



Night Masks

R.A. Salvatore

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R.A. Salvatore's The Cleric Quintet tells the tale of the scholar-priest Cadderly, who is plucked from the halls of the Edificant Library to fulfill a heroic quest across the land of Faerûn.

The assassins of the Night Masks stalk the shadowy streets of the city of Carradoon, led by the sinister killer known as Ghost. Cadderly struggles against the dreaded Chaos Curse in these dark, evil-haunted alleyways, with a silent death around every corner.

From the Paperback edition.

Night Masks Details

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From Reader Review Night Masks for online ebook

Jennifer Tull says

Not quite as good as the other 2 novels in the series but still a solid entry. The 2 things that let the novel down is the childish and kinda stupid characters in the middle of the book and the pace, It's not quite as fast paced as the others. However the writing is still solid and smooth like butter, And the MAIN characters are fantastic.

I give it a 9/10

Lauren says

This book launches The Cleric Quintet characters even further than the second book did. This is where Cadderly's major character change occurs. In the previous books, Cadderly was a struggling self-doubting and inexperienced boy. He thought himself useless to his friends, and in In Sylvan Shadows, he leaves Danica because he was afraid (he admits this in the book). Now, through, Cadderly finds a new purpose for himself and rekindles his relationship with Danica and his friends. He survives against gigantic odds and political intrigue. The entire time, he has no idea how many people are looking to kill him, and yet he manages to escape and fight back.

R.A. Salvatore is successful in weaving a complex and suspenseful story, with amazing characters and interesting subplots. Ghost is a remarkable character. For those familiar with the Drizzt novels, just imagine if Ghost happened to meet the dark elf. Could Drizzt shield himself from the Ghearufu? Ghost and the Night Mask assassins present themselves as a tremendously evil force, and I often wondered if Cadderly and his friends could withstand them. At times, the story may seem like it drags, but I believe it was necessary to describe what Cadderly goes through in the Dragon's Codpiece. His ascension towards Deneir is quite a dramatic change in this series; Cadderly now has unfathomable powers that will only keep growing.

If you enjoyed the previous books in this series, or even if you didn't but want to know what happens after In Sylvan Shadows, I recommend reading this book. It is the turn of the tide in the Cleric Quintet series, and the last few chapters of the book are quite spectacular.

Liane says

In this novel, Cadderly is depressed and unsure of what his role in life is. You can tell things are serious, because he decides to grow a beard! He spends a huge chunk of this novel being a hermit and staying inside his room at this inn in Carradoon, a port town not too far from the Edificant Library, pouring over the holy bible of his religious order. Pages upon pages of him self reflecting on how he can no longer see the world the same way because of what he's done and seen, how his hands are stained with blood, blah blah. Oh yeah, and he dumped Danica in the last book for some reason. Because he needed more angst, I guess.

Cadderly's struggle in this novel just wasn't believable, and it was extremely nauseating to read. The

melodramatics are on day time soap opera levels.

There's a scene in this novel where Cadderly talks to a homeless man who is a leper, and the leper goes through this rambling monologue about how horrible and unfair life is for him, and how can Cadderly possibly claim to try to cure him, when there's countless other's that need saving too? Is it up to Cadderly to try and cure the world of it's problems? How can Cadderly, whose never known things like starvation and poverty, take it upon himself to feel sympathy for a beggar such as he? How arrogant Cadderly is etc etc you get the point. Cadderly is naive and stupid. Can we move on now?

There's some things in this novel I really enjoyed, enough that I wanted to give this book at least three stars. Things in Castle Trinity become more amusing when we're introduced to Barjin's replacement - a haughty, power hungry teenage brat named Bogo Rath. That name is so incredibly stupid that it's actually kind of awesome. At this point, I think it's obvious Salvatore knew no one was taking Castle Trinity seriously, so he just had fun with this character. He even has a punk hair cut that he flips around all emo like and everything.

Poor Bogo isn't taken seriously by Dorigen or Aballister, and they frequently make fun of him by calling him Boygo (which ironically, sounds less stupid then his original name). His one claim to fame is that he has ties to this insidious assassin's guild in Westgate called the Night Masks, and they hire them to murder Cadderly, whose proven to be more then a nuisance to Castle Trinity.

The power struggles all the antagonists have in this novel is very interesting. Bogo wants to prove his worth to his superiors, so he threatens Kierkan Rufo to do his bidding. Rufo is an unwilling participant as usual, and just wants to be left alone. Then Bogo himself is recruited by Ghost, the Night Masks's leader, to do HIS bidding. Meanwhile, Ghost has the power to switch his soul back and forth with a giant named Vander, who is being forced to do this against his will. Watching Bogo and Ghost use their pawns to further their own agendas and try to undermine each other for a stab at power was really fun to read. Those were my favorite parts.

Unfortunately, certain events happen that take away any form of enjoyment I could possibly get from this novel.

(view spoiler)

Needless to say, this novel made me rather hate Cadderly. Hopefully his characterization improves in the next two novels.

Benjamin says

At first I was skeptical as the book just centers around the assassination attempt on Cadderly, but by the end it was my favorite of the series so far.

Ryan says

Night Masks by R.A Salvatore is a thriller yet intelligent, mystical book. I chose this book because im really into elves, wizards, and magic. This particular book is about alliance versus horde; humans,elves, and dwarfs vs. ogres,giants, and evil wizards. The genre of this book is obviously fantasy.

The story starts off with the main protagonist,Cadderly, a young priest from the Edificant Library acquiring the *Tome of Universal Harmony*. This strange tome has a magical property from Cadderly's own faith, from Deneir. He studies this book intensely, only reading a couple words per page, of the thousands in the magical tome. Yet he understands each page just from the word(s). He can usually never sleep in his cramped hotel room of the Dragon's Codpiece in Caradoon because of the magical song he hears in his head from the *Tome of Universal Harmony*, but in turn he gets amazingly powerful spells he can cast on his enemies. In another area of The Realm, a band of the alliance is fighting against incoming horde. Danica,Ivan, and Pikel are those of the alliance and also the other protagonists in the story. They fight in Shilmista Forest to protect the land from the horde for the High Elf Prince, soon to be King. The two dwarfs Ivan and Pikel fought hard in the battle and took down a giant with their huge weapons, a huge club the size of a tree trunk and an axe. Danica, a skilled woman and a rogue, also took down many ogres and trolls with her unstoppable kicks and her dual daggers. While Cadderley used his magic to conceal them so the could not be spotted and healed them when they were wounded. But Cadderley was afraid and worried that his life would be taken so he fled from the battle to Caradoon. Once the battle at Shilmista was won by the dominating power of the alliance; Danica, Ivan, and Pikel went back to the Edificant Library to report the Headmaster Avery. Headmaster Avery asked Danica to wait for three days to give the report to his assistant. Danica was reluctant because she really wanted to see Cadderley, her secret lover. Elsewhere in The Realm evil started to rouse at Castle Trinity. Aballister and Dorigen, the evil masters of The Realm hired a band of assassins known as the Night Masks along with their leader Ghost. Ghost is an wicked, evil man that has the power to transfer his soul into others and posses that person. Night Mask and their leader Ghost were assigned to kill Cadderly, will they succeed in this crime?

The main conflict in this story would have to be Man Vs. Self. The main conflict is within Cadderly and his doubt of his own faith. He is a priest of Deneir and was in the Order of the Edificant Library but he never really practiced what he was suppose to, and he never really prayed for his god. This conflict of doubt withing himself had a negative effect on him in making decisions. He could not live with killing the enemy which cost him his own comrades. His magic was also effected by this doubt and weakened him, for example he saw a beggar man in the streets of Caradoon named the Nameless, but he saw shadows on peoples shoulders that reflect the persons personality and goal. At first he saw the man with his wife and child on his shoulder, but when Ghost took over Nameless's body the shadows turned into creepy monsters with fangs. Cadderley wasn't sure about the change in the shadows when he saw the beggar again but

disregarded it which later on turns out to be a bad decision.

R.A Salvatore writes in a very interesting way, you would think that this author would write in the perspective of Cadderly but he does not. He instead uses 3rd person writing with constant changing of scenes that all connect together. He uses literary devices like dramatic irony, imagery, and exposition. The theme of this story in my opinion would be that trusting in others and yourself is the true key to knowledge.

I would rate this book a 3 because it starts off as very slow and boring but works it way up to action. Also because of its confusing set up, for example the author could be first talking about Cadderly finding the *Tome of Universal Harmony* and is in his hotel at Caradoon but then in the next paragraph starts at the battle of Shilmista that he is in. But the ending was really satisfying and the twists in the story were on edge and thrilling.

Tony says

3.5 stars, Cadderly's awakening powers manifest themselves in unforeseen manners, while the most chilling adversary yet pursues him!

This third book of the Cleric Quintet takes on a much darker tone than the previous novels. Cadderly's growth in maturity is a welcome change. As he learns more powers, his confidence grows and his self-doubts start to fade. Although sometimes he is just a bit too powerful (as are all the main characters.)

The nemesis of this book is one of Salvatore's most creative yet. He has a unique magical item that seems to keep him invincible, and the manner in which he hunts Cadderly makes him an interesting character.

A few minor things that made the story a bit less enjoyable - There was a battle in the latter half of the book that was difficult to follow along, and the authors repetitive referrals to Rufo as the "angular man" verges on parodical. In fact, he makes the reference twice in one 4-sentence paragraph.

Having said that, I like where the story is going; I just have to accept the fact that for the most part our characters are invincible, and that the Bouldershoulder brothers are going to continue their antics no matter what.

James Riley says

If you liked the first two books in the series, you'll like this one.

Scott says

This is the 3rd book in the Cleric Quintet series.

R.A. Salvatore has his faults - his worlds and magic systems are cookie cutter and a lot of books seem the same BUT the reason I keep coming back over and over again to Salvatore's books is character. He writes

great characters that are interesting, funny, tragic and characters that I care about. In this book we've got back quite a bit of the favorites - Cadderly, Ivan & Pikel Bouldershoulder and of course we have Danica.

The entirety of the plot is Ghost and some other assassins are hired to kill Cadderly.

That's it.

That's the whole plot.

That's the whole book.

Yes we have Cadderly finally coming to terms with his god and the growth that comes with that both in character and in power. But it's essentially assassins trying to kill our heroes and that's why it got a three star rating.

I did enjoy it though and look forward to continuing my journey with Cadderly and Salvatore.

Greg Strandberg says

I like these books, but I have to go down on my stars a bit for one reason: childish characters.

Maybe I'm one who, as a child, didn't like the childish characters as much. I think Pikel and his dwarven brother with the multi-colored beard (I get them mixed up), get far too much play.

I guess you could skip these chapters, but I don't play that game. So I'm just saying, expect a bit of Jar-Jar Bink stuff on this.

Leo says

It is easy to tell when an author just stops trying during a series. By the third book it is clear that Salvatore has little new to add to the overarching story line and has resorted to filling space before the final showdown. The initial concept, of an assassin capable of completely possessing another individual and using him/her to commit acts of murder, is not in itself bad. However, the flow of the story is lazy and poorly explained. For instance, the character's ability to transfer consciousness is introduced in such a way as to have reduced the impact to virtually nil. This is a trend that continues throughout the book.

It pains me to say this as the first Cleric Quintet book was fantastic, introducing new characters, locations and story lines. The villains had political intrigue, the protagonists had vibrancy. But sadly, as with the Drizzt series, the story gets stale as characters maintain similar dialogue, and battle with the same challenges in book after book, and new characters offer little to shake up the repetition.

I will read the next book in the hopes that the story will develop further and offer a bit more in complexity than the middle story line.

X_x says

Did not like the character development in this book. I mean, there's nothing wrong with characters gaining powers, but Deneir is the god of knowledge and literature and whatever, not god of communicating with

spirits and fire balls or whatever. And the way he just knows everything? There's just no suspense any more 'cause you already know how it's going to turn out.

Oh, and in the beginning we were lead to believe that Ghost is a formidable enemy, the way he tricked a man and earned his trust and whatever. He's supposed to be one of the best as far as assassins go. But when faced with Cadderly, he suddenly fails? I mean, the way Ghost screws up so blatantly and the way Cadderly figures out the disguise within five seconds. Just...what?

Don't even get me started on how his companions, who has way more experience in battle tactics than he ever did, suddenly becomes his inferior sidekicks towards the end of the book, and how he keeps harping on about this mercy business but justified torturing Kierkan Rufo at the end [the dude had it coming, sure, but Cadderly's rapid attitude change bothered me]...

Overall very disappointed with this book and the overwhelming Stu-ishness that has become Cadderly. He had potential to become an interesting character, seeing as how his expertise is in knowledge and not in combat. And I was intrigued by the concept of a cleric being used as a main character...It seems like the author's taken an easy way out by making Cadderly's magic more powerful so he could go back to writing what he's more comfortable with.

David Williams says

After the brutal battles in Shilmista Forrest Cadderly takes leave of the Edificant Library and moves to the city of Caradoon. He is afraid that he has lost his faith. Once again in battle he was forced to kill and he is not sure how to handle the feelings that go along with that. As he moves forward in his studies he begins to develop new powers. These powers begin to grow in him in new and frightening ways. At the same time he is being stalked by a deadly group of assassins known as the Night Masks. They have been hired by the leaders of Castle Trinity who are tired of the young priest showing up and ruining their plans.

Danica and the Bouldershoulder brothers join him in Caradoon and before long they are all fighting for their lives against an insidious assassin known as The Ghost. Their survival will depend on them working together. Most of all their survival will depend on Cadderly coming to an understanding of these new powers and recapturing his faith.

This book is a pivot point in the series. Cadderly and Danica take their relationship to a whole new level. He has to become a true leader in the fight against their foe. Most of all the young agnostic priest has to come to grips with his place in the universe and learn to believe. By the end he has found his way and knows what he has to do.

Ethan says

Nothing epitomizes "filler" like this book. I suspected that might happen with the 3rd book in a quintet and it did. The plot is a standard assassination attempt centered around an inn and you could probably predict what happens just from that. The character descriptions are getting tiring. I don't know how much more I can hear about "almond-brown" eyes or "strawberry-blonde" hair.

M says

Too lame to finish. Life's too short for bad genre novels.

Jason says

I think if I ever read the word "angular" again, I'm going to direct violence toward the area of Salvatore's (and possibly his editor's) crotch. I thought the descriptive shorthand for characters was bad in the second book in the series, but in this one it's done so often that I can't help but wonder if Salvatore was being paid by the reference instead of by the page or by the word or by the novel. "Angular man" in particular is so overused that I felt like I was being pranked, like I was reading some 13-year-old's fan-fiction. You probably think I'm exaggerating. I'm going to copy half of one page in its entirety for you and you can judge for yourself. I've capitalized the offending references so you can more easily skim to them.

"Cadderly does not want me there," the ANGULAR MAN lied. "He said he would meet with you alone in the hearth room before Fredegar began his work."

"Before dawn," Avery muttered distastefully.

Rufo continued to stare at the portly headmaster's back. How had it gotten this far? Rufo didn't hate Avery--on the contrary, the headmaster had acted on Rufo's behalf many time over the last decade.

But that was behind them now, the ANGULAR MAN reminded himself. Shilmista had undeniably changed Rufo's life course, but now, looking at vulnerable Avery, the ANGULAR MAN had to pause and consider just how drastically.

"Well, I am off for the the hearth room, then," Avery announced, moving to the door.

He wasn't even carrying his mace in the loop on his belt, Rufo noted. And he hadn't yet prayed and prepared any spells.

"Truly I wish Cadderly would be more conventional," Avery remarked, his obvious fondness for the young priest showing through, and that only strengthening the treacherous Rufo's resolve. "But, then, that is his charm, I suppose." Avery paused and smiled and Rufo knew the portly man was engaged in some private recollection of Cadderly.

"Meet me in the hearth room for the morning meal," Avery instructed. "Perhaps I will be able to persuade Cadderly to dine with us."

"Just what I desire," the ANGULAR MAN muttered grimly. He moved to the door and watched Avery descend the sweeping stairway to the dimly lighted hearth room.

Rufo closed the door softly. His part was done. He had set events into motion, as the young wizard had instructed him to do. Avery's fate what the headmaster's own to deal with.

The ANGULAR MAN leaned back against the wall, desperately trying to dismiss his growing guilt.

That's only half a page. The entire book is like that. The character of Avery is twice referenced as portly just in that half a page, and our main character Cadderly is the "young priest". References to portly Avery and young priest Cadderly abound throughout the entire book as well. I know I'm a supreme nitpicker and I don't deny it, but each subsequent reference to the "angular man" made me want to throw the book across the room. I've railed against fantasy's bum rap most of my life, so it particularly pains me to see such shining examples of why fantasy literature is often dismissed as fluff.

All of that complaining aside, the story is actually much more engaging this time around. Our main character is finally coming into his own, the danger is more imminent, and the stakes are higher. The characters are as entertaining as ever and this is the point in the overall story when our characters inevitably start forcing the action as opposed to simply reacting to it. If the writing tics weren't so utterly distracting, I'd have actually rated this one a four instead of a three.
