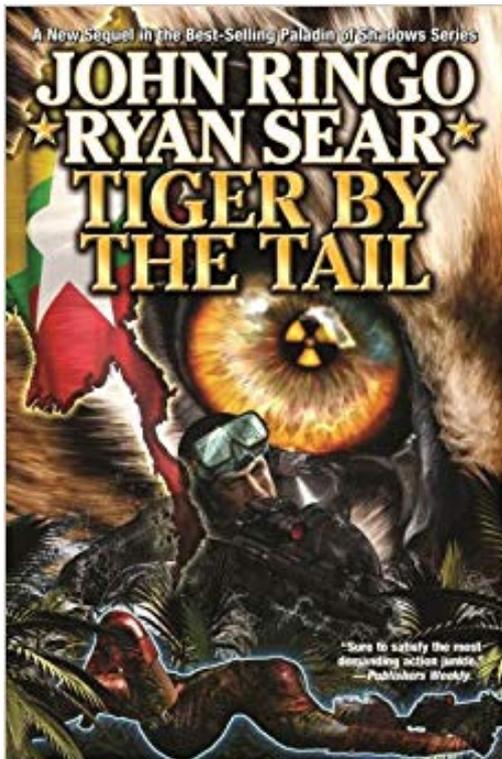


## Tiger by the Tail Limited Signed Edition (Kildar) by John Ringo



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**Author:** John Ringo

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**LIMITED SIGNED EDITION NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLING MILITARY ADVENTURE SERIES.** A new addition to the Kildar military adventure series by John Ringo and Ryan Sear. Sequel to *Ghost, Kildar, Choosers of the Slain* and *Unto the Breach*. A new addition to the Paladin of Shadows military adventure series by multiple *New York Times* best seller John Ringo and Ryan Sear. Sequel to *Ghost, Kildar, Choosers of the Slain, Unto the Breach* and *A Deeper Blue*. After saving America from Middle Eastern terrorists, even Mike Harmon and the Keldara could use a vacation. Of course, the Kildar's idea of a vacation includes taking down pirates in the Singapore Straits. But when he finds computer chips designed to run nuclear reactors in the pirate booty, Harmon has a new mission thrust upon him—discover how bottom-feeding thieves got their hands on top-secret technology. The chips are headed for newly democratic Myanmar, a country vital to American interests in the region. Now Harmon finds himself in a desperate race to learn who stole the chips and why. From glittering Hong Kong to the slums of Thailand to the swamps of Myanmar, Harmon and his Keldara team follow a trail of death and deceit across the glittering underbelly of Southeast Asia. And as the path winds through dark jungle and slave labor camps to the heart of newborn democracy, Harmon must devise a way to prevent the nasty overthrow of a nation's capital by totalitarian tyrants. But if there's one thing Mike and the Keldara specialize in, it's doing what it takes to give freedom a chance. "[Ringo's SF is] peopled with three-dimensional characters and spiced with personal drama as well as tactical finesse." —*Library Journal* ". . . explosive. . . Fans of strong military SF will appreciate Ringo's lively narrative and flavorful characters." —*Publishers Weekly* "The interstellar skullduggery is thick, and the final action sequence . . . is practically impossible not to read in one sitting . . . exceedingly impressive . . . executed with skill, verve, and wit." —*Booklist* "Ringo provides a textbook example of how a novel in the military SF subgenre should be written. . . . Crackerjack storytelling." —*Starlog*



## Reviews of the **Tiger by the Tail Limited Signed Edition (Kildar)** by John Ringo

Marilace

This is a John Ringo book similar to recent works by Tom Clancy. Sure, the name is on the cover, but you have to wonder if there was actually any direct input by the original author.

I went back and re-read through the Paladin of Shadows series in preparation for this book. After a five year absence, I was eager to dive back into the world of the Ghost. This book, however, leaves me with decidedly mixed feelings, especially since the old books were so fresh in my mind.

The old characters are stilted, and feel like parodies of themselves, several times doing things that were so far out of character that I had to go back and re-read the names. One incident in particular comes to mind, when one of the central characters that has been around since Kildar (Paladin of Shadows Book 2) uses an old nickname for someone that has never once before been used. On the other hand, the new characters are bland and uninventive, as if the writer took the established tropes of the Keldara as "beautiful" and "highly skilled" and left it at that, with few personality quirks that make the reader care about these people.

The plot is what saves this boat from completely capsizing. It's a fine techno-thriller, especially since the old tropes of saving the world from rogue nukes can start to wear thin. It's nice to see something else equally dangerous but less often used take the spotlight. But it doesn't have that extra Ringo magic that turns it into a first-class roller coaster ride.

Who is this Ryan Sear? What has he written in the past that qualifies him to step in and take the reins on such a beloved series? A quick search on the Baen website only shows this one book under his author credits, and any deeper digging turns up very little. What happened to great co-authors like David Weber or Travis S. Taylor? Sure, they have their own careers to think about, but if the only other option is this poor fan-fiction quality imitation, I'd rather have waited another five years.

A misstep by Mr. Ringo, to be sure. I can only hope that he will learn from his mistakes in handing off one of his most prized creations to an amateur so that one day the Ghost may rise again.

Qusicam

Another reviewer here commented: "How bad could it really be? I found out."

Well . . . it certainly wasn't Ringo. Ringo has a way of drawing you into a story, painting bright, hard-cornered word-pictures for you to devour in convenient chunks. OK, yeah, sometimes he data-dumps more than I'd like. And he spends too much time dwelling on "what came before", as if anyone is going to pick up the third, fourth, fifth, or (in this case) sixth volume without reading the earlier

books first. Damn it, Ringo, I already know who these people are, and why they're working together. The rest of you, go read Ghost and Kildar; you ain't ready for this yet.

Ryan Sear, whoever he is, is clearly the lead author, here. He's also, clearly, read the earlier books. What he doesn't have is Ringo's depth, or crispness. He puts sentences in characters' mouths that are, flatly, out of character. And I don't mean that the information conveyed is necessarily wrong, or that the character wouldn't say something along those lines at that point, I mean the way the words come out of their mouths is wrong. So many of the Kildar's speeches sound, sorry, stilted. And don't get me started on Katya and her Russified English with half the articles missing. First of all, she speaks better English than that in the other books. Second, Jay would kick her ass for speaking English like that around her boss or other members of the team. He'd probably say, "Never miss an opportunity to learn, padawan," or something like that.

Worse are Sear's data dumps. Honestly, I don't care what kind of ammunition Lasko is using. Or at least, I don't care who makes it and where it came from and what lot number was on the box and whether or not the guy who made it got laid the night before. (Just kidding about that last bit.) I mean, Ringo can go on and on, but this was too much. A little bit of that goes a long way, kid. That said, I'll give Sear points for not overdoing the character backstory dumps. Most of them were economical and didn't detract from the line of the story.

Anyway, I can live with most of that. It wasn't as bad as reading Pratchett's posthumous "Raising Steam", which I had to struggle to finish and read like a verbatim transcript of Pratchett dictating the story for later detailed wordsmithing. (Which it may have been.) Just, most of the characters were "off", and the general storytelling was forced; it just didn't read like Pratchett. Similarly, this book didn't read like Ringo.

The new kid, Vanel, and his girlfriend Xatia, seem like nice additions to the cast. Vanel is a young kid with mad skills trying to impress the boss. Xatia . . . we don't find out much about, really. The reviewer who said this book needed more character development is probably right. Other new characters are kind of two-dimensional. But we have to remember, we've had five previous books to build up the recurring group of characters.

Finally, my personal bugaboo: The proofreading really kind of sucked. At the very least, couldn't someone have gone through with a spellchecker and found all the places where COL Nielson's name was spelled, "Neilson"? (Sometimes it flip-flopped back and forth from one paragraph to the next.)

Despite the essentially technical issues such as outlined above, I think there was a really good Paladin of Shadows book buried in this plot. It just didn't shine through like it would have if Ringo had written it. But it does advance the story and broadens the worldview of the Keldara. From what Ringo has been musing about on Facebook, this book probably needs to be read to move on to the next chapter(s) he has up his sleeve, and that's mostly why I broke down and finally did, despite the poor reviews.

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