparent attraction did not sit well with me. I am not avert to unconventional relationships so three guys trying to create a sexual/loving relationship is fine but this story lacked the necessary chemistry between Grimm and Kestrel/Talon to make it work. (Grimm can't get it up, I mean what is with that???) Hopefully there will be more sensible character development in the future books.

Talon has a very handy ability of reading/manipulating minds but that too was not explained properly. There was a hodge podge of a lot of stuff that Talon could do which i am sorry to say gave me a major headache. At the end of the story i am still confused about what Talon can actually do\*pouts\*

The plot progresses with the growing relationship between the three main characters and the various extraordinary secrets that make up the household of the Horthmont castle. The slaves in the Prentish empire are treated horribly and is the main focus of the read. Though Kestrel and Talon are now protected from the outside world, they are still in danger. The protagonists find themselves an unlikely ally to bring the current king down, thus banishing slavery along with it. The author has tried to create a fantasy with magic, enchantment and a promise of a great battle coming in the next books. This book lacked in the

magic/enchanting department for which the anticipation was quite high. It was like a **gay "Lord of The Rings"** sans the "ring". There is very little development going on in the plot which makes the read very sluggish. An increase in pace and more adventurous situations would have been welcome.

All in all, this book is not that interesting but have **potential** to be a good fantasy read later in the series. Hopefully there will be more action, magic and chemistry in the next books.

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### **Harper Miller says**

I won an ARC copy of this story and boy was I delighted since I absolutely adore Bey's writing. Fans of high-fantasy will **LOVE** this story. I'm always in awe of BD's creativity. The world building alone is worthy of four stars. Took me entirely too long to finish this due to me working on my own projects, but this was a pretty cool story. I waxed and waned with my like for Kestrel, but Talon was quite the cheeky character. I was thoroughly entertained.

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### **Tully Vincent says**

3.5 stars

Excellent world-building, from the history, to the land (even with maps in the back), to the people, traditions, and clothing--detailed, fleshed out, and very vivid. We have slaves and magic, soldiers and war, and so much more. The story grabbed me in the beginning scene in a market where even people (slaves) are traded. The three main characters, all introduced in the same scene, were intriguing, and I was eager for the ride.

All three characters are nuanced and interesting. I enjoyed Talon's innocence, something he'd kept despite the world he'd lived in; his dedication to Grimma and his attitude on life/sex which seemed right given his past, but his jealousy and manipulations annoyed me. A scene near end shows his bravery and selflessness and made up for that a bit. Kestrel threw me off a couple of times with his harsh actions towards Talon--I understood his anger over what had happened to him but sometimes his reactions didn't sit well. And Grimma--I enjoyed him the most, I think. The story is from all three characters POV, but his probably the least. Nice job bringing together three very diverse backstories, all integral to the story. The triad in this story was quite interesting, especially given that we have a hypersexual who still manages to seem innocent, a man reeling from previous sexual abuse, and an asexual character. But I felt that they worked well together, and although I'm not big on threesomes, I was pretty well sold on them.

I always adore when there's a dog character in a story, so I adored Pants (and the name, too). Loved how he was woven into the story and often made a difference, not just there as a prop. Kestrel's connection with him fascinated me, and made me want to read more of the series just to see how that goes and if the theory proposed about their bond (and then negated by another) is actually true or not.

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### **K says**

Bey Deckard captures his audience once again with this fantasy tale of **Kestrel's Talon**. The world-building

itself is mind-boggling and will take you on a journey that is sure to hold your attention from start to finish. There are three main characters that make up the story, Kestrel, aka Kes, a soldier sold into slavery, Talon, who was born into slavery, and Count Strade, aka Grimma the Great and owner of Talon.

...

The story opens with Kes standing in the marketplace being ogled by dirty old men hoping to take their pleasures if the price is right. He hates his life and what has been forced upon him but he knows if doesn't behave it could be much worse. He notices a beautiful boy across the way and is shocked when he realizes he's coming towards him.

...

Talon doesn't understand the pull or the connection he feels towards Kes he just knows there is something there and he convinces Count Strade of the same. Once the purchase is made the story takes off from here with the three of them heading to Horthmont's Castle where Grim and Talon live.

...

Kes is skeptical of Talon and what they want from him or what they plan to do with him. He's also heard rumors about the big guy Grimma the Great and his scary castle and what goes on there. He's also a little intrigued by this beautiful boy with the red hair and pale skin who is so carefree and full of laughter.

...

Talon is a firecracker and gets amused easily and loves to make fun of Kes. His purpose for finding another slave was to have someone his age so he could have a friend but he gets much more than just a friend from Kes. He's captivated by him and even jealous at times when Kes and Grim have moments to themselves. It's short-lived, however, as they have a special connection that only they share. Talon has a special gift and even he isn't fully aware of how to use it yet.

...

Count Strade is quite the character. I wasn't sure what to think about him at first. He's big and gruff and a little scary but he's really a cuddly bear. In more ways than one. You can't help but to be drawn to this man who has suffered with so much pain and turmoil and continues to do so. I really can't explain his story because it's made up of myths and gods and spells and full moons but I do know that he loves Talon and I believe that he loves Kes and his castle is made up of misfits who have found a place to call home and they are safe and protected.

...

The story is of the triad working together to heal each other, and in the process they fall in love and learn to laugh again. Talon is a little naïve at times which causes friction and discourse with Kes but they work it out. We learn the story of the past through Grimma as he tells it to Talon and Kes and we learn what they want to see for the future.

...

There's lots of mystery and magical aspects that make up this tale. There's secrets and coded messages and I always felt an undercurrent of something bad getting ready to happen. There's too much that happens for me to explain nor could I do it properly if I tried. No one writes detail and descriptions and takes the reader on an all-inclusive journey like this author. This is the first book of a trilogy so it has a bit of a cliffhanger ending.?

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**SheReadsALot says**

**A Tag-Team Review with Cupcake!**

**4 Hearts**--Bey Deckard's, *Kestrel's Talon (The Stonewatchers, #1)*, is a fantasy based romance that stars a triad that find themselves themselves and try to heal along a twisted path. In this fictional world, there are

slaves, civil unrest among those who are slaves and freemen alike, telepaths, religion/mythology, lost cultures and a QUILTBAG cast of characters.

If I had known what all was going to be introduced \*cough\*namely psychics\*cough\*, I'd...probably not read it as soon as I did. But the premise intrigued me and the main characters actually won me over by the end. So if an anti-psychic reader can say it wasn't all that bad and kind of cool, you might want to check this out.

Kestrel is an ex-soldier, now forced into slavery in a pleasure house. He comes from a bigoted country when his sexuality is against their religion. Now in the Holy Empire of Pren, where slaves are the lowest of the low, his fountain of hope is all but run out. Until he locks eyes with a young ginger haired slave by the name of Talon. Talon is infectious and his master, a gentle giant with a reputation, Count Strade, purchase Kes and change what he knew as his life forever.

This story is long, 135K. And I will admit, the first 20% took me days to finish. It was interesting but not what I expected. I went in thinking it was going to be a dark, kinky tale between two slaves. But instead there was an extra partner, an asexual partner that threw my preconceptions out the door. **The next 70%?** I consumed in less than a day, I couldn't wait to find out what's next. The tale might take some time to get to a point (and when the paranormal part with shifters came to play) I couldn't get enough of it.

This book would work best for fantasy lovers, but it's not for everyone.

Let's get the **triggers** out front and center - **rape (off page) and physical violence (between partners)**. I wouldn't necessarily call this story dark. I thought the tone was cool, angsty in spots. But not something I'll be afraid to read in the dark alone. Though there was a few spooky bits...oh if they were only longer. I've read darker work from this author, this is a 1.5 out of 5 on the dark scale for me.

The setting was hands down the winner for me. This author is wickedly talented with setting a scene, creating a landscape and describing the smells, colors and environment. It's **5 Hearts** for me.

The story is swimming in **3.5-4 Hearts** pool. The plots and side plots were good, the execution was mostly solid. I don't mind flashbacks, this story has an abundance. And sometimes the branching out to a flashback and jumping back to present time could be a little jarring in spots. Or the flashback scene here and there would end a mite early. Overall, solid but it's a beginning. I want to read the entire story and then review it on a whole. *Kestrel's Talon* is supposed to be the base of the triad's relationship.

The characters were **4 Hearts** - I don't have a definite favorite of the throuple. Each guy brought something different to the relationship.

-*Kes* is struggling with his recovery, struggling with his lot in life especially after such horrific conditions. He is so angry, it's justified to me. I think the author did a good job of showing why he reacts the way he does and is so possessive of his spot of happiness. Imagine if you've never had any bit of hope and then a ray of sunshine is forcing themselves into your pocket? Reactions will be bumpy.

-*Talon*, the nubile, naive ginger slave whose innocence (and he's not innocent the least) brings a sense of newness that is refreshing. I didn't want anything to go wrong in his world. And I hated that he was a slave (not a sexy slave - but slave with no say in the world he lived in) But his perspective on life was a nice touch.

There was no ounce of jadedness to be found here.

-*Count Strade or Grimma*, he was the enigma for me. And definitely not what I'd imagine to go with his looks. His back story, was shared in sections throughout the story. So he's the one the reader gets the most information on. He's sweet and interesting.

The secondary characters were the ones that really helped move this story along. I think my favorite character (including the leads) so far is Hessa. And she doesn't even speak!

The story ends on a sweet, loose end note. A soft cliffhanger, if you will. There isn't as much action, more setting the groundwork of more to come. I have questions and hopes for the future of this series. I want to know about Talon's ancestry, Kes' too. What is up with the telepathy stuff? Too many question marks at the end for me and not enough periods. ;D

This story has potential, it gives more than decent framework. But I had quibbles.

- **The villains/bad guys** - I want retribution. Badly. Especially for the one who took advantage of the ginger.

- **This triad...** I'm about 75% sold on them. It might be because not all parties are equals, the hypersexual to asexual ratio or though this is super novel, I don't feel like I got enough of a sense of each character. Or it could be a combination of the three. Something about this throuple just doesn't seem rock solid. They are new partners to relationship: there is infighting, insecurities, jealousies and stupid decisions. But I'm not sure if their hearts are all in it because they ALL wanted to or there wasn't any other choice.

-**The last 10%** - it was a lull for me. I understand this is a beginning all 135K of this novel. But the last 10% seemed rushed, a little too sweet and just a little anticlimactic after all that happened in the last 90%.

Though this story is long, other than my slow start, this story was pretty easy to zip through. I definitely would read more of this series. It's more on the cerebral plot heavy than swords dashing and dukes flying. I didn't know how much I liked it until reflecting on the cool twists and turns...and I'm not telling you because it's one for fantasy lovers who don't mind flashbacks and a plot slow burn to discover for themselves.

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*A copy provided for an honest review.*