

NOTHING IS FAIR IN LOVE.



RISE ^{OF} A QUEEN

KINGDOM DUET
BOOK TWO

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

RINA KENT

RISE OF A QUEEN

OceanofPDF.com

KINGDOM DUET BOOK 2

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To kings & queens.

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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.

To remain true to the characters, the vocabulary, grammar, and spelling of *Rise of a Queen* is written in British English.

Rise of a Queen is the second book of a duet and is NOT standalone.

Kingdom Duet:

#1 [Reign of a King](#)

#2 [Rise of a Queen](#)

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BLURB

Nothing is fair in love.

This is my kingdom. My territory.

I own everything and control everyone, Aurora included.

She shouldn't have barged into my world with no armour.

She shouldn't have caught my attention with no warning.

Alas, she did.

Then she thought she could disappear.

If a battle is what it'll take to protect and own her, I'll shed blood.

Wars aren't fair, and neither am I.

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PLAYLIST

Epilogue – Normandie
What I've Done – Linkin Park
Everything I Wanted – Billie Eilish
Broken & Beautiful – Kelly Clarkson
What Have You Done – Within Temptation & Keith Caputo
Valentine's Day – Linkin Park
In My Remains – Linkin Park
Soul on Fire – The Last Internationale
I Hate Everything About You – Three Days Grace
Demons – Written by Wolves
Bottom Of The Deep Blue Sea - MISSIO
So Cold – Ben Cocks & Nikisha Reyes-Pile
Lonely – Nathan Wagner
Control – Zoe Wees
True Love – Coldplay
Sparks – Coldplay
Til Kingdom Come – Pop Evil
The Reckoning – Within Temptation & Jacoby Shaddix
Prayers For The Damned – Sixx:A.M.

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

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JONATHAN

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TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO

've never liked funerals.

Especially when it's my mother's.

The pretentiousness and the fake sympathy, or even the real tears, are all useless. Why cry for someone who will never come back? They can't hear you, so the whole point behind crying is selfishness.

People don't cry for the dead. People cry because of the uncontrollable rush of their own emotions.

I The grey clouds condense in the distance, forming one thick layer over the other until the air is nearly black. Looks like the sky might start weeping, too.

But why would it? Did it even know the woman lying in the casket?

The people surrounding it, throwing her favourite tulip flowers didn't know her either. They pretend they did, because she spent her entire life running between charities and spending money we didn't have.

Not that Gregory, my father, would've told her to do otherwise. He cared for her wellbeing enough to swallow the knife with its blood.

I take a sip of my small stash of whiskey that I stole from my brother, James, and let the burn soothe my throat. He'll probably kill me, but I don't need him drunk on this day, of all days. At least I'm in full control of my actions and myself.

Father is about to fall apart and if James does, too...well, fuck if I can carry them both.

I sit at the back of the cemetery, in front of a grave that appears a few decades old. Layers of dust cover the stone and the writing has been erased by the hands of time. Birds' waste clings to it like a second skin. One of the forgotten dead.

"There you are."

I don't lift my head as my best friend, Ethan, sits beside me. He's wearing a black suit and his light hair that he usually leaves haphazard is styled and neat.

At least he dressed up for the occasion. It took a funeral for that.

For a moment, he remains silent, his shoulder not far from mine as we both stare at the forgotten grave with its unpleasant appearance and the birds' waste.

It's me who breaks the silence, "Do you think her grave will be like this one twenty years from now?"

"Not if you have a say in it."

"True that."

"Are you going back there?" He hesitates, his voice taking a sympathetic turn. "Your father and James aren't doing so well."

"When have they ever?"

"They need you, Jon."

"They need false promises and a machine to go back in time. I have neither of those."

"So you're just going to stay here?"

"For the moment, yes. Screw off if the company bores you."

"Fuck you." He snatches my drink and takes a long pull. "I would never leave you on a day like this."

"Leave the sappy for Agnus."

"Fuck you again. I'll give you a pass for being a dick today."

"As if I would need your pass." I scoff as I yank back my bottle and down the liquid, revelling in the burn that coats my throat before settling in my

empty stomach.

I've barely eaten today and that was only because I needed the energy to remain standing tall. For me, eating and physical activity aren't things that I enjoy, but I do them religiously anyway because I don't need my health to get in the way of my brain's plots.

"It's okay if you show emotions, Jonathan. You don't have to trap it all in."

"What do you do with emotions?" I tilt my head to the side, watching him. "Do you profit from them?"

His light eyes soften at the corners. "She was your mother."

"Is showing emotions going to bring her back? Should I go through an episode like James and trash the whole house, or should I collapse like my father so it's written in some record that I mourned her?"

"I get it. You want to be strong for them."

"It's not a choice, Ethan. I have to. My father can't plan his fucking day without her and James has always been a mama's boy. If I fall with them, nothing will bring us up again. The bank will take the house as collateral if none of us gets our shit together."

"Damn. Want me to help?"

"I have a plan."

He grabs the bottle and takes a sip. Ethan and I have never found trouble in sharing things. It's our *modus operandi*. "What type of plan?"

"You know Lord Sterling?"

"The one who holds a grudge against your father because your mother didn't choose him?"

"Yes, that one. Mother abandoned him at the altar and he still feels the humiliation to this day. That's why he's after everything Father's built, from the company to the house and even the summer home in Wales."

"Sorry fuck. What do you intend to do?"

"Find his weakness and hit him where it hurts so he backs the fuck off."

My father's heart condition isn't doing well. Ever since Mum fell sick, it's like he's aged ten years every day.

The doctor told me and James to try to keep him as far away from stressful situations as possible. I couldn't do anything about today, but the future is different.

I'm taking things into my own hands, and I'll force everyone who's brought my family down to pay. In blood if I have to.

"I like that." Ethan grins. "I'm in."

"No one invited you."

He wraps an arm around my shoulder and squeezes. "I invited myself and you can't kick me out. You're stuck with me for life, Jon."

"Is this my punishment?"

"Fuck you, mate." He stands up and offers me his hand. "Come on."

I take it, staggering to my feet and dusting the dirt off my trousers and jacket.

After downing one last swig from the small bottle, I let Ethan throw it away.

"Go first," I tell him. "I'll be there in a bit."

He tightens his grip on my shoulder one final time in an obvious show of comfort before he releases me and disappears to the other side of the cemetery. James probably needs Ethan's consoling more than I do. My brother's the type who feels too much, sort of like my parents.

I'm like our grandfather. It's not that I don't feel, it's that I find it hard, even impossible, to show those feelings.

Ever since Father's company started to struggle, I've known I don't have a choice in being who I am. I might've not finished university yet, but the courses of action I suggested have worked more than what Father has been doing for years.

He can be soft when it comes to business, and that's his biggest mistake. If you're not a wolf, you'll be eaten by wolves.

James couldn't care less about affairs. He's content with being a rugby star and spending his youth drinking and shagging his way through the female population.

I cross the distance from the forgotten grave to where Mother's burial is happening. I mourn her alone, not in front of people. I mourn the way she was too naïve for this world, the way she thought giving to others was her purpose of being, to the point she forgot about us sometimes.

There was no misconception about who was Mother's favourite between me and James. She always looked at me with a furrow between her brows whenever I hit her with facts she didn't appreciate, like how Father couldn't sponsor her charitable events anymore.

She couldn't relate to me, and we remained that way. However, she loved me, I guess. Like anyone would love the child whose morals they doubted.

Mother thought I was too cruel, when I was just too realistic for her liking.

Today, I'll be the rock James and Father need, and then I'll protect the house Grandpa left us.

I will protect the King legacy.

My feet come to a halt at a low weeping sound. I stand by the tree, half-camouflaged by the trunk, and tilt my head to the side.

A woman in a black dress and a matching veil covering her eyes kneels in front of what seems like a new grave, tears falling down her cheeks.

Her black hair is pulled into a conservative bun that doesn't go well with the designer clothes and shoes she's wearing.

Beside her stands a little girl no older than five years old. She's also wearing a long black dress that swallows her small body. A veil similar to the woman's, though sheerer, covers her eyes as well. Her ebony hair is tied in pigtails, falling on either side of her face.

As the woman — her mother, I assume — cries, the little girl fiddles with the veil, nose scrunching and lips thinning in a line. Someone doesn't like that veil.

When she finally manages to shrug it off, she bunches it in her small hands, hides it behind her back, then drops it to the ground.

I smile at the mischievous look in her dark eyes. From this distance, I can't tell if they're brown or blue, or a mixture of both.

As soon as she finishes her mission of getting rid of the veil, she leans over the woman and wipes her eyes with the back of her tiny hands.

“Don’t cry, Alicia. She’ll be reight,” the little girl says in a brittle voice with a northern accent. Yorkshire dialect? “Our mummy is happy in heaven.”

That only makes the older woman cry harder, her sobs echoing in the air like an opera gone wrong.

So they’re siblings, not mother and daughter. The age difference is too large, though. The older one must be at least twenty, if not more.

The little girl wraps her tiny arms around the woman’s neck and squeezes her. “I love you, Alicia.”

“I love you, too, Claire.” The woman, Alicia, manages to say between hiccoughs, her arms caging the small girl against her chest.

They remain like that for a second before the girl, Claire, pulls away. “Hey, Alicia. I’m gonna make ya happy.”

“Really?” Alicia ruffles her hair, a sad smile on her lips. Her tone and voice are more sophisticated than the younger girl’s, hinting at a more refined upbringing. “How?”

“I’m gonna dance for ya.” She points a thumb at herself. “I’m the best dancer in town.”

“You are.”

“Aye. That’s right.” She grabs her sister by the wrist. “Come on, lemme show ya. Not here, cuz I don’t want ghosts to see.”

“Okay, okay.” Alicia staggers to her feet and follows the small girl’s lead.

Claire discreetly looks back, and I think it’s at the grave, but then she kicks something on the ground. The veil — she’s trying to bury it.

Her eyes meet mine, and she freezes. The colour of her irises are blue, a deep dark one like the undiscovered bottoms of oceans. A mischievous smile pulls at her lips as she places an index finger to them.

I wink at her and her grin widens before her sister drags her out of sight.

After they’re gone, I cut the distance to the grave they were visiting. Smiling, I crouch and take the tiny veil that’s half-buried in the dirt. My smile vanishes when I read the name on the tombstone.