

Bite-Sized History: A Crash Guide to Queer Vampires Throughout the Ages

By: Sophia Roome

Abstract: *This crash guide provides an overview of the representation of queer vampires in literature, covering works from Bram Stoker's "Dracula" to modern-day vampire romance novels. It explores the evolution of queer themes and characters in vampire literature, as well as the cultural and historical contexts that shaped their portrayal.*

Queer vampire literature is considered a sub-genre of horror and speculative fiction that uses the lens of vampire mythology to explore themes of sexuality, gender, identity, and power dynamics. Historically, queer vampire literature can be traced back to Gothic fiction in the 19th century, which often explored taboo and subversive themes of homoeroticism, sexuality, gender nonconformity, and the existence of the "other."

These themes can be traced in Bram Stoker's (1897) "Dracula", which is argued to have overt and covert queer themes. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's (1872) "Carmilla" portrays same-sex desires and relationships, as well as lesbian subtexts, becoming a precursor for later works. Later works that were influenced by these writings include Anne Rice's (1976-2018) "The Vampire Chronicles," which feature a diverse cast of characters who often engage in same-sex relationships, portrayed as natural expressions of desire rather than deviant in nature.

In recent years, the canon has been expanded, and authors are pushing the boundaries of queer vampire literature. These writers are introducing new settings, characters, and themes that challenge traditional notions of sexuality. One example is Octavia Butler's (2005) "Fledgling," which explores the intersection of race and queerness. The main character is forced to navigate how her race and non-normative sexual identity affect her relationships with others and society. Sarah Waters' (2006) novel "The Night Watch" highlights how gender, sexuality, and war can shape women's identities and experiences, and shows how queer women were affected during those times.

Themes that are prevalent in these works are adapted and changed over time. One common theme is fluidity and transformation. Queer vampire literature often blurs the lines between human and vampire, allowing the work to explore the transformative power of vampire bites. These vampire bites can be seen as a metaphor for sexual awakening or realizing one's gender identity. Some works that include these themes are "The Vampire Lestat" by Anne Rice (1985), where the protagonist constantly evolves and explores notions of sexuality with various relationships. There is also "The Gilda Stories" by Jewelle Gomez (1991) that describes the journey of a black lesbian vampire who adapts and changes to the culture's landscapes around her, representing her fluidity. Another work is the "Vampires in the Lemon Grove" by Karen Russell (2013) which is a collection of short stories where a female vampire falls in love with a woman and must change her physical appearance to fit within society to pursue her love interest.

Another common theme is power dynamics within literature. Often, vampires are seen as dominating powerful figures. Whitley Strieber's (1981) "The Hunger" is about a vampire who holds power over her lovers, determining when to turn them immortal, giving complex issues on power within a relationship. Kim Newman's (1992) novel "Anno Dracula" shows how vampires have risen to power and humans must navigate issues of class, gender, and sexuality. There is also the "Interview with the Vampire" by Anne Rice (1976) that features the Vampire Lestat, who holds power over his lover, creating complicated issues on love and loyalty. However, queer vampire literature is starting to subvert these tropes by depicting consensual but complex queer relationships.

Another great thing about queer vampire literature is that it does not stick to one genre; instead, it often blends with other genres like horror, romance, and sometimes erotica. This allows the queer vampire genre to create a unique hybrid of works that appeal to all readers. Overall, these are just a few examples of how queer vampire literature has evolved over time.

The genre explores a wide range of topics and is not limited to themes of identity, power, and desire.

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Queer Vampires on the Page: A Book List

By: Hailey Frenette

Abstract: *The new teen vampire resurgence features more diverse representation, including for the LGBTQ+ community. This list highlights popular and underrated novels and anthologies.*

This list of LGBTQ+ vampire fiction will make your teen vampire collection more diverse and inclusive. Sub-genres include mystery, romance, and fantasy/adventure. All of the novels and anthologies listed center queer narratives and characters.

Youngblood by Sasha Laurens (2022)

Youngblood is queer vampires with a dark academia setting. When a vampire at an elite vampire-only boarding school is found dead, roommates and sworn enemies Kat and Taylor must work together to uncover the web of dark secrets around the murder.



The Coldest Touch by Isabel Sterling (2021)

In *The Coldest Touch*, vampire Claire is tasked with protecting Elise, a Death Oracle who has the ability to sense how people will die when she touches them.



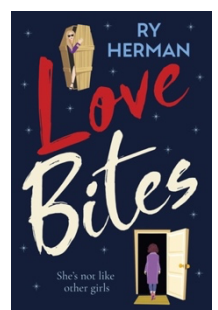
The Lost Girls by Sonia Hartl (2021)

In *The Lost Girls*, Holly was turned into a vampire in 1987 by her boyfriend. When their relationship ends and Holly learns she isn't his only victim, she teams up with his other vampire ex-girlfriends to plan revenge.



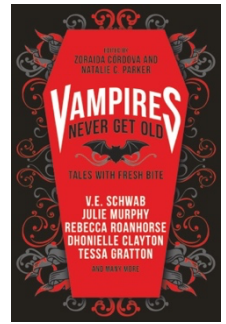
Love Bites by Ry Herman (2020)

Set in 1999, *Loves Bites* follows the love story of a gothic vampire and a human. This is an adult romantic comedy that may appeal to teens with more mature reading interests.



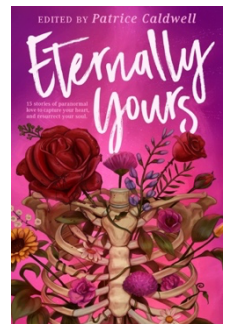
Vampires Never Get Old by Zoraida Cordova & Natalie C. Parker (2020)

In this YA anthology, queer, BIPOC, and disabled vampires chronicle their experiences of vampire life. Many of the short stories are written by popular YA authors, such as V.E. Schwab, Julie Murphy, Mark Oshiro, and more.



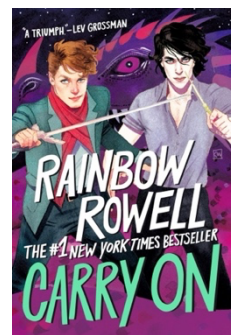
Eternally Yours by Patrice Caldwell (2022)

Eternally Yours is an anthology of diverse paranormal stories that includes some vampires. This anthology would be a perfect fit for a reader just discovering vampire fiction or looking to expand their interests to paranormal fiction more broadly.



Carry On (Simon Snow Trilogy #1) by Rainbow Rowell (2015)

In the first book of the *Simon Snow Trilogy*, teen mage Simon is determined to prove that his roommate at the Watford School of Magicks is a vampire and part of an evil plot that's endangered Simon and his friends for years.



The Witch and the Vampire by Francesca Flores (2023)

In this queer retelling of Rapunzel, a witch and a vampire travel through a cursed forest to find a group of vampires who might help them stop an evil plot. This vampire book features a central queer romance and a unique fantasy world, including a tree that eats people.



For more books like these:

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Blood & Love: A Collection of Queer Vampire Films for Young Adults

By: Sophia Roome

Abstract: *The "Blood & Love" film list is a collection of YA queer vampire films that explore themes of identity, power dynamics, and desire. These films offer a unique blend of horror, romance, and coming-of-age elements that provide representation and inclusivity for queer audiences.*

Kiss Me Deadly (1955) NR

***Parental Guidance: Violence, Gore, Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking, Sex, Nudity**

"Kiss Me Deadly" is a noted film noir known for its gritty and violent tones. Directed by Robert Aldrich, it is based on a novel by Mickey Spillane. The movie is praised for its subversive tropes, stylish direction, tense pacing, and memorable performances. Ralph Meeker plays the private investigator Mike Hammer, who picks up a hitchhiker named Christina on the highway. Later on, they are stopped by strangers who knock Hammer out and kill Christina. Hammer decided to investigate the murder but as he delves deeper into his search, Hammer becomes involved in a web of intrigue that includes corrupt officials, femme fatales, and dangerous criminals. This film has been recognized for its major influence on the genre and is a classic example of Cold War-era paranoia.



Let the Right One In (2008) R

***Parental Guidance: Sex, Nudity, Violence, Gore, Profanity**

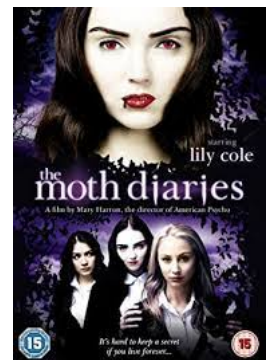
"Let the Right One In" is a Swedish horror-drama film directed by Tomas Alfredson. The story follows a 12-year-old boy who befriends a young girl, and their relationship evolves as he discovers that she is a vampire. The movie is highly praised for its atmospheric visuals, and it explores themes of love, loneliness, and the blurring of traditional gender roles.



The Moth Diaries (2011) R

***Parental Guidance: Sex, Nudity, Violence, Gore**

"The Moth Diaries" is a supernatural horror film directed by Mary Harron. The story centers around a young boarding schoolgirl named Rebecca, who befriends another girl named Lucy. As Rebecca's obsession with the idea that Lucy is a vampire grows, a series of disturbing events begin to unfold. The movie is praised for its moody atmosphere and exploration of themes such as jealousy, desire, and the dangers of obsession.



Only Lovers Left Alive (2013) R

***Parental Guidance: Sex, Nudity, Violence, Gore, Profanity, Drugs, Smoking**

"Only Lovers Left Alive" is a movie directed by Jim Jarmusch, which plays off the names of Adam and Eve. The story follows two centuries-old vampires named Adam and Eve, who have spent long periods of time apart. They are deeply in love but face the challenges of eternal life and the burden of immortality. Both are cultured, and smart, attempting to embrace music, literature and science, because of this they no longer kill for sustenance. Eventually, their peaceful existence is threatened by the arrival of Eve's sister, Ava, who is wild and uncontrollable. The film explores themes such as art, music, love, addiction, the complexities of immortality, and the nature of existence.



Byzantium (2012) R

***Parental Guidance: Language, Bloody Violence, Sexual Content**

"Byzantium" is a British-Irish fantasy horror film directed by Neil Jordan. The story follows two female vampires named Clara and Eleanor, who seek refuge in a small seaside town. They wreak havoc on the locals while confronting their past and fighting for survival from their estranged kindred group. The movie explores themes of sisterhood, motherhood, and the fluidity of gender and sexuality. It has been praised for its visual style, cinematography, and great performances by Saoirse Ronan and Gemma Arterton.



Carmilla (2019) NR

***Parental Guidance: Sex, Nudity, Violence, Gore**

"Carmilla" is a British romantic horror film directed by Emily Harris, and it is a modern retelling of the classic Gothic novella of the same name written by Sheridan Le Fanu. The movie follows the journey of a young woman named Lara, who lives with her parents and her strict governess, Miss Fontaine. Lara lives in isolation and is starting to experience her own sexuality but is struggling to find answers. It is until a young woman is brought into the house to recover from an accident that Lara starts to find answers. Lara becomes fascinated with her beautiful and mysterious new roommate, Carmilla. As their relationship becomes closer, Lara soon suspects that there is more to her roommate than meets the eye. Their journey leads to unsettling discoveries as they must confront the truth about Carmilla's vampiric nature and the secrets of their shared past while fighting against Miss Fontaine's controlling regime. The film has been praised for its LGBTQ+ representation and its exploration of themes such as love, desire, and the supernatural.



Vampires vs. The Bronx (2020) PG-13

***Parental Guidance: Violence, Language**

"Vampires vs. The Bronx" is a horror-comedy film directed by Osmany Rodriguez that follows a group of young friends living in the Bronx. They must band together to save their neighborhood from a group of blood-sucking vampires who are plotting to take over the suburb. They find out that the vampires are slowly buying up real-estate to take control of the Bronx and they decide they must put a stop to the vampires before they suck all the life out of the community. One of the main characters is a queer teen named Luis, who has a crush on one of his male friends. The film explores themes of gentrification, friendship, community, standing up against oppression, and also provides humorous takes on the classic vampire genre.



What We do in the Shadows (2014) R

***Parental Guidance: Violence, Gore**

"What We do in the Shadows" is a mockumentary horror-comedy film that follows a group of vampire flat-mates living in modern Wellington, New Zealand. The film explores the daily lives of Viago (Taika Waititi), Deacon (Jonathan Brugh), and Vladislav (Jemaine Clement) as they attempt to overcome obstacles such as being immortal vampires with a lust for blood living in the modern world. They struggle to maintain their wardrobes, pay their bills, complete modern-day chores, and cope with the nightlife in Wellington. However, their biggest challenge is getting along with each other. The film is widely praised for featuring a young bisexual vampire who has romantic relationships with both male and female vampires.



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“Carry on, Simon.”: A Review of Rainbow Rowell’s *Carry On*
By: Robyn Smith

Abstract: *The Harry Potter series has had a major role in countless childhoods since the release of the first book in 1997 but, with the fandom space no longer considered safe, many fans are struggling to find a way to address the conflicting feelings of nostalgia with the problematic material. Rainbow Rowell’s *Carry On* offers a healthy substitution, allowing readers the chance to visit worlds that feel familiar enough to fuel their Potter-fix, while also offering a fresh new perspective on a magical landscape that actually addresses themes of classism and self-discovery.*

Carry On by Rainbow Rowell
2015, St. Martin’s Press
522 pages, hardcover
Grades 10+
ISBN: 978-1-250-1-35025



Simon Snow has never been really good at being the chosen one. It’s his final year at Watford School of Magicks, he’s supposed to defeat this great and powerful evil, and half of the time he can’t get his wand to function properly. His roommate and biggest rival, Baz, likes to remind him of this and Simon expects this year at Watford to be more of the same old thing. But then Baz doesn’t show up to school and it only gets weirder from there. At least he has his best friend, Penelope, to help him figure things out and his mentor, the Mage, if they could only piece together why he’s been ignoring them.

Carry On originated as a story-within-a-story in one of Rowell's other books before inspiration struck and the series developed into its own (Romano, 2015). Originally intended as an homage to one of the most beloved series of all time, Carry On now offers young readers who may not want to support J.K. Rowling, due to the harm she has caused the trans community, but who want to explore a magical world similar to the one that enchanted them in their younger years (Bellemare, Kolbegger, & Vermes, 2021; Romano, 2023). Emphasis on similar. While the world of Simon Snow mirrors that of Harry Potter in a number of ways, Rowell shines a light on the often-overlooked challenges that come with being given an incredible amount of power and responsibility at a young age and how these tropes impact the characters. A combination of a ghost story, a coming-of-age story, a love story, and a mystery, Carry On will have readers excited to watch the love story between a clumsy wizard and mysterious vampire unfold and finish the rest of the series.

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Breaking Boundaries: The Representation of Queer Teens in “The Lost Boys” (1987)

By: Sophia Roome

Abstract: *This review explores the representation of queer identity in the 1987 horror film "The Lost Boys" directed by Joel Schumacher, by examining the portrayal of queer vampires and their relationships with the main characters.*

Annotation:



When someone thinks of "The Lost Boys," they might initially think of Peter Pan and fairy tales. However, Joel Schumacher's 1987 film has very little to do with fairies and pirates, and much more to do with queer vampires. The film has become considered a cult classic in the horror genre since its release. The story follows a mother and her two sons, Michael and Sam, as they move to a small coastal town in California. As they attempt to fit in with their new surroundings, they soon discover that their quaint little town is infested with vampires.

Michael becomes the target of a group of all-male vampires and is drawn to their leader, David (played by Keifer Sutherland). David uses his androgynous, charismatic, and mysterious aura to seduce his victims and Michael is his most recent prey. Michael's younger brother, Sam, resists the vampires and teams up with a group of young vampire hunters friends to try and rid

the town and his family of the vampire threat. As Michael becomes more entangled with the vampire gang, he slowly realizes that he must make a choice between embracing his new life as a vampire and joining the group or fighting against them to try and save his soul.

This movie is well-known for taking a unique perspective on vampire mythology and exploring themes of teenage rebellion and queer identity. It challenges traditional gender and sexuality norms and showcases the complexities of identity formation in adolescence. Overall, "The Lost Boys" is a must-see for anyone interested in horror, queer identity, and the intersections of both.

Review:

This film explores teenage rebellion and queer identity through the journey of Michael, who becomes drawn to David and seduced by him from their first encounter. The interactions between the two characters have strong homoerotic undertones, with one scene where David takes Michael flying while holding him tightly can be interpreted as a metaphor for sexual attraction and the thrill of forbidden desires. Michael and Sam are also very close with each other's, and some have argued that their relationship has homo-affectionate undertones.

The vampire gang in the film also helps to explore queer identities. Made up of attractive young men who ride motorcycles, dress in leather, and have punk rock hairstyles, they exude an aura of sexual danger or transgression. The group is portrayed as rebels who reject societal norms and rules, attempting to live by their own code of conduct. This can be interpreted as the group being marginalized from mainstream society, which often has ties to marginalized groups of queer people. Vampires have routinely been considered "the outsiders", and this gang is feared and mistreated by members of the town, showing the oppression of marginalized queer

groups. They eventually try to seduce Michael, a young boy named Laddie, and a young lady named Star to convert and join them in their vampire escapades.

These aspects of queer identity can become intertwined with teenage rebellions as the gang members reject authority and embrace a dangerous lifestyle. Michael's obsession with David and his gang can be interpreted as his own desire to rebel against the cultural norms of his upbringing and society. His transformation into a vampire can even be seen as a coming-of-age ritual. Michael even fights against societal norms by fighting with his brother Sam, who is attempting to enforce the status quo.

The film's portrayal of queer identity is not explicitly stated or shown, meaning these interpretations are left open for the viewer. However, the producers of the movie may have missed an opportunity to be more progressive by making these queer identities more overt. Another issue is that the main character, who is a straight male, is the one carrying these queer depictions. This can be associated with tokenism, where the film uses queer identity as a plot device rather than being fully developed and thought out.

Associating queer people with a vampire gang is problematic as it gives the interpretation that "queerness" is problematic, dangerous, and subversive, as gangs are typically not held in a positive light. Overall, while "The Lost Boys" is not explicitly queer within its narrative or characters, it has several elements that make it important for both the teenage rebellion genre and the queer vampire genre. The exploration of queer desire and the portrayal of the vampires as outsiders have influenced a variety of articles, fictions, and how queerness is represented within popular culture. The portrayal of teenage rebellion mixed with queer identity has also helped society challenge the traditional notions of heteronormativity and masculinity, making it important for those exploring the representation of gender and sexuality.

This film is rated R due to its gore, violence, references to sex, and use of alcohol and drugs, but would be suitable for older teenagers. Therefore, "The Lost Boys" is a must-see for anyone interested in exploring the intersectionality of horror, queer identity, vampires, and teenage rebellion.

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K-Drama Review: Kissable Lips

By Lillian MacIsaac

Abstract: A review of a new Korean BL (Boys Love) about a romance between a college student and a 500-year-old vampire.



Drama: Kissable Lips

- **Country:** South Korea
- **Episodes:** 8
- **Aired:** Feb 3, 2022 - Feb 25, 2022
- **Duration:** 11 min.
- **Content Rating:** 13+ - Teens 13 or older

“A sweet and bloody campus romance between Jun Ho, a vampire who is walking the path of extinction, and Min Hyun, a human with pure blood” (MyDramaList)

Review:

Jun Ho is a vampire who is 500 years old (played by Kim Ji Woong) who after breaking a critical law of being a vampire is dying with the only chance to live is to drink the blood of a pure-blooded human and become a human himself. He has almost given up hope until he meets the human he is looking for in Min Hyun (played by Yoon Seo Bin) a shy young man who may just steal Jun Ho’s heart before the vampire can steal his blood. This is the main set up to this Korean miniseries.

The entire runtime of the complete season is about 90 minutes and the first thing a viewer will notice when starting the show is that it goes by quickly! In the first episode they need to set up the world and its rules, are lead character, and the main conflict in less than 15 minutes. Many details of the show appear in a blink, and you miss it way, and this happens for most of the series. The show should have been longer even having 22 minutes an episode would have helped with the pacing and given the story time to breath and for us to learn about the characters and who they are. But it all goes by very fast.

It has a plot to draw you in, but what makes the viewers want to stay will be the main characters and their romance, while like the rest of the show it gets hurt form being very rushed the main actor's chemistry can be felt through the screen and every scene, they share had electricity running through.

Jun Ho has a mysterious draw to him, and Kim Ji Woong shows the layers of a 500-year-old vampire and how even living a long life does not mean he doesn't have a fear of dying or falling in love. While Min Hyun is just sweet and warm and while is character does not have as much depth as the vampire of the duo, he is so welcoming that it doesn't matter to the viewer. These two are the heart of the show and make it worth a watch.

It is only 8 episodes and also available as a "movie" all parts put tighter as one with no breaks. It can be watched in one sitting if someone just wants a little queer vampire story for an afternoon. I do think the rush that is out on the story ends up harming it and for some could ruin the full enjoyment, but still worth a watch and a try. Plus, if anything, if you come out loving the leads, like I did, they also star in another romance together called *Roommates of Poongduck 304* which is also a quick fun watch.

Currently all episodes are available for free of *Viki*.

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[kissable-lips](#).

Vampire Playlist

By: Lillian MacIsaac

Abstract: *A playlist of songs from all over the world to make you feel like you are a part of a vampire story.*

- Nosferatu – Blue Oyster Cult
- Futatsuno kodoto akaitsumi – On/Off
- Vampires Will Never Hurt You – My Chemical Romance
- On and on – VIXX
- Vampire’s Love – VAMPS
- Vampire Blue’s - Niel Young
- Cry Little Sister - Gerard McMahan
- Total Eclipse of the Heart – Bonnie Tyler
- Paint it Black - Ciara
- Kuchiduke – Buck-Tick
- Supermassive Black Hole – Muse

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A Guide to Writing Vampire Fiction

By Hailey Frenette

Abstract: *This creative writing guide provides a list of questions and things to consider when crafting your own vampire story, using examples from popular vampire books, TV, and movies.*

Choosing a Genre

The first step of the creative writing process is usually to decide on genre. This step may come organically if the idea or inspiration that sparked the writing process is genre specific. Some ideas are obviously suited to be romantic comedies, while others are destined to be epic fantasy from the start; however, if your idea is to write a vampire story, then the genre options are broad.

Most popular teen vampire franchises, like *Twilight* and *The Vampire Diaries*, fall into the paranormal romance genre, but this hasn't always been the most common type of vampire story. For a more classic Dracula-esque vampire, consider leaning into gothic horror elements. Look at the genres of your favourite vampire stories for inspiration or be bold and create something completely unique. Vampires are a character type that can be slotted into most genres of fiction, so be creative. Maybe your story is a mystery starring a vampiric Sherlock Holmes or a space opera sci-fi with alien vampires.

Designing Your Vampire

Once you've decided what type of story to tell, the next step is to design your vampire, including physical characteristics and vampire abilities. There are several common tropes and themes that link vampire stories together, but every author has their own version of these tropes. Use the list of questions below as a guide for creating your vampire character.

- What is your vampire's stance on garlic, mirrors, sunlight, and crossing the threshold?

These are examples of classic vampire weaknesses, and you get to decide how and if they apply to your vampire characters. A trope as simple as an aversion to sunlight has appeared in fiction with many variations. Your vampire may burn up in the sunlight and thus be completely nocturnal, or they may sparkle in the sun like the vampires from *Twilight*. Perhaps your vampire is immune to the effects of the sun due to a daylight ring (*The Vampire Diaries*) or a magical mark on their forehead (*The Mortal Instruments*).

- How are your vampires created?

Every vampire has to come from somewhere, and figuring out how this happens will allow you to consider whether or not to sire any new vampires in your story. There are many variations of the vampire creation myth. In *The Vampire Diaries*, new vampires are created when a human dies with vampire blood in their veins. In *Cirque du Freak*, new vampires are made when a human and a vampire exchange blood through holes pricked in their fingers. In *The Mortal Instruments*, new vampires must be buried and crawl out of their own graves to achieve immortal life. However, not all vampires are made from humans. In *Vampire Academy*, vampires are born from vampire parents. Look at how new vampires are created in your favourite books for inspiration.

You may also want to consider including half-vampires or other vampire species. The vampires in *Vampire Academy* are divided into three distinct types each with their own unique creation myth and place in the vampiric social hierarchy. Similarly, in *Cirque du Freak*, the protagonist is first transformed into a half-vampire before later becoming a full vampire. If you

choose to include these elements in your story, think about how their creation might be different from a regular vampire.

- What does your vampire drink?

Obviously, vampires drink blood, but it's important to consider where that blood comes from. Some vampires kill humans to drink their blood, while others drink straight from the vein without killing their victims. They may hunt their victims, or have access to human volunteers, like in *Vampire Academy*. Other vampires may not drink directly from humans at all. Perhaps your vampire drinks from hospital blood bags (*The Vampire Diaries*), hunts deer in the woods (*Twilight*), or drinks from rats (*Carry On*). You can also consider whether your vampire ever eats human food.

- Does your vampire have any special abilities?

Vampires typically have special skills or abilities that make them more powerful than regular humans. Traditional examples include super strength and speed, immortality, hypnosis or compulsion, and occasionally, flying; however, some vampire stories branch out beyond the classic abilities. The vampires of *Vampire Academy* have access to elemental magic, while some vampires in *Cirque du Freak* have a psychic connection to spiders. Meanwhile, the vampires of *Twilight* are just really good at baseball. Consider equipping your vampire with a mix of the classic and the unique when choosing their abilities.

- What does your vampire look like?

Vampire aesthetics have changed significantly over time, and it's important to decide where your vampire falls on the vampire style scale. Even a hairstyle can say a lot about your vampire. They may be bald with pointy ears like the classic Nosferatu, sport a sharp widow's peak like Dracula, or have a more swoopy style like Edward Cullen. Other aspects of their appearance might reference their vampiric abilities or lifestyle choices. One example of this is their eyes. In *Twilight*, vampires have golden eyes when they've recently fed on animal blood, but red eyes after drinking human blood. Meanwhile, the vampires of *The Vampire Diaries* have eyes that appear normal but become surrounded by black veins when their vampire instincts are activated. Consider how you can make your vampire's appearance unique, and what this would reveal about them.

Other Paranormal Creatures

Once you've determined the lore of your vampires, it might be time to begin expanding the universe of your story. This might involve adding other paranormal creatures. Werewolves, witches, and fairies are popular choices, but you could also incorporate more unique species, like *True Blood's* shapeshifters and were-panthers.

Ask yourself how adding different paranormal creatures into the world might impact your story. This may depend on their relationship to the vampires. Are they allies or enemies? Werewolves appear as the enemies to vampires in many popular vampire franchises, including *Twilight* and *The Vampire Diaries*. In *The Vampire Diaries*, a werewolf bite can even kill a vampire, so it may be prudent to explore how the addition of other paranormal creatures may threaten your vampires.

Consider the History

A perk of immortality is that the vampires in your story can hail from any time or place in history. This may be an important part of your character's background. Aspects of their personality may be influenced by the culture of when they were first turned into a vampire. Your vampire might be a Viking who's been around for a thousand years, a former pirate, a Regency-era gentleman, or a 1970s punk rocker. Alternatively, your vampire might be a newly turned human with no connection to the past. When planning your vampire story, explore how you can incorporate different eras from history to give your vampire a unique perspective and personality. You might want to research some historical periods or take inspiration from your favourite vampires.

Do Your Research

This guide is intended to be a starting point for brainstorming a vampire story, but don't be afraid to branch out beyond this. The best way to research vampire tropes and prepare to write a vampire story is to read and watch vampire content. If you're looking for inspiration, start by reading or watching some of the resources referenced in this guide!

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Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Staying Fit & Slaying Safe

By: Robyn Smith

Abstract: *A program plan that uses basic kickboxing and self-defense techniques seen in Buffy the Vampire Slayer to inspire teens to get active.*

When it comes to staying active, the public library would not be the first location that comes to mind when teens are researching programs and yet they persist, offering options such as community yoga, dancing, and guided meditation (BiblioCommons, 2023). Some libraries, such as the San Francisco Public Library, even host self-defense workshops for those who are less interested in improving their abs as they are in learning how to defend themselves in dangerous situations (San Francisco Public Library, 2022). With more and more opportunities to become active at public libraries presenting themselves, why not add an element of fun to the mix by taking inspiration from one of the most popular vampire mediums of all time; Buffy the Vampire Slayer?

In honor of the 20th anniversary of Buffy the Vampire Slayer's premiere People Magazine partnered with fitness professional Erin Bailey to create a work-out routine to be completed while watching the show (Olya, 2017). Several common character traits and tropes were identified and matched with an exercise with the purpose being that the viewer would take cues from the program (Olya, 2017). The exercises chosen for the article were simple, easy to learn, and came along with GIFS of Bailey demonstrating how to perform them properly (Olya, 2017). These exercises also have the benefit of not requiring massive amounts of space in order to complete them. In the same space where one could perform yoga poses, they could just as easily perform the stretches outlined in People's anniversary routine but why limit it there? Partnering with local gyms offering self-defense and beginner kickboxing courses could allow these skills to become more widely available to people who are interested in getting involved but

may otherwise be unable to attend. Furthermore, for those looking to get a richer experience from the exercises, the anniversary routine would make a great warm-up before getting into some more standard kickboxing lessons and techniques (Yip, 2022).

Whether learning to fight back against vampires, or other people, there are many potential benefits to offering self-defense classes or partnering with local gyms to host kickboxing events such as improving physical help, boosting confidence, furthering a sense of community, and helping patrons, whether they be youth or adults, feel a little bit safer.

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Carmilla: From Lesbian Vampire to Lesbian and a Vampire

By: Lillian MacIsaac

Abstract: *Carmilla is a classic piece of vampire literature and one of the first piece of queer vampire media. Over the years and adaptations, the character in with the story gets its name has gone through a change, from being a lesbian vampire to a character who is both a lesbian and a vampire.*

“You are mine; you shall be mine; you and I are one forever.”

Before we had *Twilight*, *Vampire Academy*, *Buffy* or even *Dracula* we had one vampire story that stood above the rest. We had *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu who, like his future *Dracula* writing author, was an Irish author born 1814. His gothic tale first came to public viewing in 1871 and while only 108 pages long would find its way into the heart of vampiric lore for hundreds of years to come. It is what many consider the first queer vampire story.

Carmilla is the story of Laura a young woman who lives an isolated life far from anyone in her castle like home, until one day meeting a mysterious woman by the name of Carmilla. Carmilla dark presence lures in the lonely Laura, but does she want to hurt Laura, control Laura, love Laura or a combination of the three? Like many vampire stories the connection between the leads is soaked in darkness, seduction, and blood, and this is why this story is still so popular in the modern day. But it is a story that has changed over time, and the views on sapphic relationships change too.

The original understanding of the story links the idea of being sapphic and being a vampire together completely. Many read it as being a vampire= evil so also being sapphic= evil, but with new adaptations of re-imagining of the story that no longer the case. While some versions still show Carmilla as evil and always a vampire and sapphic, no longer is it so connected. She is a vampire who happens to be sapphic. The best case of this is with the Canadian web series of the same name that ran from 2014-2016.

This series that can be found on full on YouTube ran for three seasons and takes the story of Carmilla and put it in a modern collage setting. The creators of the show found a way to take both leads and grow them into more than just predator and prey which they fell into in the original story and many of the early adaptations. Laura has more agency in the story than the original where even though she is the narrator the actions happen around and too her, but very rarely does she have any direct cause. While Carmilla gets to have more of a tragedy to herself and the show also lets her show a caring side that in the novel is only ever shown to be a falsity she is using to trick Laura.

But the biggest change made in the web series is that there is no doubt that there is true romantic love between Carmilla and Laura. The novel can be left up to the reader if Carmilla really loved Laura at all or truly only saw her as her next victim, but the series wanted to show a real relationship between the two and it grows the story even more. The two of them are given a chance to grow and be more together and a part in this series. With changing politics and gender roles, the story has room to change and grow while keeping the allure that the original had and still has today.

The *Carmilla* web series was a chance to give these classic characters be more than a trope and become full characters that can be relatable eve over 100 years since the original publication, and yes while Carmilla can be seen as the start of lesbian vampire trope does not change my point. It, like vampires, gives them a chance at a second life. Web *Carmilla* is not the last adaption of the story at 2019 British film version just being example of one that came after the end of the shows run and even the series itself has had a book and movie come out as well. The story is addictive and draws people in so more new adaptations and re imaginings will be made. Not all versions of *Carmilla* will be perfect or even good, but they all help her take steps

farther and farther away from just being a trope. Once just a lesbian vampire now she is a lesbian and a vampire.

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Southern Confederate Vampires and the Importance of Intentional Anti-Racism

By: Hailey Frenette

Abstract: *Popular teen vampire media is often associated with racist events in history. This article explains the connection between two vampire franchises and the Confederacy, and how to navigate the ongoing thread of racism in vampire media.*

Teen vampires rose to the height of their popularity in the 2000s and early 2010s, when vampires took over the screen and the page with franchises like *Twilight* and *The Vampire Diaries*. Now that new vampire media for teens is seeing a resurgence, there is an opportunity to learn from the franchises of the past and make a conscious effort to not repeat the racist history of many beloved teen vampire characters.

This racist history stems from a connection to slavery in the United States. Both *Twilight* and *The Vampire Diaries* prominently feature central characters with ties to the Confederate Army of the American Civil War. In the *Twilight* saga, Jasper Hale, the adopted brother of love interest Edward Cullen, proudly boasts that he was the youngest major in the Confederate Army (Slade, 2010). Similarly, in *The Vampire Diaries*, vampire love interest Damon Salvatore is seen fighting for the Confederates in several flashback episodes of the series (Plec, 2009-2017). Both of these teen vampire franchises made a deliberate choice not only to give these characters a background in the American Civil War, but also to align them with the side that fought in favour of continuing slavery. This decision is all the more interesting considering that in *The Vampire Diaries* novels, which acted as the source material for the television series, Damon Salvatore did not fight in the American Civil War and had no ties to the Southern United States at all (Smith, 1991).

In the early 2010s, Confederate vampires were trendy; however, current vampire media is seeing a long overdue shift towards increased diversity, especially on television. In the past year

alone, Black protagonists have starred in Netflix's *First Kill*, Peacock's *Vampire Academy*, and AMC's *Interview with the Vampire*. Although this is a significant change, it is still not enough to make up for the problems of the past, especially considering two of these three television series were cancelled after their first season. This is not to suggest a lack of interest from viewers, but instead a lack of effective marketing or care from the industry executives responsible for these series. For example, *First Kill*, which featured a Black lesbian protagonist, was cancelled despite earning over 100 million viewing hours in its first month and reaching number 3 in Netflix's Top 10 list (First Kill, 2023). Comparatively, *The Vampire Diaries* aired for 8 seasons and spawned two spinoff series that aired for 5 and 4 seasons respectively, all of which featured white protagonists.

Similar concerns of racist themes in vampire media have been noted in recent YA novels as well, including those that have been marketed as diverse for their LGBTQ+ representation. A 2022 YA vampire release with an almost entirely queer cast, *Youngblood* by Sasha Laurens, has been heavily critiqued by reviewers on Goodreads and personal review blogs for racist remarks, unnecessary references to slavery, and the romanticization of colonialism (Goodreads). One vampire character in *Youngblood* even describes his father's involvement in the British East India Company, stating that "it's not as messed up as it sounds" (Laurens, 2022).

It could be argued that perhaps racism is simply a difficult subject to avoid in vampire content, and that because the characters are so old, they're inherently tied to unsavory historical events. However, this perspective is irresponsible given the injustices and violence being faced by the Black community in North America. Librarians, teachers, and others who work directly with youth have the ability to fight against these injustices by promoting diversity and inclusion, including in the books that teens are encouraged to read (Tang et al., 2021).

There is a common perception that anti-racism in YA is limited to so-called “issue books”. These are typically contemporary, coming of age books that discuss real-world problems faced by teens, such as in *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas. These books are valuable tools for encouraging teens to grapple with and explore social issues, but this social exploration is not limited to just realistic fiction. Anti-racism can begin with the media that people consume, even if that media is paranormal fantasy about vampires. What one watches and reads can shape their perception of the world around them, especially for a teenager still developing their opinions and perspectives. As teens continue to be drawn to vampires, there is both an opportunity and a responsibility to ensure their access to diverse vampire characters, or at least to encourage them to think critically about the history being referenced in their favourite movies, television series, and books.

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Looking Like the Other: The Evolution of Vampire Fashion

By: Robyn Smith

Abstract: *From Victorian gothic inspired outfits to the leather, chains, and ripped jeans of the punk movement, this article highlights the transformation of popular vampire fashion over the years.*



(<https://townsquare.media/site/442/files/2014/01/Interview-with-the-Vampire.jpg?w=980&q=75>)

Whenever we think about vampires, we tend to picture the same archetype of a person in formal wear straight out of the Victorian Era with pale skin and black clothing but that is not always the case (Magic Wardrobes, 2013). Vampires are flexible creatures, through and through, thanks largely in part to a long list of legends and mythology which has allowed writers over the years to morph the monsters to fit their individual narratives (Asbjørn, 2001, 97, 102). As such, it makes perfect sense that the fashion worn by these characters changes to match their stories. Lestat & Louis from Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire*, for example, spend the majority of the film dressed in fine period-typical clothing in order to signal both, Louis' wealth as well as allow the vampires to blend in amongst human society in order to hunt for victims. Towards the end of the film, however, when the narrative catches up with the characters in real-time, both have moved away from the more traditional vampire wear to something a little more modern. No longer as concerned with portraying wealth, a larger importance is placed on being able to camouflage humanity. Though seemingly inconsequential, appearances matter greatly to vampires when taking into account the core of their power stems from being able to seduce their

victims. Ethereal beauty combined with clothing that demonstrated a level of wealth allowed classic vampires like Lestat to draw their victims to them, but also inspired and influenced numerous fashion trends in the years that followed (Komar, 2017).



(https://i.etsystatic.com/30920866/r/il/b047f7/4284364296/il_fullxfull.4284364296_rrk7.jpg)

Gothic fashion emerged as the result of combining the romanticism of the Victorian era with the rebelliousness of modern society and is often thought of as being “vampire fashion”. Influenced heavily by the mourning wear of the 1800s, it is easy to understand where the connection between goth clothing and vampires came from (Attitude Clothing, 2021). Though black dominates most wardrobes, gothic fashion is actually about darker shades than focusing entirely on one color and the “flashier” pieces to attire came later with the emergence of the punk movement in the 1970s & 1980s (Asbjørn, 2001, 105; Magic Wardrobes, 2013). Influenced heavily by underground musicians such as David Bowie, Iggy Pop, and Peter Murphy, punk emerged as a sister-style to the gothic and quickly became popular amongst disenchanting youth looking for a way to push back against authority (Attitude Clothing, 2021). Punk, much like the vampire itself, was seductive and easily able to draw in admirers who wanted to replicate the style on their own, much to the dismay of the conservative mainstream. Outsiders to the punk movement quickly took the stance that this loud and aggressive style with its leather, chains, and

spikes were corrupting society's youth and attempted to combat punk's growing popularity. History, as they say, is destined to repeat itself as decades earlier the predecessor to gothic & punk fashion also found itself the target of cries for censorship.

Hypnosis is frequently cited in vampire fiction as being one of the creature's many powers. Whether this is to try and unburden the fictional victim of guilt for succumbing to the monster's seduction or simply because the idea of not being in control of even yourself is terrifying beyond measure depends entirely upon the story being analyzed but, either way, hypnosis is ascribed as being connected to the eyes. There is a strange connection between lust and eyes, as a source of beauty, to the point where language describing the mere act of looking becomes sensual. When discussing the evolution of vampire fashion, it is impossible not to mention the importance of the eyes and the use of make-up such as eyeliner to highlight the feature. Historically these practices can be traced back to Theda Bara, a sex symbol from the silent film era, who used make-up to give her eyes a more almond shape (Attitude Clothing, 2021; Komar, 2017). Studios working with Bara helped her construct and embrace a vampire-like persona in which she claimed to be fascinated with the occult, to help boost her popularity and, as such, her beauty practices quickly caught on with her fans (Attitude Clothing, 2021; Komar, 2017). Only a couple of decades away from the Victorian era itself, Bara was a major influence in the flapper girl style that came in with the 1920s (Attitude Clothing, 2021; Komar, 2017). Unsurprisingly, the wider public was not pleased to see young woman applying make-up so "heavily" and women who engaged in the style were characterized as being sexually charged and carrying loose morals with the men who so easily became enchanted with them depicted as being helpless to their powers (Komar, 2017). Once again, a desire to shift against the mold was demonized and became associated with the concept of wicked sexuality.

So, what is vampire fashion? There is a tendency to assume that it is nothing more than black clothes and dark make-up but that is not the case. Though heavily inspired and influenced by historical styles such as goth, punk, and flappers, the style of the vampire is unnaturally beautiful; it is seductive, sparking concerns for the morality of those who engage with it by uninformed outsiders, but, above all else, it is fluid and changes with the times and the narratives.



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Misogyny, Homophobia, & Sexuality in Vampire Fiction
By: Robyn Smith

Abstract: *While the use of the vampire, as a metaphor, for the other has created a strong reaction from LGBT+ youth and many young women, issues of homophobia and misogyny still remain prevalent both in the stories themselves and in the response to these stories.*



(https://i.etsystatic.com/5397544/r/il/15b3be/1392474034/il_1080xN.1392474034_7s3p.jpg)

Going online in the early 2010s, you were likely to stumble across plenty of memes created in response to the Twilight series. The popularity of the teen-romance series, coupled with the questionable content of the series, made it an easy target for internet comedians. It wasn't long, however, before the jokes started to take on a more nefarious subtext. Suddenly the jokes weren't about the series being a Mormon fantasy or how boring the main characters were; they were about how "rabid" and "hysterical" the fans were and how the male characters,

particularly Edward, were “gay” (Bode, 2010, 708-710; Kellner, 2011, 67). Though unfortunate, this pattern of behavior is not uncommon.

Vampires have been used as a tool to explore themes of gender and sexuality as far back as *Dracula* where the dichotomy between characters Mina and Lucy is on full display (Kellner, 2011, 63). Mina, fitting with the societal expectations of women at the time, survives the novel and avoids falling to the titular vampire’s seduction while Lucy, who had demonstrated agency in her own sexuality, is corrupted and becomes monstrous (Ames, 2010, 42-44). Critics theorize that horror is often reflective of a society’s greater concerns at the time. A monster from the old world stepping into one characterized by science and development, preying on women and influencing them to engage in sex and violence certainly mirrors the concerns many would have felt living in the Victorian era (Ames, 2010, 43-44). When examining other pieces of vampire media, the pattern continues. Examining vampire films released during the 1980s, for example, it’s hard to miss the greater allegory at play. An unknowing, relatively innocent person crosses paths with an enchanting stranger for a night full of excitement, only to find themselves infected with a mysterious sickness associated with blood (Lavigne, 2004, 2-3 & 6; Tringali, 2016, 1). Often the stranger will try to get them to embrace the lifestyle, may even try to forge a deeper connection between them, only for the protagonist to push back, culminating in the eventual destruction of the stranger. In this case, while the fear of the unknown remains, that unknown has changed, morphed by confusion and misinformation spread during the early days of the AIDS crisis (Kellner, 2011, 56; Lavigne, 2004, 3 & 6).

Whether it is the hypnotic charm of the vampire, or the ease at which women and members of the LGBT+ community can identify with the concept of The Other, vampire fiction became a popular medium for writers exploring these concepts of identity. As the idea of the

vampire shifted to reflect the times, a new form of vampirism emerged; the teen vampire. Originating from the films released towards the end of the 1980s, teen vampires are perceived as being young, beautiful, rebellious, but, strangely, genuine in their desires. Even though teen vampires are just as powerful as their predecessors, they're capable of redemption and many go on to achieve it by the time their story ends. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s two main vampire characters, Angel and Spike, are stand-out examples of teen vampires. Despite each having a list of victims a mile long, they change and grow because of the love they feel towards the series' titular character and are viewed more sympathetically by both the audience and other characters in-universe because of this (Kellner, 2011, 59). So, what's the difference? Why were teen vampires like Spike & Angel viewed so differently from the vampires in the *Twilight* franchise? The answer may lie, perhaps, in the audience.

Whereas *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, despite having a female protagonist, has a general target audience, *Twilight* was written with a predominately female adolescent audience in mind (Bode, 2010, 707; Kellner, 2011, 55). It's a love story first and a paranormal adventure second (Kellner, 2011, 66). *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, on the other hand, is the opposite with action scenes and mystery dominating most of the run-time. That being said, it is far too easy to blame the negative reaction to *Twilight* on it being a romance novel. Questionable choices in the overall narrative, the rise of social media, lingering fears of female sexuality, and homophobia all contributed to the backlash generated by the *Twilight* craze (Bode, 2010, 712). With that in mind, the theory of horror representing society's greatest fears is reinforced but it is not the vampire that had people worrying when they logged onto the internet in the 2010s; it was sexuality.

References

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