



Mark of the Raven

Morgan L. Busse

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Lady Selene is the heir to the Great House of Ravenwood and the secret family gift of dreamwalking. As a dreamwalker, she can enter a person's dreams and manipulate their greatest fears or desires. For the last hundred years, the Ravenwood women have used their gift of dreaming for hire to gather information or to assassinate.

As she discovers her family's dark secret, Selene is torn between upholding her family's legacy--a legacy that supports her people--or seeking the true reason behind her family's gift.

Her dilemma comes to a head when she is tasked with assassinating the one man who can bring peace to the nations, but who will also bring about the downfall of her own house.

One path holds glory and power, and will solidify her position as Lady of Ravenwood. The other path holds shame and execution. Which will she choose? And is she willing to pay the price for the path chosen?

Mark of the Raven Details

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Author : Morgan L. Busse

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From Reader Review Mark of the Raven for online ebook

Rebecca says

4.5 stars

"There were no choices her future was dark and bleak."

As heir apparent to the House of Ravenwood, Selene has just been gifted; she's now a dreamwalker, and according to her mother, a surprisingly powerful one. Curious about an ability that the other six regions of her kingdom thought was destroyed, she listens as Grand Lady Ragna describes the seriousness of honing her skills, for she is to be the savior of her people by controlling the dreams of others to the point of death? It cannot, it must not, be true.

Grand Lord Damien from the House of Waters is convinced that the Seven Houses must unite their gifts in order to avoid an aggressive attack from the nearby Dominia Empire. When called to the House of Ravenwood for a strategy summit, he hopes to build an alliance that will bring peace, maximizing the kind of unity that his deceased father longed to establish. Fascinated by the dark beauty residing in Rook Castle, he cannot help but wonder what kind of strength lies beneath Selene's cold veneer. . . . if he only knew, and yet, he is about to find out.

"A leader can serve her people by sacrifice and love."

"Mark of the Raven" captures the essence of light and darkness within an ingenious package of daunting expectations and unique characterizations.taking its readers on a journey that leads straight to their souls.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher. The opinions stated above are entirely my own.

Phillip Cole says

Selene is heir to her family's gift of dreamwalking, and is being trained by her mother to learn all the skills, including killing. But there is something that tugs at Selene, and she wonders if the glory her mother seeks is really her destiny. After walking in Lord Damien's dreams, she finds out that there may be something better.

Mark of the Raven is a great story in several ways. First, the characters are well developed and relatable. Morgan L. Busse did a good job in explaining the personalities and appearances of the each character so that the reader could imagine how they looked and acted. Their struggles are understandable, especially as they deal with past hurts and wanting more than selfish desires. Selene is not convinced that the hatred her mother tries to instill in her is worth it. She wonders if the Light she has heard about is what she longs for in her heart.

The plot moves along and hold your attention. As you read, you are caught up in the story and want to keep reading to find out how what will happen next.

The story as a whole serves as a good illustration of our lives. Trying to live under our own counsel, we

misuse the skills God has given us. When we follow Him, He gives us gifts and wisdom to better use our skills, and to look beyond our own lives to how we can help others. Just like the characters, we struggle with making wise choices and doing what is right, even if it is inconvenient, or worse, for us.

I received a complimentary copy from the publisher through NetGalley. All opinions are my own.

Bryn says

Some books are amazing, others spellbinding and just a rare few are perfect.

Mark of the Raven is all those things and more.

In a fast paced plot, Busse tells a story of gifted nobles houses, treacherous plots, family secrets and murders at midnight.

I love dual POVs and Selene and Damien became instant favorites (I mean, it takes talent to make me cheer and ship a twosome who might become a onesome if one party follows through with their mission off RIPing the other).

But there's something else that has me reaching for this book again and again - something unique. Sure, the story is exciting, the characters engaging and the stakes are high. But we've all read that formula before. Mark of the Raven stands a rare breed with another layer and level beyond plot and drama. This is a story with soul, one that reaches into the raw, vulnerable places of the human makeup. Busse doesn't shy away from hard questions, kicks to the conscience and a deep laying bare of the desperate search and need we all have for something Other.

" Matthew 4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."

I look forward to more from this series ... like seriously, I need the next book now!! *cue pacing*

Alysha (For The Love of Christian Fiction) says

Fun fact, I actually got to meet Morgan at the Christy Awards. She is the sweetest soul, and she's a blast to talk to!

Anywho. On to what you're actually here for...the review. ?

The first book in a fantasy series is normally really focused on WORLD BUILDING. This book was no exception. From the first page until about the last hundred pages was a lot of world building. The author works to draw you into this world of dream assassins and evil plots, with an imagination like that OF COURSE it's going to take a while to build everything up.

First books in series are always a little hard for me to get into because of everything I have to retain in mah brain. So getting into a rhythm with this book took me a little bit.

HOWEVER! Once I got it down I flew through this book and I need book 2 in my hands ASAP!

This book had a great cast of characters. Each person played their respective parts beautifully!
There was a wonderful blend of villain to hero. And we ever got a mixture of both in one character.

Selene is this strong young woman on the outside, but inside she is searching for something. She knows her family was not given the ability to dreamwalk for the evil purpose it was used for. Though she hides all her feelings under the perfect mask of ice and indifference.

Insert Damien. A follower of the Light and a threat to the House of Ravenwood. Even burdened by the responsibility of being grand lord at such a young age, he was a level-headed man with a heart to save the hurting. Plus he smells like clove, cinnamon and sandalwood...?? (It's in the book I promise!)

I really enjoyed Selene and Damien, separate and together. I am anxious to see their love story pan out over the course of the series!

THEY GET THROWN TOGETHER! If that isn't the greatest thing in a book I don't know what is.
(...okay, so it totally helps they have a TON of chemistry!)

I'm interested in seeing how the author reveals the Light to Selene...?

Guys I'm just ready to see this series continue!! I really really liked it.

*I received this book from the publisher**All opinions are my own*

Hannah says

I wish the second book was out. I finished it before I went to bed, and let's just say my mind was all abuzz when I was trying to fall asleep. I had a lot of weird dreams which I'm pretty sure was all the book's fault. ;) A few themes really stood out to me. Selene often asked why and sought to find the reasons behind what was expected of her. She didn't simply accept her destiny, but examined the motivations behind it. I loved the light battling the dark throughout the book and I look forward to exploring it more in the next book.

Sacrifice. Selene's mother killed, sacrificed others and taught Selene that following in her footsteps was her destiny. However, Selene was willing to sacrifice herself in order to do what was right and experienced what it was to have someone sacrifice themselves for her.

Everyone has a gift, a talent, a knack for something. Mark of the Raven really explored how different people use their gifts. Some for good, some for bad. What stood out to me was that when we use our gifts for good, for God's glory, we are truly fulfilling our destiny, the purpose God has designed for us.

Sexuality: there was a very vaguely described rape scene. It was a really short moment, mostly just implied, and your deductive reasoning does the rest. It did make me slightly uncomfortable.

Language: the author made up a curse word which is used here and there.

Violence: there was one scene that I can recall where someone's wound was a little gruesome. There was

plenty of talk of killing and death, but was never described as a good thing. The main character comes from a family of assassins and was pressured into killing and finds it revolting.

I would probably recommend this book for ages 13 and up.

I appreciated how the good was good and the bad was bad and there was a stark contrast between the light and the dark. There was a lot of darkness in the book, but in the end, it was overcome by the Light.

Deborah O'Carroll says

Aaah, that was so cool! Now where's the next book?

I love a good epic fantasy and this one was awesome! The world was so rich and the characters were fantastic. The plot was a slow-burn kind of one, full of mystery and politics but enough spice of danger and adventure to keep you on the edge of your seat—the rest of it did that actually as well!

I love anything involving dreams in fiction so I was really excited to try this one. Like Inception in a fantasy world. :P The Dreamwalking was a cool aspect to the book. I particularly liked the soul aspect of it. I think I thought there would be more time spent in the actual dreamscapes, but at the same time I don't really mind because the rest of the book was so cool too!

I was so intrigued by this setting and loved the world-building. The idea of the seven nations and the Great Houses and their secrets and gifts was so intriguing. The political intrigue aspect of it was interesting instead of boring. It made me think a little of Jill Williamson's fantasy, which is high praise from me. ;) I was pulled into this story and loved visiting these mountains, castles, secret passages, and seaside—and the different Houses were really neat. Everything had a distinct feeling and vibrant color to it and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I can't wait to return to this world and find out what happens next, as well as learn more about the gifts—and spend more time with these characters.

The characters were all well-drawn and I loved them. ^_^ Selene was an interesting heroine and I felt bad for her and was always curious what she'd do next. I can't wait to see where her story goes from here. No spoilers but... it should be interesting! ;) Damien was my absolute favorite! I loved how the story alternated between his point of view and Selene's. It was so neat getting to see each of them from the other's perspective. But yes, Damien was a high point of the book—I loved his passion for helping people and how he had such a good heart and tried so hard and... he was just awesome. :D

I loved many of the side characters, too! Selene's father was so great. Taegis, Damien's mentor, who I also loved. Lady Bryren! Man, I LOVED her and the other wyvern riders and hope we'll see more of them! (And I don't love them, but the villains stood out too. Lady Ragna was sooo chilling.)

The atmosphere of the book was just really neat—with the rich colors, the harsh beauty of the mountains, the shadows and mysteries of Rook Castle, the autumnal feel, the meetings and gala and dances, the passages and secrets, and all shot through with so many questions and interesting thoughts, a thread of faith in a unique way, and the many varied people and cultures inhabiting this world.

It took me a little while to get invested in the story (maybe until meeting Damien?) but once I got into it, I lived and breathed it, and now I'm sad it's over. There were some pretty neat twists at the end which make me super curious to read the next book! I NEED IT.

MARK OF THE RAVEN was gorgeous and a little ominous and I was so intrigued the whole time, and I'm attached to these characters. It's a touch scary a few times but is a basically clean read which I think older teens and adults alike would enjoy, and I highly recommend it to fantasy fans! :)

My thanks to Bethany House Publishers for the complimentary copy of MARK OF THE RAVEN. I was not required to write a positive review. These opinions are entirely my own.

Review originally posted [HERE](#).

Nadine Brandes says

NEED. BOOK. TWO.

Shantelle says

Fantasy readers, be of good cheer! Another phenomenal fantasy novel has hit the Christian fiction market! *Mark of the Raven* by Morgan L. Busse was an engrossing read that kept me turning pages. I've been captured by this world and these characters, and am dying to see how this intriguing story continues! Book Two in THE RAVENWOOD SAGA can't come soon enough.

Morgan L. Busse does an exceptional job with world-building in this new series of hers. I was fascinated by all the different Houses and their histories. Their gifts, cultures, and landscapes. The House with a "*How to Train Your Dragon*" flavor was especially epic! *grins* And so many great characters! Despite the dark destiny of dreamwalking that calls her, I definitely loved Lady Selene and was rooting for her throughout this intense, exciting book. I also really enjoyed Damien's character. And so many others! Each one lends wonderfully to the story.

Mark of the Raven is a dark, tangled tale of kingdoms clashing, danger, drama, and secrets. But it is also sprinkled through with hope and heroic characters who exude kindness, courage, and goodwill. It was interesting learning of each of the House's gifts, and heart-wrenching watching Selene living out her own "gift". This battle between light and darkness is breathtaking. Though hard, I loved Damien's story and Selene's journey. I loved how this book ended. I'm absolutely hooked. Give me more of this strong, faithful hero and wounded, ice-cold, sword-wielding lady. I can't wait to see how the light illuminates their souls and changes their kingdom.

I received a copy of Mark of the Raven from the author/Bethany House Publishers in exchange for my honest review.

Jaime Jo Wright says

Ridiculously delicious! I'm not a regular reader of this particular genre but am eagerly anticipating the sequel. Highly HIGHLY recommend!

Laura A. Grace says

3.5/4 stars

Wow! What a compelling ending!

I have to admit that I thought the beginning was rather slow and just couldn't seem to get hooked. *hides* I'm not sure if it's because I was fairly sick when I started or not, but I also found some repetitive places that I began to find irksome.

However, regardless of how I felt in the beginning and my unsureness if I would come to really like Selene, the dream walking was a unique reading experience. I haven't read anything about dreamwalking and was very very engaged during Selene's discovery of her new gift. Her Mother makes an interesting teacher and one that leaves you just as on edge as Selene.

Damien on the other hand is a character I very strongly related to! Though I liked Selene, he was the one who really pulled my heart strings something fierce. I loved his dedication and his heart for others and just felt a strong connection with his struggles.

I'm definitely intrigued to see what happens next. Selene has more discovering to do and really want to see Damien's mission fulfilled. Hoping that good things are in store for them as well as the Seven Great Houses!

Recommended to fantasy readers who want a clean read with solid characters and fascinating gifts.

(Many thanks to the author and publisher for providing me an ARC. I was not required to write a review or positive one. All thoughts expressed are my own.)

Kav says

Whoa! I'm not quite sure how to write a review for this one! A bit of a departure from my usual reading material because, though I love fantasy, I'm rather picky about which books I choose. A speculative fiction story either grabs me or it doesn't and I'm not sure I can even tell you what the yay or nay factors are but I can tell you that Mark of the Raven not only grabbed me, it swallowed me whole and refused to regurgitate me until the very end...which is more of a beginning, really. Agh! There's so much I want to say and so much I can't say...ha! I'm like Lady Selene, bound by secrets I cannot share.

Busse has done some really creative world-building -- a kind of Medieval fairy tale ambiance with a lot more edge! I mean, seriously -- a dreamwalking would-be-assassin heroine?! What a hook! And I liked Selene right from the start, even though the burden of her gifting is beginning to blacken her soul. Such inner turmoil as she struggles with wanting to be the kind of dark leader her mother claims she needs to be while

not quite able to let go of what is true and noble and kind. Some parts of her story were hard to read and I kept shouting at her to find a better way but unfortunately, she wasn't dreamwalking in my dreams so it didn't do her (or me) any good!

Grand Lord Damien is the stuff legends are made of. The kind of hero who puts the welfare of his people before himself. Eager to carry on his father's legacy and bring peace to the nation, he attempts to unite the seven ruling Houses in order to create a stronghold that will keep their common enemy from invading their lands. Treachery, politics, secret alliances...Busse spins an intriguing tale around the age old theme of good versus evil which includes a compelling inspirational thread.

This is the first book in The Ravenwood Saga, and like most fantasy novels, the story doesn't exactly draw to a conclusion as much as it lines things up for the next book. So definitely a cliffhanger ending, but there's enough resolution to keep me somewhat satisfied until Flight of the Raven releases in April 2019.

Book provided by Baker's Publishing Group and Graf-Marting Communications Inc.

H.S.J. Williams says

[Okay, so I loved Selene and Damien, but the character who REALLY took my interest was Selene's dad. I mean, WHAT. The quiet, unloved, unappreciated consort husband to a powerful and evil queen....but even though he *seems* submissive, he is secretly super cool a

Tricia Mingerink says

This book is amazing! Of course, I knew it would be since I've adored every single novel this author has ever written!

This one started off slow. But the sort of slow where the plot and worldbuilding are unfolding like a flower, one petal at a time. Just at the moment when I wasn't sure where this was going, stuff started happening, deceptions upon deceptions and betrayals and plots and planned assassinations, and everything just got tense and crazy.

The worldbuilding is well done. Each of the Houses had their own personalities, and the author does a great job of writing clearly during the scenes where multiple houses are together and a great number of characters are introduced so that even someone like me who struggles with names didn't get confused.

Damien was my favorite character from the moment he stepped on the page. His introduction in this book is simply epic. Gave me chills. I still think one scene with him early on is my favorite in the whole book for how spine-chillingly awesome it is.

Selene was also a really, well-done character. It would've been too easy for her to feel whiny or too passive, but the author does a great job of making the reader root for her.

This is a great start to this new series, and now I am even more eager for book two!

Also, I read most of this book via audiobook, and the audiobook version is well done. The narrator does a really good job!

Ralene Burke says

In Morgan Busse's latest fantasy novel, she explores the life of a woman, a dreamwalker, as she learns about her new gifts and it's purpose in a world that is on the brink of war, both internally and from the outside. Filled with political intrigue, subterfuge, and betrayal, this tale drags the reader along for a unique experience.

Although there were some spots throughout the book that were a little slow for my tastes, the story continued to pick up the pace, and by the end I was on the edge of my seat! Overall I enjoyed the plot and the characters, and I am definitely looking forward to Book 2.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Emileigh Latham says

After just finishing this incredible book, here are the reasons why you must read Mark of the Raven:

1. Assassins

Who doesn't like a good assassins story? Darkly clad individuals quietly moving through the shadows to do stabby things. YES!

Well get this.

Selene has inherited the family ability to enter people's dreams and kill them, making people believe they die in their sleep. ? WHAT?! Such a dark and twisted way to kill someone. Dreams are supposed to be about ancient libraries filled with books; rivers made out of delicious coffee; amazing beasts that let you fly on their backs like dragons and griffins; and trees that grow donuts. But to go in and pull someone's ultimate fears and expand then until they have a heartattack and die is so evil! I like it. ???

2. The female lead

As always, Morgan's female leads are not the typical females asking "Who is going to take me to the ball?" Or "Will the prince fall in love with me?" Or "Will I be excepted among society?" Or "Am I beautiful? Smart? Enough?" (Don't get me wrong these are valid things.) Morgan's female characters ask "Am I a human anymore? Or am I monster? Can I be saved? Or am I too far gone?"

Personally, these were the questions I struggled with as a teen and I love how Morgan addresses them in all her books.

3. The character development

Mark of the Raven follows the story of Selene and Damien. Both struggle with questions about their positions as rulers over their houses and about how to use their powers in leadership roles. How do they want to define themselves with the authority and power they've inherited? And, how do they want power and authority to define them? It is so organic how these questions come and follow one after the other that it makes the characters so believable.

4. GET READY TO SHIP DALENE SO HARD!

Speaking of Selene and Damien, OH MY FREAK! I SHIP THEM! Through the whole book, I was hanging on every interact they had. Just waiting to see when and how this was going to happen. I won't say anything but HOLY COFFEE BEANS!

5. RAVENCLAWS...RAVENS! It's in the title!

Represent! Even the author is a fellow Ravenclaw.

6. Elemental powers

Now, admittedly, we don't get to see much action in this book. We did get two crazy-powerful water scenes from Damien and that was it. But this book is part of a trilogy and there is a war coming, sooooo...I'm excited to see some elemental power smash in the future!

7. The grief

This isn't a spoiler. I promise. Damien loses his family two years before the book begins. I appreciated how Morgan handled the grief. As someone that has recently lost a family member, I was able to relate to what he was feeling and experiencing.

8. Everybody was clearly defined

So, I don't know what magic Morgan used to perform this amazing act but I was able to follow and keep track of who was who, what power they possessed, and where they came. There were so many people and countries and powers but I did it. I remembered every single person. I think a cake must have been sacrificed for this to have come to pass.

9. The build-up

Morgan does an amazing job of slowly building up the story until the last 150 pages you just want to marathon your way to the end.

10. THE ENDING!!!

OH. MY. FLIPPING. FREAKING. BLAZING. STARS!!!! THAT ENDING!!! I WANT MORE SO BADLY! GAH! Luckily book 2 comes out in April 2019. Which means NOT WAITING FOR A WHOLE YEAR!

But still, I HAVE TO WAIT!!! NO!

11. Basically: READ THIS!
