



# Vampire Junction

*S.P. Somtow*

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". . . It's about rock music, about mass hysteria, about vampires, about horror . . . one comes out knowing, and caring, about a panoply of new friends and acquaintances, living and dead, and unalive".--Theodore Sturgeon, The Washington Post.

## Vampire Junction Details

Date : Published July 15th 1991 by Tor Books (first published September 1st 1984)

ISBN : 9780812525960

Author : S.P. Somtow

Format : Mass Market 384 pages

Genre : Horror, Paranormal, Vampires, Fiction, Fantasy, Splatterpunk, Urban Fantasy

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# From Reader Review *Vampire Junction* for online ebook

## Michael says

Not all that many months ago, I posted a "placeholder" review for this book, intending to update it when I re-read it. Having now re-read it, I don't have very much to add, so I'm going to leave that in place. All I would say now is that some intriguing concepts get drowned in a sea of gratuitous blood, leaving only a slight impression on the mind.

I know I read it, but I don't remember much about it at all. I did look it over a bit to refresh my memory about it, but that only drew my attention to how much I had completely forgotten it. The main thing I remember from the time is that I asked a friend why Somtow Sucharitkul would want to change such a great name to the far-less interesting "SP Somtow."

This book came out between the publication of *Interview With the Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*, and it seems to be partly a response to the first and an anticipation of the second. The first scene, in fact, is a sort of parody of "Interview," in which the vampire rapidly seduces and kills his interviewer. A lot of the book focuses around the doings of the vampire-as-rock-star, which is the theme Rice would explore in "Lestat."

This may explain why this book is so forgettable (and forgotten), it treads a bit too close to better-known ground.

The most intriguing aspect of this book, as I looked at it again, was the idea that the vampire was a kind of Jungian archetype made manifest, called out of the collective subconscious by the power of the human will. I don't recall whether this idea is explored fully, but it has great potential. Also, Somtow's hero is a conductor, which is his own profession as well, giving him a chance to discuss the world of classical music from the inside.

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## Quentin says

So, having just recently finished S.P. Somtow's *Vampire Junction*, I wanted to give my opinions on it. I started it around April, and it pretty much took me an entire month to read the whole book (including school days). Suffice to say, it was kind of worth it!

I found out about *Vampire Junction* through Etsy (which I look through constantly to see any interesting horror paperbacks). The cheesy cover on the Tor reprint was one reason I was brought into its cold, dark grasp. The other reason was that its story was intriguing, to say the least. I'll make it brief: Timmy Valentine, a young pop (or rock?) star, sings hit songs that make his fans go absolutely nuts. There's just one thing, though—he's a vampire. Nobody really knows this secret except for Rudy, his butler if I'm correct, and Maria, an old woman who sometimes takes care of Timmy.

Without trying to give away too many spoilers, Timmy seeks a psychiatrist named Carla Rubens, who helps delve more into his tragic past, which spans through different generations. Meanwhile, Stephen Miles, who knows Carla, returns to the Gods of Chaos, a cult that long ago encountered Timmy and are dead set on finding a way to get to him and kill him once and for all. There are many other characters (some don't even last long or are introduced later on in the book) that I don't feel like writing down who they are.

Now that the plot's out of the way, let's get into what I liked.

One thing that I have to mention is how well written this book is. There are some sentences that give a feeling as though some of these places could be real, and the word choices also give a Stephen King feel to

me for some reason. Looking through some sentences of the book, I found this one interesting, as it is a dream sequence and details Carla going up "*stone steps that dripped blood and moaned as her feet touched them, as if they were flesh and blood*" (Somtow, 250).

Even though that was a short sentence, it just sounds...creepy. I can't really figure out a good way to describe it.

Another thing I liked about *Vampire Junction* was that it had some well-developed characters, such as Timmy himself. You somewhat feel bad for all the things he went through in his lifetime, and all the things he has witnessed. You also feel a bit bad knowing he cannot express as much emotion as we mortals do, and that even though he has killed several people, he feels a bit of grief for these victims.

One more reason this book was interesting was how it is considered a splatterpunk classic by some people. Now, you might say, "That isn't a reason at all!" Before you finish that, let me explain.

I'll sum this up quick for those who do not know what a splatterpunk book is. Splatterpunk is a term that I can really only describe as a book that has an emphasis on gore, sex, violence, all that jazz. Some of these books were crazy from what I read in *Paperbacks from Hell* by Grady Hendrix (which I highly recommend for those who want to learn of the horror paperback boom of the 70s to the 90s), and that's fine. I can see why this book is considered splatterpunk; it has sex; it has gore; it has the violence. Even if it might qualify to some as a book that is lazy or stupid, it has some redeeming qualities and a serious tone that I feel changes it into something more.

How this is a pro rather than a con is that it makes the book a bit more fun and a faster read (despite the small font on my copy). You might disagree, but it was enjoyable from beginning to end.

Now, onto the cons!

One thing I didn't like was that, even though I said it was enjoyable, it started to feel a bit more slow towards the end. There are too many characters to focus on (even the ones I did like) and it feels more overcrowded and stuffed as a result. Some of the material gets a bit *too* cheesy to the point where this almost qualifies as a B-movie rather than what it's trying to be. (Example: the scene of (view spoiler).)

Another con: I feel as though we never really feel for some characters. Like the ones I mentioned who were barely even in the book. At least, Somtow could've have filled a bit more so we could understand and know more about these minor characters. Also, we never hear more about Timmy's songs, which would've also been interesting to know besides the ones that are mentioned.

Other than that, Somtow has managed to make a vampire book much more intriguing with his writing skills and antique feel, giving it more life and character than I expected. I may be biased, but *Vampire Junction* may be one of my favorite vampire books that I've ever read. Sure, it isn't perfect, and it *definitely* isn't as acclaimed as, say, Stephen King's books or other horror writers, but it is a fun read overall and I'd like to give it a 4.5 out of five (if I could)!

Now, I have something I have to say before I really finish. Knowing that *Vampire Junction* is part of a trilogy, I should really start looking for a decent copy of the sequels. Hopefully they're as good as the first one! (I know this may have been pointless to mention, but I just wanted to say something about it.)

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## **Julia says**

This novel and the two that follow it are about Timmy Valentine, who goes by many names, is a 2,000 year old vampire who looks like a 12 year old boy and in the present is a rock star. Like Saint Germain, he is not evil, but the vampires he makes are. Also like Saint Germain, Timmy and some of those who he is surrounded by for a very long time are musicians.

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## **Deathburst says**

Une histoire de vampire relativement originale, qui par certains côtés me rappelle le cycle du Bois des Mythagos, et qui me laisse la même impression bizarre.

J'ai apprécié ma lecture parce qu'elle m'a poussé hors de ma zone de confort et de mes ouvrages habituels, mais j'aurais du mal à dire s'il s'agit vraiment d'un bon bouquin.

Réflexions sur la nature humaine, sur les archétypes, les sentiments et leur influence sur le monde réel. Pas inintéressant, mais relativement abscons.

Je suis surpris de voir que c'est le 1er tome d'une trilogie. L'histoire est entière et se conclue sur une fin qui pourrait parfaitement être définitive. Je me demande ce qu'il se passe dans les tomes suivants.

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## **Lindsay says**

OK, I like books about vampires. Bram Stoker hooked me into the genre when I was a child, a long time ago. This book stands out because of its concept of a boy vampire, made 2000 years ago and having Greek as his first language who manages to stay alive until present times, having gone through so many identities and languages that he has difficulty remembering them all.

Enter Timmy Valentine, 12 year old rock star whose voice is so unearthly he doesn't seem to be breathing. Well, he isn't. One way and another Timmy, as he's now known, takes us back through time to Germany under the Nazis and, via a brief stop with Gilles de Rais, to an ancient Sybil at a time when Greek had so many tones it sounded almost like singing.

The ending is apocalyptic, resulting in the complete destruction of a town by fire and Timmy's disappearance. But this is only the first book of a trilogy. If you're reading this, then read Valentine and Vanitas as well.

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## **Gemma says**

If you love vampires (yes vampires, not weird sparkly things that are overly romanticised) then this one and Valentine are the books for you.

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### **Jack says**

Oddly, my copy, with the same ISBN, is a hardcover "Starblaze Edition".

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### **Adam says**

2000 year old in 12 year old body vampire eunich singer: intriguing  
hot 40 year old analyst-to-vampire: intresting  
plot: awful.

what an awful book. I'd say it was a ripoff of The Vampire Lestat, but it was written 2 years earlier. it gets an extra star for the interesting characters, but probably only deserves one.

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### **Karen says**

I read this book when it first came out back in the 80's. I think it is that rare combination of horror and black humor that Robert Bloch was so well known for. That Timmy is a vampire is really just a device to take the reader on a wild ride that manages to satirize everything from bubble gum rock to psychotherapy to characters in history while delivering a truly horrific story. Somtow is a prolific, award winning Thai writer, musician and composer. This book has been rated as one of the top horror novels ever written and tho I usually don't pay much attention to ratings,I would second this one.

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### **Sara says**

Two stars for interesting ideas, but the pacing and writing didn't really grab me. The exploding bodies at Timmy's final concert were a bit much, but then I read the scene in Bluebeard's castle and had to stop.

I read a short story by Somtow in Mothership: Tales from Afrofuturism and Beyond that I enjoyed, so I would read something else by this author, but I just couldn't finish this one.

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### **Robert says**

I stopped reading horror fiction years ago. With few exceptions, the genre seemed full of implausible characters in generically tense situations making the stupidest choices possible. Vampire Junction is an exception. Vampire Junction has restored my belief in the horror genre's potential to explore the unexplainable dread we feel when everything is going well and we think we should be feeling only contented and pleased.

It is my favorite kind of read – ambitious storytelling with multiple storylines converging into one final, satisfyingly cataclysmic ending. The story itself veers from the sublime to the absurd and back again. I could have done without the boy rock star trope and all the video games and toy trains. The best scares here aren't about bloodsucking vampires. The fright is existential; it is metaphysical. And there are real surprises. Somtow isn't afraid to kill seemingly major characters in the service of advancing the story.

This is the book that birthed the splatterpunk movement. Having read Poppy Brite and Kathe Koja, I worried a bit. But the gore serves its purpose and is not gratuitous for someone who grew up reading Clive Barker. I enjoyed it much more than I expected. Not recommended for the squeamish or the easily offended. It brims with vile acts of cruelty and repugnant deeds, but the novel offers a sincere contemplation of redemption that prevents the filth from being mere entertainment.

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## Marvin says

Rock 'n Roll vampires? Yeah. I know. Except *Vampire Junction* predates *The Vampire Lestat* by a year and Timmy Valentine is more like Justin Bieber with a cape and a blood obsession. It's a rollicking yarn and it has a nice bent on the Vampire angle.

**Update:** Another goodreads reviewer reminded me what makes this novel stand out from the other vampire books. (It's been awhile since I've read it) *Vampire Junction* is from a Jungian aspect rather than the usual Freudian. So now we have these four schools of vampire philosophy.

Freudian: *Dracula* and most others

Jungian: *Vampire Junction*

Existentialism: *Interview With a Vampire*

Harlequin Romance Psychology: *Twilight*

Yep! All covered.

One more thing. I own the ninth copy of *Vampire Junction* ever sold. How do I know this?...

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## Richard says

amusing schlock with a talking bowel

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## Kimm says

I read this way back in HS. I think it was my first Vampire Novel and I found it equal parts harrowing and thrilling. To this day it stands out in my mind as the standard for vampire lore. Disturbing but oh so good!

