Clarion Review

Science Fiction

Sons of God, Daughters of Man
Joseph R. Grych
978-1-4259-3119-3
Three Stars (out of Five)

Sons of God Daughters of Man is an exceptionally creative generally well-written book. Set in a future world Pangea where mankind has migrated away from a dying Earth through mystic portals the characters are persuasive and the dialog first rate. Pangea is divided amongst enclaves of low technology refugees a high-technology citadel ruled by an evil overlord and the native Pynxians who have been driven underground by the ancestors of current inhabitants.

Despite the author's talent and vision the complexity of the story line is a bit more than he could successfully pull off in part due to the word-count. Although the book weighs in at a hefty 367 pages the book is printed in double-spaced type so it is actually a bit less than half that length. While this layout makes for a quick review it sacrifices readability in the name of brevity. Transitions in particular are choppy doing in mere paragraphs what most authors take full chapters to accomplish. This works reasonably well in the second half of the book once readers have gotten to know the characters and settings but it is quite challenging in the first half of the book where the storyline bounces around erratically.

There are some logic issues as well. When stung by a poisonous thorn worm Lyle the main character plucks the deadly insect from his flesh carries it out the door and gently tosses it outside rather than hurling it to the floor and crushing it under his boot heel as one might expect him to do. Further while the high-tech city of Adrias populated by red-haired individuals is well known to the surrounding communities who sell them food but the superstitious population still hunts red-haired people as witches.

Grych portrays true goodness as well as bona fide evil in a convincing manner. In a caveat that can only recommend the storytelling there are parts that will make the reader shudder even while he's finding it hard to tear himself away. Some highly disturbing images such as a decapitated Adriasian who lives on in agony for several minutes unable to do more than open or close his eyes and the semi-graphic rapes of both a man and a woman by a hermaphrodite

demon-like Pynx live on long past their fictional demise.

Despite the creativity and originality of the book *Sons of God Daughters of Man* would be much easier to recommend had it been released as a value-priced mass market paperback. Hardcover prices and the diluted typography make it tough to justify the purchase. Nevertheless the author has enough raw talent that we can expect great things from him in the future as he matures in his writing.