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# ABOUT *A KING'S TRUST*



## Book Details

**Title:** A King's Trust

**Author:** S.E. McPherson

**Series:** Heart-mage Trilogy Book 1

**Genre:** Fantasy Romance, LGBT /  
Bisexual fiction

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Paperback, eBook

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## Synopsis

The spare becomes the heir and, on his contentious path to the throne, discovers magical intrigue, a secret society pulling political strings, and not one, but two loves of his life.

## Key Themes

Bi Romance | Found Family | Poly Romance | Identity | Trust & Deception

"In her debut fantasy novel, McPherson delivers a thrilling and emotional story with remarkable worldbuilding. Readers will instantly connect with the genuinely kind but snarky Beau, as he remains true to himself and his morals, and loyal to the people he cares about. Elias and Lady Penamour are also intriguing and well-developed characters. The romantic buildup between Beau and Elias, and between Beau and Lady Penamour, is engaging and ultimately satisfying. The novel also offers strikingly sensitive and authentic representations of queer and trans characters, as well as polyamory. Family strife, intense battle scenes, and magic add interest to the palace intrigue.

A compelling tale with well-drawn characters and beautifully executed LGBTQ+ romance."

***--Kirkus Reviews (starred review)***

"Tantalizing and dripping with tension—a slow-burn romantasy that explodes when things get hot.

If you're able to withstand the tantalizing tension, the dripping ache and yearning for touch, you're going to absolutely devour the second half of this book. When it gets going, it really gets going. The slow-burn explodes into a fiery pace, glowing with powerful magic and blushing with orgasmic detail. If you like your romantasy spicy—which, let's be honest, you do—you can't miss A King's Trust. Coast through the slow set-up—a tease—because it's building, it's coming. I promise.

Both Elias and Lady Penamour are superior love interests and characters. Author S.E. McPherson has done a spectacular job with these characters—about as complex and likable as they come. And with the amount of secrets hiding behind every corner, we're never quite comfortable in trusting anyone.

A King's Trust is exactly the type of slow-burn romance you were hoping for. It's not slow for slow's sake—it's slow for tension's sake. Until the tension erupts.

***--Independent Book Review***



# MEET THE *MAIN CHARACTERS*



**Beauregard Mylan Adelard Tristain Highput**  
(BO-ruh-gard HIGH-put)

Prince Beau is highly empathetic and has a strong drive to right the wrongs of the world—even when doing so is wildly inconvenient and disruptive. He *cannot* just let things go, and his curiosity and short attention span mean he finds new problems to solve all the time.



**Victoire Augusta Bridgette Penamour**  
(VIC-twar PEN-uh-mohr)

Lady Penamour knows exactly what she wants, knows exactly how to get it, and has a strong moral core that drives her to use all of that power and influence to make the world a better and more just place—even if that means committing a little treason, as a treat.



**Elias Batesian, Deadliest Man Alive**  
(EL-EYE-us Buh-TAY-zee-an)

While El has a lot of secrets, he's the only person in the book who is a true believer in Beau from day one. He wants the world changed—and he thinks Beau's the one to do it. He lies like he breathes but *never* lies to Beau about his vision for the prince.

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# AUTHOR Q&A

## Why do you write fantasy romance?

I've written something like 30 partial or complete books at this point, and I don't think I've *ever* managed to get to a final draft without a love story. I *love* love, and I find the way it stretches people past their limits, past their morals, past their expectations so fascinating. As for the fantasy part, I almost exclusively read fantasy, so there was never any doubt there'd be magic in my debut.

## Speaking of magic, what inspired the magic system of A King's Trust?

Every fantasy story with magic has to grapple with how to limit magic so the conflicts in the story can't be resolved with a hand wave and an incantation. In this book, I limited it by the scarcity of artifacts and, more importantly, scarcity of *knowledge*. Because every use of magic is a deal struck with a Source, Maurilel mages were limited by what they were willing to give up in trade for their request—but our characters don't *know* about the Sources, so who can say what they're offering up unknowingly?

## What was the hardest scene to write?

Emotionally, the hardest scene to write was Beau's last conversation with his father. Beau wants nothing more than to make his father proud and do right by the people who are depending on him, so to be so hated

and misunderstood for the things he's *proud* of doing, the positive changes he's trying to make, is just gutting. As a fellow rejection-sensitive AuDHDer who's no stranger to being misread and misunderstood, I felt that one for *days* after I finished writing it.

**"It's just gutting. As a fellow rejection-sensitive AuDHDer who's no stranger to being misread and misunderstood, I felt that one for days."**

## Did you intend for Beau to be AuDHD?

When I started writing this book, I didn't even know *I* was AuDHD. A beta reader mentioned appreciating the neurodivergent representation, and I had to have a good think about just what the hell they meant by that. Beau's struggle to understand the norms and "scripts" of a professional environment that felt dishonest, the self-talk picked up from others' comments about his attention span and communication style, and even his difficulty socializing while wearing tight, uncomfortable clothes were all personal experiences that added color to his character and, I now realize, made him obviously neurodivergent.



# AUTHOR Q&A

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## Are enemies-to-lovers and royal/guard your favorite romance tropes?

At the marketing stage, there's a lot of talk about tropes and spice level, but I wasn't thinking about any of that while I was writing. I like to let characters react naturally to their surroundings,

interests align so closely throughout the book and they have so much in common, but their conversational tension is delicious and it lets me explore one of my favorite micro-tropes, Constant Annoying Nicknames!

**“Although I don’t think I’ve ever set out intending to write an enemies-to-lovers story, letting characters lean into the tension of their circumstances pulls stories in that direction sometimes.”**

and the tension of that can work itself out in romance or not. I've had stories where it became very clear over the course of a book that the pair I *thought* was going to be end-game just wasn't going to work out! But Elias and Penny both had so much in common with Beau and so much love for his quirky little self that it always had to be the three of them.

I *am* a total sucker for supernaturally loyal love interests and I love stories with nation-level (or larger) stakes, so royal/guard is a trope I gravitate toward in quite a few of my stories.

Similarly, although I don't think I've ever set out *intending* to write an enemies-to-lovers story, letting characters lean naturally into the tension of their circumstances pulls stories in that direction sometimes. I'm still not sure Penny and Beau are ever truly enemies, since their

## What scene that you loved didn't make it in the book?

The scene that originally inspired the book was a genderbent Cinderella moment. Elias becomes an Altagnan princess with an appearance-changing artifact, Beau proposes to “her,” and they “chase” her when she flees the capital to escape the pressure to propose. So fun, but ultimately it didn't fit the final story.

“Don't tell me you don't recognize me,” she said, dipping her head conspiratorially close so she could whisper. Her voice was...deep. Familiar. “You'll break my heart.” She gave him an absolutely wicked grin that belonged to—

“El?” Shock passed enough for him to remember they were surrounded by nobles who were no doubt curious about this new addition. He hastily added, “—leanor? Eleanor?”

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# TROPEES OF *A KING'S TRUST*

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# ADVANCED BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

## *BOOK NERDS ONLY*

### General

- What scene had the biggest emotional impact on you? Why?
- Which character did you most relate to? Why?
- What are your predictions for the next book?

### Found Family

- Where have you seen the concept of a “tulip family” in your own life?
- Why do you think Beau was blind to Char’s faults? How might his defense of Char have affected his relationship with people who think of Charmant as a villain?
- How do you think Penny’s perception of Beau shifted when she met his “tulip family” on Leau and saw him at his most comfortable with them?
- Why do you think Beau struggled to relate to other nobles but was able to build a strong and nourishing community on Leau?

### Relationships & Love

- How does Penny’s sense of justice and loyalty interfere with her ability to connect with and see the positive aspects of Beau?
- Beau refuses to see Elias’s affection for what it is. Do you think that speaks to a lack of social understanding, avoidance of a power dynamic he finds problematic, or confusion about his own feelings?
- How do you think Elias’s sense of duty shifts as his priority changes from the Watchers to Beau?
- What are the differences you see in how Beau and Elias express love and intimacy versus how Beau and Penny do?
- What do you think will be the implications of having a polycule involving two royals and a soul-bound guard?

### Magic

- Beau has a history of self-harm and struggled with the idea of cutting himself with the key to access the vault. What do you think was the impact on Beau of having to cut himself to access his magic?
- What do you think the implications will be of Beau being a mage in a world where mages no longer exist?