

# PRAISE FOR KAMI GARCIA'S THE LEGION SERIES

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—VOYA, starred review

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**“In a fast-paced series opener, Kennedy Waters encounters a ghost, loses her mother and meets a love interest—all in the first few pages... Garcia shakes it up with an ending that will leave readers reaching for the next book. This vivid, thoroughly imagined paranormal world will draw readers into its icy realm.”**

—*Kirkus Reviews*

**UNMARKED**

## ALSO BY KAMI GARCIA

*Unbreakable*

“Red Run”: A Short Story

### BY KAMI GARCIA AND MARGARET STOHL

*Dangerous Creatures*

*Beautiful Creatures*

*Beautiful Darkness*

*Beautiful Chaos*

*Beautiful Redemption*

*Dream Dark: A Beautiful Creatures Story*

*Dangerous Dream: A Beautiful Creatures Story*



# UNMARKED

THE LEGION SERIES

BY KAMI GARCIA



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK BOSTON

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*For Alex—  
May the black dove always carry you.*





Hell is empty and all the devils are here.

—William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*



Iron bars were the only things separating us.

He sat on the cell floor, leaning against the wall, in nothing but a pair of jeans. I glanced at the chain binding his wrists. With his head bowed, he looked exactly the same.

*But he's not.*

I let my fingers curl around the wet bars. Several times a day, holy water rained down from the sprinklers in the ceiling. I fought the urge to unlock the door and let him out.

"Thanks for coming." He hadn't moved, but I knew he didn't need to see me to sense I was here. "No one else will."

"Everyone's trying to figure this out. They don't know what to do about—" The words caught in my throat.

"About me." He rose from the floor and walked toward me—and the bars separating us.

As he drew closer, I counted the links in the chain hanging between his wrists. Anything to keep from looking him in the eye. But instead of moving away, I gripped the bars tighter. He reached out and wrapped his hands around the metal above mine.

Close but not touching.

“Don’t!” I shouted.

Steam rose from the cold-iron bars as the holy water seared his scarred skin. He held on too long, intentionally letting his palms burn.

“You shouldn’t be here,” he whispered. “It’s not safe.”

Hot tears ran down my cheeks. Every decision we’d made up to this point felt wrong: the chains coiled around his wrists, the cell doused in holy water, the bars keeping him caged like an animal.

“I know you’d never hurt me.”

The words had barely left my lips when Jared lunged at the bars, grabbing at my throat. I jumped back, his cold fingers grazing my skin as I slipped out of reach.

“You’re wrong about that, little dove.” His voice was different.

Laughter echoed off the walls and chills rippled through me. I realized what everyone else had known all along.

The boy I knew was gone.

The one caged before me was a monster.

And I was the one who had to kill him.

**SEVEN DAYS EARLIER**





## 2. BLACK SKY

*I'm standing in front of the burning building. Ash-covered bedsheets hang from the shattered windows, outside the rooms where people are still trapped. Inside, screams rise over the roaring flames, and my skin crawls.*

*I want to run through the wall of black smoke and save them, but I can't move. My eyes drift down to my shaking hand, and I realize why.*

*I'm the one holding the match.*

I bolted upright in bed, my heart pounding.

*Another nightmare.*

They started the night the walls of the penitentiary crumbled around me, and I'd been having them ever since.

I pressed my hands against my ears, trying to silence the screams.

*It was just a dream.*

And what I'd done in real life was even worse than setting fire to a house full of innocent people.

I had freed a demon.

Andras, the Author of Discords. A demon that had been imprisoned for more than a century.

Until I released him two months ago and he killed my mother and the other Legion members in her generation. Judging from the newspaper articles I obsessively collected, he'd probably killed even more people since then. Some days I thought about it less than others.

This *wasn't* one of those days.



I spent the afternoon in the library reading articles and printing weather charts and maps.

By dinnertime, I was burned out.

As I trudged across the muddy quad, the rain soaked through the black leather boots my mom gave me the night she died. Between the rain and the Pennsylvania winter temperatures, pneumonia was becoming a very real possibility. But it was worth the risk to wear something she'd given me.

Other girls rushed by in their uniform skirts and Wellies, dodging puddles like land mines while I stomped



through every one. It hadn't stopped raining since the night I assembled the Shift—the paranormal key that had unlocked Andras' cage—and the sky still looked as broken as I felt.

How could I ever have mistaken the Shift for a weapon capable of destroying Andras?

The details of that night were branded in my memory, as inescapable as the nightmares.

Sitting on the prison floor, with the Shift's cylindrical casing in my hand and the disks scattered in my lap. Jared, Lukas, Alara, and Priest on the other side of the cell door, urging me to put it together. The paralyzing fear as I slid the last piece of the device into place.

That was nineteen days ago.

Nineteen days since I saw my friends or heard the sound of Jared's voice.

Nineteen days since I fell outside the prison, and the razor wire cut up my legs.

Nineteen days since I sat in the emergency room while a doctor stitched up the gashes and the police questioned me.

The doctor sounded apologetic when he finished. "You're all patched up, but you will have a few scars."

I remember laughing. Scars from a piece of razor wire were nothing compared to the emotional scars that night would leave behind.

Hours later, while I was watching the storm batter the windows in my hospital room, I heard voices outside my

door. I only caught bits and pieces of the conversation, but it was enough.

“—from social services. Do you have any idea why your daughter ran away, Mrs. Waters?”

A runaway—that was the story I gave the police.

“It’s Diane Charles, *not* Waters. Kennedy’s mother is dead. I’m her aunt.”

“Your niece has been unresponsive for the most part, Ms. Charles. We need to conduct a psychiatric evaluation to determine her mental state before we can release her into your custody.”

“My custody?” Aunt Diane’s voice rose. “When I agreed to become her legal guardian, Kennedy was an honor student who’d never been in any trouble. I have no idea what she’s gotten herself mixed up in, but I don’t want her bringing whatever it is into my house. And what if she runs away again?”

“I understand your concern, but you are her only relative—”

“Who you can locate,” Aunt Diane snapped. “Have you even tried to find her father?” The fact that my aunt was willing to hand me over to a man I hadn’t seen in twelve years made it clear just how much she didn’t want me.

Aunt Diane lowered her voice. “Kennedy’s mother and I were not close. My sister had *issues*, which she obviously passed on to her daughter, and I feel terrible about that. But I’m not equipped to deal with a troubled teenager.”

On any other night, I would've stormed into the hallway and verbally annihilated my aunt for insulting my mom. But she was right about me, even if she didn't know the real reason why. Letting me live with her would be a death sentence.

"You don't have to take this on alone," the social worker said. "There are programs designed for at-risk teens. Group homes, boarding schools..."

The next morning, Aunt Diane offered me a handful of pathetic excuses. "I only want what's best for you, Kennedy. Winterhaven Academy is a lovely place, and *very* expensive." She rambled on without waiting for a response. "The doctor said you can leave for school as soon as your legs heal. I've already made all the arrangements."

I stared at the TV mounted on the wall behind her as a news station showed clips of golden retrievers and Labradoodles tearing one another apart in a dog park. The headline on the ticker read TWO CHILDREN DEAD AFTER RABIES OUTBREAK IN LOCAL SUBURB. A painful reminder that I had no idea what Andras was capable of or how far his reach extended.

When my aunt finally headed back to Boston that night, I started getting answers.

Electrical storms and torrential rain hit West Virginia nonstop on the first day Andras was free. Lightning sliced through the darkness outside my window, sending the nurses scurrying through the halls whenever the hospital lost power.

By the second day, rain wasn't the only thing falling from the sky. News channels across West Virginia and

Pennsylvania streamed live video of crows dropping out of the sky like black hail.

On day three, while scientists tested dead birds for disease, violence spread like a virus. The killing began in Moundsville, West Virginia, only miles from the hospital and West Virginia State Penitentiary, where I had assembled the Shift. The bodies of a local pastor and his wife were discovered hanging from the rafters of their church, the walls plastered with pages from the Book of Enoch; a retired warden from the prison was electrocuted, an electric razor floating next to his body in the bathtub; and a theology professor from the university was stabbed to death in his office, dozens of books from a locked bookcase stolen. None of the killers were caught.

The violence only increased from there.

The next day, outside of Morgantown, West Virginia, a Boy Scout leader drowned his troop and then himself. In Pittsburgh, a retired firefighter burned down half the houses on his block and then marched into one of the infernos. Three maximum-security prisons were put on lockdown after riots broke out and the wardens were murdered, their bodies left hanging from the guard towers.

On the fifth day, girls started disappearing.

One girl every day for the past fourteen days: Alexa Sears, Lauren Richman, Kelly Emerson, Rebecca Turner, Cameron Anders, Mary Williams, Sarah Edelman, Julia Smith, Shannon O'Malley, Christine Redding, Karen York,

Marie Dennings, Rachel Eames, Roxanne North. Their names were burned into my mind without any help from my eidetic memory.

By day six, the doctors had discharged me from the hospital, and on day seven, the headmistress was handing me the same Winterhaven uniform I was wearing now.

And it still itched like hell.

I elbowed my way through the cliques of girls hanging out underneath the massive arched walkway known as the Commons. It was the day after Christmas, and the teary-eyed freshmen were still huddled together crying because their parents hadn't let them come home for the holidays.

A pack of girls with streaked black eyeliner straddled the wall between two of the pillars—sitting half in and half out of the rain—passing a contraband cigarette between them. Across from them, the lip-gloss mafia gossiped near the bathrooms, reeking of envy and imitation strawberry.

I sidestepped my way through the cloying scent and pushed open the bathroom door. With two weeks of winter break looming, I needed to find an alternate route to the library if I wanted to avoid the drama.

Water from my uniform dripped onto the tile as I stood in front of the mirror, wringing out my brown hair. I never bothered to carry an umbrella. The rain reminded me of the night in the prison—and of murdered families and charred homes, drowned Boy Scouts and missing girls.

*Things I don't deserve to forget.*

As I twisted my long hair into a ratty ponytail, I caught a glimpse of my reflection. I barely recognized the girl staring back at me. My dark eyes were lost in the bluish-black shadows around them, and my olive skin looked pale and washed out against my white button-down shirt.

The past few weeks had taken a serious toll on me. Most days I was lucky if I remembered to eat, and the nightmares kept me from getting more than a few hours of sleep.

An image flashed through my mind. The girl in the white nightgown—the first spirit I'd ever encountered, and the one that would've killed me if Jared and Lukas hadn't saved me. All I needed were the handprints around my neck and I could pass for her now.

The fluorescent light above my head flickered.

*Not here.*

I froze, my hand instinctively moving to the silver medal on my necklace. The Hand of Eshu, the protective symbol Alara had given me.

A sudden *pop* sent a shower of sparks raining down over me. I ducked and covered my head, my mind scanning through mental pictures of the room. Was there anything in here I could use as a weapon?

*Find out what you're up against.*

I glanced at the ceiling. Black smoke coated the inside of one of the lightbulbs.

*A burnt-out bulb. Not a paranormal attack.*

I'd been anticipating one since the night I freed Andras, but nothing had happened. Yet.

What would Jared think if he saw me jump out of my skin over a lightbulb? My thoughts always found their way back to him.

Where was he right now? Was he safe?

What if something had happened to him?

A familiar knot formed in my throat.

*He's okay. He has to be. They all have to be.*

Jared, Lukas, Alara, and Priest knew how to take care of themselves, and each other. The memory of the last time I saw them, at the penitentiary, lingered in my mind.

*Thinking about them will just make you miss them more.*

I splashed cold water on my face and groped for a paper towel, blinking away the memories and the water in my eyes.

A blurry reflection passed behind me in the mirror.

I jerked back. "Sorry," I said, embarrassed by my reaction. "I didn't see you."

As I turned away from the mirror, the reflection of the room lingered in my peripheral vision. I looked for the person who had come in.

No one was there.



Battling vengeance spirits with Jared, Lukas, Alara, and Priest had taught me that paranormal entities could be

anywhere. The odds of running into an angry spirit on a hundred-year-old campus like Winterhaven were pretty high for anyone. But the nightmares and my experiences over the last few months left me feeling like there was something more to it.

Whatever I'd seen in the mirror would probably be back. I needed to be ready, and eating blueberry Pop-Tarts three meals a day wasn't exactly the diet of champions. Time to lift my ban on the dining hall.

Ten minutes later, I stood in line, scooping unnaturally orange macaroni and cheese onto my plate. I grabbed a pack of cinnamon Pop-Tarts to switch things up, and scanned the room for an empty table. The dining hall was a breeding ground for everything I hated about Winterhaven—gossip, cliques, self-pity.

Two Black Eyeliners nodded in my direction, inviting me to sit with them. Instead, I took a seat at the opposite end of the table. They didn't realize I was doing them a favor. Getting close to me was dangerous, and I had the track record to prove it.

I dropped my notepad next to the congealed ball of noodles and flipped through the drawings. It felt like watching my nightmares in stop-motion—Priest's hand reaching up from the well, Alara strapped in the electric chair, the spirits of dozens of poisoned children lined up at the ends of their metal beds. There were pages and pages of them, each image more disturbing than the one before.



I reached an unfinished sketch from a few nights ago, a figure looming over me as I slept, just like it had in my nightmare. I hunched over the page, filling in the missing sections. After a few minutes, features emerged—the feral eyes and elongated jaw of an animal, jutting out from a human silhouette.

Andras.

My fingers tightened around the pencil. I'd left out a detail in the sketch, one I couldn't draw. In the nightmare, he'd spoken to me.

*I'm coming for you.*

It had sounded more like a promise than a threat.

"Another newbie," one of the Black Eyeliners called out from the other end of the table.

A girl with stick-straight blond hair stood in the doorway, her eyes darting around the room like a frightened deer's. She inched forward, her face still puffy and red from crying, a Winterhaven welcome binder pressed against her chest. I recognized that look. Her parents had probably dropped her off this morning.

Winterhaven was the last stop for the troubled daughters of wealthy East Coast families. From runaways and cutters to pill poppers and party girls, Winterhaven accepted them all—including me.

Now the school was responsible for us, which wasn't saying much. None of the teachers cared what kind of trouble we got into behind closed doors, as long as we didn't kill each other in the process. The party girls kept

partying and the cutters kept cutting. Only the runaways lost out because the school was buried so deep in the Pennsylvania woods, there was nowhere to run.

Whispers spread through the room in seconds.

“Too young for drunk driving.”

“Doesn’t look brave enough to be a runaway.”

“I’m going with pills. Definitely.”

“Final answer?”

I tuned out the voices and shaded in the rest of the sketch. Bits and pieces of the nightmare flashed through my mind—the figure watching me in the darkness, its features emerging from the shadows, the paralyzing fear.

It was too much.

My hand trembled as I fought the urge to rip out the page and tear it to shreds. I was sick of being afraid. I wanted to fall asleep without being tormented. More than anything, I wanted to forget. But I couldn’t let myself.

“Is anyone sitting here?” The new girl stood across from me, the edge of her tray shaking. “I mean, is it okay if I sit here?” She looked even younger than Priest—fourteen maybe.

The Black Eyeliners laughed. I had already passed on their invitation to sit with them, the few times I’d eaten in here. They probably assumed the new girl’s odds weren’t good, which was reason enough to let her sit with me.

I gestured at the empty seat across from me. “Sit down before the vultures start circling.”

The girl's shoulders relaxed. "Thanks. I'm Maggie."

"Kennedy." I started drawing again, hoping she could take a hint.

"That's a cool name."

"Not really." I didn't look up.

She stayed quiet for a few minutes, pushing a scoop of orange macaroni around on her plate. I sensed her watching me, but I kept my eyes glued to the page. Eye contact encouraged conversation, something I avoided at all costs.

"So why are you here? Sorry—" She bit her lip. "That's none of my business. My dad says I ask too many questions."

Her dad sounded like a heartless bastard.

*Like mine.*

"I ran away." At least that was the story I'd told the police and Aunt Diane. Before the new girl had a chance to ask why, I turned the tables on her. "What about you?"

She stabbed at the ball of noodles. "My dad just left me here."

"What did you do to piss him off?"

A tear ran down her cheek. "I exist."

My pencil stopped moving. The anger in her voice was all mixed up with the pain, and it reminded me of the last time I saw my own father. The morning he drove away while his five-year-old daughter watched from the window.

She wiped her face on her sleeve and glanced at my notepad. "That's cool...and a little scary. You're really

good. I bet your drawings will be hanging on a gallery wall someday.”

A familiar pain tugged at my chest. My mom used to say that all the time.

“What is it?” she asked, still studying the sketch.

“Just something from a dream.”

Her eyes lit up. “The easiest way to get rid of a nightmare is to tell someone about it. Then your mind will stop fighting the bad dream, and it’ll go away.”

My nightmares weren’t going anywhere.

“Real life doesn’t work that way.” I snatched my notepad and stood up, the legs of my chair scraping against the hardwood floor. “There are some fights you can’t win.”

I walked away without waiting for a response. The last thing I needed was a pep talk from a kid who was crying because her dad dumped her at a fancy boarding school. My mother was dead, and I hadn’t seen my own father in years.

My days were full of fear and guilt, dead birds and missing girls.

*And it’s only going to get worse.*



Guilt ate away at me until I finally dumped my tray and headed for the new girl’s room. Her room was easy to find. It was the only door without any messages pinned to the corkboard, which made me feel like I’d kicked a puppy.

I knocked, silently rehearsing the apology I'd practiced on the way over. "It's Kennedy."

After a moment I knocked again, listening for sounds on the other side of the door. Nothing. Either she wasn't in there or she didn't want to talk to me.

I flipped through the sketches at the beginning of the notepad, the ones I'd drawn right after Lukas gave it to me. Instead of the disturbing images from my nightmares, these pictures captured happier memories—half-finished drawings of Priest wrapping paintball guns in silver duct tape, Alara holstering a bottle of holy water in her tool belt, Lukas playing Tetris, a rare smile from Jared. Their specialties—the areas of expertise they had been trained in—were as different as the four of them. Yet each skill complemented the others: Lukas hacked into databases all over the country and used the information to track paranormal surges; Priest engineered the spirit-hunting weapons that Jared commanded with ease; and when weapons failed, Alara used wards and voodoo arts to protect them.

Together, they were a Legion, and for a while, I'd thought I was one of them.

One sketch looked different from the rest—a self-portrait. I ripped it out and pinned it to her board, along with a note.

*I'm sorry.  
-Kennedy*

Clad in military-issue cargo pants and black boots, the girl in the drawing looked brave and determined—like someone ready for a fight. I had already lost my battle, but Maggie could still win hers.

Minutes later, I stood in front of my own door, trying to remember what it felt like to be the girl in the drawing. But I couldn't.

With the Legion, I had faced malevolent spirits and destroyed paranormal entities. Now I was alone, and I wasn't even brave enough to face what was waiting for me on the other side of my own door.