

## A Talisman In The Darkness Selected Stories Of Olga Orozco

Young half-Elven Saljanon discovers that his father was murdered on his way home from work and his mother replaced by a shape-shifter. His mother, a princess of the Elven kingdom of Esmendrill, is being held by the hated Dark God Parklathvar in his stronghold of Teufelschloss. Thus begins Saljanon's quest to rescue his mother against terrifying odds and the awesome powers of the Dark God. Along the way, he assembles a band of brave young men and an aging old warrior, who pit their skills and strength against shape-shifters, Troll warriors, zombie soldiers, and Saljanon's own long-lost sister!

Includes information on what talismans are and how they work; a brief history of talismans in the Western Magical tradition; how to use names of power, angels, magical languages, and color magic; how to draw talismans, consecrate them, and even destroy them.

Named A Best Book of 2020 by NPR! "Imagine Call Me By Your Name set in Communist Poland and you'll get a sense of Jedrowski's moving debut about a consuming love affair amidst a country being torn apart." — O, The Oprah Magazine "Captivating both for its shimmering surfaces and its terrifying depths. Tomasz Jedrowski is a remarkable writer." — Justin Torres, bestselling author of *We the Animals* Set in early 1980s Poland against the violent decline of Communism, a tender and passionate story of first love between two young men who eventually find themselves on opposite sides of the political divide—a stunningly poetic and heartrending literary debut for fans of André Aciman, Garth Greenwell, and Alan Hollinghurst. When university student Ludwik meets Janusz at a summer agricultural camp, he is fascinated yet wary of this handsome, carefree stranger. But a chance meeting by the river soon becomes an intense, exhilarating, and all-consuming affair. After their camp duties are fulfilled, the pair spend a dreamlike few weeks in the countryside, bonding over an illicit copy of James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*. Inhabiting a beautiful, natural world removed from society and its constraints, Ludwik and Janusz fall deeply in love. But in their repressive Communist and Catholic society, the passion they share is utterly unthinkable. Once they return to Warsaw, the charismatic Janusz quickly rises in the political ranks of the party and is rewarded with a highly coveted government position. Ludwik is drawn toward impulsive acts of protest, unable to ignore rising food prices and the stark economic disparity around them. Their secret love and personal and political differences slowly begin to tear them apart as both men struggle to survive in a regime on the brink of collapse. Shifting from the intoxication of first love to the quiet melancholy of growing up and growing apart, *Swimming in the Dark* is a potent blend of romance, postwar politics, intrigue, and history. Lyrical and sensual, immersive and intense, Tomasz Jedrowski's indelible and thought-provoking literary debut explores freedom and love in all its incarnations.

Prepared with the full cooperation of Stephen King, a comprehensive overview of the author's seven-volume series, *The Dark Tower*, analyzes each volume in the series, from *The Gunslinger* to *The Dark Tower*, discusses the link between the books and King's other novels, and offers insights from the author on the creative process involved. Original.

Prince Dagnarus lusts for the Dagger of the Vrykyl, a magic talisman that will give him the power he needs to fulfill his dreams.

Somewhere on Prithvi, a mortal survives a supernatural attack. In the dark realm of Atala, an evil goddess prepares to do the unspeakable. And a Yakshi finds herself at the heart of an other-worldly storm. Ardra has only known life as a Yakshi, designed to seduce and kill men after drawing out their deepest, darkest secrets for her evil mistress Hera, queen of the forsaken realm of Atala. Then, on one strange blood moon night, her chosen victim, Dwai, survives, and her world spins out of control. Now Ardra must escape the wrath of Hera, who is

plotting to throw the universe into chaos. To stop her, Ardra needs to find answers to questions she hasn't dared to ask before. What power does the blood moon hold? Is the sky city of Aakasha as much a myth as its inhabitants? the ethereal and seductive Gandharvas and Apsaras? Who is Dara, the mysterious monster-slayer, and what makes Dwai impervious to her powers? A heady concoction of fantasy and romance, *Dark Things* conjures up a unique world wrought of love and sacrifice, of shadows and secrets, of evil and those who battle it. Tom Harlan brings his Oath of Empire series to a shattering conclusion in *The Dark Lord*. In what would be the 7th Century AD in our history, the Roman Empire still stands, supported by the twin pillars of the Legions and Thaumaturges of Rome. The Emperor of the West, the Augustus Galen Atreus, came to the aid of the Emperor of the East, the Avtokrator Heraclius, in his war with the Sassanad Emperor of Persia. But despite early victories, that war has not gone well, and now Rome is hard-pressed. Constantinople has fallen before the dark sorceries of the Lord Dahak and his legions of the living and dead. Now the new Emperor of Persia marches on Egypt, and if he takes that ancient nation, Rome will be starved and defeated. But there is a faint glimmer of hope. The Emperor Galen's brother Maxian is a great sorcerer, perhaps the equal of Dahak, lord of the seven serpents. He is now firmly allied with his Imperial brother and Rome. And though they are caught tight in the Dark Lord's net of sorcery, Queen Zoe of Palmyra and Lord Mohammed have not relinquished their souls to evil. Powerful, complex, engrossing --Thomas Harlan's Oath of Empire series has taken fantasy readers by storm. The first three volumes, *The Shadow of Ararat*, *The Gate of Fire*, and *The Storm of Heaven* have been universally praised. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

A concise and professionally-researched summary of Donald Michael Kraig's book: "Modern Magick". From Alden Marshall's Condensed Esoterica series, this complete summary provides a fast and straightforward way to understand and study the main ideas and concepts of the original source text. About the Original Book: *Modern Magick* by Donald Michael Kraig, although written in a familiar, conversational style, is actually organized like a textbook for a college survey course on the many various forms of magick as they are practiced in the world today. Kraig leads the reader from complete magickal innocence all the way to the point where he feels further improvement cannot be provided by a book, but only achieved through practice. And practice is the focus, as the book never loses sight of the importance of concrete results. Each lesson introduces a new form of ritual/ceremonial magick for the practitioner, with detailed notes provided. In addition to discussing the foundation and practice of magick, Kraig takes a broader view in highlighting what kinds of people are best suited to practice magick and how to organize your non-magickal life to support it. This means advising readers to think for themselves, question authority, keep in good physical shape, and cultivate interests and hobbies outside of magick to maintain a balanced mind, body, and spirit. Added-value of this summary: \* Save time \* Understand the key concepts \* Expand your knowledge Note to readers: This is an unofficial summary and analysis of the book and not the original book itself. Alden Marshall and the Condensed Esoterica Collection are wholly responsible for this content and are not associated with the original author in any way. You are encouraged to purchase and read the original text in addition to this summary.

The mysterious powers of gems, crystals, and minerals are finally explained in this practical guide to creating talismans. Casting a modern light on the age-old practice of talismans, gemologist Henry M. Mason correlates the mystical properties of these wondrous objects with the science of gemology. Connecting with the universal life force, the proper talisman can focus and magnify your own qualities—helping you fulfill dreams and desires. Mason's seven secrets explore how crystal structure, color, and chemistry contribute to a talisman's natural energies for aiding in attraction, protection,

self-improvement, creativity, tranquility, spiritual awakening, and more. From selecting and preparing the proper mineral to empowering your talisman, this guide takes you through every step of creating and using talismans and amulets for optimum effect. It has happened at last. Queen Nefasti's friends are deserting her on all sides, treachery threatens from inside her own castle, and an invasion led by an old and angry acquaintance is knocking at the very gates to the Kingdom of Vadio. Dark Magic has stirred up things best left alone. Nefasti has been given a final choice, marry The Lord High Protector's son, or suffer dire consequences. All of this threatens to ruin her 16th birthday celebrations, and probably end her life.

In 1849 Emmeline Erle and her widowed mother move from sunny southern Europe to cold and grimy Birmingham, England. The town is one of great contrasts: progress and poverty, industrial expansion and murky slums, new villas and filthy streets. Darkness and light battle in the minds of its people: principles of freedom and tolerance struggle with ignorance and prejudice; deep doubt of religious truth coexists with fanaticism. Emmeline quickly makes friends in her new home— Lizzie, the hardworking servant, and Daniel, the schoolboy living next door. For both Emmeline and Daniel, Father John Henry Newman, who runs a chapel in one of the worst sections town, becomes the most important person in Birmingham. Daniel and Emmeline come to know and admire Father Newman as he tries to help poor factory workers and to enlighten citizens blinded by suspicion and bigotry. With him they experience the anxieties of a cholera outbreak and the dangers of anti-Catholic riots. Caught up in one excitement or trouble after another, the young people finally arrive at happier times, while the walls of Father Newman's new church, a symbol of light in a dark town, rise into the smoggy Birmingham sky. This colorful and dramatic story for youth brilliantly unfolds the panorama of Victorian England—the Industrial Revolution, the Oxford movement, the Crystal Palace, and Prince Albert opening a new railway. But above all, this book portrays the character and wisdom of John Henry Newman.

Daunted with necromancy, incantations and hex is Nayala's quest to find her mother. Something that Nayala carries with her is a totem, a strong talisman which the Dark Forces desire from her. The villainous shadow wizard Endool stratagems and ploy's to put an end to her quest. However Nayala's virtue will succor her with friends who will aid her to fight her nemesis... The plot will with time pellucid and answer the questions, Is the talisman diabolic? Where is Nayala's Mother? What power lies in the talisman? Who all aid her? But it will retain a sobering fact that "there exists no darkness that can defeat light".

In an explosive novel from #1 New York Times bestselling author Christine Feehan, a human woman ignites the desire of her Carpathian lifemate—and of an ancient vampire with a score to settle. After the devastating loss of her entire family, Lorraine Peters heads to the woods searching for peace of mind and anything to quell the anger in her soul. Instead, she stumbles upon a scene of horrific violence, as one man lies helpless in the face of three attackers. Andor Katona's existence has been a harsh one, living for centuries as a monk in the Carpathian Mountains. Unable to find his lifemate, he almost welcomes his release from a colorless and unfeeling world at the hands of the vampire hunters who have mistaken him for their prey. That is, until a whirling ball of fury bursts onto the scene, determined to save him. In one glimpse, in one breath, Andor recognizes Lorraine as his lifemate, but it will take more than their telepathic

connection to convince her of their immortal bond. Lorraine is a lethal combination of cunning and courage. So much so that she captures the attention of a master vampire, one who has already lost what was once irreplaceable to him. One who will strike with deadly precision at Andor and his ancient Carpathian comrades in a war to end all wars. . .

Twelve-year-old Jack Sawyer braves the mysterious dangers of the Territories, a surreal parallel world, in his cross-country quest through the U.S. for the Talisman, the only hope for his dying mother and for his own survival.

Tap into the age-old, secret power of runes to create a better and more enriching life. Generally associated with the ancient Northern Europeans, runes are magical symbols that convey the story of creation, life, destruction, and rebirth, and how these forces constantly affect our many levels of being. Runes connect with your body, mind, and spirit, as well as the environment, and are ideal for use in psychological integration, spiritual growth, healing, and magic. Learn the history of runes and the meanings and associations of each symbol. Then discover a wide variety of ways runes can help you find answers to personal questions, increase self-awareness, relieve stress, gain a sense of personal empowerment, and clear out blockages in your life. As you work with these mystical tools you'll find within them the power to transform yourself.

Your Practical Wiccan Guide to Life Take advantage of centuries of knowledge: In this utterly unique grimoire, bestselling author Cerridwen Greenleaf gathers celestial lore, history, and mythology, drawing from the Dark Ages mystical practices of the original Gothic tribes, Scandinavian shamans and other medieval sources to infuse these spells with the magic of the ancients, allowing the modern reader to tap into that pure power. Here, you'll learn how to call upon the fairy world and little-known gods and goddesses to empower your magical workings, as well as ways to consecrate and wield magical tools, create a home and garden full of enchantment, and rituals to enhance every aspect of your life. With *Dark Moon Magic*, she has crafted nothing less than a Wiccan mystery school in book form. *Live in tune with the moon: Magicians, alchemists, witches and wise women of ancient times knew how to harmonize their lives with the heavenly cycles and seasons and were able to navigate these tides to benefit their lives, both in the inner and outer spheres. We can all use some assistance with our love (and sex!) lives as well as with more worldly matters like money, and Dark Moon Magic's tools of divination, spellwork, amulets, and charms can make a key difference. And with life's increasingly frantic pace, the search for serenity is now more important than ever. Herein may be found the keys to rising above the fray and embracing a life of abundance and joy. Reach the ultimate serenity: All of us need an edge in these difficult times, and Dark Moon Magic can help. Think of these as pagan prescriptions for the twenty-first century, guaranteed to banish stress, ease tension, and add comfort, joy, and magic to your daily life. Learn which moon phase is best for manifesting money, as well as how to recognize the optimal star signs for love and romance, the ideal timing for a job interview, or when to ask for a raise or even the best time to plant your magical herbs. What You'll Learn Inside Dark Moon Magic:*

- The magical origins of "Winter is Coming" and how it applies to 21st Century Wicca
- How to Plant a Fairy Garden that will call benevolent spirits to help you
- The importance of creating an altar and caring for your crystals and tools of magick
- The art of "Wiccan feng shui" and how to create sacred space and sanctuary
- A Conjuring Calendar for an entire year of spells,

charms, festivals and rituals • Astrological and lunar connections you can use for money, love, success and healing

Natale Ghent brings us an engrossing fantasy set in the near-future about the war between two worlds and a girl pitted in the battle of good and evil. Seventeen-year old Caddy is haunted by visions of global destruction. They come on like seizures, taking her to a desolate place where dispossessed souls struggle to be heard. It is one possible future--one she feels she must prevent. But in a world where food and money are scarce, and the struggle over resources between the continents is escalating toward war, Caddy has little hope. When her father goes missing, she searches for him and is abducted into a cabalistic society called The Dreamers--visionaries who "dream" to sustain the light against the dark energies that threaten to take over the planet. Caddy is shepherded into the society by a high school classmate called Poe, and through him, uncovers long-hidden truths about herself and her father. The situation darkens when Caddy learns that the dreamers are hunted and killed by an ancient order known as the Grey Men--a cult dedicated to eradicating the light to assist a demonic entity they call The Speaker. By killing the dreamers, the grey men open rifts in the light that allow The Speaker to seed evil and darkness on the earth plane with the ultimate goal of destroying the planet. Things become more complicated when Meg, a girl from Caddy's high school, who has been ushered into this other reality, clashes with Caddy to suppress the forces of light and to try to win back Poe's heart. As she falls deeper and deeper into the world of the dreamers, Caddy discovers layers of deceit and treachery realizes it's up to her to find a way to overcome the dark and prevent the light from being extinguished forever. . .

Clive Barker, Heather Graham, Lisa Morton, Ray Garton, and Ed Gorman lead readers down a twisted labyrinth of terror, horror, and suspense in *Dark Screams: Volume Four*, from Brian James Freeman and Richard Chizmar of the revered Cemetery Dance Publications. **THE DEPARTED** by Clive Barker On All Hallows' Eve, a dead and disembodied mother yearns to touch her young son one last time. But will making contact destroy them both? **CREATURE FEATURE** by Heather Graham What could be better publicity for a horror convention than an honest-to-goodness curse? It's only after lights out that the hype—and the Jack the Ripper mannequin—starts to feel a little too real. **THE NEW WAR** by Lisa Morton Mike Carson is a war hero and a decorated vet. He doesn't deserve to be trapped in a hospital with some black thing sitting on his chest as patients die all around him. His only hope is to take out the nurse—before it's his turn. **SAMMY COMES HOME** by Ray Garton It's what every family prays for: a lost pet returning home. But when Sammy, the Hale family sheepdog, appears on their doorstep, he brings back something no parent would ever wish upon his or her child. **THE BRASHER GIRL** by Ed Gorman Cindy Marie Brasher is the prettiest girl in the Valley, and Spence just has to have her. Unfortunately, Cindy has a "friend" . . . a friend who tells her to do things . . . bad things. Praise for *Dark Screams: Volume Four* "Collectively, Volume Four constitutes the most

cohesive, narratively enriching and entertaining Dark Screams entry to date. Be it the presence of genre icons Barker and Morton, stories from the lesser-known but equally talented Garton and Gorman, or the pure fun of Graham's tale, fans of horror of every variety will find something to love in these pages."—LitReactor "The best of the bunch so far."—Examiner.com "Stacks up well with any of the other three books so far [with] a fairly good variety in the kinds of horror stories too . . . If you're new to the series, this is a good jumping-on point."—Wagging the Fox "Dark Screams is one of the best values on the horror market. . . . Do yourself a favor, and pick it up."—Adventures Fantastic

"She's been banished from her home without a word of explanation. Assassins are hot on her tail, and she's fleeing without a plan. On the whole, her future looks grim. Then again, it's nearly impossible to catch a dark elf. And even tougher to kill one."--Inside front cover.

When the world around you turns dark, tap into the light. If you're having a hard time finding that light, facing trauma and division, or want to send healing vibes to a friend, the inspired, easy-to-do spells of Light Magic for Dark Times can assist. Luna Luna magazine's Lisa Marie Basile shares inspired spells, rituals, and practices, including: A new moon ritual for attracting a lover A spell to banish recurring nightmares A graveyard meditation for engaging with death A mermaid ritual for going with the flow A zodiac practice for tapping into celestial mojo A rose-quartz elixir for finding self-love A spell to recharge after a protest or social justice work These 100 spells are ideal for those inexperienced with self-care rituals, as well as experienced witches. They can be cast during a crisis or to help prevent one, to protect loved ones, to welcome new beginnings, to heal from grief, or to find strength. Whether you're working with the earth, performing a cleanse with water or smoke, healing with tinctures or crystals, meditating through grief, brewing, enchanting, or communing with your coven, Light Magic for Dark Times will help you tap into your inner witch in times of need.

Through a series of adventures, a poor but doughty Scottish crusader known as Sir Kenneth proves his honor and discovers his destiny in Sir Walter Scott's tale of chivalry, violence, virtue, romance, and deceit.

Zach and his sister Annis have been uprooted by their parents from their comfortable home to a remote and half-built barn in France. Zach is being removed from his 'bad-influence' friends, their parents are trying to salvage their marriage and still remain on speaking terms whilst the bitterness of their father's affair bubbles underneath the surface. And Annis - Annis just keeps going, keeping her head down, trying to keep it together. So far so normal. And then Zach, uncommunicative and contrary as ever these days, defies everything their parents have said and makes his way to the unsafe ruined building at the edge of their new garden, and leans up against the wall. The wall bulges, totters - and suddenly collapses on top of him. Annis, horrified, sees him crumpled on the ground. Desperate, she races towards him, not daring to think anything at all. She sees him, on the ground, broken, silent, not there any more. And then,

unbelievably, he moves. Zach moves. Zach, in an extraordinary and instinctive decision, has broken his bond with his own soul, the essence of himself. By doing so he has cheated death. By doing so he has also cheated life. He is unable to touch any human person again. And the essence of himself, his 'other', his soul, is chasing him, determined to rejoin what should rightfully be together. Zach is on the run, from himself, whom he can never escape, from death, but also from the life that he can never enjoy again. Perhaps only a sister can help him now.

Part of the Castle Dark acting troupe, actress Nora Blake, after the death of one of her castmates, must figure out which one of her fellow actors has taken the role of a murderous villain too seriously.

Narrator Christopher Crow takes the reader on a dark odyssey into realms where he has been given The Dark Gift by a fallen angel; it is the ability to enter other's dreams and bring back their most private memories, filling the angel's being with other's memories, which she feeds on. Crow writes from a single room cell below ground; physically he goes nowhere, but by the viaducts of his imagination we journey with him into timeless, mythic landscapes, delving further and further until we come to that place which is the birthing place of imagination and creation. Orozco's stories portray, in impressionistic, and dreamy language, a childhood spent in a small town on the Argentine pampas.

A strange assortment of humans and otherworldly beings joins a young soldier of God on his perilous quest through an alternate, technology-free reality ruled by an all-powerful Evil. In an alternate world where the Dark Ages never ended, "the Evil" that arises every five hundred years has prevented all manner of technological advancement, even well into the twentieth century. The son of a powerful English noble, young Duncan Standish has always longed to be a soldier of the Lord, and now he's been offered a rare opportunity to fulfill his dream. Entrusted with the delivery of an ancient manuscript—purported to be irrefutable evidence of the existence of Jesus Christ—to a noted Oxenford scholar, Duncan must journey many perilous miles in the company of a motley group of fellow travelers, including a goblin, a ghost, and other magical and non-magical companions. But the road they traverse together is fraught with terrible trials that would test even the most devout, for the Evil is strong in this place of dark wonders. Multiple Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Award-winner and SFWA Grand Master Clifford D. Simak moves easily from science fiction to quest fantasy in this enthralling tale of magic, peril, and discovery on an Earth that never was. Rich in color, thrills, and wild invention, and populated by a highly original and unforgettable cast of characters, Fellowship of the Talisman showcases the author's peerless storytelling skills, demonstrating once again that the great Simak had few equals in the realm of twentieth-century speculative fiction.

"Gemmell not only knows how to tell a story, he knows how to tell a story you want to hear. He does high adventure as it ought to be done."—Greg Keyes, author of *The Briar King* One awesome night, the sadistic, seemingly invincible Daroth vanished from the face of the earth. Gone were their cities, their armies, their reigns of terror. Not a trace of this conquering race remained. Until a thousand years later. . . . With the rising of a dark moon above the Great Northern Desert, comes a black tidal wave that sweeps across the land. Suddenly, the desert vanishes beneath lush fields and forests and a

great city glitters in the morning light. From this city reemerges the blood-hungry Daroth, powerful and immortal, immune to spear and sword. They have only one desire: to rid the world of humankind forever. Now the fate of the human race rests on the talents of three heroes: Karis, warrior-woman and strategist; Tarantio, the deadliest swordsman of the age; and Duvodas the Healer, who will learn a gruesome truth. "Gemmell's great reading; the action never lets up; he's several rungs above the good—right into the fabulous!"—Anne McCaffrey

From New York Times bestselling author Jacquelyn Frank comes the captivating conclusion to the sizzling series featuring four immortal warrior brothers who love as hard as they fight. After drinking from the fountain of immortality along with his brothers, Maxum is condemned by the gods to be entombed in the earth. Even though he has now been granted a reprieve by day, each night he is buried anew, his rock-hard body immobilized, his bones crushed by the pressure. When he emerges, his body heals, but his spirit remains scarred. There is only one way for Maxum to be completely free: He must kill the god who cursed him. The task will require tremendous power, so Maxum embarks on a quest to gather talismans to equip him for the battle. Then an earthy wench seduces him and steals one of his magical amulets, but he catches her. Finding herself between a rock and a hard place, she strikes a bargain. The beautiful and alluring Airianne is a skilled thief—and she can help him in his acquisition of the talismans. Will this stealthy seductress also try to steal his heart—or will their boldness end up getting them both buried?

In *Dark Assemblages*, Kay Pritchett, after surveying the novelistic production of celebrated Neo-Gothic writer Pilar Pedraza (1951-), focuses on the relevance of the Spanish author's fiction to contemporary social concerns. Pedraza's Gothic stories of development reveal the power of conventional representations (fixed images) to undermine personal growth, bringing identity into line, rather, with the objectives of oppressive social structures (dark assemblages).

I was standing there naked when my dead husband walked into my bathroom... Lillie St. Claire is a Talent, one of a few who can permanently dispatch the spirits of the dead that walk the earth. Her skills are in demand in a haunted country, where a plague of ghosts is a civic nuisance. But those skills are also feared by many citizens, who view Talents as near-demons. Her husband comes to see her as a Freak; so when Nathan dies after a car crash, she is relieved to be free of his increasingly vicious presence. Lillie expects to be haunted by Nathan's ghost, but not to become Suspect #1 for her husband's murder and reanimation. But what's most surprising of all is the growing attraction between her and psi-crime detective John Thresher. He thinks that Lillie killed Nathan—and Nathan must agree, because his zombie is seeking revenge. Now she and Thresher must work together to solve her husband's murder—before his corpse kills her... 84,000 words

W.W.II was not, for Pilot Officer Tate, one story. It was departing and arriving over and over again. It was leaving old friends, gaining new ones and living through their deaths. It was losing command of one's life and becoming the creature of a cause called great and necessary. It was being good at what one does, and hoping to be lucky. It was a barrier to a past that could not be revisited, while being lured to think of a future despite the odds against having one. It was loving one's fellow warriors in ways that can never be repeated. It was, in Tate's case, growing up and becoming an adult knowing only

how to bomb and destroy and fly back to base in whatever way possible. And, in the end, it was feeling guilty for having survived. Robert Harlow's semi-autobiographical 8th novel makes this, and more, hugely accessible.

In *Dark Lady*, Richard North Patterson displays the mastery of setting, psychology, and story that makes him unique among writers of suspense, and one of today's most original and enthralling novelists. In Steelton, a struggling Midwestern city on the cusp of an economic turnaround, two prominent men are found dead within days of each other. One is Tommy Fielding, a senior officer of the company building a new baseball stadium, the city's hope for the future. The other is Jack Novak, the local drug dealers' attorney of choice. Fielding's death with a prostitute, from an overdose of heroin, seems accidental; Novak is apparently the victim of a ritual murder. But in each case the character of the dead man seems contradicted by the particulars of his death.

Coincidence or connection? The question falls to Assistant County Prosecutor Stella Marz. Despite a traumatic breach with her alcoholic and embittered father, she has risen from a working-class background to become head of the prosecutor's homicide unit. A driven woman, she is called the Dark Lady by defense lawyers for her relentless, sometimes ruthless, style: in seven years only one case has gotten away from her, and only because the defendant took his own life. She has earned every inch of both her official and her off-the-record titles, and recently she's decided to go after another: to become the first woman elected Prosecutor of Erie County. But that was before the brutal murder of her ex-lover--Jack Novak. Novak's death leads her into a labyrinth where her personal and professional lives become dangerously intertwined. There is the possibility that Novak fixed drug cases for the city's crime lord, Vincent Moro, with the help of law enforcement personnel, and perhaps with someone in Stella's own office . . . the bitter mayoral race which threatens to undermine her own ambitions . . . her attraction to a colleague who may not be what he seems . . . the lingering, complicated effects of her painful affair with Novak . . . the growing certainty that she is being watched and followed. Making her way through a maze of corruption, deceit, and greed, trusting no one, Stella comes to believe that the search for the truth involves the bleak history of Steelton itself--a history that now endangers her future, and perhaps her life. For his uncanny dialogue, subtle delineation of character, and hypnotic narrative, critics have compared Richard North Patterson to John O'Hara and Dashiell Hammett. Now, in the character of the Dark Lady, he has created a woman as fascinating as her world is haunting. *Dark Lady* is his signature work.

Doug Stavers discovers that his possession of the Messiah Stone, a talisman with a mysterious connection to the planet Mars that gives its owner the power to induce total belief in the minds of those near him, has made him the target of every government on Earth. Brenna Strachan's entire life is ahead of her. And it's a long life, since she has joined the ranks of the immortal. She's returned to work as well and one of her first cases a rogue Witch, bent on destroying everything in their way, including her. Now, she must turn to her family and friends for help. But among those closest to her, is someone who has already betrayed the Oath of Protection. The words of the True Prophet are coming to pass and Brenna must deal with the betrayal and her life.

Since the beginning of time, the demonic races have gathered every century to resolve conflicts among them and to determine the course of their future. This centennial event was called the Dark Congress. In the second century b.c., however, the Dark Congress

failed to resolve their conflicts. Instead, the Congress ignited into a war that drove wedges between the various demon races from that time until now. And all of it began as a result of Kandida, the great North African river demon, being nearly killed by forces in the Congress and magically entombed in the riverbank. But now, Kandida is free, and for the first time in centuries, the Dark Congress is being called again. All demon races and other varieties of supernatural creatures have been called to gather at the Hellmouth in Providence, Rhode Island. Some gather in hopes of resolution, some in favor of war, and Kandida is tasked to broker a treaty and guide the Congress to peace, wherein everyone might simply agree to disagree. And so the demons gather under a banner of a truce. But the demons still harbor many bitter disagreements with one another. The Congress must have an arbiter of these conflicts, and that someone is Buffy Summers. Buffy is horrified and disgusted to be included. After all, she is not a demon...is she? She knows so little about her powers that she cannot say for certain where they truly spring from. How can she spend so much time wallowing in the darkness without becoming part of it? Can she possibly agree to a truce with all the horrors of the world, and allow them to come Providence without any attempt to stop them? And does she have a choice?

Talisman, Warrior, Prophetess, Bard, and Druid--the full Talisman Series is all in one place. Binge read the stories of your favorite band of hot Celtic warriors as they take on the war goddesses of the Celtic pantheon. Talisman: Trying his sign on Alyssa Macaulay and discovering she's his talisman, his fated mate, should be cause for their celebration. Too bad Alyssa thinks Rowan Sheridan is only looking for a good time. She has no idea who and what they are. The goddess's imminent arrival doesn't give Rowan time to show her either. Somehow, he needs to compress the lifetime of training she should have had into a week--and convince her the one amazing night they shared is only the beginning of a lifetime of love. Warrior: Ceri Ross is a flirt and a talisman with obligations to the warrior community. Though she must bond with her fated mate and not get involved with random unattached warriors, it seems she didn't get the memo. None of which helps Rio Sheridan: the woman calls to him like a siren. Prophetess: Alaisdair Graham is desperate. Gone into hiding thirteen years ago when he didn't find his talisman in time, he knows the reprieve from the goddess's curse is short. If he doesn't find his mate in the next fortnight, he won't live long enough to celebrate another Samhain. Into his life walks Shanley Conlan, and he thinks the cosmos have taken his side at last. All he has to do is convince her--before the goddess strikes and takes them all. Bard: A chance encounter at a mountain cabin seals their fate. The woman Seamus Lochlann has searched for, the woman the gods determined to be his mate, is the only woman who's ever turned him down. Fallon Graham can't believe she's fated to the warrior Maeve has marked for herself. When the goddess strikes, they have a choice--succumb to the unholy power of the goddess or believe their love can tell a different story. Druid: An unconventional love affair between a talisman and a druid could lead to disaster--for both of them. Sloane MacIntosh fears for Davy Sutherland's life if she gives in to the intense attraction she feels for him. Yet she can't seem to help herself. Whenever he's near, heat and desire ripple through her. Davy's world is one of healing and storytelling--not actual battle. But when the goddess arrives, tempting and demanding in equal measure, Davy must find a way to compose a new story, one that allows him a chance at the warrior life he's always wanted and the love a

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woman he never saw coming.

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