

VAMPYRIC VARIATIONS

by Nancy Kilpatrick

The Collection

Award-winning author Nancy Kilpatrick unlocks the crypt's door to reveal the Undead as you've never experienced them — merciless, sensuous, intelligent, loving and cruel. The short stories and novellas in *Vampyric Variations* shine light on a myriad of hidden agendas, deliciously exposing humanity's favorite predator — the Vampire.

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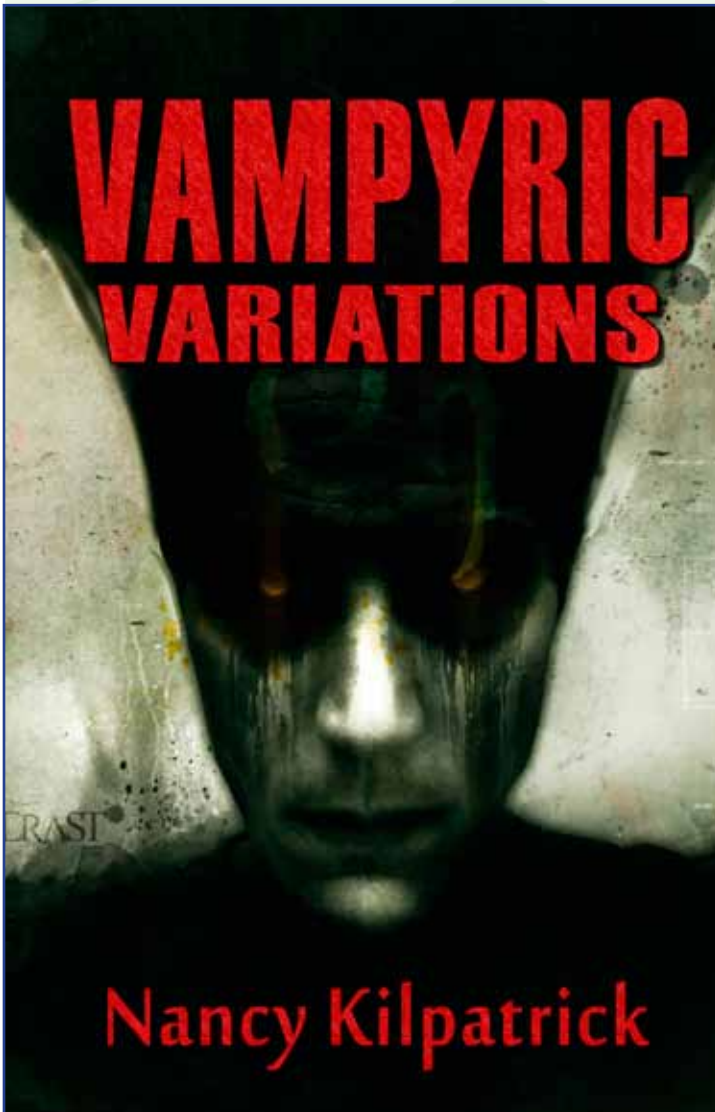
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The Author

Award-winning author Nancy Kilpatrick has published 18 novels, including the popular *Power of the Blood* vampire series. She has also edited 13 anthologies, including *Evolve: Vampire Stories of the New Undead*; *Evolve Two: Vampire Stories of the Future Undead*; and *Danse Macabre: Close Encounters With the Reaper*. *Vampyric Variations* is the sixth collection of her short stories.

Kilpatrick lives and writes in Montreal, Quebec.

She is available for blog tours and interviews.

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"Something brings about a change in the vampire pretty well every generation."

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Nancy Kilpatrick interview:

by Little Miss Zombie for Women in Horror recognition month.

What drew you to the horror genre?

It's a genre I've always been attracted to, even as a kid. Horror movies were my favorites, and when I started borrowing books from the library and then buying books, they were horror titles. My preferences went to vampires and ghosts. There weren't many zombie movies or books until more recently but zombies have become favorites too.

What I like about horror is that it allows the reader and the writer to go outside the norm and into the world of the darkest and scariest fantasies where ideas can be explored in a way that no other type of writing allows. The dark side of life is there, pretty much ignored by the 'normal' world which is so busy with work, family, hobbies and activities. The dark side of life deals with fears, crushed hopes, the uncontrollable. Looking at this material as a reader and certainly as a writer allows you to see what can, and cannot be done in the face of the frightening. That, too, is a large part of life and this is one realm where it can be looked at.

What scares you?

When ghosts are well written or well portrayed in film and the story or movie creates an eerie other-worldly mood, they get to me. I've read and written so much about the vampire that it takes an astonishing scenario and some incredible writing to rekindle fear in me — which doesn't mean I can't create it in my writing! Zombies are like mindless gangs coming at you. You can't reason with a zombie. Who isn't afraid of that?

Who are some women horror authors that you admire?

I love Angela Carter, and especially the ideas and the writing of Shirley Jackson. One of my favorite Jackson stories is "The Lovely House", which is hard to find, but it's an amazingly creepy tale sitting right on the line between realities. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is pure genius and yes, I consider that horror although some deem it science fiction. I suppose it's in the same cross-over realm as the Alien movie series.

What are your favourite horror novels?

Again, I don't tend to mention the works of living authors, although I'll make an exception for the German author Patrick Süskind. I was knocked off my feet by *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* when it first came out

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in the late 80s. Sadly, the film took forever to make and didn't do the book justice by a mile. But the writing in the book is staggering. Süskind (in translation) managed to describe 18th century France through the sense of smell. That was innovative, an eye-opener. I love writing that startles me.

You've published over 200 short stories. Do you have a favourite? Why?

Like many writers, the most recent stories are always the 'best'. I was just rereading "Vampire Anonymous" (originally published in *Vampires: Dracula and the Undead Legions*) I like the story quite a bit because it's modern but blends in history too. I also like "Traditions in Future Perfect" (published in *The Bitten Word*). I think I have a new twist on vampires in the ending, and I enjoyed constructing that story to get to that ending. An older story of mine which has just now being reprinted in *Best New Vampire Tales* (Books of the Dead Press) is "Farm Wife". It's a wacky point of view, which is one reason I like it. And two others I like are humorous horror stories — although I'm not noted for my humor! "Bitches of the Night" and "The Ghoul Next Door" (published in *Blood Lite* and *Blood Lite 2 — Obsession*).

Much of your work involves vampires. What interests you about vampires?

I've been fascinated by the undead since childhood when I saw the old b&w movies from the 1930s on TV. I love the idea that these creatures of the night look like us and usually once were mortal like us, but now are different — yet they can pass for human. I like that they prey on us arrogant *Homo sapiens*, we who consider ourselves at the top of the food chain. They live forever, and don't need to abide by society's rules and regulations, although they have their own limitations, of course. There's nothing uninteresting about vampires.

What do you hope readers get out of your work?

I want people to come away satisfied. If it's a short story or a novel, I want them to feel entertained but I also want them to feel they've seen a new angle on things and in one small way realized that life offers options in dealing with the unexpected. I tend to write about the shadowy realm between worlds and that, to me, has always been fascinating. I think my readers are also fascinated by the notion that there's a kind of hidden seam between realities and that sometimes that seam splits briefly and we can glimpse another realm. We've all had that experience in life, and I try to incorporate that in my work, both my writing and my editing.

Introduction

by Tanith Lee

Reader Beware:

Whatever your hope or perception of the Vampire, Nancy Kilpatrick's collection unearths more than myth and conjecture. It is a dissection of the uncompromising nature of the undead. Perhaps worse, of the subconscious of their enslaved and adoring human fans.

Outwardly beautiful though the Vampire race may seem, it displays itself as both gut-chillingly brutal and, often, truly heartless. In these pages you can expect a crash course in the diverse, and sometimes shockingly perverse, a juxtaposition of primal savagery and solipsistic elitism. The Barbaric is held on a thin lease, which will snap. While the book's erotic fantasies, like certain moonlit lakes, have very thin ice--skate there, and see. Against the shadow and scarlet of Draculian lusts, the proliferant limitations of humankind generally shows no credit. Does such a world inevitably invite predators?

The stories range through ancient imagery to modern and even future tropes. A remote village is cursed by an irremediable presence, a Victorian interlude revels in a contemptuous bite all its own, and a dark burlesque encapsulates the ultimate in the battle-of-the-sexes frustration, less petty than petrifying. Jewellery promises danger, tombs lure, medical urbanity might prove fatal... Within the traditional folds of the Vampiric cape, yearnings will soon demonstrate their unwisdom, and love stories reveal their main ingredients to be confused distrust and abjection.

Kilpatrick's Vampire emerges as the ultimate Taker, and the most cognizant and cunning of survivalists. An unequalled predator, whether exacting justice or indulging its unalterable loyalty to Self. Among this species even love must serve racial purpose. But as these lessons also dubiously uncover, Mankind is but too adaptable.

For aside from Vam-piratic dominion, the book's various texts concertedly define how humanity, even when not too foolish to see beyond the charismatic mask, is its own most able enemy. Humans are potentially love-sick of the Vampire long before the fangs fasten in their throats. In thrall, they assist and ally with their tyrannical masters,

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apparently unconsciously setting up their own descendants for the trap that awaits them. A human's own predilection and subservience will render them as prey. And under the Vampire heel they tender to themselves their excuses, as they sullenly, or compassionately, wait for more.

Yet conceivably this element, here presented gloves-off, is less the psychology of prey, than a by-product of mankind's own effort to get by. Who actually, here, tries hardest to survive? The relentless, pitiless overlord, or the enamored, self-deceiving slave? Under the harshness of such circumstances, what else can be done?

So, then. There, over the page, lies the icily tempting forest. Go in, why don't you? Though be advised: you may view Vampires afterwards from a different angle. And indeed, our kind too.

You have been warned.
Tanith Lee

"These stories inhabit that shadow land of sensuality between terror and pleasure. Kilpatrick she can be creepy, seductive, bleak, exquisite and terrifying — often all at once. She knows the intricacies of human minds and bodies at war with themselves, and her stories bring you into those battles in ways that make you think you've actually been there — because maybe you have." — Thomas Roche

Marketing Plans

- Review copies sent (July).
- Ads: Online, LOCUS magazine, On Spec magazine, and the World Science Fiction Convention program. (September, October, November).
- Book launch events in Calgary, Chicago, Toronto. (August, October, November).
- Blog tour and interviews. (September - November)
- Direct mail postcard campaign to libraries, bookstores, readers. (September).

Praise for Nancy Kilpatrick:

"Nancy Kilpatrick infuses her vampires with the hot blood of life and erotic passion. Vampires have never had it so good." — F. Paul Wilson

"Kilpatrick is the pony express of horror. She's fast and furious and she always delivers."
— Brian Lumley

"Nancy Kilpatrick's writing is both eloquent and erotic—her stories seduce the reader through the mutual attraction of dread and desire."
— Stephen Jones

"Kilpatrick's vampires have a distinctive bite all their own." — Nancy A. Collins

"Nancy cuts straight to the heart of the story. She is never afraid to take risks, and her risks pay off."
— Poppy Z. Brite

"Nancy Kilpatrick's command of the language is precise, sensual, and addictive, drawing you sinuously from one page to the next. Do yourself a favor and let her lure you down the less trodden paths of desire and danger!" — P. N. Elrod



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