



Deacon

Kit Rocha

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Book #2 in explosive new series from bestselling author Kit Rocha...

Ana has trained most of her life to achieve one goal: to prove that anything men can do, she can do better. Now she's Sector One's first female Rider, and being the best is the only way to ensure she won't be its last. Distractions aren't allowed--especially not her painful attraction to the reserved but demanding leader whose stern, grumpy demeanor has already gotten into her head.

Deacon has spent the last twenty years trying to atone for his past, but the blood he spilled as a mercenary and assassin will never wash away entirely. If his riders knew the extent of his sins, he'd lose their trust and respect. It's easier to keep them all at arm's length, especially Ana. But his newest recruit's stubbornness is starting to crack his defenses.

And their sparring matches are driving him wild.

The passion sparking between them can't be denied, but neither can the vengeance barreling toward Deacon. When his old squad comes back to punish him for his betrayal, Ana and the Riders are squarely in the line of fire. The only way to save his people may be to make the ultimate sacrifice.

But first, he has to convince Ana not to follow him straight into hell.

Deacon Details

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From Reader Review Deacon for online ebook

(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys_sidekick says

Originally posted at SmexyBooks-<http://smexybooks.com/2017/08/review-...>

Grade: C+

Favorite Quote: Being worshipped was a double-edged sword.

Deacon is one of the few original Riders left and their leader. A self-contained aloof man with a secret bloody past that comes back to haunt him when he is called to a murder scene. Forced to reveal all his secrets, he begins to see that his inability to accept and move beyond his past has inadvertently caused a rift between him and the Riders. Only Ana, the new recruit, sees past the walls he's erected to the real man beneath.

What begins as an itch to scratch becomes a joining of souls when Ana and Deacon fall deeper than either planned. But when Deacon's old crew comes calling, demanding payment for his supposed betrayal, Deacon has a plan to deal with them once and for all. He just needs to convince Ana and the Riders not to follow him into Hell.

Kit Rocha takes us back into Sector One and gives us unfettered access into the lives of those who choose to protect the Sector and the Rios family-the infamous Riders. A skilled set of soldiers whose religion has conditioned them to believe that their purpose in life is sacrificing themselves for the greater good. However, the Riders are going through some growing pains after the war with Eden that resulted in the loss of 30 men. Gideon has solidified himself as the leader of Sector One and the Riders. He seeks not only to make this group less kamikaze in nature but he has also opened the elite group to females. Though part of a series, this book can be read comfortably as a standalone. A spin off of their best selling Beyond series, Rocha does a light recap to help bring you up to speed.

Indulging ourselves into the history of the Riders and interacting with them on a personal level helps readers to understand the ideology behind Sector One, the Riders, and our hero and heroine. It also helps to reinforce that the individuality of each Sector and their residents. While I certainly enjoyed the eroticism of Sector Four, I find I don't miss it so much in here though that's not to say the loves scenes aren't sensual in their own right. Sector One is essentially a religious cult whose residents all work for and worship the Rios family. While exploring one's sexuality is certainly encouraged, marriage is the endgame (for most) with polygamy and multi-gender relationships the norm.

Ana and Deacon are interesting characters and very much alike despite their age difference. Intelligent, loyal, protective, and skilled, both have chips on their shoulders that affect their everyday lives. Deacon has a past that, unlike the rest of the Riders, didn't originate in Sector One. He has seen and done things that he regrets and is unable to forgive himself for. Ana's demons revolve around her father's legacy and her need to constantly prove to herself as a Rider and her uneasiness at what messages she may be sending to future female Riders. Every day she unconsciously waits for someone to tell her she doesn't belong and make her leave.

The balance of the romance with the external conflict surrounding the Riders was a little off kilter. Everything felt rushed and too simplistic for the issues surrounding this couple and the team. Ana and

Deacon share a moment and suddenly they are a couple. I felt like I missed some crucial moment in their evolution from team mates to declarations of love. The emergence of the Suicide Kings and their association with Deacon is very interesting but I wish we would have divulged deeper into their background and Deacon's time with them. It's all very low-key.

Witty informative narrative and a steady pace keep the story moving along as Rocha introduces more characters to further expand this world. Ana's aunts are delightful and Gideon's sister Maricela continues to reveal herself as more complex than originally thought. Excited to see my fav O'Kane couple make a cameo appearance along with a surprise character who I hope spends more time in Sector One. This invigorating and personable secondary cast provides depth and continuity in the arc. Complex by design, we see that everyone has their own agenda and the rules are long gone. Allies and enemies alike are climbing out of the rubble of Eden, looking for footholds to regain what they lost.

The ending is an explosive affair that resolves the main conflict while opening multiple storylines as it sets up what looks to be the main arc for this series. Overall, Deacon is a quiet romance that celebrates life, love, and new beginnings. I'm looking forward to reading about the next Rider to fall-Ivan-release date to be announced.

Anna Banana says

3.5 stars

I really wanted to love this one but once again, I just couldn't connect with the romance. It felt *sooo* rushed and I couldn't understand where their emotions were coming from. One minute Deacon barely notices her and then the next, suddenly after one encounter he's really into her? I think the reason I'm having a hard time connecting fully with the romance is that these books are significantly shorter than their other series and of novels in general (this is only about 260 pages) so it feels more like a novella than anything else.

The plot was interesting but even that I kind of skimmed at times because it felt like way too much detail on plot and I kind of wish more time was spent developing the characters and their relationships. I can tell who is interested in who but it already feels so superficial and one dimensional...I really hope they give more depth to these next relationships because I am interested in reading more of these books but for \$4.99 I'm feeling kind of duped right now with the content we're given in this book.

MischaS_ says

****An advance reading copy of Deacon by Kit Rocha was generously provided to me in exchange for an honest review.

EDIT (05/09/2017): Change of rating.

Writing this review is a bit hard for me. There was a lot of thinking involved. I love the Beyond series very much; I was constantly re-reading the series and getting the copy of Deacon I just realized that since finishing Ashwin, I didn't go back to re-read a single scene from it. Realising this I was a bit skeptical; well I was skeptical also because of the Deacon/Ana duo. They didn't sit well with me from the very right beginning we knew they would be a couple. Which wasn't anything new, I was skeptical about Jeni and Hawk book because I didn't care for either of them but the outcome was good. Here? For me? Not so much.

I'll start with the better things. I love the Riders. Especially Reyes, Hunter, and Gabe. Always waiting for another scene with them.

Which was also the part of the problem. I like the book when it was Deacon and others, even Ana (okay, not really her) and others but not the two together.

And to my main problem. I basically couldn't stand Ana! The first female Rider, the legacy of her father. Bragging about it, fighting for it and then after it all, she's just a little girl too scared that others will just judge her! Come on! Everybody is always judged, no matter what!

And after more bragging about how she cannot sacrifice all she ever achieved because they are going to laugh at her for it and say that somehow she cheated, she basically does what she knows is a big No, No! (view spoiler) <---Really got my blood boiling, sorry.

So, what can I say? This book is a low for me. Saving grace for me is the rest of the Riders. And the promise of the storyline. (view spoiler) And the promise of next stories - Waiting for Ivan and Maricela which I have high hopes for! Then Gideon and (view spoiler), Gabe and definitely (view spoiler). And I cannot wait to see who will be brave enough to catch Reyes that one will be fun!

Well, as I said everything other than the couple was great which leaves me with a hard choice of rating. I'm somewhere between two and three stars. Cannot really decide but since it's so close to finishing the novel and I know I am way too angry with Ana that if I rate it two stars, I'll probably change it to three stars in a while because as I said, this novel minus Ana is pretty good. - Okay, no. This book is 2 star for me. No change.

Melanie says

My review and an extended sample of the audiobook are posted at Hotlistens.com.

4.5 stars

We are back in the world of Sector One and Gideon's Riders. The Riders are a group of soldiers who are an extension of Gideon's will. They look at themselves as having one foot in the grave, because they are willing to die for Gideon and Sector One.

Deacon has a bad history before he came to Sector One and became a Rider. He is now the leader of the Riders. Gideon knows his past, but the other Riders do not. When it comes back to haunt him, he must fess up to the Riders. He even steps down while they have a chance to decide if they still want to follow him.

Ana is the only female Rider. Her father was a Rider and will be sainted soon. She has a lot of weight on her soldiers. The other Riders have no idea how much the pressure is on her. She feels the weight of every little girl who looks up to her.

The Rider's generally don't have real relationships. The idea was to prevent them from leaving someone behind when they die protecting the sector. Plus, Ana is very concerned about people thinking she's sleeping her way into the Riders.

Again, this is a fun combination of romance, action, mystery and really great characters. I love seeing this all play out. Watching Deacon regain the trust of his Riders while facing his past was a lot of fun. Watching Ana struggle with the pressure of being the only female Rider was exciting as well.

There is a great heart-to-heart conversation between Ana and Gideon towards the end of the book. She confesses how much pressure she feels being the only female Rider. He also talks with her about defying leadership in public. That she can still disagree, but that you have to show a united front, so have those discussions at another time. Ana really grows as a leader in this book.

Narration

Tatiana Sokolov continues to do a great job with the narration of this book. Her pace and tone are always perfect for the wide variety of scenes in this story. She does a good job with the male voices, of which there are many. Her female voices are great. If you haven't tried her, I highly recommend you give her a try.

**I like to thank the publisher for providing me with a copy of this audiobook in exchange for an honest review.

Mara says

<2

God, what a mind numbing, boring book. Quite difficult to love the MCs, the romance was totally missing, and Gideon gives me the creeps. I faintly despise his holiness. And well all his family and their holiness too. :)

The plot was barely there, and I honestly wanted to DNF it most of the time.

Kudos to the wonder couple though. They can move from the raunchy Sector 4 to the holy sector 1 without a glitch.

Unfortunately this series does not seem to be the right one for me.

Marta Cox says

Ok so the ideology of Sector One is completely different to Sector Four but I can't deny the passion and focus these Riders have when it comes to protecting their people. For more than twenty years Deacon has hidden his past, staying in control and aloof. In many ways he isn't truly living just getting through but there's someone who challenges all that and the cracks in Deacons armour are getting wider . So it's no surprise that when push comes to shove Deacon really doesn't see his own value or indeed realise how important his life is to others.

Ana has been driven all her life to be a Rider and her skills are unquestioned but she's no machine. No Ana is a thinking warrior, tempered by her ability to feel and right now she's got all kinds of feelings going on when

it comes to leader of the Riders Deacon ! Their chemistry is incendiary but Deacons past quite literally comes to their door. The secrets he has kept put those he cares for in danger and Deacon firmly believes that no sacrifice is too great in order to protect those around him.

Poor Deacon so used to being obeyed and yet with Ana around he really has to face what must feel like blatant disrespect. He's fallen hard for Ana but just cannot watch her get hurt. Deacon has been alone inside his head for so long that he's perhaps broken and truly might not understand there no mistakes only lessons to learn . Actions have consequences yes but people have choices.

Ana is the only female Rider, ridden hard by her father and now trying to emulate the impossible, perfect Deacon. She's so used to putting up a calm and collected front that her feelings for Deacon lay her bare. She has always fought and now when it looks like she's lost the most important thing it's time to step up and be the Rider she was born to be.

There's a lot more depth and information about the Riders and their leader in this book. The authors have upped the ante and started to open up more about these characters who are very diverse. The titular Gideon starts to become more transparent too and the insight we are given of the man who many believe is close to godlike is very intriguing as his people skills have been learnt and honed the hard way. For now though it's all about Ana and Deacon and I enjoyed their story although freely admit I much preferred the second half with its action and huge emotional pull. The duo known as Kit Rocha have exceptional world building skills but for me it's their ability to take somewhat hostile, cool characters and make them feel oh so very real that always pulls me in.

This voluntary take is of an advance copy and my thoughts and comments are honest and I believe fair

MaggieReadsRom says

Confession time:

I inhaled the Beyond series and when the spin-off was announced I was beside myself with giddiness when ASHWIN released. But ASHWIN did not blow me away like the Beyond books. Different Sector, different vibes and Ashwin and Kora were characters whose backstories made them hard for me to click with. It didn't make for passionate and emotional intensity like the characters in the Beyond series. Also the worldbuilding had a different vibe so in short it was not the amazing read I was expecting but I did enjoy the plot, as per usual with Kit Rocha books. But the "magic" that had me mesmerized in the other series was missing for me.

Then DEACON released in the middle of a major reading slump for me so it went to my TBR and got buried there until a few weeks ago when I called out to me from the TBR and I just had to read it. And I loved DEACON a lot better than ASHWIN.

I still have trouble with the worldbuilding of Sector One (this might be the religious and worshipping stuff) but at the same time I'm super intrigued by the Riders and love the "band of brothers/brotherhood" feel. The plot and politics are getting very interesting and the passion and emotional intensity I missed in ASHWIN was definitely back in this one. I connected much better with Ana and Deacon and their romance and the heat and sexiness from the series this spun off of is starting to come back.

The groundworks and setup for future books are definitely there and I'm sure it won't take me too long before I dive into IVAN's book because I need to know what happens next in Sector One.

Sarah says

Deacon is one of the few remaining original members of the Riders and he's also their trusted leader but he's

been keeping a huge secret about his background and that past is now about to come back and bite him. Ever since becoming the leader Deacon has held himself at a distance from the others, partly because it hurts him to send them into battle knowing that they may never make it home but partly because he worries about what they'll think if they discover his secrets. When it becomes clear that his past has now put everyone he cares for in danger Deacon immediately steps up to sacrifice himself for the greater good but what he doesn't realise is how much the Riders care about him and that they'll never let him walk into a bad situation alone.

Ana is the first, and so far only, female Rider and that puts her under a lot of pressure. Her father was one of the founding members and he pretty much trained her for birth to join him, she always dreamed of being a Rider and after her father's death it became even more important as a way to honour his memory. A skilled fighter and fiercely intelligent Ana is a worthy member of the group but she always feels like she's being scrutinised and measured up against the guys, especially when she realises that she has become a role model to young girls in the sector who have dreams of joining the Riders and being just like her. Ana has always had feelings for Deacon but she hates the idea of people thinking the only reason she's a Rider is because she was sleeping with the boss so she's never acted on them. Then when she realises the danger they are all in she starts to realise that some things are worth fighting for.

I absolutely loved Deacon and Ana as a couple, they have a few issues to work through but in the grand scheme of things there is no major unnecessary relationship drama to keep them apart. They have fantastic chemistry and are both pretty good at talking things through but Ana does have a tendency to drive Deacon insane by refusing to blindly follow his orders when she knows he is making stupid choices. There aren't many that can stand up to Deacon and sometimes he needs someone who will question his decisions. The main tension in this story comes from outside sources, I'm not going to say much about that just that you can expect a lot of fighting, guns and explosions so there is lots of edge of your seat action, particularly in the second half!

We've met the Riders before of course but this book really gives us a chance to start connecting with them as individuals and as a group. Gideon's Riders may have totally different beliefs to the O'Kanes but the bond between members of their group is just as strong. The Riders promise to give their lives for Gideon and Sector One when they sign up, they even give up the chance of having a family of their own, and that has made them a little fatalistic because they don't have anything at home worth fighting to come home to. Even Gideon is starting to see the error in this, it's not that the Rider's won't have to sometimes risk their lives, and they might even die in battle one day, but they need to find a balance so that they actually live their lives to the fullest while they can. I think it's going to be really interesting to see how the group dynamics start changing as they begin learning how to live as well as to fight.

This series is turning out to be just as fantastic as the Beyond one and I can't wait to get my hands on the next instalment. I have a great feeling about Ivan already and it's going to be a lot of fun watching how Gideon reacts when he realises who the man has fallen for!

Source: Received from the author in exchange for an honest review

Jen Davis says

I am really enjoying the books in this series so far. Gideons Riders is a spinoff from Kit Rocha's Beyond series. I did not read those books, but the spinoff will give you no trouble if you are a new reader.

If the name didn't give it away, this is Deacon's book. He is the leader of the Riders, tough as nails, but no one really knows him. Turns out, he is a former assassin who was once hired to kill Gideon, the man they all serve with unwavering loyalty. Unfortunately, his old band of killers is back, and it seems that they have come to collect their wayward assassin. Deacon has to finally come clean to the team who has trusted and respected him for so long.

Anna is the only female Rider. She carries a lot on her shoulders, being the first woman to hold the position. She feels like one wrong move and she will lose all of the respect she has worked so hard to gain. And what move could be more wrong than starting a relationship with her boss?

Here's the thing. One of the reasons I was so looking forward to this book is because I love a good forbidden relationship. Even if it's not so much forbidden as at least one of the people involved feels like they can't have the other for some reason. I really thought that Deacon was going to fight harder to keep Anna at arms length. I expected all kinds of angst and teeth gnashing about it. I was a little disappointed at how easily they gave in to their attraction.

That being said, it was the only time I was disappointed while reading. I enjoyed the dynamic between Deacon and Anna as they first allow themselves to connect physically, and ultimately emotionally. These are two people who have really held at themselves apart from others, so it was a great turning point for both of them to experience the vulnerability of connecting to one another.

There is plenty of action and, as always with these authors, hot sex. The reason I did not read the Beyond the series is because I prefer more traditional one-on-one relationships in my romance. So far in this series, it seems to be one-on-one, but since it is set in the same world as the Beyond books, there are several different kinds of relationships referenced. It doesn't seem that there are any kind of traditional ménages in this world. For instance, one character has multiple husbands and wives. I mention it not because it particularly bothered me, but it's different, and you should know what you're getting into.

It looks like the next book will be about Ivan. The authors set up his romance nicely here. And I am really looking forward to seeing how that plays out.

Overall, I did not love this one quite as much as I loved Ashwin, but it was very good. I will definitely keep reading for book 3.

Rating: B

**ARC provided by author*

Anne - Books of My Heart says

This review was originally posted on Books of My Heart

Review copy was received from Publisher. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Deacon is the second book in the *Gideon's Riders series*. It is a science fiction erotica, with a new couple in each book. I think it helps to read them in order as the world building and character building continues throughout the series. This one has a bit more of the religious aspect with Sector One and I'm not sure I like it.

The couple here are Deacon and Ana. Deacon is Gideon's second in command and has been with him about 20 years. He has a shadowy past, unknown to most people. I'm not all that into Deacon, but the story here is still good.

Ana has been about the Riders her whole life. Her father was a famous Rider. She is the first female Rider. As any female knows, one has to be better than male counterparts to even join the game. Ana is awesome. I like her so much. Of course, she has to be attracted to Deacon. *rolls eyes*

Anyway, some things in Deacon's past come calling. The whole team of Riders ends up involved. It's generally smart and exciting. We learn a bit more about the sectors overall, too. Ana makes mistakes but she owns up to them and really is a solid fighter and compassionate woman.

Narration:

Tatiana Sokolov continues as the narrator, which is great. I did listen at 1.25x narration, which I've been using 1.5x speed. She handles a variety of voices well and I like her male voices. Her straight narration when she is not voicing dialogue is pleasing. Her performance certainly added to my enjoyment.

Listen to a clip:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-149056452...>

Kahea says

5 “*Stern But Bangable*” Stars

Well, hello Riders. It's lovely to FINALLY meet you all.

I know we met them in Ashwin, but let's be perfectly honest here. That book really was ALL about Ashwin and rightfully so, because I adored the complex yet simple man, but we only got a whisper of who the Riders were, but here we got an unadulterated, blow your eardrums to smithereens access into their world and some pretty decent insight into what makes this group tick. That coupled with Deacon and Ana's road to their HEA, which was all kinds of smexy, sweet and filled with heart, made it a book that I all at once savored and devoured and has me making full on grabby hands for the next on in the series.

I loved Deacon and Ana. Deacon is the taciturn leader of the Riders, but as much as he cares about them he's got quite a few walls up that keeps them at arm's length. Some of his reasons for it are valid, but some need to be bent a little. But the man is loyal to a fault and as the book progresses I loved seeing who he was as the cracks started to form and the man underneath was pretty spectacular.

Ana's got a lot going on since she is the first and only female Rider and as such feels as if everyone is watching her for one reason or another. That pressure causes many internal debates between Ana the woman and Ana the Rider, but it doesn't diminish her love of being apart of their world. I loved how her mind

worked and how her heart found ways to see what was going on beneath the surface with those around her, even if that surface was extremely dense.

I loved the simplicity of Deacon and Ana's journey to their HEA. I know that may send some of you scratching your heads considering what the synopsis states, but there wasn't any OTT angsty-ness going on. They had issues to face and a huge life or death situation, but it all made sense and that made watching as they navigated their own emotions about their attraction to each other that much more enjoyable. I loved watching as they exposed themselves to each other in every way and how they helped the other become better and stronger versions of themselves.

It's pretty evident that a good if not equal portion of my love, and rating, is because of the secondary characters and the family-esque dynamic the Riders have going on (It also helped that my favorite O'Kane couple made an appearance in the book) And, in all honesty it shouldn't come as a huge surprise since that was what had me falling in love with the Beyond series. Each character is so well written and the depth and heart they bring to the world makes me want to spend more time with them all. I don't have an absolute favorite...yet, but they've all peaked my interest. And while Ashwin was a book that acted as a bridge between the end of the Beyond Series and the beginning of the Gideon's Riders series, Deacon sets up what looks to be the series story arc and though I'm not even going to guess where this one will take us, I can say that I am totally looking forward to ride!

~ Copy provided by the author & voluntarily reviewed ~

Alison says

Awesome.

So, this is the second series set in a future dystopia after the world was rocked by The Flare. Much like The Hunger Games one sector had all the technology and power and the other satellite sectors scraped an existence. The previous series focused on Dallas O'Kane's sector four - a sector built on bootleg booze characterised by hedonism and sexual liberation.

This series is focused on sector one, led by Gideon Rios. Sector one is a contrast to Dallas' sector four, sector one is deeply religious, believing that Gideon is a prophet, a Messiah, one step away from God. Gideon and his brothers and sisters lead sector one but the sector is protected by an elite group of holy warriors on motor bikes called Gideon's Riders who have sacrificed their immortal souls in order to protect sector one and the Rios family.

Ana is the daughter of one of the Riders, she has fought tooth and nail against the condemnation of society, friends, family and other Riders to become the first female Rider, she can't afford to allow people to doubt her place by falling for another Rider, certainly not their enigmatic, aloof leader Deacon.

For over 20 years Deacon has led the Riders, what only Gideon knows is that before he came to sector one, Deacon was a member of a mercenary group of assassins known as the Suicide Kings. But his past life is about to come rushing back to haunt him when the Suicide Kings leave a calling card for him.

Kit Rocha has a real knack for creating a totally believable, yet alien, dystopian society in which polyandry

is the norm, the people are devoutly religious and a holy MC gang of elite warriors protect the populace. Deacon is a brilliant tortured hero, atoning for his past sins and holding himself apart from the other Riders. Ana is amazing as the woman trying to prove herself to everyone, herself perhaps most of all, and the Suicide Kings are a suitably evil group of baddies.

I loved every part of this book, the hot sex, the fight scenes, the vignettes of everyday life in sector one, Gideon's trials and tribulations of being worshipped, the politics of noble life - just everything.

I can not wait for Ivan's book.

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Gideon Rios, the religion and culture of Sector One, and the Riders have fascinated me from the minute I met them in the Beyond series. I am loving this spin-off series and the up-close, in-depth look we are getting of the Riders, Gideon, and his family. Deacon is the second book in the Gideon's Riders series, but this is the book where we finally begin to know the individual Riders. With each book we get a few more pieces of the Gideon puzzle. As much as I'm loving them, it's making me that much more anxious for his story. His insight and skills with both his own people and the other sector leaders has me itching for more. Long-term romantic relationships have been off-limits for most Riders, but, along with so much in this world, that is changing. Deacon, the leader of the Riders, and Gideon's best friend and right hand man, has fallen for Ana, the first and only female Rider. Their relationship is complicated—she feels the pressure to be the best and sets a high standard for herself. She knows she's a role model to the young girls of the sector, a responsibility she takes very seriously. Ana, along with the other Riders, has always idolized Deacon, so when he confesses his past affiliation with a group of mercenaries, she and the others are shocked and angry. The ensuing fallout—the emotions and thoughts of the rest of the Riders—was the perfect way for readers to finally get to know them on a deeper level. The willingness of the Riders to die guarantees a high level of tension and emotion. This book is intense and action-packed. The Riders on a mission—their bravery, intelligence, instincts and ability to improvise (including a bit of McGyver-ing) was both thrilling and nerve-wracking!

Deacon was every bit as heroic and sexy as I expected. He's always been super serious and self-contained, so to see him open up, and let down his guard was so much fun. Ana was the revelation here. Her evolution from well-trained soldier with a propensity to overthink to a confident leader, comfortable speaking truth to power (Gideon) epitomizes the strong, kick-ass women I've come to expect and love from Kit Rocha.

I have come to expect high quality, complex, intense, hot, emotional stories from Kit Rocha. Deacon definitely met those expectations.

Review copy provided for a voluntary review.

Maria Dimitrova says

When I first discovered the sectors I quickly fell in love with this world even if I wouldn't want to live there, after all I'm well aware that I won't survive even a day in Sector Four. So it was nice when Sector One was introduced and I saw a place that doesn't require insane survival skills for its ordinary citizens.

Ashwin was one of my most anticipated books of 2017 and now I feel a bit ashamed that I forgot about this series following that release. Thanks to Anne - Books of My Heart and post about *Deacon* a few weeks ago I had the pleasure of rediscovering Sector One and Gideon's Riders.

Deacon is a fascinating character and seeing the complexity hidden behind the tough exterior was pure pleasure. Unlike with the first few books of the previous series, the characters here are well developed and the book is driven by a well thought-out plot. It's true that a lot of the book revolves around the relationship between the two main characters but the book also introduces a plot-line that will take at least 2-3 books to be fully explored. It also deals with some existential problems most of us can relate to which makes it even more enjoyable.

Despite being a rather clumsy nerd myself, I could see myself in Ana as she is a perfectionist weighted down by her perception of what other people, especially her dead father, expect from her. She's deeply insecure in her own place in the world, regardless of how well she does her job, how well she fits in. For people like her nothing is ever good enough and they're driven by fear of rejection. And it's not necessary for this to be due to some internalized parental teachings (like with another character in this series). I would know cause while my parents never indicated that bringing anything other than an A from school is a bad thing it took me years to stop dreading their perceived disappointment. What helped was that eventually I grew bold enough to talk with them and their perplexed expressions are seared in my brain. Because all of it was just in my head and they never cared as much as I thought they did. I would like to say that from that moment on I never fell for that same trap but even years later I still make that same mistake. To the point that I drove myself into a depression instead of quitting a grad program that had become intensely toxic. I was so afraid of what other people will say and think that I closed myself into a narrow box that almost suffocated me.

Ana goes through something very similar and while I was reading I couldn't help but think how much this book could have helped me just a couple of years ago. Which only made me madder at myself for not picking it up when it was published. So now this series is firmly on my to-watch-out-for list. After all I might gleam some other life lesson well hidden in the rubble of the Sectors.

Bj says

4 "Follow Instructions or Your Heart" Stars!

Deacon features an action-filled plot with a touch of suspense and a love story with a touch of a forbidden love theme. For those of you who are familiar with Kit Rocha's predecessor series, *The Beyond Series*, this is a spin-off series that takes place chronologically after the war is over and is primarily focused on Section 1. All that said it is not necessary to have read the *Beyond Series* to be able to enjoy this series. If you haven't though, I would recommend that you at least read book 1 (*Ashwin*) as it will give additional background about Gideon's Riders and the royal families of Sector 1 which although not essential for an enjoyment of the romance in *Deacon* definitely help put the political and ideological influences in context.

One of the factors that attracted me to this book was the heroine, Ana. Ana is the only female Gideon Rider and therefore feels like she has big shoes to fill. Always cognizant that her actions will affect the many young girls who look up to and admire her, never mind the ones that hope to follow in her footsteps, Ana feels like she (more than any other Gideon Rider) must lead an exemplary life above criticism from anyone.

Complicating Ana's hope to lead a life as a Gideon's Rider above reproach is *Deacon*. *Deacon* is the longest

living Gideon Rider and technically her boss. As her leader, any romantic connections could be misconstrued and call into question her decisions in battle. Try though she and he might though, there is definitely an attraction that binds them beyond the normal ties of co-workers or a brother and sister in arms. And when a shocking secret is revealed about Deacon's past, and the sordid circumstances as to how he came to be among the Gideon's Rider's ranks comes to the surface, Ana's as well as the other Gideon's Riders loyalties will be tested. Can Deacon be trusted? Is it possible to love and also be a martyr and ruthless defender of one's sector as all Gideon Rider's are required to be?

The professional quandary's that Ana must navigate and survive are not unlike many of the struggles that professional women endure when their loyalties between home and work come into question. I enjoyed seeing Ana stay true to herself, including her big heart, and still find a way to succeed. Therefore I think this is an inspirational story that PNR/dystopian science fiction romance lovers, particularly women, will enjoy. Now I can't wait for the next book in the series, Ivan, which will feature Ivan.

Source: Review copy provided for review purposes.
