

A FIELD GUIDE TO VAMPIRES

We as a species boast a civilizations-long history of walking corpses, bloodsucking or otherwise. How do you identify whether that thing asking to come into your house is a vampire?

First, does your subject:

- Consume blood or another life essence?
- Possess sharp teeth or fangs?
- Exhibit a corpseslike pallor or other signs of undeath?

If so, don't panic, but exercise caution. Different vampires have different temperaments. You wouldn't approach a Transylvanian vampire the same way as a vampire from Sesame Street.

Let's move on to identifying your vampire guest's *modus operandi*.

A note on porphyria:

Be sure not to confuse a vampire with someone suffering from porphyria. Porphyria is a blood disease with the following symptoms:

- Sensitivity to sunlight, which can cause facial disfigurement and discolored skin
- Receded gums, which can cause long and fanglike teeth
- Aversion to garlic, which can cause pain due to its high sulfur content
- Drinking animal blood, which doctors used to prescribe as a treatment

Be careful that you aren't misidentifying the above as vampirism. Have compassion first!

The Shambling Night Horror

Examples: Lilitu (Babylonian legends), the upiór (Slavic folklore), Riri Yaka (Sri Lankan mythology), Queen Rangda (Balinese folklore), Ben Cortman (I Am Legend), the infected (The Strain), Bill Compton (True Blood)

Creatures of the night. The shambling undead. Cannibal corpses. Here, "vampire" encompasses a variety of maybe-bloodthirsty, maybe-undead, maybe-shapeshifting humanoids. They have existed since the beginning of human civilization, with blood-drinking beings said to wander ancient Mesopotamia just like the infected who prowl Guillermo del Toro's *The Strain*.

Its characteristics depend on its place of origin. The Scottish *baobhan sith* has little in common with the Philippine *manananggal*, for example. Do not approach one if you value your limbs. During the day, they sleep in graveyards. Look for telltale claw marks on the inside of a coffin's lid.

Weaknesses: Fears daylight and avoids water.

The Prowling Aristocrat

Examples: Count Dracula, Carmilla, Elizabeth Bathory (disputed), Lord Byron (alleged), Countess Alcina Dimitrescu (Resident Evil), Count Orlok (Nosferatu), Blacula, Dio Brando (JoJo's Bizarre Adventure), Vladislav the Poker (What We Do in the Shadows)

The Great Vampire Epidemic in Europe marked the spread of a more human-looking vampire. Better dressed and vastly wealthier, you'll find them living in manors with velvet curtains drawn permanently shut. They moonlight as mysterious aristocrats while hunting for victims.

You can identify them by their cadaverous pallor, powers of mind control, dastardly good looks, and tendency to attract nocturnal animals like bats and wolves.

Weaknesses: Fire, hunger, decapitation, silver, a wooden stake through the heart, holy items like crucifixes, running water, garlic, sunlight.

The Creature with a Crush

Examples: Lestat de Lioncourt (Interview with the Vampire), Angel (Buffy the Vampire Slayer), Countess Marya Zaleska (Daughter of Dracula), Edward Cullen (Twilight), the Salvatore brothers (The Vampire Diaries), Matthew Clairmont (A Discovery of Witches)

This 20th-century variant can be identified by their brooding and intellectual nature. Also new to this type is that they often elect to practice "vegetarian" vampirism, substituting human blood with a more ethical alternative. They may believe their vampirism is a curse.

You can identify them by their bewitching looks, superhuman strength and speed, and immortality. Luckily, instead of embracing their predatory instincts, they prefer to be your friend (or more-than-friend).

Weaknesses: Self-loathing and vampire infighting.

The Good Guy Vampire

Examples: Blade, Dr. Michael Morbius, Alucard, Mavis Dracula (Hotel Transylvania), Selene (Underworld), Draculaura (Monster High), Marceline the Vampire Queen (Adventure Time), Nandor the Relentless (What We Do in the Shadows)

This variant may have any or all of the above strengths, weaknesses, or other quirks. The Good Guy Vampire's main characteristic is its choice to protect its human friends and the greater good.

You may find this friendly neighborhood vampire doing a variety of things: investigating mysteries, walking around in the daytime, practicing medicine, attending school, hunting other vampires, or even imitating Count Dracula to embrace the culture.

Weaknesses: Unknown.

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