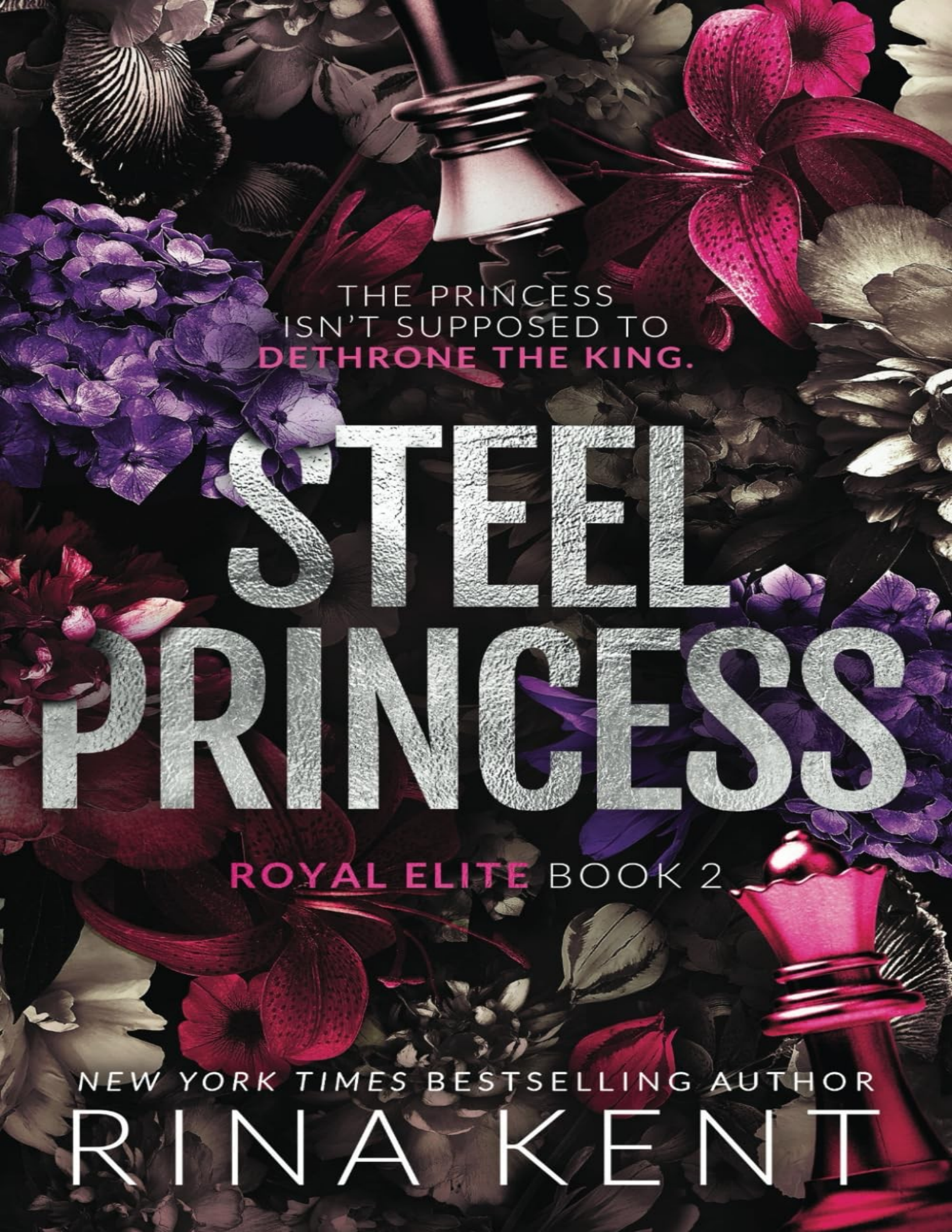




THE PRINCESS
ISN'T SUPPOSED TO
DETHRONE THE KING.

STEEL PRINCESS

ROYAL ELITE BOOK 2

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

RINA KENT

STEEL PRINCESS

ROYAL ELITE BOOK TWO

RINA KENT

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P.S. Pirates are bad. Not Johnny Depp's Captain Sparrow bad, but seriously effing bad. Support an author by buying a book. Don't be a totally-not-cool pirate.

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Black Knight

Vicious Prince

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*To the lost souls,
You are not alone.*

AUTHOR NOTE

To remain true to the characters and the author's origins, the vocabulary, grammar, and spelling of *Steel Princess* is written in British English.

Steel Princess is a dark high school bully romance, mature new adult, and contains dubious situations that some readers might find triggering or offensive.

If you're looking for a hero, Aiden is NOT it. If you, however, have been itching for a villain, then by all means, welcome to Aiden King's world.

This book is part of a trilogy and is NOT standalone.

Royal Elite Series:

#1 [Deviant King](#)

#2 [Steel Princess](#)

#3 [Twisted Kingdom](#)

Full-length standalone: [Cruel King](#)

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BLURB



The princess isn't supposed to dethrone the king.

Elsa

He said he'll destroy me, and he did.

I might have lost the battle, but the war is far from over.

They say it starts with one move to dethrone the king.

No one mentioned he'll yank me with him on the way down.

Aiden

If Steel's little princess wants a war, then war it is.

There's only one rule: my rules or none at all.

By all means, show me what you got, sweetheart.

PLAYLIST



Let It Burn – Red
Up in Flames – Coldplay
Death and All His Friends – Coldplay
Up with the Birds – Coldplay
Fun – Coldplay & Tove Lo
Heroin – Badflower
Kill Somebody – YUNGBLUD
Anarchist (Unplugged) – YUNGBLUD
Break In – Halestorm
Unstoppable – Red
Hymn for the Missing – Red
If I Break – Red
Gone – Red
Not Alone – Red
Yours Again – Red
Obsession – Joywave
Teeth – 5 Seconds of Summer
Youngblood – 5 Seconds of Summer
Rush – The Score
The Descent – Bastille
Bury Me Face Down – Grandson
Burning Alive – 8 Graves
My Friends – Bohnes

Guns and Roses – Bohnes
Dead – Normandie
I Don't Care – Our Last Night
Hollow – Barns Courtney
You Should See Me in a Crown – Billie Eilish

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

AIDEN

Intuition is interesting.

It's like turbulent energy slamming into a hard object.

Intuition can predict that you'll lose the battle before it starts.

I don't lose battles.

As soon as the coach's usual pep talk ends, I grab my messenger bag and stride out of the locker room without speaking to anyone.

Nash calls my name, but I zone him and everyone else out.

I get lost in my head more often than not, and they know better than to barge between me and my own mind.

Besides, they spent almost two decades with me, they should be used to it by now.

I pull out my phone and dial Elsa.

It's turned off.

Elsa doesn't turn off her phone.

Ever.

She won't admit it, but she's always conscious about not answering if either of her guardians calls her.

I stop outside the locker room and try again.

Still nothing.

I usually put the negative before the positive because the positive fucks you up.

But at the moment, I wish there's an exception to my perception.

I wish there's some positive before the negative.

I wish Elsa's fucking phone isn't turned off.

And I don't even do the wishing thing.

"Yo, King!" Astor crashes into me from behind and wraps an arm around my shoulder.

His uniform is tucked all wrong and there's still some shampoo in his damp hair like he couldn't bother to rinse properly.

He's an anomaly to his last name. If the great earl Astor sees him this way, he'll probably lock him up and teach him manners all over again.

If I weren't so preoccupied, I would've sent him a photo just to watch Astor's reaction.

He's entertaining sometimes.

Despite his appearance, the girls passing us by bat their eyelashes at him. He winks at one and motions for the other to call him.

This school needs to up its standards.

"You look like shit," I deadpan. "And remove your arm before I break it."

"Aaaand there's my mate." He grins at me. "I thought I lost you for a moment there. Now, where was I? Why did I come to your grumpy arse again...?" He snaps his fingers. "Right! Was Jonathan meeting the principal for the Premier League's scouts? Put a word for me, eh?"

"Jonathan was here?"

"*Bah alors*, mate. Everyone in the school knows your father was here, but you don't? What the fuck, seriously?"

Jonathan was in RES.

Elsa's phone is turned off.

I want to chuck it up to coincidence, but there's no such thing as a coincidence.

Coincidence is an excuse weak people use when reality hits them in the face.

It wasn't a coincidence when I met her again.

And it's not a coincidence that she disappeared now.

I told her not to talk to Jonathan. I made it clear that she's to stay the fuck away from him.

The sound of an ambulance cuts through the air.

And it's not an ambulance passing by.

No. It's coming straight for the school's back entrance.

“Ooh,” Astor tiptoes to look through the window. “Drama. Let’s go watch.”

Jonathan came to RES.

Elsa’s phone is turned off.

An ambulance is in RES.

The thing about intuition? It’s always right.

At least in my case.

“Hey, King.” Knight runs towards us, his brows drawn together. “You might want to see this.”

“That’s what I’ve been telling him,” Astor says. “It’s drama and we should always take part in drama —”

“It’s Elsa.” Knight cuts him off. “She was found drowning in the pool.”

ELSA

P*ast,*

“YOU CAN’T BE mine if you’re weak.”

The haunting voice becomes a buzz. A long, forgotten buzz.

Water fills my mouth, my nose, and my ears.

“Fight!” The voice shouts on top of me. “Fight, Elsa!”

My limbs flail in the water. My chest constricts with the pent up energy.

I can’t breathe.

Please let me breathe.

That familiar dizziness lures me into its clutches. My limbs barely move anymore.

I’m hauled from the water. I gasp for air, choking and spluttering saliva. My heart almost beats out of my chest.

My vision is still blurry even after I blink several times.

The gloomy, cloudy air coats my skin with a sheen of stickiness. My clothes are glued to my body like paste as I shake. My teeth clatter, but them monsters wouldn’t leave me alone.

I want to say a name, but if I do, if I say it, I won’t only be thrown in the water, I’ll also have to be the one who shall not be named.

So I call the other.

The only name I have left.

“Ma—”

I’m thrown into the water again.

I don’t even get to take my fill of air this time.

I don’t get to fight.

What’s the use of fighting if them monsters won’t let me fight?

Soon, I’ll be like the one who shall not be named.

Soon, Ma will be hugging someone else because she won't be able to hug me.

Them monsters took everything from her and me.

Them monsters killed me. Not once, not even twice, but all the time.

Maybe I should've never come back to life.

If I didn't, them monsters wouldn't have killed me again.

If I didn't, I would've been like the one who shall not be named and the ones who came after him.

That's what happens to those who can't escape monsters, right?

Them monsters take everything they want.

A hand pulls me by the arm, hauling me out of the water. My lips curl into a smile.

He's here for me.

He'll always be here for me.

My limbs and my lungs fail me. I can't even open my mouth and breathe.

I can't do anything except for closing my eyes and drifting.

PRESENT,

My eyes crack open, and the smell of antiseptic assaults my nostrils.

For what seems like forever, I stare at the white ceiling, letting the smell of antiseptic seep all around and inside me.

This must be a hospital.

Why am I in a hospital?

I'm too disoriented to recall what happened before I was admitted here.

Something about —

Could this be...?

I slap a hand over my chest, but I find no bandage.

Okay, so this isn't about the heart surgery.

I probe my brain for answers, but it feels dizzy. Everything is like a giant black puzzle with no pieces to put together.

“Oh, hon. You’re awake.” Aunt’s brittle voice reaches me from the doorway before she appears by my bed.

Her red hair is held in a bun and she’s wearing a black trousers-suit. The paleness of her face is more alarming than usual.

“Aunt...” I trail off at the grogginess in my voice and clear my throat. “What happened?”

I try to sit up, and Aunt helps me by adjusting the hospital bed and putting a pillow behind my back. I stare at the needle lodged in my veins and a deep-seated itch starts underneath my skin.

I rip my gaze from it to focus on Aunt.

She sits on the edge of the bed, a frown etching between her brows. “You don’t remember?”

“I was going to the car park and then —”

Her parents killed his mother. The only reason Aiden approached that monster is to make her pay for her parents’ sin.

I blink a few times at the onslaught of Jonathan King’s words.

It’s a dream.

It can’t be true.

The more I deny it, the harder the memories hit me. They’re like the crashing water that swallowed me and suffocated my breathing.

I gasp for breath.

But there’s nothing. No air.

I can’t breathe.

“One of your classmates found you in the pool. You stopped breathing and the school called an ambulance...”

Aunt continues speaking, but I’m struggling to breathe. Something heavy smashes my ribcage and my lungs.

I curl a fist in the hospital robe and hit my chest over and over.

Hit.

Hit.

Hit.

Breathe.

Breathe, you stupid thing.

“Elsa!” Aunt yells, her voice crackling. “W-what’s wrong?”

Hit.

Hit.

Hit.

The stronger I hit, the harder I can’t breathe. No air comes in or out. I’m going to suffocate.

Just like in the water, I’m going to stop breathing.

This is the end.

“Elsa!”

Aunt’s voice turns shaky and brittle. She tries to grip my wrist, but she can’t. Nothing stops me from hitting over and over again.

Steel blood runs in your veins.

You’re my masterpiece, Elsa.

My pride.

My legacy.

The room fills with noise. I barely register Uncle’s voice. Aunt’s cries. The doctors. The nurses.

Someone is talking to me. A blinding light is shoved in front of my pupils.

Hit.

Hit.

Hit.

Get out.

Strong hands restrain me, but I can’t stop hitting. They strap my hands and the material slashes into my wrists.

They tell me something, but I don’t hear it above the buzz in my ears.

It’s all over now.

Everything is over.

I scream above all the sounds in the room.

Get out!

Get out of me!

A needle pricks my skin.

Ow.

My hands fall on either side of me and my movements slow down.

My eyes roll to the back of my head.

It's over.

All of it.

Happy now, monster?

ELSA

When I wake up next, Aunt and Uncle sit by either side of me.

Aunt's eyes are puffy as if she's been crying while she wipes my hand with a soft, damp cloth. It's soothing, lulling even.

I'm tempted to close my eyes and go back to the void I just came from.

It's quiet in there. So quiet that I see nothing, smell nothing, and feel nothing.

Here, antiseptic and detergent surround me from every side.

I hate this smell. It's a reminder of my surgery and how utterly abnormal I am.

I'm about to chase sleep when I notice something on Aunt's hands. The sleeves of her jacket ride up, revealing scratch marks on her wrist.

My frantic gaze bounces to Uncle. He's leaning both elbows on his knees and watching me with furrowed brows and a stiff upper lip.

No.

I didn't.

... right?

The scene is like a flashback from those times I used to have nightmares.

And episodes.

I had an episode in the hospital. I think I hit my aunt again. Those scratch marks are because of me.

I *hurt* her.

"I'm sorry," I whisper, slowly sitting up.

"Honey." Aunt stops wiping my arm and lunges at me in a bear hug. "I'm so glad you're back."

"I'm sorry for hurting you, Aunt. I'm s-so sorry." I sob into her neck. "I didn't mean to. I-I don't know what's wrong with me."

“There’s nothing wrong with you, okay?” She pulls back and brushes my hair behind my ears, her expression stern. “You’re just stressed. Right, Jaxon?”

“Yes, pumpkin.” Uncle inches closer and forces a smile as he takes my hand in his. “You just had a panic attack. The doctor said it looked worse than what it actually was.”

“But...” I motion at the scratch marks on Aunt’s wrist, lips trembling. “I h-hurt Aunt and...”

“The doctor said I shouldn’t have stopped you in the middle of a panic attack.” She smiles, stroking my hair like I’m such a good daughter. “So it wasn’t your fault, hon.”

How can she be so easy-going about this? I hurt her.

I did it before, too.

If Uncle didn’t get her out, I don’t know what I would’ve done.

If the doctors didn’t inject me with something just now, I could’ve done much worse than scratches.

Aunt is the only mother figure I’ve ever known. It can’t be normal that I’m hurting her.

“Tell me about what happened at school,” Aunt probes and Uncle inches a little closer.

My lips tighten in a line.

That familiar itch starts under my skin.

The reason I had the panic attack is about to grip me again.

The room starts spinning and my free hand fists in the sheets until my knuckles turn white.

Aiden approached me for revenge. He approached me to hurt me.

To *destroy* me as he promised.

It was all a lie.

A game.

I was a pawn on his chessboard since the beginning, and I was too naive to notice it.

No. I did notice.