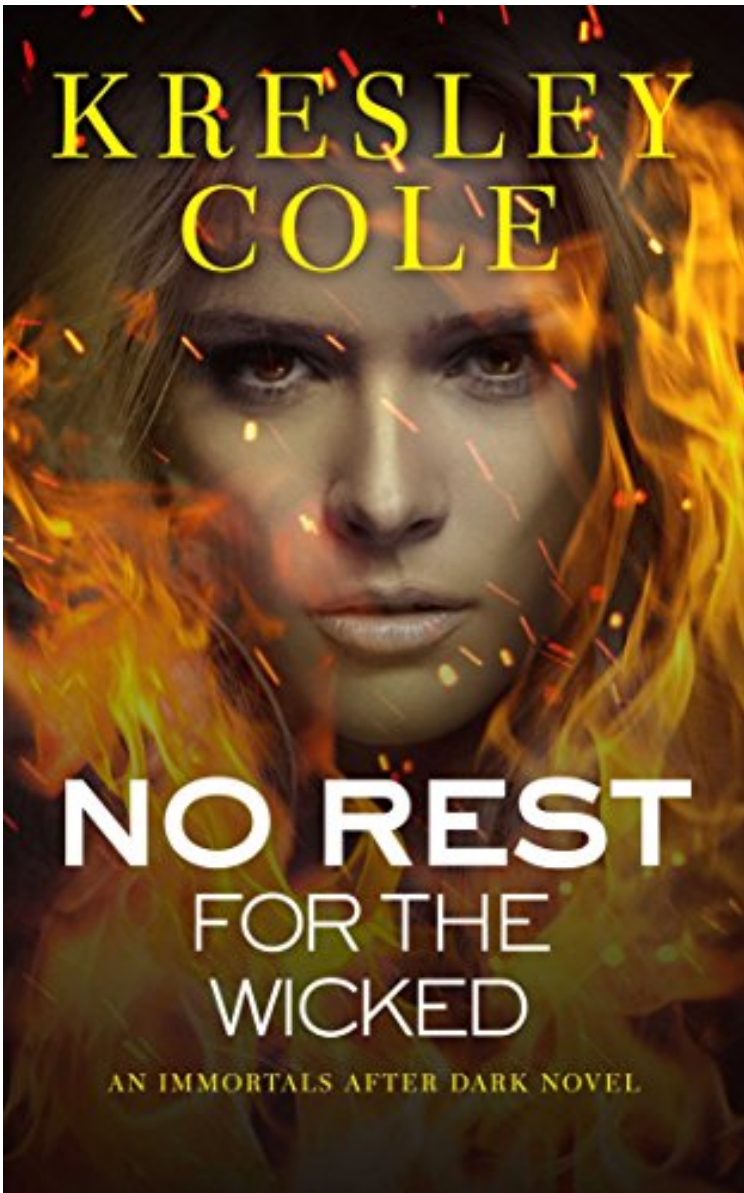


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No Rest for the Wicked (Immortals After Dark, Book 2)



Par Kresley Cole
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNew York Times and USA TODAY bestselling author Kresley Cole delivers a scorching tale about a foreboding vampire who lives in the shadowsand the beautiful assassin determined to hunt him downin the sensational (RT Book s) second novel of the Immortals After Dark series.Centuries ago, Sebastian Wroth was turned into a vampire against his will. Burdened with hatred and alone for ages, he sees little reason to live. Until an exquisite, fey creature comes to kill him, inadvertently saving him instead.

When Kaderin the Cold Hearted lost her two beloved sisters to a vampire attack long ago, a benevolent force deadened her sorrow accidentally extinguishing all of her emotions. Yet whenever Kaderin encounters Sebastian, her feelings particularly lust emerge multiplied. For the first time, she's unable to complete a kill. And when the prize of a legendary month-long contest is powerful enough to change history, Kaderin will do anything to win it for her sisters. Wanting only to win her, forever, Sebastian competes as well, taking every opportunity as they travel to ancient tombs and through catacombs, seeking relics around the world to use her new feelings to seduce her. But when Kaderin is forced to choose between the vampire she's falling for and reuniting her family, how can she live without either?

Extrait No Rest for the Wicked 1 Castle Gornyi, Russia Present day

For the second time in her life, Kaderin the Coldhearted hesitated to kill a vampire. In the last instant of a silent, lethal swing, she stayed her sword an inch above the neck of her prey because she found him holding his head in his hands. She saw his big body tense. As a vampire, he could easily trace away, disappearing. Instead, he raised his face to gaze at her with dark gray eyes, the color of a storm about to be unleashed. Surprisingly, they were clear of the red that marked a vampire's bloodlust, which meant he had never drunk a being to death. Yet. He beseeched with those eyes, and she realized he hungered for an end. He wanted the death blow she'd come to his decrepit castle to deliver. She'd stalked him soundlessly, primed for battle with a vicious predator. Kaderin had been in Scotland with other Valkyrie when they'd received the call about a vampire haunting a castle and terrorizing a village in Russia. She had gladly volunteered to destroy the leech. She was her Valkyrie covens most prolific killer, her life given over to ridding the earth of vampires. In Scotland, before this call to Russia, she'd killed three. So why was she hesitating now? Why was she easing her sword back? He would be merely one among thousands of her kills, his fangs collected and strung together with the others she'd taken. The last time she'd stayed her hand had resulted in a tragedy so great her heart had been broken forever by it. In a deep, gravelly voice, the vampire asked, Why do you wait? He seemed startled by the sound of his own words. I don't know why. Unfamiliar physical sensations wracked her. Her stomach knotted. As though a band had tightened around her chest, her lungs were desperate for breath. I can't comprehend why. The wind blew outside, sliding over the mountain, making this high room in the vampire's darkened lair groan. Unseen gaps in the walls allowed in the chill morning breeze. As he stood, rising to his full, towering height, her blade caught the wavering light from a cluster of candles and reflected it on him. His grave face was lean with harsh planes, and other females would consider it handsome. His black shirt was threadbare and unbuttoned, displaying much of his chest and sculpted torso, and his worn jeans were slung low at his narrow waist. The wind tugged at the tail of his shirt and stirred his thick black hair. Very handsome. But then, the vampires I kill often are. His gaze focused on the tip of her sword. Then, as if the threat of her weapon were forgotten, he studied her face, his eyes lingering on each of her features. His blatant appreciation unsettled her, and she clutched the hilt tightly, something she never did. Honed to masterly sharpness with her diamond file, her sword cut through bone and muscle with little effort. It swung perfectly from her loose wrist as though it were an extension of her arm. She'd never needed to hold it tightly. Take his head. One less vampire. The species checked in the tiniest way. What is your name? His speech was clipped like an aristocrat's, but held a familiar accent. Estonian. Though Estonia bordered Russia to the west and its inhabitants were considered a Nordic breed of Russian, she recognized the difference, and wondered what he was doing away from his own country. She tilted her head. Why do you want to know? I would like to know the name of the woman who will deliver me from this. He wanted to die. After all she'd suffered from his kind, the last thing she wanted to do was oblige the vampire in any way. You assume I'll deliver your death blow? Will you not? His lips curled at the corners, but it was a sad smile. Another tightening on the sword. She would. Of course, she would. Killing was her only purpose in life. She didn't care if his eyes weren't red. Ultimately, he would drink to kill, and he would turn. They always did. He stepped around a stack of hardbound books some of the hundreds of texts throughout the room with titles imprinted in Russian and, yes, Estonian and leaned his massive frame against the crumbling wall. He truly wasn't going to raise a hand in defense. Before you do, speak again. Your voice is beautiful. As beautiful as your stunning face. She swallowed, startled to feel her cheeks heating. Who do you align with . . . ? She trailed off when he closed his eyes as though listening to her were bliss. The Forbearers? That got him to open his eyes. They were full of anger. I align with no one. Especially not them. But you were once human, weren't you? The Forbearers were an army, or order, of turned humans. They refused to take blood straight from the flesh because they believed that act caused bloodlust. By forbearing, they hoped to avoid becoming like crazed Horde vampires. The Valkyrie remained unoptimistic about their chances. Yes, but I've no interest in that order. And you? You're no human either, are you? She ignored his

question. Why do you linger here in this castle? she asked. The villagers live in terror of you. I won this holding on the battlefield and rightly own it, so I stay. And Ive never harmed them. He turned away and murmured, I wish that I did not frighten them. Kaderin needed to get this killing over with. In just three days, she was to compete in the Talismans Hie, which was basically a deadly, immortal version of The Amazing Race. Besides hunting vampires, the Hie was the only thing she lived for, and she needed to confirm transportation and secure supplies. And yet she found herself saying, They told me you live here alone. He faced her and gave a sharp nod. She sensed that he was embarrassed by this fact, as if he felt lacking that he didnt have a family here. How long? He hiked his broad shoulders, pretending nonchalance. A few centuries. To live solitary for all that time? The people in the valley sent for me, she said, as if she had to explain herself. The inhabitants of the remote village belonged to the Lorea population of immortals and mythical creatures kept secret from humans. Many of them still worshipped the Valkyrie and provided tributes, but that wasnt what made Kaderin travel to such an isolated place. The chance to kill even a single vampire had drawn her. They pleaded for me to destroy you. Then I await your leisure. Why not kill yourself, if thats what you want? she asked. Its . . . complicated. But you save me from that end. I know youre a skilled warrior How do you know what I am? He gave a nod at her sword. I used to be a warrior, too, and your remarkable weapon speaks much. The one thing she felt pride in the one thing in her life that she had left and couldnt bear to lose and hed noted its excellence. He strode closer to her and lowered his voice. Strike your blow, creature. Know that no misfortune could come to you for killing one such as me. There is no reason to wait. As if this were a matter of conscience! It wasnt. It couldnt be. She had no conscience. No real feelings, no raw emotions. She was coldhearted. After the tragedy, shed prayed for oblivion, prayed for the sorrow and guilt to be numbed. Some mysterious entity had answered her and made her heart like ash. Kaderin didnt suffer from sorrow, from lust, from anger, or from joy. Nothing got in the way of her killing. She was a perfect killer. She had been for one thousand years, half of her interminable life. Did you hear that? he asked. The eyes that had been pleading for an end now narrowed. Are you alone? She quirked an eyebrow. I do not require help from others. Especially not for a single vampire, she added, her tone growing absent. Oddly, her attention had dipped to his body once more to low on his torso, past his navel to the dusky trail of hair leading down. She imagined grazing the back of one of her sharp claws along it while his massive body clenched and shuddered in reaction. Her thoughts were making her uneasy, making her want to wind her hair up into a knot and let the chill air cool her neck. He cleared his throat. When she jerked her gaze to his face, he raised his eyebrows. Caught ogling the prey! The indignity! What is wrong with me? She had no more sexual urges than the walking-dead vampire before her. She shook herself, forcing herself to remember the last time shed faltered. On a battlefield, an age ago, she had spared and released another of this ilk, a young vampire soldier who had begged for his life. Yet he had seemed to scorn her for her very mercy. Without delay, the soldier had found her two full-blood sisters fighting in the flatlands below them. Alerted by a shriek from another Valkyrie, Kaderin had sprinted, stumbling down a hill draped with bodies, living and dead. Just as shed reached them, hed cut her sisters down. The younger, Rika, had been taken off-guard, because of Kaderins panicked approach. The vampire had smiled when Kaderin dropped to her knees. Hed dispatched her sisters with a brutal efficiency Kaderin had since emulated. Shed like to say she started with him, but shed kept him alive for a time. So, why would she repeat the same mistake? She wouldnt. She would not ignore a lesson she had paid so dearly to learn. The sooner I get this done, the sooner I can begin preparing for the Hie. Squaring her shoulders, she steeled herself. Its all in the follow-through. Kaderin could see the swing, knew the angle she would take so that his head would remain on his neck until he fell. It was cleaner that way. Which was important. Shed packed her suitcase lightly. Presentation de l'diteur New York Times and USA TODAY bestselling author Kresley Cole delivers a scorching tale about a foreboding vampire who lives in the shadows and the beautiful assassin determined to hunt him down in the sensational (RT Book s) second novel of the Immortals After Dark series. 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