

The Blood Rider Approaches

By Greg Saulmon

Mark Tarrant may not know it, but he has a solid backup plan. The 35-year-old from Chicopee is set to publish his first novel next summer; he could just as easily become a killer life coach. "The guys who did it themselves -- that's who I admire. If you wait for someone to do it for you, it's never going to happen," he told me.

The book, *The Blood Rider*, is the first (he has four in the can) in his Blood and Spurs series. The genre-bending tale follows Ezekiel, a priest-turned-vampire searching for faith in the Wild West.

For many, the terms "self-publishing" and "vanity press" go hand-in-hand. But Tarrant sees a viable option for authors willing to do some heavy lifting: "I can promote the book the way I want -- it's just a matter of doing the work."

And although making some money would be a nice bonus -- and although it's clear Tarrant has an acute understanding of the business side of the equation -- his hopes are realistic, and it's hard not to admire his artist's ethic. "Making money isn't the point," he said. "The point is to tell a story, to develop characters."



Tarrant will be on hand to promote *The Blood Rider* at the United Fan Con at the Springfield Marriott (11.10-11.12). This year's special guests include wrestler Kurt Angle, Monkee David Jones, and William Shatner.

For more on the Blood and Spurs series, visit www.bloodrider.com.