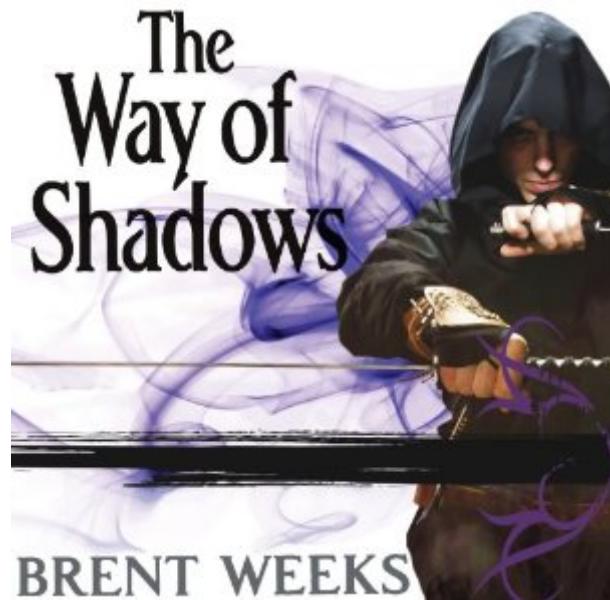


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The Way Of Shadows: Night Angel Trilogy, Book 1



Synopsis

For Durzo Blint, assassination is an art-and he is the city's most accomplished artist, his talents required from alleyway to courtly boudoir. For Azoth, survival is precarious, something you never take for granted. As a guild rat, he's grown up in the slums and learned to judge people quickly-and to take risks. Risks like apprenticing himself to Durzo Blint. But to be accepted, Azoth must turn his back on his old life and embrace a new identity and name. As Kylar Stern, he must learn to navigate the assassins' world of dangerous politics and strange magics-and cultivate a flair for death. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Way of Shadows is the first in the Night Angel Trilogy by newcomer Brent Weeks. Let me start by saying that Brent Weeks writes action like Jet Li fights! He seems to have a good understanding of how action sequences flow and how to describe them in such a way that they are detailed without bogging down. Bravo. The story begins with some frankly darkly disturbing descriptions of life on the streets which include child sexual abuse and extreme violence. Though The Way of Shadows is fiction, there is a sad truth in the darkness that these children face and the extreme actions that the fight for survival creates within humankind. This portion of the story could happen anywhere in any big city on Earth; and because of this Weeks' characters and motivations are believable and three dimensional. One of the mistakes that new fantasy writers often make is to become so excited by their magic and dragons that they forget that all good stories are about people. Brent Weeks I'm

happy to say does not make this mistake. His story is about people and their motivations first and magic and abilities second. Our similarities bind us, but our differences make us interesting. Young Azoth sells his soul to a "Devil" by the name of Durzo Blint in order to protect his friends Jaral and Doll-girl. Blint is a "wetboy" or super assassin, who's abilities are trained, but also a product of his "Talent"...an innate magic that augments his ninja-like skills. At first glance Blint is a complete sociopath with no connection to the humanity around him. Azoth turns out to have the abilities to become the physical equal of Durzo Blint, but the real story takes off when he is tested in order to discover if he has the heart (or lack thereof) to become a Wetboy. I loved this story and anxiously await the next two novels to be released in October and November of '08. If you like your fantasy gritty in the vein of Matthew Woodring Stover and George R.R. Martin you'll enjoy this new treat by first time novelist Brent Weeks.

I picked this book up at random from Borders. Always had a weakness for assassin stories, and I was excited to be able to experience a new series from the beginning as it was being released. To be perfectly blunt, "The Way of Shadows" is a great concept with some very professional execution. The protagonist is interesting to follow around as he is swept up from the life of a common street rat and into that of a calculating assassin, or "wetboy" (didn't care for the title, sounds funny), whilst under the tutelage of Cenaria's best-of-the-best killer for hire, Durzo Blint. In stark contrast to the almost YA writing style, this book manages to pick up some very haunting themes including child abuse and prostitution. This makes the characters' ordeal that much more chilling, when they begin to find that the unforgiving life of the city is more of an enemy than anything else they've experienced. You can feel this presence of turmoil pick away at them slowly through the first pages, and then slip away as everyone makes their "escape" from the street life. As for the assassin's journey, it's more than exceptional. The real drama of the story isn't in the actual killing at all, but in dealing with the very morality of the situation. Watching Kylar hesitate and choke as he attempted to take his first life was heart-stopping in itself. The only real gripe I had with the book, and it is, unfortunately, a rather large one, is the story structure itself. As the book progresses, it seems that every named character gets their own perspective. I found myself getting absolutely absorbed into Kylar's story, and then, all of a sudden, I'm reading about someone else. This happens soooo many times, and while I understand the author's reasons, as he wanted all the cards to be out on the table, eventually these constant cutaways to (in some instances) throw-away characters becomes very annoying, and actually persuaded me to put the book down for the night a couple times. These cutaways not only put a damper on the flow, but made the whole story much more complicated. As

if to solve this at times, the characters also drift into page-length monologues to explain...everything. If some of these cutaways and monologues had been removed, there would be a much tighter novel in its place. Instead, they sit there and make the 600 or so pages much more intimidating as time goes by. Now, that may seem like a complete turn-off, but it shouldn't be. This novel is greater than the sum of its parts. Kylar's journey (while interrupted at times) crosses paths with some great and interesting characters who are simply a joy to read about. I'm glad that I only have to wait a month for the next book, and I hope that Mr. Weeks can prove that the land of Midcyru can stand on its own two feet after a promising start.

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