



ALWAYS HUNGRY
Inez Baranay
Arcadia, 164pp, \$24.95

What a delightfully sophisticated and refreshing departure this is from the mass commodification of the idea of vampires in popular culture, particularly in their incarnation as sparkly young things. Instead, we have as heroine an Australian writer whose book *Monstrous Women* has become a popular hit.

Marisa, a woman whose unusual sexual tastes begin to emerge early in the story, has travelled to Amsterdam to attend a ceremony. At the event and afterwards, Marisa is stalked by two women straight out of her own book: the powerful and histrionic Tango Sierra and the rich and beautiful Bette, whose mint-condition vintage corselet comes from the Vienna of 1783 – and so we begin to realise what Bette might be.

Much as the reader might like the vampire to remain within the realms of metaphor, this playful, beguiling, horrifying and sexy book is also about the real thing.

SMH 15-16/10/11