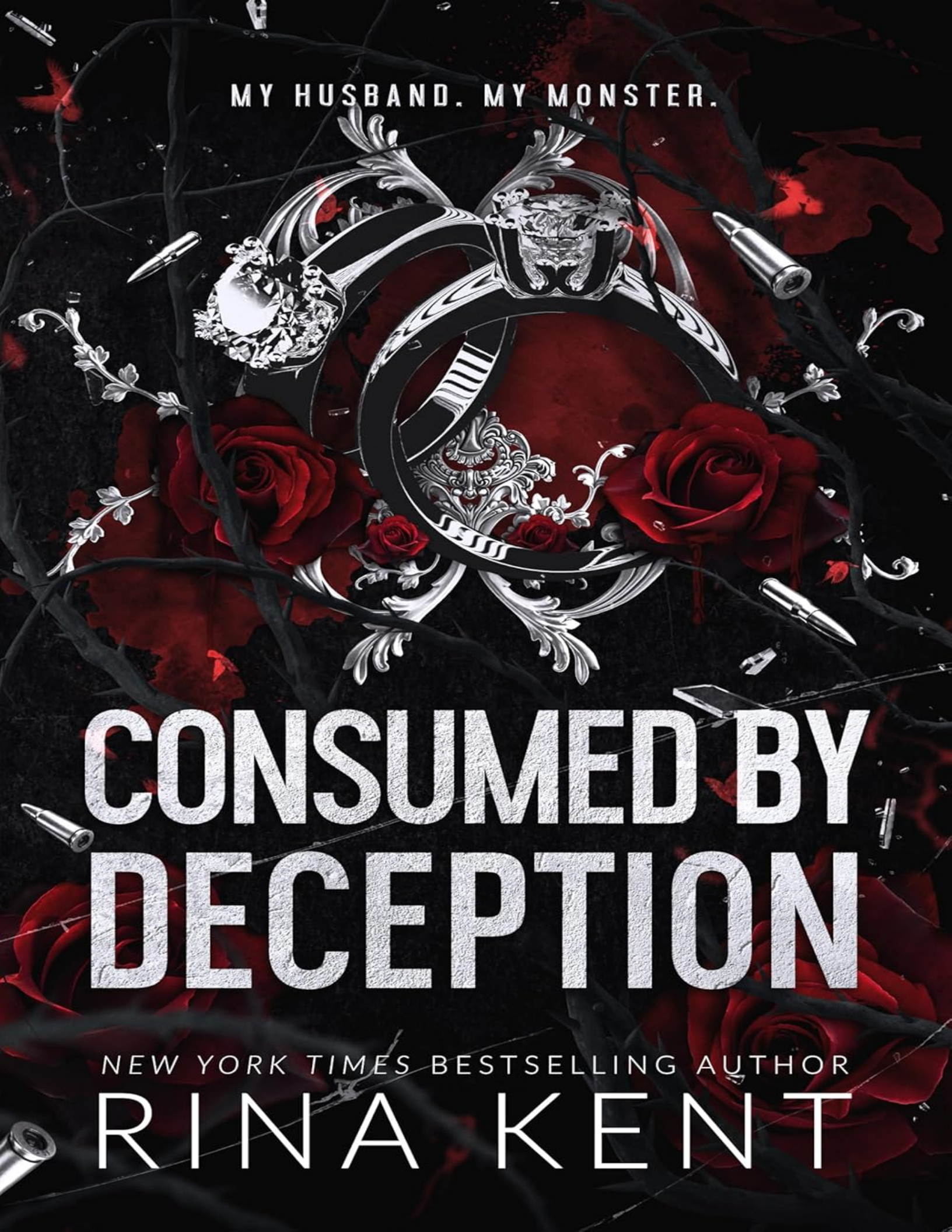




MY HUSBAND. MY MONSTER.

CONSUMED BY DECEPTION

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

RINA KENT



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DECEPTION TRILOGY BOOK 3

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He Hates Me

He Hates Me Not

*To the little girl in me who found heroes boring
and fell head over heels with villains.*

AUTHOR NOTE

Hello reader friend,

If you haven't read my books before, you might not know this, but I write darker stories that can be upsetting and disturbing. My books and main characters aren't for the faint of heart.

Consumed by Deception is the final book of a trilogy and is not standalone.

Deception Trilogy:

#0 [Dark Deception](#) (Free Prequel)

#1 [Vow of Deception](#)

#2 [Tempted by Deception](#)

#3 [Consumed by Deception](#)

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BLURB

My husband. My monster.

The truth isn't always what it seems.

Lia doesn't realize that, but she will. Soon.

I chose this life. This road. This twisted arrangement.

For her, I made a deal with the devil.

For her, I toyed with fate and death.

There's no going back.

I stole her and like any thief, I won't return her.

Lia is my addiction. My obsession. My love.

Mine.

PLAYLIST

True Love – Coldplay
Let it Go – James Bay
Infinity – Jaymes Young
Flying High Falling Low – Walking on Cars
Breath – Breaking Benjamin
Lost it All – Black Veil Brides
Fallen Angel – Three Days Grace
Everyone Changes – Kodakline & Gabrielle Aplin
Learning to Breathe – Switchfoot
Remedy – Thirty Seconds to Mars
Closer to the Edge – Thirty Seconds to Mars
Make Believe – The Faim
My Heart Needs to Breathe – The Faim
Never Know – Bad Omens
Second Chances – Imagine Dragons

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

PROLOGUE – ADRIAN

AGE TEN

'm thrust into the cold, dark night.

At first, I can't keep up with my dazed head as I blink the sleep out of my eyes.

I take a moment to focus on my surroundings and make sure I'm not daydreaming about the last book I read.

I Books have been my only escape since Aunt Annika left. She died all alone in a brutal car crash and my father wasn't there for her. Instead, he was with us. My parents had taken me to the hospital to put a cast on my arm that Mom broke.

I didn't cry. The pain in my arm didn't hurt as much as the constant, unending ache in my chest, and the fact that Aunt Annika wouldn't be there to hug me, that she couldn't take the pain away anymore is what put a halt to my crying.

Dad was proud of how strong I was and that his son didn't shed any tears. I thought about telling him everything, but before he came to take me to the hospital, Mom said she'd get rid of me as she got rid of Aunt Annika if I mentioned anything to Dad.

I wanted to hit him and Mom. I wanted to throw them both from the car because back then, I thought I'd have Aunt Annika again if they disappeared.

But she was already gone and merely has a tombstone now. One that no one visits anymore.

All the warmth and joy she brought to the house has vanished ever since Mom took her place.

Dad married my mom, even though his friends from the Bratva don't like her.

She's too smart for her own good. I heard one of them say.

I guess it's because she insists on knowing everything and gets involved in as much as possible.

She fights with Dad a lot because he doesn't want her to be 'part of the business.' Once, Mom said that if he would listen to her, he could be the *Pakhan* and he hit her across the face.

I don't like it when Dad hits Mom. Because she hits back and then they're both screaming, breaking things, and bleeding.

If I get in their way, Mom shoves me against the nearest wall and Dad hits her harder.

But I guess it's better if they're fighting, because when they're not, Mom slaps me for the slightest mistake and Dad makes me memorize books and meet his friends from the brotherhood.

Judging by the pain in my arm, it's Mom who's dragging me. She's the violent one, at least at home. Dad gets violent with her but never with me. He loses his temper whenever she hurts me, and that's why she only does it behind his back.

I blink as I'm hauled to my feet, unsure why she's yanked me out of bed and barely given me time to put on my shoes before she's leading me outside.

She doesn't usually bother me after I'm asleep.

"Hurry up, Adrian!" Mom shoves me forward, her red nails digging into my wrist and her expression pale under the soft light coming from the street.

"Mom...? Where are we going?"

"Now, hush!" Her gaze darts sideways, then she dashes to her Jeep and pushes me into the passenger seat. "Fasten your seatbelt."

Before I can ask again, she hurries to the driver's side and gets in. The tires screech and the car races in the direction of the exit.

My hands are unsteady when I loop the seatbelt around me. Mom doesn't bother with hers as she drives down the empty street at a speed that physically draws me back and steals my breath.

I hold onto the seat with both hands while I study my surroundings. It's dark but for a streetlight every so often. No other people or vehicles are in sight. I crane my head and see '2:25 a.m.' in neon red on the dash in front of Mom, who keeps hitting the gas harder with each passing second.

She's never been a careful driver. If anything, she's the type who honks and shouts at people and calls them names. However, this is the first time I've seen her knuckles white and trembling on the steering wheel.

"Mom? Where are we going?"

Her head tilts in my direction and she's wearing a weird expression, as if she's just realized I'm here. Then she focuses back on the road. "Away from your fucking father."

I know they've been fighting lately and that Dad's guards have been whispering about her, but I thought they would reconcile, as usual. They have phases where they're tolerant of each other's presence, but it barely lasts before they start hitting and calling one another names.

She takes a turn while speeding and I hit the door, bruising my side. My hold tightens on the seatbelt. "Why?"

"Because he's an idiot," she snarls. "He could be so much more, but he's letting his fear overrule him. If he's taking away my ambition, I'm taking away his precious heir."

"Does that mean we'll live together, just you and I?"

"That's the plan. Until Georgy stops being a fucking fool."

I don't want to live alone with Mom. At least she doesn't hit me in Dad's presence. If he's not there, nothing will prevent it.

At the same time, I don't like the fighting, so maybe if they're not together, it'll be better.

"The asshole doesn't even know how far he could go or where I can get him. That jerk, Nikolai, doesn't deserve to be the leader."

"But he's the *Pakhan*," I say softly.

“That doesn’t make his reign absolute. Remember, Adrian, power is seized, not given. If there’s a chance to win, don’t ask questions or hesitate. Take it.”

“Even if it hurts others?”

“Even if it hurts others. They’re the ones who allowed themselves to be hurt, so you needn’t worry about such idiots...” she trails off as she stares at the rear-view mirror and then smacks the steering wheel, cursing in Russian.

I look behind me and find several cars on our tail.

“Motherfucker!” Mom hits the breaks hard when a car cuts in front of us horizontally and stops.

I tumble forward, only the seatbelt holding me in place. Three men rush out of the car, and before I realize what’s going on, both of our doors are jerked open. Mom is yanked from her seat by two of them while Pavel, Dad’s senior guard, undoes my seatbelt and leads me out, much more gently than the way the other guards handled Mom.

Pavel makes me stop in front of him, his hands on my shoulders as we stand between Mom’s car and the one that blocked us.

She’s fighting against the guards who are detaining her, cursing in a mixture of Russian and English. She tries kicking them with the pointy heel of her shoe, but they mobilize her.

I’m a few feet away, completely still in Pavel’s hold. Not that I would leave or even have an idea of where to go.

Dad strolls in from the side. Although Mom is a tall woman, he’s taller and more buff, and he has a scowly face that never changes. I can count the number of times in my life that I’ve seen him smile on one hand, and that only happens when he’s with his Bratva friends.

As soon as he approaches my struggling mom, she spits in his face.

He raises his hand and slaps her on the cheek so hard, her head reels back and blood explodes from her bottom lip. It trails down the fair skin of her chin and to her graceful, long neck.

I wince, still not liking that he hits her. He never did it to Aunt Annika, at least not when I was around. But he always becomes violent with Mom.

“Stupid bitch.” Dad wipes his face with a napkin. “I knew you’d be more trouble than you’re worth.”

“Fuck you, Georgy!” she snarls, trying to kick him, but it ends mid-air because the guards are holding her hostage.

“Fuck me? *Me*? Fuck *you*, Dominika, and all the trouble you’ve put me through since I married you. I told you not to get involved in Bratva business. I told you to keep your conniving mind to yourself. But what did you do? You met Italian capos and their wives behind my and Nikolai’s backs. Did you think we would never fucking find out?”

“I did that to get you the power, you fucking asshole! Nikolai is old-fashioned and you could be stronger than him, *better* than him.”

“He’s my *Pakhan*! One does not plot a coup behind their Vor’s back. That’s not how it fucking works, as I’ve told you a million damn times. Any act of betrayal is punishable by death.”

“No one will punish you if you’re the damn leader!”

“But I’m not.” He releases a long breath. “You betrayed me and the brotherhood, Dominika.”

“No.” She squirms and fights, kicking and screaming.

I hate this sight of Mom. I’ve always known her to be larger than life, stronger too. Sometimes, downright hateful. I’ve never forgiven her for taking Aunt Annika away, but I also don’t like seeing her this helpless and with no way out.

“You can’t do this to me! I’m the mother of your son!”

“Doesn’t make you exempt from punishment.” Dad retrieves his gun and motions with it at his guards. “Put her on her knees.”

The men push her down until her knees hit the ground, her shoes making a haunting sound on the concrete as she thrashes. “No! Don’t! Are you picking Nikolai over me?”

“I’m picking the brotherhood over you. If you’re not punished properly, Nikolai will never forgive what he thinks is *my* betrayal.” He pauses, looking at me for the first time tonight. “Come here, Adrian.”