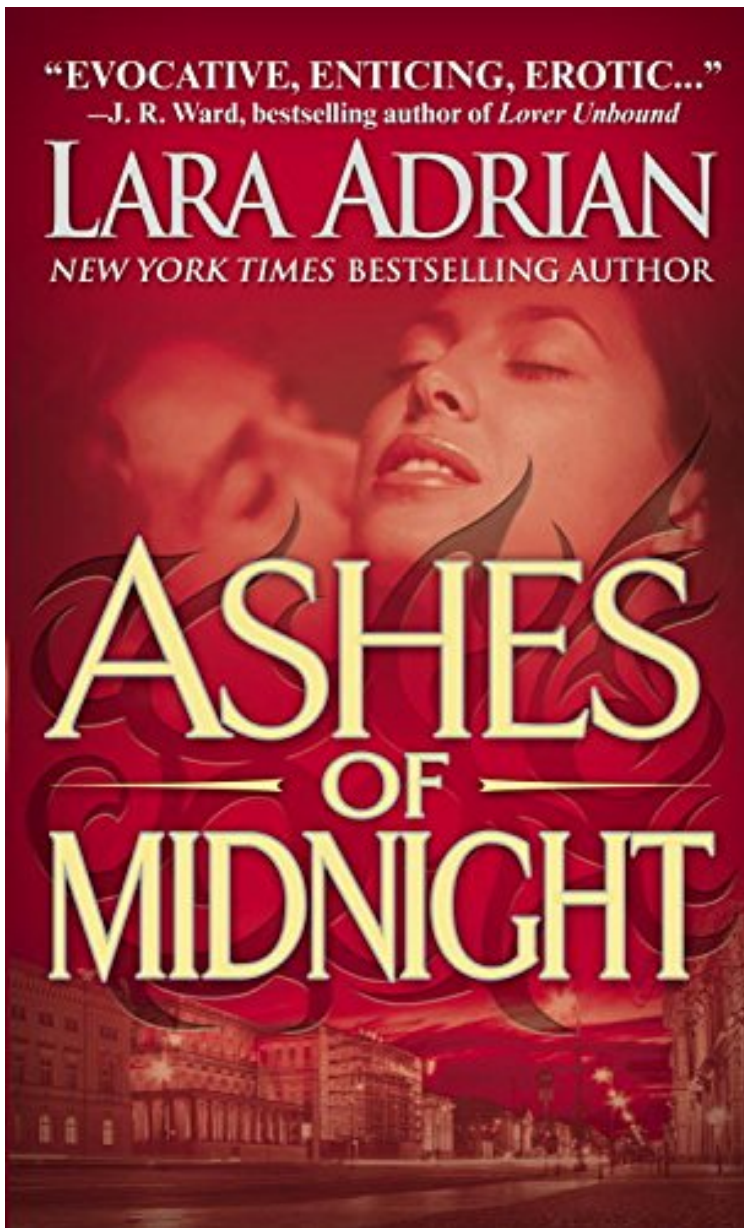


[Download pdf] File size: 27.Mb

Ashes of Midnight: A Midnight Breed Novel



Par Lara Adrian
ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub |
DOC | audiobook

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #326506 dans eBooksPubli le: 2009-05-09Sorti le: 2009-05-26Format: Ebook Kindle

[Download pdf] Ashes of Midnight: A Midnight Breed Novel

Par Lara Adrian : Ashes of Midnight: A Midnight Breed Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ashes of Midnight: A Midnight Breed Novel:

Download

Read Online

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurBONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Lara Adrian's Shades of Midnight.A woman driven by blood. A man thirsting for vengeance. A place where darkness and desire meet... As night falls, Claire Roth flees, driven from her home by a fiery threat that seems to come from hell itself. Then, from out of the flames and ash, a vampire warrior emerges. He is Andreas Reichen, her onetime lover, now a stranger consumed by vengeance. Caught in the cross fire, Claire cannot escape his savage furyor the hunger that plunges her into his world of eternal darkness and unending pleasure. Nothing will stop Andreas from

destroying the vampire responsible for slaughtering his Breed brethren . . . even if he must use his former lover as a pawn in his deadly mission. Blood-bonded to his treacherous adversary, Claire can lead Andreas to the enemy he seeks, but it is a journey fraught with danger and deep, unbidden desires. For Claire is the one woman Andreas should not crave, and the only one he's ever loved. A dangerous seduction begins one that blurs the lines between predator and prey, and stokes the flames of a white-hot passion that may consume all in its path. . . .

Chapter One BERLIN, GERMANY

The vampire had no idea that death awaited him in the darkness. His senses were overloaded with need, his hands and arms full of a half-dressed redhead who pawed at him with barely restrained lust. Too fevered to notice they weren't alone in his Darkhaven bedchamber, he willed open the carved double doors and guided his eager, panting prey inside. The woman teetered on a pair of tall heels, laughing as she twisted away from him and wagged a finger in front of her face. "Hans, you fed me too much champagne," she slurred, stumbling into the dark room. "My head's all woozy." "It will pass." The German vampire's words were sluggish, too, though not from the alcohol that had inebriated his unsuspecting American companion. His fangs were no doubt filling his mouth, saliva flooding over his tongue in anticipation of feeding. He tracked her with deliberate movements as he closed the doors behind him and prowled toward her. His eyes glowed like embers, transforming from their natural color to something otherworldly. Although the woman seemed oblivious to the change coming over him, the vampire held his head low as he approached her, careful to conceal the telling heat of his bloodthirsty gaze. Except for that shuttered amber glow and the dim twinkle of stars outside the tall windows overlooking the Darkhaven estate's private grounds, there was no light in the room. Then again, being one of the Breed, he could see well enough without it. So could the one who came to kill him. Enveloped in shadows across the large chamber, a dark gaze watched as the vampire grabbed his blood Host from behind and got down to business. The first pungent copper whiff of the human's pierced vein made the observer's fangs erupt from his gums in reflexive response. He hungered, too, more urgently than he wanted to admit, but he had come here for a greater purpose than to serve his own base needs. He had come for vengeance. For justice. It was that overriding mission that held Andreas Reichen's feet firmly to the floor as the other vampire drank greedily, blindly, across the room. He waited, patient only because he knew this male's death would bring him one step closer to fulfilling the vow he'd made some twelve weeks ago . . . the night his world had disintegrated into a pile of ash and rubble. Reichen's restraint was held on a threadbare leash. Inside he churned with the heat of his anger. His bones felt like hot iron rods beneath his skin. His blood raced through his body, liquid fire that seared him from scalp to heels. Every muscle and cell within him screamed for retribution. He screamed it with a fury that bordered on nuclear meltdown. Not here, he warned himself. Not that. The price would be steep if he gave in to the full measure of his rage, and by God, this son of a bitch wasn't worth it. Reichen held that explosive part of himself at bay, but the effort came a fraction of a second too late. The fire in him was already swelling, burning through the fragile tethers of his self-control . . . The other vampire suddenly lifted his head from where he'd been feeding at the woman's neck. He drew in a sharp breath through his nose, then grunted, animalistic . . . alarmed. "Someone is here." "What'd you say?" she murmured, still drowsy from his bite as he sealed her wound with his tongue then shoved her away from him. She staggered forward, huffing a couple of choice curses under her breath. The instant her sluggish gaze lit on Reichen, a scream ripped from her throat. "Oh, my God!" Feeling his eyes smoldering with the amber fire of his rage, his fangs tearing through his gums in readiness of the fight to come, Reichen took a single step out of the shadows. The woman screamed again, hysteria rising in her wild, panicked eyes. She looked to her companion for protection, but the vampire had no further use of her. With a callous sweep of his hand, he knocked her out of his way and stalked forward. The blow sent her careening to the floor. "Hans!" she cried. "Oh, God, what's going on?" Hissing, the vampire faced his unexpected intruder and crouched into an attack stance. Reichen had only a moment to cast a quick glance at the confused, terrified human. "Get out of here." He sent a mental command that unlocked the bedchamber's doors and swung them open. "Leave, female. Now!" As she scrambled up from the polished marble beneath her and escaped the room, the Darkhaven vampire leapt into the air in a single, fluid arc of motion. Before his feet could touch down, Reichen launched himself at the bastard. Their bodies collided, the explosion of Reichen's forward momentum propelling both of them across the width of the chamber. Fangs huge and gnashing, fierce amber eyes locked on each other in the deadliest kind of malice, together they crashed like a wrecking ball into the far wall. Bones cracked with the impact, but it wasn't enough for Reichen. Not nearly enough. He threw the struggling, furious Breed male to the floor and pinned him there, one knee crushing his throat. "Ignorant fool!" roared the vampire, arrogant despite his pain. "Have you any idea who I am?" "I know who you

are Enforcement Agent Hans Friedrich Waldemar." Reichen bared his teeth and fangs in a profanity of a smile as he glared down at him. "Don't tell me you have already forgotten who I am." "No, he hadn't forgotten. Recognition flickered behind the pain and fear in Waldemar's slitted pupils. "Son of a bitch . . . Andreas Reichen." "That's right." Reichen held the bastard in a gaze so deadly furious it must have burned to hold it. "What's the matter, Agent Waldemar? You seem surprised to see me." "I don't understand. The attack on the Darkhaven this past summer . . ." The vampire sucked in a choked breath. "I'd heard no one survived." "Almost no one," Reichen corrected tightly. And now Waldemar knew why he'd been paid this unexpected visit. There was no mistaking the bleak awareness in the other male's gaze. Or the stark fear.

When he spoke now, his voice shook a bit. "I had nothing to do with it, Andreas. You must believe me" Reichen snorted. "That's what the others said, too." Waldemar started to squirm, but Reichen pressed down harder with his knee planted heavily against the vampire's throat. Waldemar wheezed, trying to raise his hands as the weight began to crush his air channel. "Please . . . just tell me what you want from me." "Justice." With neither satisfaction nor remorse, Reichen grabbed Waldemar's head in his hands and gave a fierce yank. His neck snapped, then the Breed male's head fell back to the floor with a heavy thunk. Reichen exhaled a deep sigh that did little to purge his anguish, or the grief he felt at being alive and alone. The sole survivor. The last of his family line. As he stood and prepared to leave this latest death behind him, a glint of polished glass on one of the room's several mahogany bookcases caught his eye. He stalked over to it, his feet moving automatically, sharpened gaze fixed on the face of his enemy that stared out from within the silver-framed photograph. He grabbed the picture and stared down at it, his fingers hot where they pressed into the metal of the frame. Reichen's eyes burned the longer he looked at that hated face, a growl curling low in his throat, raw with visceral, still-smoldering rage. Wilhelm Roth stood among a small group of Breed males wearing ceremonial Enforcement Agency garb. All of them were decked out in black tuxedos and starched white shirts, their chests festooned with bright silk sashes and gleaming pendant medallions, gilded rapiers sheathed at their sides. Reichen snorted at the self-importance the power-hungry arrogance etched in those smug, smiling faces. Now they were dead men . . . all but one. He'd saved Roth for last, having meticulously worked his way up the chain of command. First the Agency death squad members who'd ambushed his Darkhaven home and opened fire on every living being inside even the females, even the infants asleep in their cribs. Next he'd targeted the handful of Enforcement Agency cronies who had made no secret of their allegiance to the powerful Darkhaven leader responsible for ordering the slaughter. One by one over the past several weeks, the guilty had met their end. The vampire lying dead and broken on the floor was the last known member of Wilhelm Roth's corrupt inner circle in Germany. Which left Roth himself. The bastard was going to burn for what he'd done. But first he would suffer. Reichen's gaze drifted back to the framed photograph in his hands and froze there. On first glance, he hadn't noticed the woman. All of his focus all his fury had been centered solely on Roth. Now that he had found her, he couldn't tear his eyes away from her. Claire. She stood off to the side of the group of Breed males, petite yet regal in a sleeveless ghost-gray gown that made her light brown skin look as smooth and lush as satin. Her soft black hair was swept up in a careful chignon, not a single strand out of place. Time had not aged her so much as a year from when he'd known her not that it would, when she was kept youthful and strong by the blood bond she shared with her chosen mate these thirty-some years. She was looking at Wilhelm Roth and his criminal friends, smiling with a perfectly schooled, perfectly unreadable expression. A perfectly proper mate to the vampire who had proven to be Reichen's most treacherous adversary. Claire. After all this time. My Claire, he thought grimly. No, not his. Once, perhaps. Long ago, and for merely a few months at that. A brief handful of time. Ancient history. Reichen stared at her image behind the silver-framed glass, surprised at how easily his fury for Wilhelm Roth could bleed over to the vampire's Breedmate. Sweet, lovely Claire . . . in bed with his most hated enemy. Was she aware of Roth's corruption? Did she condone it? It hardly mattered. He had a mission to fulfill. Justice to claim. A deadly, final vengeance to serve. And nothing would stand in his way . . . not even her. Reichen's gaze bore down on the photograph, fury smoldering in the amber light that reflected back at him from the surface of the glass. His fingers burned where his skin met the metal of the frame. He tried to cool the acid tempest swirling in his gut, but it was too late to hope for even a small measure of calm. With a snarl, he tossed the photograph to the floor and turned away from it. He stalked to one of the tall windows and willed open the pane, knowing he couldn't trust his touch now that his rage was so close to ruling him. Reichen stepped onto the sill in a crouch, hearing the hot spit and sizzle of melting silver and cracking glass as the framed photograph burst into flames behind him. Then he leapt into the thick autumn night to finish what Wilhelm Roth had started. Chapter Two Claire Roth's lips pursed in contemplation as she

stared down at the architect's model spread out on the table in her library. "What do you think about moving the bench away from the strolling path and closer to the koi pond, just on the other side of the cottage roses?" "An excellent idea," said a bright female voice over the speakerphone situated nearby. The young woman was calling from one of the region's Darkhavens. Having seen some of her work elsewhere within the vampire community, Claire had been working with her for the past week, privately consulting on the design of a small garden park. "Have you decided about the material for the walkways, Frau Roth? I believe initially you'd mentioned cobblestones or crushed rock" "Would it be possible to keep the paths natural instead?" she asked as she moved along the side of the table, perusing the rest of the scale model. "I'm thinking soft earthen walkways trimmed with something simple yet inviting. Forget-me-nots, perhaps?" "Of course. That sounds lovely." "Good," Claire said, smiling as she considered the change. "Thank you, Martina. You've done a wonderful job. Really, I couldn't be more pleased with how you've taken my jumble of rough ideas and turned them into something so much more than I imagined." The young Breedmate's voice brightened on the other end of the line. "The park is going to be beautiful, Frau Roth. It's obvious how much time and care you've put into your vision of what you'd like it to be." Claire quietly registered the compliment, feeling less pride than relief. She wanted this slice of empty land to be turned into something beautiful. She wanted it to be perfect. Every planting, every carefully placed sculpture, bench, and strolling path was intended to be a place of total peace and tranquillity. A sanctuary meant to inspire the mind, heart, and soul. She wasn't one to pick up the torch for a cause, not in a very long time, at any rate but she had to admit this project had become something close to an obsession for her. "I just need it to be right," she murmured, blinking past a sudden misting of her eyes. She'd been overly emotional lately, and was grateful that there was no one in the library to see her weakness. "Don't worry," Martina's cheerful voice soothed. "I'm certain he's going to love it." Claire swallowed, caught off guard. "W-what?" "Herr Roth," the young Breedmate replied. An awkward silence stretched out for long moments. "I, um . . . I'm sorry if I'm prying. You'd asked me to keep the park and its design a secret, so I suppose I assumed that you meant it to be a gift for him." A gift for Wilhelm? Claire had to work to contain her bemused reaction to the idea. She hadn't even seen her mate for half a year. He came to the country only because his blood compelled him to. Claire had grown to dread those visits, expected as his mate to feed him from her veins and to take his blood in exchange. Wilhelm hardly pretended to feel differently about their coolly obligatory arrangement. They had discreetly lived apart nearly all of the three decades of their pairing; he in his Darkhaven mansion in the city, she and a handful of security staff here in the country manor a couple of hours away. No, the garden park was not a gift for her chronically absent mate. In fact, she was sure he'd be furious if he found out that she'd undertaken the project on her own. Fortunately for her, Wilhelm Roth hadn't taken an interest in anything she thought or felt or did for quite some time now. He was more than content to leave her to pursue her assorted philanthropic and social activities; his business with the Enforcement Agency was all that mattered to him, particularly of late. That was his obsession, and in a quiet corner of her heart, Claire was glad for her solitude. Especially these past difficult weeks. Martina let out a small sigh over the speaker. "Please, Frau Roth . . . forgive me if I've overstepped my bounds in any way." "Not at all," Claire assured her. Before she had to offer Martina either a pleasant lie about her motivations for the park's construction or explain her estrangement from the Breed male she saw infrequently at best, a hard rap sounded on the library door. "My thanks again for the lovely design, Martina. Let me know if you have any other questions before we proceed with the project." "Of course. Good night, Frau Roth." **Presentation de l'auteur** **BONUS:** This edition contains an excerpt from Lara Adrian's *Shades of Midnight*. A woman driven by blood. A man thirsting for vengeance. A place where darkness and desire meet... As night falls, Claire Roth flees, driven from her home by a fiery threat that seems to come from hell itself. Then, from out of the flames and ash, a vampire warrior emerges. He is Andreas Reichen, her onetime lover, now a stranger consumed by vengeance. Caught in the cross fire, Claire cannot escape his savage fury or the hunger that plunges her into his world of eternal darkness and unending pleasure. Nothing will stop Andreas from destroying the vampire responsible for slaughtering his Breed brethren . . . even if he must use his former lover as a pawn in his deadly mission. Blood-bonded to his treacherous adversary, Claire can lead Andreas to the enemy he seeks, but it is a journey fraught with danger and deep, unbidden desires. For Claire is the one woman Andreas should not crave, and the only one he's ever loved. A dangerous seduction begins one that blurs the lines between predator and prey, and stokes the flames of a white-hot passion that may consume all in its path. . . .