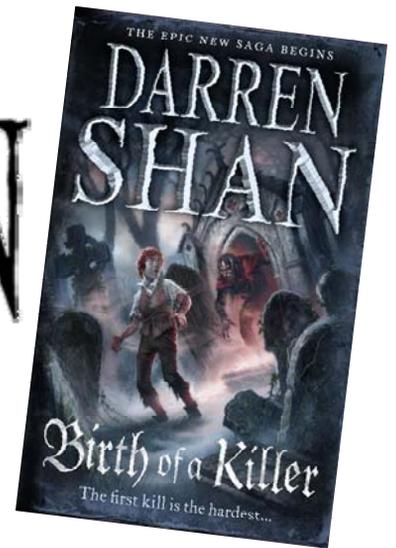


DARREN SHAN



AN INTERVIEW WITH DARREN SHAN

Q: For people who don't know, tell us about the main character of Larten Crepsley from *Birth of a Killer* and how he came about?

We first met Larten Crepsley in *Cirque Du Freak*. He was a 200 year old vampire with a troubled past. When we first found him, he had cut himself off from the vampire clan and turned his back on the bloodsuckers who had been his only family for more than two centuries. He was a lonely, isolated figure. After I'd finished writing *The Saga Of Darren Shan*, I found myself thinking a lot about Larten and what his life must have been like, and what had happened to drive him so deeply into the shadows of the night. Over the course of a few years his story began to fall into place, and it was even darker and more tragic than I had guessed!

Q: How many books are to come and what can we expect from subsequent instalments?

There will be four books in total, so three more are on their way. The books cover most of the two hundred years of his life. The second, *Oceans Of Blood*, takes us through the latter half of the nineteenth century, as Larten struggles to adapt to his life as a creature of the night. The third covers the early years of the twentieth century, and sees him come of age and cement his place in the vampire clan. The fourth brings us up to the present, and in that one we get to travel with Larten through the darkest, most wretched years of his life, as everything falls apart around him and destiny leads him into a terrible, lonely place...

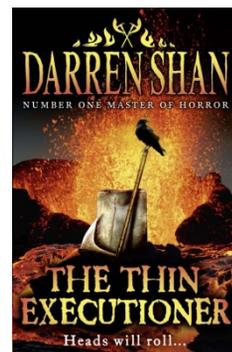


Q: The series takes place over more than a century, how did you go about writing over such a long time span?

It was difficult! There had to be a main storyline, a narrative thread that would run through all four books and link them tightly together. I didn't want it to read like a series of short stories, so I focused on his family and those who were closest to him. *The Saga of Darren Shan* worked so well, I think, because of the focus it had on relationships, e.g. between Darren and Mr Crepsley, and between Darren and his best friend, Steve Leopard. Once I had sorted out the relationships, the rest of the series fell into place around them.

Q: Tell us what makes your vampires different from some of the other fictional vampires out there!

Well, my vampires are REAL vampires!!! Seriously, I've tried to come at vampires from a completely different angle. I didn't want to go down the whole *Dracula* route (although we do get to meet a certain Bram Stoker in this series!). I wanted to do something new and original with vampires. So I took as my starting point that vampires were people who had to drink blood to survive, could only come out at night, and lived for hundreds of years -- but, crucially, they did not become monsters when they changed. I figured that such a secret society of centuries-old vampires would be organised in a similar fashion to human warrior tribes like the Samurai, the Celts or the Masai Mara. So I created a tribe of hard-living warriors who place a lot of emphasis on pride and courage and fighting prowess.



Q: You've written many books in the past, do you have a favourite one?

My absolute favourite single book of mine is *The Thin Executioner*. It's the book I feel closest to, the one I poured more of myself into than normal.

Q: What other horror/scary book do you wish you'd written?

Salem's Lot by Stephen King was a brilliant reworking of the original *Dracula* story, and the book that more than any other set me on my way to becoming a horror author.

Q: Are you working on anything else at the moment?

I'm working hard on the second half of The Saga of Larten Crepsley, but even though that's not finished, I'm also working on a new series, but I can't say anything about it just yet, because I'd have to feed you to a demon if you found out!!!