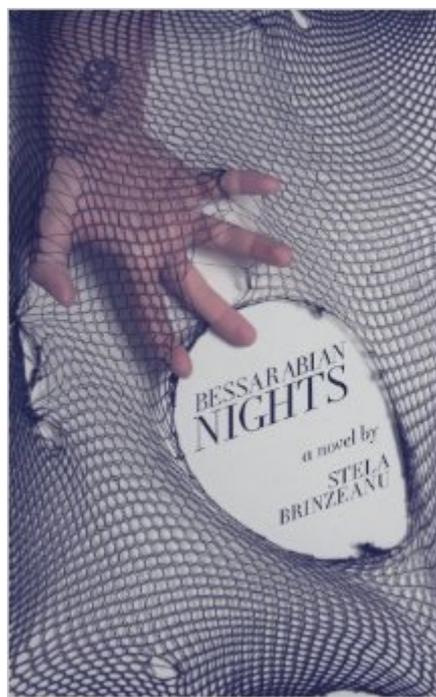


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Bessarabian Nights



Synopsis

The upshot of the dilemma between sacrifice and desire? - It's not betraying your destiny but creating it! The novel explores issues besetting contemporary Moldova. Its plot rests on modern topics such as economic migration, the East/West culture-clash, the sexual exploitation of East European women and the role of local religion - which has a penchant for the sensational - in the psychological makeup of these victims. The book is given life and flavour by the tumultuous human stories which form the pulsating heartbeat of the novel. Perhaps sometimes the devil you know is more dangerous than the one you don't.

Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: AUROCHS (March 3, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0992746108

ISBN-13: 978-0992746100

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,363,763 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > Eastern](#) #46970 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology](#)

Customer Reviews

Although the iron curtain fell more than two decades ago most of the ex soviet republics have still remained veiled in mystery. Who are these people? How do they live? What is their cultural heritage? In this novel the writer, a Moldovan citizen, explores her roots via the story of three best friends whose lives get turned upside down when one of them is dragged into the dark world of human trafficking. The plot is heartbreaking and it weaves in and out other socio-economic issues this small country faces into: massive migration to the west, remnants of the soviet propaganda, alcoholism, poverty, superstition, sexual exploitation, inadequate health care, etc The author paints Moldova through the eyes her protagonists, who all see their country in a very different light from each other. Their unique perspectives gives the book more than one voice. After hearing about Crimea on the news for the last two weeks some of the insights in this book were very helpful in understanding the friction between the locals and the Russian population in all the ex soviet

countries. Haunting, mesmerizing, and deeply disturbing. I read it a few days ago and I can't stop thinking about it.

Bessarabian Nights, Stela Brinzeanu's first novel, is much more than a coming of age story about three girls who are as close as sisters growing up together in a Moldovan village. It is a story about Moldova, a small Eastern European country situated between Romania and Ukraine which was formerly part of the Soviet Union. This well-written book was my introduction to the cultural and social life of Moldova, a country that I was fortunate enough to lecture and teach in for a very short period of time. In the foreground is the story of the three "sisters". It is a compelling story that has at its center the kidnapping of Ksenia, who is violently forced into the sex trade by a gang of human traffickers, and the impact it has on the lives of Larisa and Doina. The fertile beauty of the countryside, the religious beliefs and superstitions of villagers, the exodus of young Moldovans seeking a better life abroad provide the context in which this tragic story unfolds. Despite the weightiness of the subject matter, Brinzeanu brings a sure literary hand to her vivid descriptions of her beloved country and its people. She is a gifted writer with insight into the human condition that belies her years. My only frustration is waiting for her next book. I hope it will come soon.

In *Bessarabian Nights*, Ms. Brinzeanu gives us a tale that interweaves brightly colored threads of endearing innocence with thistles of horrific bestiality. An amazing feat which she pulls off masterfully. As an insider's look at human-trafficking, it is also an open door to the Moldovan soul. This book has the potential to be as transformative of its culture as Dicken's *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist* were of early 19th century England. I pray that potential is realized.

This is a very well written and engaging book. The author does a great job of describing life in Moldova and the challenges people there face. She deals with immigration from the emigrant's side of the story and the disruption it causes the home country and the psychological problems facing the emigrant. The subject of sex slavery and trafficking was very difficult to read but unfortunately that is part of our reality. This is a major part of the book and is quite disturbing so be prepared. Hopefully this book will help raise awareness of these issues and governments will start to take this seriously.

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