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Alfie thought he knew his destiny. He didn't know the half of it. Fourteen year old heir to the throne, Alfie, didn't expect to be King so soon. He DEFINITELY did not expect to be ... DEFENDER OF THE REALM. A legendary superhero, fighting a secret, centuries-long, battle to protect the nation from monsters and super-villains. Blamed for her uncle's death, fifteen-year-old Annie is on the run. Knowing the perils she will face on the streets of eighteenth century London, she disguises herself as a boy. Her life on the streets is cut short when she becomes Captain Hawke's cabin boy. Not only must Annie work alongside the Realm's motley crew of outcasts and gentlemen, she must also keep her superstitious shipmates from discovering she is a girl. Annie vows she will never leave the Realm, where dreams are chased, shattered lives can mend, and secrets are stowed like keepsakes in an old desk drawer. But when her past catches up with her, can she return to the Realm? More importantly, will she have a choice? Thomson provides a systematic theory of human and social rights, elucidating what in general makes an attribution of a right true. This is a major effort to provide a stable foundation for the deeply held belief that we are not mere cogs in a communal machine, but are instead individuals whose private interests are entitled to respect. Shedding new light on British expansion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this collection of essays examines how the first British Empire was received and shaped by its subject peoples in Scotland, Ireland, North America, and the Caribbean. An introduction surveys British imperial historiography and provides a context for the volume as a whole. The essays focus on specific ethnic groups -- Native Americans, African-Americans, Scotch-Irish, and Dutch and Germans -- and their relations with the British, as well as on the effects of British expansion in particular regions -- Ireland, Scotland, Canada, and the West Indies. A conclusion assesses the impact of the North American colonies on British society and politics. Taken together, these essays represent a new kind of imperial history -- one that portrays imperial expansion as a dynamic process in which the outlying areas, not only the English center, played an important role in the development and character of the Empire. The collection interprets imperial history broadly, examining it from the perspective of common folk as well as elites and discussing the clash of cultures in addition to political disputes. Finally, by examining shifting and multiple frontiers and by drawing parallels between outlying provinces, these essays move us closer to a truly integrated story that links the diverse ethnic experiences of the first British Empire. The contributors are Bernard Bailyn, Philip D. Morgan, Nicholas Canny, Eric Richards, James H. Merrell, A. G. Roeber, Maldwyn A. Jones, Michael Craton, J. M. Bumsted, and Jacob M. Price. During a dire battle against the fearsome Skinners, Daine and her mage teacher Numair are swept into the Divine Realms. Though happy to be alive, they are not where they want to be. They are desperately needed back home, where their old enemy, Ozorne, and his army of strange creatures are waging war against Tortall. Trapped in the mystical realms Daine discovers her mysterious parentage.

And as these secrets of her past are revealed so is the treacherous way back to Tortall. So they embark on an extraordinary journey home, where the fate of all Tortall rests with Daine and her wild magic. With Prince Henrick dead, a foreign army in league with the king, and the palace taken, Reid must find a way to right the wrongs for the people of Marsden. Reid never expected to find love, friendship, or her mother in the kingdom of Axian. She also never expected to become a leader for her people. With the king threatening to overthrow the dukes and take complete control of the kingdom, Reid realizes she may be the only one in a position to stop him. With the ring her father gave her, the commanders of the army at her side, and a master schemer in league with her, Reid just might be able to pull off the greatest upset in Marsden history—all she has to do is step into the role she was born for. To protect her kingdom, Reid must outsmart them all. Luckily, she's spent the last eighteen years learning the art of manipulation, and she isn't above putting those skills to the test. An epic LitRPG saga for fans of *The Lord of The Rings*, *Grimgar*, and *Dungeons and Dragons*. Will refused to admit to the HR lady at Radical Interactive that he In June 2016, Rodrigo Duterte won the Philippine presidential election by a landslide. Infamous for his bombastic temper and un-PC wisecracks, he is waging a brutal drug war that has killed more than 12,000 people so far. Over the last nine years, British writer Tom Sykes has travelled extensively in the Philippines in order to understand the Duterte phenomenon, interviewing friends and enemies of 'The Punisher' - as he is known - in politics, the media, the arts and civil society. Sykes witnesses anti-government demonstrations in the capital Manila and visits the provincial city of Davao, where Duterte began his crusade against crime using police and vigilante death squads. By delving into Duterte's troubled childhood of violent rebellion, Sykes discovers what motivates the man today in his pursuit of a merciless 'war on the poor' - as Amnesty has described it - that has no end in sight. *The Realm of the Punisher* also examines oppressed and marginalized groups in the modern Philippines through encounters with a transgender rights campaigner, an 86-year-old former sex slave to the Japanese in the Second World War, a public artist who must work while under attack from Maoist rebels, and slum-dwellers resisting violent eviction by a real estate company. The past is never far away from these present-day problems and Sykes' travels to festivals, cemeteries, war memorials and a tomb housing an embalmed corpse reveal the ways in which key figures in Philippine history - from José Rizal to Ferdinand Marcos - have influenced current affairs. Funny, tragic, enlightening and uncompromising - and infused with the author's strong sense of social justice - *The Realm of the Punisher* is the first major travel book by a Westerner to explore Duterte's Philippines. To heal addiction, you have to go back to the start... Featured on Russell Brand's podcast *Under the Skin* Dr Gabor Maté is one of the world's most revered thinkers on the psychology of addiction. His radical findings - based on decades of work with patients challenged by catastrophic drug addiction and mental illness - are reframing how we view all human development. In this award-winning modern classic, Gabor Maté takes a holistic and compassionate approach to addiction, whether to alcohol, drugs, sex, money or anything self-destructive. He presents it not as a discrete phenomenon confined to a weak-willed few, but as a continuum that runs through (and even underpins) our society; not as a medical 'condition', but rather the result of a complex interplay of personal history, emotional development and brain chemistry. Distilling cutting-edge research from around the world, *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts* avoids glib self-help remedies, instead promoting self-understanding as the first key to healing and wellness. Blending personal stories and science with positive solutions, and written in spellbinding prose, it is a must-read that will change how you see yourself, others and the world. 10th anniversary edition, updated with new chapter on the Opioid crisis What if you could meet your guardian angel? What would he look like? What would he do to keep you safe? And safe from what? Anna Valairy is a young woman trying to assert her independence, while still trying to please her family and find her own place in life, when one night she meets a man who changes everything. *The SECRET LIFE OF ANNA* is an intense and powerful love story for ages 16-60 that continues with *BLOODMOON* and into *RAGE OF ANGELS*. Some believe the Ambhan Empire is cursed. But Arwa doesn't simply believe it - she knows it's true. Widowed by the infamous, unnatural massacre at Darez Fort, Arwa was saved only by the strangeness of her blood - a strangeness she had been taught all her life to suppress. She offers up her blood and service to the imperial family and makes common cause with a disgraced, illegitimate prince who has turned to forbidden occult arts to find a cure to the darkness hanging over the Empire. Using the power in Arwa's blood, they seek answers in the realm of ash: a land where mortals can

seek the ghostly echoes of their ancestors' dreams. But the Emperor's health is failing, and a terrible war of succession hovers on the horizon, not just for the imperial throne, but for the magic underpinning Empire itself. To save the Empire, Arwa and the prince must walk the bloody path of their shared past, through the realm of ash and into the desert, where the cause of the Empire's suffering-and its only chance of salvation - lie in wait. But what they find there calls into question everything they've ever valued . . . and whether they want to save the Empire at all. When the gormons invade, Bronwyn & Blayne, 2 young realists, are forced to leave their homes and undertake a dangerous journey to Vellonia, City of the Dragons. In retrospect to the *Realms and Dimensions of the Supernatural*, this publication is a continuation of the book titled, "7 DIMENSIONS OF THE SUPERNATURAL REALM". In this publication, Apostle Frequency Revelator explores divine strategies on how these Seven supernatural dimensions can be accessed in the realm of the spirit. The dimensions speaks of the scope, depth and magnitude of operation while the realms speaks of the spheres, domain and flavours available for exploration in the realm of the spirit. The greater truth is that there are new realms, higher dimensions and greater depths in God which are available for exploration and discovery by the new creation believer. These are pivotally important revelations the Lord gave me while in the midst of prophetic worship pertaining how we could constantly move or migrate to higher realms of glory. The abundance of these revelations shared in this publication has a lot to do specifically with continuous, progressive and heightened spiritual momentum. It is disheartening to note that multitudes of Christians have not yet discovered the deeper realms of the spirit world. In other words, they are not aware of the limitless opportunities available for them in the realm of God. As aforementioned, it is undeniably evident that there are new realms, higher dimensions and greater depths in God which are available for exploration in this critical season which marks the conclusion of God's master plan for the earth. When Paul articulated in 1 Corinthians 2:9 that no eye has seen nor has it entered into the heart of man what He has prepared for those who love Him, he spoke of these new realms of glory which mankind have not yet fully comprehended in this end time season. This concurs with God's call in Jeremiah 33:3 that, "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show you great and mighty things which you knowest not." This speaks of the availability of boundless opportunities which God has prepared for us in the glory. Moreover, the riches in Christ glory described by Paul in Philippians 4:19 speaks of these realms, depths and dimensions of glory. THE 7 REALMS OF THE SUPERNATURAL DIMENSION ARE AS FOLLOWS:1.THE FIRST REALM: The Realm of Trances & Manifestations 2.THE SECOND REALM: The Realm of Operating In an Open Visions3.THE THIRD REALM: The Realm of Taping into God's Omnipresence4.THE FOURTH REALM: The Realm of Divine Transportation the Realm of Disappearance in the Natural Realm5.THE FIFTH REALM: The Realm of Transfiguration6.THE SIXTH REALM: The Realm of Visitation to the Throne Room (Being Caught up To God's Throne) Inside the Body and outside the Body Experiences7.THE SEVENTH REALM: The Realm of Translation "The ultimate chronicle of the games behind the game."—The New York Times Book Review Baseball has always inspired rhapsodic elegies on the glory of man and golden memories of wonderful times. But what you see on the field is only half the game. In this fascinating, colorful chronicle—based on hundreds of interviews and years of research and digging—John Helyar brings to vivid life the extraordinary people and dramatic events that shaped America's favorite pastime, from the dead-ball days at the turn of the century through the great strike of 1994. Witness zealous Judge Landis banish eight players, including Shoeless Joe Jackson, after the infamous "Black Sox" scandal; the flamboyant A's owner Charlie Finley wheel and deal his star players, Vida Blue and Rollie Fingers, like a deck of cards; the hysterical bidding war of coveted free agent Catfish Hunter; the chain-smoking romantic, A. Bartlett Giamatti, locking horns with Pete Rose during his gambling days of summer; and much more. Praise for *The Lords of the Realm* "A must-read for baseball fans . . . reads like a suspense novel."—Kirkus Reviews "Refreshingly hard-headed . . . the only book you'll need to read on the subject."—Newsday "Lots of stories . . . well told, amusing . . . edifying."—The Washington Post Enter *The Realm of Possibility* and meet a boy whose girlfriend is in love with Holden Caulfield; a girl who loves the boy who wears all black; two boys pondering their first anniversary; and a girl who writes love songs for a girl she can't have. These are just a few of the captivating characters readers will get to know in this intensely heartfelt new novel about those ever changing moments of love and heartbreak that go hand-in-hand with high school. David Levithan plumbs the depths of teenage emotion to create an amazing array of voices. So, enter their intricately

interconnected lives and prepare to welcome the realm of possibility open to us all. David Levithan is an award-winning and New York Times-bestselling author of young adult books, including *Every Day*, *How They Met*, *Two Boys Kissing*, *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist* (with Rachel Cohn) and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (with John Green). He lives in New Jersey and spends his days in New York, editing and publishing other people's books. For over 100 years, the agents of MI5 have defended Britain against enemy subversion. Their work has remained shrouded in secrecy—until now. This first-ever authorized account reveals the British Security Service as never before: its inner workings, its clandestine operations, its failures and its triumphs. Enter *The Realm of Possibility* and meet a boy whose girlfriend is in love with Holden Caulfield; a girl who loves the boy who wears all black; two boys pondering their first anniversary; and a girl who writes love songs for a girl she can't have. These are just a few of the captivating characters readers will get to know in this intensely heartfelt new novel about those ever changing moments of love and heartbreak that go hand-in-hand with high school. David Levithan plumbs the depths of teenage emotion to create an amazing array of voices. So, enter their intricately interconnected lives and prepare to welcome the realm of possibility open to us all. Structural colorations originate from self-organized microstructures, which interact with light in a complex way to produce brilliant colors seen everywhere in nature. Research in this field is extremely new and has been rapidly growing in the last 10 years, because the elaborate structures created in nature can now be fabricated through various types of nanotechnologies. Indeed, a fundamental book covering this field from biological, physical, and engineering viewpoints has long been expected. Coloring in nature comes mostly from inherent colors of materials, though it sometimes has a purely physical origin such as diffraction or interference of light. The latter, called structural color or iridescence, has long been a problem of scientific interest. Recently, structural colors have attracted great interest because various photonic architectures, now developing in modern technologies, have been spontaneously created in the self-organization process and have been extensively used as one of the important visual functions. In this book, the fundamental optical properties underlying structural colors are explained, and these mysteries of nature are surveyed from the viewpoint of biological diversity and according to their sophisticated structures. The book proposes a general principle of structural colors based on the structural hierarchy and presents up-to-date applications. *The Battlefield Realm: A realm where sects rise and fall. Where the ground trembles under the feet of fighters from the higher realms. Where riches are gained, and empires lost. This is where Erik and Rugrat must go if they want to increase their strength, to increase the strength of Alva. They say that fortune favors the bold. This is the Ten Realms. To the victor go the spoils. The Fourth Realm will change their lives...or end them.* FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *RED QUEEN* COMES A BRAND NEW SERIES *SAVE THE WORLD OR END IT...* A strange darkness is growing in the Ward. Even Corayne an-Amarat can feel it, tucked away in her small town at the edge of the sea. Fate knocks on her door, in the form of a mythical immortal and a lethal assassin, who tell Corayne that she is the last of an ancient lineage - with the power to save the world from destruction. Because a man who would burn kingdoms to the ground is raising an army unlike any seen before, bent on uprooting the foundations of the world. With poison in his heart and a stolen sword in his hand, he'll break the realm itself to claim it. And only Corayne can stop him. Alongside an unlikely group of reluctant allies, Corayne finds herself on a desperate journey to complete an impossible task, with untold magic singing in her blood and the fate of the world on her shoulders. A young man looking for death finds purpose in a world beyond our own in this sweeping fantasy from Greg Keyes (*The Briar King*, *Newton's Cannon*). Errol Greyson hadn't intended to commit suicide. Or so he told himself. But waking up after his "cry for help" in the body of a wood-and-metal construct magically animated by Aster?the strange girl from school?was not a result he could have imagined. Aster's wild explanations of a quest to find the water of health that would cure her father seemed as unreal as her description of Errol's own half-dead existence, his consciousness stuck in an enchanted automaton while his real body was in a coma from which it might never wake. And of course, they would need to recruit a girl?a virgin, no less?who had been dead for thirty years, to lead them through something called the Pale, beyond which a bunch of magical kingdoms existed. Plus, the threat that Aster could turn him off like a light switch, sending him into a hellish oblivion, was a convincing incentive to cooperate. It all seemed quite mad: Either Aster was nuts, or Errol was hallucinating. But if it meant a new chance at life, he reckoned it was worth playing along. A coming-of-age

epic that will push TikTok star Kyle Thomas to his limits — can he rely solely on his wit, strength, and the power of friendship to save his mum and defeat the beast that's threatening life as we know it? When Kyle Thomas and his best friend, a meerkat named Mylo, begin a new life together at The Sanctuary, a safe haven for animals, their world is turned upside down. Within days, he's drawn into an extraordinary and magical alternate universe, Kyle and Mylo enter a land filled with strange and wonderful creatures that roam wild. Everything seems perfect here, but danger is lurking. A dark creature has escaped this alternate realm and is wreaking havoc in our world. People are frightened for their lives and Kyle's mum is in danger. It's up to Kyle and Mylo to find the creature and save the world! TikTok star Kyle Thomas, Sunday Times bestselling comic book artist Amrit Birdi and scriptwriting powerhouses Leah Moore and John Reppion have come together to create Kyle's first-ever graphic novel, which will transport you to an other-worldly dimension like no other. **TECHNOLOGY AND FANTASY CLASH:** TikTok star Kyle Thomas discovers a portal to new realms, each one filled with action, intrigue, and tribes of talking animals. **COMING OF AGE:** When Kyle's mum moves them to a new home at an animal sanctuary, as he struggles with his new, lonely life. **TIKTOK MEETS COMICS:** Kyle Thomas has teamed up with a group of talented writers and artists to bring you a graphic novel unlike any other. **HEART-STOPPING ILLUSTRATIONS** from Sunday Times bestselling artist Amrit Birdi. **BEHIND-THE-SCENES BONUS:** Includes script samples, art steps, and early character concepts. Reid has spent her whole life pretending to be a man so she can inherit her father's estate, but when a chance encounter threatens to expose her lie, she is forced to risk everything. In the kingdom of Marsden, women are subservient to men and land can only pass from father to son. So when Reid Ellington is born, the fifth daughter to one of the wealthiest landholders in the kingdom, it's announced that Reid is a boy. Eighteen years later, Reid struggles to conceal the fact she's actually a young woman. Every day, her secret becomes harder to keep. When one of Marsden's princes sees her sparring with a sword, she is forced to accept his offer and lead her father's soldiers to the border. Along the way, she discovers a covert organization within the army known as the Knights of the Realm. If Reid wants to save her family from being arrested for treason and robbed of their inheritance, she will have to join the Knights and become a weapon for the crown. To protect her family, Reid must fight like a man. To do that, she'll need the courage of a woman. A new translation of Kumazawa Banzan's (1619-1691) *Responding to the Great Learning*, the first major writing on political economy in early modern Japan. How do you measure one life against another? In *The Realm*, there's an unseen consequence for every life taken. As Azure and the gang complete quests to obtain the Life Stone, they learn many new lessons about the history and mechanics of *The Realm*. Danger lurks around every corner, and it's not always in the form of monsters. Mysteries deepen and relationships are altered as Azure and his companions are sent on a quest to broker peace between a businessman and a village on the brink of war. Some injuries are deeper than flesh, and warnings of the future threaten to split Azure's party apart. What threats does the Land of Life have to offer? Find out in this exciting installment of *The Realm Between*. At the age of eight, Fanny is thrown into a new life in the southern seaside resort of Margate. Her northern family are objects of curiosity to the people of Kent, wary of anyone or anything that comes 'from the Sheers'. Despite their reception Fanny tries to settle and does her best to reconcile herself and her wild brother Joshua to the change. Her evangelist parents set about running private schools, which steadily gain in standing and respectability. All is peaceable enough - until the chance discovery of an underground grotto exposes them to temptation, manipulation and the wilfully unscrupulous dealings of their neighbours. The discovery of the underground realm of shells heralds the uncovering of some unpleasant family truths - and the dark, stark realities of the adult world. 'Sensationally good ... A riveting story, the real-life spooks and spies far more compelling than anything you will see on the screen ... history doesn't come more fascinating than this' *Evening Standard* For over 100 years, the agents of MI5 have defended Britain against enemy subversion. Their work has remained shrouded in secrecy - until now. This first-ever authorized account reveals the British Security Service as never before: its inner workings, its clandestine operations, its failures and its triumphs. 'Definitive and fascinating ... whether reporting on Hitler in the 1930s, the Double-Cross System of the second world war, Zionist terrorism, the atom spies, the Cambridge spies, the so-called Wilson plot or the 1988 shooting of the IRA bombers in Gibraltar, this book is essential reading' Alan Judd, *Spectator* 'The British Secret Service has opened its archives - and even 'insiders' may be in for a surprise ... magisterial ... extremely readable' Oleg

Gordievsky, The Times 'Compelling ... a feast' Max Hastings, Sunday Times 'A superb account ... He has captured every important detail of the Service ... unlikely to be surpassed for another 100 years' Simon Heffer, Daily Telegraph It is Henry's third visit to the Faerie Realm, but this time in a rather different guise and to a rather different kind of place. Holly Blue is Queen and Lord Hairstreak appears to be proposing a truce between the Faeries of the Night and the Faeries of the Light. Meanwhile Prince Pyrgus has stumbled across some mysterious crystal flowers with an apparently formidable secret weapon, and there are rumours of a demon invasion led by Beleth, the Prince of Darkness. Queen Blue, wary of her uncle's uncharacteristic generosity, pays a visit to the Spicemaster's labyrinth in an attempt to divine the possible future of the Realm. She is warned to beware of someone close, little realising just how careful she will need to be - and when she is kidnapped by the most unlikely candidate, the Realm rapidly descends into chaos. In a dramatic adventure, Blue, Pyrgus and Henry will find themselves in the midst of a furious battle to protect the future of the Realm and secure the throne for the rightful ruler. "Contains material originally published in single magazine form as The realm #1-5"--Copyright page. To mark the centenary of its foundation, the British Security Service, MI5, has opened its archives to an independent historian, the first time any of the world's leading intelligence or security services has taken such a step. The Defence of the Realm, the book which results, is an unprecedented publication. It reveals the precise role of the Service in twentieth-century British history, from its foundation by Captain Kell of the British Army in October 1909 to root out 'the spies of the Kaiser' up to its present role in countering Islamic terrorism. It describes the distinctive ethos of MI5, how the organization has been managed, its relationship with government, where it has triumphed and where it has failed. In all of this, no restriction has been placed on the judgements made by the author. The book also casts new light on many events and periods in British history, showing for example that through well-placed sources MI5 was probably the pre-war department with the best understanding of Hitler's objectives, and had a remarkable willingness to speak truth to power; how it was so astonishingly successful in turning German agents during the Second World War; and that it had much greater roles than has hitherto been realized during the end of Empire and in responding to the recurrent fears of successive governments (both Conservative and Labour) of Cold War Communist subversion. It has new information about the Profumo affair and its aftermath, about the 'Magnificent Five' and about a range of formerly unconfirmed Soviet contacts. It reveals that though MI5 had a file on Harold Wilson it did not plot against him, and it describes what really happened during the failed IRA attack in Gibraltar in March 1988. When Rab Butler was appointed Home Secretary with responsibility for the Security Service in 1957 he didn't even know where its headquarters were. The Defence of the Realm now describes this previously extremely secretive organization more fully than any previous book - and identifies all its main buildings on the endpapers. This book details the tactical and operational dynamics of Britain's small wars, arguing that the military's use of force was more heavily constrained by wider strategic and political considerations than previously admitted. In the slum town of Sawtong, a place where spirit priests have ruled through fear for generations, fifteen-year-old Adan tries to hold onto his family's power. He and Graisia, a twelve-year-old orphan, struggle on opposite sides of supernatural forces that vie for control of their community. Somehow, Graisia has discovered a power greater than Adan has ever seen. Drew is caught in a world of light - just inches away from the dark What if...there was a world beyond our vision, a world just fingertips beyond our

reach? What if...our world wasn't beyond their influence? Tragedy and heartache seem to be waiting for Drew Carter at every turn, but college offers Drew a chance to start over—until an accident during a physics experiment leaves him blind and his genius friend, Benjamin Berg, missing. As his sight miraculously returns, Drew discovers that the accident has heightened his neuron activity, giving him skills and sight beyond the normal man. When he begins to observe fierce invaders that no one else can see, he questions his own sanity, and so do others. But is he insane or do the invaders truly exist? With help from Sydney Carlyle, a mysterious and elusive girl who offers encouragement through her faith, Drew searches for his missing friend, Ben, who seems to hold the key to unlocking this mystery. As the dark invaders close in, will he find the truth in time? The action-packed second book in the Defender of the Realm trilogy! After the great battle at King Alfie's coronation, the nation thinks it's seen the last of the Black Dragon. But when a band of undead Vikings appears, Alfie, Hayley and the rest of the Yeoman Warders must prepare for the epic battle that's brewing. States are inherently and fundamentally geographical. Sovereignty is based on control of territory. This book uses Song China to explain how a pre-industrial regime organized itself spatially in order to exercise authority. On more than a thousand occasions, the Song court founded, abolished, promoted, demoted, and reordered jurisdictions in an attempt to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources in a climate of shifting priorities, to placate competing constituencies, and to address military and economic crises. Spatial transformations in the Song field administration changed the geography of commerce, taxation, revenue accumulation, warfare, foreign relations, and social organization, and even determined the terms of debates about imperial power. The chronology of tenth-century imperial consolidation, eleventh-century political reform, and twelfth-century localism traced in this book is a familiar one. But by detailing the relationship between the court and local administration, this book complicates the received paradigm of Song centralization and decentralization. Song frontier policies formed a coherent imperial approach to administering peripheral regions with inaccessible resources and limited infrastructure. And the well-known events of the Song—wars and reforms—were often responses to long-term spatial and demographic change. "Greg Keyes has always been . . . a skilled storyteller."—Terry Brooks, New York Times bestselling author The Curse shaped Aster's life from birth. At first, she believed her father was its only victim, and determined to save him from it. In doing so she learned that the Curse had stricken everyone in the magical realms known as the Kingdoms - and that, in an attempt to protect her, her father had himself created it. Now he is dead, a victim of his own sorcery. But the Curse has not ended with him. Her father's actions, his dread spell, were only the shadows cast by a much deeper, older conflict, which is now unwinding the universe itself. As the sun fades and the stars wink out, Aster must follow a clue from her dead father to the highest, furthest domain - beyond the fairy-tale kingdoms, through fantastic and terrifying realms of gods and demons, to the very source of reality, the beginning and ending of everything. There she might finally set things right. Her path is narrow, and the sacrifices necessary for even a tiny chance at success are unacceptable. For the Curse has also released a rot at the very heart of the High and Faraway, an evil more ancient than time itself. It is against this unwavering malevolence that Aster, Errol, Billy, Dusk and Delia must pit themselves. They must do so without their friend Veronica, a girl murdered decades before and brought back to life by Aster's magic. For as Veronica discovers her own vast power, she stares into the face of the enemy and sees in it her true self . . .