



## Sacrament

*Clive Barker*

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A boy has an encounter with a man who causes extinctions of other species, so he grows up to be a man who documents (and thus appeals for a halt to) those extinctions. This dark fantasy tale is unlike Clive Barker's other recent ones: it is more tightly plotted, and more of *this* world. In a sequence of well-executed stories within stories (comparable to Russian dolls), Barker unfolds a compelling examination of what it means to be human, to be a man, and to be a gay man--on a planet where aging, disease, and death bring "the passing of things, of days and beasts and men he'd loved." A satisfying long novel packed with vivid images, memorable characters, and a melancholy mood that reaches for hope.

## Sacrament Details

Date : Published May 1st 1997 by Harper Voyager (first published July 1996)

ISBN : 9780006482642

Author : Clive Barker

Format : Paperback 594 pages

Genre : Horror, Fantasy, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Sacrament for online ebook

### **Joshua Jorgensen says**

Wow. Clive Barker is a master. This novel is a truly meditative and breathtaking exploration of death, love, loss, forgiveness, and coming of age. It is a philosophical probe into our fears and hopes, and is an unapologetic reverie of sexuality, desire, and LIFE. This book is a commentary on the human experience. It took me a while to read this novel, mostly because I wanted to think about what I was reading, meditate on it, and relish the way Barker strung together his sentences.

The imagery is nothing short of stunning.

I laughed. I shivered. I burned with desire. I hungered for more. I recoiled when there was sensory overload. I probed the darkness and bathed in the light. I wept.

I wept.

This is one of my favorite novels I have ever read.

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### **Mizuki says**

So far, Sacrament is Barker's best, fullest, most imaginative works. Once again highly recommended to all.

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### **Alice says**

Whatever his flaws may be, there is no arguing the fact that Clive Barker is a visually stunning author. The scenes that he evokes in his writing will remain with one for years and linger long after any recollection of the plot has faded. I say this because I read this book on vacation over a decade ago. I remember devouring it, but I do not remember too much about the plot. I do however immediately recall lush scenes in a forest, a terrifying visual of a polar bear, a bedroom in San Francisco, and something about a domus mundi and a sparsely populated section of the british isles (perhaps).

Given the fact that most books are gone a few months or a year after they are read, I would argue that Sacrament is worth a spin just because of its incredible staying power.

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### **S.A. says**

Odd that I haven't read a Clive Barker novel in years. This book reminded me why I used to read him on a regular basis. I believe I need to rekindle my reading affair with him again. If I wasn't eating, sleeping or writing, I was reading this book.

Let's just say I sat there weeping for the last 40 pages. Just the quiet "hey, why is my sight blurry" situation. A major plot reveal was given to the reader long before the end but I didn't pick up on the clues. There were actually a few of them.

Haunting, elegant, sad and thought-provoking, at least for me. And inspiring. Reading such a richly textured

but never excessive book kicks my author's ass. I thank Clive for the kick.

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## Mark R. says

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Clive Barker is not strictly a horror author, and I'm sure it's been somewhat frustrating to him over his career to have carried this label years after writing his last true piece of horror fiction, *Cabal*, in 1988 (a case could be made, however, for *Cold Heart Canyon* [2001:] or *Mister B. Gone* [2008:], being horror). But his style of fantasy, even his children's novels such *The Thief of Always* (1992) and the *Abarat* series (2002 and 2004), are so dark, and contain so many elements of horror fiction, that it isn't difficult to see why he still gets pegged as a horror author. And, I'm sure his involvement in mainstream horror film series (*Hellraiser*, *Candyman*) helped contribute as well.

Anyway, I'm now going to discuss his 1996 novel, *Sacrament*, which is a fantasy, a parable of sorts, and is not a horror novel, but does, as I said above, contain plenty of horror content, like his other fantasy novels, and thus is suitable for discussion on this blog.

The scope of this novel is not nearly as large as some of his other works. A recurring theme of Barker's stories is that of a world hidden within our own world; or a doorway from our world leading into another. In *Imajica* (1991), the heroes of the story travel through Four Dominions, other planes of existence linked to Earth, the Fifth Dominion; the characters in *The Great and Secret Show* (1989) and *Everville* (1994) travel across a mystical dream sea known as Quiddity, to explore the unknown areas lying on the other side. *Sacrament*, on the other hand, involves a man, Will Rabjohns', journey across the Arctic, through his hometown in England, and to his new residence in San Francisco. The vivid and fantastic descriptions this time around are focused not on otherworldly places, but right here in our own fantastical world.

One thing Barker does so well in this book is show an enormous appreciation of nature and our planet in general. It isn't a preachy story, but one doesn't have to look hard to find an environmental message of sorts. Rabjohns has made a career as a photographer snapping pictures of wildlife in its last throes, species on the verge of extinction. When a polar bear knocks him into a coma, he is taken back through his memories to his childhood, when he came into contact with two bizarre, powerful beings disguised as humans, Steep and Rosa. He finds that it was Steep who, when he was a child, gave him his first taste of death and provided him with his lifelong interest in the end of life, particularly with the extinction of entire species.

Will Rabjohns is the first gay lead in a Clive Barker novel, and sections of the book deal with Rabjohns' and his friends' coping with, and understanding of, "the plague," Barker's word for AIDS (he also referred to the disease by this name, and this name alone, in *Imajica*). Indeed there are parallels drawn between the AIDS epidemic, and also the gay lifestyle, and Rabjohns' and Steep's respective places in the world. Steep is a man who has lived for hundreds of years and is continuously vexed by the fact that he does not know what he is or where he came from; his entire life is an attempt to reconcile this, to hopefully figure out what he is. He has transformed Rabjohns, in a way, or rather, set his life on a course he otherwise wouldn't have intended; and because of this, Rabjohns has doubts and questions about his career and motivations. But his identity, who he is as a person, as a gay man and artist, are never unclear to him. His security in himself is in sharp contrast to the murderous Steep, who can never be fully satisfied due to his lack of understanding of himself.

Like Barker's other novels intended for adults, *Sacrament* contains some fairly bizarre violent and sexual content, mixed in with scenes of great beauty and some philosophy. He's stated that this is his lowest-selling novel (I don't know if that's still the case). Too bad, because it's an excellent story, told through flashbacks, with a great pace, startling moments of horror, and is certainly worth reading for fans of dark fantasy, fantastique, fables, or however you'd like to call it.

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### **Michael says**

A mighty book, filled with the fantastic elements of Barker's later work (as opposed to the outright horror of his early books), but *Sacrament* has a story that I found much more relatable than *Weaveworld*, for example. His storytelling is at his peak here. To be honest, the last one hundred pages started to bore me, but then the last forty picked right back up. A bit of a strained travelogue isn't enough for me to rate this terrific tale less than five stars. *Sacrament* reminded me why I love Clive Barker.

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### **Bill says**

Clive is one of my favorite authors, and it's been quite a while since I've read him. Throughout half of *Sacrament* it wasn't the story or characters that drove me on, it was Barker's voice. He's one of those guys whose novels come across as easily as if he were across the table from me telling a story.

Having said that, it's not the best I've read from him. Many critics have called *Sacrament* "the novel Barker had to write". This because the lead character is gay, and the story revolves around his obsessiveness with species approaching extinction, which inevitably draws parallels to the AIDS epidemic, and Clive is gay, blah, blah, blah.

Well, whether this is the novel he had to write or not, it was an interesting read but not one I would insist everyone read.

I save that endorsement for *Imajica*, and I really need him to write more brilliance like that.

Bottom line: *Sacrament* is still wonderful writing, and it held my interest to the end. But I want the old Clive back.

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### **C.W. says**

Clive Barker is one of our finest living writers; far more than a mere genre horror writer, he imbues his novels with a tangible sense of soul, as well as candid, often unnerving explorations of our darker impulses, fears, and passions. Forbidden sexuality, the quest for immortality, corruption of the soul and damnation are just a few of the themes that often haunt his work and in *SACRAMENT*, all of these themes are on display in what is arguably his most personal and lyrical novel to date.

Will Rabjohns is a famed wildlife photographer, specializing in documenting the brutality and suffering that mankind inflicts on nature. Will is also a gay man caught up in the ravages of the HIV epidemic, with a dying ex-lover in San Francisco. But most importantly, Will is a man fleeing from his past, scarred by a terrifying childhood encounter with two savage and conflicted beings who altered the way he looked, and interacted, with the world. But a near-death encounter with a wounded polar bear forces Will to re-examine both his past and his place in it, setting him on a harrowing, illuminating journey into both the heart of his

own nature and the truth about those beings he met so long ago.

Part meditation on the premature loss of youth and life caused by AIDS, the splintered connections between nature and modern man, the toll of the sins of our fathers, both literally and figuratively, as well as the secrets that lie just beneath the surface of our perceptions, SACRAMENT is an elegiac masterwork by a master writer at the pinnacle of his craft.

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### **Nate says**

At first I didn't get into it very much, but by the end I was staying up all hours of the night to see what would come next. I tend to enjoy epic fantasy more than "low" fantasy, but the way Barker mixed the real human struggles of his characters with a fantastic reality just under the surface of it all gripped me as I never expected. This book also has its deep moments, where it gets you thinking about life and the meaning of it all. For me it was truly breathtaking, an excellent read!

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### **Quill says**

Really fantastic read. Barker proves once again how effortlessly he handles urban fantasy. I'm a big fan of his work and writing style and the types of characters he writes, and I felt like this book fully delivered on everything a fan would expect of him. I'm actually shocked now when I think of how little I'd heard about this book. That's one of the reasons I picked it up, because it seems to be the one Barker novel that no one talks about. But it's just as good, if not better, than the ones that seem to get all the attention. It's hard for me to narrow down why I loved it so much. Partly the risks he took here, partly the mysterious nature of what made the plot supernatural. But suffice to say I loved it.

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### **Krzysztof says**

The reader is introduced to Will Rabjohns, a photographer of soon to be extinct species. He has his deal of fame, an Englishman living in San Francisco and a gay.

After we take a look at the average day of the main character, Will falls into a coma. This acts as a way for Barker to shift our attention to Will's childhood. The reader goes over the major events that made Will into who he is now and builds the basis for the rest of the book. At the same time, it's uncertain how the book's present interacts with the character's past. In many ways, I was reminded of time travel stories. It's also the first time we are introduced to the story's main antagonists, although their true nature isn't revealed up until the very last pages.

I am not familiar with literature where the main character is homosexual but I am pleased that this fact isn't used merely for the sake of it. Will's homosexuality is part of the plot and one of the reasons why the main antagonist despises the photographer so much, it also correlates Will's perception of himself.

The story overall is gripping. I found myself craving to read what happens next. However, the main reason it caught me as much as it had was that the author doesn't limit himself just to pleasantries. I would imagine some might find the images this book gives to be slightly disturbing if not obscene.

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### **Dreadlocks smile says**

A dark tale that skates around the ideas and principals of extinction, both individual and as an entire species. The storyline finds itself placed both in the gay bars of San Francisco and the rather different atmosphere of the Yorkshire Dales. The novel blends dark fantasy with a sprinkling of the exotic and erotic. The base of the story skirts between the physical world of mankind and the haunting and surreal world of the magical and fantastic. The book opens the doors to many questions for the reader, but refreshingly it leaves the questions unanswered, allowing the reader to make their own conclusions and judgments. It is a book that you can tell Clive had brewing in himself for a long time, and this passionate masterwork has finally got released.

The book is well written and gripping from the start, with surreal character developments and even more bizarre twists within the plot. It will ease you into the unfolding tale and totally absorb you. A classic addition to Barker's work.

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### **Jean says**

Barker always amazes me, because I think he's highly underrated. The prose is always so tight, and so effortlessly good (you don't feel him reaching, and therefore never trip over it). But what really impressed me about this book was the pacing: it's a longer one, and I've read books numbering this page count or less that dragged, or rushed over some things and lingered on others. But Barker knows just when to pull you away, to move on to something new to keep your interest at the same peaked level. And, as always, I'm in awe of his imagination. He keeps the lore focused in this one, even if he offers no clear explanations as to the first origin of the Nilot. Was it my favorite? Not necessarily. But it always impressed.

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### **Fabian says**

Even though it's well written & explores themes like the extinction of species, the sadness of killing off bloodlines because of homosexuality, plus the uselessness of immortality, the plot is convoluted & sometimes Barker suffers from the redundancy that plagues writers like his peer, S. King.

I LOVE that Barker explores dreams within dreams logic: he compares it to Russian nesting dolls. Sometimes the protagonist dreams of the past, relives events, becomes a part of someone else's consciousness while he can stick to another person's psyche (think a less technical "Being J. Malkovich"). He often encounters an underwritten character named Lord Fox, who's an imaginary offspring of his ego, a stand-in for the theme of nature. Things that do not normally talk do... trips can be taken and you don't have to leave your room! (Or take drugs). Often, it's bizarre & phantasmagorical.

I LIKE that despite Barker's arguments, Jacob and Maria, that loathsome couple who live forever and kill just for the thrill of it, remind me of the Cenobites, made famous by Barker in "Hellraiser." These are subhuman species with evil powers... but the cool thing about them, just like Pinhead, is that they can be friends with you for a while, until they stab (impale...behead...seduce...drain) you behind the back, exactly when all your defenses are down.

I HATED that I started drifting from its pages (the introductory chapters are very captivating!) to read "better fiction" (Sookie Stackhouse novels... WTF!?). But sticking with it I gave it another chance, reading it often like a marathon runner runs just to finish it.

& Final verdict: Skip it unless you feel you must read about gay people escaping extinction. Oh... plus I am baffled as to why the title is at all relevant.

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### **Bookhode says**

The difference between Clive Barker and other most popular fiction/horror writers of his time (for example King or Simmons), is that Barker is a poet in his heart, and as such, he is only able to write about things that mean a lot to him, that are intimate, hurtful, that lay heavy on his shoulders, and go deep through his thoughts. That is why it became apparent over time that Barker's motifs were repeating themselves, growing and fading away, and going around in circles, this tendency becoming clearest in "Sacrament".

This is probably the most personal of Barker's works, as it focuses on homosexuality and relationships between father and son/ creator and offspring, in a manner that is almost completely deprived of fantastic or supernatural elements, with no pretensions to reach the epic heights of *Imajica*, or wild violence of his early works. There is not much action and quite a lot of introspect in first 400 or so pages of this novel, as we get to see deep into the soul of main character, the famous photographer Will Rabjohns, and recognize many of the questions and doubts that were obviously familiar to the author, and to ourselves.

Only in the last 100 pages Barker lets the reigns of his dark fantasy loose, but seems almost unwilling to do so, which results in exciting but not very original finish, with many of the scenes looking like reenactments from *Weaveworld* (Domus Mondi being The Loom, evil Immacolata helping the protagonists like Rosa does, main character in sort of a coma after final showdown etc.). Still, thanks to Barker's beautiful style, and very honest approach in his work, *Sacrament* ends up as probably the best 600-page novel in which almost nothing significant had happened, that I have ever read.

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### **Thee\_ron\_clark says**

This is another supernatural novel by Clive Barker. The novel is about a homosexual (Yes. That is an important part of the novel.) photographer who had an encounter with two very odd people in his youth. After being mauled by a Polar Bear, the author's youthful encounter becomes important to him.

The plot was interesting, but not fantastic or amazing by any means. It was a standard read, but I would really hope for more from this author. I also felt his necessity to be descriptive of some of the sexual activities was not appealing to me. Not to be a homophobe, but I do picture what I read and there is no fast-forward button for novels.

All in all, not bad. Just not spectacular.

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## Tonya says

I find myself mostly ambivalent regarding this novel. It didn't keep my interest long. It rarely entertained me.

Will Rabjohns is a photographer that specializes in animals and even more specifically the death of endangered animals. While he's out on a shoot Will is mauled by a polar bear and winds up in a coma where we, as his audience, are treated to the chronicle of Will's young teen years. After the death of his brother and the family moving to a new town Will meets Jacob Steep and Rosa McGee, itinerant murderers. We learn Jacob and Rosa are 'special' because they are ageless and it's intimated they are not of this world or if they are then they are something 'special'. Rosa likes to kill, make babies, and molest the male sex (consenting or otherwise). Jacob likes to kill things and write it in a journal.

Edge of your seat stuff. Right?

The novel goes on and on about Will's psychic connection to Jacob and after Will wakes from the coma we follow Will back to San Francisco so he can tell us about the tragedy of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that ravaged the LGBT community in the late 80's early 90's. What bothers me about this is it felt like it was used wrong; I felt like this horrible virus that decimated the LGBT community in so short a time was used as a bit of background fluff to prove the character of Will was *really* gay and not given enough respect.

One of the few paragraphs I liked was where Rosa McGee explains why she is drawn to cross dressing males:

*"I've always loved things that weren't what they seemed," Rosa replied. "And for a man to deny his own sex, and corset himself and paint himself, and be something that he isn't because it touches a place in his heart...that has a kind of poetry about it, to my mind."*

It seemed one of the few truly felt lines out of the entire novel.

Listen, I understand this story is supposed to be, on a deeper level, about the world and how extinction can act on an entire species or a certain group in a species. I understand the reader is supposed to come away with a sense of how wrongs can be righted. And we are who we are now because of who we were in the past and how we let that shape us but I don't think the ending played those lessons well, the ending left those pieces hanging.

All in all an ok read but for some reason I feel cheated. I believed, based on the flow of the story, I'd be treated to a great crescendo for an ending. All really I got was a lousy cow bell.

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## Cody | cody'sbookshelf says

*"He had seen mourning in a hundred species in his time. Made photographs of elephants at the bodies of their fallen kind, grief in every tiny motion of their mass; and monkeys, maddened by sorrow, shrieking like keening clansmen around their dead; a zebra, nosing at a foal brought down by wild dogs, head bowed by the weight of her loss. It was unkind, this life, for things that felt connection, because connections were always broken, sooner or later. Love might be pliant, but life was brittle. It cracked, it crumbled, while the earth went on about its business, and the sky on its way as though nothing had happened."*

Written in the afterglow of the worst of the AIDS crisis, *Sacrament* is the indelible, masterful work of a

writer assured in his craft; Clive Barker, in this 1996 tome, grapples with the sheer largeness of nature, of society, of animal life. And loss, yes. This novel is very much about loss: as evident from the barren forest on the jacket cover.

It was in the months leading up to this book's release that Barker finally came out to the press: his upcoming work would largely deal with the eradication of the gay community, and it was coming from a place of anxiety and fear on Barker's part, giving this particular book a certain poignancy that is not evident in his earlier releases.

This is a complex work, filled to the brim with grandiose ideas: Barker often works in metaphor here, making for a challenging (and rewarding) canvas . . . or photograph. I must admit some aspects of the story went over my head (what, exactly, is Lord Fox?), but that only means I will glean more from a reread.

Though this isn't the grotesque horror Barker has earned his reputation on, *Sacrament* is worth a look. A mature, somber look at the life and death — the cycle — that occurs all around us, this is a treat for any reader; it is a journey into the fantastic darkness.

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### **Suzanne Synborski says**

Clive Barker's *Sacrament* is a puzzle box, a mystery that begs to be solved. This novel stands apart in Barker's arsenal. It exudes a personal, contemplative aura. It cannot truly be considered horror or even fantasy. It might more accurately be regarded as something akin to magical realism. Those less-than-hardy readers who avoid books that contain blood and gore can read this book without fear of getting wet.

*Sacrament* is a thinking person's novel. It is a novel that examines the past and foretells the future.

Every aspect of this book shivers in the light like reflections in a house of mirrors. Characters mirror each other to the point that one cannot be sure of who is real and who is the shadow- double of another. One cannot even come to a definitive analysis of the plot line. Is it a non-linear frame story, or is it a linear progression documenting the unconscious adventures of a man in a coma? One cannot even say whether the man ever wakes, or if he continues in a dream state.

Mr. Barker weaves a tale of a man on a quest initiated by a pivotal childhood meeting. The narrative opens in a frozen town called Balthazar. Snow and ice give rise to a sterile whiteout, a tabula rasa that insists on annotation. The borealis ripples across the night sky, its wavering image foreshadowing magical things to come. The protagonist, Will Rabjons, is a photographer. He filters his view of the world through the lens of a camera, effectively distancing himself from the truth. His passion is documenting extinctions. Why? He regularly risks his life to capture a picture that commemorates the passing of the last of a species, even if that animal is dangerous. It appears he is taunting death, daring the grim reaper to take him. The last animal he photographs is a giant polar bear that turns out to be blind—blind like a photographer who hides from the truth. Will survives this test, but later meets his match when an angry polar bear, another soon-to-be last thing, mauls him.

It is extremely interesting that, in the midst of this crucial photo shoot, Will is focused on arranging a meeting with a mysterious hermit. A reader would most likely predict that this meeting must have something to do with Will's profession, but when he finally gets to meet Guthrie, the narrative reveals that it is knowledge Will seeks. All he wants is to ask about "Jacob and Rosa." The true mystery begins. Soon

thereafter, Will is so severely injured by a polar bear that that he falls into a coma. Here, the story appears to drop into a frame to return to Will's past—or is Will simply dreaming?

The reader then meets Will as a boy, a boy unloved by his parents. Will believes that a "perfect" brother forced him into this position. After his brother's death, Will's parents become distant, preferring the memory of a perfect, dead child to the presence of a living, unique son. Since Will is gay, one might wonder if there ever really was a corporeal, perfect brother, or if the perfect, deceased brother was actually Will himself, the perfect Will who fell tragically from favor when his parents discovered his true nature and decided he no longer deserved their love. Will's mother constantly mourns, and his father hovers in his library, judging the living and the dead in his philosophical writings.

Supposedly, to ease the grief of Will's mother, the family moves away and settles in a country town, Burnt Yarly. Again, a reader might wonder if the move was truly spurred by a shameful attempt to escape a truth Will's parents cannot accept. At the same time, Will is glad his brother is dead, just as he might be glad to have left a counterfeit persona behind in the past so he can honor his true self. As expected, Will suffers from an abject lack of love, a situation that sends many young people careening toward disaster.

Desperate to escape his pain, Will sneaks out of the house and becomes lost in overgrown fields. There he stumbles upon, or is perhaps lured to an abandoned building. It turns out to be the skeleton of a "court house" built by an eccentric man whose goal was to judge people based on the way they treated animals. Once inside, Will finds a starving sheep lost in the labyrinthine courthouse. He leads the sheep to freedom and unconsciously offers himself up for sacrifice in its place. There he meets Jacob, the killer of last things, who keeps a diary in which he documents all the last of things he annihilates, just as Will publishes photo collections that artistically document the deaths of last things. In addition, Will meets Jacob's partner, Rosa, a defiler of young men. Jacob draws Will into his web by building a fire stoked with the dusty wings of fluttering moths. When Jacob convinces Will to add moths to the fire, he is hooked. He will never be the same. With the innocence of childhood, Will believes he has found the love and acceptance he craves.

Back in the present, Will supposedly wakes from his coma. He returns to his home in California, but he no longer feels at home. He feels strangely distanced from his old haunts, from old friends and lovers. It is as if he walks in a dream. When he is lured back to England to see about his seriously injured father, Will leaves his camera out of the picture; guided by his totem fox, he is ready to face a truth unaltered by the lens of a camera. He knows he must see through his own naked eyes and flayed soul. Thus begins Will's quest.

So many mysteries beg to be dragged out into the light. Is Jacob a discrete individual, or is he actually Will's Jungian shadow fighting to preserve its existence by refusing to join with its other half in order to avoid an individuation that would leave behind only one, new, complete individual? Why are Will's mother and Rosa both portrayed as women haunted by the loss of children who have met violent ends? Even Frannie loses her brother/son to violence, forming a female triad. Why the triad of secluded, judgmental, controlling men? The father in his library, Jacob in his courthouse, and Rukenau in his kingdom built of excrement. Actually, it could be said that all three men live in kingdoms of excrement.

It could be said that the operative questions raised by this novel include us all. Are we all drawn to the flame of knowledge? Are we nothing more than moths, kindling for the fire? Since each human is unique, is each a last thing? Will anyone be there to document each individual passing? Are we killers of last things when we support child labor in order to purchase a fine rug? Are we killers of last things when we wear real fur?

Given the title *Sacrament*, and the word's association with inner grace and purification, perhaps this novel is actually a glorious metaphor for the coming to terms with pain and the finding of one's self and the hunger

for love and acceptance that can never truly be found in another?

Dear readers, if you decide to join Will on his journey through this extremely ambiguous text, take care, you just might solve the puzzle box and be forced to gaze upon your own wavering reflections in a house of mirrors. Keep your wings tightly tucked, and stay away from the flame.

As Jacob says, "Living and dying, we feed the fire."

<https://rougeskireads.com/>

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### **Sarah says**

I keep circling typing in comments here because this book so totally blew my mind that I can't even begin to get my thoughts together.

First we meet Will, a man in his forties who goes around the world photographing the conflicts between civilization and animals. He makes a mysterious trip to ask a man about two people, Jacob and Rosa. Shortly after this we get a flashback to when he was a boy, probably 12 or 13?, when he first encounters Jacob and Rosa. He makes a very strong connection with the pair, especially Jacob, and we learn that this couple is... different from other humans and possibly immortal. Fast forward to the present day and we have Will in his forties again, and we see him going about the everyday business of his life. This piece was especially interesting to me because Will is gay and we meet his former lovers and see the impact that AIDS has had on his life as well as the lives of those he's loved, and many lost.

As the story progresses Will and Jacob are drawn back together. Oh, and Jacob thinks his mission in life is to snuff all living things out of existence by killing off one species at a time. It's actually really weird.

The story doesn't proceed how I expected, despite the fact that I've read it before. This is no straightforward good vs evil or Jacob vs Will type book. It's messy and complex and brilliant and beautiful and absolutely inspired. And it never really went in a direction that I was expecting. It evolved. I honestly couldn't recommend it more.

I listened to the audio. I enjoyed the narrator's voice and felt that it was perfect for the character, but I also didn't feel that it was so special that it should be experienced that way.

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