

DARK VERSE  
BOOK FOUR

LOS FORTIS TIMES

DAVLY NEWS

20 NOV 2014

RAMPAANT KILLING SPREE IN THE STREETS

The city has witnessed the most brutal wave of murders in the last two months. While Los Fortis has always had a violent history, this rampart spree is unlike any recorded. Over the past few weeks, more are reported to have been killed than in any other period. Alleged to be a serial killer, we might

# THE FINISHER

R U N Y X

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DARK VERSE BOOK 4

RUNYX

The Finisher

Dark Verse #4

RuNyx

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*To everyone who ever made a cocoon of their blanket, and never wanted to  
leave the bed.*

*This is for you.*

*There is a rainbow beyond the gray.*

*Just wait for the clouds to part.*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS IS THE FOURTH book in the Dark Verse series. Although the book deals with a new couple, there are characters and events from the previous books that heavily influence the plot in this. Reading the series in order (The Predator, The Reaper, The Emperor) is recommended for the best reading experience. This is NOT a standalone.

Please note that this book has a happy-for-now and not a settled epilogue. The reason for that is the timeline. Alpha and Zephyr's big epilogue falls after the final book in the series, and for that reason, it will be included in a novella released after the series is complete.

If you have read the previous books, this one will get darker.

This book includes graphic violence, foul language, and sexual content recommended only for 18+.

I also want to list a few trigger warnings of the darker themes. This book contains scenes of character death, murder, arson, torture, solicitation and sex work, depressive episodes, post-traumatic stress disorder, human trafficking and mentions of human slavery, mentions of violence against a



minor, mentions of sexual assault of adults and minors, mentions of illegal dogfights.

If reading about any of these is in any way detrimental to your mental health, I sincerely urge you to pause.

If you continue with the book, I hope you enjoy the journey.

Thank you.

# BOOK PLAYLIST

## SCARS - BOY EPIC

Scars - Tove Lo

Scars - I Prevail

Believer - Imagine Dragons

Be Mine - Ofenbach

Bad Things - Jace Everett

Friction - Imagine Dragons

Fisherman - The Peach Kings

Beat the Devil's Tattoo - Black Rebel Motorcycle Club

Looking At Me - Sabrina Carpenter

Glowing in the Dark - The Girl and The Dreamcatcher

High - Whethan ft. Dua Lipa

I Love Rock N Roll - Joan Jett & The Blackhearts

Teeth - 5 Seconds of Summer

Bom Bidi Bom - Nick Jons ft. Nicki Minaj

My Oh My - Camila Cabello

Glow - Ella Henderson

Capital Letters - Hailee Steinfeld

Love is a Bitch - Two Feet

Give 'em Hell - Everybody Loves an Outlaw

On My Way - Alan Walker

Push - Royal Deluxe

Pray For Me - The Weeknd ft. Kendrick Lamar

Pray - JRY ft. RuthAnne

Rockabye - Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul

Skin to Bone - Linkin Park

Soldier - Samantha Jade

The Wolf - The Spencer Lee Band

Making Love on the Mountain - The Woodlands

Side to Side - Ariana Grande

[Full Playlist On Spotify](#)

# PROLOGUE

IT WAS HIS THIRD murder that week.

His fiftieth in total, over the course of years. This one was special, something he would celebrate later.

The woman's body lay torn open in the dingy alley, her heels askew, her lipstick smudged, her eyes vacant.

He loved that look in their eyes, the unseeing gaze up at an open sky they would never fly in because he was their god in their last moments. They called him the *Fortis Finisher*. He preferred 'Lord of Death', but nobody really called him that. They would someday though, when all the murders got connected to him and the corrupt cops stopped sleeping.

Smoke seeped out from the crack between the buildings in tendrils, a light bulb flickered somewhere, and the butcher? He wiped his knife on a torn part of her skirt, the blood soaking into the white fabric as a souvenir he would stash with the rest of them. He was still high on the kill, on the chase, on her desecrated body nude to the elements. The incoming rain would wash away all evidence, the cops would never give a shit about

another whore gone missing, and the one man who owned the city would go down for it, framed for the crimes.

And the butcher—he would then be the entire city's god.

It was the *perfect* plan.

A movement in the shadows at the end of the street had him stilling. He squinted, trying to see what had shifted the thick air, and saw a silhouette leaning against the wall. The same silhouette he had been seeing at every kill for the last two weeks.

A sound pierced the silence. A lighter flicked open. A flame, barely showing a hand, before being extinguished.

The same.

Fear was not an emotion he was familiar with, but watching the silhouette in the dark, uncaring, unmoving, observing him, stalking him for two weeks, a frisson went down his spine.

*No, it couldn't be the myth.*

He said that to himself every time. A myth to many, a truth to some who never lived to tell the tale, the name everyone deep in the underworld knew to be wary of. Was that him? No, no way. The man wasn't real. It was possibly just a homeless guy who had seen everything and was scared to come out, or maybe even an undercover cop. Nothing else.

"Get lost before I cut you open," the butcher called out, glad his voice didn't have the tremor he felt.

No sound. No movement. Nothing but eyes watching him quietly.

It scared him, emasculated him, and he didn't like that. He, who had terrorized and killed over fifty women, felt fear watching a silhouette in the shadows because of a fucking underworld myth.

Sirens sounded somewhere in the city, far away at this time of the night. A nightclub down the block pounded the music as its door opened and closed.

And he just heard his own breathing, angry at being afraid, angry at feeling hunted.

He took a step back.

The silhouette didn't move; just kept watching him.

*Just a scared homeless guy, that was all.*

He pocketed his knife and backed out of the alley, slowly checking to see no one else saw him, and began to sprint away from the crime scene. But just before he turned off the block, paranoid, he looked back at the mouth of the alley like he did every time.

And like each time, a man in dark clothes stood in the shadows, leaning against the wall, playing with a lighter, and watching him run like a coward into the night.

The Shadow Man, a bigger monster than him, was real.

# PART I

## THE CRUST

**"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,  
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind."**

*-William Shakespeare*



# EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO

ZEPHYR, 10

## BROKEN BONES HURT.

Zephyr struggled to lie still, alone in the general hospital room. The nice nurse had just made her mama and papa leave her behind. They promised to come back in the morning, but they had to get home to take care of her new sister, Zenith. Zephyr called her Zen. She was five, and really pretty and quiet, but she loved playing with Zephyr, and Zephyr loved her already. She wanted to go home.

She sniffled, wiping her nose with her hand. It was cold, and her sides hurt.

“Why’s a pretty girl like you crying?”

The older woman’s voice from the bed across from hers made Zephyr look up with her red eyes. *There hadn’t been any beds in the children’s area of the hospital*, the nurse had told her parents. So, she’d put her in with an older lady for the two nights. She looked really thin and sick.

“I want”—Zephyr hiccupped—“to go home.”

“You will, sweetheart.” The lady smiled at her. She looked like she was her mama’s age, maybe a bit older. “Your parents will take you tomorrow.”

Zephyr nodded. Yes, she just had to stay two nights. “Will your parents take you too?”

The woman’s smile turned sad. “No, I’m not going home, although my son wants to take me.”

“Then why don’t you go with him?” Zephyr leaned to the side, her little mind distracted by the older lady with the tubes in her hands.

The lady laughed, but her voice broke. “I don’t have much time in this world, sweetie. I’m just sad I’ll be leaving him behind with no one to care about him.”

That was a concept Zephyr could not understand. Everyone had family, didn't they? She had so many uncles and aunts and cousins she barely remembered all their names. "He has no one else?"

The woman shook her head sadly.

Her heart broke. Everyone should have a family.

Zephyr jumped down from the bed, her side hurting a bit, and wobbled over to the older woman, extending her pinkie out. "I can be there for him. I promise. What's his name?"

The woman laughed again, a tear trailing down her face, and hooked her rough pinkie with Zephyr's. "You're a sweet child."

Zephyr nodded. She liked being sweet. "His name?" she asked, stuck on the boy who didn't have a family.

"Alessandro. Alessandro Villanova. Alpha."

# CHAPTER I

ZEPHYR, PRESENT DAY