



The Crack at the Heart of Everything

Fiona Fenn

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In Fiona Fenn's romantic fantasy novel *The Crack at the Heart of Everything*, a dark wizard in exile finds unexpected warmth and love amid the desolation of an apocalyptic world.

Orpheus once stood by the side of Empress Lore and channeled a spell that cracked the world, summoning an army of beasts from the depths of hell. The spell also cast the world into fiery darkness and brought a death curse on Orpheus. Worse, the empress (a childhood friend of his) betrayed him, casting him into the wasteland that his spell brought forth.

The wasteland is a bleak, intense place where the stench of brimstone is pervasive. There, Orpheus is accompanied by Fenrir, a former general who now works against the empress. Orpheus works to undo the death curse, to learn why Lore betrayed him, and to understand why Fenrir is eager to help him. And though he's focused on these pursuits, he also finds that the wasteland isn't just home to fire-breathing dragons and monsters, but to people who care and who connect with each other, knowing that giving into constant warfare would be untenable.

The story is anchored by the intense longing between Orpheus and Fenrir. The latter is patient with his tragic-hero counterpart, injecting warmth into their bickering. Above all else, Fenrir's heart belongs to Orpheus, even if the dark wizard is too closed off to see it.

An unlikely hero must decide between his magic and rescuing the world in *The Crack at the Heart of Everything*, a charming fantasy novel in which two men strive to fix the brokenness around them.

JOHN M. MURRAY (November / December 2024)

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