

**Hell hath nothing worse
than a Fury scorned...**

As a Fury, Marissa Holloway belongs to an Arcane race that has avenged wrongdoing since time immemorial. As Boston's Chief Magical Investigator for the past five years, she's doing what she was born to: solving supernatural crimes.

It's far from business as usual when the body of one of Riss's sister Furies washes up in Boston harbor. Riss discovers that the corpse's identity has been magically altered, but as soon as she reports her findings, she's immediately—and inexplicably—suspended from her job. Then a human assassin makes an attempt on her life, and Riss starts to realize that someone may be trying to stir up strife between mortals and Arcanes.

When a Fury gets mad, she gets even, and Riss is determined to untangle this case. Without the support of the mortal PD, Riss turns to the one man she can trust to watch her back—shapeshifting Warhound Scott Murphy. But since Scott is also Riss's ex, she'll have to keep a tight leash on more than just the supernatural rage that feeds her power as they try to solve a murder—and stop a war...



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Kasey Mackenzie lives with her husband and son in St. Louis, Missouri; home of the Gateway Arch, the baseball Cardinals, and the world's greatest thin-crust pizza. Kasey was one of those students who always had her nose in a book—so no big surprise when she was voted “Teacher’s Pet” in her high school yearbook. Today, she is a voracious reader of fantasy, romance, suspense, and “soft” science fiction. She adores her German shepherd puppy, two cats, playing softball, and has recently taken up knitting. So far she can cast on, do the knit stitch, and cast off. Hey, it’s a start!

Visit Kasey online!

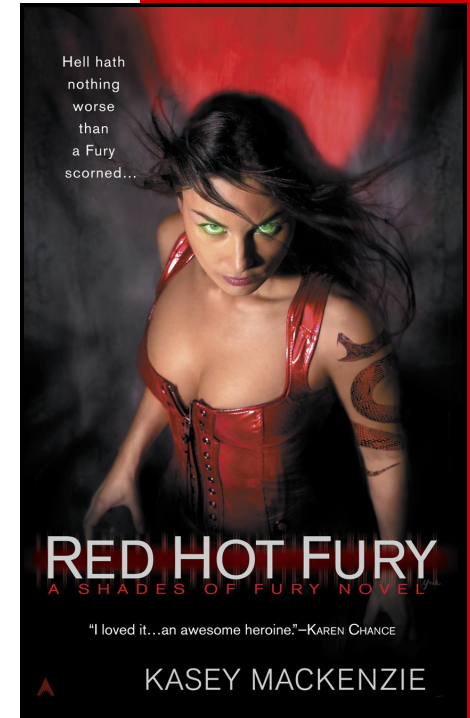
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Book 1 in *Shades of Fury*

*A Thrilling New
Series from
Kasey Mackenzie*

Old Flames Die Hard...

My skin tingled when I crossed the border separating relatively normal Chinatown from the anything-*but*-normal Underbelly. The scents of a dozen different arcane races, all tinged with various flavors of magic, hit my nostrils. A mortal would have compared the smells to mundane spices: the sweetness of cinnamon and sugar warring with the spicy tang of cayenne and cumin. My nose itched with the urge to sneeze, but I fought it back. I reassumed Fury guise, knowing that only one form would gain true respect from *all* members of the Gens Arcana.

There was a very simple reason Furies wore our flashy red uniforms, beyond the fact that the magically treated leather was stain-resistant and provided a rudimentary form of armor. They made us look badass. And when one was responsible for policing a vast array of magical badasses, looking the part was more than half the battle. Plus, let's face it, most Furies have a vain streak wider than the Mississippi. Even if we'd never admit it.

Drab brick buildings of short stature lined the Belly's outskirts, giving way to taller, cleaner-looking glass-and-steel structures the farther I walked. The streets morphed from pockmarked asphalt to unnaturally smooth, magic-worked cobblestones. The illusion of days gone by without their bumpy inconvenience. After a brisk, ten-minute walk, I finally reached my destination.

Neither overly glitzy nor disreputable, Hounds of Anubis took up most of the ground floor of a block-long structure crouched at the intersection of the Belly's two largest thoroughfares. Though the building itself was a sturdy-looking brownstone, the shop's storefront was much more gilt than gold. I stared up at the store's crudely carved insignia, tracing the row of fake gold Egyptian letters surrounding an ugly, dog-headed man wearing an ornate headdress. Anubis, patron god of the Cabal. A pretty badass dude himself, and not someone I wanted to meet again anytime soon.

Nemesis and Nike curved their way from lower arms to upper, radiating calm as well as chastisement. I was stalling. They knew it. I knew it. Hell, the entire surrounding two-block radius no doubt knew it. Scott's and my breakup had been very public, conducted on the steps I now scuffed my boot soles along.

"Shit," I muttered, glaring at the crimson-scaled traitors on my arms. "Yeah, yeah. Let's get this over with."

A pleasant, slightly gravelly voice rang out when I approached the front counter. "Can I help you?" A shaggy-haired brunette turned, then bared razor-sharp canines when she recognized me. "What the hell do *you* want?"

"Down, girl." I made the phrase a carefree drawl, trying to ignore the pain of someone who had once been a friend now treating me like an interloper.

Kiara Murphy, Scott's older and very protective sister, slapped both hands down on the counter, spiky tufts of hair bristling. "You said all that needed to be said when you chased Scott off like he was some no-good mutt. Just like our mother's oh-so-fine family. Now get the hell out."

I crossed arms over chest like I didn't have a care in the world. She'd be over the counter and at my throat if I showed the slightest shred of weakness. "That's not the way it went down, and you know it. Where's Scott?"

"He's nowhere *you* need be—"

"Kiara!" My voice cracked with every ounce of Rage I'd been suppressing for the past hour. "This is Fury business. Don't make me ask again."

She closed her eyes, hands balling into fists at each side as warring instincts boiled inside, the urge to protect her brother battling with the deeply ingrained belief that Furies must be obeyed at all costs. Not every arcane felt that urge as strongly as others, but Warhounds were fiercely honorable as well as deeply loyal.

Amber-yellow eyes opened, and she nodded. "Fine, then. Show yourself to the back room. But mark me well, Marissa. This had better damned well *be* Fury business, or you'll regret lying to me."

I headed for one of several doors in the rear of the room, unable to resist throwing a "Good girl" over my shoulder.

Her low growl had me grinning until I reached the centermost door. My fingers curled around the door-knob, tingling at the buzz of magic. When the security system recognized me as Fury, the tingle faded and the door responded to my touch. I drew in a deep breath, opened the solid length of steel, and stepped into my ex-lover's domain.

Three men and one woman sat around the table, cards in hand and cigars beside them. Scott's well-muscled back caught my attention immediately. Thick red hair flowed just past his shoulders in gentle waves. I widened my eyes. He used to keep his hair buzzed as short as possible, refusing to offer enemies any advantage in a fight. His deeply bronzed skin and hellaciously sexy body remained the same from what I could see. Secretly I'd hoped to see him gain a hundred pounds in my absence, but it looked like I was SOL.

Scott turned to the door, direct as always, and cut to the chase. "Why are you here, Marissa?"

The ice in his voice raised shivers along my spine, though I refused to let anyone else see that. *Marissa*. Once he'd always called me *baby*, or *Riss*.

"I want to hire your services."

His jaw worked with the obvious effort not to curse. Obvious because I'd once known him better than any other man.

His cousin Elliana broke in before he could answer. "The whores work five blocks down, Marissa. Perhaps you can find your little lost friend there."

I was halfway across the room before any of them had time to react. Scott and Sean broke into smooth, well-rehearsed motion just in time, Sean gathering Elliana and herding her back a half-dozen paces while Scott grabbed my arm and jerked me across the room and into the back office. He slammed the door and pushed me against a wall. Hard.

Despite the anger in his eyes and grip, his sheer physical proximity made a shiver of desire run down my spine. "What the hell kind of game are you playing at, Riss?"

"I need help, Scott. You're the only one I can trust."

—To see more sparks fly between Riss and Scott, go to www.redhotfury.com and click on "Sizzling Scenes."

