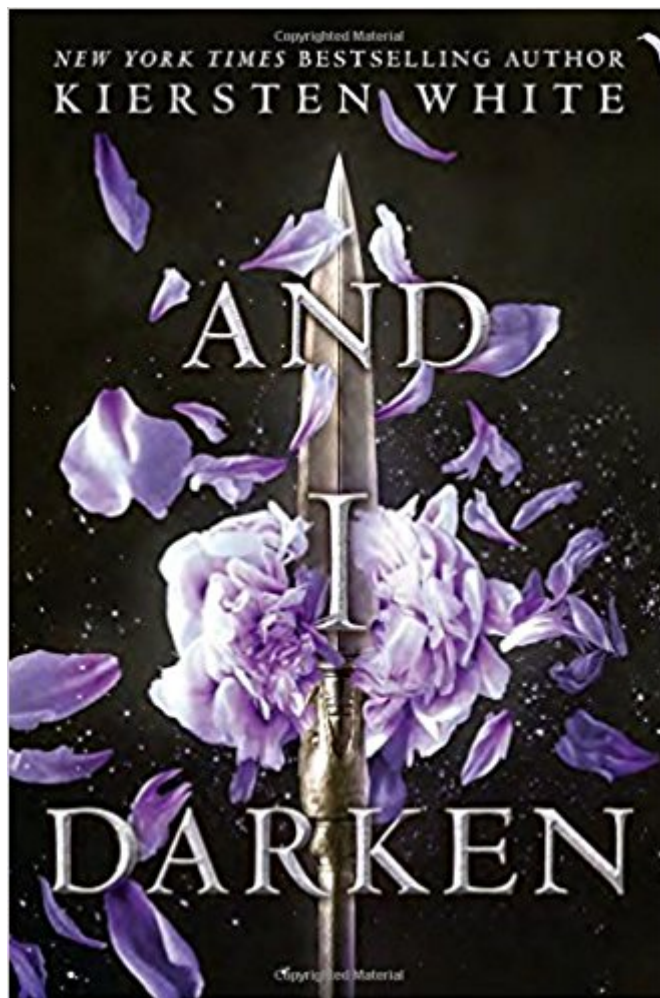


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# And I Darken



## Synopsis

The New York Times Bestseller! “Absolutely riveting.” —Alexandra Bracken, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Passenger* This vividly rendered novel reads like HBO’s *Game of Thrones* . . . if it were set in the Ottoman Empire. Ambitious in scope and intimate in execution, the story’s atmospheric setting is rife with political intrigue, with a deftly plotted narrative driven by fiercely passionate characters and a fearsome heroine. Fans of Victoria Aveyard’s *THE RED QUEEN* and Sabaa Tahir’s *AN EMBER IN THE ASHES* won’t want to miss this visceral, immersive, and mesmerizing novel, the first in the *And I Darken* series. NO ONE EXPECTS A PRINCESS TO BE BRUTAL. And Lada Dragwlya likes it that way. Ever since she and her gentle younger brother, Radu, were wrenched from their homeland of Wallachia and abandoned by their father to be raised in the Ottoman courts, Lada has known that being ruthless is the key to survival. She and Radu are doomed to act as pawns in a vicious game, an unseen sword hovering over their every move. For the lineage that makes them special also makes them targets. Lada despises the Ottomans and bides her time, planning her vengeance for the day when she can return to Wallachia and claim her birthright. Radu longs only for a place where he feels safe. And when they meet Mehmed, the defiant and lonely son of the sultan, who’s expected to rule a nation, Radu feels that he’s made a true friend—and Lada wonders if she’s finally found someone worthy of her passion. But Mehmed is heir to the very empire that Lada has sworn to fight against—and that Radu now considers home. Together, Lada, Radu, and Mehmed form a toxic triangle that strains the bonds of love and loyalty to the breaking point. From New York Times bestselling author Kiersten White comes the first book in a dark, sweeping new series in which heads will roll, bodies will be impaled . . . and hearts will be broken. “A dark and twisty fantasy . . . think *Game of Thrones*, but with teens.” —Seventeen “Sinister, suspenseful, and unapologetically feminist.” —Buzzfeed “Will completely spin you into another time and place.” —Bustle “Takes no prisoners, offering up brutal, emotional historical fiction.” —NPR.org

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0750 (What’s this?)

Series: *And I Darken* (Book 1)

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 243 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #25,313 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Medieval](#) #28 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious](#) #53

in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Royalty](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 10 Up  
•The first in a trilogy from best-selling author White, this historical adventure set in the mid-15th century tells the story of Lada and Radu, the children of Vlad Dracul, prince of Wallachia (modern-day Romania). Shouldered with the inescapable curse of being female and the unrelenting burden of her beautiful, sensitive, and physically inept brother, Radu, Lada is perpetually spoiling for a fight. When her father tries to secure his throne by giving the children as hostages to the Ottoman Empire, Lada and Radu must find a way to survive and thrive in a world where no one cares if they live or die. They befriend the young Ottoman heir Mehmet, and the three form a bond of friendship that saves their lives and ultimately shapes their adult destinies. Full of sword fights, assassination plots, and palace intrigues, this novel is ambitious in scope and concept and reveals a fascinating, important, and somewhat obscure slice of history. Compared to White's painstaking development of her characters and the fantastic world they inhabit early in the novel, the ending sequence that sets up the next book in the series seems rather abrupt and haphazard. However, as a whole, the novel is breathtakingly good. The brutality and carnality of this time and place in history are faithfully rendered here, making the volume more appropriate for older teen readers. VERDICT Highly recommended for all high school collections.  
•Kelly Kingrey-Edwards, Blinn Junior College, Brenham, TX  
YA Graphic Novels

“A dark jewel of a story, one that gleams with fierce, cunning characters”  
•absolutely riveting.  
•Alexandra Bracken, #1 New York Times bestselling author of Passenger  
“Kiersten White at her absolute best. The epic story will thrill you, the

Transylvanian setting will transport you, and the characters (especially the fierce, take-no-prisoners Lada) will capture your heart. Don't miss it.

•Cynthia Hand, New York Times bestselling author of the Unerthy series

"Sweeping and epic, AND I DARKEN is a gender-bent take on history that gives us a fierce and brutal heroine, a fascinating time period, and a beautifully intelligent look at love, family, and power. I loved every twisty, bloody moment of it!

•Rachel Hawkins, New York Times and USA Today bestselling author

"As richly complex and glittering as the Ottoman Empire itself, AND I DARKEN is daring in its scope and brilliantly executed. The fiercely dark Lada is a razor-edged sword tempered in the blood of family betrayals and the fire of her own passions. I was instantly and utterly smitten. She haunted me long after I turned the final page and left me craving more.

•Robin LaFevers, New York Times bestselling author of the His Fair Assassin series

"A jewel of a book

•a jewel embedded in the hilt of a blood-soaked sword. A brilliantly envisioned alternate history that is meticulously detailed but compulsively readable, this is a story I could not put down. I demand the sequel like Lada demands Wallachia!

•Beth Revis, New York Times bestselling author of the Across the Universe series

"An intense, risky, passionate novel that dragged me through love and danger with the force of its heroine's heart and the power of its hero's faith.

•Tessa Gratton, author of the Gods of New Asgard series

"Girls with teeth and priorities. I want to read this book forever.

•E. K. Johnston, author of A Thousand Nights

"Full of sword fights, assassination plots, and palace intrigues, this novel is ambitious in scope and concept and reveals a fascinating, important, and somewhat obscure slice of history

"the novel is breathtakingly good.

•School Library Journal

"starred review

"White deftly weaves historical fact into this complex concoction of love, war, politics, homosexuality, religion, loyalty, and friendship."

•Booklist

"starred review"White excels at presenting an anti-hero who contrasts conventional female heroines. Readers expecting a typical love triangle tale will be surprised, for Lada's characterization is executed in a far-from-stereotypical manner as White challenges femininity and explores the types of power women can wield. White also succeeds in crafting an accessible setting that brings complex historical figures to life."

--VOYA

\*\*\*Praise for Kiersten White's novels:

Paranormalcy:

"A fast, flirty roller coaster of a ride. I'm in love!

•Becca Fitzpatrick, New York Times bestselling author of Hush, Hush

"The perfect blend of light and dark. I can't wait for more!

•Carrie Ryan, New York Times bestselling author of Daughter of Deep Silence

Mind



it's beautiful and everything a book should be. This is the story of Vlad The Impaler, if he was a girl. I'm getting goosebumps writing this, I swear! As the baby latched on with surprising fierceness, the nurse offered her own prayer. Let her be strong. Let her be sly. And let her be ugly. Born in 1435 in Transylvania to Vlad Dracul Prince of Wallachia aka Vlad the Dragon and Vasilissa Princess of Moldavia, named Ladislav the feminine form of Vlad, we meet Lada who soon to be the female Vlad The Impaler. Her father had no use for a daughter, apart from a good marriage, but Lada from a very young age showed she is not to be underestimated. "I am your father. But that woman is not your mother. Your mother is Wallachia." I often request more badass heroines, that are not badass only for show, heroines that do stuff, heroines that are fierce and Lada is 100% that heroine. She's a badass from birth, practically unwanted by her awful father and abandoned by her weak mother that couldn't stand up to Vlad, she became her own person from day 1 and was never going to settle. She was contrary and vicious and the meanest child the nurse had ever cared for. But in Lada she saw a spark, a passionate, fierce glimmer that refused to hide or be dimmed. And so Lada grew up, with a brother she didn't care for and a person she treated like a brother. It was a good build up for what's to come to see her childhood in such detail. Sort of like an origin story. I'm a huge fan of historical fiction, but also I'm extremely picky because I want there to be accuracy and kudos to the author for all the research, finally all these years of history lessons paid off because this blew my mind!! I AM THE DRAGON Lada as a character is fierce. Unlike most dystopian books that try to make the heroine want to be more than is what is expected of a woman, this one had the history to back it up, I can't stress this enough. All around her, she sees the way the world is built, only fit for a man, and her brother, well he is not born to be a warrior for sure, but that's all she wants, she wants more than to just sit and wait for whatever future her father arranges for her. She's mad. She's pissed at the limited choices she has and she fights back, there's not a single moment that she gives up or changes her views. "I am not something to be kept! Next you will tell me you want to keep me behind walls, keep me in padded, perfumes rooms, keep me here. I am not your concubine, Mehmed!" The story takes place in Eastern Europe which is so rare to find, a lot of readers might be afraid to branch out of the usual setting for YA but trust me, this book went where no book would dare to go. I'm not big on religion in books and the author didn't take sides, there are so many religions

mentioned, and it was done in a clever way from Lada's POV that she didn't care much for, so there's only enough to get the readers in that time period. After Transylvania, Lada and her brother Radu are sort of taken to Edirne, northwestern Turkey near Greece and Bulgaria. This amazing journey is so historically accurate or as accurate fiction and history combined can be that I got chills. Christianity, Islam, harems, the entire Ottoman empire and actual historical figures come to play. We see her training with Janissaries and it's amazing. But also, love. It's definitely not your typical YA love. No triangle whatsoever. While in Edirne, Lada and her brother befriend Mehmed The Second. There's a complex relationship between the three of them that is so fascinating. "None of them are real to me. You are the only real thing in my life." I'm very much interested in what this story will develop to, there's only enough romance to make me crave more. But Lada? Her mouth answered hers. It felt like fighting. It felt like falling. It felt like dying. This book is only a small teaser of what is next to come at least historically speaking the bar is set so high I'm terrified of the next one. This is my first book from the author but I'm counting down the days for the next one! Don't be afraid to branch out, if you ever thought about reading a more historical YA story, this is it! "Souls and thrones are irreconcilable."

Finally something different. Well researched and more humanity than your typical Fantasy. I definitely recommend to anyone looking to switch things up from the usual that this genre brings.

Perfect ending. I'm so grateful it didn't take a romantic twist.

Totally different from everything else I've read by Kiersten, but her characterization and complicated plot are incredible. Radu is one of my favorite characters of all time.

The book was well written and the characters were interesting and intense. I hung on to every word and could hardly put it down.

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