

# A VIDEO GAME IN WORDS

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*I got my hands on the first Assassin's Creed video game tie-in novel by Oliver Bowden almost a year ago, and being a fan of the video game, I decided to give the series a read. Even though there are eight of them, I will be reviewing the first three.*

## ASSASSIN'S CREED: RENAISSANCE

The novel showcases Ezio Auditore as a young man with an Assassin heritage who seeks vengeance after his father and two brothers are executed. Equipped with a blade that can be concealed, he begins to train himself as an assassin along with Mario, his uncle. He then gets involved in the unsettling affairs of two secret societies called the Assassin's Order and the Templar Order, who are trying to seek the Vatican Vault which contains secrets about a superior ancient technology. After a series of assassinations, Ezio confronts Rodrigo a.k.a. Pope Alexander VI, in order to gain access to the Vault.

As you can already tell, the plot of the novel is more or less similar to the game. It is an interesting read that keeps you on the edge with its clever twists and turns, but at the same time, the novel fails to explore some of the deeper issues – some situations and information that have not been included in the original medium. However, it does give us an in-depth view of the character of Ezio - of the things that he feels and the thoughts that go through his mind in each situation. Overall, I would recommend it for the not-too-ardent fans of the game.

## ASSASSIN'S CREED: BROTHERHOOD

Just like the previous book, it's a narration of the video game in words but also tells you more miniature details neglected in the game. After having gained access to the Vault, Ezio is dealing with a mysterious apple, a technology given to him by some powerful people. Cesare Borgia, Rodrigo's cruel son, lays siege to Monteriggioni where the Assassins

rule, his troops annihilating much of the city and killing many people. The Borgia troops kill Mario and get hold of the apple. Ezio, forced to move on without his best armour, sets out on a thrilling mission to retrieve the apple and finish Cesare.

With its absorbing action scenes and cliff-hangers, I was quite satisfied with the book even though the climax felt like it was a little rushed. The grammatical structure and other aspects of the book are greatly simplified and it is an enjoyable read. The characters are given a new dimension which gives the novel a stronger impact. You can discover more of Ezio's personality – how he's a violent Assassin but at the same time is deeply caring about his loved ones. The suspicions, the conspiracies and the vibrant battle details are what keep the book alive.

## ASSASSIN'S CREED: THE SECRET CRUSADE

This novel depicts the life of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, one of the most extraordinary Assassins. Stripped of his rank of Master Assassin after a breach of conduct, Altaïr is given a chance to change his careless way of fighting and to transform to the calm and composed Assassin that he once was. He is set on a mission to kill nine men to prevent the Templar, an enemy of the Assassin Brotherhood, from gaining control of the world using an ancient artifact. As he gets closer to completing his mission, he is spun with a web of deception and must learn to distinguish his friends and enemies.

The Secret Crusade has an interesting storyline, but sometimes it felt like the scenes



were dragged too far to make the book bigger. It has the humour at perfect moments and the right amount of anticipation to keep a person going. It takes plots from the first Assassin's Creed game and also from the Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines. It tells a little more about Altaïr's past and gives good background information on the Assassin.

Novelisations of video games aren't supposed to be great literary pieces. They are supposed to fill in small voids that the gamers might

find questioning themselves about, give detailed overview of the lives and personalities of the characters, and simply provide a fun read. Even if you have never played Assassin's Creed before, you may still find the novels a worthy read.

*Zarin Rayhana is a self-aggrandizing ambivert who ponders over philosophical epiphanies during rainy evenings and waits for her crush to jump straight out of her favourite novel. Treat her with novel suggestions at ericaavianazarin@gmail.com*