

DARK VERSE  
BOOK TWO

THE MYSTERIOUS KILLING

THE COUNT OF MISSING GIRLS SHOOTS UP TO 25

In a grisly turn of events that have shocked the city, 25 more girls have been reported missing in the past 24 hours. It is only the tip of the iceberg. So far as the police are working on the cases, they are only the open and reported ones. The latest case is the one involving the girl named...

# THE REAPER



R U N Y X

THE REAPER  
Dark Verse – Book Two



RUNYX

The Reaper  
Dark Verse #2  
RuNyx  
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*To my parents.  
For always having my back, giving me strength and encouraging my  
dreams.  
I wouldn't be who I am without your unconditional love.  
I love you.*



author's note



This is the second book of the *Dark Verse* series and picks up directly where the first book, *The Predator*, left off. If you have not read the first book, I highly recommend doing so for a complete reading experience.

This book contains explicit scenes of violence and sexual nature. There are also a few trigger warnings I feel would be fair to warn you about in case you are sensitive to these subjects - panic attack, murder, mentions of rape and torture, mentions of human slavery.

If any of these subject matters make you uncomfortable, please take heed. If you continue to read the book, I hope you enjoy the journey. Thank you.



*The playlist is for Tristan and Morana for both Book 1 and Book 2.*

Devil Devil – Milck

Carnival of Rust – Poets of the Fall

Animals - Maroon 5

Closer - Nine Inch Nails

One Way or Another - Until the Ribbon Breaks lyrics

Every Breath You Take – The Police

Eyes on Fire – Blue Foundation

A Little Death - The Neighbourhood

Russian Roulette - Rihanna

Between the Bars - Elliott Smith

Toxic - Sofia Karlberg Cover

Hypnotic - Zella Day

Carry You - Jeffrey James

Bravado - Lorde

Salted Wound - Sia

Crazy in Love - Beyonce (Fifty Shades Cover)

Wicked Game - Ursine Vulpine ft. Annaca

Bedroom Hymns - Florence + The Machine

Cut - Plumb

Fire Breather - Laurel

Broken - Seether ft. Amy Lee

Monster - Imagine Dragons



Demons - Imagine Dragons  
Don't Let Me Go - RAIN  
Help - Hurts  
I Found - Amber Run  
Making Love on the Mountain - The Woodlands  
Lullaby - Nickelback  
Touch Me - Rui Da Silva Ft. Cassandra  
Bleeding Love - Leona Lewis  
My Heart Is Open – Maroon 5  
Partition - Beyoncé  
50 Shades - Boy Epic  
Trust - Boy Epic  
Dirty Mind - Boy Epic  
Walk Through The Fire – Zayde Wolfe ft. Ruelle  
You Belong To Me - Cat Pierce  
My Love Will Never Die - Claire Wyndham  
A Little Wicked - Valerie Broussard  
You Should See Me in a Crown - Billie Eilish  
Flesh - Simon Curtis  
Dinner & Diatribes - Hozier  
I'm A Wanted Man - Royal Deluxe  
Dangerous Woman - Ariana Grande  
Not Afraid Anymore - Halsey  
Game of Survival – Ruelle  
Shameless – Camilla Cabello  
Craving You – Thomas Rhett  
Madness – Ruelle  
Blood and Muscle – Lissie

Fear and Loathing – Marina and the Diamonds

Black Magic Woman – VCTRY

I Can't Go On Without You - KALEO

[Playlist on Spotify.](#)

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*“I love you as certain dark things are to be loved,  
in secret, between the shadow and the soul.”  
- Pablo Neruda*



The orange glow of the burning cigarette was the only flicker of life in the sheer dark, stormy night.

The man sitting behind the steering wheel looked at the cemetery on his left, his hazel eyes tracking the lovers kissing each other amidst the dead. While he couldn't see the girl, hidden as she was behind the tall frame of her lover, he knew exactly where she was, just as he'd known all these years.

He watched them from the darkness of his car, his window rolled down just an inch to let the smoke escape before it choked him. Not that he feared death, not at all. He just had a purpose, a goal that had been driving him for a very long time. He had lain in wait, day after day, week after week, year after year, taking one metaphorical step closer to his goal.

Taking a long drag into his lungs, he felt the smoke seep into his cells and mix with the ashes of his old life. He rubbed his knee absently, stroking the ghost of a pain that haunted him.

A flash of lightning illuminated everything for one split second. Had The Predator turned around, he would have seen him easily. But one of the best hunters in the mob was distracted by the woman. He was irrational, sloppy. He was emotionally invested in her.

The man watched them separate, watched the younger man bend down to pick up the fallen gun, watched him hand it to her. He watched, silent as the shadows, as the woman followed him to the waiting vehicle.

Rolling the window down completely, the man threw the half-smoked cigarette outside, droplets spraying in his face with the enthusiasm of a reconciling lover, kissing his skin. His eyes drifted to the silver ring glinting on his right ring finger, the skull chiseled down to its last details. It had been made for him a long time ago as a gift. The skull had been his crowning jewel once. Now, it was his ghost.

He'd wondered over the years about the thin line between justice and vengeance. Which side he ended up on depended a lot on the girl. He wore the ring, not for the memories of laughter and friendship, but the reminder of all that he had lost.

It was time to bring it back.



The rain was consistently coming down in sheets.

The drops splattered against the windshield and died an instant death, weeping down over the glass as occasional bursts of thunder rent the night sky.

Morana was still on the other side of that window, still looking out at the shower, still removed from the drops trying to penetrate the invisible walls and touch her.

This time though, she wasn't untouched. She'd already been kissed by them, ravaged by them, made love to by them. This time, she was drenched and wet and shivering with the force of the memory of those raindrops caressing her skin for a moment frozen in her heart.

This time, as had been that night in the penthouse, she wasn't alone.

She still hadn't turned her neck to look at him in the car.

He wasn't untouched either. Earlier, she'd watched with rapt fascination as he'd silently gotten inside the vehicle after walking away from her.

The clouds had rolled. The lightning had split. The winds had whipped.

And she'd stood outside, exposed for a long time while he'd gone behind his walls.

But not completely.

Though he'd turned on the ignition, he'd not made any move to pull the car out, soundlessly waiting for her as she'd stood to his periphery and let her eyes linger on the exact spot where she'd made her choice and forced him to make his. Their footprints had been washed away by the onslaught of rain, mud, and grass covering up on the outside what had been a turning point inside her. The deluge had also washed away most of the smudges on her body remnant from the blast and opened the graze wound she had on her bicep. That had worried her slightly, since getting it wet was something she'd avoided last night and now it was completely drenched.

Even as she'd stood feeling and contemplating the tautness in her arm, he'd not once honked the horn, nor opened the door, nor revved the engine. He'd not made a single move to overtly indicate that he'd been waiting for her. Yet, she'd known it simply because he'd still been there, a silent but magnetic presence lingering forcefully in the empty area – a sentient life amongst the death and destruction surrounding him.

Silently, he'd offered her a place behind those walls that sheltered him. Just as silently, she'd accepted. She'd made her way around that beast of a vehicle and climbed right into the passenger seat. He'd simply pulled out of the cemetery.

The warm air blowing from the vent felt good on her clammy, cold skin now as she thrust her palms directly in front of them, letting the heat from the circulation seep into her bones slowly. Allowing her eyes to roam freely around the interior of his car for the first time, she was not in the least surprised at the black leather seats that were now completely doused in

moisture, thanks to both their clothes. It was her first time in his car, a gorgeous black BMW she was slightly envious of if she was being honest.

Shaking her head slightly, she turned towards the console, seeing ‘Play Music’ glowing on the digital dash and raised her eyebrows, wondering for a second what kind of music he indulged in if he even did. Did his taste in music lean towards Rock or R&B? Or was it as eclectic as her tastes? Simple questions that she’d never allowed herself to ponder about him rifled through her mind as she took in the objects surrounding them.

Her wandering, inquisitive eyes came to a halt at a small pendant. It was really small, feminine, dangling on a silver chain that hung around the mirror in the center, a tiny round disk on it.

Without seeming too obvious, curiosity getting the better of her, Morana squinted her eyes and tried to make out if there was an inscription on the flat disk-like shape.

There was.

*‘Baby sister’*

Oh lord... it had been hers.

Luna.

Morana felt her heart squeeze painfully, all her newly acquired knowledge making her fall back against the backrest, her gaze falling to the silent man beside her.

He appeared relaxed in his seat, neither of his hands clenching on the steering wheel or the gear stick when he shifted it, his breathing smooth and even. Everything seemed fine. Except for one little thing—he was looking straight ahead with a devout concentration that she doubted he needed to



drive, avoiding her eyes since the moment he'd handed over the fallen gun to her.

Since he'd kissed the bejeezus out of her.

Morana let her eyes flutter back to that simple, small pendant, weaving in circular motions with the movement of the car, and felt her chest hurt. That tiny piece of jewelry dancing freely between them – the silver that bore the imprint of and had once belonged to his beloved baby sister – said more about him than anything else ever could. So much pain, so much rage, so many scars...

And along with the heaviness in her chest came another epiphany—the car was his territory too. Or else that pendant would never have hung there, so exposed, so pretty, so vulnerable. Its very existence in the car told her it was very, very private.

And she realized – just like he'd done at his penthouse that first night of the rain when he'd decreed she would stay at his apartment rather than leave with Dante – he'd let her into his territory. Again. Even after making a choice she could not even begin to fathom.

The aftermath of that choice still clung to her muscles, still bussed in her blood, still hummed in every cell in her body. She could still feel the cold metal of that gun against the pounding of her beating heart. She could still feel the pressure of those lips throbbing against her swollen ones. She could still feel the slide of that tongue stroking against the inside of her mouth.

A shiver wracked her frame – from the chill or the memories, she didn't know.

Questions swirled in her mind, words formed in her throat and came right onto the tip of her tongue, but she bit them down, unwilling to break the silence. She had just forced him into a spot, and knowing what she

knew of him, she understood that he wouldn't respond well to being coerced to talk, not until he'd had the time to process it all.

Or well, at least that's what she would've wanted had she been in his shoes. She was still uncertain about him, about where his brain was at, but she was alive and shivering beside him after giving him a chance to kill her. And that was enough. For now.

The sound of his phone buzzing on the dash cracked through the tensed silence.

Morana glanced towards the phone reflexively.

*'Chiara calling'*

A slight frown wrinkled her brows before she could stop it.

Chiara? Who the hell was Chiara? And why would she call at this time of the night?

Turning her head towards the window intently, Morana focused on the raindrops cascading down the glass, at the other vehicles on the mostly-empty road, aware of him rejecting the call. Whether he did that because he was driving or because of her presence or simply because he wasn't in the mood, she didn't know.

But a tiny knot in her stomach unfurled, worrying her by its very existence. There shouldn't have been that knot at all. There shouldn't have been any reaction to beautifully named women calling him in the dark of the night. She didn't have the energy for this. This was bad.

Shaking off the thoughts crowding her head, she chose to study his large hand instead as he shifted the gears smoothly, in a way she'd never had the time or inclination to. She took in the huge metallic watch around his strong wrist with a navy dial that looked expensive, the veins that ran at

the back of his hand, the sparse dusting of hair that curled right under his sleeve, the long, strong fingers she'd felt inside her intimately. Squirming just slightly, she let her gaze travel lower, looking again at the broken skin over his knuckles, the flesh still tumefied. Though he could've easily done that damage last night on the shower wall, it looked freshly bruised.

She opened her mouth to ask him about it, saw the corner of his lips pull down infinitesimally, and shut up.

Not the time. *So not* the time.

The miles flew by as he drove, weaving the car expertly through the light traffic, and after long, tensed minutes, she saw the familiar gates of his apartment complex, the building rising high into the tempestuous sky, the sea a vision on the far left of the structure.

The two guards at the gates with guns strapped to their hips nodded at him respectfully and he drove down the small driveway to the underground parking. White lights lit the entire space, gleaming on the metal of all the dark vehicles sleeping there. Morana looked at all the cars and wondered for a moment who all lived in the building apart from him and Dante.

Before she could follow that train of thought, he maneuvered the car into his spot beside his beautiful bike. Morana looked at the dark muscle on it, a longing to ride the thing again echoing in her heart, coming from the treasured memory of that first bike ride, from that first memory of feeling truly free.

Her longing cracked open when she heard the door open and turned to watch him jump out of the car, slamming the door behind him, all before she could even undo her seat belt. She got the sense that he wanted to get away from her and again, while it made her a little mad, she understood. Had she been in his place, she would've probably ditched him in the

cemetery itself and run away for her precious space. She'd honestly half-expected that from him as well.

And just like in the cemetery, though he reached the private elevators first, he didn't go up but silently waited for her. Morana quietly opened her door and locked it behind her, letting her hand stroke the seat of the bike once, the cool air of the garage making her wet frame shiver as she made her way on brisk feet to where he stood inside the metal box with his foot beside the doors to keep them from closing.

Surprised by the gesture, she entered as he withdrew, and pressed the code for the penthouse. She watched as the doors slid shut, the mirrors on them reflecting both their drenched forms. Morana stared at the picture they made. While he looked put together, his tall, muscular frame encased in that drenched suit and dripping tie, those abs evident against the white shirt plastered to his torso, she looked like death warmed over. Her clothes were slightly torn from the blast, her light-colored top now an odd shade of brown, streaks of dirt and mud marring the fabric and in places, even her skin. Her hair was matted and tangled, half in the drooping ponytail and half out of it, her cheeks were the only spot of color on her face, her eyes huge and slightly red.

The contrast between their reflections at that moment—his darker skin to her pallor; his clean dark clothes to her dirty light; his tall, broad frame to her small, curvy one; the power radiating from his very being, even in a disheveled condition at a moment when he wasn't even glancing at her, prickling against her skin—sent a shiver down her spine.

While the thought of having this man's body against her had merely aroused her until a few days ago—although to a level she'd never understood—it was a chaotic frenzy inside her now. Fascination and lust, compassion and lust, anger and lust, mingled in an ardent concoction she