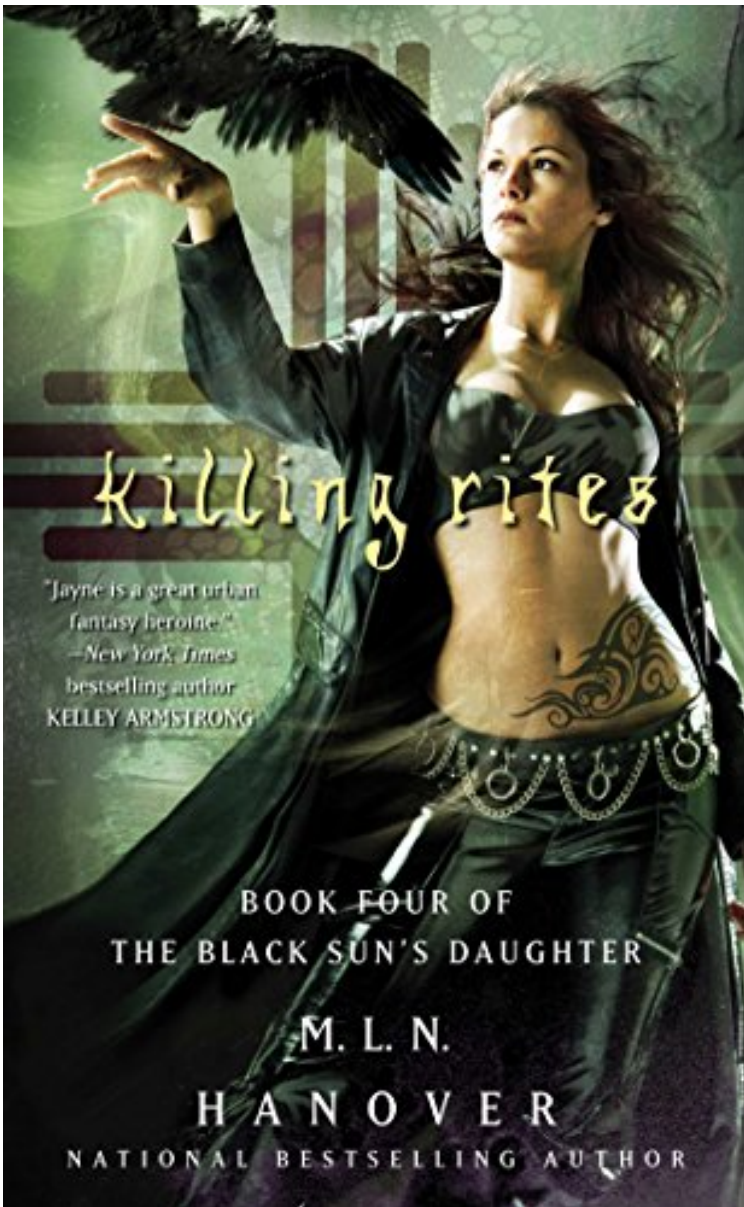


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Killing Rites: Book Four of The Black Sun's Daughter (English Edition)



Par M.L.N. Hanover

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Par M.L.N. Hanover : Killing Rites: Book Four of The Black Sun's Daughter (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Killing Rites: Book Four of The Black Sun's Daughter (English Edition):

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe fourth book in M.L.N. Hanovers acclaimed Black Suns Daughter series featuring smooth prose and zippy action sequences (Publishers Weekly).Jayn Heller has discovered the source of her uncanny powers: something else is living inside her body. Shes possessed. Of all her companions, she can only bring herself to confide in Ex, the former priest. They seek help from his old teacher, hoping to cleanse Jayn before the parasite in her becomes too powerful. Exs history and a new enemy combine to leave Jayn

alone and on the run. Her friends try to hunt her down, unaware of the danger they're putting her in. Jayn must defeat the past, and her only allies are a rogue vampire she once helped free and the nameless thing hiding inside her skin. Extrait ONE I lay as flat as I could on the carpet of old pine needles, my rifle hugged close against my cheek. The world smelled of soil and gun oil and sweat. I kept my breath soft, my hands steady. In the crosshairs, Chogyi Jake crouched beside a huge pine tree, one hand on the rough bark to steady himself. He had a rifle of his own, held low against one hip. The sun was setting behind me. If he looked in my direction, the light would dazzle him. From my perspective, it was like God was shining a spotlight on him. The targeting site magnified his familiar face. To someone who didn't know him, who hadn't spent over a year day-in, day-out in his company, he might have looked fine. To me, he radiated the same physical exhaustion I felt. I let the crosshairs drift down to his body. Shoot for the center of mass, I told myself. Go for the biggest target. Gently, I put my finger on the trigger. I breathed out as I squeezed. My rifle coughed, and a wide swath of bark two feet above Chogyi Jake's head bloomed neon green. He looked up at it, and then out toward me with an expression that said Really? That was your best shot? just as three sharp impacts drilled into my side. Baby blue splotches marked my autumn-leaves camouflage fatigues.

Aubrey's color. I rolled onto my back and said something crude. Okay, Miss Heller, Trevor said in my earpiece. He always called me Miss Heller instead of Jayn. I had the impression that even after he'd heard it pronounced correctly zha-nayhe was afraid he'd refer to me as Jane or Janie. I think we're calling it a day. I fumbled with the mic. Somewhere in the exercise, I'd pushed it down around my collarbone. Got it, I said. Ill see you back at the cabin. I lay there for a moment, the wide Montana sky looking down at me through the trees. The setting sun turned a few stray wisps of cloud rose and gold. The ground under me felt soft, and the sting of the paintballs faded. A breeze set the pines rippling with a sound like something immense talking very gently. I thought that if I closed my eyes, I could fall asleep right there and dream until the bears woke up next spring. My muscles felt like putty. I felt wonderful. I'd gotten Trevor Donnagans name from a cop friend of mine in Boulder. He'd said that Trevor was hands-down the best place to go if you absolutely, positively had to train yourself into a killing machine in the minimum possible time. A former Green Beret and five or six different kinds of black belt, Trevor had spent the better part of his life meditating on how to dislocate joints, shatter bones, and immobilize bad guys without having the same happen to him. His cabin sat on eight square miles of fenced-off woodland, and he was charging me enough for a month of private, intensive training to pay for eight more. Considering the shape my life had taken in the last year, it was cheap. I'd been coming up on my twenty-third birthday when my uncle Eric died. I went to Denver knowing that I'd been named his executor. I didn't know that I was also his sole heir, or that he had more money than some small countries. Or that he'd made his fortune as a kind of spiritual fixer, dealing with any number of parasitic things from just outside reality that could take over people's minds and bodies and do magic a thousand times more powerful than a normal person could manage. Vampires, werewolves, shape-shifting demons. The generic term was rider. Now I was almost a month into twenty-four, and several times in the past year, my learning curve had approached vertical. Aubrey walked up from my left. I knew from the sound of his footsteps that he was at least as tired as I was. I turned my head. His camouflage was smeared with Day-Glo yellow over his right shoulder and left hip, meaning that Ex had gotten the drop on him at least once during the day. His sandy hair stood at ten different angles, and a smear of mud darkened one cheek. I raised my left hand. He took it and hauled me up to my feet. I followed through, collapsing against him a little, my forehead resting in the comfortable curve where his shoulder met his neck. I felt his chuckle as much as heard it. I have never been this tired in my life, he said, threading his arm around me. Im getting too old for this. Poor ancient man, I said. Cant keep up with his bouncing baby girlfriend. My poor childlike sweetie looks like she could use some rest too. Im fine, I said, leaning against him a little more. Just lulling you into a sense of safety. Besides, Im not that old. Mens physical peak is, like, twenty-five, I said. You're ten years past that. Your teeth should start falling out any minute now. You keep me young, he said with a mock sourness, and spun me back toward the east and our walk to Trevors cabin. The sun blazed on the horizon, glowing like a fire among the trees. The shadows of the low, rolling hills splashed against the landscape, and the green and yellow of the cottonwood trees nearest the cabin standing out against the evergreen pine. It was at least a half-mile walk, down a long, gentle slope to the path that curled around to the north. We walked together, our rifles slung over our shoulders, our paint-stained uniforms glowing in the twilight like we were veterans of the battle of Playskool Ridge. The wind cooled. The sky faded from blue to gray, darkness creeping up the eastern sky. Missoula was an hour-and-a-half drive away, and not even a smudge of backslash on the nighttime clouds. The cabin itself was two stories of stained wood and black iron with a

wide, flat expanse on one end like a military parade ground and a barn in the back that was really a gym and dojo unlike anything I'd ever seen before. Our rented minivan squatted beside a dusty three-quarter-ton pickup truck. His bumper stickers suggested Trevor was unlikely to vote for a Democrat. Inside, warm, thick air carried the scents of curry and fry bread. A sudden near-raging hunger hollowed my stomach. Trevor stood in the doorway to the kitchen, nearly blocking out the light behind him. The man was built like a refrigerator. Soups on in twenty, Miss Heller, he said. Should give all of you a shot at the showers. Thank you, I said. You can leave your weapons in the case there. I'll get them stripped and cleaned. I knew I should have objected, should have insisted on doing it all myself if only to prove that I wasn't just some poor little rich girl hauling her male friends on some kind of weird Outward Bound retreat. I let the fatigue win. Is Ex already here? I asked instead. Upstairs, Trevor said. Jake's there too. Aubrey tilted his head like he'd heard something strange. Is something wrong? he said. Trevor crossed his massive arms and looked uncomfortable. Nothing we can't talk about after dinner, he said. Twenty minutes. On the way up the stairs, Aubrey exchanged a silent look with me. It hadn't been so long since I'd been in a more traditional learning environment, and even though I knew I was the one paying Trevor, part of me got nervous at the thought that teacher was pissed off about something. At the head of the stair, we split, Aubrey heading down the left-hand hallway while I went to the right. Alone in my little monastic cell of a room, I stripped off my fatigues and sweat-soaked T-shirt. As the only woman, I got the cell with the private bathroom; an undersized toilet crowded against a tiny sink, with a shower the size of a postage stamp. The closest I had to an amenity was a soft towel and a full-length mirror. After I'd washed the bits of pine needle and dirt out of my hair, I paused and took stock of my new bruises. There was a nasty one, blue-black on my left hip where I'd landed wrong when Trevor threw me. Four light ones across my back, legacies of paintball failures. Or five, if I counted the one hidden by the half-finished tattoo at the small of my back. A raw, red patch on my shin from slipping during a fast scramble up a stony ravine. And with the scars I had on my side where a possessed man had shoved knifelike fingers into my ribs last August, and the long, white-pink mark where a voodoo God had split my arm open in the spring, I looked pretty beat-up. Well seasoned, Trevor called it. As soon as I was dressed again—blue jeans, Pink Martini T-shirt under a wool cardigan, white sneakers—I headed downstairs. Aubrey wasn't at the dinner table yet, but Ex and Chogyi Jake were. Ex was in his usual priestly black even though he'd dropped the whole Jesuit gig long before I'd ever met him. His white-blond hair was tied back in its severe ponytail. Chogyi Jake had skipped his usual sand-colored linen shirt for the kind of white sleeveless T-shirt my big brother used to call a wifebeater when our parents weren't around. His scalp was freshly shaved and shining, his smile as genuine and enigmatic as ever. I pulled out a chair and sat down. Our rifles were, I noticed, already disassembled, cleaned, reassembled, and put away with nothing more left behind than a slight hint of gun oil under the curry. Holding together? I said. Were fine, Ex said. It's a more vigorous lifestyle than I'm used to, Chogyi Jake said, but I have high hopes that the training effect will kick in. Aubrey clomped down the stairs nineteen minutes after we... *Revue de presse* Jayn is a great urban fantasy heroine. New York Times bestselling author Kelley Armstrong