**Clarion Review**

Fantasy

**Eternal Nights-Book One: Redemption**
Richard Spegal
iUniverse
978-1-4502-2044-6
Four Stars (out of Five)

*Redemption* is the first book in the occult fiction trilogy Eternal Nights by Richard Spegal.

Much more than a simple tale of evil vampires pitted against the forces of good, it is the tale of two ancient vampires in search of redemption.

John Wolf and his wife, Danielle, are a lovable, nine-hundred-year-old couple who possess unmatched supernatural powers, along with a vestige of humanity. Defending their immortality, they must go head-to-head with the Sword of God, a militant arm of the Catholic church dedicated to eradicating demons. After spending centuries futilely hunting the undead, the Sword of God enlists werewolves—sworn enemies of vampires—to assist them in their mission.

Fierce battles ensue between vicious werewolves and the vampires. There is no paucity of bloodshed in the battle scenes that follow. A warning to the faint-hearted: the book contains graphic scenes of decapitation, disembowelment, and blood drinking by the gallons.

Spegal deftly avoids the tropes of the often predictable tale of good battling evil, as is typical of the occult genre. This story's antiheroes, John and Danielle, decide to fight back through political destruction. They sneak their way into the Vatican, fully intent on killing the pope. Instead, however, John and Danielle find themselves in the company of an understanding pontiff who allies himself with the couple to work toward destroying the Sword of God. There are more surprises in store for the unsuspecting reader that, in the end, add up to a twisting and turning storyline that is sure to satisfy. This is not your typical, one-dimensional occult book.

*Redemption* is as much a lesson on the secrets of the kingdom of the undead as it is a tale of good versus evil. Ghouls (the loyal minions of vampires), werewolves, and other creatures of the night populate this tale to create a panoply of occult characters whom readers will find both interesting and compelling.

Underneath the blood and guts lies a cleverly constructed story. Unlike the vampires typically depicted as clinging "to their immortality with every drop of blood in our bodies," these vampires are torn between the bloodthirsty, bestial satisfaction of blood drinking and the deep wish to be forgiven and granted redemption in the eyes of God.

In the end, the forces of the Sword of God close in on the vampires' haven. Is an ancient marriage and nine hundred years of immortality about to come to an end? After reading *Redemption,* readers will anxiously await the next tale of "undead enchantment" to follow in Book Two.

*Gary Klinga*