

# BROKEN

A dark, gothic-style house at night. The house has multiple stories with pointed roofs and many windows, some of which are glowing with a warm, orange light. A large, ornate staircase leads up to the front entrance. The sky is dark and cloudy, and there are bare trees in the background. A red brushstroke is visible over the letter 'O' in the word 'BROKEN'.

KARMA KENNEDY

# **BROKEN**

A Nine House Novel

KARMA KENNEDY

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# Synopsis

*NINE HOUSE MUST FALL.*

Nine elite families have claimed the whole world as their playground, keeping everyone under their control with malevolent political schemes. For centuries they have searched for an ancient mythical amulet, the key to humanity's origin and limitless generative power. Its secrets have been guarded by one prehistoric family whose maternal line dates back to the dawn of time, and the last remaining heir must protect it with her life.

They've been hunting River for years but she's always been one step ahead, so when she's suddenly abducted by sadistic elites, her only goal is to survive. Broken and desperate she makes a harrowing escape, only now she must convince an insider to help her even the score and take back everything that was stolen from her.

Del has only one objective, revenge. They destroyed his family for uncovering their secrets and now he'll make them pay with their lives. When sexy ass River captures his attention, he's tempted to risk it all for her. Caught in a deadly game of cat and mouse, Del must make a choice that could get them both killed and destroy the entire world.

# Author's Note

## TRIGGER WARNINGS

Some parts of this book may be upsetting to some readers. Please be aware that there is prolific use of explicit language, as well as graphic sexual scenes and depictions of violence, some of which may impact your mental health.

The following is a list of some scenes you may find triggering, so please take whatever appropriate measures you need before immersing yourself in this book.

- torture
- sexual violence,
- child abuse
- human trafficking
- domestic abuse
- suicide

# Glossary

**Bloodclaat** (*Patois - Jamaican origin, curse word*)

A curse word that is commonly used as an adjective. The direct translation is “blood cloth”, which is in reference to a sanitary napkin filled with bodily waste. In other words, it is a term used to debase someone by calling them filthy.

**Bumborassclaat or Bumboclaaat or Rassclaat** (*Patois - Jamaican origin, curse word*)

Used to express shock, dismay, or frustration.

**A wha de** (*Patois - Jamaican origin*)

Directly translated to mean, “what the...”

**Dat de** (*Patois - Jamaican origin*)

Directly translated to mean, “that there...”

**Dis yah** (*Patois - Jamaican origin*)

Directly translated to mean, “this here...”

**Jancro** (*Patois - Jamaican origin*)

A person who takes advantage of others, a scavenger.

**A wha wrong wid dem ya crosses people, yah** (*Patois - Jamaican origin*)

Directly translated to mean, “what’s wrong with these wicked people”

**Bacchanal** (*West Indies*)

A term used to describe excitement, chaos, or drama

**Gworls** (*African American Vernacular English - AAVE*)

The girls that get it, get it. What’s understood doesn’t have to be explained.

**Il Macellaio** (*Italian*)

Direct translation, “The Butcher.”

**Il Mostro** (*Italian*)

Direct translation, “The Monster.”

**Mia bella bambina** (*Italian*)

Direct translation, “My beautiful little girl.”

**Il mio cuore** (*Italian*)

Direct translation, “My heart.”

**Piccolo** (*Italian*)

Direct translation, “little one.”

**Papà è qui** (*Italian*)

Direct translation, “Papa’s here.”

**Qu'est-ce que tu penses, ma chérie** (*French*)

Direct translation, “What do you think, my darling.”

**Ma petit** (*French*)

Direct translation, “my little one.”

**Moya lyubov’** (*Russian*)

Direct translation, “my love.”

**I’ll bust your dial** (*Irish slang*)

meaning, “I’ll smash your face in.”



# Prologue

Kisiah

(Kiz-eye-yuh)

*MOTHERFUCKERS!*

“There’s just, too damn many of them, Kisiah! If you don’t leave now, we’re all gonna die!”

I press a trembling hand to my side, trying in vain to staunch the flow of blood steadily trickling through my fingertips. “It’s already too late,” my ticket’s been punched, death is upon me. “Take my daughter and go. Do it now, Maria, that’s an order!”

She hesitates, indecision clouding her gaze. “You know I can’t do that, Your Highness,” she says, racking her gun and firing off another round. “I’m not leaving you behind.” Her brows furrow in consternation, nostrils flaring as she assesses me.

A deep breath and exhale is all I allow myself before we go charging towards the stairs, more gunfire following swiftly in our wake. Bodies, balloons, and red plastic cups litter every inch of the once gleaming, hardwood floors. Cheerful purple streamers spattered with blood hang limply from the exposed beams, a macabre desecration of my nine year old’s birthday party.

Only an hour ago we were eating cake and opening presents, as laughter rang merrily throughout our home. Our two storey ranch-style residence sits on twenty-seven acres of rolling hills and lush green pastures, and the violent sound of gunfire continues to shatter the silence of the night.

My parents’ bodies now lay in a tangled heap next to the dining room table, my father desperately protecting my mother with his own. Nine House has us in their sights, cornered and outnumbered, they’re determined to use us as pawns in their twisted games no matter the cost.

“Mommy, *please*, help me!” my daughter’s screams tear into my chest, brutally seizing my heart with fear.

“How the *fuck* did they find us?” Maria shouts. “You don’t think—”

Another round of gunshots slam into the picture frame hanging beside my head. Maria and I duck as we return fire, adding more bodies to the death pile now bottlenecking the staircase. Standing outside of my daughter’s room, I pause, my energy all but spent. The Keeper who swore to protect her is lying in pieces at our feet, her once bright eyes, sightless and unmoving. Harsh breaths saw in and out of my lungs as my back presses firmly against the wall.

Maria stares at my wound, rage boiling in her gaze. “You’re losing too much blood and we no longer have a medic,” she whispers, tipping her head towards the dead Keeper. “We need to get you out of here before they send even more of these Nine House, motherfuckers.” She’s reloading her weapon, preparing for whatever is waiting for us just beyond the door. Maria’s the best Keeper I’ve ever seen, but even she looks afraid. “You can barely stand as it is, Kisiah, and there’s only one escape route left,” she barks harshly.

My head falls back against the crumbling wall, eyes drifting closed as if to shut out the truth of her words. “Moonbeam’s all I have left so don’t ask me to leave her,” I pant, as River’s shrill cries break my heart and strengthen my resolve.

“If I d-don’t ma-make it...tell my daughter I love her, th-that I’ll always be with her. Can you do that for me, M-Maria?” I don’t even wait for an answer before I go barreling through the door, killing every asshole left standing. Seconds later, all that remains is the echo of the rat-tat-tat-tat from my gun.

“What’s h-happening, Mommy!?”

I struggle to stand before moving slowly towards the bed. River’s knees are drawn up to her chest, wrists bound tightly together, a rumpled blindfold covering her eyes. My bloodstained fingers reach towards her left cheek to stroke the tears away, before prying apart the blindfold with a firm but gentle tug. I gingerly sit beside her on the bed, knowing I don’t have any time to comfort her.

“They’ve found us baby,” I say raggedly, wishing I could protect her from what lies ahead.

Maria stands in the doorway covering our backs as I work at the zip ties cinched around River's wrists.

"There's so much I never g-got the chance to tell you, to...t-teach you, about who you are and wh-where we come from. You have so much power inside of you Moonbeam, I just...wish we had a little m-more time." My words start to tangle, my mind growing sluggish as my strength seeps slowly away. I hate the task that I've thrust upon her, it's a burden much too difficult for her tiny, young shoulders to bear. Not...alone. The amulet is River's birthright, and she's the last remaining Royal of our entire family line.

"Sw-sweetheart, I need you to do something for me. Remember what I told you about the amulet?"

She nods, her tears tripping freely down to her chin, as the amulet dangles on the charm bracelet I gifted her not two hours ago, is clutched firmly in her slender, trembling fist.

"No matter what h-happens, you can *never* let them find it." I kiss her tenderly on the chin and gently squeeze her hands knowing this is our final goodbye.

Her fear is a living, monstrous thing, growing larger with each and every breath. My grief overwhelms me as her eyes fill with a thousand wishes, each one of them dying swiftly in the brokenness of her gaze.

"Be brave my little Moonbeam, go with Maria, she's going to take you somewhere safe. Mommy has to get rid of more bad guys, ok?"

Maria shifts, her steps taking her closer to the bed. She kisses the top of my head before quickly taking River by the hand, sparing me one last glance, despair sweeping into her gaze. Maria has been my Keeper since we were both nine years old, and now she'll watch over my daughter like she were her very own. I stare numbly as she tugs River towards the secret passageway tucked into the back of the closet.

"*No, Mommy!* Come with us, *please!*" She's kicking and screaming, biting and clawing, determined to stay at my side.

I'm fading fast, my time is far spent, and I have no promises left to give her. Not even just to ease her scared, innocent mind. I feel the edges of my vision start to darken, numbness taking me over. My ears prickle at the sound of footsteps thundering up the stairs, my gaze greedily lapping up these last few moments with my little girl. "Moonbeams make the broken things bloom," I whisper, smiling at my daughter wistfully. Her screams fill me with anguish as blood pools beneath me, staining the sheets as I lay down to die.

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