



Dark Blood

Isabella Starling

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DARK BLOOD runs through her veins,
and the beast is on her trail...

For the first time in her life, Bianca Da Costa feels free, even when she is bound by chains. Kidnapped from under her mobster daddy's nose, she has no way of escaping the Hound - the Abbate crime family's most vicious hitman.

But maybe she doesn't want to escape. Maybe her savior is the dark beast himself... And to face him, Bianca will have to look right into the eyes of the monster.

Matteo Salini is trained to kill. Pumped with drugs and used to blood, he doesn't expect to flinch when he has to take Bianca's life. She's beautiful - there is no doubt in that.

But Matteo has women servicing him left and right, and he doesn't need a spoiled mafia princess to screw with his head. Bianca is much more than that, though, and her tenderness finds its way under Matteo's rough skin. She might be his only chance of redemption.

She's his prisoner, he's her savior.

WARNING! Dark romantic themes included. If you don't like your bad boys BAD, look the other way!

Dark Blood Details

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From Reader Review Dark Blood for online ebook

EpicRomanceReviews says

"Some monsters are apparent to the eye, but others hide in the light."

4.5 darkly entrancing stars!

I adored DARK BLOOD: A Mafia Hitman Romance. It is a scintillating, irresistibly romantic, dark and thrilling tale that rendered me BREATHELESS!

This first installment in Isabella Starlings Mafia Brides series revolves around a pampered mafia princess who is kidnapped for revenge by the brutish son of a rival crime famiglia. The two warring clans have been feuding for the last fifteen years and Angelo Abbate's bloodthirsty vendetta against Nicolas Da Costa has escalated to EPIC proportions.

Matteo Salini, Abbate's reviled bastard son, has been raised for the sole purpose of being a killing machine. They were making their way through the Da Costa family lineage, and fast. At his maniacal father's orders, he has already taken out his mark's beloved son Lorenzo. Now he has been tasked with the job of putting out a hit on the ailing Da Costa's precious daughter, Bianca, the last surviving sole heir to the vast mafia empire.

He is so desensitized from feeling that Matteo relishes scaring the living daylight out of Bianca when his sleeping princess awakens from her chloroform-induced slumber, chained mercilessly in a dark, dank cell.

"Hey, beautiful," I growl, stepping out of the corner.

"W-who are you?" She scrambles on her feet, trying to get away from me.

"I'm your worst f***ing nightmare."

As always, Matteo is more than happy to do his father's bidding because nothing is more important than gaining his love and approval. "I don't mind this life. I don't care that the innocent signorina next to me is sentenced to die. I'll only deliver the blow."

Growing up, Matteo was pumped full of drugs and trained by his father to kill like a dog. His moniker is the Blood Hound. "Smell blood, draw blood, kill, kill, kill." He's the best weapon the Abbate family has.

"You're a monster."

"And you're the goddamned beauty," he snarls. "Except this isn't a f***ing fairytale."

But what starts off as a routine job becomes anything but when the soulless, savage hitman finds himself powerfully drawn to his beautiful, petrified captive. The virginal beauty stirs something primal in him...."something lustful, dark and so damned delicious" and for some reason he can't bring himself to hurt her.

"I want to comfort her. But at the same time, the beast inside me wants to take her. Ravage her. Explain to her that she was made for me."

And though every instinct Bianca has is telling her to run from her menacing captor, she sees glimpses of gentle tenderness and humanity in him and she can't help but be drawn to his dark, just as he is bewitched by her light.

"I want him to touch me. I want him to do bad things to me. And I know it's so goddamn wrong, but I can't resist. He's done something to me, messed with my head and played with my heart. I'm the puppet, and he's pulling on every one of my strings."

But dare the beauty try to tame the beast?? And even if she soothes the savage inside of him and succumbs to her traitorous desires for her family's sworn enemy, can her dark savior protect her from unspeakable harm or will they both pay the ultimate price for betraying their warring familias??"

WOWZER!!! Let me count the ways I enjoyed this book!!! I knew from the onset that DARK BLOOD was gonna be an addictive page turner but never imagined what kind of overpowering visceral hold it would have over me. Ms. Starling is an exceptionally talented new author and she has a gift for striking a deep emotional chord in the reader. The hypnotic chemistry between Matteo and his beloved princess was absolutely MESMERIZING and what started off as a brutal revenge tale morphed into a captivating, deliciously dirty, achingly tender love story that ultimately melted my heart!

I was so swept up into the story, in fact, that I felt every gutwrenching emotion these characters experienced as if it were my own!! Bianca's forbidden lust--and eventual all-consuming love--for her dark, brooding captor....a cold blooded killer she should loathe with every fibre of her being...coupled with Matteo's torturous struggle between light and dark were particularly entrancing.

Speaking of Matteo, the dark mafia prince is a big, brutish mass of delightful contradictions! Fiercely protective yet predatory, swoony yet savage, wickedly seductive yet gently doting, I was drawn to every part of him and even when he'd was at his worst, his most sinister, I always saw the good struggling to overpower the bad.

Bianca was his perfect Achilles heel...so sweet and feisty and I relished her beguiling innocence as much as her unflinching courage. Even before her abduction, she was living in the prison of a different kind. She didn't ask for this life...never wanted to be the sheltered princess living in a tower, inaccessible to anyone but immediate family. But it's the life her father chose for her, and as it turns out, being at Matteo's mercy might be the lesser of the two evils.

Matteo and Bianca were a dream couple and exuded pure magic in each and every scene they shared!! They were hot, sexy, angsty, intensely romantic, and despite the dark, violent nature of this mafia romance, surprisingly enchanting too. And once they decide to fight for their love, watch out! The depth of their devotion was intoxicating and I had a plethora of warm, gushy feels throughout!! Together, their "broken pieces become one" and it is such a provocative sight to behold.

There is the perfect blend of breathtaking romance, melodrama, mob action, intrigue, subterfuge and gritty violence in this fast paced novel. In fact there were some major adrenaline pumping bombshells that kept me in a constant state of frenzied awareness. And just when I thought the worst had passed...BOOM!...another perilous plot twist unfolded.

All in all, DARK BLOOD, is a riveting, highly addictive dark mafia romance, penned by a gloriously gifted author, that I couldn't put down. Now I will wait with baited breath for the next sure-to-be-spectacular installment in the Mafia Brides series!

Espresso-Girls Just Wanna Have Books ; A Mafia Romance says

Matteo is thought to be the deadliest enforcer in the business. He is also the son of the head of the Abbate crime family, although his father doesn't acknowledge the kinship. Matteo's current task is to kidnap and kill the rival family's last living heiress, Bianca.

This is a Mafia story. The storyline, the idea of the story is a great one. Captive to repay an old debt. It's the life of the mob. This story missed the delivery component. Matteo had the reputation that incites fear in everyone near and far in Mafia circles, but he's portrayed in several scenes as a needy, wimpy, easy to manipulate, easy to abuse boy. He's beaten several times by those lesser in stature than him. It's not an easy feat to reconcile the two personalities. The story makes Matteo character contradictory and unrealistic. There are several scenes that force the reader to question the research involved, question character development, and overall to believe and understand this story required huge effort. I think with an effort to focus on creating believable characters with realistic personalities, extensive plot and scene development, and delivery of the overall story, this could definitely become a 5-star read!

Disclaimer: As always with my reviews under four stars, I advise you to consider other reviews if deciding to purchase. This review is my opinion, my interpretation of this book and should be considered as such. This review is based solely on the book and no other components outside the pages of this book were taken into consideration while creating this review. This review does not and should not reflect badly on the author. This review is simply feedback, a tool that can be used for improvement of this story only.

2.5 stars

Aisling Zena says

Free on Amazon.co.uk at the time of posting.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Dark-Blood-M...>

NC Reader says

Matteo, aka the "Blood Hound": Illegitimate son of the head of the Abbate crime family.

Bianca: Illegitimate and only daughter of the head of the Da Costa crime family.

Matteo's father sends him in to kidnap and kill Bianca right under her father's nose. Bianca is well aware of the feud between her family and the Abbate's all though she's not aware of the reasons. After losing her older brother to the hands of her captor, she should fear for her life but finds herself lusting him instead.

Soooo, I loved the plot of this story. The synopsis had me watching the calendar for its release date.

I did not find Matteo to be the badass hitman described in the description. I actually found him to be wimpy and rather weak. He's supposed to be the family's best hitman yet he hit the wrong mark and weren't even aware of it until after it was said and done. He also allows people to push him around and decide his future (WEAK!).

I wouldn't call this is a dark read either. There were a couple of scenes where Bianca was hit (punched, back handed & whipped with a belt) but they weren't detailed. The sex was not rough or dirty but somewhat boring.

TP says

I can't recommend this book.

Not in the least authentic. Limited word pool, relentless repetitions in one chapter, predictable storyline and shallow characters, if you can call this stereotypical behavior even owning a character.

In short: Shilling shocker or penny dreadful you may call it.

Susan Burgess-Ryan says

“He is her captor, and she is his salvation. (direct quote from synopsis.)”

This is my first book to read by Isabella Starling. I have to say for a first book she captured the Mafia and their hitmen perfectly. I definitely will be following her work. I loved the storyline and how the characters worked perfectly with it. The minor characters even played their parts perfectly. I can always tell if the author did their job if the book makes me laugh, cry, get mad, or even want to jump in the book and jump the Bad Boy's bones myself. This book had me feeling all those feelings. Matteo Salini and Bianca Da Costa both come from Mafia families. They are both illegitimate children of their respective father. Bianca's father treats her as if she were legitimate, a true daughter. Matteo's father treats him as scum. He even went so far as to make Matteo his killing monster. Their families happen to be at war with each other. Matteo is the Abbate crime family's most notorious and dangerous hitman. He was filled with drugs and blood by his own father in order to do his father's bidding. He kidnaps Bianca right under her father's nose and is supposed to kill her. But there is something about the Mafia princess that Matteo can't seem to resist her, even though he has women to service him from his father's house. “He is her captor, and she is his salvation. (direct quote from synopsis.)” This book is recommended for mature readers 18 years of age or older because of the violence and SEX!!!

No spoilers. ARC free book given in exchange for an honest review.

Kira says

I would have liked this more if Matteo was actually a bad ass hitman like he was described to be. He wasn't much of an alpha at all since he let a bunch other men push him around and decide his fate.

Rochelle says

Phenomenal new author who writes with passion. Amazing book filled with pain and love. I highly recommend!

Bex (Beckie Bookworm) says**Steamy Reading.**

Matteo and Bianca love story was more sweet than dark he quickly falls for his girl and we see a steamy relationship develop, with some darker aspects.

Shari Kay says

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

texxie-PRUFreads.blogspot.com says

Probably closer to 4-4.5 but since GR has yet to give us half stars. -_-

There are times, many times actually, that I end up regretting one clicking kindle freebies. This, however, was NOT one of those times. Initially, yeah sure...FREE PLUS ABS and I was sold. What a pleasant surprise! Dark Blood is very dark and gritty and could easily be 'too much' for some readers.

This book isn't perfect. Pretty damn far from it if I'm being honest. It could use a bit more editing and there were a couple of things that drove me insane. The no shower thing, I couldn't look over that. Not to mention, a very crucial scene, while powerful, didn't make a whole hell of a lot of sense to me. I mean you have a GROUP of onlookers, badass mafia types, and they couldn't stop ONE man? Really?...

Anywho, I still loved it. Despite the need for a more polishing, Dark Blood is an emotional, dark and gritty read with family at the center. Fantastic, even if flawed. I will be looking for more from this author and this series!

Jos says

4.5 Stars, GREAT debut novel

OK, from my understanding, this is her first book out, a debut, and if that is a fact then count me in on being

a follower of her work in the future!!!!

I loved it, I truly did:) The story was fast paced, it was intriguing, it was quick and easy and I read sitting out by the pool all in one afternoon!

Why not 5 Stars, well, I wanted "more" of the characters. I wanted to see their relationship develop even further. Yes, this was a quick read so i will give her that but because I LOVED the h and the H, I guess selfishly I wanted more together time with them and not just surrounded by the external "drama" if that makes sense!

All in all, I will definitely read more by her and look forward to see what she writes in the future:) I think for a debut, it was fantastic and she only has room to grow leaps and bounds:)

Lesley Book Lover says

This book needs a lot of editing, so many things just don't work for me.

Arlene Adams says

SUMMARY OF DARK BLOOD ISABELLA STARLING

My brother died two days ago. Killed in cold blood by a hitman. If I ever find the man who did this to my family, I will claw his eyes out. No one messes with the Da Costas. My brother, Lorenzo, was daddy's only remaining son. He was my half-brother, really. We shared a dad, but not a mother. I'm an illegitimate child, though that's a story for another day.

Now that Lorenzo is gone. His face makes another appearance in my mind, his blue eyes twinkling with mischief like they used to , and I feel a tear trickle down my cheeks.

Lorenzo and I had always been close, growing up together as if we were true siblings despite our mothers being sworn enemies. Lorenzo always treated me well, like a real sister. I will miss that man dearly. He was my big brother, my rock, my protector. Now, he is just gone.

"Bianca, you will need to be trained to protect yourself. You will need to be surrounded by guards constantly. I will send two additional members of security to your house tomorrow – they will ensure you are always safe," he says, and I cringe. Even less privacy. Even more monitoring. My life as I knew it is over. Daddy sits down in a sofa I have already found you a husband," he tells me His name is Giovanni Peretta," Daddy says matter-of-factly. "He is rich. You will want for nothing, cara mia." He's Fifty-two," Daddy says, My heart feels like it's taken a punch , and so does my head . I am only eighteen years old. I cannot marry a man who could easily be my father! "Why?" I ask. He will take good care of you. He will protect you. He will ensure you are safe, and it's a good business match, as well. He works in San Diego. It will be good for us."

"The wedding will be in two months," he says. Two months. Two months until my freedom is stripped from me. Not a long time for an eighteen-year-old girl.

“Daddy!” I finally get out, fear icing its way through my veins. “What’s wrong with you?” My father looks up at me with the eyes of a man who’s seen the world. He is weary and tired. He is the shell of the man he used to be, not only in his broken mind, but his fragile body, too. I am sick, cara mia, “I don’t have a lot of time left.” He admits to having a kidney transplant a few months ago now hooked up to this horrible dialysis machine. Remember, I love you,” my daddy says. It sounds like you’re saying goodbye,” “I don’t want to say goodbye, daddy.” He holds me in his arms for a while as I sob, my heart writhing in anguish. I’m realizing I would do anything for my father.

I’m pondering my own fate when I see several figures approaching us. They’re men I don’t recognize I’m about to scream when Gianni drops to the ground and a gunshot rings out in the air. An ambush. Right on my father’s property. I don’t dare make a sound. The man who has been by my side for the past ten years is bleeding to death on my daddy’s driveway. Franco is looking around frantically, realizing he is surrounded. A silent scream has become permanently lodged in my throat.

Franco looks right at me, raises a finger to his lips and motions for me to stay quiet. Maybe they won’t find me. A rouge flower blooms on Franco’s chest as another shot rings out. I watch three masked figures kick my guards’ dead bodies off to the side. I fight every instinct. I don’t scream. I bite my tongue and I pray for my life to be spared.

A masked face appears in the glass, looking right into the interior of the car. I know he can’t see me, but I can no longer suppress my scream. As soon as the piercing sound leaves my lips, I know I’ve sealed my fate. The door to the car opens, and large, strong hands make a grab for me. I’m screaming I inhale deeply, too late to realize My lungs fill with alcohol and poison, and I see dark spots in front of my eyes. Darkness and monsters, coming to get me. One of the monsters has taken off his mask and is staring right at me, a wicked grin painted on his face as I slowly plunge into total darkness. He is beautiful. A beautiful fucking monster.

MATTEO She is not a willing victim. You would think that given the strength of the drug we used and her frail appearance, she’d go down easy. But the girl has some fight in her and she struggles against me, trying to break free. Finally, she goes under and stops screaming.

I’m going to kill her to make my father proud. I’ll take another innocent fucking life, watch the blood leave her body, and dump her corpse in a grave I dig myself. I won’t feel a damned thing . I never do. I’d killed the girl’s brother only a few days ago. She would be an orphan soon, or so she thought when she walked into daddy’s mansion today. Now, I wonder whether her daddy will be left to mourn her death before his. I know that’s what my father wants. I wait for Bianca Da Costa’s body to go limp in my arms After all, we’re just trained fucking dogs, left out to kill, kill, kill.

“Yes, father,” I respond. “Don’t call me that,” he barks , and I curse myself for overstepping. I always make the same fucking mistake, even though my father has made it clear he doesn’t see me as a son. All I am is a killing machine. A rabid dog sent out to ravage the victims my father chooses. I don’t mind this life.

My eyes roam over her again. Yeah, she’s a beauty. Maybe there’s more to this than just my father’s rage at her papa. Maybe there’s another story there. I don’t get another opportunity to think this over.

«Foreshadowing»

“Bring her to the bunker,” father continues, this time in English. “Tie her down. Make sure she can’t run.” “You don’t want me to kill her?”

I look at the girl again. Bianca Da Costa . She’s so similar to me in so many ways, but so fucking different at

the same time. My papa is a mafia king, too. And I'm an illegitimate child just like Bianca. But unlike her father, mine has an abundance of sons, all ready to take his throne after he passes. He doesn't need a bastard like me. That's why he turned me into his personal killing machine.

She'll wake up any minute now. The drug we gave her was only supposed to knock her out for an hour or so, and that's how long the drive took. I sit down in the far corner of the room, partially hidden by the shadows. Just in time, too, as she's already coming to in her shackles.

"I'm your worst fucking nightmare," I tell her.

He's built like a rock, and any hope of getting past him escapes me as my eyes drink in his form hungrily. Besides, I'm still chained to the ground.... "Like what you see?" he asks me, and I try to avert my gaze. He won't let me, and he grabs my chin, making me look directly into his eyes instead. "Get a good fucking look, princess."

"Don't leave," I say, even though I don't mean for the words to slip out. he turns around, looking at me with surprise. "Why I don't want to be alone." Kill me now; just get it over with." I've been my daddy's daughter long enough. As head of the family, I know he has many enemies

"I give orders, you follow them," he tells me. "Now take. Off. Your. Fucking. Dress." In panties and bra no sex. just kiss.

"You're hurt." His voice is cold. I narrow my eyes at him, and then realize something is aching on my back. "Stay the fuck still," snarls at me. "You have a bad scratch on your back." I tense when his cold fingers touch my scalding hot skin. Instead, he applies something stinging to my skin and starts bandaging it up.

Why did you do that?" I ask. "Why did you fix me if you're going to kill me?" He looks like he doesn't know the answer himself. "Just do it!" I scream at him. "Cut me, shoot me, hang me.... Kill me." He looks over his shoulder without interest

Ashleyjo says

The blurb says: "If you don't like your bad boys or BAD, look the other way."

The blurb should say: "If you don't like your bad boys to **tell you** they're *BAD*, **but** show you they're a pussy willow within the first 15%, look for an actual DARK book deserving of a warning for *BAD boys*."

This Book In One Gif

What's The What?

Mafia enforcer MMC, Matteo, kidnaps mafia princess FMC, Bianca.

He's the bastard child of the head of his family. She's the bastard daughter of the head of her family. Their families hate each other and his family has killed all but her and her father.

Matteo whisks an unconscious Bianca off to her inevitable death. We get a chapter with an unconscious Bianca, and Matteo **TELLING** us at 8% ...

"I'm going to kill her to make my father proud."

"I wonder detachedly whether one of my men will rape her.. -

"All I am is a killing machine."

So I'm thinking...

Not hardly.

She wakes up.

Five seconds later, these two are like two dogs in heat dry humping each other. I swear I've been transported from a mafia book to some HBO wanna be porno.

She immediately trusts him despite knowing he just killed her brother a week ago.

He's went from wondering if his men will rape her at 8% and seeking his father's approval to this at 16% ...

You couldn't kill her now. Not after seeing that looks of lust in her eyes. My father hesitates, possibly the only moment I've seen him indecisive in my entire life. "She will die," he says, and it hurts. Why does it fucking hurt. I imagine her pretty face roughed up and bloodied, and it makes me want to vomit. Shit."

All mofo bets are off on killing/hurting her because he dry humps her and sees a wet spot on her innocent little pink panties for him.

So, he kidnaps her from his evil father whom he's never once disobeyed.

Off they go to his apartment to have a Dom/Sub scene straight outta FSOG - minus the sex because he ain't ready to take her virginity just yet. It was *hard* sacrifice through all her begging to be taken. Whatdaya know.. Chivalry from a trained monster.

True love~ aww.

He leaves her alone, but she can't even fathom running away now. Why? Electricity in her blood for him.

Baddamn... An actual evil villain appears to tear down Matteo's apartment door and kidnap her so he can pretend she's his dead sister.

Why, yes, this does makes 3 times she's been kidnapped in 48 hours.

Poor Matteo is beside himself with grief, guilt, and quickest voiced instalove in book history.

No fear, Matteo's daddy who hates him so much that he forbids Matteo from even addressing him as dad is there to console him and make a plan to get her back.

Silly me I thought the dude saying "she will die" meant he actually wanted her dead. I guess I should've known that was mafia code for if she's kidnapped by you for me, by you for you, and then by someone else altogether ... we'd save her, make her my daughter-in-law, and all live HEA.

Of course, the answer here is for Matteo and his dad to go to her dad for a reunion among enemies to save Bianca.

I digress. Is there really a need to tell you that they storm in with the bad guy's dick mere centimeters from rape penetration and that they save the day and her virginity before they all sit together and all but sing a lullaby to her in her childhood bedroom? No? Good, I'll spare us all the rest.

The Writing

If nonsense is your jive, then I should warn you that the writing itself is befitting for the plot and characters. IE it treats readers like complete idiots...

"I climb off the bed and find some clothes neatly folded in a stack on the chest in front of the bed. {**PRECISE, THANKS**} They're my size, in pastel pink and white. {**LUCKY, AYE**} I put them on reluctantly, only because I don't want to prance around naked. {**HOPE NOT BEING KIDNAPPED AND ALL**} It would only make the situation more dangerous and disconcerting. {**YA THINK**} The outfit consists of pink yoga pants and a white T-shirt. {**I didn't catch that it was pink and white 2 sentences ago.**} Too girly and childish for me, but I put it on nonetheless. {**DONT CALL YOU PRINCESS FOR NOTHING**} There's a set of lacy lingerie, as well, and I put that on first. {**ALL THIS TIME IVE PUT MY LINGERIE ON LAST .**}

Bottom Line

1 star.

Rec on KU; Gee, thanks, Amazon.

For The Author

This appears to be the author's first book. So, I'd like to give precise reasons why this is a one star book. • The MMC character arc shouldn't go from TELLING the reader he is an emotionless killer to him BEING a Disney style Dom in love over the course of 15 minutes reading. Same with the villain going from an unloving parent who's hell bent on revenge and genocide of a family to a caring father, hero, and all around peacefully swell guy with no explanation. • The plot is but a bunch of talking points strung together with nothing in the middle. Examples: A vendetta spanning 20 years and that's murdered almost an entire family is resolved instantaneously? Three kidnappings in 48 hours? An 18-yr-old girl never been kissed but makes an immediate and unafraid submissive to an unknown man who just killed her brother, killed her longtime guards, and kidnapped her? • Readers aren't idiots. Mundane and common sense elements are given paragraph upon paragraph of explanation, but the actual plot points go from A to Z, skipping any and all letters between. Too much fluff surrounded by zero substance.
