

## Book

# I, Vampire, is not your typical lesbian love story

*I, Vampire* is in this way a warning. A call for its readers to wake up, a cry for sanity before it's too late. Scott wants her readers to abandon the bureaucratic state and the Twinkie culture of modern Earth before we end up like the Sajorans. By using humour and sci-fi fantasy as her form, Scott allows *I, Vampire's* audience to laugh at the hang-ups of the Today People. Freedom and laughter are ours already; we just have to stop obeying and start living.

The Rysemians' answer to the problems of the planet is to do away with all of society's laws, rules and regulations. Benaroya says the first ten commandments didn't work, so humans passed a billion more which work even less. Scott shows how our rules surrounding morality have oppressed the beautiful O'Blivion first as a vampire and later as a lesbian.

When O'Blivion is fired from her job as manager of a Max Arkoff dance studio because of her disgusting habits, she assumes they've discovered that she is a vampire. Losing jobs and moving to countries with a new identity is nothing new to a vampire whose practises have been hated for hundreds of years. (Except of course, in medieval Europe where she was respected, feared and loved.) O'Blivion is shocked when Bubbles, a new dance starlet, informs her she was dismissed for being a dyke.

The novel also turns traditional stereotypes of lesbian sexuality on their head. Scott moves them from the category of annoying to the absurd. While lesbians in the past have been portrayed as unnatural and strange, Scott delights in making her lesbian characters the deviant's deviant. O'Blivion is a blood-sucking vampire and Benaroya a bloated sea creature from outer space. They lust after each other madly.

*I, Vampire* is more than a lesbian love story, though it's definitely that, too. It's a wonderful piece of science fiction, fantasy, social commentary and political criticism not written for Today People. And it'll make you think twice about taking out insurance.

*A review of I, Vampire, written by Jody Scott, published by Ace Science Fiction Books, 1984. Review by Samantha Brennan.*



# I, VAMPIRE

Strange things begin to happen to Sterling O'Blivion, a dance instructor who's really a 700-year-old vampire from Transylvania, when she falls in love with Virginia Woolf, who's really a Rysemian sea-pig from outer space on a mission to save humanity from our own madness.

The Rysemians have assumed the likeness of dead or fictional characters from North American culture, including Mary Worth, General Patton, and of course Virginia Woolf, to rescue the planet. If they fail, Earth will have to be terminated before our psychosis spreads.

Author Jody Scott uses this rather unusual plot to make a stinging and hilarious critique of modern, North American society. Through the voice of Benaroya (Virginia Woolf's name on Rysemus), Scott diagnoses our sickness and gives clues to a cure.

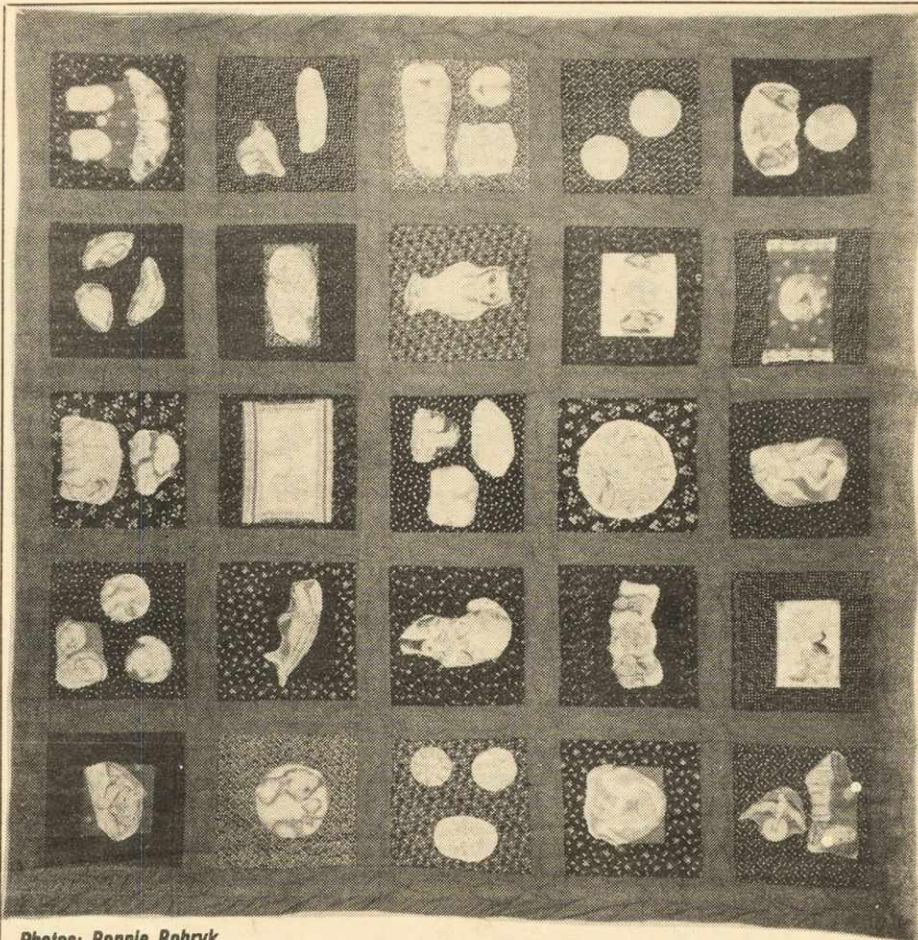
"A prime test for madness and paranoia is called 'insurance'. If a species has 'insurance' it is patently doomed. Only a toy-like, salivating, pent-up bunch of gruntlings could conceive of such a sociopathic type of gambling," says Benaroya. "Another test is 'forms to fill out'. Any person or organism that asks you to fill out any kind of a 'form' whatsoever is an entrapment specialist of the sneakiest kind and should be avoided or if possible shot."

Another flaw of the Today People, as O'Blivion refers to 20th century humans, is their need to see themselves as living above nature, not in it, and superior to all other species on the planet. The Rysemians chose to enlist O'Blivion in their struggles because as a vampire she is only too aware of her part in the cycle of life, needing six ounces of blood every so often to survive and as someone who's outlived 52 lovers and seven centuries, she's wiser than most.

O'Blivion and Benaroy set out to reach the women of America (who are easier to save than the men, being just a little less messed up) by selling Famous Men's Sperm kits. Door-to-door they flog the sperm of earth's most well-known men, from the Shah of Iran and Billy Graham to Elvis Presley, to bored housewives who want super-children. It's all a guise to talk to the women about their lives, sex and the reasons for their boredom.

For the Rysemians that's at least half of what's wrong with evil — it's dull. Benaroya and her comrades are also fighting the Sajorans, who are as boring as they are bad and who are stealing humans for the intergalactic slave trade.

What do they do, asks O'Blivion. "Sue each other," giggles Benaroya. "Live like bees or ants in statewide metal cities all crawling with security guards. Make their surroundings as ugly and oppressive as possible, and blame each other for it, as if they couldn't have anything in the galaxy they wanted. Lots of them cling to one body and gloat over its illness. Others get into power positions on planets like Earth and grind down the dominant race saying they are 'helping' or 'doing good' by suppressing people. They're the ultimate groupies, loving strange entertainments and concerts in which 'aliens' are dismembered to music; all that kind of stuff. Evil is boring. Same thing over and over again."



Photos: Bonnie Bobryk

## Peace

### Study war no more: a bibliography of feminist peace literature

An excellent book list entitled "Arms Race - The global Crisis" is available free and in quality from the Halifax City Regional Library. **BY LYN KEARNS**

Here are some suggestions of new releases and old standbys:

**SEXISM AND THE WAR SYSTEM**, Betty A. Reardon, 1985, Teacher's College Press.

**WORLD MILITARY AND SOCIAL EXPENDITURES 1985**, by Ruth Leger Sivard, World Priorities Inc., Wash.

**UNFORGETTABLE FIRE: Pictures Drawn by Atomic Bomb Survivors**, 1977, Japanese Broadcasting Corp.

**WE ARE ORDINARY WOMEN**, Participants of the Puget Sound Peace Camp, 1985, Seal Press.

**CANADA AND THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE**, ed. Ernie Regehr and Simon Rosenbloom, 1983, James Lorimer and Company.

**KEEPING THE PEACE**, Ed. Lynne Jones, 1985, Women's Press.

**REWEAVING THE WEB OF LIFE: Feminism and Non-Violence**, 1982, New Society Publishers.

**MY COUNTRY IS THE WHOLE WORLD: An Anthology of Women's Work on Peace and War**, 1984, Cambridge Women's Peace Collective, Pandora Press.

**THE TAMARISK TREE: Vol. 3, Challenge to the Cold War**, Doa Russell, 1985, Virago Press.

**MOST DANGEROUS WOMEN: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War**, Anne Wiltsher, 1985, Pandora Press.

**AIN'T NOWHERE WE CAN RUN: Handbook for Women on the Nuclear Mentality**, Susan Koen, Nina Swaim & friends, 1980.

**NO IMMEDIATE DANGER: PROGNO-**

**SIS FOR A RADIOACTIVE EARTH**, Rosalie Bertell, 1985, Women's Press.

**GREENHAM WOMEN EVERYWHERE**, Alice Cook and Gwyn Kirk, 1984, South End Press.

All of these and many more can be purchased at Red Herring Book Store at the corner of Blowers and Granville Streets, Halifax, or you could try your local library and encourage them to get such books if they are not available.

And from DEVERIC lending library:

**THE NUCLEAR NORTH: The People, the Regions, and the Arms Race**, Carole Giangrande, 1983.

**DESPAIR AND PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE NUCLEAR AGE**, Joanna Rogers Macy, 1983.

**DOES KHAKI BECOME YOU? The militarization of Women's Lives**, Cynthia Enloe.

**PIECING IT TOGETHER: Feminism and Non-Violence**, Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group, 1983.

Video: **DEBURT BUNKER: BY INVITATION ONLY**, Liz MacDougall, 1985.

Information files: DEVERIC also carries files with newspaper clippings on Disarmament, Peace Group Actions, Women, and others.

DEVERIC, P.O. Box 3460, 1649 Barrington Street, Halifax, N.S. B3J 3J1, Phone 429-1370.

On Kids and Peace:

**WATERMELONS NOT WAR! Nuclear Education Project**, 1984, New Society Publishers.

**A MANUAL ON NON-VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN**, Educators for Social Responsibility, 1977, New Society Publishers.