



The Wine of Violence

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On a distant planet, two human societies exist in uneasy equilibrium—one wholly nonviolent, the other ferocious and cannibalistic

A fact-finding mission has crash-landed on a harsh world, leaving entomologist Francis Lostwax and physicist Burne Newman marooned. The scientists are rescued by a mysterious society whose inhabitants are wholly incapable of murder, assault, rape, or any other form of aggression. Protected by a river made of liquid hate, the descendants of Quetzalia's original human colonists have devised a strange techno-religion that has in turn engendered a culture of total pacifism.

While Burne undertakes to rid the planet of the savage and menacing brain-eaters that flourish beyond the utopia's walls, Francis cultivates his romantic feelings for Tez Yon, the Quetzalian surgeon who saved his life. But the entomologist's obsession with Tez's soul leads him down a dark and twisted path, in time confronting him with a terrible dilemma. Should he murder the woman he loves to save a society he abhors?

The Wine of Violence Details

Date : Published September 1st 1981 by Holt, Rinehart & Winston (NYC) (first published 1981)

ISBN : 9780030590511

Author : James K. Morrow

Format : Hardcover 299 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy, Fantasy

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From Reader Review The Wine of Violence for online ebook

Matthew says

The wine of violence is a reification of the metaphor of hate, literally liquified. What would a truly nonviolent society look like? A human society incapable of using violence, and how would such a thing be possible. Through a little sci-fi magic, Morrow gives us the tools to construct such a society, complete with its religion, Zolmec, its philosophy, sports, politics and even its ersatz Christmas holiday. He paints a pretty picture of a civilization not unlike the Toltecs, but also asks the question, Are we truly human if we give up part of ourselves, albeit an unappealing part? Morrow is always thought provoking, and it was interesting to read his first novel and see him laying the foundations for the investigations to follow.

Miriam says

The meditations on the nature of violence were interesting; the plot and characters somewhat less so. Kudos for a fairly complexly developed made-up religion, which doesn't seem too common in science fiction.

Mari says

1.5/5

Bellerofonte Chimeras says

A little masterpiece, i totally loved it, and was impressed that i wrote a little concept ep about it.

Michèle says

this story was my first intact with the work of James Morrow, satirical and witty SF, and I fell in love with the style, the story.

A innovative social reflexion on violence and conditioning.

Jeff Youngstrom says

My review from August 2, 1997

Patrick says

James Morrow's first novel. I enjoyed it -- moments of humour alternated with moments of sheer horror.

Carol says

Jam packed with thought-provoking, neat ideas. A group of scientists crashes on a planet with monstrous cannibals and a weird totally non-violent society, both of whom are descended from a previously crashed colony ship. It really explores the idea of can man be truly non-violent, as well as who is more a monster a normal man or the cannibalistic killers? A good smart read. Not a comfortable one, but worth it.

John says

A Fine Debut Novel from One of Speculative Fiction's Greatest Living Satirists

Admittedly "The Wine of Violence" isn't James Morrow's best work, but even it, as a debut novel, illustrates much of the major themes present in his literary career, with an interest in exploring - and ridiculing - faith and in championing reason. "The Wine of Violence" reminds me a lot of some bizarre Philip K. Dick, with Kurt Vonnegut - before he renounced his ties to science fiction - and Harlan Ellison thrown in. It's a compelling saga in which two stranded human travelers stumble upon a society totally devoted to peace while co-existing uneasily with an almost subhuman tribe of cannibalistic savages; both societies the descendants of survivors of a long-lost Earth colony ship. Anyone who has been a fan of Morrow's work will find much to celebrate in his debut novel, while others may find themselves intrigued by the fascinating, often complex, protagonists as well as the settings, including a dark river in which those from the peaceful society have poured in all of their anger and hate. Morrow excels especially here as a superb satirist of ideas, anticipating much of his recent brilliant satire, especially in novels as stylistically different as "The Madonna and The Starship" and his latest, "Galapagos Regained".

Howard says

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Erik Graff says

This is a decent satirical science fiction novel.

Mjlibrary NDSCS says

I love medieval historical novels. This was fairly accurate as to time period with likable characters. Not a deep story, but not a romance type, it was a great summer read.

Bandit says

My second read by Morrow and just as good. In fact, dangerously close to great. If not for some minor drag, it would have been. Conceptually ingenious, this book is an exploration of the violence as an entity that may or may not be innate and inherent. Sorry, that's much too vague. How about...it's a book that makes you think about how integral aptitude for violence is to the concept of essential humanness. Which makes this the best sort of story, the one that deals with serious topics while thoroughly entertaining with fictional settings. And so when a group of Nearthlings (New Earth residents, lazy abbreviations) crash land onto a planet whose inhabitants are pacifistic to a fault, there is a culture/mentality clash of epic proportions, told with Morrow's terrific humor. Mind you, this isn't merely a philosophical exercise, this is a genuinely fun book with action, love story, awesome world building...just imagine a genuinely nonviolent society, how would they process their anger, how would they deal with their emotions...Morrow's world has some very clever methods for this. The moat of hate alone is priceless. And there are cannibals. Point is you don't need do any serious thinking while reading this book, it can be just purely entertaining, but for me the fact that you can do both was the best part. It's not merely thought provoking, it has a staying power, because the subject is timeless, so it has the sort of Brave New World or 1984 quality, though objectively neither as serious nor as horrifying. And to think this was Morrow's debut, that good right out of the gate, wow. Great book, strongly recommended.
