Romantasy audiobook scripts

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One Blanket, Two Enemies

Forced proximity, comedic · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

There is one blanket. Of course there is one blanket.

"We could share it," says Captain Daverin, like a man suggesting we share a toothache.

"I would rather freeze."

"Your teeth are making a noise."

"That is the sound of my dignity."

He lifts a corner. He does not smile, which is worse, because I can tell he wants to. Three weeks ago I tried to have this man arrested. Tonight he is warm, and I hate that I noticed.

Never Thank the Fair Folk

Mortal in a magical court · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral British · 30 seconds

The first rule my grandmother taught me was never to thank one of them. Thanks are a debt, and they collect.

So when the lord of the Gloaming Hall caught my wrist before I fell, I said nothing at all.

"Most mortals say thank you," he murmured.

"Most mortals end up owing you a year of their lives."

His mouth curved, slow and delighted. "Clever girl. Now I shall have to find some other way to keep you near."

I Hated Him First

Enemies to lovers · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

For the record, I hated Soren Valcourt long before it was fashionable.

I hated him when he took my seat on the war council. I hated him when he was right about the northern pass. I hated him most last night, when an arrow came out of the dark and he stepped in front of it without a glance at me.

You cannot hate a man properly after that. It is exhausting, and he keeps bleeding on my good cloak.

The Prince Cannot Cook

Forced proximity, quest · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

She has saved my life four times, and I have just set fire to her breakfast.

"It is porridge," Wynn says, watching it smoke. "It is oats and water. How?"

"I was raised in a palace."

"You were raised by wolves, clearly."

"Wolves would have managed porridge."

She laughs then, properly, head back, the first time since the border. I would burn every pot in the kingdom to hear it twice.

Rule One of the Moth Court

Mortal in a magical court · Adult (25-40) · Neutral British · 45 seconds

Rule one of the Moth Court: eat nothing. Rule two: promise nothing. Rule three, which nobody mentioned, is do not look directly at the queen's youngest son when he is bored, because he will take it as an invitation.

"You are staring, little scribe."

"I am taking notes, Your Highness."

"On my face?"

"On the tapestry behind it."

He turns to look. There is no tapestry. There is only a bare stone wall, and when he turns back he is grinning like a fox who has found the henhouse door open.

"Oh," he says softly, "I am going to enjoy you."

I write that down too. For the record. My hand is perfectly steady. It is the ink that shakes.

A Kiss to Break It

Cursed bargain, friends to lovers · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

The curse is very clear. One kiss, freely given, before the last frost, or I spend eternity as a rather handsome statue in my aunt's garden.

"So kiss someone," says Brielle, not looking up from her book.

"It has to be someone who means it."

"You are a prince. Somebody must like you."

"They like the crown. The curse can tell the difference. It is irritatingly well made."

She turns a page. Snow is falling outside the tower window. I have eleven days and one friend, and I have just realised, with the cold certainty of a man falling down a well, that those are the same problem.

"What?" she says. "You have gone a funny colour."

The Dragon Likes Her Better

Dragon riders, comedic · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

My dragon has opinions about my love life, and today she has decided to share them with the entire flight yard.

"She is not usually like this," I tell the new rider, as four tons of bronze scales flop over to have their belly scratched.

"Like what?" says Ysolde, scratching. "Friendly?"

"She bit the last commander."

"Maybe he deserved it."

He did. That is not the point. The point is that Karrow has not let anyone but me touch her in six years, and now she is purring, and looking at me over this woman's shoulder with one amber eye.

It is the look of a creature who has made a decision on my behalf.

"Traitor," I mutter. Karrow yawns.

Slightly Stolen

Found family · Any · Neutral American · 45 seconds

Nobody on the Marigold was technically related. The captain had been a duchess. The cook had been a pirate. The navigator was a retired god of small rivers who preferred not to discuss it.

And then there was Tam, who had been stolen.

"Rescued," said Ilya, for the ninth time.

"You put a sack over my head."

"A rescue sack."

"You asked the ransom price."

"For reference." Ilya handed over a bowl of stew, and then, without comment, her own bread. "Eat. You are thin. It makes us look like bad kidnappers."

Tam ate. Six strangers argued about the weather as if nothing in the world were wrong.

It was, Tam thought, a very odd way to finally come home.

The Map Is Wrong and So Are You

Forced proximity, quest · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

We have been walking in a circle for two hours, and the most dangerous swordsman in the Nine Marches will not admit it.

"The map is wrong," Cael says.

"The map was drawn by my mother."

"Then your mother is wrong."

"We have passed that rock three times. I have named it. Its name is Gerald."

"It is a different rock."

"It has the same moss!"

He stops. He looks at Gerald. A muscle moves in his jaw, and I watch him do the arithmetic of his own pride.

"If I say you were right," he says, "will you stop talking?"

"No."

"No," he agrees, and hands me the map. He is almost smiling. I pretend not to see.

Letters to the Enemy General

Enemies to lovers, epistolary · Adult (30-45) · Neutral British · 45 seconds

General Ashcroft,

Your terms are insulting, your handwriting is worse, and your siege engines are parked on my mother's rose garden. I decline to surrender.

I will, however, return your hawk. She arrived with your letter and has since eaten half a chicken and bitten my steward. I assume she takes after you.

You asked, in your postscript, whether the stories about me are true. Some. I did win the fortress at cards. I did not turn a man into a heron. He was like that already.

Write again, if you must. The hawk seems to know the way.

Yours in continued opposition,

Merrin of Hale

P.S. Move the engines two yards left. The white roses were my favourite.

Her Side of the Bargain

Cursed bargain, dual POV · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I sold seven years of my life to the Lord of the Drowned Orchard, and the worst part is that he is polite about it.

He does not gloat. He does not loom. He pulls out my chair at dinner as though I am a guest and not a debt.

"You are scowling at the soup," he says.

"I am scowling at you. The soup is in the way."

"Ah." He passes the bread. "Six years and three hundred days remaining. You may scowl at your leisure."

"You are counting?"

Something moves behind those silver eyes, quick as a fish under ice. "It is my bargain, Odalys. Naturally I am counting."

It is a reasonable answer. It is the answer of a careful creditor.

So I cannot explain why he said it the way a man says the number of days until someone leaves. Or why, for the first time since I crossed his threshold, I forget to be afraid.

His Side of the Bargain

Cursed bargain, dual POV · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I have made nine hundred bargains, and I have never before wished to lose one.

She arrived at my gate in a borrowed coat, offered me seven years for her brother's fever, and did not cry. I have respected that every day since, which is becoming a problem.

"You are scowling at the soup," I say.

"I am scowling at you. The soup is in the way."

I pass her the bread so she will not see my face. "Six years and three hundred days remaining."

"You are counting?"

Of course I am counting. I count the way a drowning man counts breaths. Each morning she is a little less afraid of me, and I cannot decide whether that is mercy or ruin.

"It is my bargain," I tell her. "Naturally."

The law of my kind is simple. I may not release her. I may not ask her to stay. I may only pass the bread, and hope that seven years is long enough for a mortal to choose.

The Bridge at Varn, Her Version

Rival heirs, dual POV · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral British · 1 minute

The treaty said the heirs must meet alone, unarmed, at the middle of the bridge. It did not say I had to be nice about it.

Dacian Vey was already there, leaning on the rail as if he had invented leaning.

"You are late," he said.

"You are early. It makes you look eager."

"I am eager. I have a list of your family's crimes and I only get an hour."

"Start with the cattle. Everyone does."

He laughed. I had planned for arrogance. I had not planned for the heir of House Vey to have a nice laugh, and I resented it enormously.

"Ilsabet," he said, quieter. "Do you want this war?"

Three generations of my family were watching from the eastern bank. I could feel their eyes like a hand on my back.

"No," I said.

It was the first true thing either house had said in sixty years. He let out a breath as if he had been holding it since childhood.

The Bridge at Varn, His Version

Rival heirs, dual POV · Young adult (18–25) · Neutral British · 1 minute

My father's instructions for the bridge were simple. Give her nothing. Smile at nothing. Come back with the river or do not come back.

I arrived an hour early, to practise looking bored.

Then Ilsabet Corrow walked out of the mist with mud on her hem and murder in her eyes, and I forgot every word.

"You are late," I managed.

"You are early. It makes you look eager."

She was meant to be a monster. I had been raised on stories of the Corrows the way other children are raised on wolves. Nobody had mentioned she was funny. Nobody had mentioned that she would look at the water the way I do, as a thing to love and not a thing to own.

So I threw away my father's list and asked the only question I had.

"Do you want this war?"

She took a long time. Behind me, two hundred Vey spears waited for my signal.

"No," she said.

I have been in a great deal of trouble ever since.

The Princess and Her Shadow

Bodyguard and royal, dual POV · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

My bodyguard has been within ten paces of me for four years, and he has never once called me by my name.

"Your Highness should step back from the window."

"Your Highness would like some air."

"Your Highness had three assassins last month."

"Two. The third was a very aggressive tailor."

Edrik does not laugh. Edrik has never laughed. He moves me away from the glass with one hand at my elbow, careful as if I were made of spun sugar, and lets go the instant he is able.

That is the part that undoes me. Not the touch. The letting go.

"Say it," I tell him. "Once. My name. As a royal command."

He goes very still. He is the finest sword in the kingdom. I have seen him face six men without blinking, and he looks at me now as if I am the one holding a blade.

"I cannot," he says quietly.

"Why?"

"Because I would not be able to stop."

The Shadow and His Princess

Bodyguard and royal, dual POV · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

A royal guard takes three vows. To see everything. To want nothing. To stand, always, between the crown and the knife.

I have kept two of them.

"Your Highness should step back from the window," I say, because her hair is catching the light and there is a rooftop across the square I do not like.

"Your Highness would like some air."

She is impossible. She is brave in ways that will get her killed and funny in ways that will get me dismissed. I put my hand on her elbow and move her out of the line of a bolt, and I let go. I always let go.

"Say my name," she says. "As a royal command."

Liora. I say it every night, to the ceiling of the barracks, like a man confessing.

"I cannot."

"Why?"

There are a hundred safe answers. I have used all of them. I am so tired of being safe.

"Because I would not be able to stop."

Two Riders, One Storm: Sorrel

Dragon riders, dual POV · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

There are two rules in the Kestrane flight corps. Never fly into a stormwall, and never climb onto another rider's dragon.

I broke both before lunch.

"Hold on to me," Brannoch shouted over the wind.

"I am holding the saddle!"

"The saddle is not attached to anything! Hold on to me!"

So I did. I wrapped both arms around the most insufferable captain in the corps as his dragon dropped through the cloud, and I thought, this is how I die, clinging to a man who once marked my landing a four out of ten.

"It was a four," he yelled, as if he had heard.

"It was a seven!"

"You clipped the tower!"

"The tower was in the wrong place!"

Under my hands, his heart was going like a drum. It occurred to me that he was not calm at all. That the arguing was for my sake. That he had flown into a storm to come back for me.

A six, then. I would give him a six.

Two Riders, One Storm: Brannoch

Dragon riders, dual POV · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I saw her dragon fall out of formation, and I did not make a decision. A captain weighs the risk. A captain holds the line.

I was already diving.

Sorrel was on a cliff ledge when I found her, soaked, furious, her dragon's torn wing folded behind her like a broken sail.

"Go back," she shouted. "You will lose your command!"

"Get on."

"He cannot fly. I am not leaving him!"

"The ground crew can reach him by dawn. They cannot reach you. Get on."

She got on. She held the saddle instead of me, because she would rather fall than admit she needs anything.

"Hold on to me!"

Her arms came around my ribs. The storm closed over us. And I started an argument about her landing scores, the stupidest thing I could think of, because if she was angry she would not be frightened.

It was a seven. It has always been a seven. I marked it four because I looked too long.

Examination Day, According to Her

Magic academy rivals, dual POV · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Lucan Ferro has beaten me in every examination for three years by exactly one mark, and I am fairly sure he does it on purpose.

Today's test is paired casting, names drawn from a bowl. I watch the slip unfold and feel my whole future sink through the floor.

"Quill," he says, taking the place beside me. "Try to keep up."

"Ferro. Try not to faint when I do."

Threadwork needs two pairs of hands and one shared breath. You cannot lie inside it. The moment our fingers cross in the first knot, the light between us goes gold, a colour I have never once managed alone.

The proctor's pen stops moving.

"Interesting," Lucan says. His voice is not quite even.

"Do not."

"I did not say anything."

"You were about to."

"I was about to say," and he ties the next knot without looking away from me, "that I have been losing sleep over one mark for three years. I thought you should know it was mutual."

Examination Day, According to Him

Magic academy rivals, dual POV · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

For three years I have studied until dawn to stay one mark ahead of Nessa Quill, and she believes it costs me nothing. I have worked very hard to keep it that way.

Then the proctor reads our names together, and I have to cross a silent hall and stand beside her as though my pulse is behaving.

"Quill. Try to keep up."

"Ferro. Try not to faint when I do."

She has ink on her wrist. I have noticed this for three years, the way you notice a splinter.

Threadwork cannot lie. Two casters, one breath, and whatever is true between them shows in the light. I have been dreading this since first year.

Our fingers cross. The thread goes gold.

Not rival red. Not the grey of indifference. Gold, and Nessa is staring at our hands as if they have betrayed her.

"Interesting," I say, because it is that or tell her everything.

Then I think: why not everything?

The Dance He Owed Her

Fae court, slow burn · Adult (25-40) · Neutral British · 1 minute

At the Lantern Court, a dance is a contract. You may not speak falsely while the music plays, and you may not leave the floor before it ends.

Which was why Senna had avoided dancing with Lord Aurelian all season.

"You owe me one," he said, offering his hand. "From the solstice. You fled."

"I had a headache."

"The music has started, my lady. Try again."

She felt the magic close around her tongue like a ribbon. "I fled," she admitted, "because you looked at me."

"I look at everyone."

"Not like that."

He turned her beneath his arm. A hundred lords and ladies watched over the rims of their glasses.

"Ask me, then," he said. "While I cannot lie. Ask me how I looked at you."

Three more bars. She could stay silent for three bars and be safe forever.

"How?"

His hand tightened on hers.

"Like a man," said Aurelian, "who had finally been given a reason to dread the end of a song."

Stitching Up the Commander

Healer and warrior, slow burn · Adult (30–45) · Irish · 1 minute

The commander of the Iron Vanguard is sitting on my kitchen table with a hole in his shoulder, complaining about my bedside manner.

"You could be gentler."

"You could have ducked."

"It was a griffin."

"Griffins are large. They are famously easy to see coming."

He huffs, which pulls the stitches, which serves him right. I have patched Torin Garrick eleven times in two years. I know he goes quiet when it truly hurts and talkative when he is frightened, and tonight he has not stopped talking since he came through my door.

"Hold still."

"I am still."

"Your knee is bouncing."

"Maeve." He catches my wrist. Not hard. His hand is shaking, this man who walks into dragonfire. "It was not after me. It was coming down on the village. Your roof was under it."

The needle stops.

"So you did not duck," I say.

"So I did not duck."

I tie off the thread. I do it slowly, because my hands have forgotten how.

The Witch Who Would Not Be Rescued

Cosy, comedic · Any · Neutral British · 1 minute

Sir Alder had climbed nine hundred steps, fought a hedge, and bribed a gargoyle to reach the witch's tower, so it was disappointing to find the door unlocked.

"I am here to rescue you," he announced.

The witch looked up from a cauldron. She had flour on her nose. "From what?"

"From... the tower."

"I own the tower. I have a mortgage on the tower."

"The king said you were imprisoned by a terrible curse."

"The king owes me for forty love potions and does not want to pay." She tasted the spoon and frowned. "Do you know anything about soup?"

He did, as it happened. His mother had kept an inn. Sir Alder took off his gauntlets, added salt, and said the thing that would alter the entire course of his life.

"It needs thyme."

The witch stared at him. Then, slowly, she smiled, and every candle in the room burned a little taller.

"Well," she said. "You had better stay for dinner, then."

Midwinter at the Borrowed Hearth

Found family, slow burn · Adult (30-45) · Scottish · 1 minute

It was Bram who decided they would keep Midwinter, though none of them could agree on what Midwinter was.

The elf said it was a night of silent fasting. The selkie said it involved a great deal of fish. Corwin, who had been raised by soldiers, was fairly sure there had been a goose once.

"We do all of it," said Bram.

So they fasted in silence for nearly four minutes. They ate fish. They could not find a goose, and made do with a very surprised chicken.

Late, when the others slept, Corwin found Lark on the doorstep watching the snow.

"You are not sleeping," he said.

"I am counting. There are seven of us." She said it carefully, like a spell that might break. "Last winter I counted one."

He did not have the words. He had never had the words. So he put his coat around her shoulders and counted too, all the way to seven.

Then, because it seemed right, he started again.

The Library After Curfew

Magic academy, opposites attract · Young adult (18–25) · Neutral British · 1 minute

You are not supposed to be in the restricted stacks after curfew. I know this because I wrote the rule.

"Prefect," says the girl on the ladder, without turning. "Lovely night."

"Miss Fenn. That is a forbidden book."

"It is a cookery book."

"It is bound in chains."

"It is a very exciting cookery book." Ada tucks it under her arm and climbs down, and the lantern-moths that light the library drift after her as if she is the brightest thing in the room. They are not wrong. "Are you going to report me?"

I should. I have reported my own brother. I once reported myself.

"What is in it?" I hear my voice ask.

Her eyes widen. Then she grins, a real one, crooked, and I understand with total clarity that I am about to break nine rules.

"Hold the lantern," she whispers, "and I will show you."

For the record, it was not a cookery book. For the record, I have never regretted anything less.

What the River Queen Wants

Arranged marriage, older leads · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I have buried one husband, outlived two wars, and ruled the river cities for nineteen years. I did not expect to be nervous about a wedding.

"You are pacing, Majesty," says the man I am to marry in the morning.

"You are in my private garden, my lord."

"Your gate was open. I assumed it was a test." Lord Evander of the Salt Coast is grey at the temples and missing two fingers on his left hand. The treaty described him as agreeable. The treaty lied. "I came to give you a way out."

"I am fifty years old and I snore. You could have a prince." He says it lightly, the way one presses on a bruise. "Say the word and I will fake a fever. Nobody loses face."

It is the kindest thing anyone has offered me in two decades. An exit, held open by a tired man with honest eyes.

"Evander," I say. "Do you play chess?"

"Badly."

"Good. Sit down."

The Night Before the Crossing

Forced proximity, slow burn · Adult (25–40) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

On the last night before the mountain, Kestrel sharpened a knife that was already sharp, and I pretended to sleep.

We had been travelling together for forty-one days. I knew he hummed when he thought I could not hear, always the same four notes, and that he had not once in six weeks turned his back to a door.

"You are a terrible pretender," he said.

"You are a terrible hummer."

"I do not hum."

"Four notes. Like a kettle with a grudge."

The whetstone stopped. In the firelight he looked younger than a hired sword had any right to.

"It is a lullaby," he said at last. "My sister's. I do not remember the rest."

I sat up. In forty-one days he had told me nothing true about himself. Not even his real name.

"Why tell me now?"

"Because tomorrow we cross, and the pass takes one in three." He set the knife down very carefully. "And I find I do not want to go up that mountain as a stranger to you."

Somewhere above us the snow was waiting.

"Then hum it," I said. "I will make up the rest."

"You cannot sing."

"No. It will be awful."

He laughed, a short surprised breath, and then, low and unsteady, he began. I came in on the fifth note, badly. He did not stop. Neither did I.

We were still awake when the sky went grey.

A Mortal's Guide to Surviving the Glass Court

Mortal in a magical court, comedic · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Welcome to the Glass Court. If you are reading this, you are mortal, you are lost, and you have already made at least one mistake. Do not panic. I made eleven on my first day and I am still mostly myself.

First: they cannot lie, so they have become astonishingly good at everything else. If a courtier says, "I would never dream of harming you," ask what he does when he is awake.

Second: do not dance, do not gamble, and do not accept fruit. I cannot stress the fruit enough.

Third, and this is the one I got wrong. Do not make friends with the Queen's Huntsman.

He will seem safe. He will notice that you are cold and leave a cloak on your chair without a word, and you will think, how refreshing, a sensible one.

Then one evening you will say, "Why do you never speak to me?"

And he will say, "Because I cannot lie, and I have nothing safe to say to you."

And you will say, "Try an unsafe thing."

And he will look at you for a long time, and say, "I have asked the Queen for your freedom. She named her price. I paid it this morning."

He will not tell you the price. You will discover that you are no longer lost, and no longer interested in going home.

So. Do not make friends with the Huntsman.

I recommend it highly.

Truce Until Dawn

Enemies to lovers, rival generals · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

The rules of a mourning truce were older than either kingdom. From dusk until dawn, no blade was drawn, and the two commanders kept watch together over the field.

So General Hadrian Voss sat on an upturned crate beside the woman who had beaten him at Mirren Ford, and tried to think of something to say.

"Your left flank was weak," she offered.

"Your cavalry was late."

"My cavalry was exactly on time. You were early."

She had a split lip and a voice like smoke. He kept her intercepted letters in a box beneath his cot, and he had read them more often than strategy required.

"Why do you fight for him?" Hadrian asked. "Your king. He is not worth you."

"No," said Sabine Aldaine, calmly. "He is not. Why do you fight for yours?"

He had no answer. Across the dark field the fires of two armies burned, like one camp seen in a mirror.

"I have a flask," she said. "It is bad."

"I have bread. It is worse."

They shared both. Somewhere past midnight her shoulder came to rest against his, and neither of them moved.

"At dawn," she said, "I will have to try to kill you again."

"I know."

"I want it noted that I will not enjoy it."

Hadrian looked at the grey line growing in the east and, for the first time in his life, wished a night longer.

"Noted," he said.

The Dragon Chose Wrong

Dragon riders, rivals to lovers · Young adult (18-25) · Australian · 90 seconds

Everyone agreed that the dragon had made a mistake. The dragon included, I think, for the first few days.

Her name is Ostra. She is three hundred years old, and had refused every rider for half a century. On Choosing Day she walked past the crown prince himself and put her enormous head down in front of the girl holding the soup ladle.

That was me. I am still holding it, in most of my nightmares.

"Again," says Prince Leander, from the ground.

"I fell off!"

"Yes. I watched. It was very thorough. Again."

He was supposed to be her rider. Instead he has been ordered to teach the kitchen girl not to die, and he does it with a patience so perfect it feels like an insult.

"Why are you helping me?" I ask, climbing back up. "You must hate me."

"I tried." He checks the strap at my knee and does not look up. "For about a week. Then I saw you sneak her an entire ham."

"She likes ham."

"She has never let anyone feed her. Not in fifty years." Now he looks up. His eyes are grey, and tired, and not unkind. "She did not choose wrong, Mara. I have known that longer than you have. Knees in. Eyes on the horizon, not on me."

"I was not looking at you."

"Of course not," says the prince, and steps back, and almost smiles. "Again."

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