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# While The Others Sleep

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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It is 1897, the age of advancement in industry, technology and medicine. Lord Mandeville hopes that there is a cure for his 14 year old son Alfred's intractable insomnia and sends him to Scarbrook House, where Dr Edmund Grenfell will, he prays, restore his son to a fit state to take his place as heir to his father's fortune. Grenfell, however, has hidden his talents away behind drunkenness and admits Alfie only in order to receive a huge donation from his father which will ensure that the east wing of the sanatorium, destroyed in a fire, can be rebuilt if Alfie recovers.

Suspense, horror and intrigue are woven into the story from the start and the gloomy setting of the imposing building only adds to the atmosphere. There are echoes of Harry Potter in the Scrapers, malevolent half-men who come at night to find and remove the fiend who hides behind the exterior of an innocent boy. The alliance between Alfie and his friend William opens the door to a series of haunting adventures, described in graphic detail. Alfie seeks to save his beloved Selena, to whom he has been close since their families lived in India, but his attachment to her hides a deadly secret, one of which he and the reader are unaware until Becker shockingly twists the end of the book.

There are many characters in the book, which may cause a younger reader some problems in remembering names and pairing them with personalities. Although the narrative moves swiftly from one heightened moment to the next, the gore and grisly detail saturate it to such a degree that there is some danger of graphic overload and this is particularly true of the overwrought ending, which is difficult to believe and strips faith in the credibility of the characters.

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