



Night Drop: A Blake Sanders Thriller

Michael Sherer

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The ticking clock of this thriller amps up the suspense as a grief-filled man steps up to rescue his ex-wife.

Suicidal teens, military-trained dolphins, beautiful feds, and Islamic terrorists all manage to find a way into the life of Blake Sanders, the beleaguered but determined hero of *Night Drop*, Michael W. Sherer's third book in the Blake Sanders thriller series. Despite Sanders's shortcomings—he suffers from attention deficit disorder and is prone to grief-fueled outbursts—he's ready to step up and save his ex-wife when her kidnapers demand their first ransom.

Sanders asks a friend, "What, you don't think I'm tough enough to take a bullet for you?" With a fair amount of humor and a serviceable plot, this novel sets out to prove he is, and *Night Drop* is packed with plenty of action and one-on-one showdowns. The hero risks his life, takes a beating, and goes back for more. But those who kidnapped his ex-wife are willing to do whatever it takes to complete their mission, keeping everyone—rescuers and accomplices, alike—on edge.

Even on more civilized terrain, Sanders has no patience for anyone less committed than he is to saving his ex-wife, and he repeatedly finds himself in shouting matches with territorial lawyers and small-minded FBI agents. Sanders stares them all down, then works to regain composure through the breathing exercise *pranayama*.

Sherer maintains a clean and effective narrative structure. A diverse cast of characters is quickly introduced, and Sanders's history and relationships are neatly reviewed; by the end of chapter one, the major players have been identified, and it's clear what's at stake. Sherer methodically ratchets up the severity of the conflict, briefly interspersing plot developments with descriptions of Seattle venues—Pike's place market, The Space Needle, citizens in a subway car—and giving some background on Sanders's personal struggles with ADD and the loss of his son. The action sequences often run long, devolving into overly orchestrated play-by-plays that rely heavily on clichéd physiological responses, like racing hearts and boiling blood, to impart a sense of panic or anger.

Sherer's latest installment will appeal to fans of fun thrillers who enjoy underexplored settings and who don't need a lot of gore to be clear on who the bad guys are.

JENNIFER WILLIAMS (Winter 2015)

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