



Ahsanuddin, Arshad
SUNRISE: *Pact*
Arcanum: Book Two
Createspace (313 pp.)
\$16.00 paperback
\$4.99 e-book
April 10, 2011
ISBN: 978-1456358440

Vampire mythology, music, magic and science fiction fuse in the second installment of Ahsanuddin's (*Sunset*, 2011) *Pact Arcanum* series, a homoerotic tale of lust and power.

Sentinel Antonio Martinez is quick to realize he's found three members of the Four Winds in Rory, Ana and Takeshi, the young musicians of the band Nightfall. Having rescued the longtime friends from two bloodthirsty predators, Martinez assists the trio in understanding their destiny and the bandmates, out celebrating the debut of their breakthrough album, soon find life has more to offer than mere concert dates. Beginning in the not-so-distant future of 2015 and continuing to 2039, the newly reborn musicians are soon embroiled in a world of Nightwalkers, Sentinels and the dark Court of Shadows. The novel's science fiction elements, particularly the author's use of House Lucian, House Jiao-long, off-world travel and other cosmic references, evoke Frank Herbert's operatic *Dune* novels. Hierarchal themes may also ring familiar to adult readers of Richelle Mead's *Vampire Academy* series, though Ahsanuddin brings a crisp edge to the telling. And, like *Vampire Academy*, the allure of forbidden romance plays an integral role in the development of the novel's central characters, particularly in Rory's love for Takeshi. Toss in the usual doses of Anne Rice's homoerotic *Vampire Chronicles* and Stephanie Meyers' virtuous *Twilight* series and you will find Ahsanuddin's surprisingly provocative sophomore novel. The story's main characters, like Rice's much hyped vampire Lestat, are beautiful, eager musicians consumed by the eternal struggle of good and evil. Ahsanuddin melds the elements at his command with powerful literary alchemy. Eloquently written, the words more than the tale shape the romantic flow of this adult story as the members of Nightfall struggle to understand their gifts and the drama of their new lives. This prequel to Ahsanuddin's first novel *Sunset* takes readers on an engaging trip into the dark underworld of desire and power—a foray written with sharp clarity and passion.

A sweeping fusion of fantasy elements, boiled to perfection.