

Moonlight: Pact Arcanum Book Three

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In the year 2042, there is a war going on between Daywalkers, Nightwalkers, Sentinels, and humans. Each group has a distinct political hierarchy, an agenda to accomplish, and ruthless leaders. Toby Jameson is a powerful sentinel who wants only to live his life. However, he is in love with Layla Magister Curallorn, who is the leader of the Daywalkers. Additionally, Toby's brother Nick is the Archangel of the Armastice Hierarchy, and he has important plans for his brother that keep Toby firmly embedded in politics and away from the music he loves. Andrea Daniels is the daughter of the president of the United States and new Wind of Air, a leader of the Sentinels that Toby has been assigned to guard. Each of the key characters plays an important role in their world, and each one is significant in dealing with a new faction, the AI's led by the Nexus, that joins the fighting.

Moonlight is well written and highly creative*. This is the third book in the Pact Arcanum series, and author Arshad Ahsanuddin has created a rich and complex world full of magic and political intrigue. The Daywalkers and Nightwalkers are vampires, and Ahsanuddin has taken the vampire mythology in a completely fresh direction, organizing them into Houses with strong traditions and religious beliefs. For example, he writes of a duel between two vampires, Lorcan and Thomas. Lorcan, who is a Daywalker, calls on the Creator for help: "Lord, help me save my House from this Nightwalker ... Help me save Toby and Andrea. Help me save all those who will die when the Nexus destroys human civilization. Please, lend me the smallest part of your strength to let me save the rest of them in your name." The result of this prayer is dramatic: "Thomas barely had time to scream before the Faith Ward exploded around him." Additionally, the characters are compelling and believable, and the dialogue is very well done.

There is one fairly significant problem with *Moonlight*. The audience will need to have read the previous installments in the series to fully understand what is going on in this story. Anyone who attempts to read this book as a stand-alone novel will be frustrated by unanswered questions about how the characters relate to one another, the significance of the various factions in the war, and the roles the central characters hold within those factions. Even the Pact Arcanum, which is the title of the entire series, is never adequately explained. This mysterious entity is mentioned only once in the book, when Nick contacts the higher powers through the Pact in order to learn the importance of Toby and Layla's baby.

Ultimately, *Moonlight* is a very interesting book. Readers who are willing to put in the effort to understand the complex world created by Ahsanuddin by reading the entire series will find much to enjoy.

CATHERINE THURESON (August 2, 2011)

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