

Tales of the Otherworld

Kelley Armstrong

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New York Times *bestselling author Kelley Armstrong has bewitched audiences with her Otherworld series of supernatural thrillers. Now, in this new collection of shorter fiction, some of Armstrong's most tantalizing lead characters appear alongside her unforgettable supporting players, who step out of the shadows and into the light.*

Have you ever wondered how lone wolf Clayton Danvers finally got bitten by the last thing he ever expected: love? Or how the hot-blooded bad-girl witch Eve Levine managed to ensnare the cold, ruthless corporate sorcerer Kristof Nast in one of the Otherworld's most unlikely pairings? Would you like to be a fly on the wall at the wedding of Lucas Cortez and Paige Winterbourne as their eminently practical plans are upended by their well-meaning friends? Or tag along with Lucas and Paige as they investigate a gruesome crime that looks to be the work of a rogue vampire?

Now devotees of the Otherworld can share these special moments with some of their favorite characters - as well as discovering deeper insights into the lives of some of the lesser-known players. But even readers new to the Otherworld universe will find much to love in these seven tales of friendship, adventure, and enduring romance. For when the superhuman men and women of the Otherworld set their minds to a task, they do so with fierce passion and an undivided sense of purpose that make them, in the end, very much human.

Contents:

Rebirth

Bewitched

Birthright

Beginnings

Expectations

Ghosts

Wedding Bell Hell

The Case of El Chupacabra

Tales of the Otherworld Details


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From Reader Review Tales of the Otherworld for online ebook

Carol. says

I enjoyed reading the Tales of the Otherworld, but would suspect it is a book largely for fans.

"Rebirth" is a vampire birthing tale, which was moderately interesting. I had forgotten how vampires worked in Armstrong's world. "Bewitched" was one of the better stories, and describes the meeting and sweet romance between Eve Levine and Kristof Nast. I've always had a problem with Eve's character in Armstrong books, because her characterization varies so much depending on which book/story. When she is first introduced (chronologically) we are given to understand she is a witch of the blackest order. I enjoyed this background tale a great deal, but continue to be confused about the extreme dichotomy we see in her character, from sensitive, misunderstood mother to black witch for hire, willing to kill as needed.

"Birthright" is the story of a werewolf coming of age. This one didn't do it for me; I think it wasn't long enough or well enough characterized to care about Logan. The other men in the story are familiar from other books, but I had forgotten who one of them was, and there wasn't really enough background to help me remember. Definitely a fan-only piece.

"Beginnings" is the standout story, an engrossing read and reminding me of Bitten, why I started reading Armstrong in the first place. (Note to self: add Bitten to personal collection). A story of how Elena and Clay met and fell in love, and does well to capture the singlemindedness of the werewolf and the unsureness of Elena's feelings.

"Expectations" is about Eve and Lucas, a number of years after the first story in the collection. Anticlimactic storyline. I tend to dislike Lucas' voice as narrator and think it sounds very stilted. "Ghosts" is definitely a fan piece, and reads like a scene that ought to be from a longer format. It was interesting because I knew the character from the novels, but still didn't feel like fleshed out enough. It's the sort of scene that comes to you in inspiration, but needs to be written and lengthened to come to shareable fruition.

"Wedding Bell Hell" was a humorous pre-wedding tale, including intrusive in-laws-to-be. "The Case of El Chupacabra" wasn't a particularly strong mystery, but had nice moments about Lucas and Page's relationship. Again told in Lucas' voice. Had bonus moments of Cassandra, a vampire at the end of life, who provides moments of levity through her sheer non-interest in most human activities.

Mello ♥ Illium ★Harry★ ?Myrnin? Torin Ichimaru says

This was an awesome collection of short stories. We got some seriously good backstory on these characters. I had not realized just how long it was that Aaron and Cassandra knew each other. I hadn't realized his vampirism was hereditary, either. I liked that story.

Then, we get the story of how Eve met Kristof, loved Kristof and left Kristof. Eve is still one of my favorite characters in this series. She is awesome and Kristof solidified himself as my second favorite hero in this series. I already loved him after reading Eve's book, but this one just made me love him even more. We really got to see just what it was that attracted her to him. He was ruthless, yes, but he taught her a lot and he

was an excellent father. Plus, had he been given a chance, he would have fought for his relationship with Eve. His douchebag Dad never allowed that to happen and Eve left to save him from having to make an impossible choice. That story made me feel pretty sad. I cried a bit.

Later, we get the story of how Elena and Clay met, told from both of their POVs. I loved this. It was a normal love affair save for Clay's wolf nature mucking things up. We see just what freaked him out so much that made him bite Elena, lose her trust and push Jeremy right over the edge. He didn't like what he did, but as we know, things eventually worked out for the two of them. I actually ended up loving Clay a whole lot more from reading this despite how horribly he messed things up. He was so freaked out and torn. I wanted to hug him. Reading this, it makes me feel a little more sympathetic to Elena's behavior in *Bitten*. That book was difficult to get through for me because I couldn't stomach Elena's attitude. It makes more sense to me now.

Loved Jeremy's POV of what he had to deal with during that mutt revolt and the "ghosts" of the past he still saw around the house. The memories of the aftermath of Clay biting Elena were hard. Jeremy lost it. But when you got back to the current situation, he so obviously wanted them both safe and in the Pack together.

The story of Lucas's first encounter with Eve was cute.

I loved the story of Paige and Lucas's wedding! They made Benicio so happy that day.

That El Chupacabra case worked out for Paige and Lucas in the end, too. I'm glad Lucas found a way to put the insecurities about being able to help with supporting his family to rest. I hope Sean Nast gets some much needed happiness as well. I already liked him when he was introduced in *Industrial Magic* and then from Eve's check-in with him in *Haunted*. This story made me hurt for him. I love Sean Nast.

Lisa (Harmonybites) says

I greatly enjoy Armstrong's Otherworld books. I wouldn't recommend starting with this one if you haven't read them--these are a grouping of 8 stories, including one novella, and I think their primary pleasure comes from seeing them fill in the gaps in the histories of some favorite characters. They'd definitely act as spoilers for those early books and without that background some readers might be a bit lost, or at least miss some of their impact without the context. So go read *Bitten* and *Stolen* and *Dime Store Magic* and *Industrial Magic* at least first, then come back and pick up this book. I enjoyed all the stories here, but I think my favorite was the last one, "The Case of El Chupacabra." But then Lucas Cortez and Paige Winterbourne are my favorite Armstrong characters, and I always love it when they show up.

Incidentally--several of the stories originally appeared for free for years on her website--she had written fiction shorts at fans' requests since 2002. Because of that, she said in her introduction, she couldn't justify publishing this short story collection for profit and the proceeds go to *World Literacy of Canada*. But there are also stories here offered for the first time and it's a generous full book length. I can't help but contrast this to LK Hamilton, who offered up a scant (and imo sloppily written) novella in *Flirt* at full book price. And if you go to Armstrong's website, there are more free goodie extras [here](#). This is a woman who obviously respects and loves her fans. Just a tiny part of why it's hard not to love her back.

Cindi says

For those of you who love Kelley Armstrong like I do, I suggest you read this group of shorts/novellas that touch on several series characters and explore the first meeting of Clay and Elena. If you are able, BUY this book (vs. borrow or check it out) because Ms. Armstrong has published Tales ONLY as a charitable endeavor. What a generous lady!

Normally I do not care much for short stories, novellas and anthologies because there is never enough time to bond with the characters. Tales, however, has proved a pleasant exception. As a faithful series reader, I may not have remembered every character but this grouping serves as a reminder while being engaging stories in their own right. By the end I had had my memory tickled and was very satisfied with what I learned about each subject in the book. I will look at Lucas and some of the Cabal guys a little differently now. I have a whole new outlook about Clay and his grumpy personality (except with his adored Elena) and how completely he had to change his life for a mate. I am further impressed by Elena's independent nature, her strength of character and sense of self-preservation as I hear about the first time she told him to take a hike (even while she loved him) when he seemed to exhibit the signs of abusiveness - Clay is so gorgeous and adores her so much that I admit I'd have probably let him slide! Elena doesn't. Yay, Elena!

Jessica ❀ ➡ Silverbow ➡ ❀ Rabid Reads-no-more says

4.5 stars

Rebirth - How Aaron became a vampire and met Cassandra.

Bewitched - This is the story of how Eve and Kristof met and fell in love. And also the specifics concerning why she left him. Fair warning--it's as lovely as it is heartbreaking.

Birthright - Logan POV. How he joined the Pack.

Beginnings - At close to 200 pages this is closer to a short story than a novella (not that I'm complaining). It's included in the Tales of the Otherworld collection, and it is A-M-A-Z-I-N-G.

I'm talking OMGOMG!! amazing.

It's the story of how Clay and Elena met and fell in love right up to where it all went to hell (you can read about the hell part in *Becoming*). It's told, alternating, from both Clay and Elena's POV, so it finally answers the question, "What was his thinking?!" a million times over. Was it a crap thing to do? Yes. Do I love, love, L-O-V-E him anyway? YES.

Expectations - From Lucas's POV, about a run-in he had with Eve in an attempt to steal one of her grimoires.

Ghosts - Jeremy POV from right after he sent Elena and Clay to Toronto in *Bitten*.

Wedding Bell Hell - Countdown to Lucas and Paige's wedding. Meh.

The Case of El Chupacabra - Lucas and Paige short story with a tiny bit of Sean Nast tossed in. About an alleged vampire killing and how Lucas and Paige came into possession of their office space.

Carmel (Rabid Reads) says

Reviewed on Rabid Reads

It's been a few months since I've read a book by Kelly Armstrong but within moments of starting this one I was reminded why she's one of my all-time favorite authors. Her writing skills are top notch and her characters are so real I feel as if they're my friends. Tales of the Otherworld is a real treat for both new and old fans because it offers a peak into this series without commitment but also offers new insights into your favorite characters. There was one particular short story that I was looking forward to in this novel: the tale of how Clay and Elena met. My absolutely, most favorite, beyond the shadow of a doubt, werewolf couple. And rest assured that it did not disappoint! In fact, it was all that I could have ever hoped for and more! I'm getting warm fuzzy feelings all over again just thinking about it!

There are a few short stories in this book that are only a chapter in length. Not much to go on if you're new to this series but for long-time fans they're like the cherry on top of a delicious sunday. Short but oh so sweet! While these stories may leave a newcomer confused, don't worry because others are between 100 & 200 pages in length with ample content that'll convert even the most skeptical reader. One such story is about the beginning of Eve Levine and Kristof Nast's romantic relationship. Both of which are extremely badass and evil in their own right but this tale shows them in an entirely different light. Love doesn't discriminate and even bad guys have a soft side. By the end of this short story I actually liked Eve. I was shocked by the history between these two! A quick side-note, they're Savannah's parents, and because of this my interest in their lives grew two-fold.

The coup de grâce of this anthology for me was Beginnings. I've been dying to know how Clay and Elena's relationship first began. Bits and pieces are mentioned throughout this series but this story really brings it all together. Again, I was surprised by the events in this tale. Modern day Clay is very masculine, which is still true in Beginnings but a whole new side of him is also explored. When he meets Elena he falls head-over-heels and all of his walls turn into goo. I loved seeing this side of him. I already count him among my fictional boyfriends but this story made me pine for him even more! Elena is great too. In the more recent books of the Women of the Otherworld series she's strong, authoritative and the backbone of the pack but she didn't start out that way. In this tale she's vulnerable, insecure and human. I could go on forever on the reasons why I adored Beginnings but I'm afraid to ruin it for those who haven't read it so I'll stop here. But I LOVED this short story. There I go getting emotional again! Will I be re-reading this one? HELL YEAH!

Wedding Bell Hell and The Case of El Chupacabra are also brilliant! Lucas and Paige are front and center in both of these stories. Another one of my favorite fictional couples. The second tale gave me a whole new understanding of Lucas and the motives behind his decisions. What more can I say!? This book is incredible and I was enthralled from page 1. My expectations going into this novel were excessively high, but in true Kelley Armstrong fashion, she surpassed them by leaps and bounds. Read this anthology; in fact, read the whole series! I can't reiterate enough how fabulous all aspects of these books are so you'll just have to read them for yourselves and discover first-hand.

Literary Ames {Against GR Censorship} says

I ordered a signed copy of this book a few days ago with the warning that I wouldn't receive it until May and then to my surprise it came through my letter box this morning!

The Introduction explains that these stories were all previously available online on the author's website except of course the new story, *Bewitched*.

Rebirth - This is Aaron's story (first seen in *Stolen*) of how he became a vampire and how he met Cassandra (also first seen in *Stolen*). I found this story interesting as it explains everything about being a vampire. I really like Cassandra and still hope she gets her own book but I have a feeling she won't get one until she's dying. ★★★★★?

Bewitched - This new story is about Eve (first mentioned in *Stolen* and had her own book, *Haunted*), how she was raised, kicked out of the coven, surviving on her own and meeting Kristof Nast (Savannah's father) and falling in love with him while teaching him witch-magic. I loved this story. You can't help but hate Kristof's father, I'm so glad Eve and Kristof got their happy ending in *Haunted*. ★★★★★

Birthright - Ah, Logan (first seen in *Bitten*). This is about how he came to the pack thinking he was going to meet his father and came face-to-face with Clay instead! A scary prospect. ★★★★★?

Beginnings - The best story that everyone should read if they liked *Bitten*. It tells the story from both Clay and Elena's points of view of how they met and fell in love, then Clay bites Elena and it all falls apart. I loved how Logan's meeting Elena made Clay seem more normal. ★★★★★

Expectations - This one is about Lucas's (first seen in *Dime Store Magic*) scary encounter with Eve set years before *Stolen*. She basically puts the fear of god in him and lets him escape with his life and a broken arm. I'm not really a Lucas fan but I do like Eve. ★★★★★??

Ghosts - This is a quick story from Jeremy's point of view set just after *Bitten*. I was a bit unsure of this one because it's mostly about Jeremy's memories and his need to protect his 'children' (Clay & Elena) and his pack. ★★★★★??

Wedding Bell Hell - This about the countdown to Lucas and Paige's wedding set after *Industrial Magic*, I think. We get to meet his mother, who seems quite reasonable and laid back compared to Benecio - she becomes a restraining influence on him, trying to hold him back from taking control of their son's wedding, which in the end doesn't quite work! ★★★★★?

The Case of El Chupacabra - This is told from both Sean (Kristof's son and Savannah's half brother) and Lucas's perspectives but involves quite a few characters from the series. Although not my favourite story, I did feel for Sean and his situation. It seems like all the Cabal heirs aren't allowed to be happy. ★★★★★??

Although I read most of these stories when they were online, I've really enjoyed re-reading them, especially *Beginnings*, and *Bewitched* was a brilliant new story to add to the background of the Women of the Otherworld series.

Kathy says

what an idea... a collection of stories (like the 'Men of the Otherworld') that take snippets from her otherworld novels, and fills in what happened. What a concept...

This one introduces Aaron's heredity discovery of being a vampire... and Cassandra helping him..

Eve & Kristof's romance (ahhhh), that ended with her pregnancy & his father's interference...

Logan, a hereditary werewolf of unknown parentage, sent to Jeremy Danvers just before his Change at 18 years old - I don't remember him in the story - but I think Elena or Clay accidentally kill him when she is 1st changed and adjustments are difficult...

and a lot about Elena & Clay - how Clay's wolf recognized her as his mate... and how he goes about courting her... and ultimately biting her when he cannot reconcile losing her or losing the pack...

and Lucas & Paige's wedding...

and then Lucas & Paige & Savannah working together to solve a mystery in which a vampire is indicted incorrectly, and ending with Bencio finally finding a gift (office building) Lucas & Paige will accept.

Melissa says

I finished Bitten and realized there were a bunch of prequel short stories to that book, so going by the author's website (I think that's where I got my chronological list of stories) I started with the first.

Rebirth: It's not really related to the characters in Bitten, but it was a good quick read and I'll look forward to see more of those characters somewhere else in the series. Perhaps I'll go check out the publication dates before I go to the next. Either way though I enjoyed Aaron and Cassandra's story and look forward to learning more about them further in the series.

Bewitched: I loved this story! I can't wait to read more about these characters later in the main series, hopefully there will be some resolution later in the series to this story that left me hanging a bit and holding out hope for Eve and Kris!

Honestly I fell in love with these two characters and based on this story theirs will be so heartbreaking, but I can't wait to read it!

Birthright: Very short story about how Logan learned about his birthright. This one could have been even longer for me.

Beginnings: Another excellent backstory this one of Clay and Elena's history before Bitten. How they met and the circumstances of their courtship and relationship before the events in Bitten. A really great insight into their early relationship and what brought them together and to Stonehaven.

Expectations: A backstory for Lucas (a new character for me), a brief appearance by Eve (who I've met earlier in these prequel short stories), and a glimpse of her daughter, and the machinations of a rival Cabal I've seen mentioned before too. Lots of tiny pieces that I can't wait to see how they all fit together.

Ghosts: Great story from Jeremy's POV, takes place during the events in Bitten, and basically is him thinking back on Clay and Elena's relationship, the part he played in her transformation, and the situation they find themselves in now. I really enjoy Jeremy's take on some of the other characters.

Wedding Bell Hell: LOL! A wonderful wedding story filled with all the little things family does that complicates and makes things so utterly memorable.

The Case of El Chupacabra: To read

Katie says

There's one thing I HATE about Kelley Armstrong's books (yes, all of them) - they end. Love her writing, wish there were more.

I try to read slow, but her stories suck me in and they play out like the best movies ever made and next thing I know THE END - you can't "read her words" you simply see her stories.

Chris says

The stories in this collection are mostly okay. There are two and half stand-outs, but the rest of the stories aren't bad, but just okay. However, one cannot but be joyful at the reason for this book's publication and its use in raising money.

The two stand out stories are the story of Eve and Kristof's relationship and the story of Elena and Clay up until the bit that forms the basis for the interaction in the first novel of the Otherworld series.

In many ways, Eve's story is better, the characters are old, more mature. Then is something spooky about the Clay/Elena relationship, in part because of Clay's werewolf nature (and his position as teacher). It raises some interesting questions, but also gives greater strength to the issues of trust raised in Bitten. The story is also further fleshed out by a later short story, told from Jeremy's point of view, that deals with Elena after the bite (it is one story removed from the Clay/Elena) story.

So, worth reading simply for the two stories as well as the cause the book supports.

Luke says

Rebirth

★★★★??

Basically, it follows Aaron as he becomes a vampire. It was enjoyable. There was a paragraph that amused me: the one where the word "sh*t" is thrown around—a *lot*. My only issue is that it was short, that not too much happened—apart from the "rebirth" of Aaron, that is—and I wish there was more to it. That aside, it was still a good read.

Bewitched

★★★★?

When Eve and Kristof met . . . I'm totally on board. Eve always surprises me—I accepted that fact when I read *Haunted*. And Kristof surprised me as much as Eve did. I loved them so much together, and the ending, even though I knew it was coming, broke my heart.

Birthright

★★★??

A little snippet into Logan's history—when he learned what he was. It was short, and I wouldn't have minded to read more about Logan since his character isn't that prominent in the main series due to circumstances that you would know if you read *Bitten*.

Beginnings

★★★★?

A prelude to *Bitten*, *Beginnings* told the story of how Elena and Clay met. It was an interesting read. I enjoyed seeing Elena before she became a werewolf; it detailed more on her past. Overall, I enjoyed it a lot!

Expectations

★★★★?

I love Lucas. I don't know why, but I do. Okay, actually I do—he is so *dang* cute. I liked this glimpse into his past. My expectations were definitely met. And I can't wait to read more of stories with him.

Ghosts

★★★??

Set around the events in *Bitten*, we follow Jeremy Danvers. Basically, flashbacks haunt him like ghosts. Or at least that is how I am putting it since it allows me to be all punny. It was short. And I mean, so short. Overall, I enjoyed it, though.

Wedding Bell Hell

★★★??

Paige and Lucas' wedding—how exciting is that? I can say that, yes, it is. But I would've enjoyed it better if there had been more going on. Not to imply that I didn't enjoy it, because I did, but if there had been something like a threat, or something like a mystery, involved, perhaps it would've worked better for me. Overall, though, it was still enjoyable.

The Case of El Chupacabra

★★★★?

I really enjoyed *The Case of El Chupacabra*. I especially enjoyed the look into the character of Sean, who, in the main series, doesn't really get to shine as much as he does in this story; I hope, when I reached Savannah's books, he is more prominent. And of course, there was Lucas—I love him. The plot was intriguing, and I didn't want to miss a thing, so there was no skimming whatsoever. When I reached the end, though, I wanted more, which . . . well, isn't unusual.

AH says

As I was reading this book, I felt like I was back with some old friends. Two summers ago, I tore through Kelley Armstrong's Women of the Otherworld series. I love the books. I can't get enough of my favourite characters. I want more!

I did get more. I got more Clay and Elena, more Paige and Lucas, and more of the rest of the great cast of characters that inhabit this world. This is a collection of 8 stories featuring these characters. My one and only criticism is that a few of the shorter stories ended a little abruptly. Aside from that, I was in Otherworld heaven.

I have two favourite stories: **Beginnings** and **The Case of El Chupacabra**. For Elena and Clay fans, **Beginnings** is the story of how Clay and Elena met. It is actually quite a beautiful love story when you overlook Clay's stalker tendencies. Clay was completely smitten by Elena and his protective side really comes out. I liked how you really get an insight as to Clay's thought processes. This is also a glimpse of a younger Elena, pre-werewolf. Some of Elena's background is revealed as well.

The Case of El Chupacabra involves a whole cast of characters. Paige and Lucas are hired by Sean to solve a murder at a gay bar. I liked a lot of things about this story, notably the Cabal politics and the inclusion of Benicio Cortez. I would love to see more Benicio stories in the future. Cassandra and Aaron are also in this story to give us a vampire perspective. I enjoyed the portrayal of Savannah in this story – she's growing up and becoming a very intelligent and beautiful young woman.

What I love about Kelley Armstrong's world is the diversity of characters. They are vampires, werewolves, witches, sorcerers, demons. They come from all walks of life and all colors and backgrounds. I can't wait to read more books in this series.

Siobhan says

I'm a big fan of Kelley Armstrong's Women of the Otherworld series (Kelley Armstrong in general, if we're being completely honest), meaning I was more than happy to dive into the Otherworld short stories despite the fact I'm not that big a fan of short stories. With my love of the world and the characters, though, I was more than willing to believe Kelley Armstrong would be offering some great stories in the collections offered.

Although I have given Tales of the Otherworld a three-star rating, know the book is made up of three-star reads and four-star reads. The reason I gave an overall three-star rating is that I rounded down my rating, as there were more three-star ratings than four-star ratings.

Despite the three-star rating, I did have a lot of fun with this one. There was so much enjoyment to be had throughout, with plenty of stories being offered, guaranteeing something for fans of each of the characters. More than worth the read if you're a fan of the Women of the Otherworld series.

Individual ratings:

Rebirth: Three stars.
Bewitched: Four stars.
Birthright: Three stars.
Beginnings : Four stars.
Expectations: Three stars.
Ghosts: Three stars.
Wedding Bell Hell: Three stars.
The Case of El Chupacabra: Four stars.

Jodi says

It's hard not to enjoy a book that has a novella with Clay and Elena. These are short stories set within the Otherworld that Armstrong wrote for her website based on fan request. The Eve/Kristof story, narrated by Eve, is the story of her involvement with him and why she left. In fact, most of these stories are backstories. As such, they lack the immediacy of the books. But learning how Aaron became a vampire and chose to live or setting the stage for Lucas and Paige to run a Cortez office in Portland or even watching how Clay fell in love with Elena, make for worthwhile reading, or listening in my case.

Kathy Davie says

A couple of the tales are somewhat independent; the rest fill in background on the principal characters in Armstrong's Women of the Otherworld series.

Rebirth tells of Aaron's introduction to the undead life; Aaron, today, is a co-delegate on the Council with Cassandra.

Bewitched is the story of how Kristof and Eve met, their singular courtship, and why Eve left.

Birthright chronicles Logan's introduction to the Danvers Pack.

Beginnings finally gives us the background on Clay and Elena's courtship ending with his biting her.

Expectations occurs before Lucas meets Paige and after Eve has left Kristof. Lucas has been told of a grimoire held by Eve Levine and he finally decides that he will have to steal it from her if only to keep the Cabals from going after Eve. (Savannah is old enough to be going to school.)

Ghosts is Jeremy's remembrances of the aftermath of Clay biting Elena. It takes place during *Bitten* after Clay has gone up to Toronto to protect Elena who is living with Philip because Daniel and his gang has attacked the Pack.

Wedding Bell Hell is the funniest story in this collection. It's the weeks before Lucas and Paige's wedding and Benicio is determined to "help" somehow, anyhow...

Case of El Chupacabra fills in the blanks of how Lucas and Paige got their hands on their new Portland offices. It also signals the start of Sean's comeout.

Francesca the Fierce (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

I enjoyed reading these stories, it all helps build a better picture of the Otherworld. Here's a small review of each story in no particular order.

The Case of El Chupacabra. Forgive me if this was explained in other books, I might've overlooked it, but I didn't know that Sean Nast was gay. That is actually pretty cool, I'm ok with that and want to see where this will go. I liked seeing Lucas and Paige in a more day to day operation investigating this case, and we also have a guest appearance by Cassandra. It just could've been shorter in my opinion.

Birthright. This is the story of how Logan came to be a part of the pack. It is kinda sad to read more about him, being that we don't get to know him in the series.

Escape. This takes place before book 2, Eve and Savannah get captured, and she will do whatever is necessary to get her daughter out of danger. Except she doesn't quite make it.

Ghosts. These are more of Jeremy's ghosts during Bitten. It felt like a deleted scene from a movie, and it was a nice backstory to his character.

Expectations. Who knew Lucas had gone after Eve!! I think throughout this whole book, not just this story, I've learned to like Lucas Cortez a lot more. And in this story, he actually fights Eve, gets away, and steals something from her.

OK, so maybe I lied, I left my two favorite stories for last.

Wedding Bell Hell. This is the preparations for Lucas and Paige's wedding. I never knew he was a bit, somewhat jealous of Adam. The wedding planning was a disaster, Lucas's father was, as always a pain to deal with, but kinda cute. And Savannah was adorable and funny.

Beginnings. If you get this book for this story only, you'll get your money's worth. I LOVED THIS STORY! This is how Clay and Elena first met, first started going out, and became a couple, up until the moment where Clay turns her. So this is obviously before Bitten. I almost would recommend reading this story before you read Bitten. It just made me fall in love with them all over again.

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

I'm completely gaga over The Women of the Otherworld series. It's hard to put these down - not only am I going through the novels in order (thirteen full length), but also the several novellas and anthology collections. This is the first anthology I've taken on for the series, and if they continue to be as good as this one, I'll end up enjoying these almost as much as the full-length novels. This is one of the highest recommended because it has Elena and Clay's novella where they first meet and bond.

The anthology opens mediocre before blooming into greatness. Rebirth is Aaron's short story - how he died, how he rose, how he meets Cassandra. It was just okay. I never cared about either character in the series

either really. Short and to the point.

Bewitched is telling the backstory of how Eve met Kristof and how they ended up working together and eventually falling for each other. It was okay, but since I'm not attached to either of the characters just yet, I wasn't as glued into the story. The ending felt slightly abrupt. I'm curious how he found out about the pregnancy and did she go into hiding? Only more reading will tell. It would work out reading this one before or after Eve's full length novel, Haunted.

Birthright is a short stint showing Logan coming to Stonehaven. While I usually love Clay, he was a little too trigger happy for my tastes in this one. It's brief and shows a quick intro to the character and how he came there.

Beginnings is the heart of this anthology. Pretty much any fan of the series will want to see Clay and Elena meeting and falling for each other. The novella takes up most of the book at over 100 pages. It's told through alternating POVs for Elena and Clay. Shows his offstandish personality with people which comes across adorable. His intensity in the relationship with Elena = heart-putter. I love the slow and realistic way their bond develops. It's not instant lightning strike but it's awesome. The scene with Jeremy explains much more than I understood before on the reasoning. Excellent novella fans should hunt down.

Expectations is a brief journey of Lucas stealing a grimoire. It doesn't add anything to the canons of the story, like Logan's short, but it's worth reading.

Ghosts is beautifully strong. Told through Jeremy's POV with flashbacks to Elena changed and begging to break from the cage, to Clay's weakness and also begging from the cage. It shows how lonely Jeremy is without him and how he fears the emptiness of the house. Haunting in theme and gorgeous writing, one of the best of the anthology.

Wedding Bell Hell is the top one outside Elena and Clay's meet that I wanted to read. It was funny as anticipated but I wish it were longer and could go into a bit more detail. Love that couple and the father's meddling. Recommended.

The Case of El Chupacabra was lengthy and enjoyable. We get into Paige and Luca's life while they explore and solve, but also other characters like Sean and a personal dilemma, Savannah showing off to her two grandfathers, Benecio's scheming, and a life changer for Lucas.

Tales of the Otherworld carries stories central to the characters: Elena and Clay meeting, Paige and Lucas tying the knot, Kris and Eve first falling for each other. It tells the backstory for a few minor characters like Aaron and Logan. Finally, it throws in some behind the scenes stuff that fleshes out some regulars like Jeremy. Highly recommended for fans of the series.

Kat Kennedy says

This is only a review for Elena and Clay's portion of Tales of the Otherworld as I never read the series past Stolen and they were the only couple I was interested in.

In some ways, I was really glad I'd read it and in others I somewhat despaired. Beginnings is the story of how Clay and Elena met and fell in love, roughly set ten years before Bitten where they finally resolve their issues and relationship.

And that's the big problem for me. I'd always imagined, while reading Bitten, that they had this wonderful, deep relationship that had been destroyed by one act of betrayal and thus took ten years to get on track. However, Beginnings shows that, really, Clay and Elena had a very shallow relationship that was really only the relational equivalent of an infant. It was hard to get to the end of their story and realize it would be ten years before they would both develop the skills and relationship that could be sustainable and healthy. However, I applaud Armstrong's impressive story-telling technique and abilities. The text is most definitely well written with compelling characters and situations.

So whilst in some respects, it didn't live up to what I'd imagined, it was still a great read and I'm still glad I had the opportunity for further insight into their relationship. Was it as great as Bitten? No, but honestly, how could an emerging tale of two flawed protagonists reaching an ultimately unsatisfying ending possibly compare to the latter story of two seasoned and flawed protagonists finally coming together?

Onto a more important topic: I think Armstrong is the only author so far to reasonably pull off a stalking, obsessive paranormal male as romantic, in my opinion. Clay is socially disfunctional and nearly more wolf than man. It's understandable.

Edward has no excuse. None.

Vera says

My rating is for the short story 'Beginnings' alone.

For ages, I felt the desire to read how Clayton and Elena began. Although the backstory is hinted at in 'Bitten' - to read it in full was marvellous. It felt so strange reading the early dynamics in Elena and Clayton's relationship. She really allowed herself to open up to him - but he broke her trust in a serious way. Although Elena is more bitter, and 'hardened' in the later books, I appreciated seeing this more altruistic side to her. She was quite sweet before Clay got his hands on her *wolfish grin*

Also it was great to see a human-hating werewolf become besotted with a human. Now I feel tempted to reread Bitten.
