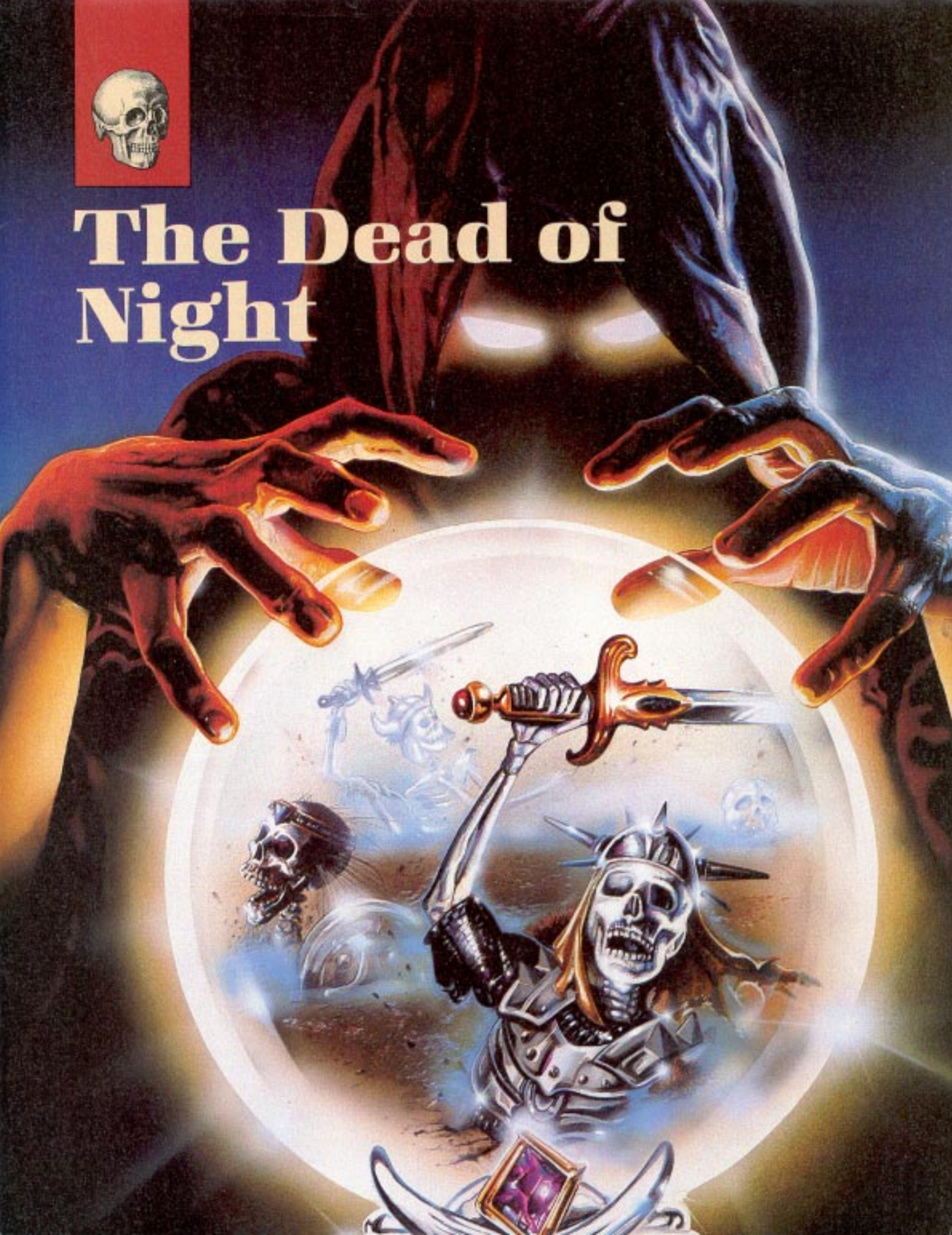




# The Dead of Night





# Hearts of Darkness

*Vampires, from Dracula to Ch'ing Shih*



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by Tom Moldvay

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The word "vampire" is derived from the Slavic word "vampir." Indeed, vampire legends are strong in the traditional folklore of all Slavic countries (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Russia). The classic vampire legends, however, come from the ancient Kingdom of Hungary and were probably created by the Slavic minority of the country.

A vampire is a malign, animated corpse that seeks nourishment and causes harm by sucking the blood of sleeping persons. The best known version of the vampire legend adds several other traits:

1. A vampire operates only at night. It must sleep during the day, resting in a coffin which contains some of the soil in which it was originally buried. At best, a vampire can exist for only a few minutes in direct sunlight before being destroyed.

2. A vampire cannot cross the threshold of a dwelling unless first invited inside. Once it gains permission, it can return at night at will.

3. A vampire cannot, by itself, cross running water (such as a stream or river). If one of the living provides assistance, it can cross safely. A vampire also needs assistance to cross salt water.

4. A vampire can turn itself into a vampire bat. This trait is a fairly recent addition to the vampire legend, since vampire bats are only found in the Caribbean Sea and South America. Many vampires have other shape-shifting powers and can transform themselves into other animal shapes, especially those of wolves.

5. A vampire holds the allegiance of certain types of animals — especially those which are malicious or love the night. The most typical animals here are bats, wolves, and rats. Some vampires can even summon these creatures to their aid. The most powerful vampires also have hereditary human helpers; generations of families, even entire clans, may serve the same powerful vampire, acting as its living allies. (AD&D® game monsters with an affinity for vampires include lamias, rakhshasas, striges, and pseudo-vampires.)

6. A vampire has an aversion to certain plants (such as garlic), holy symbols (such as the cross), and fragrances (such as holy incense). The more powerful vampires can temporarily overcome their aversion (especially if the will of the victim weakens).

7. A vampire can change into a mistlike form which can see through the tiniest crack. In fact, this mist is usually the way in which the vampire leaves its coffin, which is normally kept buried underground.

8. A vampire has supernatural strength and agility. A normal human has no chance against it in combat. The strength and dexterity of a vampire allow it to perform feats impossible to normal humans, like climbing sheer surfaces or leaping across great distances.

9. At night, outside its coffin, a vampire is invulnerable to most attacks. Normal weapons, even bullets, have no effect on it. Some vampires, however, can be harmed by silver weapons or weapons that have been especially blessed.

10. A vampire cannot eat normal food. Its only nourishment is fresh blood. At most, a vampire can pretend to eat a few crumbs and sip a bit of wine. Even then, the food and drink will cause it pain.

11. A vampire is a soulless creature. It thus casts no reflection in mirrors, nor does it cast a shadow like living creatures.

12. A vampire is generally described as being exceedingly gaunt and lean, with deathly pale skin. Most of the time, its skin is as cold as ice and radiates the chill of the grave. Occasionally, its skin grows fevered and burning, like a hot coal. Its eyes either glow with a hideous red light or are icy blue-gray. The lips are rich and full, and are the color of fresh blood. A vampire's teeth are white and gleaming, with long, pointed canines. Its nails are usually long and pointed like talons. The vampire initially smells unbearably fetid and rank, like the stench of a decomposing body. As time goes on (and the vampire's body would normally have decayed to mere bones), the vampire merely smells a bit stale and musty, like a closed room that needs airing. The stench of a vampire can be temporarily suppressed and is strongest just before it attacks.

13. Before feasting on a victim, a vampire has an aged, hollow look. After draining a victim, the vampire looks younger and somewhat bloated.

14. A vampire has strong hypnotic powers and can use these powers to break the will of a victim. It is especially dangerous to look into a vampire's eyes. The mesmeric attraction often has a sexual basis, and many vampires can more easily hypnotize victims of the opposite sex (though only the blood, not the sex, of a victim is important to the vampire).

15. If so desired, a vampire can transform its victims into vampires, thus spreading the curse of the undead. Only a select few of the victims become vampires; most victims merely die as a result of being drained by the bite of a vampire.

16. A vampire can only be killed while asleep in its coffin. There are three traditional methods for slaying a vampire: drive a stake through its heart, cut off its head, or completely burn its body. Severing the head and placing the remains in running water is said to be good, as is exposing the vampire to direct sunlight.

The usual wood from which the stake should be made is hawthorn or whitethorn. In Russian folklore, aspen or maple is used. It is important to drive the stake right through the heart of a vampire in one single stroke. If it takes more than one blow, the vampire can later return to its undead state.

Similarly, the vampire's head should be severed in a single blow. The ideal weapon

to sever the head of a vampire is a sharpened spade used to dig graves. If at all possible, the same shovel used to originally bury the vampire should be used to destroy it.

Cremation is a fairly universal method to destroy vampires. If vampires have no body, they cannot roam as animated corpses. Considering how malign and powerful vampires can be, it is probably best to use several methods of execution simultaneously just to be on the safe side.

### **Other vampire legends**

There are a number of other legends which are not necessarily part of the classic vampire myth. In Slavic folklore, the vampire and the werewolf are closely related. In fact, the surest way to become a vampire after death is to have been a werewolf in life. Another way to become a vampire is to eat the flesh of an animal that has been killed by a wolf (especially a werewolf in wolf form). The idea is that the wolf's bite has spread the contagion. Not surprisingly, werewolves and vampires continue to be closely associated. In fact, the wolves summoned by a vampire are more likely to be werewolves than normal wolves.

The connection between the werewolf and vampire can be used as the basis for a subplot in fantasy games. A party of adventurers might manage to kill a werewolf — only to be stalked, several days later, by a vampire (who is actually the werewolf returned from the grave for revenge).

In some legends, it is not only the bite of the vampire which is deadly — it is also the breath of the vampire, which is particularly fetid and smells of rotting corpses. The breath also has another quality of rotting corpses — it carries all sorts of diseases. Thus, in some countries, contagious diseases are thought to start with the breath of a vampire.

In Chinese legend, the misty vampire form is also connected to those gaseous marsh lights which are the basis for the will-o'-the-wisp legends. Again, there is a chain of logic that connects vampires to disease. Swamps are known both for their heavy mists and the diseases they breed. Vampires must, therefore, breed disease because of their misty form. In addition, vampires are bloodsuckers, as are mosquitoes, which are similarly notorious for carrying and transmitting disease.

### **Real vampires?**

Vampires are not merely a mythological phenomenon. Throughout history, there have been people who believed in the physical existence of vampires. There are, in fact, numerous historical accounts of the alleged sighting and slaying of vampires. Most of the reports are second- or third-hand, and should be viewed with suspicion. Even so, the sheer number of "authentic" accounts have led some individuals to speculate whether or not there

might be some real basis to the vampire myths. Two of the more interesting explanations are those of "catalepsy" and the "psychic sponge."

Catalepsy is a kind of trance-state which is virtually identical with death. The bodily functions are so reduced that there are no noticeable vital signs. Before the advent of modern medical techniques, an examination of a cataleptic, even by a skilled doctor, would have revealed no heartbeat or breathing.

The condition of catalepsy in the past could easily lead to premature burials, since no form of embalming techniques were formerly used. No one knows for sure how common premature burials once were, but there is plenty of evidence for both catalepsy and premature burials. One investigator, Dr. Franz Hartmann, collected details of more than 700 cases of premature burial. Most unfortunate victims of premature burial awoke in their coffins and eventually suffocated, unable to break out. But in some cases, panic gave the victim superhuman strength. If the grave was shallow or the ground especially loose, the victim was able to escape from the coffin.

In most cases, the victim had never heard of catalepsy or premature burial. The dead were dead, and only corpses were buried. The victim had been buried; he must therefore be dead. But the victim could move and feel. Only vampires came back from the dead with uncorrupted bodies. The logic was inescapable: The victim must be a vampire.

It's easy to see how the victim, too, could believe he was a vampire and would act exactly as a vampire was expected to act. The trauma of the premature burial could easily induce a kind of insanity in which the victim hallucinated changing shapes, having hypnotic powers, and growing younger with each drink of blood. If the victim continued to live by murdering people and drinking blood, the belief would be more strongly reinforced with each new drink (blood has enough nutritional value that it could sustain a minimum level of life).

If a sane victim tried to return to his family, the villagers would be likely to treat him as a vampire. In fact, in many of the historical accounts, the "vampire" looks and acts perfectly normal — except for the fact that he had been buried some time before. There are accounts of people returning from the grave to take up life as normal, even having children after they had supposedly died.

The catalepsy theory can provide an interesting subplot, especially for lower-level adventures. What if the vampire the characters meet in a dungeon was actually a victim of a premature burial who believed he was a vampire? The subplot allows for plenty of inventive role-playing by both the DM and the players. If the characters eventually discover the truth without killing the "vampire," there could

be the additional mission of trying to return the victim to his home and convince everyone that the poor fellow really wasn't a vampire.

A "psychic sponge" or "psychic vampire" is a more bizarre concept — a person who appears to physically drain the energy of other people. Psychic vampirism, according to some sources, is largely an unconscious psychic power. The individual really doesn't know why everyone around him grows pale and tired and seems to be constantly ill while he keeps growing stronger.

If vital energy can actually be drained in some psychic way, then it could explain many of the symptoms of supposed vampire victims. People in a village where such a being lived would become pale and sickly for no apparent reason. After a time, the villagers might notice something was wrong. If they dug up enough graves, by the laws of chance, one would be sure to contain a body that had not decomposed at a normal rate. Here would be "proof" that a vampire was ravaging the village.

### **Dracula: lord of vampires**

The most famous vampire, Dracula, though familiar to most of us as a character in a novel, is based on stories about an actual historical individual. Dracula's real name was Vlad Tepes. In A.D. 1431, the same year that Vlad was born, his father (also named Vlad) was made a knight of the Order of the Dragon, a paramilitary organization dedicated to fighting the Turks. In Rumanian, "dragon" is "dracul." So, the father was given the nickname Dracul, and his son was given the nickname Dracula, which means "son of Dracul." Unfortunately, "dracul" also means "devil." Thus, Dracula could mean either "son of the dragon" or "son of the devil."

Vlad Dracul was Prince of Wallachia from 1436-1442 and again from 1443-1447. The small country of Wallachia (which today comprises one-third of Rumania) lies between the lower Danube River and the Carpathian Mountains. Wallachia was nominally a Banates (frontier march) of the Kingdom of Hungary, but it had been essentially an independent country since about 1360.

At the time that Vlad Dracul was prince, Wallachia was in imminent danger of being absorbed by the Turkish Empire then overrunning most of the Balkans. Any leader of Wallachia was stuck in the middle of a power struggle between the Turks and the Hungarians. Both tried to put candidates favorable to their side on the throne, and both sent armies or assassins when they became displeased with the prince's rule.

In 1444, Vlad Dracul and his two oldest sons, Mircea and Vlad, joined the anti-Turk crusade which led to the disastrous defeat of the Western crusaders at Varna. After the defeat, Vlad Dracul was forced to give up his second son, Vlad, and his youngest

son, Radu, as hostages to the Turks. For the next four years, the young Dracula was a Turkish prisoner. While the imprisonment was not always physically harsh, it was an extreme mental ordeal since Dracula was likely to be executed at any moment if the Turks did not like his father's policies. During those years, Dracula came to view life as fleeting and cheap. In reaction to his imprisonment, he developed a reputation for trickery, cunning, insubordination, and brutality.

By remaining on good terms with the Turkish Sultan, Vlad Dracul angered the protector of Hungary, John Hunyadi. Henchmen of Hunyadi murdered Vlad Dracul and his eldest son Mircea in December of 1447. John Hunyadi then placed his own candidate, Vladislav II, on the throne of Wallachia. Backed by the Turks, Dracula became Prince of Wallachia for two months in 1448. But the Hungarian faction was too strong. Dracula fled to Moldavia, the northernmost Rumanian principality. There, he formed a close friendship and alliance with his cousin Steven.

Politics in Moldavia were as dangerous as in Wallachia. In 1451, Steven's father, Bogdan, was murdered, and the two cousins fled. Dracula managed to make peace with John Hunyadi and served under Hunyadi in John's constant fight against the Turks. From 1451-1456, Dracula lived in Transylvania, which is now the third province of Rumania, but which was traditionally a part of the Kingdom of Hungary. Transylvania contained many Hungarians and Germans as well as Romanians.

Vladislav II was having the same kind of problems Dracula's father once had. In 1456, John Hunyadi decided that Vladislav was favoring the Turks too much. He loaned Dracula the nucleus of an army and sent him to regain the throne of Wallachia. Dracula defeated Vladislav and became Prince of Wallachia again.

Now, Dracula could release all his pent-up hatreds. He executed the members of the faction that killed his father. Since he couldn't be sure exactly who was guilty, he solved the problem by killing 500 suspects, among whom were bound to be the 20 or so men responsible for his father's death. Dracula raided the Turks, whom he hated with pathological fervor, and also raided the German merchant towns of Transylvania. The Germans had come to Transylvania hundreds of years before as immigrants from Saxony, invited by the Hungarian king to encourage commerce. To many of the Rumanians, the Germans were foreign upstarts, monopolizing trade throughout Transylvania. On St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1460, nearly 30,000 men, women, and children of German descent were slain on a hill outside the city of Brasov in Transylvania.

But Dracula's main enemies were the Turks. In 1461-1462, he led a campaign against them in which he made full use of guerrilla tactics and terrorism. By Dracula's

own count, his forces slew 23,809 Turks. In fact, Dracula cut off the heads, noses, or ears of the Turks to keep an accurate count, then sent them as presents to neighboring Christian rulers to enlist their aid against the infidel Turks (without success). Dracula's favorite means of killing his victims was by impaling them on a stake. This practice gave him his second nickname, "Tepes" which means "The Impaler."

By the end of 1462, Vlad Tepes was driven from the throne by his younger brother Radu, who had become a Turkish puppet. When Vlad appealed to Mathias Corvinus, son of John Hunyadi and now King of Hungary, he was imprisoned. Mathias was concentrating on political maneuvers in Europe, and he needed a quiet border with the Turks.

Vlad Tepes was still a valuable political asset. Eventually, he converted from the Orthodox to the Roman Catholic religion and married one of Mathias' sisters. When Stephen (the Great) of Moldavia, a remarkable cousin of Vlad who managed to hold the throne for nearly 50 years, supported Dracula's claim to Wallachia, the time was ripe for Vlad's return. The official commander of the expedition was Stephen Bathory, Prince of Transylvania (soon to be elected King of Poland). The army was made up of Hungarians, Wallachians, Transylvanians, and Moldavians. In 1476, they defeated the Turks and set Dracula once more on the throne of Wallachia.

But Dracula had alienated too many factions among his subjects. Before he could consolidate his reign, his enemies united against him, and Dracula was slain on a hilltop outside Bucharest. His third reign had lasted barely two months.

In his own day, Dracula was notorious. Numerous writers, especially Germans sympathetic to their Transylvanian cousins, wrote about him as the "Blood Monster" Bram Stoker knew some of the stories about Dracula and made them the basis for his main character in the novel of the same name.

Dracula was certainly bloodthirsty with a pathological cruelty. He firmly believed in the effects of terror to intimidate his subjects and defeat his enemies. Even his favored means of torture, the stake, made him a natural candidate for the vampire legend that grew around him.

At the same time, Dracula managed to maintain some shreds of personal honor. It was his boast that a person could walk across Wallachia with a bag of gold and be completely safe from bandits (who feared his wrath too much to operate in the country). There were many cases in which Dracula personally rewarded faithful service. No one questioned Dracula's personal courage or his prowess as a warrior. He was even something of a patriot,

So, the main character of the novel *Dracula* is no mere one-sided personality. He is evil, certainly, and terrifying, cruel, and merciless — yet he retains a hint of

honor, his courage is undaunted, and he is still human enough to fall in love, in his own twisted way.

Since Dracula is the best-known vampire, he can serve as a kind of vampire prince in AD&D games. One could always assume that Dracula was summoned to the AD&D game universe by an evil magic-user who probably got more than he bargained for.

### DRACULA (Vlad Tepes)

FREQUENCY: *Unique*  
 NO. APPEARING: 2  
 ARMOR CLASS: -1 (-4 with dexterity)  
 MOVE: 12"/18"  
 HIT DICE: 12 (96 hp)  
 % IN LAIR: 10%  
 TREASURE TYPE: G  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 (*by touch or weapon*)  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+7)  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Energy drain, hypnosis, +4 to hit in combat*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *+1 or better weapon to hit*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*  
 ALIGNMENT! *Chaotic evil*  
 SIZE: M  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 204  
 Attack/Defense Modes: B,C/J

S: 19            I: 17            W: 17  
 D: 17            C: 19            CH: 17

Dracula is similar to the usual AD&D game vampire in the *Monster Manual*, except as noted in this article. His strength is 19 (as per *Legends & Lore*), and he can wield a long sword if he so desires, doing 8-15 hp damage per attack (the weapon may be magical as well). Dracula can regenerate 5 hp per melee round. Garlic, mirrors, and holy symbols only cause him to hesitate 1-2 rounds because of his strength of will, and he can survive up to 10 rounds in sunlight or running water. Dracula is assumed to have been reborn as a true vampire after his death, perhaps being summoned to a magical universe by an unlucky wizard. It is highly likely that he would make use of magical weapons and items in an AD&D game world, selecting those items appropriate to warriors since he had no skill at magic or the priesthood in life. Magical rings, amulets, scrolls of protection, swords and daggers, and similar items would be preferred.

Unlike most vampires, who have been completely overwhelmed by their transition into the undead, Dracula can sometimes overcome his undead state of mind by sheer willpower. It is possible that he could be impressed enough by an exceptional display of courage or faithful service on the part of a character or retainer to call off any attacks he is making. It is probable that Dracula will become involved in the politics of whatever world

	VRYKOLAKAS	GREAT VRYKOLAKAS
FREQUENCY:	<i>Rare</i>	<i>Very rare</i>
NO. APPEARING:	1-10	1
ARMOR CLASS:		- 2
MOVE:	12/	12"
HIT DICE:	7	13
% IN LAIR:	25%	10%
TREASURE TYPE:	E	G
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10	2-20
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>Energy drain (see text)</i>	<i>Energy drain (see text)</i>
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>+1 or better weapon to hit</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	<i>See below</i>	30%
INTELLIGENCE:	<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>
ALIGNMENT!	<i>Chaotic evil</i>	<i>Chaotic evil</i>
SIZE:	M	M
PSIONIC ABILITY:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

he enters. His relationship with Orcus, demon prince of the undead, is best left to the DM's imagination.

When trying to turn Dracula away, a cleric should consider this monster to be classed in the "special" category. Conversely, though Dracula has no other clerical abilities-as such, he may exert his incredible willpower to force other undead beings into servitude for short periods of time. Treat him as an evil 12th-level cleric, making the usual attempts to call undead into service as per the rules for turning undead.

### Vampires in Greece

The vampire in Greek folklore is called the *vrykolakas*. Both the *vrykolakas* and the vampire are animated corpses that prey upon the living, but the *vrykolakas* differs from the vampire in a number of details.

A *vrykolakas* has a weird, distinctive look. The 17th-century writer Leo Allatius gives an eyewitness account of the exumation of a man believed to be a *vrykolakas*: "On top of the bones of other men there was found lying a corpse perfectly whole; it was unusually tall of stature; clothes it had none, time or moisture having caused them to perish. The skin was distended, hard, and livid, and so swollen everywhere that the body had no flat surfaces but was round like a full sack. The face was covered with hair dark and curly; on the head there was little hair, as also on the rest of the body, which appeared smooth all over. The arms, by reason of

the swelling of the corpse, were stretched out on each side like the arms of a cross. The hands were open, the eyelids closed, the mouth gaping, and the teeth white.

"Such bodies do not, like those of other dead men, suffer decomposition after burial, nor turn to dust, but having, as it appears, a skin of extreme toughness become swollen and distended all over, so that the joints can scarcely be bent; the skin becomes stretched like the parchment of a drum, and when struck gives out the same sound."

The *vrykolakas* is not self-animated. Instead, an evil spirit enters the body, causing it to move about. The *vrykolakas* would thus be the result of a bizarre kind of demonic possession, all the more terrible because the dead person has no mind to actively resist the takeover.

The *vrykolakas* is most active at night, but only because devils and demons prefer darkness, not because the monster itself is in any way allergic to sunlight. If it so wishes, the *vrykolakas* can terrorize its victims in the daytime. In fact, a Greek proverb advises people to "beware of the noontime vampire."

This monster delights in inflicting random violence and spreading panic. The *vrykolakas* does not so much feed off the blood of the living as it does their terror and fright. One common practice of the *vrykolakas* is to seat itself upon a sleeping victim and, by its enormous weight and horrific presence, cause an agonizing sense of oppression. A victim who dies from this oppression will himself become a *vrykolakas*.

In a short time, the original vrykolakas can gather a large and dangerous train of followers. Furthermore, as time goes on, the vrykolakas becomes more and more audacious and bloodthirsty, so that it is able to completely devastate whole villages. According to legend, if the vrykolakas is not annihilated within 80 days of its first appearance, it will become a merciless and invincible dealer of death. The mere sight of the vrykolakas in this state could cause death.

Among the many legends of the vrykolakas are some curious ones. One says that when the vrykolakas first returns from the dead, it goes to its native village at night, knocking at doors and calling for one person of the household. If that person answers, he will die the next day. But a vrykolakas never calls twice, and so the inhabitants of the island of Chios (from which this legend springs) always wait for a second call at night before answering.

Even as late as 1910, according to John Lawson (author of *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*), the island of Santorini was notorious for its vampires (i.e., vrykolakas). "To send vampires to Santorini" was an expression synonymous with sending "owls to Athens" or "coals to Newcastle." (American equivalents might be sending "cars to Detroit" or "movies to Hollywood.") The present day island of Santorini was known in ancient times as

Thera. About 1,600 years ago, the island of Thera blew apart in a volcanic explosion believed to have been more devastating than even Krakatoa or Mount St. Helens. The resultant tidal waves and heavy fall of ash helped destroy the Minoan civilization and might possibly be the historical basis of the Atlantis myths. Making Santorini the "Isle of the Undead" may reflect some folk memory of that ancient disaster. Areas in a fantasy universe in which huge numbers of people were slain or died all at once might also form breeding grounds for immense numbers of undead.

There are two ways to destroy a vrykolakas. One method is to exorcise the evil spirit which animates the monster. If the exorcism is successful, the corpse immediately begins to decay, rapidly decomposing in a single round until only bones are left. The second method is to dig up the monster's grave and burn the corpse. Presumably, the evil spirit is only in the corpse while it is animated. By finding the grave and exhuming the body, it is possible to catch the evil spirit unaware, before it has a chance to repossess the body.

In the statistics given here for the vrykolakas are two separate columns. The first, termed "Vrykolakas," is for the monster from its initial appearance and for the first 80 days of its existence. The second column, termed "Great Vrykolakas," is for

the monster after 80 days have passed.

*Sleep, charm, and hold* spells do not affect these creatures, nor do poison or paralysis. A vrykolakas also has a special kind of attack. Each turn, anyone whom the vrykolakas touches must make a saving throw vs. spells (specifically against *fear*, with wisdom bonuses applicable). If the save fails, the victim loses an energy level as the vrykolakas feeds off his fear. The vrykolakas can also attack physically for 1-10 hp damage per strike.

A cleric has the same chance to turn a vrykolakas as he does a mummy. In addition, the *exorcise* spell can force the evil spirit to leave the vrykolakas, rendering the creature harmless and inert.

After 80 days, the vrykolakas gains enough power to become a great vrykolakas. The great vrykolakas has a better armor class and more hit points than an ordinary vrykolakas. It has two attacks per round, each of which does 2-20 hp damage. It also attacks by *fear*, but the power works on anyone who gazes at the great vrykolakas (in addition to anyone it touches). The *fear* power drains two levels if the save is unsuccessful. A great vrykolakas has a 30% resistance to all magic (except the *exorcise* spell).

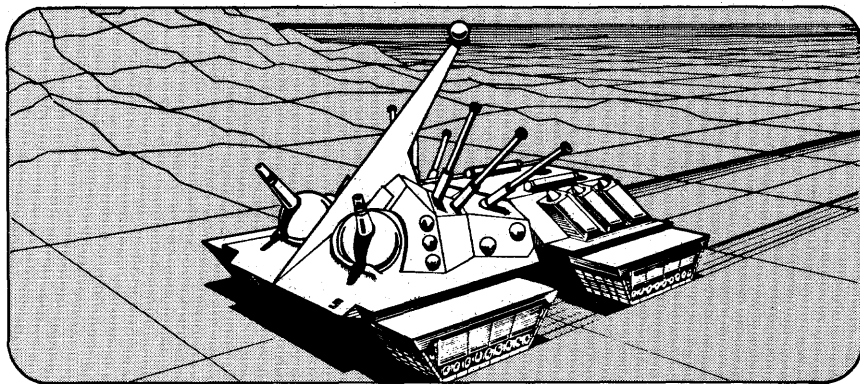
The great vrykolakas is usually accompanied by 1-6 ordinary vrykolakas under its control. For purposes of turning it away, consider the great vrykolakas to be in the "special" category. If the great vrykolakas can be turned away, or the *exorcism* spell succeeds against it, the ordinary vrykolakas are also rendered harmless and "dead" again.

#### The dancing vampires

A kind of vampire spirit from Highland folklore is the *baobhan sith* (pronounced baavan shee). Since Gaelic can be difficult to pronounce, an alternative spelling of the monster's name could be "bavanshee." The word itself is a dialectic variation of banshee, but the creature is completely different from the usual banshee. The following tale about a *baobhan sith* is retold from C.M. Robertson's *Folklore from the West of Ross-shire*.

Four young men were on a hunting trip and spent the night in an empty shieling, a hut built to give shelter for the sheep in the grazing season. They began to dance, one supplying mouth-music. One of the dancers wished that they had partners. Almost at once, four women came in. Three danced, the fourth stood by the music-maker. But as he hummed, he saw drops of blood falling from the dancers. He fled out of the shieling, pursued by his demon partner, and took refuge among the horses. The woman could not get to him, probably because of the iron with which the horses were shod. Nonetheless, she circled round him all night, and only disappeared when the sun rose. He went back into the shieling and found the bloodless bodies of the dancers lying there. Their partners had drained them white.

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## BAOBHAN SITH (Bavanshee)

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-8

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 5

% IN LAIR: 10%

TREASURE TYPE: A

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells and blood drain*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *High*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

SIZE: M

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Baobhan sith are evil spirits that roam at night seeking victims. As minor demons, they are in the "special" category for clerics who seek to turn them. The baobhan sith look like beautiful young women. Using spells, they try to trick their victims into letting them drain all the blood from the victims' bodies. Baobhan sith have the magic-user spells *charm person*, *clairaudience*, *suggestion*, *phantasmal force*, and *teleport*.

If a baobhan sith grasps a victim (who usually allows the touch because of *charm person* or *suggestion*) and makes a successful "to hit" roll for vampiric contact, the creature automatically drains blood for 3-18 hp damage in one round. The *charm* or *suggestion* is then broken, and the victim can fight back normally — but the baobhan sith will not release the victim unless the victim makes a strength roll as if to open doors (e.g., a victim with a strength of 15 can throw off an attacker on a 1-2 on 1d6). The baobhan sith drains 3-18 hp with each further round if not removed. Any victim drained below zero hit points is dead. The baobhan sith has a physical attack (a strike with a clawed hand) which does 1-6 hp damage, but the attack is rarely used since they prefer spells and blood draining.

An iron weapon automatically does double damage to a baobhan sith (and gets a +3 bonus to hit). Since they are especially vulnerable to iron, the baobhan sith will always try to avoid contact with it (they can sense it within a 60' radius). Oddly enough, silvered weapons have only normal effects against them. Holy water does 1-6 hp damage per vial to them.

### Oriental vampires

The *ch'ing shih* is a kind of Chinese vampire. Like the vrykolakas, the corpse is actually animated by a sort of demon who preserves the corpse from decay so that it can prey on the living. Unlike the vrykolakas, however, the demon animating the corpse is not entirely alien.

The Chinese believed that a person has two souls: the Hun, or superior soul which

is aligned with the spirits of goodness; and the P'o, or inferior soul, which is aligned with the spirits of evil. If a body is not given the proper funeral rites, the P'o can seize control and animate the corpse. A particularly evil person may become a *ch'ing shih* by purposely separating the two souls. The superior soul can be stored someplace outside the body (much like in the *magic jar* spell) while the inferior soul is given free reign. When the person dies, he will return from the grave to work evil. This type of *ch'ing shih* cannot be destroyed until the superior soul is first liberated from whatever physical object it occupies (usually a clay vase). The physical object must be broken to free the superior soul.

G. Willoughby-Meade, in *Chinese Ghosts and Goblins*, relates a story about four travelers who meet a *ch'ing shih*. The same story is also told by Pu Sung Ling in the book *Liao Chai*.

Four travelers arrived late one night to the village of Tsaitien in Shantung province. They were extremely weary, wanting only to sleep for the night. But the village inn was completely filled. After some lengthy discussion and a bit of bribery, the travelers persuaded the innkeeper to find them some indoor sleeping place, out of the foul weather.

The innkeeper reluctantly led the four travelers to the only place available: a small, lonely house a little distance away where, he told the travelers, his daughter-in-law had recently died. In the one-room cottage, behind a heavy curtain, lay the uncoffined body of the woman. While the circumstances were somewhat gruesome, at least the house was warm and dry. The innkeeper gave the travelers straw pallets and blankets which were comfortable enough. Within minutes, three of the four travelers were fast asleep.

A strange sense of evil seemed to oppress the fourth traveler. In spite of his fatigue, fear prevented him from shutting his eyes for some little while. Yet he was so tired that he could not resist long and had just about fallen asleep when he heard an ominous rustling behind the curtain, which sounded as though somebody was stirring very softly.

Cold, with horror, he peered out from half-closed eyes and he distinctly saw a horrible, stealthy hand thrust itself from behind the curtain, which was noiselessly drawn aside. There stood the livid corpse gazing into the room with a baleful glare. It approached softly and, stooping over the three sleepers, seemed to breathe upon their faces.

The man who was awake buried his head under the quilt, horror-stricken. He felt that the corpse was bending over him, but after a few minutes, as he lay in an agony of terror, he heard the same gentle rustling as before. This time the sound, made by the movement of the stiff grave-clothes, moved away from him. When he cautiously peeped out he noticed that the corpse had returned to its bier and was

stretched out stark and still.

He crept from his place and, not daring to even whisper, shook each of his comrades. But he could not make them move. He then reached for his clothes, but hearing the gentle rustling sound once more, he realized that he had been seen.

In a moment, he flung himself back on the bed and drew the coverlet tightly over his face. A few minutes later he felt the awful creature was standing by his side. However, after looking him over, it seemed to retire again. At length, half mad with fright, the man grabbed some clothes which he threw on and rushed barefoot from the house.

He again heard the corpse stirring, but now it sprang from its bier with a rush of speed. The man was able to bolt and bar the door just as the corpse leaped at it with demoniacal fury. As the man ran at full speed under the light of a waning moon, desperate to put as great a distance between himself and the haunted house as possible, he chanced to glance back and shrieked aloud to see that the corpse was not only following him — it was hard at his heels and gaining rapidly. In desperation, he fled behind a large willow which grew by the side of the road. As the corpse rushed at him in one direction, he darted rapidly in the other.

Fires burned in the corpse's red eyes as it strove to catch its terrorized prey. Finally, as it suddenly swooped upon him with hideous violence, the traveler swooned and fell senseless to the ground. The corpse missed its aim so that it struck the tree, not the man, with all of its might.

At daybreak, both corpse and man were found. When the corpse was pulled away, it was found that it had embedded its taloned fingers so deeply into the tree that it could not free itself. The traveler, after many months of rest, recovered his health — but his companions were found lying dead, poisoned by the fetid breath of the *ch'ing shih*.

The story shows several aspects of the *ch'ing shih*. It is not especially intelligent but is extremely persistent. It is not a true vampire, as it kills with its poisonous breath, not by draining blood. It attacks with a terrible, berserk fury which temporarily gives it increased strength.

A *ch'ing shih* can normally be destroyed by physical attacks. If the superior soul is, however, hidden in some magic container, then the creature will continue coming back to life to stalk its attackers. Normal means of destruction only temporarily destroy the body. Even if it is cremated and the ashes are scattered, the *ch'ing shih* will regenerate a new body after a day or so and return to the attack. If all else fails, it will take possession of some other corpse. If the magic container holding the superior soul is broken, then the *ch'ing shih* will return no longer. Whether or not a particular *ch'ing shih* is the type that has a hidden superior soul is, of course, left to the DM.

## CH'ING SHIH

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-8

ARMOR CLASS: 3

MOVE: 12" (15" when berserk)

HIT DICE: 7

% IN LAIR: 10%

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (2 with breath)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Poisonous breath, berserk attack*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT! *Chaotic evil*

SIZE: M

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

The main attack of the ch'ing shih is its poisonous breath, which can affect any one person within 10' of the creature. At the same time, the ch'ing shih can physically attack, doing 2-12 hp damage with a clawed hand.

During its berserk attack, which may be used once per night for 3-12 melee rounds, the ch'ing shih's strength is considered to be 18/00 (adding +3 to hit and +6 to damage with its claws), although the creature's normal strength is 15.

A cleric has the same chance to turn a

ch'ing shih as he would a spectre. An *exorcism* spell can also drive out the evil P'o animating the corpse, returning the corpse to its formerly inactive state.

### The mass-media vampire

While the vampire owes its origin to folklore, it owes its popularity to movies and fiction. In this century, more than 100 movies have been made about vampires. The most popular and enduring have been based on Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*.

In 1921, F.W. Murnau made a classic, silent film version of the story of *Dracula*. Though he gave full credit to Bram Stoker's novel, he didn't get permission to use it. So, he altered the plot and location slightly. The result was the movie *Nosferatu*. The film release was delayed (in fact, nearly all copies of the movie were destroyed) by a lawsuit with the Stoker estate. It was eventually released in London in 1928 and the U.S. in 1929. Since then, it has continued to be shown in the art cinema theaters of the world.

In 1931, the film *Dracula* was released. It starred Bela Lugosi and was directed by Tod Browning. The film was so successful that, for more than a generation, the names "Dracula" and "Bela Lugosi" were virtually synonymous.

In 1958, Hammer Films released its version of the story, entitled *The Horror of*

*Dracula*. Terence Fisher was the director; *Dracula* was played by Christopher Lee (with Peter Cushing as Dr. Van Helsing). Once again, the performance was so electrifying that the lead actor became identified with the vampire. Christopher Lee also went on to make a number of other movies in which he starred as a vampire.

One of the latest remakes of *Dracula* starred Frank Langella. Like Bela Lugosi, Langella first starred in a hit Broadway play version of *Dracula* before being chosen to star in the movie.

Besides the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, there are several other classic vampire stories. The first well-known vampire story was written by Dr. John William Polidori and was entitled *The Vampyre*. For a long time, the story was actually attributed to Polidori's better-known friend, Lord Byron. The tale came about as the result of one evening when the physician Polidori, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the daughters of Polidori and his friend Mr. Godwin sat reading ghost stories to each other. Because of that evening, everyone present decided to try to write a horror story. Two of them became classics (Mr. Godwin's daughter married Shelley; later, as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, she wrote *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* — the first science-fiction novel).

Polidori's tale can be "seen as the start of the vampire craze. While little-known today, the vampire of Polidori's tale (Lord Ruthven), was as well known in the 19th century as *Dracula* is today. Just as movies have been based on *Dracula*, a number of plays were based on Lord Ruthven.

One of the best vampire stories is the novelette *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu. *Carmilla* first appeared in a collection in 1872 entitled *Through a Glass Darkly*. *Carmilla* is the archetype of a female vampire, and the story has formed a base for at least three movies. It is probable that the story inspired Bram Stoker to write his own vampire tale.

Vampire fiction is as popular today as ever. Fairly recent novels dealing with vampires include: *Salem's Lot*, by Stephen King; *The Hunger*, by Whitley Strieber; *Fevre Dream*, by George R.R. Martin; and *Interview with a Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*, by Anne Rice. Series of novels about vampires are also currently popular. Vampire series include: *The Dracula Tapes*, *The Holmes-Dracula File*, *An Old Friend of the Family*, and *Thorn* by Fred Saberhagen; *Bloodright: The Memoirs of Mircea*, *Son of Dracula*, *The Revenge of Dracula*, and *Dracula, My Love*, by Peter Tremayne; *Hotel Transylvania*, *The Palace*, *Blood Games*, *Tempting Fate*, and *Path of the Eclipse* by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro; and *The Black Castle*, *The Silver Skull*, and *Citizen Vampire* by Les Daniels — and there are always "Dark Shadows" reruns on television for die-hard fans.

And with that, good evening. . .

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