

Birth of a Killer (The Saga of Larten Crepsley)

By Darren Shan

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Before Cirque Du Freak...Before the war with the vampaneze... Before he was a vampire... Larten Crepsley was a boy.

As a child laborer many centuries ago, Larten Crepsley did his job well and without complaint, until the day the foreman killed his cousin as an example to the other children.

In that moment, young Larten flew into a rage that the foreman wouldn't survive. Forced to live on the run, Larten now sleeps in crypts and eats cobwebs to get by. And when a vampire named Seba offers him protection and training as a vampire's assistant, Larten agrees. This is his story.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Gr 6-8-This adventure story traces the early life of master vampire Larten Crepsley. Sent to work in a Dickensian factory, young Larten kills the abusive foreman and flees. He takes shelter in a cemetery crypt where he meets the 500-year-old vampire General Seba Nile, who explains to the terrified youngster that vampires aren't evil. Although they drink human blood, just as the legends say, they do not harm those on whom they feed. When he invites Larten to travel with him as his assistant, the boy agrees. As the first entry in a projected series, this story includes quite a bit of exposition. The plot action covers more than 20 years, taking Larten through his first "blooding" and into full vampire status, and features his first meetings with mysterious Cirque owner Hibernius Tall; Seba's vampire ally Paris Skyle; and the vampaneze Murlough. At times, the pacing feels rather rushed with the effort to introduce many important characters, settings, and themes from Shan's "Cirque du Freak" saga (Little, Brown). Transitions are often abrupt, jumping several years between chapters. A cliff-hanger ending promises further revelations. "Cirque du Freak" aficionados will be intrigued by this glimpse into Crepsley's formative years, but the uninitiated will want to read the original books first.-Elaine E. Knight, Lincoln Elementary Schools, IL (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Review
"His writing is slick, his dialogue sharp and clever, his plotting immaculate. His books ooze with the kind of creepy, dark atmosphere and powerful characters that young teenage readers lap up. Shan is honing his craft with every book, and I look forward to the next gore-fest with relish." Irish Independent "Forget Stephen King, this author's the master of scaring children." The Big Issue in Scotland "A tantalising start to the series and a must-read for Darren Shan fans." Books Quarterly Praise for Cirque Du Freak: "...fast-paced and compelling book ...full of satisfyingly macabre touches...which leaves the reader hungry for more." JK Rowling "Brilliant, macabre tale." Guardian "I read Cirque Du Freak last week. I loved it. I love the way you manage to juggle the funny with the unpleasant, the affection with the hurt. It's great story-telling." Roddy Doyle Praise for The Vampire's Assistant: "The Vampire's Assistant blazes a thrilling, gruesome trail through a fascinating plot." The Good Book Guide Praise for Vampire Mountain: "Get your teeth into it!" Funday Times

About the Author
Darren Shan is the New York Times bestselling author of Cirque Du Freak and The Demonata, whose novels have sold over 15 million copies worldwide. Darren lives in Ireland, where he writes and collects art, comics, and film.

Users Review

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