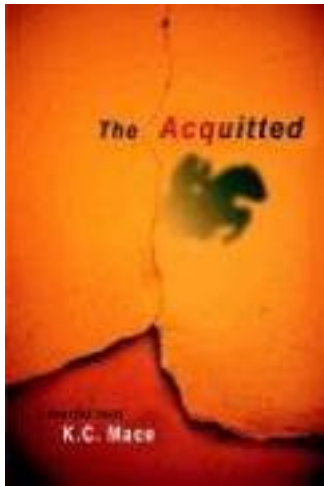


The Acquitted



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The Civil War was a time of brutal conflict in Missouri, leaving deep scars that festered for years afterwards. Some killed for revenge and survival in battle, others out of malevolence. This is a story about redemption for some and continuation for others. William Quantrill's lieutenant, Jonathan, a venerated combatant, becomes an assassin in St. Louis after the Civil War. After agreeing to kill a powerful politician, he knows that he must disappear, fearing that those who hired him will not want to leave any loose ends. Ten years later, Will and Betsy McGee, a young couple who have recently inherited a small ranch in southwestern Missouri, come into Cassville for supplies. There they encounter Chunk and Virgil Jennings, both local ruffians. Chunk, the town bully, is embarrassed when he picks a street fight with Will. The Jennings retaliate in the most nefarious manner. Will is left to die and is rescued by John Turner, the wealthiest rancher in the territory. In the Box-T bunkhouse, his body recuperates, but not his mind. The story evolves to an eventual confrontation between decency and depravity, pulling Jonathan out of the shadows.

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