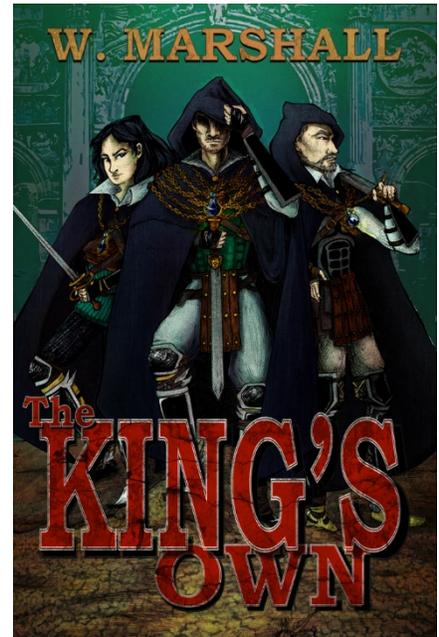


Media Kit: *The King's Own*

ABOUT *The King's Own*

The King's Own are as feared as they are ruthless, doing all of those hard, and sometimes terrible, things necessary to ensure the safety of the realm. Owing allegiance to the King alone, they are his spies, his assassins, and his advisors. They exist to walk in the shadows, to enforce the King's will, to change the course of entire wars, and to root out dissenters. They live without family, in service to the crown, unknown and unsung.

A young man conscripted to fight in a war far away from home. Blood and loss tempered with hope and a vow. Recruited into the King's Own, he must learn quickly to do whatever it takes to serve the kingdom so that others can live their lives in relative peace and safety. But just how far will he go to keep his oath, especially when the King is murdered?



ABOUT W. Marshall



W. Marshall was born in Florida, but found his home when he moved to Colorado. He is a lover of movies, books, dogs, science fiction, fantasy, and military history. His debut novel, *The King's Own*, is a work of dark fiction that asks hard questions as it examines the life and labors of the protagonist.

In his free time, he enjoys running, reading a wide array of fiction, and writing science fiction and fantasy.

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AUTHOR INTERVIEW

How did you decide on the name for the novel? The name sprung for the core concept I had for the book, a lone man who is at the center of a world-changing events. It was just one man, at first, and then the idea grew into a small, elite group. Originally, the name was The Kingsman, meant to be both the name of the Order and the title by which they are known. I had to change the name once the movie of that name came out, though. I decided on The King's Own to convey the sense of importance of the Order, showing they answered only to him, and were his most trusted agents.

What was your inspiration behind the story? There is one scene, late in the book, that I had in my head. Without spoiling anything of the plot, it is a key moment, a confrontation between two characters. I wanted to ask the question of just how far will people go to uphold their ideals. Are they willing to make the necessary sacrifices to remain true to themselves and their cause? And with that, I knew the book had to be written in first person, and had to flash back in time so we can see how he becomes the man he is.

Do you have any superstitions or quirks when you write? I don't have any real superstitions about writing, per se, but I do tend to find that characters take on a life of their own. For example, the character of Commodus was originally a harsh, extremely tough mentor, but in the course of writing, he became much more of a father figure than a taskmaster. I also tend to be a bit chaotic when I write. In most cases, I don't have a detailed outline, and write specific scenes that are in my head. Whole chapters grow from that, and I form the outline based on my writing to ensure consistency and flesh things out. It's a bit of an inverse approach, but it's always worked for me.

Coffee or tea? Tea. Earl Grey. Hot. But I also enjoy coffee, usually on the extremes of black or oversaturated with flavored creamers.

Who is your favorite author? Now there is a difficult question! I'd say currently, Terry Goodkind for fantasy, and John Scalzi for Sci-Fi. I also love Robert Jordan, Robert Heinlein, Elizabeth Moon, Dean Koontz, David and Leigh Eddings, Terry Brooks, the team of Weis and Hickman, and so many more.

What kind of reader are you? Multi-tasker, must finisher, multiple books at one time I'm a pretty slow reader, taking my time and enjoying each new world (or returning to a familiar one). When I pick up a book, I tend to read everything by that author, devouring their entire bibliography if I enjoy their writing. That's gotten me into trouble a few times, in fact, when the books in a particular series aren't

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complete. For example, Harry Potter was only on book four when I picked them up, and the Wheel of Time was only on the third!

What fantasy worlds inspired yours? The King's Own takes place in a dark, low fantasy world. There is very little magic, there are no other races aside from humans, and the world is largely untamed outside of the populated, civilized areas. A Song of Ice and Fire springs to mind, and I would definitely say both the worlds of the Witcher and Dragon Age have some influence. I also drew inspiration from the Roman Empire and Medieval Europe.

EXCERPTS FROM *The King's Own*

Excerpt One

"Alright," Commodus said. "I guess I'll be the bait. I'll just stroll right up there and announce myself and hope they don't riddle me with arrows." I smirked, pointing off to the left to show Samarra where I wanted her to scout. "You'll be fine, old timer," I said, giving him a familiar nod. I turned and slipped off into the thick woods, circling far enough around to avoid detection by the sentries. Samarra had proven to be even more skilled than I was at infiltration like this, moving quietly and quickly, unseen and unheard. Years of practice had made me an expert, but she took to it as naturally as walking. I blended with the shadows, slipping among the trees as easily as a panther, my eyes searching for my targets. There. Not very well-hidden to the trained eye. My hand clamped over the first sentry's mouth, my dagger slitting his throat. Two more followed, their bows showing me they were indeed there to kill us if things turned sour for the rebels. Quickly then, back to Commodus, before he decided to pull something stupid and become a martyr by attempting to rescue the Princess by himself.

Excerpt Two

I let out a silent howl of rage and loss, shaking in fury. He was right, but I didn't want to admit it. The bandits on the other side of the door were growing closer, shouting and mocking as they looked for more victims.

"I can at least ..." I protested, but the Old Man shook his head again.

"Listen to me, son," he said, his voice surprisingly calm. "I've never in your life given you a command. But obey me now. You must flee. We have no time to argue, and there are so many things still to tell you. I want you to live. Make this mean something. Your mother and your sister would want the same. Your wife and your son would want the same. Sarra wants the same. The gods above, or maybe even the gods below, spared you for something. Live to fight another day, son."

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I took a deep breath, wrestling with my emotions, mastering them once again, allowing that cold calmness to settle over me so I could act. I opened my eyes, looking at the Old Man, wishing I could say all the things I never had.

Excerpt Three

“Cousin!” Countess Lucretia exclaimed as she emerged from her carriage. Her eyes had met mine as she stepped down, instantly recognizing me as the one who had written the letter we had smuggled in. Only the gods knew how. She embraced me, kissing me on both cheeks, the scent of her perfume something I wasn’t used to. I responded in kind, Commodus’s lessons in decorum suddenly paying off. “I am beside myself that you would join us in our darkest hour.”

She turned to Lord Commander Emren, giving him a curtsy. “I thank thee, Lord Commander, for this kindness.” The Lord Commander inclined his head, gracious despite the fact he didn’t have to be, not with hundreds of soldiers and knights behind him. I climbed into the carriage with the Countess, Commodus climbing on top with the driver, playing his role.

“What game is this you are playing?” the Countess demanded as soon as the door shut. The horses set out, pulling us along. “I need an army to break this siege, but all I get is one boy with a beard to hide his age and a middle-aged man?” I fought back the heat I felt rising, swallowing her insult and instead focusing on the task at hand.

“We are the King’s Own, your Grace.”