

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Pair of con artists battle villains in exorcist romantasy

Friends-to-lovers battle against literal and figurative demons

Chester, England, UK – Exorcise some demons (or pretend to) with Colton and Lucian in this frenemies-to-lovers paranormal romantasy from acclaimed author, E.L. Deards. “**The Lavender Blade**” (**She Writes Press, July 8, 2025**) follows two con artists that pair up as exorcists pretending to exorcise demonic possessions for handsome rewards. But when one of them is possessed by a real demon, the other must choose if he can save his friend and save his relationship.

In this dark romantic fantasy, E.L. Deards raises the stakes creating a steampunk world where villains desire world domination, pitting both Colton and Lucian against personal demons both literal and figurative. A witty exploration into themes of acceptance, identity, and resilience, fans of *Gideon the Ninth* and *A Marvellous Light* will be asking: Will this pair be able to save each other from themselves?



More about the book: Colton and Lucian, a young pair of exorcist con artists, use sleight of hand and their natural charm to scam the nation’s wealthiest...until one of them becomes possessed for real. Colton has to act quickly to learn the real tricks of his trade and exorcise the demon before Lucian’s soul is snuffed out completely. As the creature becomes more and more powerful, Colton resorts to increasingly drastic measures to save the man he loves from annihilation.

“The Lavender Blade”

E.L. Deards | July 8, 2025 | She Writes Press

Fiction/LGBTQ+/Paranormal Romance

Paperback | 9781647424879 | \$17.95



E.L. Deards grew up in New York City and earned her undergraduate degree at Barnard College at Columbia University, where she studied Japanese literature and biology. She was then accepted to The University of Edinburgh, where she completed her veterinary degree. She remained in the UK afterward, and since then has split her time between her day job as a vet and her secret passion: writing. Emma has authored a number of humor articles for *In Practice*, a veterinary magazine, and was the recipient in college of two writing awards: the Oscar Lee Award and the Harumatsuri Award. Her first book, *Wild with All Regrets*, came out in 2023.

Follow E.L. Deards on social media:

Twitter: [@emmadeards](https://twitter.com/emmadeards) | Instagram: [@emmadeards](https://www.instagram.com/emmadeards) | TikTok: [@emma.deards](https://www.tiktok.com/@emma.deards)

In an interview, E.L. Deards can discuss:

- How she explores the ideas of self-identity and acceptance through her two main characters
- How she plays with the metaphor of “inner demons” as her main character is possessed by one
- How she uses humor to bring levity to the heavier themes of the book
- How the main themes of the book emphasize the emotional complexity of love, relationships, and loyalty
- Why she decided to write a high fantasy novel after publishing a historical fiction story



An Interview with E.L. Deards

1. How do you think the journey of facing personal demons mirrors the external battles the characters face in the story?

The external conflicts in *The Lavender Blade*—the power struggles, the betrayals, the fight to stay alive—aren't just obstacles; they're reflections of the internal wars the characters are already fighting. Colton, especially, is dealing with more than just political danger—he's haunted by his past, by his own self-doubt, by the question of whether he's anything more than the persona he's created to survive. The magic, the deception, the looming threats—they all serve as amplifications of that central struggle. The real fight isn't just about who wins or loses; it's about whether Colton and Lucian can make it through without becoming the worst versions of themselves.

2. What do you hope readers take away from Colton's journey to save Lucian, both in terms of their relationship and the themes of loyalty?

Colton and Lucian's relationship is built on sharp edges—mutual dependence wrapped in danger, trust tested at every turn. Loyalty, in their world, isn't simple; it's a risk, a weapon, a thing that can be used against you just as easily as it can save you. But what makes their dynamic compelling is that, despite everything, they still reach for each other. Colton saving Lucian isn't just about keeping him alive—it's about proving, maybe for the first time, that loyalty doesn't have to be transactional. That sometimes, it's real, even when it shouldn't be.

3. What role does setting play in creating the mood for this story, and how do you ensure it enhances the emotional stakes that Colton and Lucian face?

The setting doesn't just frame the story—it sets the mood, builds tension, and reinforces everything Colton and Lucian are up against. Silvermoor is a city of contrasts: opulence and grit, wealth and violence, the polished elegance of the Ivory District pressed up against the raw survival of the Iron District. Colton knows the smoke-filled taverns, the



back-alley deals, the weight of a blade hidden in his sleeve, while Lucian understands the cold calculation of power wielded in whispers and signatures. As their worlds collide, they begin to see what the other has survived, expanding each other's understanding of how to navigate a city that gives nothing freely. I want the reader to feel that—to smell the smoke in the air, feel the sea breeze on their faces, and feel the slick squelch of blood beneath their boots.

4. What was your writing process for *The Lavender Blade*? How do you approach a story with such intricate world-building and character development?

I always start with a vague idea—something like *con artist exorcists, but then one actually gets possessed*—and from there, everything builds outward. The world, the plot, the magic system—all of that grows naturally, but what really shapes the story is the characters. I focus on their voices first, letting them develop into fully realized people, because once I know who they are, I know how they'll move through the world. Their decisions drive the plot, their personalities dictate the tone, and the setting becomes an extension of their struggles. I don't try to force them into a strict outline; I let them breathe, and in doing so, the story takes on a life of its own.

5. What do you hope readers will take away from the story, both in terms of the emotional journey of the characters and the broader themes explored in the novel?

I want *The Lavender Blade* to be the kind of book that pulls readers in and doesn't let go—the kind that makes you lose track of time because you're too caught up in the characters, the twists, and the world. There's depth to it, sure—questions about trust, self-acceptance, and the weight of the past—but first and foremost, it's meant to be an exciting, *fun* read. Colton and Lucian are sharp, complicated, and sometimes their own worst enemies, but they're also impossible not to root for. I hope readers come away from the story feeling like they've lived in it for a while, that they've laughed, held their breath, maybe even yelled at the pages, and that when it's over, they already miss it.