



Ahsanuddin, Arshad

**SUNSET: *Pact Arcanum:*
*Book One***

CreateSpace (437 pp.)

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A blend of epic fantasy, visionary science fiction and homoerotic romance, the first installment of Ahsanuddin's *Pact Arcanum* series breathes new life into the vampire mythos with a grand-scale story about the existence of metahumans and what transpires after these superpowered beings are forced to unveil themselves to humankind.

Set in 2040, the novel begins in grand style—during a prestigious motion picture awards ceremony in Los Angeles with the whole world watching, a terrorist group lead by a woman named Medusa commandeers the building and informs the star-studded gathering that unless the U.S. government acknowledges the existence of an illegal weapons program, she will detonate a nuclear bomb that could kill millions and turn much of Southern California into a radioactive wasteland. Faced with the dilemma of watching millions die or exposing the existence of the three races of metahuman to the world, vampire Nicholas Jameson, aka Soukkiller's Bane, chooses to save human lives, and in doing so, endangers the future for all metahumans. Faced with a potential war with humankind, newly titled Ambassador to Humanity Jameson is tasked with reaching some kind of accord with humans. But millennia of conflict between Nightwalkers (vampires) and their bitter enemies, the Sentinels, threatens to throw the planet into chaos. All Jameson, a Daywalker (a "redeemed" Nightwalker who has a soul again), wants is peace, but his mission is further complicated by various male love interests who are obsessed with the enigmatic hero. Like the Nightwalkers featured in this wildly ambitious and richly storied vampire epic, the novel is dark, intriguing and unfathomably complex. But while readers will undoubtedly be blown away by the novel's meticulous world building and labyrinthine plotline, they will have a hard time connecting to the two-dimensional and decidedly inhuman characters. The dialogue in particular is awkward and, at times, almost mechanized: "I am Layla Magister Curallorn, called Nemesis, the Prince of Wrath. I have been tracking your movements since the day you opened your eyes, just as I have followed the Winds of each generation as they came to power."

Complex but hollow.