

The twilight realm



# THE UNDEAD

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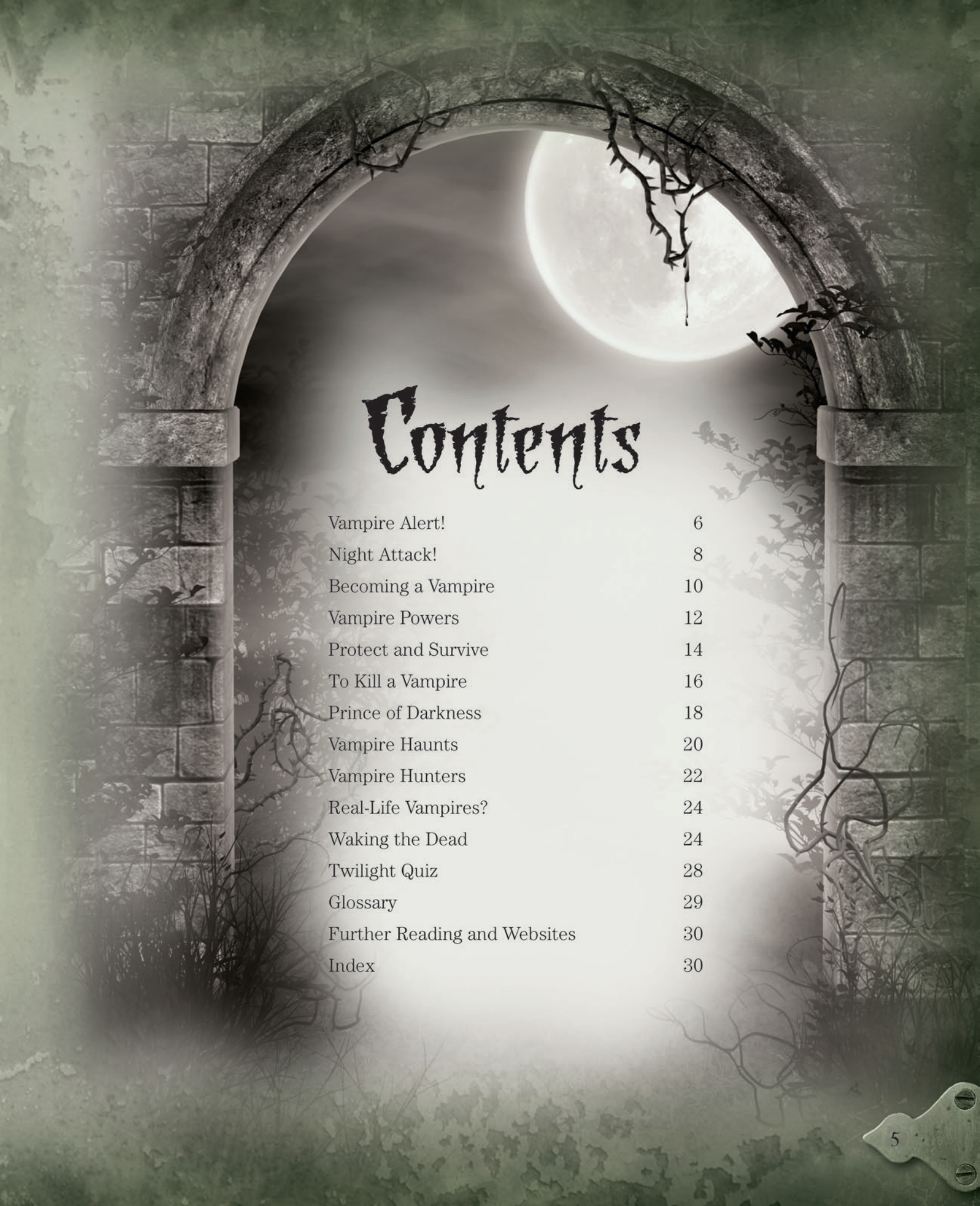
# The Undead



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# Protect and Survive

Do strange shadows flit past your window at night? Do you hear strange screeching noises? Could there be a vampire in your neighbourhood?

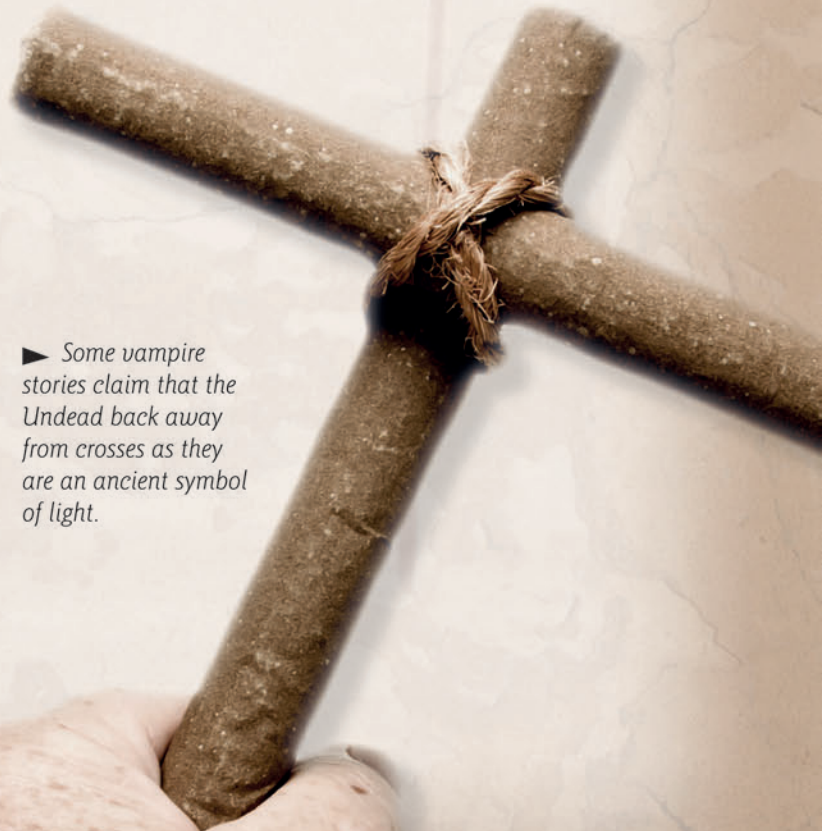
**F**ear not. Vampire lore is full of suggestions about how to protect yourself. Early vampire hunters relied on garlic and religious symbols such as crosses and holy water to defend themselves against their fanged foes. They also trusted that vampires would recoil in horror at the sound of church bells or the sign of the cross.

The Roma people of central and eastern Europe wore charms such as tigers' teeth and iron rings set with pearls. They also believed that socks stolen from a dead person were a powerful way to ward off vampires.


According to today's vampire experts, this is all hocus pocus. Their advice is simple: make use of what is known. Many vampires avoid direct sunlight, so you are generally safe during the day. At night, trust only your instincts and your weapons.



▲ *Strong-smelling garlic was widely believed to repel vampires, who were said to have sensitive noses.*



► *Some vampire stories claim that the Undead back away from crosses as they are an ancient symbol of light.*



'As I enter the village, I notice the fishing nets placed on almost every door and window. These are to distract vampires, as locals believe they are obsessed with untangling objects.'

from the journal of Victorian adventurer  
Albert Kingsley, who vanished in 1865.

► Spitting fiercely,  
a vampire shrinks in  
terror at the sign of  
the cross.

### Mirror, Mirror

If you're looking out for vampires, don't forget the theory that they cast no shadow. Having no soul, they were once thought to cast no reflection in a mirror either. Recent vampire lore refutes this, possibly because modern mirrors are no longer made of polished silver, to which vampires reacted badly.

### Wolfsbane and Wild Roses

In parts of eastern Germany, superstitious people placed sprigs of wolfsbane under babies' cribs and mattresses to keep away vampires. Wild roses or thorns were also strung around the outside of coffins to discourage vampires from leaving their grave.

# To Kill a Vampire

When faced by a creature as hideous as this, few vampire hunters would hesitate before slaying their foe. If they did, they wouldn't last long.

◀ *This vampire looks old and frail, but don't be fooled. Centuries-old vampires are still dangerous enemies.*

**T**racking down a vampire is hard enough, but how do you kill a creature that's already dead? In old stories, vampire hunters led their horse around until it got spooked, a sure sign that a vampire den was close by. To put the Undead out of action, they then placed a bulb of garlic in its mouth or a cross under its chin. A more permanent solution was to drive a wooden stake through the vampire's heart, cut off its head and burn the body.

By all accounts, vampires today are even tougher to exterminate. Even at rest, they remain on the alert. Today's vampire hunters won't get close enough to use a wooden stake without years of martial arts training and plenty of weaponry to hand. Lone vampires are deadly enough, but some stories describe vampires hunting in packs of as many as a dozen.

*'The organs were cut out, and one piece after another burnt. Last of all the heart was burnt, and those who attended came near so that the smoke passed over them, and protected them from evil.'*

*from The Vampire in Romania  
by Agnes Murgoci*

### *Death by Silver*

In ancient lore this white, reflective metal, linked to the moon, was also a symbol of purity. In many parts of Eastern Europe, it was believed to have a deadly effect on monsters like vampires and werewolves.

Tiny particles of silver mixed into water have been also used for centuries to stop the spread of all sorts of germs and bacteria, so the modern view is that silver could have a similar effect on the vampire virus.

► Driving a wooden stake into a vampire's heart is not for the squeamish. Apart from the mess, it takes a hefty blow.

# Prince of Darkness

Dracula! The name alone sends a shiver down the spine. Look no further if you want to learn about the vampires of the past.

**A**uthor Bram Stoker based his vampire on East European folk tales, but his creation remains the most famous vampire in the world.

In the story, Count Dracula lures a young Englishman, Jonathan Harker, to his castle in Transylvania by asking him to help him buy property in London. Leaving Harker a prisoner in his lair, he travels to England by ship in boxes filled with earth from his homeland.

Once in England, Dracula sinks his fangs into Lucy, a friend of Harker's fiancée, Mina. Vampire expert Dr Van Helsing is called in to investigate, but not soon enough to stop Lucy turning into a vampire.

*'My feelings changed to repulsion and terror when I saw him slowly emerge from the window and crawl down the castle wall over the dreadful abyss, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings.'*

*from the novel 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker*



▲ Stoker dreamed up new powers for his blood-sucking hero. Dracula could climb up walls, control the weather and walk about in daylight without turning to dust.



**V**an Helsing destroys the undead Lucy with a stake through the heart, then sets out to deal with Dracula. Meanwhile, Harker escapes from Transylvania and joins Van Helsing and a group of friends in the hunt. By finding Dracula's den and destroying most of his coffins, they manage to drive the 'Prince of Darkness' out of England.

In the meantime, Dracula has attacked Mina, feeding her with his blood so that she will become a vampire too. The friends race across Europe and manage to kill Dracula as the sun sets, just in time to save Mina from his clutches.



▲ Working on his novel in the 1890s, Stoker came across a newspaper clipping about South American vampire bats – giving him the idea that Dracula could turn himself into a monstrous bat.

▼ Transylvania is home to the spooky Bran Castle, one of Vlad Dracul's haunts. Bram Stoker used it as the model for Dracula's castle.



### The Real Dracula

Prince Dracula was a real person – and just as bloodthirsty as his fictional namesake. On St Bartholomew's Day 1469, Vlad III of Wallachia, nicknamed Dracul or 'dragon', ordered 30,000 enemy prisoners to be impaled on sharp wooden stakes. The prince then set up a picnic table and enjoyed lunch surrounded by this forest of corpses.

# Real-Life Vampires?

The word 'vampire' has often been used to describe people who have committed horrific, bloody crimes. But how many were really blood-sucking monsters?

**D**uring the 1900s, Grigori Rasputin was a trusted advisor to the Russian Tsarina Alexandra. This was due to his seemingly magical ability to cure her son Alexei of a bleeding disorder called haemophilia. So Alexandra was under his spell – but why was he linked to the Undead?

The legend grew up around the story of Rasputin's death. In 1916, his body was found in the freezing Neva river. He had been shot three times, beaten and poisoned before being tied up in a rug. Even then, he almost crawled out onto the ice before finally drowning. No wonder people whispered he might still come back from the dead. But compared to Vlad Dracul (page 19) and Erzsebet Báthory (page 25), Rasputin hardly deserves the title 'vampire'.

▼ Grigori Rasputin (1869-1916):  
mystic healer, scheming genius –  
vampire even?



*'Rasputin's power came from his ability to hypnotize others. He was about six feet tall, with big grey, piercing eyes that seemed to look into your soul.'*

*from a description by a Russian courtier*

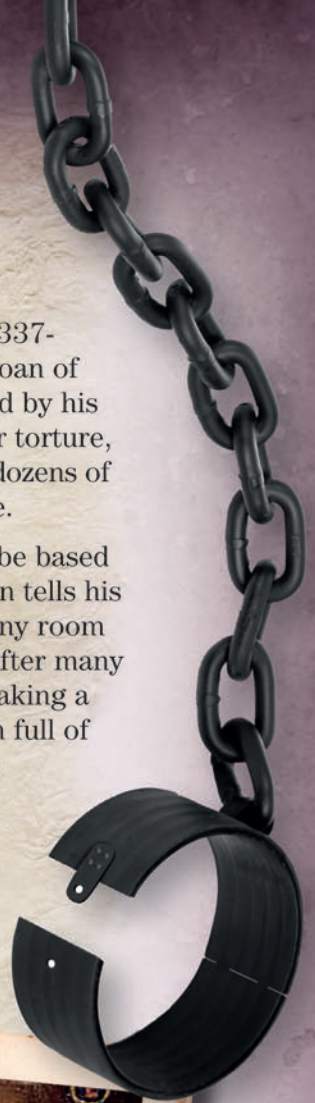


## Hero or Horror?

General Gilles de Rais was a French hero in the Hundred Years War against England (1337-1453). He fought alongside Joan of Arc and, like her, was accused by his enemies of witchcraft. Under torture, he confessed to murdering dozens of boys, and to being a vampire.

The tale of Bluebeard may be based on de Rais. A rich nobleman tells his new wife she can go into any room in the castle except one. After many weeks, she cannot resist taking a peek – and finds the room full of the bloody corpses of his previous wives!

◀ Gilles de Rais, alias Bluebeard, of France (1404–40)



## The Blood Countess

One of the cruellest women who ever lived, the Hungarian Countess Erzsebet Báthory (1560–1614) is said to have tortured and killed dozens, if not hundreds, of young women. In legend, she bathed in their blood to keep herself looking young and beautiful. Rumours spread that Báthory was a vampire who drank her victims' blood. Both stories are probably untrue. She was just a vicious person who was powerful enough to get away with murder.

▶ Erzsebet Báthory, alias the Blood Countess, of Hungary (1560–1614)

