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Entertainment :: Books

The Sin Warriors

by Daniel Scheffler

EDGE Contributor

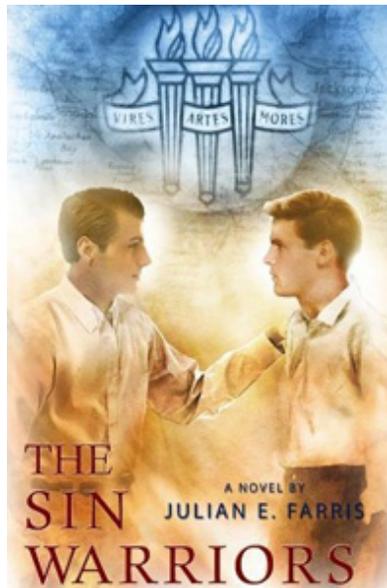
Tuesday Sep 11, 2012

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An attempt to bring that horrid past into the present is what **"Sin Warriors"** half-heartedly attempts. The words and themes feel somewhat inauthentic and convoluted. Although the novel is based on real events it washes away with an inability to show its teeth.

Gay bigotry is a popular theme this year as Andre-Carl Van Der Merwe's "Moffie" launches in the United States after being published some time ago in South Africa. His novel deals with a main character that has to come to terms with his homosexuality whilst in the army and whilst being mistreated in the army in the worst way - dating back to the 80s. As the writer of "Sin Warriors," Julian Earl Farris, was determined to expose a shameful time in American history a sense of honor is definitely felt just by picking up the novel.

Farris' novel is set in Florida over fifty years ago when homosexuality and anything related to what we now know to be "liberation" was viewed very differently. Judgments and prejudices were ripe and lives were "lost" during these conflicting times. The rise of hippies with their blooms allowed for more liberal thinking

across the States but consecutively homosexuality was suppressed and forbidden in other parts. The



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novel explores the dichotomy that swirls across the Florida Universities as the main character, David Ashton, embraces an ideal for a new life as a gay man.

The quest for self-love and sexual awakening, in gay novels are not fresh themes anymore

According to Farris there were actual events ("gay purging") in Florida, the Johns Committee, where "three hundred teachers and students vanished". The novel "Sin Warriors" is based on these events and follows David Ashton as he floats further, and so catalyzing himself eventually, away from his family as he gingers up his sexuality.

The novel crisscrosses from scandalous relations with a gay professor, to a baleful state senator, to abuse of power, to ostensible communism and blackmail, to a dash from being hunted, to finding love. But the novel feels as if it just doesn't cohesively knit together, it feels like the puzzle has just too many pieces. The research Farris did with families that were supposedly affected and the results throughout the novel feel light and unexercised as much as the author wants to will each character with enough pain and hope.

The quest for self-love and sexual awakening, in gay novels are not fresh themes anymore. They feel stifled by the supposed empathy required by the reader, and so an experience of coercion into

a place of irritation and unsympathetic half smiles is where the book spoons you. Although the book asks big questions about identity, about Orwellian effects, about love and of course homosexuality, it leaves the questions wildly unanswered without even realizing.

"Sin Warriors"
Julian E. Farris
Lethe Press
\$15.00

by *Julian E. Farris*

Daniel Scheffler is a writer who spends his time in New York, Cape Town and India. Follow him on Twitter @danielscheffler



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