



Vampire God: The Allure of the Undead in Western Culture

Mary Y. Hallab



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Examines the enormous popular appeal of vampires from early Greek and Slavic folklore to present-day popular culture.

It seems we're awash in vampires these days, in everything from movies, television shows, and novels to role-playing games, rock bands, and breakfast cereals. But what accounts for their enduring popular appeal? In Vampire God, Mary Y. Hallab examines the mythic figure of the vampire from its origins in early Greek and Slavic folklore, its transformation by Romantics like Byron, Le Fanu, and Stoker, and its diverse representations in present-day popular culture. The allure of the vampire, Hallab argues, lies in its persistent undeadness, its refusal to accept its mortal destiny of death and decay. Vampires appeal to our fear of dying and our hope for immortality, and as a focus for our doubts and speculations, vampire literature offers answers to many of our most urgent questions about the meaning of death, the nature of the human soul, and its possible survival after bodily dissolution. Clearly written, with wry humor, Vampire God is a thoroughly researched, ambitious study that draws on cultural, anthropological, and religious perspectives to explore the significance and function of the vampire in relation to the scientific, social, psychological, and religious beliefs of its time and place.

“Hallab offers enough new insights to keep even jaded, well-read scholars interested, and her wealth of examples and obvious enthusiasm for the subject will likely entice even readers with only a passing interest in the subject. It is certainly a worthy addition to any library.” — *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*

“Hallab’s book is a fascinating read that is expansive and informative without ever being boring. On top of that, she has a great sense of humor (especially when it comes to religion) that is a welcome ingredient to such an academically engaged text. Fans of the horror genre in general or vampires in particular [sic] would do well to pick this one up.” — *Pop Theology*

“...timely and interesting ... For the influx of new students schooled in the pop-cultural sexuality of the contemporary vampire, Hallab ups-the-ante beyond fashion and fandom, insisting there are more profound ways to hang out with the damned.” — *Journal of American Culture*

“Vampire God offers a wide-ranging introduction for students and academics seeking a concise review of canonical and scholarly vampire literature ... [and] offers an expansive survey of predominant themes and preoccupations of vampire literature over time that is both lively and accessible.” — *Religion and the Arts*

“Among the numerous studies published about the vampire in film and fiction, I would certainly rank Hallab’s Vampire God at the top. She has mastered the ability to blend her discussion with both interesting detail and larger social significance—a difficult balancing act indeed, and one that few have accomplished in cultural studies.” — Gary Hoppenstand, editor of *The Journal of Popular Culture*

“Compared with most academic books, Vampire God is a delight to read. Hallab brings a wry sense of humor to her book—and humor is something, it seems to me, lacking in most critical works. Within the limited focus of vampire lore and literature, Hallab covers a lot of ground, and she covers it superbly.” — Eric Miles Williamson, author of *Oakland, Jack London, and Me*

Mary Y. Hallab is Professor Emerita of English Literature at the University of Central Missouri.

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