



KISS THE VILLAIN

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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To the ones who would kiss the villain... but only in fiction

AUTHOR NOTE

Hello reader friend,

If you're new to my books, you might not know that I write darker stories that can be intense, unsettling, and even disturbing. My characters and their journeys defy societal norms and aren't meant for everyone.

The following paragraph contains content warnings and specific kinks that may spoil plot details. If you have no triggers, feel free to skip it.

Kiss the Villain includes themes of consensual non-con, dub-con, self-harm, violence, and mild homophobia. It also contains non on-page mentions of suicide, rape, child sexual assault, and domestic abuse. Specific kinks featured in this book include degradation, mild consensual feminization, mild BDSM, and praise. Please be mindful of your triggers before diving in.

For more things Rina Kent, visit www.rinakent.com

BLURB

My darkness meets a darker soul.

I'm a golden boy.

A genius law student, the heir to the Carson empire, and the dutiful son.

Or, at least, that's what it looks like from the outside.

Deep inside, I have the urge to set the world on fire.

I keep these impulses in check, rarely indulging in mayhem.

Until one night of debauchery backfires, and I'm caught by a villain.

I bury the entire ordeal with the rest of my skeletons.

That is, until that night walks into my classroom in the form of my new professor.

Kayden Lockwood.

A criminal who's teaching criminal law.

I can't expose what he's done without unmasking my secret life.

What I can do, however, is force him to taste the poison he gave me.

In the clash of titans, Kayden and I break and crumble.

And I'm starting to realize this dangerous game may have no winners.

PLAYLIST

Power – Isak Danielson

He's My Man – Luvcat

Daddy Issues – The Neighborhood

Strangers – Ethel Cain

Apocalypse – Cigarettes After Sex

Addicted to the Wicked and Twisted – Palaye Royale

The Summoning – Sleep Token

Teacher's Pet – Melanie Martinez

Swim – Chase Atlantic

Want Me – Stephen Dawes

Bad Omens – 5 Seconds of Summer

Pain Killer – Grabbitz

Sail – AWOLNATION

nameless – Stevie Howie

Green Eyes - Coldplay

Into The Fire Acoustic – Asking Alexandria

Something Blue – VOILA

Birds of a Feather – Billie Eilish

Livin' in a World Without You – The Rasmus

You can find the complete playlist on [Spotify](#).

GARETH

Tonight, I'm going to hurt someone.

I don't care who as long as they wiggle and writhe like worms beneath my shoes.

Or more accurately, a snake.

Just kidding. I do care who.

It can't be just *anyone*. The target of my night of mayhem needs to be a miscreant who's as bad as me.

Or worse.

On paper, *everyone* is worse than me, though, so there's that, I guess.

No one would expect The King's U—or TKU—college's resident genius law student to infiltrate the Serpents' mansion during one of their grand parties.

Or to target none other than the head of the Serpents, Yulian Dimitriev.

The son of the leader of the Chicago Bratva.

But I've always been up for a little challenge.

So here I am, walking amid the overflowing extravagance of their lively mansion, sliding between hot, drugged, and drunk bodies. Despite being a Heathen—the other secret club on King's U's grounds and the Serpents' deadly rival.

We've been at each other's throats since the start of school on this godforsaken island on the coast of the dreary, dark, and depressing United Kingdom.

And while we love causing trouble, the one who actually started the war was Yulian, who was just itching to have his head bashed in and splintered to pieces.

Obviously, we returned the initial blow, and ever since then, it's been a struggle to determine who holds more power.

Just kidding again. We're unrivaled.

However, the Serpents are up there as well. Especially Yulian.

Our fights are always the talk of the campus, and the underground fights draw more crowds than intended.

Truth is, everyone loves a bit of anarchy.

A touch of chaos and violence.

A drip of blood here. A crack of bones there.

The crazier the better. The more unhinged the scene, the more entertaining it is to the audience.

But that audience is appalled about the idea of getting close, throwing a punch, tasting that blood, or touching that broken bone.

It's shockingly disgusting.

Severely deviant.

Outrageously inhumane.

Vile.

Atrocious.

Horrifying.

I chant the same mantra in public—even amongst my friends. They know me as Gareth 'The Fixer.' Gareth, who makes sure no one gets killed and that the police are taken care of.

Golden boy Gareth with the highest GPA, who had Ivy League colleges foaming at the mouth to have him join their ranks.

Gareth, who possesses the cleanest reputation and a future lined with open doors.

No one suspects that when they think I'm closed off in my room studying, I'm actually here, roaming behind enemy lines with the Serpents.

Doing what none of them, not even my brother, Killian, would ever do.

And I've been so meticulous about it, too. First, I needed to receive an invitation, and those are only issued by the upper echelon, i.e., Yulian and his gang of useless followers. But they also allow their invitees to bring plus-ones.

So I seduced one of the girls Yulian's been flirting with, pretending the book she was reading was interesting—it wasn't, just another piece of mind-numbing analytical bullshit written by a self-righteous idiot—and it got the convo going.

I was pretty sure she was Yulian's girlfriend since she was always hanging onto his arm and deep-throating him with her tongue around campus, but she sure didn't look like it when she had her foot on my crotch under the table in the library—disgusting, by the way, don't ever put your dirty shoes anywhere near me.

One incinerated pair of jeans later, I had the invitation I'd endured the urge to slit her throat for.

I've totally ignored her since I got here, though. The mask helps in keeping my preferred identity tucked away.

Invisible.

I adjust my white skeleton mask that has two large, black-painted holes where my eyes are—the Serpents' version of our neon stitch masks. While ours are differentiated by color, theirs can be distinguished by the symbols engraved on them.

Normal members, like who I'm pretending to be, wear a simple white skeleton mask.

The leaders wear black skeleton masks.

Yulian, whose movements I've been following from across the room, is also wearing a black skeleton mask, but his has engraved golden serpents shooting out from where his eyes are.

No surprise there as he always loves standing out. The freakier the better.

His mansion is everything one would expect, though. An overwhelming display of power, wealth, and control. The grand hall stretches out before me in cold, decadent shades of ivory.

The chandeliers hang from the ceiling, dripping with crystals, emitting a dim, ethereal glow over the marble floors that shine like glass. Velvet drapes line the walls, their deep-red swaths casting a crimson hue on TKU's students.

Noisy chatter and loud music fill the air, but it all feels distant, muffled, because I'm standing on the outside of something I don't care to be part of.

I move through the crowd with ease, a faceless figure among the Serpents, blending in with the rest of them. My posture straight and movements confident, I slip further between them, unnoticed.

That's what I've always been.

Invisible.

Unremarkable.

Since I grew up in the overpowering shadow of my younger brother, I automatically became smaller.

Barely discernable next to him.

Completely overshadowed by his attention-seeking habits.

You're such a good boy, Gaz.

I never have to worry about you.

I'm so glad you're this dependable, son.

Responsible.

Reliable.

Perfect.

Perfect.

P. E. R. F. E. C. T.

Those are the words I grew up hearing from my parents, my grandpa, my teachers, and my entire entourage, really.

And I *love* it.

I like that none of them caught a whiff of this side of me.

The side riddled with urges and voids, and a thirst so deep, Kill would look like a saint if they realized.

Except for Grandpa.

Grandpa is different.

So back to those urges—the reason I'm wasting my time with these people. The air is thick with perfume, alcohol, and something else, something darker, like desperation and pain. It wraps around my throat like a noose, and I suck it deep into my lungs.

Like a hit of the strongest shit on the market.

Shit I slipped into Yulian's drink earlier when I casually passed by him while he was talking to one of his goons.

I made sure to be facing away from the camera so that if they checked the security footage later, they wouldn't find anything. Sure, they could track my movements throughout the evening, but I'm a step ahead on that front as well.

Not only did I make sure to avoid all cameras, but I also wore brown contacts, so even if they managed to get a picture of my eyes, it'd be misleading.

Yulian stumbles and grabs onto the staircase for balance. None of the other drunk fools pay him any attention.

My lips pull in a smirk behind the mask.

The drug is kicking in.

Soon, he'll be losing all his strength.

Don't misunderstand. I might want to ruin the Serpents' leader, but I'm not foolish enough to think I can handle him.

Not only is he big—almost as large and tall as my cousin Nikolai—but he's also cunning and surrounded by his people and guards who'll maim me on the spot.

I had to be smart about this.

I was never that good with my fists, which is why I learned archery and use arrows to shoot people at our initiations.

Pity I couldn't slip my bow in here.

He'd look cute with an arrow between his eyes and blood dripping down his face.

What a missed opportunity.

But my plans are more wicked. I'll humiliate him in a way that will get him blacklisted, not only on the island, but even back home.

His dad might put a bullet in his head. That would be fun.

My smile widens at the thought.

With Yulian gone, the Serpents will be over. Unlike us, who have a more balanced power structure, Yulian has been carrying this entire clusterfuck on his back this whole time.

Sure enough, Yulian trudges up the stairs slowly, holding on to the railing.

I wish I had a camera to record this scene.

The guys' minds would be blown if they knew what I've done and what I'll be doing.

But then again, they won't.

No one will.

Unlike my brother, I don't like showing off my masterpieces.

I blend in with a group that's heading upstairs and then break away and slide through other partygoers who are searching for a room where they can fuck the horniness out of each other.

It's beyond me how people can be such...animals. Letting their urges get the better of them, succumbing to dumb decisions and lackluster fucks they'll definitely regret come morning.

Don't get me wrong. Fucking is good, but only when I decide it's time to. I only get in the mood when I make the conscious decision to fuck, and never due to external stimuli.

Mostly, I love the power, the choking, seeing them writhe beneath me. I love it more when they have this little pained look in their eyes when it gets to be too much, and I wish I could keep hurting them. Turn their skin red. See their fucking tears. Blood. Their goddamn insides.

But alas, I can't have rumors that I'm a sadist going around. I'm known to be a good fuck with a huge dick who eats girls out until they come. I make sure they always come first, too. I also set the mood and ensure they stay hydrated and sleep well.

I'm the best fuck any girl can have and I come with a ten out of ten recommendation rate.

So to keep that image, I can't exactly act on instinct.

Doesn't bother me, though. I've mastered the act of wearing a mask at all times—sex included.

Even with the people closest to me.

There's an external persona and an internal one.

The main version is the genius, well-mannered Gareth who's loved by everyone and would make a perfect politician.

The secondary version, coincidentally my true self, is Gareth, who I only let loose when the void gets too wide and I need to purge some dark energy.

Yulian happens to be the fortunate scapegoat.

Or unfortunate, depending on how you look at it.

I follow from afar and watch as he stumbles into a room, whether or not it's his, I don't know.

Doesn't matter either.

I remain still near the corner for a few minutes.

Invisible.

It's a superpower I lost over the years as I grew up and became noticeable, mostly due to my looks. An accidental thing that happened because two good-looking people fell into something called love and decided to spawn some clones.

The clones were me and my brother—definitely not what my parents wanted.

They think Killian is the only anomaly with the Carson name, but that's only because they never *met* me.

Not really.

When I saw how they both freaked out about Kill's stupid harmless fun with killing mice, I stood around the corner and listened.

I listened to Dad blame himself, his genes, and that person who should not be named. I heard Mom cry and beg him to stop.

I heard the mess.

The desperation.

The impression that their perfect little family was shattered.

And I decided I wouldn't be like Kill.

I wouldn't flaunt my demons or publicize my emptiness. I wouldn't even let them figure out something is wrong or, worse, get so concerned that they take me to a doctor and have me diagnosed like they did with that idiot brother of mine.

I decided to be their unblemished boy. The picture-perfect son they actually never had and never will.

A spotless, unparalleled emulation of what I imagine a younger version of my dad would've been like.

Because that's who I would've turned out like if I hadn't been born me.

After a quick glance at my surroundings and making sure no one is paying attention, I walk to the room Yulian went into. My fingers are steady as I turn the doorknob, do a quick once-over to make sure no one is around, and then go inside. With a small smile, I flatten my back against the door and lock it.

That was so easy, I'm slightly offended, but that doesn't stop my blood from roaring in my veins, a thunderous surge that resurrects me.

I've always loved the hunt, the way the creatures scurry in the shadows, the thrill of the unknown creeping in with every breath.

My heart booms and my demons claw at their chains, their rage spilling from the depths of the void, their bloodlust painting the room in my mind red.

My favorite color.

Yulian's room of choice is dim, the air thick with a stale, artificial chill. The walls are lined with dark wood paneling, casting shadows that stretch into the corners, making the space feel smaller than it is.

As I move closer, I catch a glimpse of a desk and shelves filled with books and knickknacks. But the only real thing that stands out is the black leather sofa in the center of the room, on top of which Yulian is sprawled. The sorry fuck probably couldn't make it to a room with a bed, too drugged out of his goddamn mind.

A mask still covering his face, he's dressed in black slacks and a long-sleeved shirt. My eyes flit to his pulse point—the first thing I notice about

people.

It's beating steadily, the point throbbing against the skin in a hypnotizing view. It's silent, but I can hear the deep, rhythmic pulsating.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

And I want to cut it off.

To slice my knife through it and watch as it grows quiet.

Motionless.

Nonexistent.

I flick my thumb at the edge of my upper lip but quickly drop my hand before I can bite the skin and draw my own blood.

It's been a while since I got rid of that habit and I certainly won't let it rush back in now that I'm in full control of my being.

As much as I want to kill Yulian, I won't.

The one rule I have for myself is no killing.

It's not out of any moral code I mentally don't possess. In fact, I believe it'd do the human race good to get rid of the stupid wastes of space that keep diluting the average IQ.

It's the knowledge that I won't be able to stop and will eventually get caught.

Yes, I can avoid prison for a while. Not only am I a first-year law student who's studying law to manipulate it, but also, my dad's side of the family owns one of the largest and most successful law firms in the States, Carson & Carson.

My grandfather loves me more than his own son and would get me the 'not guilty' verdict no matter how many shady methods he has to use.

But how long would that last?

I'd still kill.

It would be impossible not to.

Especially after...*him*.