



Sons of Devils

Alex Beecroft

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Sons of Devils, by Alex Beecroft, is a mystery with gothic, supernatural elements and a charming ensemble of characters. The narrative questions what is going on in the land of Wallchia and what shadowy forces are truly pulling the strings.

The story follows three perspectives, but central to the story is Frank, an exile from England struck with amnesia. Awakening in Wallachia, his fate becomes entwined with Radu Văcărescu, the region's ruler and namesake of a family shrouded in mystery. Frank also meets Mirela, a Roma woman meant to be sacrificed to a ghastly entity that stalks the countryside. Elsewhere in the world, Zayd, who comes from a holy lineage, is summoned by the sultan for a magical undertaking.

One of the strengths of the novel is its protagonist, Frank. He has never experienced much hardship or resistance and as a result is very indecisive. However, when thrust out on his own, Frank must learn to survive in an unforgiving world. As the story progresses, Frank matures gradually, learning that the demons of the past will not always encumber the future.

One interesting plot device is the way Frank's amnesia is used to develop his character. Memories start to return, and he experiences flashbacks to England and the circumstances of his exile. The book, despite its somber overtones and intense storyline, still contains a lot of humor. When referring to the livelihood of their slaves, one of the Văcărescus adds, "They eat hedgehogs cooked in clay, and berries, and they don't have to worry about anything. We take care of all the difficult things, so they can dance and sing all day long." This assertion is in contrast to the squalor they are subjected to. Moments like these break up the serious nature of the story line.

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GREGORY A. LOWE (LGBTQ+ 2017)

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