



Blood Thirst: 100 Years of Vampire Fiction

By Richard Matheson

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In the past hundred years, since the publication of Bram Stoker's infamous book, no literary figure has enjoyed a more horrific resiliency than Count Dracula. In film, television, novels, and short stories, he keeps coming back to life, fed by the vital imaginative energies of a world-wide audience that cannot seem to resist his abominable charms. Aristocratic and urbane, deeply erotic and profoundly evil, Dracula's bloodsucking savagery has cast a mesmerizing fascination not only over his victims but over his readers as well. And, as Leonard Wolf suggests, "Vampire fiction...exerts an amazing pull on readers for a reason that we may find disturbing. The blood exchange--the taking of blood by the vampire from his or her victim is, all by itself, felt to be a singularly symbolic event. Symbolic and attractive!"

Now, in *Blood Thirst: One Hundred Years of Vampire Fiction*, Leonard Wolf brings together thirty tales in which vampires of all varieties make their ghastly presence felt--male and female, human and non-human, humorous and heroic--all of them kin to the dreadful bat. From Lafcadio Hearn, Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman, Edith Wharton, August Derleth, and Ray Bradbury to such contemporary masters as Anne Rice, Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates, John Cheever, and Woody Allen, and in settings as diverse as rural New England and outer space, this collection offers readers a dazzling compendium of vampire stories. Wolf organizes the collection into six categories--The Classic Adventure Tale, The Psychic Vampire, The Science Fiction Vampire, The Non-Human Vampire, The Comic Vampire, and The Heroic Vampire--which allows readers to see the many guises Dracula's descendants have assumed and the many ways they can be interpreted. In his penetrating introduction, Wolf argues that such an arrangement enables us to see the evolution of the vampire from an unmitigated evil to a creature we are more likely to identify with. "In a century in which God and Satan have become increasingly irrelevant in the popular arts, there has been an accompanying secularization of the vampire idea. And, as the stories in *Blood Thirst* will show, sympathy for the vampire has grown as we have become increasingly interested in the workings of the mind." Indeed, the vampire's ability to change over time, to draw into itself such a richness of symbolic meanings, to conjure itself into so many diabolical shapes, may account for the enduring appeal of the literature written about it.

Here, then, is a definitive collection for aficionados and novices alike, and whether readers find the vampires who inhabit these pages sympathetic or horrific, psychologically intriguing or spiritually repellent, morbidly seductive or

comically absurd, *Blood Thirst* gives us all something to sink our teeth into.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The infamous count is probably the best-known nosferatu, but many tales centering on the undead have been written. Editor Wolf (*Dracula: The Connoisseur's Guide*, Broadway, 1997), who has written extensively about *Dracula*, has assembled a collection of short stories and novel excerpts that show the variety of vampire villains and even heroes that populate the genre. Novel excerpts include Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* and Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*. Some of the short stories, such as F. Marion Crawford's "For the Blood Is the Life," have been anthologized in several collections, but others, such as Leslie Roy Carter's "Vanishing Breed," are more difficult to find. Wolf has put together an interesting mix of vampire tales that would serve as an excellent introduction to the literature. Recommended for public library and supernatural collections. —Patricia Altner, Information Seekers, Bowie, Md.

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From Kirkus Reviews

A roundup of over two dozen vampire tales illustrating the evolution of the genre since Bram Stoker, gathered by Wolf, our tireless annotator of terrorlit (*Dracula*, p. 372, etc.). What, Wolf asks, makes vampires so attractive today? He notes in his cogent Introduction that vampire tales draw from the gruesome in mainstream horror, the pulsing eroticism of bodice rippers, the supernatural in sword-and-sorcery. But blood is the primary metaphor, Wolf says, drawing on folk knowledge and traditions from Cain and Abel to Christ and transubstantiation, while the modern blood exchange brings on a kind of sexual dream-bliss beyond the facts of intercourse. Illustrating the classic adventure tale is Wolf's exciting excerpt from Stephen King's only vampire novel, *Salem's Lot* (1975), with good guy Mark versus a whole townful of bloodsuckers. Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman's "Luella Miller" draws the "psychological vampire" as a thief of energy rather than a blood drinker. The science-fiction vampire in C.L. Moore's "Shambleau" indulges in monstrous, slimy couplings, while the immortal woman in the excerpt from Whitley Streiber's erotically powerful "The Hunger" blesses her victims with lives that last for 200 years. The nonhuman vampire in Hanns Heinz Ewers's "The Spider," a beautiful woman in a window, hypnotizes her victims into the supreme delight of suicide (she is, literally, a spider). The heroic vampire in Anne Rice's "The Master of Rampling Gate" remains invisible except to the heroine. Also on hand: Joyce Carol Oates, John Cheever, and E.F. Benson. And don't miss Woody Allen's "Count Dracula." A bedtime book with a bite to it. -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"Wolf has put together an interesting mix of vampire tales that would serve as an excellent introduction to the literature."--Library Journal

"Wolf is precisely the person to edit a definitive vampire anthology. He gives Oxford something to be proud of..."--Booklist

"A bedtime book with a bite to it."--Kirkus Reviews

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Steinbach:

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Janna Lefevre:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read the book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day long to reading a reserve. The book Blood Thirst: 100 Years of Vampire Fiction it is rather good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book provides high quality.

Alissa Sowell:

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Lee Fuller:

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