



## **Emerald Buddha (Drake Ramsey Book 2)**

*Russell Blake*

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Drake, Allie, and Spencer reunite in Emerald Buddha, the second Drake Ramsey adventure - a quest to locate the lost treasure of the Khmer Empire, secreted away in a hidden temple somewhere in Myanmar. But nothing is as it seems, and their archaeological expedition soon turns deadly when desperate factions target them in order to safeguard a secret that could topple the U.S. government.

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### **Q&A w/Russell Blake:**

**Q:** Emerald Buddha is somewhat of a departure from Ramsey's Gold, in that it features multiple story lines that develop as the book progresses. Why go with that approach?

**RB:** With Ramsey's, I was introducing a completely new set of characters and developing their arcs over the course of the first volume, so the mission of that novel was to do so in as compelling and thorough a manner possible while moving the story forward. In Emerald Buddha, the assumption is that readers are familiar with the main characters, so it felt like I could play with the plot more, and have a series of questions that are only resolved as the reader moves through the story. That's not as straightforward, but epic treasure hunts lend themselves to the approach, and I hope to layer on interesting complexity as the series evolves.

**Q:** There are some unexpected twists with the character development. Spencer comes to mind. Why put him in the predicament you did?

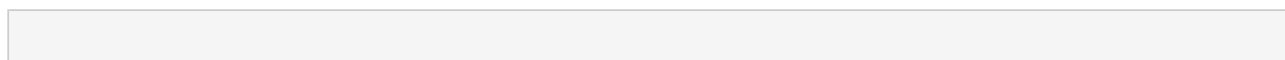
**RB:** I wanted to loosen him up a little, make him less of a super-hero and more human, warts and all. The idea that you can be smart, savvy, worldly, and yet still be out of your depth when it comes to something like dealing with impossibly large sums of money seemed like a natural way to soften and develop him, as well as to show that even with a mountain of cash, many problems might go away, but they're inevitably replaced by a whole new set. I'd been reading about Bernie Madoff, and how he bilked sophisticated investors out of billions while pretending to be the most honest guy on Wall Street, and wanted to include an element of that to show how quickly it can all turn ugly, as well as how possessions can become obligations that enslave rather rapidly.

**Q:** Some quirky new characters in EB. More of them to come in future novels?

**RB:** Anything can happen. We'll have to see. If it seems fitting to make a non-recurring character a regular, I'll do it, but I won't shoehorn one in simply because he or she was popular in one book. One of my pet peeves with the genre is the sort of formulaic, cartoonish approach many offerings adopt, as though readers simply want a comic book minus the drawings. I grasp that there are conventions you have to uphold to deliver a quality adventure novel, and familiar faces are a natural way to please readers, but I'm cautious about populating the series with the same stuff every time. I like to see some real development along the way as the characters grow from installment to installment, and I hope to avoid having the usual suspects in rehashed situations from book to book. Introducing new characters is a nice way to keep things spontaneous, so we can expect more fresh faces as the series progresses.

**Q:** Drake and Allie. What happens with them?

**RB:** The readers will be the first to know when I do! Seriously, I have a rough idea, but they have taken on a life of their own, so at some point it's out of my hands...



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