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Menace (Scarlet Scars Book 1)



Synopsis

Once upon a time, there was a guy who got so fed up with life that he resorted to murder and mayhem just to feel alive. Lorenzo Gambini is bored. So f*cking bored. Most people either annoy him or avoid him, afraid to face him. Figuratively. Literally. With his face partially disfigured, scarred, he looks every bit the monster the stories make him out to be: the notorious Scar. They say he's a sociopath. Maybe he's a psychopath. Whatever path he's on, people tend to stay far away from it. Until one day, a young woman bumps right into him--a woman just as fed up with life, but for much different reasons. With a Scarlet Letter inked on her wrist and secrets buried deep in her soul, Morgan Myers is running from something... or maybe somebody. Lorenzo isn't quite sure. You can bet your ass he's going to figure it out, though.

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Customer Reviews

Reviewed by Rachel & Sharon Thorne
Darhower took us by storm! Unarguably, Mafia genre is her forte and by offering us what we thought might be hoping too much for, made our day, or month or our year complete. One of the characters in Target on Our Backs, Lorenzo Gambini,

that bad boy who left us greedy to know more, is back and in full force with his own series, Scarlet Scars. To our delight, he hasn't changed his tune one little bit, either. Now then, what is interesting about this book is you don't need to read the Monster in His Eyes series to appreciate why he's like he is. The author has given little tips about his past experiences without confusing the new reader. If anything, what she has done is open up one's appetite for those who haven't had the pleasure of meeting him. Not only did she jog our memory, but she also titillated us in unimaginable ways. To write what she has took a lot of courage since she's changed her storytelling style a tad. It's darker. And how damn well it worked out! We love stories told in present and from two perspectives which she has done in many of her previous books. Even though the narrative structure in this one was more than to our liking, it's different in the respect that both protagonists ask the reader rhetorical questions making one ponder over what is going to come next. In some instances, we even found ourselves answering back in the middle of a battle of wits. However, there is nothing amusing about their story. This is serious stuff in capital letters underlined and highlighted. Not surprisingly, we loved their gritty mind games that kept us guessing right up until the end! We have to say that if there are was one character we couldn't help but to succumb to at the drop of a hat was Lorenzo. He is our man! Yep, Darhower's Mafia men we love to death and unashamedly so! Lorenzo's villainous persona, his understated comebacks regardless of the outcome, were second to none. His outlook on life's little-huge setbacks never ruffled his feathers. He is understood by no-one. He's scarred past is under wraps but to be revealed...slowly, and just how we like. He's fearless and has a moral compass that only works to serve his imperfections brilliantly. His nuances and peculiar tastes, we connected to easily. Nonetheless, he made our hair stand on end. We adored him; we hated him, we agreed to disagree with him. His quirks, decisions and impatience made him the perfect adversary for Morgan who would cross his path when least expected. Finding someone such as her to stand up and tell him what she thought was our pleasure tenfold. Ah, but Morgan plays just as dirty as him. If anything, the game is lost before it's even begun. . . I'll forgive you a lot of things, but if you tell me you don't eat oranges, we're going to have a problem. Morgan wasn't on his agenda and would become a thorn in his side. Like an aching constant, he couldn't get her out of his mind. Fathoming out this young woman who wanted to be left alone, who was so unpretentious, opens Pandora's box. Ooh boy, do things get interesting in this read from there on in! Morgan confused us, worried us and her unpretentiousness even got the better of us. She selflessly carries out her quest for freedom making the reader ask why she has to go through

such trauma. This young gal rocks and became our number one heroine without even trying to. Like Lorenzo, her past is complicated. There are moments extremely difficult to read in this book. Moments when our imagination ran riot, but here— the huge but... you don't know why until the last written word. We like to think that we can suss out the ending of a book. Not here folks, and we tried our hardest!—You're mine. I won't let you go. I can't. I destroy any man who tries to take you away from me. .—The secondary character development was beyond our expectations. Lie. Darhower is an expert in such details and has yet to let us down. Frustratingly explicit descriptions of events regardless of whether or not they were in the bedroom, have without a doubt, defeated these two readers. We were left in a blubbering mess and can't thank her enough for releasing Grievous soon. The outcome of such a nail-biting conclusion to this duet is so anticipated that we'd sell our souls for it! And that's saying something! Bravo ma'am!

The heightened suspense began early on, then at 84% the suspense level was knocked out of the park and continued right through until the final chapter. Initially, I regretted not having read this book earlier, then I hit the cliffy at the end and was glad I had waited so I could dive straight into the next book. I highlighted non-stop, with the writing always poignant, amusing or because the words were resonating so strongly I didn't want to let go of them. The frequent fairytale and movie references added frivolous imagery to the dark and dangerous lives Morgan and Lorenzo experienced. They were opposites with so many complimentary traits. Morgan quickly became an irresistible challenge to him, a distraction he craved, a puzzle he needed to solve and a damsel he wanted to rescue. He was rewarded when it was evident that only he could put life and sparkle back into her eyes. Dry humour masks the dark undertones of how Lorenzo distances himself from hurt. He used various tactics, including not using people's name to avoid any emotional attachment. There were rare exceptions, one being his young brother Leo, but then again, the reference Pretty-Boy comes a little too quickly to mind when I think of Leo, so I am going to scrap the whole exception thought! It was almost comical, with two such different siblings coexisting harmoniously under the one roof, with their quirky attitude to each other proving Lorenzo did have a streak of humanity running through his veins. Morgan is a mysterious woman, tough and resourceful, doing what she has to do to see her next sunrise. Her innocence was ripped from her as a child, but she holds on to the tricks/games her mother taught her to keep her safe. Taught to be aware of danger from an early age, she refuses to allow anyone to get too close to her for fear of being found by her father or his men. For the villains in this story to stand out, they have to employ extreme tactics. All the characters in this story have a

dark element to their psyche and although it is easy to pick out the good guys from the bad to an extent, there was no doubt as to who the evil one was. Awareness of the travesties that had been dealt out justified the indifference Morgan and Lorenzo had acquired. This story has it all—“suspense, drama, mystery, sizzling hot chemistry blended with enough levity to not feel lost in the bleak reality of the catalyst driving the plot. I am fearful of what will happen next but desperate to continue reading. I am not a reader who demands a HEA but at the moment I am willing to beg for one for all the characters I became rather attached to while getting to know Lorenzo and Morgan.

Let me start out by saying that J. M. Darhower is one of my favourite writers and her books are always unique. Also, my review includes the two books of the series "Scarlet Scars" and the spoilers in the end are about the second book. So, if you have read -in the past- the "Target on our backs" then you are familiar with Lorentzo Gambini's character and how insane and awesome he was. In this book his personality goes to an all new level. I thought that J. M. Darhower will never be able to overcome "Monster's" series and Naz's character but I was very wrong and now I am torn which one is better but I can't find my self to give an easy answer. Of course, the two stories doesn't connect in any way. This book is a lot different and difficult to take it slightly. It is deep, dark and hardcore in many occasions. What I liked the most, though, were the incredible characters, the dark humor, the witty banter, Lorentzo's oranges and the Star Wars' references. Not a simple word was unnecessary in these books. But I have some objections about some things that remained unanswered or cloudy until the end. -And that makes me to wonder if the author gives a sequel again.****Spoilers**** : What happened with Detective Jones is one thing. Did the Russians killed him? Why the same detective didn't give Morgan to the Russians? He didn't help her but he didn't fight her either. The motives were in a blur there. Lastly, did Morgan knew about her daughter paternity? This was very odd situation. Overall an amazing story.

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