

A BLOOD AND ASH NOVEL

A
SOUL
OF
ASH
AND
BLOOD

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JENNIFER L.
ARMENTROUT

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A Soul of Ash and Blood
A Blood and Ash Novel
By Jennifer L. Armentrout

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BOOK DESCRIPTION

A Soul of Ash and Blood

A Blood and Ash Novel

By Jennifer L. Armentrout

Only his memories can save her...

A great primal power has risen. The Queen of Flesh and Fire has become the Primal of Blood and Bone—the true Primal of Life and Death. And the battle Casteel, Poppy, and their allies have been fighting has only just begun. Gods are awakening across Iliseum and the mortal realm, readying for the war to come.

But when Poppy falls into stasis, Cas faces the very real possibility that the dire, unexpected consequences of what she is becoming could take her away from him. Cas *is* given some advice, though—something he plans to cling to as he waits to see her beautiful eyes open once more: Talk to her.

And so, he does. He reminds Poppy how their journey began, revealing things about himself that only Kieran knows in the process. But it's anybody's guess what she'll wake to or exactly how much of the realm and Cas will have changed when she does.

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author Jennifer L. Armentrout revisits Poppy and Casteel's epic love story in the next installment of the Blood and Ash series. But this time, Hawke gets to tell the tale.

ABOUT JENNIFER L. ARMENTROUT

#1 *New York Times* and #1 International Bestselling author Jennifer L. Armentrout lives in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. All the rumors you've heard about her state aren't true. When she's not hard at work writing, she spends her time reading, watching really bad zombie movies, pretending to write, hanging out with her husband, her Border Jack—Apollo, Border Collie—Artemis, six judgmental alpacas, two rude goats, and five fluffy sheep. In early 2015, Jennifer was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a group of rare genetic disorders that involve a breakdown and death of cells in the retina, eventually resulting in vision loss, among other complications. Due to this diagnosis, educating people on the varying degrees of blindness has become another passion for her, right alongside writing, which she plans to do for as long as she can.

Her dreams of becoming an author started in algebra class, where she spent most of her time writing short stories...which explains her dismal grades in math. Jennifer writes young adult, paranormal, science fiction, fantasy, and contemporary romance. She is published with Tor, HarperCollins Avon and William Morrow, Entangled Teen and Brazen, Disney/Hyperion, Harlequin Teen, and Blue Box Press; and PassionFlix recently made her Wicked series into a feature film. Jennifer has won numerous awards, including the 2020 Goodreads Choice Award in Romance for her adult fantasy, *From Blood and Ash*. She has also written Adult and New Adult contemporary and paranormal romance under the name J. Lynn.

ALSO FROM JENNIFER L. ARMENTROUT

[Fall With Me](#)
[Dream of You \(a 1001 Dark Nights Novel\)](#)
[Forever With You](#)
[Fire in You](#)

By J. Lynn
[Wait for You](#)
[Be with Me](#)
[Stay with Me](#)

The Blood and Ash Series
[From Blood and Ash](#)
[A Kingdom of Flesh and Fire](#)
[The Crown of Gilded Bones](#)
[The War of Two Queens](#)
[A Soul of Ash and Blood](#)
[Visions of Flesh and Blood: A Blood and Ash/Flesh and Fire Compendium](#)

The Flesh and Fire Series
[A Shadow in the Ember](#)
[A Light in the Flame](#)
[A Fire in the Flesh](#)

Fall of Ruin and Wrath Series
[Fall of Ruin and Wrath](#)

The Covenant Series
[Half-Blood](#)
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[Deity](#)
[Apollyon](#)
[Sentinel](#)

The Lux Series
[Shadows](#)
[Obsidian](#)
[Onyx](#)
[Opal](#)
[Origin](#)
[Opposition](#)
[Oblivion](#)

The Origin Series
[The Darkest Star](#)
[The Burning Shadow](#)
[The Brightest Night](#)

The Dark Elements

[Bitter Sweet Love](#)
[White Hot Kiss](#)
[Stone Cold Touch](#)
[Every Last Breath](#)

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Anthologies

[Meet Cute](#)
[Life Inside My Mind](#)
[Fifty First Times](#)

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A big thank you to JLAnders for always creating a fun and often hilarious place to chill. And to the ARC team for your honest reviews and support.

Most importantly, none of this would be possible without you, the reader. I hope you realize how much you mean to me.

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DEDICATION

For you, the reader.

MAP



To see a full-size version of the map, visit <https://theblueboxpress.com/books/asoabmap/>

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Characters

Aios – AYY-ohs
Alastir Davenwell – AL-as-tir DAV-en-well
Andreia – ahn-DRAY-ah
Arden – AHR-den
Attes – AT-tayz
Aurelia – au-REL-ee-ah
Baines – baynz
Beckett – BECK-et
Bele – bell
Blaz – blayz
Brandole Mazeen – bran-dohl mah-ZEEN
Braylon Holland – BRAY-lon HAA-luhnd
Britta – brit-tah
Callum – KAL-um
Clariza – klar-itza
Coralena – kore-a-LEE-nuh
Coulton – KOHL-ton
Casteel Da'Neer – ka-STEEL DA-neer
Crolee – KROH-lee
Dafina – dah-FEE-nuh
Davina – dah-VEE-nuh
Delano Amicu – dee-LAY-no AM-ik-kyoo
Dorcan – dohr-kan
Dorian Teerman – DOHR-ee-uhn TEER-man
Duchess and Duke Ravarel – duch-ess and dook RAV-ah-rell
Dyses – DEYE-seez
Ector – EHK-tohr
Effie – EH-fee
Ehthawn – EE-thawn
Elian Da'Neer – EL-ee-awn DA-near
Elijah Payne – ee-LIE-jah payn
Eloana Da'Neer – EEL-oh-nah DA-neer
Embris – EM-bris
Emil Da'Lahr – EE-mil DA-lar
Erlina – Er-LEE-nah
Ernald – ER-nald
Eythos – EE-thos
Ezmeria – ez-MARE-ee-ah
Gemma – jeh-muh
General Aylard – gen-ER-al AYY-lard
Gianna Davenwell – jee-AA-nuh DA-ven-well
Griffith Jansen – grif-ITH JAN-sen
Halayna – hah-LAY-nah
Hanan – HAY-nan
Hawke Flynn – hawk flin
Hisa Fa'Mar – hee-SAA FAH-mar
Ian Balfour – EE-uhn BAL-fohr
Ione – EYE-on
Ivan – EYE-van
Isbeth – is-BITH
Jacinda Teerman – juh-SIN-dah TEER-man
Jadis – JAY-dis
Jasper Contou – JAS-per KON-too
Jericho – JERR-i-koh
Joshalynn – josha-lynn
Kayleigh Balfour – KAY-lee BAL-fohr
Keella – KEE-lah
Kieran Contou – KEE-ren KON-too
King Jalara – king jah-LAH-ruh
King Saegar – king SAY-gar
Kirha Contou – k-AH-ruh KON-too
Kolís – KO-lis

Kyn – kin
 Lady Cambria – lay-dee KAM-bree-uh
 Lailah – lay-lah
 Lathan – LEY-THahN
 Leopold – LEE-ah-pohld
 Lev Barron – lehv BAIR-uhn
 Lizeth Damron – lih-ZEHTH DAM-ron
 Loimus – loy-moos
 Lord Ambrose – lohrd AM-brohzh
 Lord Chaney – lohrd chay-NEE
 Lord Gregori – lohrd GREHG-ohr-ree
 Lord Haverton – lohrd HAY-ver-ton
 Loren – LOH-ren
 Luddie – LUHD-dee
 Lyra – lee-RAH
 Mac - mack
 Madis – mad-is
 Magda – mahg-dah
 Maia – MY-ah
 Malec O’Meer – ma-LEEK O-meer
 Malessa Axton – MAHL-les-sah ax-TON
 Malik Da’Neer – MA-lick DA-neer
 Marisol Faber – MARE-i-sohl FAY-berr
 Millicent – mil-uh-SUHNT
 Mycella – MY-sell-AH
 Naill – NYill
 Nektas – NEK-tas
 Nithe – NIGHth
 Noah – noh-AH
 Nova – NOH-vah
 Nykto – NIK-toes
 Odell Cyr – OH-dell seer
 Odetta – oh-DET-ah
 Orphine – OR-feen
 Peinea – pain-ee-yah
 Penellaphe – pen-NELL-uh-fee
 Penellaphe Balfour – pen-NELL-uh-fee BAL-fohr
 Perry – PER-ree
 Perus – paehr-UHS
 Phanos – FAN-ohs
 Polemus – pol-he-mus
 Preela – PREE-lah
 Priestess Analia – priest-ess an-NAH-lee-ah
 Queen Calliphe – queen KAL-lih-fee
 Queen Ileana – queen uh-lee-AH-nuh
 Reaver – REE-ver
 Rhahar – RUH-har
 Rhain – rain
 Rolf – rollf
 Rune – roon
 Rylan Keal – RYE-lan keel
 Sage - sayj
 Saion – SIGH-on
 Sera – SEE-ra
 Seraphena Mierel – SEE-rah-fee-nah MEER-ehl
 Sera – SEE-rah
 Shae Davenwell – shay DAV-en-well
 Sotoria – soh-TOR-ee-ah
 Sven – svehn
 Talia – TAH-lee-uh
 Taric – tay-rik
 Tavius – TAY-vee-us
 Tawny Lyon – TAW-nee LYE-uhn
 Thad – thad
 Theon – thEE-awn
 Tulis [Family] – TOO-lees
 Valyn Da’Neer – VAH-lynn DA-neer
 Veses – VES-eez

Vikter Wardwell – VIK-ter WARD-well
Vonetta Contou – vah-NET-tah KON-too
Wilhelmina Colyns – wil-hel-MEE-nuh KOHL-lynz

Places

Aegea – ayy-JEE-uh
Atheneum – ath-uh-NEE-uhm
Atlantia – at-LAN-tee-ah
Barren Plains – bar-uhn pleynz
Berkton – BERK-ton
Carsodonia – kar-so-DON-uh
Cauldra Manor – kall-drah [manor]
Chambers of Nyktos – cheym-berz of nik-TOES
Dalos – day-lohs
Elysium Peaks – ihl-LEES-ee-uhm peeks
Evaemon – EHV-eh-mahn
High Hills of Thronos – hie hilz of THROH-nohs
Iliseeum – AH-lee-see-um
Isles of Bele – IGHelz of BELL
Kithreia – kith-REE-ah
Lasania – lah-SAHN-ee-uh
Lotho – LOH-thoh
Masadonia – mah-sah-DOHN-uh
Massene – mah-SEE-nuh
Mountains of Nyktos – MOWNT-ehnz of nik-TOES
New Haven – noo HAY-ven
Niel Valley – nile valley
Oak Ambler – ohk AM-bler
Padonia – pa-DOH-nee-ah
Pensdurth – PENS-durth
Pillars of Asphodel – [pillars of] AS-foe-del
Pinelands – PINE-lands
Pompay – pom-PAY
Seas of Saion – SEEZ of SIGH-on
Skotos Mountains – SKOH-tohs MOWNT-ehnz
Solis – sou-LIS
Spessa's End – SPESSAHZ ehnd
Sirta – SIR-ta
Saion's Cove – SI-onz kohv
Stygian Bay – stih-JEE-uhn bey
Tadous – TAHD-oos
Temple of Perses – TEM-puhl of PUR-seez
The Three Jackals – thuh three JAK-uhlz
Three Rivers – three RIH-verz
Triton Isles – TRY-ton IGH-elz
Undying Hills – UN-dy-ing hillz
Vathi – VAY-thee
Vodina Isles – voh-DEE-nuh IGH-elz
Western Pass – WEST-tern pass
Whitebridge – WIGHT-brij
Willow Plains – WIHL-oh pleynz

Terms

Arae – air-ree
benada – ben-NAH-dah
ceeren – SEER-rehn
Cimmerian – sim-MARE-ee-in
dakkai – DAY-kigh
demis – dem-EEZ
eather – ee-thohr
graeca – gray-kah
Gyrm - germ
imprimen – IM-prim-ehn
kardia – KAR-dee-ah
kiyou wolf/wolves – kee-yoo [wolf/wolves]
lamaea – lahm-ee-ah

laruea – lah-ROO-ee-ah
meeyah Liessa – MEE-yah LEE-sah
notam – NOH-tam
sekya – sek-yah
sparanea – SPARE-ah-nay-ah
tulpa – tool-PAH
wivern – WY-vehrn

NOTE TO READER

While the lives of those written on these pages are fictional, what they experience occurs in life outside of these pages—myself included. For that reason, please be aware that there are discussions surrounding self-harm and abuse.

Please know that you do not need to hurt.

There is help.

Visit crisistextline.org

PRESENT I



A sweet but stale scent drifted out from the dark corridor. My head jerked toward the sound of light, fast footsteps as I reached for my hip, drawing the bloodstone dagger.

A vampry darted between the sandstone pillars, rushing into the lamplit hall of the seemingly unending vault beneath Wayfair Castle, nothing more than a flash of streaming dark hair, alabaster skin, and crimson silk.

There was no hesitation. Neither Kieran nor I had given any of them leeway since entering the underground.

I released the dagger, sending it flying across the hall. The bloodstone blade struck true, embedding deeply in the vampry's chest, cutting off the annoying, godsawful shriek as it knocked the Ascended back. A web of fissures rapidly appeared in the Ascended's flesh, spreading across its cheeks and down its throat. Skin cracked and then peeled back, lifting from bone and turning to dust. Within a heartbeat, my dagger clanged off the stone floor beside nothing more than a pile of silk.

"Cas." It came out as a sigh, and my lips curved into a smile despite the frustration filling the breathy word.

I couldn't help it when Poppy called me that. Hearing it sometimes made my chest tight yet made me feel light as air. Other times, it made me hard as fuck. But it always brought out a smile.

"The Ascended didn't attack us," Poppy said.

"It was running at us." I went to where the dagger lay and picked it up.

"Or running *from* us," she suggested.

"That's one way to look at it." Cleaning the blade on the leg of my pants, I sheathed the dagger and faced her—and damn if I didn't feel a catch in my godsdamn breath.

Every inch of Poppy showed that she'd just fought a terrifying battle. Blood and grime smeared her cheeks, hands, and her clothing, not to mention what covered her bare feet. The braid she'd forced her unruly hair into had mostly come undone, and the strands gleamed like bold, red wine in the dim light of the gas lamps, spilling over her shoulders and down her back.

And still, she was so damn beautiful to me.

My heartmate.

My Queen.

Not a goddess but a Primal—the Primal of Blood and Bone. Of Life and Death.

Shock rippled through me, nearly causing me to stumble. It had been doing that every couple of minutes since she went all Primal on the Blood Queen. I imagined it would be a long damn time before it stopped happening.

"But the last thing anyone who doesn't want to end up a pile of dust should do is run in your direction." I bowed at the waist. "My Queen."

Poppy blinked slowly, clearly unimpressed by my chivalry. That brightened my smile, and her full lips twitched as she fought back a grin, revealing a hint of sharp canine.

Lust punched straight through me as my chin dipped, and my eyes locked with hers. Every time I caught a glimpse of her fangs, I wanted to feel them in my flesh. *Correction.* I wanted to feel them in my flesh while I was buried deep inside her.

A throat cleared. “May we continue?” a raspy, flat voice asked. “Or would you two like a private moment?”

Poppy’s cheeks warmed, flooding her face with color that had been absent since we’d arrived at Wayfair. My gaze shifted to the speaker.

The massive mountain of a male with his black-and-silver-streaked hair raised a brow.

Fucking Nektas, the eldest and inarguably most dangerous of the draken, was starting to piss me off.

Holding his stare, I checked my desire for my wife. Not because of his presence. And not even because we were down here searching for her father. But because of Poppy.

Something wasn’t right.

I rejoined her and the ever-alert Delano, who had been sticking close in wolveren form. “You ready?”

Nodding, she started walking again, the stone floor likely icy against her bare feet. I’d offered to carry her.

The look she’d given me ensured I didn’t ask again. That hadn’t stopped Kieran from making the same offer, though. He’d received a similar look of warning—the kind that made you want to cup your balls. Lucky for us, Poppy likely preferred us with those parts undamaged.

I didn’t take my eyes off her as we continued.

Out in the Bone Temple, before she unleashed unholy hell on the Blood Queen, I’d watched in unfettered horror as pure light exploded her armor. And I’d been unable to do a damn thing. I’d only ever felt such fear one other time; when the bolt had struck her in the Wastelands, and I’d watched her life slipping from her. I’d felt that same terror earlier when I saw the blood running from her mouth. She’d *changed*, even if only for a few seconds, her flesh becoming a kaleidoscope of light and shadow with an outline of wings taking shape and arcing behind her. It reminded me of the winged statues guarding the City of the Gods in Iliseeum.

I’d then watched her destroy Isbeth.

No one among us would miss the woman, but the Blood Queen had been Poppy’s mother.

At some point, the realization that she had taken her mother’s life would hit her, bringing out a lot of messy, complicated emotions.

And I would be there for her.

So would Kieran.

He walked on her other side, doing the same as I was. Every couple of moments, he glanced down at her, a mixture of concern and awe flashing across his blood-streaked features.

He was a fucking mess.

So was I.

Our clothing and what remained of our armor was shredded from the battle. I knew blood splattered my flesh—some of it mine, some from the dakkais. The rest was dried specks from those who’d been struck down—those who had died but hadn’t *stayed* dead.

I glanced to where Delano prowled silently behind us. While most of the wolveren and the others were currently moving through Carsodonia in search of the Ascended and looking for my brother, he had chosen to follow Poppy.

There was a strange, unnerving sensation I couldn’t shake as Delano lifted his head and pale, luminous blue eyes met mine. I wondered if the life restored to those who’d fallen in battle had been a gift that could be stripped away at any moment. I had no real reason to feel that way. According to Nektas, the act of restoring life to so many was not only known to the Primals of Life and of Death but also aided by them.

Besides, that feeling of unease could be sourced back to a shit ton of things. We were

currently moving about the enemy's nest, and while none of the mortal servants or Royal Guards who remained at Wayfair had put up a fight when we entered, and there had only been three Ascended underground so far, none of us were comfortable here. Wayfair wasn't ours. It never would be.

Another thing preying on my mind at the moment was my brother, who was somewhere out there, chasing after Millicent, who happened to be Poppy's sister. And none of us knew where Millicent stood in regard to their mother.

Then again, from my personal experience with Millie, I didn't think she knew where she stood on anything half the time.

There was also the fact that Poppy's Primal grandparents were no longer sleeping, and from what I could figure out, one of them could enter the mortal realm whenever they felt like it.

And then there was Callum, that golden fuck of a Revenant who still needed to be dealt with, which brought me to what probably should be the most disconcerting item of all. Yes, we'd defeated the Blood Crown, but the real battle awaited. We had only prevented Kolis, the original and *true* Primal of Death, from taking full corporeal form. Still, he was free, he was awake, and he wasn't the only one. All those things were hardcore pressing issues, but...

My gaze returned to Poppy's profile, and my chest tightened again. The thin, jagged scar on her cheek and the one cutting across her forehead and eyebrow stood out more starkly than they ever had. She was pale—paler than she'd been when she came to at the Temple. And shouldn't it be the opposite? Shouldn't her skin have become flushed? Other than the passing blush earlier, it hadn't, and that worried me most of all.

Poppy turned her head in my direction. Our gazes met. Her irises were the color of dewy spring grass laced with vibrant streaks of silver—eather. Was it just me, or had those luminous lines gotten brighter in the time it took us to arrive at Wayfair? Her full lips curved up in a reassuring smile, and I knew immediately that she'd picked up on my concern, either because I was projecting it, or she was simply reading me—reading all of us around her.

I reached out and took her hand. More pressure clamped down on my chest. Her hand, so much smaller than mine, was *cold*. Not icy, but also not warm.

"Are you feeling all right?" I asked, my voice low yet echoing through the cavernous hall.

Poppy nodded. "Yes." Her brows knitted as her eyes searched mine. "Are you?"

"Always," I murmured, glancing at Kieran.

There was more concern than awe in his stare. Without me having to say anything, he inched closer to Poppy.

Something wasn't right.

Starting with Nektas, who now walked silently on Kieran's other side. Poppy had asked earlier if what she had become, a Primal that had never existed before, was a good thing or bad. I already knew the answer to that. But Nektas's response?

That is yet to be known.

Yeah, I didn't like that at all.

I also didn't like his expression when he looked at Poppy. It reminded me of how we all looked at Malik—like we weren't sure we could trust him. No one wanted a draken looking at them like that.

Poppy suddenly stopped at the entrance to a long, shadowy hall. There was a musty scent to this area, one that threatened to send my mind back to darker, colder places. I stopped that before it could happen. Now wasn't the time for that shit.

Slipping her hand from mine, Poppy faced us. "Okay. Why does everyone keep looking at me?" she demanded, propping her hands on her hips as she lifted her chin. "Has something changed about me that I'm unaware of?"

"Other than your adorable fangs?" I offered.