

ASTRA'S TOWER

Special Leaflet #2

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Marion Zimmer Bradley
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A S T R A ' S T O W E R Special Leaflet # 2 is a one-shot publication by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Box 246, Rochester, Texas. All opinions expressed herein are those of the editor unless otherwise specified. Price of this booklet, ten cents. Entire contents copyright, March 1958. This is # _____ of a limited and numbered edition.

PREFATORY MATTER:

The idea of this booklet stemmed from a paragraph in Jeannette Howard Foster's invaluable study of the literature of variance and lesbianism, SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE (Exposition Press, 1956, \$5.00)... "however thoroughly a student may comb bibliographical sources, he will still happen by pure chance upon enough items not mentioned there to end with the certainty of others still undiscovered. He can only hope, then, that better informed readers will hasten to attack his shortcomings and fill his lacunae..."

Since the publication, by Royal Drummond and myself, of the leaflet "Fairy Tales", which reviewed some of the better-known literature of homosexuality for the uninitiate, much interest has been shown from all sources on this particular topic. In the past six years I have received at least three dozen requests for spare, or stray copies, of "Fairy Tales". Since less than a hundred copies were printed, and 68 of them went to the membership of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, it was obviously impossible for me to fill these requests. Furthermore, the material in the earlier leaflet has become seriously outmoded during the passage of time.

This leaflet is intended as an unofficial supplement to the Foster study, comprising reviews only of those books not listed in her book. Exception is made only in the case of those books which have been published in new editions under different titles. The appendix lists books which, although they were listed, and reviewed at length in Miss Foster's book, are currently available in paperback or cheap editions. It has also been thought better to limit this study to books dealing only with female homosexuality or variance (with one or two exceptions) rather than covering the entire field of homosexual literature.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to those whose generous response have made this booklet possible. Of all those who wrote to me for copies, only two sent me the minimum of five cents. Others sent stamps, coins and bills in amounts up to two dollars, and one generous friend even offered to assume half of the publishing expenses if I would estimate them
(continued on inside back cover)

CHECKLIST OF LESBIANA AND VARIANT NOVELS

NOTE: Titles preceded by an asterisk (*) are those which I have not myself read. Descriptions of such books enclosed in quotation marks have been gathered from other sources. Reviews credited DoB are those which have been listed in the Daughters of Bilitis publication The Ladder and are cross-reviewed here for convenient reference. Titles dismissed with "no data available" are those mentioned by a reputable source as being of some variant interest which may, however, be very slight. An uncertain date is followed by ?; an unknown publisher is indicated by Pub? --MZB

A DIARY OF LOVE Maude Hutchens (Pyramid Books, 1952; original pub. New Directions Press, 1950.)

Billed as "the awakening of a teen-age girl to love", it takes Noel, the heroine, through a bizarre gamut of sensual experiences, both as observer and participant. Her grandfather seduces his (male) music pupils; a goatish neighbor pursues the entire feminine neighborhood; Noel is herself pursued by a nymphomaniac housemaid. Weird stuff, written with a delicacy and detachment worthy of the early Colette novels.

* A LESSON IN LOVE Margaret Craol (Simon & Schuster, 1957)

"A sensitive, well-written first novel about a Canadian boarding school for girls. Primarily the story of a 15-year-old girl's love affair with a 17-year-old girl. Very sad, very cruel and very unfortunate." (DoB)

* DAM AND TWO EVES Anonymous. (Beacon Books; 1956)

A farcical novel about a young man who becomes simultaneously the lover of two women.

AFFAIR WITH A GREEN MONKEY Theodore Sturgeon (In Venture Science Fiction, May 1957)

Short story with a bizarre twist, based on a "manly" man's reaction to a suspected homosexual.

* AMONG THE DAUGHTERS Angna Enters (Coward-McCann, 1955)

No data available, buy at your own risk.

* AWAKE MONIQUE Astrid van Royen (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1957)

"Tenderly and with candid beauty, Astrid tells the story of her life so that her 11-year-old daughter can read it when

she grows up...there is an important lesbian couple in the book, her aunt Carla, and Dini, Carl's young friend. Astrid goes at an early age to live in the house of Renier, her uncle by marriage. She and Renier live upstairs, and his wife (in name only) Carla and Dini live downstairs. There is complete acceptance between the two strange households even to Renier making an impassioned plea for understanding and explaining that Dini makes Carla happier than any man could. Really a delightful reading experience." (DoB)

BIRTH OF THE GODS Dmitri Merezhovskii (J.M. Dent Ltd, trans. from the Russian by Natalie Duddington.)

Laid in Crete during the reign of Amenhotep the IV; a large part of the story deals with the passionate devotion between Dio, a priestess of the Mount Dikte cult of the Great Mother, and Eolia, her young novice, a Temple dancer. A second novel in the series (Akhnoton, King of Egypt - same publisher) takes Dio to the world of Dynastic Egypt, where her curiously bisexual beauty attracts both men and women, including the ambiguously-sexed Akhnaton himself. Both books are beautifully and delicately written and have an authentically pagan atmosphere.

***THE CATAFALQUE** Robert Goldston (Rinehart, 1958)

This is evidently a high-grade thriller, since it merited mention in the Saturday Review. The lesbian element may be slight but merited mention even in the review of that staid publication, so it might be worth investigating. The book apparently deals with an ill-fated archaeological expedition to Spain.

***CHILD IN THE DARK** Rosemary Timperley (Crowell 1956;) No data.

***CITY OF WOMEN** Nancy Morgan (Gold Medal 1952) no data available.

THE DAMNED ONES Guy Des Cars (Pyramid Books, 1957)

Variant rather than lesbian, this deals with a member of French nobility who is ambiguous enough to be classed as female at birth; later develops masculine characteristics but retains "her" female name and dress to avoid family scandal - which comes anyway when she carries on a liaison with a neurotic Englishwoman.

***DANGEROUS GAMES** Tereska Tottos (Dial 1957)

"Juliette, returning from a vacation, finds that her husband Frederic has been having an affair with her best friend Francoise. To her surprise her jealousy is of her husband and she finds her feelings toward Francoise turning into passion." (DoB)

***DESPERATE ASYLUM** Fletcher Flora (paperback 1956? no other data)

The second volume of a historical trilogy, this book is located in a Provençal convent during the spurious Doomsday terror of 1212 A. D. It deals with the introspective and relatively innocent outbreak of passion among the three youngest girls in the convent. The causes seem to lie in the deeply sublimated sensuality and frustrated maternity of the crippled Mother Leonor, whose repressed love for her young novices leads to trouble and tragedy when the youngest and best loved, Dolores, finds a young and knightly lover. This book is an astonishing psychological study of the Middle Ages, exploring the monastic life, providing many colorful scenes of ancient life, and is also a fruitful source of Provençal ballads and legends.

DIANA STAIR Floyd Dell (Farrar & Rinehart, 1932)

This long novel of the 19th century deals with a woman writer and poet, perhaps based on the life of woman's-righter Victoria Woodhull. Diana, never overtly lesbian, has many affairs with men but is "never without....some older woman to adore and emulate, and some younger woman to teach and inspire." While thoroughly female, Diana is unconventional, seizes many masculine privileges, and her story will be of great interest to all nonconformist women.

DIARY OF A 15 YEAR OLD FRENCH GIRL (paperback, now on the stand)

Surprise; this is our old friend, CLAUDINE AT SCHOOL, by Colette, with a new title and a garish jacket. Bargain at 35 cents if the lurid cover doesn't blind you first.

FEAR AND THE GUILT Wilene Shaw (Ace Books, 1954)

"A sort of Lesbian Tobacco Road, a poignant story of moral and spiritual degradation on a backwoods farm, wherein the main protagonist finds her own father as rival." (DoB) For a shocker, this is remarkably sympathetic.

GREEN SCAMANDER Maude Meagher (No Pub? 1935?)

A novel laid in the days of the Trojan war, dealing largely with the emotional attachment between Penthesilea and Camilla, the two co-teigning queens of the Amazon tribe who fought with the Trojans. Borderline, but interesting, particularly to those who enjoy ancient history.

HEARTH AND THE STRANGENESS N. Martin Kramer (Pyramid, 1957; Orig. Pub. The MacMillan Company, 1956?)

"Enclosed in a lengthy and excellent novel on inherited insanity is one of the most beautifully told stories of love between two women. It is especially important in that the causation of lesbianism in one

girl is made manifestly clear from early childhood to complete maturity...." (DoB) -- It also skins the entire range of abnormal pathology with such thoroughness that in contrast to the rest of her family's queeresses, the lesbianism of Aliciane seems pleasantly normal by contrast.

HORIZONTAL MAN Helen Eustis (Pocket Books Inc. 1949?)

An offbeat psychological murder mystery in which a suppressed homosexual alter-ego provides the clue to murder. Macabre.

* KING OF A RAINY COUNTRY Brigid Brophy (Alfred A Knopf 1957)

"A poignant novel about a young girl who lives with Neale, a young homosexual male, without benefit of wedlock. They both become enamored with the picture of Cynthia, a girl out of the past life of the protagonist. After searching over all the world for Cynthia she finds that her love is only a dim childhood memory. At the end of the book she meets and falls in love with a famous singer, Helena....(DoB)"

THE LINEMAN Walter H Miller (in Fantasy & Science Fiction Magazine, August 1957)

Short science fiction which deals mainly with the predicament of an isolated colony of men on the Moon, but contains passim some amazingly sensitive and sympathetic reflections of homosexuality, male and female.

* THE LORD HAVE MERCY Shelley Smith (Harper 1956) no data

* THE LOVE SEEKERS Leonora Hornblow (Simon and Schuster, 1957)

"A modern and quite well written novel with approximately one-fifth of the book telling the story of the lonely young lesbian Mab, her tragic love affair and the rather macabre developments surrounding it..."(DoB)

THE MAIDS Jean Genet (Grove Press, 1954; expensive pb)

Surrealist drama dealing with involuted love between two housemaids and their mistress; preface by the author gives some Existentialist attitudes about homosexuality. For offbeat intellectuals only; grotesque.

*MOON-KISSED Barry Devlin ("Modern", Green Farms, Conn; 1957)

No data available except a terse comment "tripe" by a well-informed reader. Probably well worth missing.

*MY SISTER, MY BELOVED. Edwina Marks. (Citadel, 1955)

No data available except "author rumored to be Erwin Edman Jr."

*NIKKI Kevin McGrath (Hinge, 1955)

No data available, but
Vantage is a vanity-publisher; the book is probably poor.

NORMA Felice Romani

(Opera set to music by Vincenzo Bellini, 1831. Oliver Ditson libretto available for 40 cents. Buy only if you can read Italian, since existing translations carefully paraphrase and eliminate variant elements. Modern translation now in preparation by M Z Bradley - write me if interested) This classic drama, based on a French play by Soumet, deals with two Druid priestesses successively wooed and won by a Roman; they renounce him through mutual devotion in some exquisite scenes. Several recordings are currently available and the duets Io fui così and Mira O Norma are virtual love duets.

NOT AS A STRANGER Morton Thompson (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954)

Completists only will notice the minor incidents involving two sets of lesbians, buried in a long novel about Medicine.

ODD GIRL OUT A Bannon (Gold Medal, 1957)

A sorority-house novel involving the usual crush, now almost a cliché in this type of fiction, between a crazy mixed-up freshman and a frigid senior. The ending carefully satisfies the censors. Well written.

QUEER AFFAIR Carol Emery (Beacon Books, 1957)

A prurient novel involving a couple of Bohemian types, with an ending calculated to pander to sadists. Trash, but contains a few pages of serious and genuine reflections on lesbianism which the author evidently sneaked in when the publisher was looking the other way. Makes the book worthwhile anyway...at 35 cents.

QUEER PATTERNS - Lilyan Brock. (No bib. data available; paperback about 1950)

A trashy and sugary novel in prose tinted deep purple. The lesbian actress Nicoli and her friend Sheila are treated sympathetically but the book is a cut below most love pulps.

THE RAINBOW BRIDGE Mary Watkins Cushing (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1954)

In reviewing biography or autobiography, particularly of living persons, it is necessary to avoid conclusion-jumping which might conceivably embarrass someone. Hence it should be made abundantly clear; this book is reviewed here only for the sidelight it sheds on a famous novel of devotion between an

opera singer and her young admirer (Marcia Davenport's OF LENA GUYER). Mrs. Cushing's reminiscences of the years spent with prima-donna Clive Fromstad, who sang at the Metropolitan during the first world war, lead inescapably to the conclusion that their fast friendship served as the model for the devotion between Lena Goyer and Elsie de Haven. The book is interesting reading for its own sake, and those interested in opera in general and Lena Goyer in particular will find it delightful. (Even without drawing unjustified conclusions about the never-married Mrs. Fromstad, her reclusive, fanatically self-disciplined personality comes well within the range of "variance" if not abnormality.)

*THE RED ROOM Francoise Mallet-Joris (Farrar-Strauss 1956)

sequel to the author's ILLUSTRATIONIST, it carries the protagonist of the former novel through an unsatisfactory affair with an older man.

*REMEMBRANCE WAY Jessie Rehder (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1956)

data available. Buy at your own risk.

THE SEX OPPOSITE Theodore Sturgeon (in the collection E Pluribus Unicorn, Ballantine Books, 1953; orig. Pub. Abelard Press)

weird compelling short story, about a hidden "third sex" who briefly come out of hiding to avenge the murder of two of their kind in syzygy; one such being masquerades as a man to the heroine of the story, as a woman to the hero, giving each a taste of perfection in love, then leads them to discover one another.

*SHIP'S COMPANY Lonnie Coleman (Dell 1955) no data available.

*THE SIGN OF EROS Paul Bodin (Berkeley Books, 1957?)

The story of Etienne, who discovers a lesbian attachment between two women in whom he is interested. Well known but I can't guarantee.

*STRANGE CONFLICT Olga Waller (Fagant Press 1955) No data available)

...but Fagant Press is a vanity-publisher who will print any trips for which an author can pay; caveat emptor.

*STRANGE FRIENDS Agnete Holk (Pyramid Books 1955; translated from the Danish by Anthony Hinton)

The story of Vita Storm, who adopts a little "sister" but remains unaware of the nature of their mutual attraction even when she gallantly carries young Hilda across streams, etc. Roused but ignorant, Hilda makes a hasty and unwise marriage, throwing Vita into a series

of casual amours. A remarkable study of adolescent emotion and some interesting pictures of European gay life, which is very unlike its American equivalent.

*THE TORMENTED Audrey Erskine Lindeys. (Popular Library 1956?)
No specific data available; may deal with male homosexuality instead of lesbianism.

TWILIGHT WOMEN Les Scott (Beacon Books, 1956)
Rance Marshall, Greenwich Village writer, meets a beautiful Polynesian, Laka. Laka, herself in love with him, forces him to accept, also, her beautiful friend Aletha. A suspenseful kidnapping takes all three to the Islands where he "marries" both of them, with their own knowledge and consent. Good fun of the racy type, even though the pronounced lesbian attachment between the women is incident to their mutual devotion to Rance. (FJA)

VENUS WITH US John Marston (Republished under the title PRIVATE LIFE OF JULIUS CAESAR by Universal Publishing and Distributing Co, 1953; Orig. Pub 1932.)

Trivial and risqué historical novel containing numerous lesbian episodes, some light-hearted in almost the manner of King Pausole, others intense; in the serious category belongs the story of the Vestal Virgin Florentia, who escapes the penalty of becoming Caesar's mistress through the devotion of the Chief Vestal, Verusia. Worthless as history, but amusing reading almost without equal except for Louys himself.

*WARPED WOMEN Janet Fritchard (Beacon Books, 1951, 1956) No data.

WE ARE FIRES UNQUENCHABLE Mary Speers; (hardcover edition Pub? 1946?)

A very badly-written novel which begins in a girl's music school crawling with lurid lesbians; the protagonist, herself heterosexual, is later engaged as cheperone to the lesbian Irene to keep her on the straight and narrow. After Irene's suicide the book turns heterosexual and is, if possible, even more sordid and unhappy. Rare - and for completists only.

WE TOO MUST LOVE Ann Aldrich (Gold Medal 1958)

Like the author's earlier We Walk Alone (same publisher, 1955) this purports to be non-fiction by a lesbian, and contains many vignettes and profiles. A usually reputable source in the publishing business advises me that this book was written by an otherwise well-known writer of pulp fiction (male). This book has its defenders; I consider it as phony as a three dollar bill.

WHISPER THEIR LOVE Valerie Taylor (Crest Books 1957)

Reasonably well-written paperback of the "realistic" variety, laid in a girl's college, dealing with an intense affair between the usual mixed-up freshman and the Dean of Women. Side threads run an unsavory gamut between nymphomania, incest and abortion. As usual in books of this type, it ends with the seducer in difficulties and the mixed-up victim falling "normally" in love. Good reading but very little real insight into either homo- or hetero-sexuality.

WIDE WIDE WORLD Elizabeth Wetherell (pseud. of Susan Warner; pub. about 1890? Was still in print, after dozens of editions, as late as 1930)

"Much of the book is devoted to the intense love between two young girls, one (Ellen Montgomery) still in her teens, the other (Alice Humphreys) in early twenties. The story is beautifully and tenderly and compellingly written. Of course the author...in no way suggests lesbianism, and though a multitude of hugs and kisses are exchanged between the two girls, no behavior of more intimate nature is implied. Naturally, not only would such indication have been taboo at that time, but it is doubtful if the author herself was aware of (the existence of) what today we call variance. (F.L.S.)... Considering the innocence, not to say ignorance about human relationships during the last century, we may regard this as a naive but uncommonly direct, for its period, picture of variance in young women.

WOMEN WITHOUT MEN Reed Marr (Gold Medal, 1956?)

A realistic and rather grim portrait of lesbianism and sadistic persecution in a woman's prison, culminating in murder and the total corruption of a rather naive prisoner.

WORLD WITHOUT MEN Charles Eric Maine (Ace Books, 1958)

The 47th chromosome has vanished; the world is inhabited by women who reproduce by chemical parthenogenesis. Naturally, since there is no one else to love, they love one another. The finding of one surviving male changes all this. For science-fiction enthusiasts; others will probably find it puzzling. (FJA)

APPENDIX: FOR FLAT POCKETBOOKS

NOTE: most of the books reviewed in this leaflet can be found in secondhand bookstores. The following list names all lesbians published in paperback over the past five or six years; copies of used paperbacks can usually be bought for 5 or 10 cents and anyone with the patience to rummage for them can obtain most or all of these for under \$5. I did.

- ALDRICH, ANN; We Walk Alone (Gold Medal)
ALDRICH, ANN; WE TOO MUST LOVE (Gold Medal)
ANONYMOUS: Adam and Two Eves (Beacon)
ANONYMOUS: Olivia (Berkeley)
BALZAC, HONORE DE: The Girl with the Golden Eyes (Avon)
BANNON, A. Odd Girl Out (Gold Medal)
BODIN, PAUL: The Sign of Fros (Berkeley)
COLETTE, SIDONIE-GABRIELLE; Diary of a 15 Year Old French Girl
CRAIGIN, ELIZABETH; Either is Love (Lion)
DIE CARS, GUY: THE DAMNED ONES (Pyramid)
DONISTHORPE, SHEILA; Lov liest of Friends (Berkeley)
EMERY, CAROL: Sugar Affair (Beacon)
FLORA, FLITCHER: Strange Sisters (Lion)
FREDERICS, DIANA: Diana, a Strange Autobiography (Bantam?)
HALL, R. DCLYFFE: The Wall of Loneliness (PermaBooks?)
HARRIS, SARA: The Wayward Ones (Bantam?)
HOLK, AGNETE: Strange Friends (Pyramid)
HUTCHENS, MAUDE: A Diary of Love (Pyramid)
KRAMER, N. MARTIN: Hearth and the Strangeness (Pyramid)
LOFTS, NORA: Jassy (Bantam?)
LOUYS, PIERRE; Aphrodite (Avon)
----- Collected Works of Pierre Louys (contains also Songs of
Bilitis, and King Pausole) -Avon 50 cent.
MALLETT, FRANCOISE: The Loving and the Daring (The Illusionist)
MAINE, CHARLES ERIC; WORLD WITHOUT MEN (Ace)
MARR, REED: WOMEN WITHOUT MEN (Gold Medal-Fawcett)
MORGAN, CLAIRE: The Price of Salt (Bantam)
PACKER, VIN: Spring Fire (Gold Medal)
FRITCHARD, JANET: Warped Women (Beacon)
SHAW, WILENE: The Fear and the Guilt (Ace)
SCOTT, LES: Twilight Women (Beacon)
TAYLOR, VALERIE: Whisp r their Love (Crest)
TORRES, TERESKA: Women's Barracks (Gold Medal)
WEIRAUGH, EILZABET: The Scorpion (trans. Guy Endore; (Avon?)
WILHELM, GALE: The Strange Path (Torchlight to Valhalla) (Lion)
-----We too are Drifting (Lion)
WYLIE, PHILIP: Opus 21 (Signet?)
----- The Disappearance (Signet?)

EDITORIAL - continued.

for her. I had originally envisioned a list of titles and authors. It is your generosity which has permitted this project to grow, and I hope with all my heart that the result will satisfy you.

This response has also convinced me that this leaflet should become an annual listing of all books appearing during the year.

I suggest that anyone who is willing to help the good cause along should file my address away, and whenever he/she comes across an unlisted title, write to me, giving title, author, publisher, price, and (where possible) a brief resume of the plot.

Would somebody in a large city offer to comb all news-stands for me, regularly? I live in a small town without a single news-stand, and can visit them only at intervals. Therefore, I miss many titles which would otherwise be drawn to my attention. Inveterate browsers, take notice.

Finally, this leaflet makes no pretensions whatever to completeness. There is, for instance, another novel by Paul Bodin already on the news-stands, blurbbed as "by the author of The Sign of Eros," whose title has slipped my memory, and new ones appear every day. Carol Hales' Wind Woman is soon to appear in a paperback edition. This leaflet will probably be obsolete even before the last stencil leaves the mimeograph.

But I can only repeat the paragraph which opened this editorial, and invite better-informed readers to attack all my failings and fill up the gaps in my education.

Marion Bradley

AFTER THOUGHT: After completing the preparation of this leaflet -- forestalling the picture I was going to draw in this space -- it was called to my attention that the Haldeman-Julius Company, Dept. C-1, Girard, Kansas, lists many titles on lesbianism of the fact or quasi-true variety; catalogues of their Little Blue Books and Larger Books are free on request. They also publish books on atheism, Free Thought, and the like -- Clarence Darrow, Robert Ingersoll and such. Some full-length miniature books cost only 5 cents. Among the titles are "Why I, a woman, must wear men's clothes"; "Lesbians tell their stories" and similar stuff which did not reach me in time for reviews to be included here.....

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