



# Assassin's Heart

*Monica Burns*

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## **Assassin's Heart** Monica Burns

The truth of the soul.

Lysander Condellaire never understood why he had telepathic and telekinetic powers until the night his Praetorian father tortured him and left him for dead. Now, the half-angelic, half-demonic face he sees in the mirror is a reminder of the monster he must keep hidden or face expulsion from the order of assassins known as the Sicari. But his dreams of Ancient Rome hint at a destiny he finds hard to accept, especially when it involves the woman he loves, but can never have.

The consequences of desire.

A gifted healer in the Order, Phaedra DeLuca witnessed her mother's murder when she was just a little girl. The haunting memory makes her loathe everything Praetorian. When she travels to Rome in search of an ancient artifact, she must work alongside a man who once cruelly rejected her love and healing touch. But her dreams of Ancient Rome tell of an irreversible and possibly dangerous future. For the distant past and present are about to collide—with the one man she is destined to love.

## **Assassin's Heart Details**

Date : Published September 7th 2010 by Berkley

ISBN : 9780425236529

Author : Monica Burns

Format : Trade Paperback 360 pages

Genre : Romance, Paranormal Romance, Fantasy, Paranormal, Urban Fantasy, Magic, Historical

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## From Reader Review Assassin's Heart for online ebook

Love2Read?HEAs? {Anne} says

3.7 Stars

Story was very good, lotsa action too. For some reason though, I just didn't like this one as much as book 01.

I will still continue on with book 03 though.

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### Lauren says

#### Assassin's Heart

5 Stars

##### Synopsis:

After being subjected to horrific torture, Lysander Condellarie is left with disfiguring scars and a terrible secret that results in the loss of the love of his life. Phaedra DeLuca has never understood Lysander's sudden rejection. Now the two must comply with their destinies and join forces in the search for an ancient artifact, which, if it falls into the hands of their enemies, could mean the destruction of their order.

##### Review:

An outstanding read! I would give it 6 Stars if my scale went up that high. It is even better than the first book in the series, which is saying a lot as Assassin's Honor is an amazing read as well.

The plot builds on the foundations established in the first book with the continued search for the Tyet of Isis. The richness of detail concerning the conflict between the Sicari and Praetorian secret societies fills in the gaps that remained at the conclusion of Assassin's Honor, and the author also provides tantalizing clues to the story in the next installment. I am really looking forward to finding out more about Alexander the Great's potion.

The characterization is excellent. Lysander and Emma have a primal and fundamental connection that just leaps off the pages. Their pain and the love they feel for each other reaches out and grabs you. Lysander has an incredible strength and vitality even in the face of adversity, and while there were one or two moments where I could have smacked Phaedra upside the head, her emotions and reactions are, nevertheless, consistent with her nature. The secondary characters are not left out. The villains are suitably diabolical (I won't tell you who they are so as not to ruin the interesting twists), and I enjoyed catching a glimpse at the history of the Sicari, both distant with Maximus and Cassiopeia, and more recent with Atia and Marcus, whose relationship is apparently going to be crucial to the next book. You'll just have to read to see what I mean.

Burns's writing has only gotten better, and she has managed to overcome the repetitiveness of thought and emotion that marred the first book. The flashback scenes are intricately woven into the primary story and the transitions between past and present are smooth and do not detract from the overall plot.

Overall, I highly recommend this series, which should be read in order because the plotlines are intertwined,

and I cannot wait for the release of the next book, *Inferno's Kiss*.

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## **Mandi Schreiner says**

Favorite Quote: "Kiss me and I'll show you what to believe," she said in a voice that challenged him to listen to his heart and nothing else.

The Sicari are an ancient order of people and Lysander has lived his life fighting as one of their best. Now Legatus, or head of his order, it is a daily struggle to keep the demons and dark side of him at bay while he is the leader his team has come to expect. After being tortured at the hands of the Sicari's nemesis, the Praetorians a year ago, he is left with only one eye, and half of his face severely disfigured. To make matters worse, the Praetorian who tortured him happens to be his father, and now he has to deal with the fact that he is one-half the enemy, a deep, dark secret he can't bear to share with anyone.

Before his torture a year ago, he spent a passionate night with Phaedra, a Sicari healer. But after the torture, and the shame of finding out who his birth father is, he has pushed her brutally away. Phaedra is confused, and has been yearning for Lysander this past year. She could care less about his disfigurement, and only wants him to open up, and share what haunts him. As she pushes his boundaries, Lysander digs deeper into himself. They also have an important mission, the reason they are in Rome. They believe an ancient artifact, The Tyet of Isis is near, and with the rest of the crew, they go off on a search to bring a very valuable artifact into safe keeping, before the Praetorians get their evil fingers on it.

*Assassin's Heart* is book two in Monica Burn's Sicari series, and while I enjoyed book one, I think I liked this one even better. The prologue is completely antagonizing with the details of Lysander's torture a year ago. It shows how strong he is mentally, but it also shows the fear and pain he had to endure. I'm really glad Monica Burns included it, because Lysander is such a broken hero, it gives us a very good understanding of where he is coming from.

There are a lot of things going on in this book, but all the events work really well together and present a book that will have you interested until the end. First we have Lysander and Phaedra's dramatic love story. And I say dramatic because the angst and tension in this relationship will have you either biting your nails or banging your head against a wall. At times I became frustrated that Lysander would not give an inch and let Phaedra in on his secrets. I will say he stays true to his character until the very end, and for that I give Monica Burns a lot of credit. I wanted to grab Lysander and shake him, but Phaedra eventually does that for me. If you enjoy tortured heroes, Lysander is the guy for you.

We also get the story of Atia, the Prima Consul, or Lysander's boss in basic terms and her very complicated relationship with the Sicari lord, Marcus. I won't go into a lot of their story, but it is heartbreaking, and really adds a lot to this book. I really look forward to getting more from them further in the series. We also get some pretty bad dudes in the villain department, and some cool twists that make them much more than just villains looking in from the outside.

Now that I have read both of these books, I can say this is a series where I find myself anticipating the next one. With adventure and romance, angst and tension, this book is a really fun read.

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## **Brandy \*Ahviel\* says**

The half-angel, half-demon face that telepathic Lysander sees in the mirror is a reminder of the monster he must keep hidden to avoid expulsion from an order of assassins. His dreams of ancient Rome hint at a destiny with a woman he loves, but can never have.

When the gifted healer Phaedra travels to Rome in search of a legendary artifact, she works alongside a man who once rejected her love and healing touch. But her dreams of Ancient Rome tell of an irreversible and possibly dangerous future. For the distant past and present are about to collide-with the one man she is destined to love.

I love the chemistry between Lysander and Phae. These two bicker back and forth for good reason Lysander shut Phae out of his life over a year ago without a reason why now those reasons are coming to light and Phae is having a hard time accepting those reasons. Just as Lysander is having a hard time accepting that he must accept those reasons and allow himself love the woman that Phae is.

The battle of wills is great. The story line is written so much better than the first book that I really can't wait for the next installment because that book is going to reveal so much more

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## **UKSandy says**

This was the story of Lysander and Phaedra.

I read reviews that people had thought of Zsadist (whom I love so much) when reading this book and I understand why (I'm the tortured hero's number one fan!). I don't want to say too much as I don't want to give away anything about the story but trust me it's definitely worth your time to read this.

I loved this book a lot more than I ever expected to. I did find when reading it you needed to make sure you didn't miss anything as there is just so much going on. As well reading about Lysander & Phaedra you also get the back story of Atia and Marcus and as well as a great story I loved to read all about Rome, I found this a really interesting part of the story.

There was a lot of action in this book which I really enjoyed - but not at the expense of romance there just seem to be enough of everything.

I believe the next book is going to be Atia and Marcus and I can't wait to read this one.

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## **Hbeebti says**

Oh yes I truly loved this book! Lysander was just so..... wounded and passionate . I just wanted to gobble him up! Poor guy. I don't care about the scars. His character was even better than I thought he would be. This had plenty of action. Lots of drama and some hot sex going on. Oh and a couple of shockers. Loved the almost side story of Marcus and Atia. That was really great. Nothing was resolved with the baddies. But hey that means more books for this series!! Oh yeah baby I can't wait! Cleo's book is next and I can't wait to see what happens. Now the secret is out. What is she going to do? I hate having to wait!!ugh..... Oh well.... These Roman's are HOT!!!

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## Amy says

Tortured male. Surprise paternity of tortured male shocking everyone. Two factions warring against each other in modern day Rome. An order of assassins that seemed to be more a background factor than highlighted in this text. An OK read but I was slightly disappointed as I thought it would have a little bit more action in it.

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## ~V~ says

This second book in the Order of the Sicari series was so much better than the 1st book! There were still a couple of things that were kind of distracting for me though...the author still has a tendency to be a little bit repetitive w/ some of her words and phrases..and she is still using those darn Italian words throughout the entire book..that DID drive me a little bit nutty! Having said that, Assassin's Heart was definitely an improvement! I really enjoyed Lysander and Phaedra..and i absolutely LOVED the whole reincarnation storyline!! I loved the flashbacks of Maximus and Cassiopeia..such a sweet and tragic story...and i really also enjoyed the side story of Atia and Marcus. Marcus was very intriguing and it was kind of nice to see a softer side to Atia because she came off as pretty detached and cold in the first book. I'm assuming Monica Burns will be writing more books in this series, things were definitely not wrapped up..other than between the two main characters..but the storyline is still left open as well as the future of a few main characters. I would like to see more of Cleo, she's quite the little spit fire and it would be fun to see her get a HEA. I would also like to see what becomes of Atia and Marcus..w/ everything they've had to endure it would be really great to see some closure for those two...for them to finally be together w/ out all of their obligations getting in the way.

\*\*i wanted to add a little side note here...i checked the author's website and she has a glossary of ALL her Italian words!..It sure would have been nice to know that because i would have printed that list off and had it with me while i was reading the darn book!..ggrrrr..oh well..for the next book i guess. :)

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## Sharon ∞💞 is an emotional book junkie 💞∞ says

**\*\*3.5 stars\*\***

This book took me awhile to get into it...probably not until 60%!! From that point on, it got really exciting. I enjoyed Lysander's and Phaedra's story but a lot of the other background stories were distracting. Along with the repetitive phrases and the non-translated Italian/Latin words, it was a bit frustrating. I do think the author has a good idea with the series.

Lysander and Phaedra were really sweet. The reincarnation story was interesting and I enjoyed how it played out. I was hoping that Lysander would've been "healed" physically but unfortunately that didn't happen.

I was surprised that Gabriel was killed and am interested in Cleo learning about her Dad and what happens.

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## **Katie(babs) says**

Assassin's Heart (Book 2 in the Order of the Sicari) by Monica Burns is filled with incredible world building, strong, warrior type characters and an amazing romance. Assassin's Heart stars Lysander, a facially scarred and brooding Sicari fighter. The beginning of Assassin's Heart takes place a year before the events of the first book, Assassin's Honor. Lysander has been taken captive by his enemy, the Praetorian. He is tortured horribly by one of the Praetorian who scrapes away the skin on part of his face and blinds him in one eye. Even though Lysander is in incredible pain and expects to die, he has no regrets, especially since he had an amazing night of lovemaking with the healer Phaedra (Sister to Ares, the hero in Assassin's Honor). He loves Phaedra with everything he has inside him, but his torturer tells him something that will destroy him. Lysander's mother was raped by the Praetorian torturer and from that violent act, Lysander was conceived. Everything Lysander thought he knew was a lie, and now he feels dirty and less of a man. He is saved by his fellow Sicari, and Phaedra wants to heal his face, but he rejects her healing powers and her help. He wants to live with the scars his father has given him as punishment. And he knows if Phaedra finds out he is part Praetorian, she will hate him because the Praetorians murdered her parents.

Now a year later, the Praetorians are still out to get the Sicari. Phaedra suffers silently because of Lysander's harsh rejection, while Lysander longs for Phaedra, but turns away from her because of what he is. Phaedra wants to get to the bottom of Lysander's grief. And even though he acts cold and uncaring towards her, she notices the heated stares he gives her. Also, both are having strange dreams where they come to the conclusion that Lysander is the first Sicari Lord and Phaedra is his wife that have been reincarnated. Not only do they have to deal with the Praetorians upping their attacks, but they must learn to work with one another no matter how hard it is. Phaedra is not one to have a man like Lysander walk away from her. She refuses to let him wallow in his despair, and won't rest until he tells her the truth. And when he does, it's just as explosive as the passion they have for one another

Monica really knows how to bring out the yearning, angst and smoldering lust two people can have for one another. Assassin's Heart has wicked fighting scenes with nasty, powerful villains and more than enough hot love between Lysander and Phaedra that almost had me grasping for air. Everything is explained in such detail that I'm simply amazed by how Monica could do it all.

I'm usually not one for flashback scenes, but the ones with Maximus and Cassiopeia, both Lysander and Phaedra dream about are very well written and fit in the story. I also loved how Monica had me aching for two characters whose story must be written because they made such an impact on me. This deals with Atia, one of the heads of the Sicari Order. She is the mother of Cleo, another Sicari. Atia hides many secrets. One being of Cleo's father who has no idea that Atia gave birth to her. He is Marcus, a Sicari Lord, who had to give up Atia decades ago because of his important role. Now he's back and wants Atia. He won't allow her to walk away from him as he did before. But there's another man who protects both Cleo and Atia, who also wants her as much as Marcus does. Their relationship is filled with mistrust and hurt. And there's a major shocking twist with their son that Marcus took away who could possibly destroy the Sicari after all these centuries. At times I was more interested in Atia and Marcus, versus Lysander and Phaedra, and can't wait to see what Monica has in store for them.

Assassin's Heart is very rich and descriptive. The men are full of smoldering sexiness and their women are their equals in every sense of the word. If you're lacking an action packed, swoon worthy type romance, do give Assassin's Heart a read. You will definitely enjoy the masterful talents of Monica Burns who never fails to disappoint.

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## Eskimo Princess Jenkins says

This book took me a long time to read, it did not hold my interest. I almost didn't make it past the first chapter, it made me sick.

This was one of those books that while reading, I was OK. but as soon as I put it down, it really didn't want to keep reading. I could've finished a lot sooner, but I honestly didn't feel like continuing with it.

The writing is great, storyline good. bit just not for me I guess.

But I am glad I read it to know the story. and I will read book 3, because I have to know how it all ends.

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## Erinaceina says

The premise was interesting, Lysander was a gorgeous hero, and the romantic plot was wonderfully angsty. Unfortunately, this was all marred (not ruined, although it came close at times) by Monica Burns's invented language for the Sicari. I know that Burns says on her website that 'The Sicari language is a mix of Italian and Latin, blended together to form a dialect that is not the Italian or Latin we know or study today. The dialect has evolved over the past two thousand years as any language does.' However, it doesn't work as this. For instance, she has phrases like 'il mia signora' and 'mea amor' side-by-side in the language of the Sicari. 'Mia' is the Italian form which has evolved from the Latin 'mea'. The Sicari language would have either evolved the Italian form (or another form altogether) or kept the Latin form; it would not have both. Similarly, the Sicari language has the Latin form 'cor' and the Latin 'cuore' which are the same word (heart) at different stages in its linguistic life. (It is theoretically possible to have two words from the same original word, as in English guard and ward, but they don't tend to have exactly the same meaning).

In the phrase 'Il Christi omnipotentia', 'omnipotentia' does not mean 'omnipotent' as Burns uses it, but 'omnipotence': it's a noun. Once again, you could say that it's a change in the dialect (something weird to do with nouns being used as adjectives or something, I suppose), but it doesn't make sense, particularly as both Latin and Italian have an adjective for this and would use it in these circumstances (omnipotens and onnipotente, respectively).

The most frustrating thing was her use of longer phrases. For example:

'Mea gladius non voluntas concidi, mea kara.' (My sword will not fail, my beloved)

Almost everything in this sentence is wrong, but every individual word is Latin, and therefore it's easiest to treat it as such.

*Gladius* is grammatically masculine, whereas the form *mea* is feminine. Therefore, they do not agree. You'd expect *meus gladius*, but I suppose the rules of agreement could change, despite remaining fairly stable in the basics for Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Likewise, it's hard to understand why the Sicari language would evolve the form *kara* alongside *cara*. They sound the same and they mean the same; they're only written differently. But at a push, I could pretend it was just part of the dialect and move on. Where the sentence really gets me is *non voluntas concidi* (will not fail). Trying to avoid getting too tediously technical, *will* in the English is a part of the verb which tells us that the action is happening in the future. Italian does not mark the future tense in this way, but instead adds bits to the end of the word like this, like the way in



which English marks the past tense by adding -ed to the end of a word. Latin marked the future tense in a similar way to Italian. Not only that, but the word which Burns uses to translate 'will' isn't a verb at all: it's a noun. It's the equivalent to the English 'will' in 'it is my will that you stop fighting' (slightly strained, but you get the picture).

Now on to *concredi*. This is a nasty trap, and one you're most likely to fall into if you're looking in a Latin dictionary without knowing what you're looking for. Most verbs are given in the form 'I walk, to walk, I walked' form in the dictionary, but sometimes they miss out the 'to walk' form, particularly if it's exactly what you'd expect it to be. Thus, instead of 'concido, concidere, concidi', the dictionary just has 'concido, concidi', which makes it easy to confuse which one you should be using. Instead of 'to fail' ('concidere'), Burns has used 'I failed' ('concredi'). Of course, as Latin doesn't form the future tense in this way, it would still be wrong if she had used 'concidere'.

Thus, the sentence is something like 'My (female) sword (male) not will (noun) I failed'.

It should be something like:

'meus gladius' (agreement)

'non'

'concedet' (third person singular future of 'to fail' > 'will fail').

'Meus gladius non concedet' - 'My sword will not fail'.

As the original seems to have nothing to do with Italian, I think this is a fair translation. My Italian is very limited, but an equivalent would be something like 'la mia spada non fallirà'. I've probably chosen the wrong words there, and apologise, but you can see the same features: agreement ('la mia spada') and the future tense all in one word ('fallirà') - no nouns involved in the latter!

I know I'm nitpicking, but the point is that none of this reads like a carefully imagined dialect/language descended from Latin and closely related to Italian. It looks like bad Latin made up by choosing words from a dictionary and stringing them together without knowing how they work, with some bits of Italian thrown in. Language change forms patterns, but this is like someone shredded a couple of dictionaries and mixed the resulting shredded paper together. It was a pity, because there was something of her Sicari language on pretty much each page, which jolted me out of a story I otherwise really enjoyed. I'm a grad student working on how words change their meanings, and I know that I have a geeky obsession with how languages change over time, so I was more susceptible to this than most, but every time I saw something in the Sicari language, it felt like fingers down a chalkboard inside my brain. I'd rather an author didn't use foreign languages at all than put together a haphazard mishmash like this.

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## Mojca says

Oh, yes. Yes, baby. Now we're talking. Because this was a huge improvement from Assassin's Honor. Especially in the heroine department. Because I liked Phaedra. Very much. Sure, she had her moments – first when she believed Lysander's lies and didn't press the issue further, and second when she discovered what he kept from her and without thinking decided she couldn't trust him. Yes, she changed her mind pretty quickly, thanks to her friends' intervention, but that little lapse shouldn't have been there.

Well, it doesn't matter now, because this one was one heck of a story. Angst, baby, angst galore, drama, a little lighter on the action as the previous one, but what it had to offer was "da bomb", smokin' hot when it needed to be, sexy, bittersweet, and a lot angsty. Did I mention that? I usually don't like my books so rife with angst, but Ms. Burns made it work in this one.

And all thanks to the one, the only, Lysander Condellarie. Boy, what a package. Hot and sexy as hell, eye-patch, scars and all. A protective streak a mile wide, loads of self-punishment, doubt, and guilt. And a whole lot of love for one woman. Angst personified, and I loved every minute of it. He was an idiot to push her away, but this reader could understand and sympathize, he was still an idiot one year ago but you could see he was wavering, and when Phae finally decided to take matters into her own hands and give him a push, this reader sighed in relief. Then there was another heart-wrenching couple of pages when he suffered for being an idiot in the beginning and not telling her (which would've resulted in the same treatment and they all knew it), some more suffering in the end when... Yes, there was a lot of suffering going on around in this book, but it was "good" suffering, don't fret.

And there was an interesting side story – and possibly a glimpse into a future one – involving a Sicari Lord and the *Prima Pilus*, but I'm not saying more and risking spoiling it for those who haven't read it yet.

The only problem this book had were the flashbacks in form of dreams. Sure, they were an intricate part of the plot, but they slowed the pacing down too much, and the only interesting part was the end of "history". And, yet again, the Sicari language bothered me. Sorry.

So, not 5 stars for this one but a solid B+.

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## **N says**

Was a little disappointed in this one. The first book seemed much more thought-out in comparison. The character's weren't as well developed and at times I felt like I was getting whiplash with the emotional polarities they would jump to one after another (lusty - angry - sad - happy - angry - shy...all in one page by ONE character!). But the plot was interesting, so I still read it to the very end!

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## **Fil says**

4.5 omnipotentia stars. Great continuation of this story. Lysander and Phaedra story was so much more, can't wait to see how this all unfolds in the last installment.

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