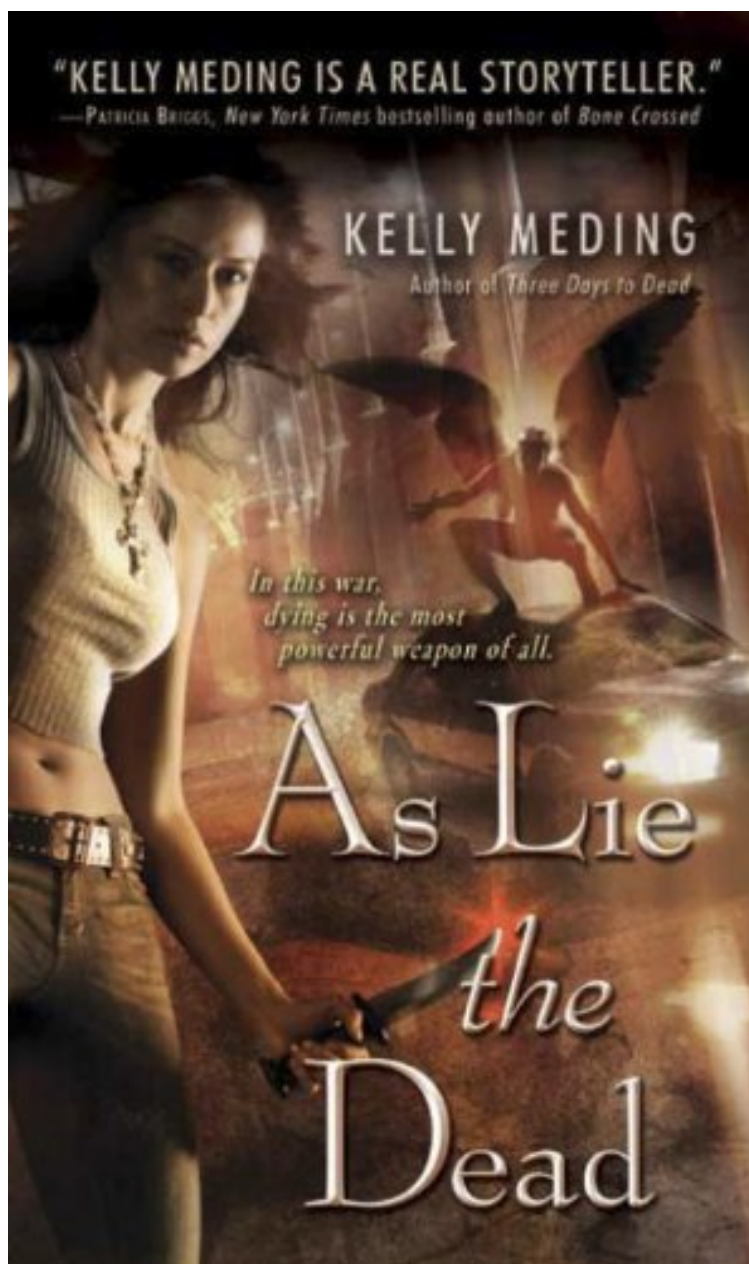


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As Lie the Dead



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurEvangelina Stone, a rogue bounty hunter, never asked for a world divided between darkness and light or the power to die and live again in someone elses borrowed body. After a murder plot meant to take her out leaves an entire race of shapeshifters nearly extinct, Evy is gnawed by guilt. So when one of the few survivors of the slaughter enlists her aid, she feels duty-bound to helpeven though protecting a frail, pregnant shifter is the last thing Evy needs, especially with the world going to hell around

her. Amid weres, Halfies, gremlins, vamps and increasingly outgunned humans a war for supremacy is brewing. With shifters demanding justice, her superiors desperate to control her, and an assassin on her trail, Evy discovers a horrifying conspiracy. And she may be the only person in the world who can stop it unless, of course, her own side gets her first. From the Paperback edition. Extrait Chapter One Friday, 5:56 a.m. Deep red bled into the predawn sky above the defunct Olsmill Nature Preserve, and I didnt want to be around when the sun fully rose above the mountain treetops. Once sunlight hit the plethora of vampire and Halfie bodies strewn around the sea of pavement that surrounded the preserves Visitors Center, it was game over. I smelled burning vampire bodies acrid and heavy, like scorched rubber. More than forty corpses littered the ground, victims of last nights semi-epic battle. Theyd smell it in the city all day. I wandered away from the grisly mess, back toward the line of Jeeps that created a barrier between the carnage and the dense forest, past the human Hunters collecting goblin corpses for the bonfire. I wanted out before they lit that, too. Even dead and rotting as they were, just the sight of the hunched, oily-skinned goblin warriors set my skin crawling. Voices on the forest side of the Jeep trickled over. . . you see how she got them inside the Visitors Center? People cant teleport. Thats impossible. Cant come back from the dead, either, but she did. Like a friggin zombie or something. She moves too fast to be a zombie. I was being discussed. Not surprising. How often did a Dreg Bounty Hunter get brought back from the dead, lead an attack on a possessed elf, discover she could teleport, and continually heal from wounds that would kill any regular human being? We lived in a city where magic existed, where teenagers were recruited to kill the beasts of nightmares, and the only way those guys could understand my existence was to go Romero on me? Terrific. The two gossipers shuffled to my side of the Jeep, carrying a goblin corpse between them. They froze when they saw me. I knew their faces but not their names. Each Triad unit consisted of three Hunters, with each unit working independently of one another and overseen by a trained Handler. Handlers kept in contact with other Handlers, but anonymity among Hunters protected us from attack by our enemies. Todays mass battle in the mountains north of the city was the first time Id seen more than three Triads in one place, ever. I narrowed my eyes at the pair and lowered my voice to a guttural growl. Mmm, brains. The taller of the two grunted, his thickly lashed eyes going wide. His companion, shorter by several inches and with skin the color of strong coffee, snorted. He seemed the most familiar, and it finally struck me where Id seen him before Burger Palace. He belonged to a Handler named Rhys Willemy and had helped arrest my own Handler two days ago. Huh. They continued carrying their burden toward the bonfire pit to add more organic fuel to what was sure to be a disgusting fire. As they wandered off to collect the next corpse, I was glad I wasnt required to help with cleanup. Probably my reward for, you know, stopping the bad guy and keeping a demon from running amok. I turned my attention back to the sprawl of dead things in front of me. My target hadnt been collected. Kelsas broken body had shriveled from blood loss. The fuchsia liquid gelled on the blacktop around the goblin Queen to create a kind of paste. It squelched around my sneakers, which were already stained with blood and dirt. I breathed through my mouth, but it didnt help. The cloying seawater stench was thick enough to taste. The goblins would be furious when they learned of her death. I knew little about the specific hierarchy within hidden goblin society, but Kelsa was a rare and revered female. Shed led a horde of warriors. She had orchestrated the goblins end of Tovins plan to summon a demon. She had power within the goblin ranks. And I had killed her payback for killing me last week. It was only a matter of time before they regrouped and came after me. Again. Evy? I did a careful one-eighty in the puddle of blood. Wyatt Truman my Handler and the man whod almost become a demon suitwalked across the pavement toward me, and I nearly tackled him with another hug. Nearly. One sleeve of his shirt was stained red, darkening as it dried a constant reminder of how Id felt an hour ago when hed been shot with an anticoagulant bullet and had died in my arms. A constant reminder, also, of the power of the gnome healing magic that had brought him back to me. Howre those? he asked, pointing at my stomach. My hand went to the torn, soaked fabric of my T-shirt. Below it, scabbed slash marks were slowly healing gifts from my throw-down with Kelsa. An inch deeper and she would have gutted me, and I doubted my healing ability could have saved me from having my intestines stomped all over the blacktop. An ability I seemed to have retained, even though my three days were up. The bite on my ankle, the cuts on my cheek, and other gashes across my torso and legs were also healing, creating an itchy sensation not unlike rolling in dry grass. Ive had worse, I replied. You ready to get out of here? Sunll be up soon. Yeah, there was just one thing I wanted to do first. Which is? Another pair of Hunters strode past us. One walked with his shoulders slumped, head turned away. Wyatt reached out and tapped him on the shoulder. The kid stopped and looked up. I saw his swollen lip an instant before Wyatts fist slammed into his nose. The kid squealed and stumbled backward, hands covering his face. Blood streamed

between his fingers and down his chin. Wyatt, I said. He glared at me and I glared right back. Like I cared if he punched that little shit in the nose. I already did that. Wyatt shrugged. Hey, you got to kill the bitch who killed you. Give me something here. You have a good, if somewhat morbid, point. You broke my nose, the kid whod fired that fatal anticoagulant shot said. Though muffled beneath his hands, it sounded closer to You bruk by doze. Hey, Truman! Ease up, will you? Adrian Baylors question was barked from a brief distance. The burly Handler strode toward us from the other end of the Jeep line, bristling like an angry dog. The kids a week out of Boot Camp, and it was an accident. The kid, Wyatt said, is too skittish to be using live rounds. Who the helld he pay to graduate? The kid has a fucking name, snarled the kid in question. Color flamed both cheeks. Hed dropped his hands, allowing his broken nose to bleed freely. Half a foot shorter than Wyatt, he stood up like the class nerd facing down the playground bully. For a rookie, he had brass ones. Wyatt crossed his arms over his chest. Which is? Paul Ryan. Okay, then. Wyatt tilted his head toward Baylor. Paul Ryan is too skittish to be in the field with live ammo. Pauls entire face turned beet red. Baylor growled low in his throata challenge. Yeah, Im sure Ill be taking training advice from a guy who got his whole team killed. Wyatt flinched. I tensed, expecting more punches. Or at the very least, a couple of choice insults. When nothing happened, I got pissed. For Wyatt and for me, being one of the three dead people referenced in Baylors snarky comment. I was across the blood puddle and in Baylors face before anyone could stop me. I balled my fist in the front of his black turtleneck and leaned in until we were nose to nose. Id just crossed an unspoken line of code among Hunters and Handlers, but I didnt much care. Its not like I worked for them anymore. Our deaths were not Wyatts goddamn fault, understand? You fucking asshole. I let him go, and he stumbled back a step. Evy, stop, Wyatt said. I rounded on him, my hands clenched. His shoulders had slumped. He didnt seem angry anymore, only sad, but that just fueled my anger. Why, Wyatt? Our deaths were not your fault. Yeah. His tone said otherwise, but it wasnt a fight I was prepared to relive in front of the others. Maybe not again until Id had a few days sleep. I thought hed accepted the fact that Jesse and Ash, my late Triad partners, had been killed as part of a larger plan. Their deathsand, ultimately, mine as wellwere orchestrated, unpreventable. Not his fault. Not my fault, either. Yeah, not my fault. Maybe if I said that a few more times, Id even believe it. Prsentation de l'diteur Evangeline Stone, a rogue bounty hunter, never asked for a world divided between darkness and light or the power to die and live again in someone elses borrowed body. After a murder plot meant to take her out leaves an entire race of shapeshifters nearly extinct, Evy is gnawed by guilt. So when one of the few survivors of the slaughter enlists her aid, she feels duty-bound to help even though protecting a frail, pregnant shifter is the last thing Evy needs, especially with the world going to hell around her. Amid weres, Halfies, gremlins, vampsand increasingly outgunned humansa war for supremacy is brewing. With shifters demanding justice, her superiors desperate to control her, and an assassin on her trail, Evy discovers a horrifying conspiracy. And she may be the only person in the world who can stop it unless, of course, her own side gets her first. From the Paperback edition.