

Vampires

Do not take your children to see *Vampires*, especially if you object to foul language, to guts being ripped out, and heads chopped off in one fell swoop. But you should know that with modern vampires garlic will not work, bullets are ineffective, and even a cross will not drive them away.

Always look up when entering a room because vampires may hide on the ceiling. Never confront a master vampire between dawn and dusk. But at night vampires may be killed by driving a stake through their chest, ripping out the heart (technique illustrated in the movie), decapitating them when dead (*ibid*), and burning their bodies.

Vampire stories originated in the Far East and were spread by caravans along the silk route, and later by the Mongols, to the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, especially to Transylvania. Immortality and eroticism lie at the heart of these stories, for vampires cannot die and are seductive: they come at night and bite their victims in the neck.

The stories reflect the peasants' folklore of feudal times example, Vlad the Impaler or Elisabeth Bathory, said to have bit her subjects to drink their blood may refer to light sensitive persons with red teeth from erythropoietic porphyria; to an epidemic of rabies transmitted by bats; to corpses found twisted in their graves with blood on their shrouds people buried prematurely; or to corpses bloated after death and with nails and teeth still growing.

Vampires are the souls of the undead, witches, wizards, and suicides, that quit the body at night to suck the blood of the living. Anybody may become a vampire if a cat leaps over his or her grave or a bird flies over it. Medical residents ordering too many tests do not qualify, though they may join the vampire clubs, go to blockbuster movies, or watch *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* on television. Vampires may not work as hospital phlebotomists (union rules).

Despite suffering from a bad press, vampires can be quite health conscious. Three vampires were recently seen in a bar ordering drinks. Two said that they wanted a pint of blood, but the third, the diet conscious one, asked for a glass of plasma. The waitress taking the order went to the bar shouting, "Two Bloods and one Blood Light."