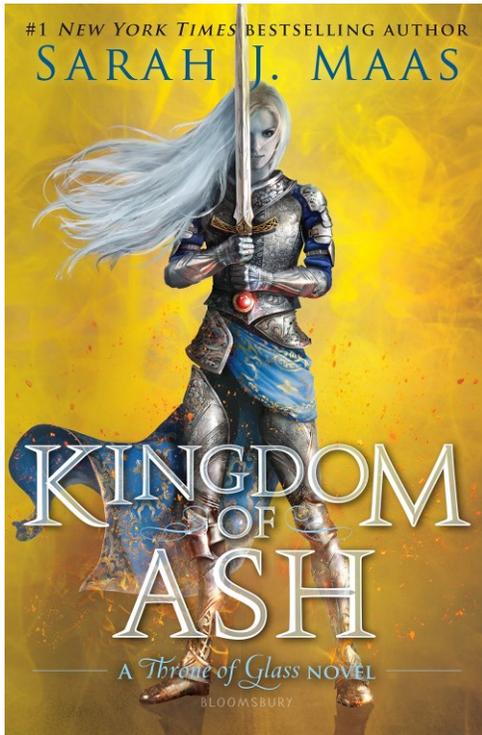


# KINGDOM OF ASH



## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains violence; mild profanity; and explicit sexual activities; sexual nudity.

*Young Adult*

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**CONTENT WARNING**

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**4** / 5

**Not For Minors**  
BookLooks Review Rating

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67	<p>He brushed a kiss to the column of her neck, a precise reminder of how, exactly, Yrene had awoken him. And what they'd spent a good hour around dawn doing.</p> <p>Just the warmed silk of her skin against his lips was enough to heat his chilled bones. "We can go back to bed, if you want," he murmured.</p> <p>Yrene let out a soft, breathless sound that had his hands aching to roam along her bundled-up body. Even with time pressing upon them, hurrying them northward, he'd loved learning all her sounds—loved coaxing them from her.</p>
349	<p>She smiled despite that truth. "I'm ready to be kissed again, Prince."</p> <p>He let out a dark chuckle and muttered, "Thank the gods," before he lowered his mouth to hers.</p> <p>The kiss was gentle—light. Letting her decide how to guide it. So she did.</p> <p>Sliding her arms around Rowan's neck, Aelin pressed herself against him, arching into his touch as his hands roamed along her back. Yet his mouth remained featherlight on hers. Sweet, exploratory kisses. He'd do it all night, if that was what she wished.</p> <p>Mate. He was her mate, and she was finally</p> <p>...With a growl, Rowan swept her into his arms, never tearing his mouth from hers as he carried her to the bed and set her down gently. Off came their boots, their jackets and shirts and pants. And then he was with her, the strength and heat of him pouring into her bare skin.</p> <p>She couldn't touch him fast enough, feel enough of him against her. Even when his mouth roved down her neck, licking over that spot where his claiming marks had been. Even when he roamed farther, worshipping her breasts as she arched up into each lick and suckle. Even when he knelt between her legs, his shoulders spreading her thighs wide, and tasted her, over and over, until she was writhing beneath him.</p> <p>But something primal in her went quiet and still as Rowan rose over her again, and their eyes locked.</p> <p>"You're my mate," he said, the words near-guttural. He nudged at her entrance, and she shifted her hips to draw him in, but he remained where he was. Withholding what she ached for until he heard what he needed.</p> <p>Aelin tipped back her head, baring her neck to him. "You're my mate." Her words were a breathless rush. "And I am yours."</p> <p>Rowan thrust into her in a mighty stroke as he plunged his teeth into the side of her neck. She cried out at the claiming, release already barreling along her spine, but he began moving. Moving, while his teeth remained in her, and she moaned with each drive of his hips, the sheer size of him a decadence she would never be able to get enough of. She dragged her nails down his muscled back, then lower, feeling every powerful stroke of him into her.</p> <p>Rowan withdrew his teeth from her neck, and Aelin claimed his mouth in a savage kiss, her blood a coppery tang on his tongue.</p> <p>He went wild at that, hoisting her hips to angle himself deeper, harder. The world might have been burning around them for all she cared, all he cared, too.</p> <p>"Together, Aelin," he promised, and she heard the rest of the words in every place their bodies joined. Together they would face this, together they would find a way.</p> <p>Release crested within her once more, a shimmering brightness.</p> <p>And just when it broke, Aelin sank her teeth into Rowan's neck, claiming him as he'd claimed her.</p> <p>His blood, powerful and wind-kissed, filled her mouth, her soul, and Rowan roared as release</p>

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	<p>shattered through him, too. For long minutes, they lay tangled in each other.</p>
435	<p>He ran a hand down the back of her head, his fingers twining in her hair before he murmured in her ear, "Come to bed." Heat flared through her body. "We've a battle to launch tomorrow. Again." "And a day of death has made me want to hold you," the prince said, giving her that disarming grin she had no defenses against. Especially as he added, "And do other things with you." Nesryn's toes curled in her boots.</p>
484	<p>Rowan came up behind his mate and pressed a kiss to her neck. Right to where his new claiming marks lay. ...Another kiss to her neck.</p>
535	<p>He left her jacket open, the swells of her breasts just visible between the lapels. They rose and fell in an uneven rhythm that only turned more unsteady as she reached between them and began to remove his own jacket.</p>
537	<p>He ran his fingers over the scar. Over it, and then up her stomach. Up and up, her skin pebbling beneath his touch, until he halted just over her heart. Until he laid his palm flat against it, the curve of her breast rising to meet his hand with each unsteady breath she took. ...So Dorian brushed his mouth against hers. Manon let out a small sound. Dorian kissed her again, and her tongue met his, hungry and searching. Then her hands were plunging into his hair, both of them rising onto their knees to meet halfway. She moaned, her hands sliding from his hair down his chest, down to his pants. She stroked him through the material, and Dorian groaned into her mouth. Time spun out, and there was only Manon, a living blade in his arms. Their pants joined their shirts and jackets on the ground, and then he was laying her upon his bedroll. Manon drew her hands from him to remove the glittering crown atop her head, but he halted her with a phantom touch. "Don't," he said, voice near-guttural. "Leave it on." Her eyes turned to molten gold, going heavy-lidded as she writhed, tipping her head back. His mouth went dry at the beauty that threatened to undo him, the temptation that his every instinct roared to claim. Not the body, but what she had offered. He almost said yes, then. Was almost selfish enough, greedy enough for her, that he nearly said yes. Yes, he would take her as his queen. So he might never have to say farewell to this, so that this magnificent, fierce witch might remain by his side for all his days. Manon reached for him, fingers digging into his shoulders, and Dorian rose over her, finding her mouth in a plundering kiss. A shift of her hips, and he was buried, the heated silk of her enough to make him forget that they had a camp around them, or kingdoms to protect. He did not bother with phantom touches. He wanted her all for himself, skin to skin. Every thrust into her, Manon answered with a rolling, demanding movement of her own. Stay. The word echoed in each breath. Dorian took one of her legs and hefted it higher, angling him closer. He groaned at the perfection of it, and Manon swallowed the sound with a kiss of her own, a hand clamping on his backside to propel him harder, faster. Dorian gave Manon what she wanted. Gave himself what he wanted. Over and over and</p>

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	<p>over.  Manon's breathing was as ragged as Dorian's when they pulled apart at last. She could barely move her limbs, barely get down enough air as she gazed at the tent ceiling. Dorian, as spent as she, didn't bother to try to speak.</p>
555	<p>A soft groan came out of him as she continued to look her fill. Asking for things that he sure as hell was in no shape to give her. And that she might not yet be ready to give him, declarations aside.  He was immediately challenged to prove his resolve as Elide ran slightly shaking fingers across the new scar on his abdomen.  ...Another one of those small smiles curved her lips, and Lorcan's hands tightened in the sheets with the effort it took not to taste that smile, to worship it with his own mouth.</p>
556	<p>Lorcan held absolutely still as she brought her mouth to his. Brushed her lips across his own.  ...Too shaken by that soft, beautiful kiss to bother with words, he lay back down.  ...This kiss lingered. Her mouth traced his, and at the slight pressure of her lips, the gentle request, he answered with his own.  The taste of her threatened to undo him entirely, and the tentative brush of her tongue against his own drew another rolling purr from deep in his chest. But Lorcan let Elide explore him, slowly and sweetly, giving her whatever she asked.  And when her mouth became more insistent, when her breathing turned ragged, he slipped a hand around her neck to cup her nape. She opened for him, and at her low moan, Lorcan thought he'd fly out of his skin.  His hand slipped from her nape to run down her back, savoring the warm, unbreakable body beneath the layers of clothes. Elide arched into the touch, another of those small noises coming from her. As if she'd been just as starved for him.</p>
568	<p>He brought her hands to his mouth for a swift kiss. "And  ...Rowan nipped at her nose. "I do keep a tally, Princess. Of all the horrible things that come out of your mouth."  Her toes curled, and she dragged her fingers through his hair, luxuriating in the silken strands.  ...Rowan smirked, as if sensing Gavriel's swift exit, too. Then his hand flattened on her abdomen, his mouth grazing the underside of her jaw. "I've been thinking of some ways."  But the hand he'd set on her belly pushed down just enough that Aelin let out an oomph.</p>
570	<p>Though unlike those months this spring, when Aelin set down her plate between her feet, she slid her arms around Rowan's neck and his mouth instantly met hers.  No, it was certainly not at all like their time at Mistward as she crawled into Rowan's lap, not entirely caring that anyone might stride up or down the stairs, and kissed him silly.  They halted, breathless and wild-eyed, before she could decide that it really wouldn't be a bad idea to unfasten his pants right there, or that his hand, discreetly and lazily rubbing that damned spot between her thighs, should be inside her.</p>
727	<p>Elide bit her lip, her breasts becoming heavy, tingling. "I might slip."  His eyes drifted down her body, but he made no move. "A dangerous time, bath time."  Elide found it in herself to walk toward the copper tub. He trailed a few feet behind, giving her space. Letting her steer this.  Elide halted beside the tub, steam wafting past. She tugged the hem of her shirt from her pants.  Lorcan watched every move. She wasn't entirely certain he was breathing.</p>

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	<p>But—her hands stalled. Uncertain. Not of him, but this rite, this path.  “Show me what to do,” she breathed.  “You’re doing just fine,” Lorcan ground out.  But she gave him a helpless look, and he prowled closer. His fingers found the loose hem of her shirt. “May I?” he asked quietly.  Elide whispered, “Yes.”  Lorcan still studied her eyes, as if reading the sincerity of that word. Deeming it true.  Gently, he pulled the fabric from her. Cool air kissed her skin, pebbling it. The flexible band around her breasts remained, but Lorcan’s gaze remained on her own. “Tell me what you want next,” he said roughly.  Hand shaking, Elide grazed a finger over the band.  Lorcan’s own hands shook as he unbound it. As he revealed her to the air, to him.  His eyes seemed to go wholly black as he took in her breasts, her uneven breathing.  “Beautiful,” he murmured.  Elide’s mouth curled as the word settled within her. Gave her enough courage that she lifted her hands to his jacket and began unbuckling, unbuttoning. Until Lorcan’s own chest was bare, and she ran her fingers over the smattering of dark hair across the sculpted planes.  “Beautiful,” she said.  Lorcan trembled—with restraint, with emotion, she didn’t know. That darling purr of his rumbled into her as she pressed her mouth against his pectoral.  His hand drifted to her hair, each stroke unbinding her braid. “We only go as far and long as you want,” he said. Yet she dared to glance down his body—to what strained under his pants.  Her mouth went dry. “I—I don’t know what I’m doing.”  “Anything you do will be enough,” he said. She lifted her head, scanning his face. “Enough for what?”  Another half smile. “Enough to please me.” She scoffed at the arrogance, but Lorcan brushed his mouth against her neck. His hands bracketed her waist, his thumbs grazing her ribs. But no higher.  Elide arched into the touch, a small sound escaping her as his lips brushed just beneath her ear. And then his mouth found hers, gentle and thorough.  Her hands twined around his neck, and Lorcan lifted her, carrying her not to the bath, but to the cot behind them, his lips never leaving hers.  Home. This, with him. This was home, as she had never had. For however long they might share it. A  nd when Lorcan laid her out on the cot, his breathing as uneven as her own, when he paused, letting her decide what to do, where to take this, Elide kissed him again and whispered, “Show me everything.”  So Lorcan did.</p>
730	<p>She’d taken one look at the spread wings—a hawk’s wings—across her back and kissed him. Kissed him until his own clothes were gone, and she was astride him, neither bothering with words, or capable of finding them.</p>
824	<p>He gripped her waist in one hand, the other plunging into her hair, and tipped her head back as his mouth met hers.  The kiss seared her down to her ever-changing bones, and she wrapped her arms around his neck as she held him tightly.</p>

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	<p>Alone in the dark, quiet hall, death squatting on the battlefield nearby, Lysandra gave herself to that searing kiss, to Aedion, unable to stop her moan as his tongue flicked against hers. The sound was his unleashing, and Aedion twisted them, backing her against the wall. She arched, desperate to feel him against all of her. He growled into her mouth, and the hand at her hip slid to her thigh, hoisting it around his waist as he ground into her, exactly where she needed him.</p> <p>Aedion tore his mouth from hers and began to explore her neck, her jaw, her ear. She breathed his name, running her hands down his powerful back as it flexed under her touch. More. More. More.</p> <p>More of this life, this fire to burn away all shadows.</p> <p>More of him.</p> <p>Lysandra slid her hands to his chest, fingers digging into the breast of his jacket, seeking the warm skin beneath. Aedion only nipped at her ear, dragged his teeth along her jaw, and seized her mouth in another plundering kiss that had her moaning again.</p> <p>Footsteps scuffed down the hall, along with a pointed cough, and Aedion stilled.</p> <p>Loud—they must have been so loud—</p> <p>But Aedion didn't budge, though Lysandra unwrapped her leg from around his waist. Just as the sentry walked past, eyes down.</p> <p>Walked past quickly.</p> <p>Aedion tracked the man the entire time, nothing human in Aedion's eyes. An apex predator who had found his prey at last.</p> <p>No, not prey. Never with him.</p> <p>But his partner. His mate.</p> <p>When the sentry had vanished around the corner, no doubt running to tell everyone what he'd interrupted, when Aedion leaned to kiss her again, Lysandra halted him with a gentle hand to his mouth. "Tomorrow," she said softly.</p> <p>Aedion let out a snarl—though one without any bite.</p> <p>"Tomorrow," she said, and kissed him on the cheek, stepping out of his arms. "Live through tomorrow, fight through tomorrow, and we'll ... continue."</p> <p>His breathing was ragged, eyes wary. "Was this from pity?" A broken, miserable question.</p> <p>Lysandra slid her hand against his stubble-coated cheek and pressed her mouth against his. Let herself taste him again. "It is because I am sick of all this death. And I needed you."</p> <p>Aedion made a low, pained sound, so Lysandra kissed him a final time. Went so far as to run her tongue along the seam of his lips. He opened for her, and then they were tangled in each other again, teeth and tongues and hands roaming, touching, tasting.</p>
830	<p>Rowan had taken the time last night to reacquaint her with certain parts of that body. And his own. Had spent a long while doing so, too. Until that haunted look had vanished, until she was writhing beneath him, burning while he moved in her. He hadn't stopped his tears from falling, even when they'd turned to steam before they hit her body, and there had been tears on her own face, bright as silver in the flame, while she'd held him tight.</p> <p>Yet this morning, when he'd nuzzled her awake with kisses to her jaw, her neck, that haunted look had returned. And lingered.</p>
834	<p>A soft, swift kiss was their only greeting.</p>
843	<p>So Aedion leaned in, and kissed Lysandra, kissed the woman who should have been his wife, his mate, one last time. "I love you."</p>
931	<p>To kiss his cheeks, then his mouth. Loving, gentle touches.</p>

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939	Elide waved him off, but Lorcan kissed her. ...He swept her up into his arms, raining kisses over her face. As if some final, chained part of him had been freed.
966	Right before the queen threw her arms around Rowan and kissed him.
976	Rowan brushed a kiss to her mouth.
977	Rowan laughed, and kissed her again. ...Aelin kissed him again and took his hand, guiding him into the castle. Into their home.

Profanity	Count
Ass	8
Bitch	13
Piss	10
Prick	5
Shit	19