

Angel of Deception

Shannon Langel

Story Premise

Anastasia Ward has been hired to find a young girl named Claudette. In order to save her, she must infiltrate and destroy a ring of corrupt men who have been capturing young women and selling them off to the highest bidder.

Seduction, deception and bloodlust are a few qualities every assassin must use in order to survive. It's no easy task and Anastasia's dreams are haunted by those she has murdered. If she is to succeed she will need to blend into society and keep her wits about her. It's a kill or be killed world.

Historical Background Information or Timeline

Over a thousand years has passed since the world's first civilization began. A struggle for power, land, and glory has been going on for centuries between the two Kingdom's. The Valkiran King is a ruthless ruler and won't stop until he has conquered every inch of the world. The only lands left to take are the Kingdom of Phoemear and the Forest of Darkness which is where the hidden realm of the Assassins is located. The Phoemearian King has grown frail and a change in power will soon occur.

The instability of the two kingdoms has caused turmoil throughout the land. There are constant raids and with the soldiers focused on the current battle, there isn't anyone left to protect the citizens from theft and murder. A new form of criminal activity has begun, attractive young women are being taken from towns and sold off to the highest bidder.

The assassins in the realm consist mostly of merciless killers and only few know how to gain an audience with one. Most people send messengers on horseback to deliver letters however, in order to contact an assassin, one must visit a certain Falconer. He sends word to the assassins and when an assassin accepts the job then that assassin sends a falcon of their own back to the home of their client.

While most assassins' take jobs based on payment, there are a few assassins in the land who have dedicated their lives to hunting and destroying only the corrupt of the world. Anastasia Ward is one of these assassins. After losing her mother she has vowed to never take a job for the money, it is now her life's mission to help as many people as she can.

Anastasia is the only child of Isabella Ward and Duke Julius Vigil. Isabella met Julius while on a mission. She seduced him in order to acquire information about her target, which was another high-born noble. Julius discovered Isabella's true identity and she was forced to kill him. Shortly after she found out she was pregnant with Anastasia. Few people know that Anastasia is next in line for the Phoemearian throne because of her father's lineage.

Main Character

Anastasia Ward



Shannon Brown (2011)

Anastasia is a very opinionated and overly confident twenty-three-year-old assassin. She is an attractive young woman with a petite body but an athletic build. She has a heart-shaped face, curly brown hair and ice blue eyes. Her mother called her Ana, since her mother's passing, she only allows her closest friends to call her this. She has no living blood relatives. The assassins in the realm are her family now.

Ana was born and raised in the Assassin's Realm. Her mother, Isabella Ward was the top Assassin of her time. When Isabella wasn't on a mission she personally trained Ana in the arts of Alchemy and Combat. Ana's schooling also included learning as many languages as she could, ancient runes, etiquette, horseback riding, embroidery, reading and writing. When her mother was gone Ana learned from anyone willing to show her new skillsets.

She has a black stallion, Onyx, who's name means protection and security. Her falcon is named Banshee since a Banshees cry is a sign of upcoming doom. She sends Banshee out informing her clients that she accepts the jobs that they have requested.

Anastasia was ten years old when she watched her mother die. They were on a mission together in which her mother only accepted for the money. Ana was unable to save her mother and has lived with the guilt of it. Since that day, Ana only accepts jobs where she is able to rid the world of evil. Being an assassin comes with a price though, she is haunted by the ghost of the people that she has killed.

Her lineage is a well-kept secret, her father, Duke Julius Vigil was seduced and then killed by Isabella when he was twenty-five. Ana is actually in line for the throne because of who her father was. She isn't a fan of the kingdoms though and avoids any conversations about it.

Supporting Characters

Christian Fletcher



Shannon Brown (2011)

Like Anastasia, Christian was born into the Assassin lifestyle and his parents also died young. Many people assume that Ana and Christian are siblings because of their looks and how much time they spend together at the realm. He is 5'8", has an athletic build, jet black hair and blue eyes. Christian is skilled with a bow and the long sword. He enjoys sparring with Anastasia while at the realm.

His schooling consisted of combat, horseback riding, alchemy, etiquette and smithing. He has crafted many of his own weapons along with Anastasia's and their friend, Annabelle's weapons. He cares about the safety of the two girls and often follows them on missions to keep them safe.

Annabelle Bennett



Shannon Brown (2011)

Annabelle's nickname is Belle. Unlike her two friends; both her parents are still alive and are referred to as the keepers of the Realm. Although she is a trained assassin, she prefers not to kill. She rarely goes out on missions and instead is more of a guardian of the realm. Her tasks are to keep watch over the realm, see to the horses in the stables and the falcons in the aviary, maintain the armory and hunt for food.

Belle usually leaves the realm to help Christian and Ana with scouting. Like Ana, she is very petite but athletic. She has blonde hair and green eyes.

Isabella Ward



Shannon Langel (2018)

Isabella is mother to Anastasia. She was twenty-four years old when she took a job to kill a high-born noble. In order to acquire more information, she seduced Duke Julius Vigil and in doing so she became pregnant with Ana. The Duke eventually figured out who she was and Isabella had to kill him in order to protect herself and her mission.

Isabella was the top assassin of her time and raised Anastasia to follow in her footsteps. She took any job that came her way as long as the reward was high. When Anastasia was ten years old, she insisted to her mother that she was ready so, Isabella brought her along on a mission. Isabella was concerned for her daughter's safety and made a foolish mistake that caused her to be captured and killed.

She is now one of the ghost that haunts Ana's dreams although she comes to Ana to help her not to punish her.

Locations

The Assassins Realm

Hidden deep within the Forest of Darkness is where the Assassins Realm can be found. The forest is located adjacent to the plains which separates the two realms. The assassins have created a sort of kingdom of their own. It is a stone castle surrounded by a moat and ancient protection runes can be found throughout the forest to help conceal it. The realm has an armory that is larger than the armories of the two kingdoms combined. There are training areas, sleeping/living quarters, stables for the horses and an aviary for the falcons. Their food supplies and ingredients for medicine are gathered from the forest or grown within the realm.

Kingdom of Valkira

Valkira is located in the mountainous region. It is a strong and wealthy kingdom due to its location. The mountains are filled with riches such as gold and silver which are the currency of the realm. The mountains also offer a defensive view point of the sea and allows the kingdom the advantage to prepare for raids. Valkira controls much of the plains which is where the majority of the farming communities are. The peasants of the plains are kept in check by the nobles. It is their job to grow the crops and raise the livestock which feed the kingdom.

Kingdom of Phoemear

Phoemear is a stone kingdom located in the tundra. It is a very harsh dark and windy climate. The land of Phoemear is unable to grow much vegetation due to its cold climate. There are only a few months out of the year that the weather permits them to grow crops and hunt. Unfortunately, this usually is not enough to survive. Most of their food is acquired from the sea. Due to this they must raid Valkira often to gather supplies and attempt to conquer more land for their kingdom in order to survive. A small portion of the plains is ruled by the Phoemearian King.

Additional World Information

Many people throughout the kingdoms are Christians. However, there are Pagans and those who worship the Gods not just one God. Those who do not believe in the Christian God also believe in Magic. Magical runes are used in order to help protect them.

Before battle, Ana draws runes on her body to provide her with stealth, control and strength. These are drawn in areas where they can be easily concealed and only work on people who actually believe in the magic behind them.

Those who are lucky enough to come by gold and silver are considered wealthy since this is the currency of the realm. Most people located in the plains tend to use a bartering system in order to survive.

The postal system consists of hiring someone on horseback to deliver letters. To ensure privacy it is best to have personal wax seals. Some people have falcons and have trained them to deliver messages. Although Falcons have a weak sense of smell the ones who have been trained are able to use scents to find and deliver letters.

Events are occasionally held in both kingdoms such as tournaments involving sword fighting and jousting. Masked balls and plays are also held for the nobles to attend.

Nobles women wear long flowing colorful dresses and the men have colorful stockings and tunics. Peasants are only allowed to wear the color grey. It's an indication of where the people of the realms stand. Any peasant caught wearing a color other than grey will be placed in the stocks for a week.

Story Synopsis

For centuries the two kingdoms, Valkira and Phoemear continue to fight for land, glory, and riches. The continues battle leaves the people of the land unprotected from thieves and murderers. High-born nobles seeking opportunities to raise their station without getting their hands dirty call upon the assassins of the realm to do their dirty work for them.

Anastasia Ward is one of the few assassins who has vowed only to use her skillsets for good. She is determined to rid the world of scum and help as many people as she can. It's not an easy job and there are times when innocent lives must be taken to protect her identity. She is haunted by their ghost and occasionally they are able to speak to her from the other world. Her current mission is to find a young girl named Claudette. Ana discovers that Claudette has been taken by a group of high-born nobles who are kidnapping attractive girls and selling them off to the highest bidder.

Ana with the help of her friends, Christian and Annabelle, disguise themselves as nobles visiting from another land. They are able to blend in with society and infiltrate the ring. Anastasia finds Claudette in the home of Duke Pennington, she is bruised and bloody but still alive. Once Claudette has been taken to safety, Anastasia and her friends do what they are best at and take the lives of everyone involved in the kidnapping.

Back at the Assassins Realm a letter bearing the royal seal of Phoemear is waiting for Anastasia.

Story Excerpt

The carriage bounced as we traveled down the dirt road. The dirt lingered in the air and filled my nostrils. Cows were calling out to one another and a rooster crowed as we rode down the path. A church bell sounded in the east.

“Amateurs,” I said.

“What did you just say?” asked my captor.

“You are all fools. What was the point in blindfolding me? Did you know that Saint Paul’s Church rings that bell every day at 6pm?”

“Did you know that with one punch from my fist you’ll be hearing bells of your own?” asked my captor.

I knew I should keep my mouth shut. I shouldn’t antagonize him any further. Where’s the fun in that though?

“Fool. That will be the last word you hear me say as I watch your life slowly fade from your pathetic body,” I said to him.

His fist came crashing down on top of my head with such a force that Thor himself would envy. A throbbing sensation began to set in and my ears started ringing. I knew it would only be a moment before I passed out from the pain. I had to get one smart ass remark out first.

“Wow, a man true to his word,” I managed to say, “These bells sound lovely.”

The ringing slowly faded as the throbbing pain took away my consciousness.

Sunlight blared into the room making my head pound with a dull aching reminder of the events that led me into my current situation. Pressing passed the pain, I took a moment to assess the current situation. I had a job to do.

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