



Night of the Assassin: (Assassin Series Prequel)

Russell Blake

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Night of the Assassin is the gritty, edge-of-your seat prequel to King of Swords. A no-holds-barred, breakneck-paced thriller, Night of the Assassin charts the early years of El Rey - the King of Swords - a super-assassin responsible for some of the world's most spectacular and daring executions.

Framed against the backdrop of present-day Mexico's brutal narco-trafficking violence, Night of the Assassin chronicles the making of a monster - a cold-blooded, ruthless killing machine. Raw, disturbing, edgy and unflinching, this epic saga defies convention to create a roller-coaster of intrigue, suspense and thrills that will leave even the most jaded thriller aficionados gasping for breath.

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A Q & A for Night of the Assassin with bestselling author Russell Blake

Question: Night of the Assassin uses often bloody, shocking imagery. Why write the novel that way?

Russell Blake: I wanted to write a barreling, no-holds-barred Lamborghini of a book, with unexpected twists and turns that left you with your stomach in knots, afraid to turn off the lights. Mexico's drug war sees over eight thousand people dead every year from cartel violence that's savage and ruthless. I wanted to capture that lurid, blood-soaked reality and make it visceral, make it real for the reader, and also leave them feeling like they'd been through a disturbing, tangible experience. I used a variety of techniques to achieve that, and the evocative and shocking scenes are one of them. There are a few images that will have readers cringing and will cause nightmares, so this isn't for the faint of heart.

Q: Night of the Assassin is the prequel to King of Swords. Why write this after that novel was released?

RB: The villain of KOS is El Rey, the assassin who uses the tarot card, the King of Swords, as his signature. After I finished writing KOS, I couldn't get him out of my head, and I immediately started writing Night. It was like a compulsion, and I couldn't shake it. So I got it onto paper as immediately as I could, so I wouldn't lose the essence of the character. The result, I've been told, does KOS justice.

Q: Night of the Assassin is set in Mexico, as well as Australia. The descriptions are very vivid. Have you ever been there?

RB: I live in Mexico, so the descriptions better jump off the page. And I spent a lot of time knocking around Australia, so I'm more than passing familiar with all the locations in the book.

Q: What is your ideal reader like?

RB: My readers are intelligent, savvy, jaded, and demand a lot out of their thrillers. I write for those who have read all the big names, and I expect my work to be compared against the Forsyths and Ludlums of the

world. I write my thrillers even faster-paced, so they'll show positively and leave a lasting impression. I grew up on Day of the Jackal and The Bourne trilogy, and that's the level I try to write to every page. Even though Night is a prequel, it's designed to knock readers' socks off from the first sentences.

Q: Some of the scenes are so graphic they make you wince. Have you gotten flack for that?

RB: I had a few readers say they were reading between their fingers as they hid their eyes. That tells me I did my job as a storyteller. I think good fiction should take you out of reality, and some of the scenes in Night will stay with you long after the book's done. The scenes are paced for specific effect, & I like how they wound up working.

Q: You use flashbacks in the early chapters of the book. Why use that technique?

RB: Sometimes you can allude to things in a character's past, but other times it's better to bring the reader to the event in order to make it more vivid. There were a few seminal events I felt needed to be memorialized as whole sections based in the past rather than discussed as part of the present. Flashbacks are the best mechanism to accomplish that I know of.

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