

HE'S HER GREATEST ENEMY
AND HER DEEPEST DESIRE



INTERNATIONALLY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JULIE SOTO



ROSE IN CHAINS

JULIE SOTO





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Magpie Books
An imprint of
HarperCollins*Publishers* Ltd
1 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9GF

www.harpercollins.co.uk

First published by HarperCollins*Publishers* Ltd 2025

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Text layout and family tree by Taylor Navis

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Source ISBN: 9780008711672
eBook Edition © July 2025 ISBN: 9780008711696
Version: 2025-06-23

PRAISE FOR *ROSE IN CHAINS*

‘A stunning romantasy that had me riveted to the pages.
Julie Soto has spun an unforgettable tale, weaving luminous and dark
threads alike into a beautiful, heart-rending romance.

Lush, complex, and utterly engrossing’

**Rebecca Ross, No.1 *Sunday Times* and *New York Times* bestselling
author of *Divine Rivals***

‘A dark fever dream of a fairytale. *Rose in Chains* is a heart pounding,
spellbinding, forbidden love story that kept breaking my heart and putting it
back together again’

**Stephanie Garber, No.1 *Sunday Times* and *New York Times* bestselling
author of the *Caraval* series**

‘Absorbing, unique, and addictive’

**Jodi Picoult, *Sunday Times* and No.1 *New York Times* bestselling author
of *Mad Honey***

‘Dark and steamy, beautifully written, magical and nuanced, and completely
unforgettable’

Thea Guanzon, *Sunday Times* bestselling author of *The Hurricane Wars*

‘The scintillating romantasy of my dreams. The all-consuming, captivating
chemistry between Briony and Toven has changed my life ... a must-read
for all romantasy lovers’

Lindsey Kelk, *Sunday Times* bestselling author of *Love Story*

‘Captivating magical world, tension-filled intrigue, and riveting enemies-to-
lovers romance’

**Abigail Owen, No.1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Games
Gods Play***

‘Julie Soto has created a lush, high-stakes fantasy world that’s decadent and sexy as hell. Prepare for *Rose in Chains* to be your new obsession’

B.K. Borison, *USA Today* bestselling author of the Lovelight series

‘Amidst the intrigue and suspense, Soto masterfully crafts a delicious, darkly tender slow-burn romance. I didn’t want to come up for air’

Brigitte Knightley, author of *The Irresistible Urge to Fall for Your Enemy*

‘A darkly luscious, unputdownable romantasy debut. Soto weaves together a complex and captivating world of magic, lust, and longing’

Kate Golden, *USA Today* bestselling author of *A Dawn of Onyx*

‘An intoxicating tale of forbidden love ... This dark and decadent world is punctuated by moments of magical light, with a heroine you’ll love to root for and a slow burn of temptation that will have you on the edge of your seat’

Sarah Hawley, *USA Today* bestselling author of *A Witch’s Guide to Fake Dating a Demon*

‘Dark and gripping and full of twists and turns’

Nisha J. Tuli, internationally bestselling author of *Trial of the Sun Queen*

‘A sexy, tension-filled ride. Julie Soto creates a fantastical world full of delightfully dangerous men and strong-as-nails women. Weaving magic, romance, and adventure, *Rose in Chains* is something special, and every page has you wanting more’

Elissa Sussman, bestselling author of *Funny You Should Ask*

DEDICATION

For the Saturday Girls ...

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CONTENT WARNING

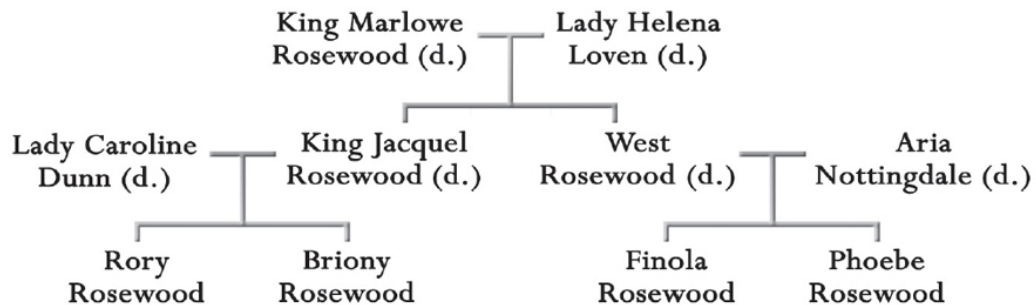
This work contains explicit sexual content, scenes with gore and violence, and sexual assault of a POV character. Non-consensual sex is referred to, and the buying and selling of human beings into captivity is a core theme of *Rose in Chains*. Forced sterilization, death of minor characters, and torture are present in this story. For a more detailed list of content warnings, please visit www.juliesotowrites.com

MAP





EVERMORE ROSEWOOD FAMILY TREE



BOMARD

THE SEAT OF BOMARD – VERONIKA MALLOW

LINE TO THE SEAT

1st – Riann Cohle
2nd – Aron Carvin
3rd – Genevieve Trow
4th – Hap Gains
5th – Moira Locklin
6th – Caspar Quill
7th – Alba Twindle
8th – Orion Hearst
9th – Florence Kleve
10th – Cal Gidrey

succeeded by Del Burkin
succeeded by Lucille Piken
succeeded by Canning Trow
succeeded by Stance Green
succeeded by Rowan Locklin
succeeded by Liam Quill
succeeded by Collin Twindle
succeeded by Toven Hearst
succeeded by Ryden Kleve
succeeded by Evelyn Gidrey



PART ONE

Some of us would argue that the source of our magic comes from blood—from the heart—but I think that too simple an explanation. Do we not summon it? With our minds? With our intentions?

I shall be hanged for saying it, I know, but I believe harnessing power from our minds is how we elevate our magic beyond our ancestors. Saying we are harnessing our hearts is too simple.

For those among us who have loved have done so with our hearts, yes—but through a willing fault of mind as well.

—THE FIRST WRITINGS OF VINDECCI, CIRCA YEAR 1507
AFTER RECORD, ALSO KNOWN AS YEAR 8 BV
(BEFORE VINDECCI)



CHAPTER 1

BRIONY THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE that she didn't feel it when her brother died. The crack of the boundary evaporating rattled her ribs, and the rock scraped under her fingertips as she gripped the ledge looking out over what was left of the country of Evermore—but she felt nothing in her soul when Rory died.

As his twin, she'd tugged on the thread that ran between them many times—when he was injured, when he needed help. Briony reached for that thread now, seeking out the vein of magic in her chest that was reserved for Rory only. Dark silence was the only response. She supposed she'd had no premonition, either, when her father had fallen four years ago, and her mother had been dead already when they'd cut Briony out of her.

But when the dust billowed up like a cloud on a summer's afternoon just under half a mile away, and the calm that had curled around her and Cordelia collapsed into rumbling chaos, Briony knew that Rory was dead.

His protection boundary around the castle had fallen. He was dead.

And yet her soul didn't wrench in half.

Briony watched the moon move away from the sun, the eclipse ending as soon as it had begun.

How strange, she thought numbly.

"No ..." Cordelia whispered.

Briony looked to her right and found her friend's pale fingertips almost translucent against her lips. The wind whipped Cordelia's auburn hair around her eyes, as if trying to spare her from the sight. On the other side of Cordelia, Anna stepped forward to the balcony ledge as if in a trance, her mouth open. The sunlight reflected off the purple rose crest on her armor.

Briony looked back to the cloud of dust and ash that blossomed higher and higher to cover the moon and the sun in their dance. She saw the reflection of it to her left in the water of the lake.

The last dragon flapped her spindly wings and soared away from the mess of humans on the battlefield, returning north.

“Stay here,” Anna said, running quickly toward the balcony stairs. She pivoted, changing her mind. “No ... You should go inside. Get somewhere safe and wait.”

Briony stared at her. Cordelia choked on a sob.

Anna gazed back, and Briony watched her guard’s mind twirl through her plans and strategies. Anna was supposed to stay by her side; she had held her as a baby and promised her father to give her life for Briony’s.

Before she could overthink, Anna darted down the stairs.

Briony turned back to the dust cloud, wondering if parts of her brother were inside of it. Her brother who was supposed to be the one to end this war. Her brother who had been foretold.

She gasped then, as if the idea of the failed prophecy was the slap she’d needed.

Rory was gone. Tears filled her eyes on a shuddering inhale, and she imagined what the front would be like. A thousand soldiers realizing that their long-held hope, their Heir Twice Over, was just a man after all.

She shrugged off her cape. It wouldn’t help her run. Neither would her slippers or draped silk gown, but she didn’t have time to change.

She had one foot on the stairs when Cordelia grabbed her wrist, tugging her back. “Where are you going?” The panic pinched her voice. “We have to hide!”

Briony laid her hand on her friend’s wrist. “If we hide, we’ll be the last ones left,” she said, her voice flat.

Cordelia’s blue eyes widened. The moment Cordelia’s grip relaxed, Briony spun and raced down the stairs, her friend’s light footsteps chasing behind her.