

The Appeal of Vampire Fiction



Before *Twilight*, it seems that the majority of vampire fiction was geared towards males, both young and old. It was more a part of the horror genre, featuring gore and murder. However, now more books are being read by females, particularly younger females, and often feature romance and sometimes even comedy.

So what are some of the characteristics that makes vampires so appealing, to both males and females, young and old?

- ❖ Forbidden sexual attraction
- ❖ Immortality
- ❖ Power (both physical and mental)
- ❖ Lust for blood or physical desires
- ❖ Inexplicable beauty
- ❖ Marginality and being able to identify with marginalized groups
- ❖ Horror and thrill-seeking
- ❖ Absurdity
- ❖ The allure of the dark unknown
- ❖ The embodiment of evil
- ❖ The war between good and evil

What about young adults, specifically? Joseph DeMarco (1997), a young adult librarian who has studied the relationship between teens and vampires, states:

The average teenager, rife with confusion and ambiguity, filled with fear of the future, possessed by the need to find stability, a role, a purpose, sees the vampire and knows that everything is possible, every goal can be reached. The vampire is suave, sophisticated, certain of himself, rooted in history, poised to take the future with neither fear nor reluctance, self-possessed, sexual, powerful, sometimes cruel and sometimes kind, not possessed by doubts, not burdened with conscience, cool and resourceful, supremely intelligent and, best of all, immortal. This is everything the young adult is not and everything they aspire to be. The vampire suffers no identity crisis, save for the fleeting moment when the undead personality commingles with the human. Even this crisis of the developing self is resolved in a most magnificent way thus appealing to the teen who is constantly trying out new roles and discarding identities like yesterday's rock stars. (pg. 26).

Source: De Marco, J. (1997, May). Vampire literature: Something young adults can really sink their teeth into. *Emergency Librarian*, 24(5), 26.