



Kiss Me Like You Mean It

J.R. Rogue

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My love is poison. His kiss is mine.

“The first time he saw me I was shattered glass, and he was a shadow. If I had stayed, he would have just faded away.”

It’s strange how easy it is to tell our stories to a stranger’s eyes. The truth about Connor Stratford and I had always been a sad tale. Over ten years of chasing, tears, lies, vows, and leaving. Two people who never loved each other at the same time, but couldn’t let each other go.

Now here I was telling our story over drinks midday in an airport bar with my old diary clutched in my hand. Telling some version of our story, anyway.

I left him once with no goodbye. Now I was returning home to give him what he needed to move on.

“It’s important. It’s what you’re thinking.”

I knew what his message meant, sent in the middle of the night after I woke from a fever dream.

He was finally ready, and so was I. I just needed to finally give him the kiss he begged for. The one that meant goodbye.

Kiss Me Like You Mean It Details

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Author : J.R. Rogue

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From Reader Review Kiss Me Like You Mean It for online ebook

Orolock says

This bitch right here has left me speechless. Excuse me while I go cry uncontrollably in the shower for the next few days.

Ashley (5171MilesBooks) says

Read this review and many more at: [5171 Miles Book Blog](#).

Check out my interview with J.R. Rogue here!

Everything about this book makes me excited. The cover, the story, the setting(s) - J.R. Rogue knocked it out of the park with her third novel. This is not your typical love story. It's raw, revealing, and you may find your heart snagging on some of the shattered dreams inside. Nevertheless, the best books are the ones that make readers feel every word, and I definitely have some inkspots splattered on my heart after finishing *Kiss Me Like You Mean It*.

A broad spectrum of topics are covered in this novel, from drinking, to men, to mental health, and abuse. The hardest hitting for me was the description of abuse and the after-effects of it numerous years later. I think the mind has a way of protecting itself from hardship. If we felt the full brunt of it all at once, it would be too much to bear. J.R. Rogue describes these moments of realization exactly as they happen and exactly how they feel. Abuse is never something that goes away, even if the abuser is long gone. It's something that stays with a person for their entire existence, manifesting and reshaping as the years drag on. I respect Jen using her voice to encourage women who have been through similar experiences, allowing us to find solace in her words.

"I know more women who have had no father, who have been raped, who have been beaten, than those who live happy full lives with no scars littering their past, their skin. I like likeness in women. I like our sadness, so close to a mirror."

I almost felt like I spent more time highlighting great lines than reading. The cover lured me in and the tale held me hostage. Jen's honest poetic style is infused into this novel, making the story everything it needed to be. Emotion drips from every page allowing the reader to fully connect with the characters, flaws and all. Reading about Gwen's character was like watching my own reflection in the mirror, maybe her actions didn't quite match my own, but her personality was identical. I felt as if I was being flayed open while reading.

"Traditions are hard to break away from. We are all victims of 'this is what you're supposed to do' guilt."

One of my favorite things in this novel was the narration. I loved the airport conversation, journal entries, and the alternation of Gwen and Conner's perspectives. It took me a second or two to figure it out when I started the book, but once I had it, I was hooked. I loved Conner's steadiness and unconditional love throughout. It's such a rare thing to find, but something all of us want. My only critique in regards to the writing as a whole relates to the choppy feel of the paragraphs and chapters. The storyline wasn't as cohesive as I hoped for, and felt a little jumpy and jagged at times. In some ways, the writing style of this particular

book fits with well with the plot, but a bit of smoothing may have been helpful.

Rating a book based on someone's life feels like the biggest injustice. Everyone's life has value, every story is important, and rating with stars feels cheap. I loved Jen's story in a painful and reflective sort of way. Parts of the story were hard to read because I felt so deeply heartbroken for the struggles the characters (and real-life people) had to face and the self-reflection I was forced to do hurt. Life just really sucks sometimes. J.R. Rogue captures the suck and from it makes the most beautiful works of "fiction". Her writing fully immerses me in her thoughts and feelings and doesn't let me go, long after I've turned the last page. I'm a fan for life.

Pick up Kiss Me Like You Mean It on March 22nd.

J.R. Rogue says

The main character is a trainwreck, but I can relate..... ??

Amy says

If you're a fan of easy romances featuring cute guys and plucky heroines whose biggest challenge is overcoming miscommunication, this is NOT the book for you.

If, on the other hand, you are a fan of brutal, raw, emotional books, this most assuredly is one you want to read.

Gwen warns you--repeatedly--that she is a liar. So you spend part of your reading time wondering how much of what she's telling you is real. Sometimes her story takes such Dickensian turns that you suspect her veracity. Yet when she says, "I didn't deserve tender acts from tender men. I deserved the hell I had been living," you believe her because if Gwen is hard on anyone, it's herself. She cuts herself no breaks. She excuses none of her poor decisions or behavior. She recognizes that baring herself makes her vulnerable, yet she does. As she puts it, "One of the hardest things to live through is knowing someone doesn't want you anymore after you've shown them every ugly crack in your soul."

Rogue has published several volumes of poetry, and at times, this book reads like lines from poems forged into prose, with choppy sentence structure and paragraphs that seem more like stanzas. These stylistic choices represent Gwen's frame of mind very effectively, as she herself tends toward choppy relationships and broken rhymes.

On a few occasions, we move from her perspective to that of Connor, a man with whom she is in an on-again, off-again, on-again, off-again, not-sure-again relationship. This proves a bit unsuccessful because his voice is almost identical to that of Gwen. If Rogue hadn't specified that this is Connor speaking, I would not have known. I'm still not sure we need his perspective, however infrequent it may be. He does give us a different sense of Gwen, although one of his observations--that she "wanted to change the world" and "absorbed all the hurt the world had"--is something Gwen never shows us. In fact, when I read those lines from Connor, I thought, "Is he still talking about Gwen?"

So, yes, this book, like Gwen herself, is flawed. But so what? Those flaws make it even more compelling

because you feel like you're reading something real. You're reading a raw, brutal, emotional love story about two people who earn their way to each other.

JR Rogue, I'm a fan.

Christina Hart says

Tragic, hopeful, honest. I believe this is Rogue's best novel to date.

At once arresting, haunting, and harrowing, Rogue's latest novel will send you down a rabbit hole of adultery, faithfulness, hardships, and ultimately, the path to healing.

I wasn't more than five pages in when I realized this book was going to hurt all my feelings and then some. It was captivating, poetic, and brutally honest in its prose. Rogue has a way of weaving words together that will leave you speechless, make you pause and put the book down, so you can take in her words and really feel them, then possibly want to just snuggle up with the closest animal and eat as much chocolate as you can. But the sick part is, you'll LIKE it.

Her words will hurt. She will twist the knife but then she will stitch you back up.

This book was so many things at once. It was too much, yet it was everything in your life that wasn't quite enough. It was unforgettable. It will creep into your bones and make a home there. It will render you speechless and vulnerable and it will make you question the world, even yourself.

I can't go in to too much detail without spoiling anything, but I will say this: for anyone who has loved, for anyone who has hurt, for anyone who has suffered through traumatic experiences, for anyone who has felt ashamed and alone, for anyone who feels human or anyone who wishes they were anything but, read this book.

Five stars because I can't give ten.

READ THIS BOOK.

Dilek VT says

What a beautiful cover!

Talon says

If you were ever interested in what a love child between Amy Harmon and Tarryn Fisher looked like- HELLO KISS ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT.

Not only is this a novel about a woman and her struggles with loneliness, depression, and keeping certain men at arms length- it's a poetic adventure full of delicate words and strong and jagged cuts of feelings.

Feelings bleeding out and no band aid cures for these kind, sorry.

The book as a whole was FULL of great lines. The lines were so palpable, heavy. Just right there on the page for you to grasp and take how you want. I almost highlighted the entire book. The prose within these pages were just so overwhelming and full of punches it was sometimes hard for me to breathe. The truth that Jen writes is a lot, but it's so good.

My kicker with the book, as a whole...wait, do I always have a kicker? I think I do. Anyways, I'm sorry. One word: Timelines. I needed more of a structured timeline. What year were we on? I blinked and Gwen and Conner had been together for four years? Sometimes it was hard for me to tell if we were at present time, or the airport, or past time. So, my only complaint was a more structured timeline.

"When he reaches me, he kisses me like he means it, and he always has. Even when he hated me, he kissed me with the kind of honesty I let die in my throat. He is beauty and life and I am alive because he believes in me, for some reason.

The fairytales don't compare to the work he does.

To the day in and the day out.

He endures."

The little twist that was thrown in there caught me off guard but it was great. I seen you Jen, but I didn't see that coming and I can appreciate how it was put into the story. How it wasn't thrown in for shock factor. How it was thrown in for Gwen's growth and understanding.

I would like to end this review with one VERY important piece of information:

#TEAMCONNER

Cranky - The Book Curmudgeon says

5 Cranky Stars

This book is messy and it's not happy and it will pull your soul apart and then stitch it back. Maybe not in the pieces it was before but it will give you some vague sense of hope. I saw my young self in Gwen. Messy when it came to love and terrible when it came to seeing myself as a decent person. A person who deserved all the mess I got and all the heartache I had coming to me. I hope J.R. Rouge knows that this book was like therapy for me yet this isn't my story to tell it's Gwens.

Gwen is a mess. Her heads a mess, her heart is a mess and her life is a mess. She seeks love in the wrong ones some repeatedly some for a night. She suffered a tragic betrayal and horrible abuse that is now reflected in her adult life. This is her story her recounting of her life from Avery to Connor to Logan and back again. You see her and Connor come to terms with who they truly are. She will always be a rebel who wants to be free but deep down she needs to feel wanted. We even get snippets of Connor and his spiral down and why he will always love Gwen no matter how much she tries to hurt him and push him away.

I don't think my words can do this book justice it is something you must experience firsthand. J.R. Rouge bled her soul onto these pages of that I'm almost certain. Its real life peppered in with some fiction. I at times had to step back from the book because it was hitting too close to home. While no I was never abused I am the daughter of an addict so I guess in a way that is abuse.

I just want people to go into this book with an open mind embrace this story and if you see even a small part of yourself reflected in this story please keep hope alive. Embrace this book everyone you will hopefully thank me.

Abs says

The rawness. I love her writing. Holy mother.

This is between a 4 & 5* for me, but when someone writes about their brutal truth for all the world to see, you applaud

the beautiful bravery they've shown and you give them all the stars.

This was unputdownable for me. Loved.

Erica Russikoff says

I'm ashamed to admit that I've had this book for weeks and am just now reviewing it. Honestly, I needed to think about it. I needed time to process. Gwen was not an easy person to like and yet I liked her. Why? I just got her. She had been abused. She was depressed. She hated herself. She was ugly, sloppy, and weak (her words, not mine). She sought distance in relationships. She self-sabotaged. She was flawed. And I could relate to her completely. In getting to know Gwen, I felt like I got to know a part of myself too.

Being an editor, I tend to read books differently than most. Sure, I spot grammatical errors, but I also evaluate the story from the standpoint of an author. Why would the author write this scene this way? Why use these words? Why organize the events in this order? I can tell that every decision Jen made was a deliberate choice. I can also tell she struggled writing this. She's opened herself up with this book, has shown her vulnerability for all to see. That takes guts. She lived her story. She wrote her story. She shared her story. Courage, Jen. You have a wealth of it.

Jen stayed true to herself in her story and, just as importantly, with her voice. You can tell that Jen is a poet. Her writing is very lyrical. She was careful with her wording, describing just enough without giving everything away. She used words like "stain" and "weapon" and "darkness" knowing her readers would get the meaning and understand Gwen's pain.

This book was work. It was not an easy read. But that's one of the reasons why I like it. This book addresses things that I wish more authors would shine a light on. Mental health being number one. "My life was sepia and my tongue was that of a serpent." Because when you're hurting, sometimes all you can do is hurt others, because hurt is all you know. Such is the case with depression. Thank you, Jen, for making it more than just "sadness."

Pavlina Read more sleep less blog♥♥ says

4 stars

Such a great story! I love the writing so much it was poetic and flawless! I was hooked from the beginning! It was interesting and so different from whatever I have read so far! Kiss Me Like You Mean It was an intense and emotional story! Gwen isn't perfect she is messed up and she tries to hide her emotions. The story was original and you could easily feel like you are a part of it! This isn't your typical romance. I would love to see more books like this from this author!!

Inked Avenue says

"When I think of his eyes and the way they looked at me I can convince myself that my heart isn't still mangled. I can convince myself I am a little bit whole."

There are certain novels that carve a mark through my heart and demand too much; too much of my heart, too many of my emotions. They make me revisit a darkness from my past; a part that I'm not sure will ever heal. I both love and hate these novels. I love them because I relate so deeply, and I hate them for the very same reason. Kiss Me Like You Mean It left me feeling a little bit hollow and a lot hopeful. It's a vulnerable piece of prose that reads like lyrical poetry as the author exposes her soul to her readers.

Kiss Me Like You Mean It isn't just a romance novel about two people that wanted to be together, but didn't know how to love the other's faults, it's a novel about one woman's battle with depression, loneliness, and how she survives in the aftermath of abuse to find healing. The jagged writing and jumpy timeline mirrors the plot and style of this novel perfectly. It's gritty, raw, brutality honest, and hits below the belt. Gwen strips herself emotionally naked as she confesses her past to a stranger. The story is choppy and wild, but when does a retelling of the past ever flow smoothly?

The way abuse morphs and shapes its survivors will stick with them the rest of their lives. It grows and changes with each stage alongside the individual; never quite showing them the way out. Gwen and Conner's journey reflects this. Gwen views herself as the villain; however, as the reader, I don't see her like this at all, and I don't think Conner did either. She kept men at an arm's length, closed herself off, and buried her feelings. Conner struggled to navigate how to love Gwen after learning the truth, but you could still feel his steady, unconditional love even through his struggles. Both clung desperately to the idea of the other, to the idea of perfection, and to the idea that one-day things would change. They loved each other, but the never at the same time. They wanted to let go because they were slowly killing the other's heart; however, neither

knew how to let go even after it seemed the other had. Their love was, is, complicated and delicate, and can only be understood if you read the book.

Even though this novel drained me, I loved every word. Every sentence, paragraph, and chapter spoke to my soul and buried its way into my scarred heart. I have so much respect for J.R. Rogue. The strength she holds as she opens her heart and recounts her past is something to be admired. It's a novel that will forever stick with me and is one that is now a favorite of mine.

XX,
Jennifer

Donna ~ The Romance Cover says

Kiss Me Like You Mean It by JR Rogue
4 stars!!!

“You can only go to sleep with tear-stained pillows for so long.”

JR Rogue is a new to me author and it was the synopsis that really captured my attention and made me want to read it. I have to say that this author is insanely talented, the way she strings her words together, sentences, paragraphs and pages is exquisite. Lyrical prose that reads like poetry, effortless, emotional and bewitching. This was a book that I couldn't put down, another night with hardly any sleep as I devoured the pages effortlessly.

“But the problem with broken people pouring broken love into humans molded from their own flesh was you could see all of your lacking in their eyes.”

This book is hard hitting and covers a range of subjects that are times are uncomfortable and yet I couldn't put it down. A book with characters so messed up that it was hard to understand at times and yet the author then throws a glimpse to the past that makes everything crystal clear. I thought this was a work of pure fiction, but knowing it was based on the authors own experiences made this harder to read and I felt a bit sick that I enjoyed this book as much as I did. I felt empathy and sympathy for our heroine, but her actions made her hard to love at times, but none the less, once the I's are dotted and the t's are crossed the author went some way to justifying her actions.

“And what were you used to?”

“Being used for nothing more than my skin.”

I highlighted so much of this book, I mean, I highlight a lot, but the sentences and paragraphs in this book are unparalleled such was my attachment to this authors words. So why not 5 stars? The timeline is extremely jumpy, which I do not mind if it is clearly defined. However, in this book it just shifts with no heads up and at times I found myself going back and re-reading to make sure I understood whereabouts I was in their story. This detracted from my enjoyment as it kept me outside of the story when all I wanted to do was just sit down and devour it.

“Grief can alter your body rapidly. Grief had been altering her heart for years and I ignored it.”

The authors words are effortless and emotional and my connection to these characters was all in. I felt everything, I had tears, I felt the regret, I felt the uncertainty, I felt our heroines pain. Gwen’s life was a car crash of epic proportions and I felt like a voyeur looking in and yet...I couldn’t look away. Emotion oozes from every page, you could tell that this was personal, you could tell that this came from experience, the rawness, the brutal honesty was tragic, so damn tragic and yet you couldn’t help but champion Gwen to find some stability, accept that she could be loved, no matter how unconventional.

“That’s why you were so sad all the time. You weren’t just sad about the things that happened to you. You absorbed all the hurt that the world had.”

The way this book was narrated was like nothing I have ever read and it was the constant jumps of medium that really made this book. Yes, it was unconventional, but this author told the story the only way it could have been and it only affirmed her voice. This book encompasses child cruelty and the long-lasting effects it has going well into adulthood. How our early experiences morph our character, our insecurities and our outlook on life in general. How it manifests in our characteristics without us even realising and how hard it is to shift that nagging voice that digs deep into our psyche. No matter the experiences, they all matter, they all leave their mark, they imprint on your soul and more often than not, the damage is irreparable. Faceless men, alcohol, depression and mental illness are all explored with frank honesty, afraid of commitment, afraid to love. This was a unique read and one that I can highly recommend.

“I want to know something beautiful can grow from this. That opening up doesn’t have to be the end of everything. That someone will see all of this ugly in me, and tell me where the beauty is.”

Kelli Spear says

I may have to remove my rating at some point. This is a placeholder until I further review my feelings on this one.

I love me some angst. That's no secret. And that's what I was expecting here. Honestly, though, I didn't feel any. I mostly felt confused and angry.

I'm sort of shocked that this is someone's true life story, because man. It's shocking. I really don't know how else to describe it. Or how I felt reading it.

I'm so many ways, it's sad. The way she sees herself and the way she thinks others feel about her. The insecurity runs deep. The hurt, pain, everything is hard to read. And it manifests in the worst ways. Self-loathing and sabotage are the tips of the iceberg.

Maybe because I've never dealt with these issues is the reason I feel so disturbed by Gwen's actions, feelings, thoughts. I couldn't relate. So when she'd do something I deemed ridiculous or over the top, it made me angry. Like, why are you hurting yourself??? Not to mention a guy she loved so much. It's hard not to feel sorry for Connor at first. Yet, as he continued to go back, I lost that feeling too. I get that he loves her, but man. It was almost literally killing them to be together. I can't imagine living that way.

This entire tale until the last page is jarring. A trip. Loads of brutal honesty. Rogue has balls of steel putting this out there for the world to judge her. And I was enthralled. But is this something I'd want to read over and over? Absolutely not. The writing is superb. But that story is far too intense. The fact that it's real is also part of that shying away. I have partial intimate knowledge of someone's life now. Sure, some may be fiction, but it's rooted somewhere in truth. As much as I appreciated this opening up, I also need to remain a step back. So while this is something I enjoyed to some extent, I don't know that I'd recommend it for every reader.

Yeah, I'm torn. I liked it okay. I didn't love it. I'm not sure if I'm supposed to? I'm rambling and not making sense. But at the end of this story, I think my jaw was dropped and I asked myself "wtf did I just read?" Lol

warhawke says

Genre: Women's Fiction/Romance

Type: Standalone

POV: First Person – Female (Partially dual)

Rating:

Gwen's life was in shambles. After the future she dreamed of was stripped from her grasp, she needed a distraction. Connor Stratford came into her life when she needed him the most. But what started as a simple friendship turned into a decade complications that would consume both of their lives.

J.R. Rouge is a new author to me. I've seen and like bits and pieces of her poetry and I was intrigued by how this novel would be. The story wasn't how I expected it to be. It was better.

I didn't deserve tender acts from tender men. I deserved the hell I had been living in.

Right from the beginning I knew Gwen wasn't going to be a likeable character. She loved too deep and obsessed too much for her own good. Her self destructive behavior dragged her down and refused to let go.

We had too many weapons behind our backs, ready to pull out.

Connor wasn't any better. If I were to sum up their relationship in two words it would be beautiful disaster. It was painful to see how their actions (and inactions) hurt each other. It was like watching a slow motion train wreck - gruesomely mesmerizing.

The writing is beautiful but it took me a bit to get in the groove with the switching narrative. But I'm the type of reader who likes books that challenged readers' attention so I like it. My reading ADD brain also appreciates the short chapters. However there were some parts that felt too slow.

It was always this thing with us before we got together. Constant chasing and other people and never being happy with the stand-ins but pushing each other away when we were free to be together.

Kiss Me Like You Mean It is a story of hard earned love. It would appeal to readers who could appreciate the allure of messed up characters.

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