

# ACRIMONY

September 2004  
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*The bloody history of the Catholic Church*



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**Vampires: A new look at an old subject**  
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Reporting on the Alternative, Gothic, and Paranormal Scenes  
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# Acrimony

September 2004 - Volume 2 - Issue 13

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# To the Editor...

I checked out Acrimony....It is a good site....I really like Blood and Water...It really made me laugh, even though I wasn't in a laughing mood....Thank You for Cheering me Up.....Keep up The GREAT work.

Midnite Maiden

I think your article last month about Ellen Claire Lawrence was touching. It's nice to know people out there do things like that. All too often we are reminded of humanity's dark side. It is refreshing to see it's light side reported upon.

Jan

**Send your email and comments to [editor@acrimony.org](mailto:editor@acrimony.org)**

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Bleeding dreams commoner's fears

Feeding the desolate womb of our shame  
Wasted in puddles of come  
Hearing these vaporous whispers of prophets  
Beating our purple ears numb

No more adorable packets of fun  
Fuzzy wet furry delights  
No more puppies for anyone  
As prettiness snuffs in the dust

by **Andy T Coombs**  
grohantizar@yahoo.com

# Vampires

*A new look at an old subject*



by **Dan Shaurette**  
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"Few creatures of the night have captured our imagination like vampires. What explains our enduring fascination with vampires? What is it about the vampire myth that explains our interest? Is it the overtones of sexual lust, power, and control? Or is it a fascination with the immortality of the undead? And what dark and hidden parts of our psyche are aroused and captivated By the legends of the Undead."

Raymond T. McNally, sound bites from the song "Vampires" by Godsmack

Your heart begins to race as the last rays of the sun set beyond the horizon. You have been anxiously waiting for this moment all day. But is it with trepidation or exhilaration that you find the blood rushing through your veins? The pulsing rhythm pounds in your ears and stirs your senses. Everything is alive now, as the darkness purples the sky and the stars come out to visit you.

Soon another sensation will arise, and burn you with a calling that you have come to depend on. Is it hunger or thirst, or something deeper, more

carnal? The craving for that which mortal men take for granted, and you take for food? **Blood.** You need blood. You **NEED.** It isn't lust, desire or passionate wanting. **You need.**

What must it be like to be driven by such a compulsion? The need to feed on that which gives us life. This must be what it is like to be a *vampire*. Can a mere mortal ever understand such a sensation? Without exaggeration, *for millennia* mankind has been fascinated with legends of creatures that might have this very need.

We have feared them, making them monsters - the reanimated deceased, or Un-dead - who must kill in order that they should survive. We have glorified them, making them the ultimate connoisseurs of passionate lust. We have deified them, worshipped them, and granted them immortality.

In other words, they embody everything that humans wish they could be and can never be without severe circumstances... *and consequences*.

### **The Origin of the Species**

The word *vampyre* only entered the English language in 1734 when German accounts of the "vampyre hysteria" in Europe were translated to English. This was at a time in European history when the plague was making a resurgence through Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. Besides the plague, typhus and influenza resulted in many thousands of deaths in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Fear of the dead was natural, as it seemed that the sick, dying, and deceased spread the plague. The belief that the dead were coming back to cause more death was rampant and it was this environment that lead to many Eastern European vampire myths. In fact, *nosferatu* is a Slavic word for "plague carrier" (from the Greek

*nosophoros*), but has come to be synonymous with "un-dead" or vampire.

The earliest known form of the word, *upir*, was first recorded in 1034 in Russia describing a notorious prince as "*upir lichy*", or "wicked vampire". However, the history of the vampire is as long as that of mankind, and has had many names in many lands.

### **Mythology and legends**

*Ekimmu* is a Sumerian (perhaps Babylonian) word for a spirit who would attack the living and drain them of their energy. Dating this to a timeframe more than 4,000 years ago, this is probably the oldest reference we have to a vampiric creature. Sometimes described as a phantom, other times as a rotting corpse, the *ekimmus* were usually manifest as the result of a violent death, an improper burial, or were the deceased who were forgotten and not given proper tributes. They would return to the earth, not to seek revenge, but simply to torment and leech from the unfortunate people who crossed their path.

Serpentine vampires called *empusas* plagued the ancient Greeks. The most famous was Lamia, a queen who had made the mistake of falling in love with Zeus. The mistake being that Hera found out about the tryst



**What would you do...**

*If the mysterious woman in your dreams was real?*

*If the woman in your dreams was a vampire?*

*If you were dying,  
would you want to  
taste immortality?*



*For the blood is the life,  
the blood is eternity,  
but at what cost?*

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as cursed Lamia to become half serpent. For her revenge, Lamia roamed the countryside attacking children and drinking their blood. *Empusas* were also skilled seducers of men, being beautiful women above the waist, never revealing their serpentine nature until it was too late.

In Hindu mythology there were shape-shifting demons known as *rakshasas*, which fed on human flesh and could be found living in cemeteries. They were often blamed for illness, or simple mischief, often times being just as likely to help someone become rich. However the latter was usually the means to gain someone's trust before attacking them.

The medieval cousin of the vampire is the *incubus* (from the Latin *incubare*, meaning "to lie upon"), which was a demonic spirit that usually took a male form and would force itself sexually upon women while they slept. Incubi have been known to take female form in order to seduce men as well, but usually such a spirit is known as a *succubus* (from the Latin *succubare*, "to lie under"). Sensual and sexual dreams (or nightmares for the penitent) were explained away by the legends of these seductive demons.

Perhaps the legendary creatures we would recognize the most as being the basis of our

modern mythology comes from Romania, and were known as *strigoi morti*, or "dead witches". The implication being that these creatures were the dead who were reanimated via a pact with the devil. They would leave their graves at night so they could feed on the blood of the living. Though they could take on the appearance of an attractive person, they reeked of death when nearby. Like repelled like to the Romanians, so they believed the *strigoi* were repelled by garlic. It was believed that a branch of wild rose could prevent them from leaving their graves. Ultimately however, once they returned, they could only be stopped by staking and decapitation. Their living counterparts were the *strigoi vii*, or "living witch/vampire", which could leave their bodies at night and attack people psychically.

This is but a small sample of the myriad of demonic, cursed, dead, seductive, and deadly creatures that give us a glimpse into our obsession with vampires. To be considered vampiric therefore is only to feed on the living, taking what you need to survive. It need not always be blood, but this simply was the most physical and visible form of life energy to take. It is because of these different backgrounds that we have to say that no two vampires are alike. They are as varied as the cultures they were created from.

## Diagnosis: Vampirism

But where did the myths come from. Behind every legend there is either a grain of fact or a question that needed an answer. Vampirism is no different; it is just harder to trace one source, even amongst one culture. But in most cases, the main cause is a communicable, fatal disease. There are many to choose from, but the most prevalent was the Bubonic plague, or the Black Death, which shaped Europe over the course of hundreds of years, spreading from one culture to another. In many cases, these pandemics were also attributed to witchcraft, thus linking the two together in the public's mind.

People never expected that the sick and deceased could still pose a threat. It wouldn't be until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that doctors would discover the bacteria that were passed from rats to the fleas that fed on them and in turn infected humans. But such is the nature of hysteria; it's hard to think rationally when your skin is covered in infectious black lumps that are slowly causing you to bleed internally, leading you to the same painful death that you saw your townsmen, your own family, suffer from. Of course you're going to blame the old woman down the street whose remedies failed to cure you; she must be in league with the devil. Of course you'll also blame your

husband who raped you in your sleep last week, even though he's been dead a month now; he must be a vampire.

Others have linked vampirism to rabies outbreaks, which also took place in 19<sup>th</sup> century Eastern Europe. At first a bitten person might not realize they are sick, but will eventually become ill, suffering from high fevers, a loss of appetite, and extreme lethargy. In the late stages of a rabies infection, patients try to avoid the sunlight and prefer walking at night. Flashes of light, like those that might be reflected by mirrors, would cause violent animal-like episodes, which could drive a patient to attack and bite others, thus potentially spreading the infection. A rabid person is literally overcome with animalistic tendencies, becoming wild and uncontrollable. Some with advanced rabies have even vomited blood. All of these symptoms have become forever linked to vampires thanks to their description in the literature of the time, like Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

One must also understand that nature is full of creatures that feed either partly or solely on blood. Mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas, as well as leeches, were common and well known for their parasitic nature. In South America, zoologists would also discover vampire bats, and give them that name to describe their thirst for blood. Surely it

seemed logical then for them to take this knowledge, combine it with their fears and religious dogma, and explain their problems with vampires.

### **Art imitates life imitates art**

When most people think of vampires, they probably imagine "Count Dracula", and might consider him to be the granddaddy of them all. But in fact, this is not the case even amongst British literature. The Europeans suffered greatly from the Dark Ages into even modern times with the tragedy of epidemic diseases. As a result they would pen poetry, stories, and novels detailing their trials and tribulations, describing the mythical creatures that caused

them. At first they were warnings with graphic depictions of these deadly creatures. But eventually, the culture would come to romanticize them.

As odd as this would seem — why idolize something so feared and despised for centuries — it is actually almost understandable... and predictable. Believe it or not, the church is primarily to blame. You see, everything sinful is banished together, creating new monsters capable of horrible evils. Take the legends of succubi and incubi, which deviously force sexual lust upon a victim, and mix this with the living dead, who are the minions of the devil, and *voila*. You now have creatures that use temptation,

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which caused the fall of man and Lucifer himself, to kill innocent folk. Only the valiant priests can save us all, and save our soul, from these foul beasts of the night.

However, once a seductive legion of evildoers is unleashed, there's no turning back. Legends die harder than even vampires do. Now, the vampire had the power to entice people into releasing them from sexual repression. They could tempt you into joining them off the mortal coil and away from the rules of church and state. They were the ultimate liberating force, and people loved to hear stories about them.

## Hollywood revamped

But no medium has helped spread the romance with vampires better than cinema. Film has depicted vampires in outlandish and seductive new ways. It has been the cause of even new powers and scourges for vampires. Cinema introduced the concept that sunlight and a stake through the heart would crumble a vampire to dust. Even Bram Stoker's literary creature could walk in daylight and was not killed by a stake; it was actually a bowie knife, and he simply expired, he did not crumble or explode. But this didn't stop Hollywood from making money off the ideas.

What films truly provided for the public was the visual look of the vampire. The 1922 German silent film classic, ***Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*** ("A Symphony of Terror" in English) is praised for providing the most accurate screen image of the vampire from folktales. Truly a living corpse, deformed, even demonic in appearance with long, sharp claws, and gnarled fangs, not extended canines. He moved with an inhuman stature, and yet he held sway over those he needed.

Cinema also helped refine the sensuality and temptation of the vampire, because unlike ***Nosferatu***, which strived to be accurate, the rest of cinema tried to sell movie tickets. The way to do that is to feature handsome actors and beautiful actresses to play the insidious creatures. Yet again, this only served to reinforce the "sex is sinful, but you know you want it" allure of vampires.

The hunger, or bloodlust of the vampire, however received very little treatment. This almost bolstered our concept that we may never fully understand what it is like to be cursed with vampirism. Some modern movies however have made strides with this. Francis Ford Coppola's interpretation of ***Bram Stoker's Dracula*** did well with this, but he actually described the hunger quite well in

his journal, part of which was published in the book ***Bram Stoker's Dracula: The Film and the Legend***.

He wrote, "Everyone knows the phenomenon of trying to hold your breath underwater - how at first it's alright and you can handle it, and then as it gets closer and closer to the time when you must breathe, how urgent the need becomes, the lust and the hunger to breathe. And then the panic sets in when you begin to think that you won't be able to breathe - and finally, when you take in air and the anxiety subsides... that's what it's like to be a vampire and need blood."

### **But vampires are fictional... *right?***

Here's where we cross the line and ask the question, "Which came first, the fact or the fiction?" Certainly vampires are legendary. But are they real? Do people really live today with a medical or clinical vampirism? Or is it mental, or even just plain theatrics?

Do not dismiss when I tell you that vampires are indeed real and many people today fit the definition of *living vampires*. To my knowledge none of them are immortal, nor do they claim to be. Although, many have claimed to have been

reincarnated. This is not an implication that vampires have to have lived before, nor that all people who have discovered their past lives are vampires. But it is a common trait I have discovered.

The primary trait that defines a vampire is their craving for life energy. Notice again I did not say blood. Blood is only one carrier medium for life energy. As we've seen in other ancient forms of vampirism, psychic energy is vital to a human, as is sexual energy, and both are prone to attack. Vampires today tend to fall into these same three categories: pranic (or psychic) vampires, sexual vampires, and sanguine (or blood-drinking) vampires.

Pranic vampires are those people who literally drain your energy levels. *Prana*, also known as *chi*, is the energy that is believed to flow within all of us. When our chi is in balance, we are in harmony. But when these energy levels are unbalanced, they can cause stress, illness, depression, and more. A pranic vampire believes that they actually can absorb another person's chi in order to balance theirs out. After spending time with a pranic vampire, you may feel lethargic, depressed, or even anxious to get away. Some pranic vampires are also empathic, in that they feed off of strong emotions and feelings. If you are near them,

you may find yourself going through a host of emotions, unable to control yourself, and leave quite shaken afterwards.

Sexual vampires are more than just nymphomaniacs, or sex addicts, although this is a trait they can have. A sexual vampire can be either like the pranic vampires described above, or like the blood-drinkers we know so well, or be a hybrid of both. Like the incubi and succubi of old, they can satiate themselves on the sexual energy that is fueled by passion, and/or they can slake their thirst on the fluids produced during intercourse.

*Sanguinarians*, or sanguine vampires, are the type we are familiar with. They are the ones that drink blood in order to satisfy their appetites. Blood is symbolic of life, and has been in many cultures throughout the ages. Even in the book of Deuteronomy, from the Torah (a.k.a. the Old Testament), we are commanded to understand “For the blood is the life, and thou shalt not consume the life with the flesh (of animals).” This is more than just an important kosher law; it commands that it is wrong to take the life of another inside you by drinking the blood.

There are of course other types of vampires, but they are sometimes related to one of the above. For example, I have

heard of elemental vampires, who actually feel the energy of the elements around them and can feed on them. People whose mood, even physical well-being changes “with the weather”, may be latent elemental vampires. These people may stand out in a storm and feel rejuvenated by the raw power the wind or rain generates, for example.

### Constant cravings

My personal theory about vampirism is very simplistic; so much so I think it is taken for granted. Perhaps this is not true in every case, but we should already be used to generalities, so here’s mine. Put simply, vampires have a craving that they cannot satisfy with a normal diet. *No shit, Sherlock*. Seriously, some cravings are obvious, but some aren’t.

Pregnant women for example are the classic case. Their bodies are already going through drastic changes, producing hormones, trying to not only maintain the mother’s health, but also provide for the child inside them. They will start craving banana splits... with pickles! Or even foods they’ve never liked before, suddenly it’s all they’ll eat. They don’t know really what it is the “baby wants”; it isn’t the baby craving it, it’s their body craving nutrients. The body will tell you what will satisfy that craving.

# Vampire Rave

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There's another mysterious craving that can affect pregnant women, but also anyone with an iron deficiency. The general term is "pica syndrome", and it manifests in people eating *very* strange things, some with seemingly no nutritional value, some that can actually be harmful. This includes people eating chalk, dirt, clay, sand, starch, even laundry starch! Some of these might make sense, as dirt has a certain level of iron in it. If you find that your child eats mud-pies, maybe an iron supplement would help.

Another pica syndrome, which truly baffles the medical community, is one that I suffered from after a surgery that I had about five years ago. I had an almost constant craving for ice! Being a native of Phoenix, Arizona, and during the summer, this didn't immediately strike me as odd. However after a while it started to bug me. I explained this to my doctor during a follow-up from the surgery, and he just smiled at me and said, "Congratulations Dan, you are now a member of the Pica club."

He went on to say that pregnant women sometimes crunch ice or eat lots of ice cream to satisfy their craving for ice. The issue amazingly is usually an iron deficiency — same as dirt eating. But as ice has no iron in it, they only figure the craving is actually for

cold things. Why this is, they don't know. At least they have a name for it: *pagophagia*.

Which, in a frightening way brings me back to my discussion of cravings. Sometimes, you just don't know why you crave something; **you just do**. *Haemophagia* is the medical term for the craving that living vampires have; a craving to consume blood. Is it because blood has a certain iron content, or sugar content, or even oxygen content? We may never know. But we know what happens when a craving isn't met.

### **Fetish, Food... or addiction?**

Is there a difference between a vampire and someone with a fetish? Could any of this be explained as an addiction? There is a difference in that a vampire craves blood or energy. This craving is a physical need that is satisfied once enough has been consumed.

This could be compared to an addiction, except that an addiction implies an acquired taste. Someone who has never smoked cigarettes, drunk alcohol, or done any drugs does not crave these things until they become dependant on them. Peer pressure provides the usual reason to start partaking of those vices. That being said, do people really crave blood, or do they see it in a movie starring a sexy vampire and think they'd like to give it a try?

I cannot answer this question because I know personally I have no desire to drink blood, yet I still enjoy reading (and writing) a good vampire tale. From what I have heard, the cravings are not linked to any social stimuli. In fact, many vampires reject their cravings at first because of society's mandates that drinking blood is "evil". Some do experience their first taste however from their own wounds.

*Autovampirism* is the name for tasting/drinking one's own blood. The first taste is almost always from an accidental wound. At the sight of their blood, they may feel a craving come over them, or a simple curiosity may compel them to lick their wound. If they find their craving is satisfied and they liked it, autovampirism can lead to "cutting", or self-mutilation. But cutters are usually attracted to the pain and the sight of blood, and not the taste of blood.

This leads me to fetishes. A *fetish* is an object, like a totem, that represents something else, usually of religious significance. Sigmund Freud expanded the definition to mean anything that someone obsesses over having. A sexual fetish is usually manifest by requiring a certain object, or body part, to become the focus of arousal. Without that fetish, there is no arousal. Fetishes

range from everything from toes, legs, breasts, leather, toys, etc., but can in some cases include blood.

A *blood fetish* is just the sexual arousal at the sight of blood, not the consumption of it. If you ask me, humanity has a latent blood fetish that is never really talked about. It might explain why we believe that blood is the medium of life, and consider it to be so holy. Moreover, why do we enjoy violent movies and sporting events, hoping to see blood spilt? Why do we slow down on the freeway when we pass a fatal car accident? OK, more generalizations, but maybe Freud was right that blood has a sensual connection? In any case, a vampire might have a blood fetish, but a blood-fetishist is not a vampire if they do not consume it. Not all vampires are sexually aroused from their consumption, either.

Can these practices become dangerous compulsions? Absolutely, if not controlled, human nature drives us to get what we need, and the vampires I have heard from would agree. Such people are known as *psychopaths*, or individuals who do not care who they hurt, or how, in order to get what they want. The compulsion does not create the psychopath, the short-circuit in the brain that governs our morals is responsible for that.

## ***The Embrace of The Vampire Clan***

The perfect case for this is Rod Ferrell. In 1996, then only sixteen years old, Roderick Ferrell led a group of teenagers on a trip from Kentucky to New Orleans. He was clearly a blood fetishist, but he claimed he was a *supernatural* vampire. He had convinced his friends Dana Cooper, Charity Keesee, and Scott Anderson, that he was a vampire and would grant them immortality once they arrived in New Orleans. The foursome claimed to have shared blood often and called themselves the Vampire Clan.

On the way, Rod decided to include Heather Wendorf, a former girlfriend, on their stop in Florida. While he told her they would all go to New Orleans together, what he really wanted was an extra vehicle. Believing himself to be immortal, he also believed he was above the law. Heather met Dana and Charity outside her home, convinced she was running away to a new life with Rod. After she left, Rod and Scott broke into Heather's parents home with the intention of stealing their vehicle.

Getting inside unnoticed was the easy part. So was finding the vehicle. But they needed the keys. Assuming you were a sane criminal (this is not an oxymoron), you would try to acquire them without being

detected, let alone a struggle. But Rod was not sane, nor was he alone. He convinced Scott that they needed to kill Heather's parents in order to get away with stealing the car. They would consume their lives in order to be ready for the final leg of their trip.

So on Thanksgiving night, the two went inside, and found the father sleeping on the couch and the mother upstairs. According to them, Rod told Scott to handle the mother while he took care of the father. Using a tire iron that he took from their garage, Rod beat the father to death, and continued until he was hardly recognizable; nothing but a bloody mess. Scott went upstairs but did not disturb the mother. Instead he came back down to find what Rod had done. The mother also came downstairs, and when she did, she too was beaten by Rod.

This story made headlines not only because of the brutality involved, but because of the fact that Rod claimed that he and his accomplices were vampires. A journalist named Aphrodite Jones wrote a best-selling book based on the story, entitled ***The Embrace: A True Vampire Story***, which was later filmed as a mediocre movie named "The Vampire Clan". My point here is that Rod Ferrell, now 24, is on death row for the murders he committed. Whether he is a vampire or not, [www.Acrimony.org](http://www.Acrimony.org)

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he is a psychopath pure and simple.

Psychologists have defined a term for a new condition, Vampire Personality Disorder (VPD) and even given it a nickname: Renfield's Syndrome. People with this disorder essentially begin their blood fetish with autovampirism. They will eventually eat small animals in order to gain their lives. The disorder helps the patient rationalize progressing up the food chain to "bigger lives", which could become fellow humans. The insane character Renfield from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* exhibited this syndrome to the extreme. This craving itself is known as *zoophagia*, or the consumption of living animals. Is this person really a vampire with a craving that's gotten out of control?

To answer that, you'd really have to understand the human psyche, and I'm no doctor by any means. But, I can imagine what must happen to someone who has a need that can't be met. If and when they discover what it is they need, and in this case they are told it is forbidden by every authority, they'd probably snap. What happens then is what really determines their ultimate state and classification.

The admitted vampires in this world are obviously very careful in how they meet their needs. None of them would justify the

intentional harming of another person, especially if it leads to murder. They believe that the key is to help younger vampires understand their cravings.

### **Vampirism in our culture today**

There is much discussion by some learned people about the state of our society today. They would have us believe that these are darker times, and they may very well be right. It seems to me, however, that these times are no darker than any other period in history. Everything works in cycles, and the course of mankind is no different. We have good times and bad. War, famine, pestilence, and death are our ever-vigilant curses. But the beauty of mankind is seen in our attempts to try to make things better.

These same doomsayers would also have us believe our modern life is susceptible to darker influences. We have become a nation not under one god, but tolerant of things our ancestors were burned at the stake for. They would chastise our romanticizing of the vampire myth, even the recent conversion of vampires into tortured heroes.

To them I have only this to say: *we need all the heroes we can get!* Our society values a hero, someone who goes

beyond their nature, human or otherwise, and fights to champion a greater cause than themselves. Heroes are also usually given powers that separate them from the very thing they try to protect and defend. When they fail, they are chastised and persecuted. When they succeed, they are promoted as the pinnacle of hope and glory.

Why then is the vampire not allowed to fit this same model? It seems to me that it fits it perfectly. Our society has not "turned a blind-eye" to evil – it has opened its eyes to the truth. The gothic sub-culture has embraced a morbid, macabre lifestyle, but there's nothing gruesome about this. Watch any movie, read any comic book, and you will find that the hero is becoming a tortured soul just as the vampire seems to be. The sins of the past are heavy, as are the hopes of a demanding fragile humanity that needs a hero.

# Vampyr ic Chat

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There is no new, modern fascination with all things vampiric; this is a natural impulse, and one that has been a part of the human condition for a very long time. This is not a fad nor a fashion, or even a lifestyle. It simply *is*, and no irrational human fear will make it disappear. The vampires are *out of the coffin* for good. ***Carpe noctum!***

*"A crimson pool so warm and deep.  
Lulls me to an endless sleep.  
Your hand in mine - I will be brave;  
Take me from this earth.  
An endless night - this, the end of life.  
From the dark I feel your lips,  
And I taste your bloody kiss."*

Type O Negative, "Bloody Kisses"

# Srebrenica

**I bite back screams  
As I wake  
Piled up bodies  
Each one.. her face.  
It's the man on the corner  
Selling candies of torture  
Me.. mocking families that died  
Riddled with holes  
In my own self abuse.  
Matching each one with tracks on my arms.  
Its my number babe.  
Everyone dies, and you know baby  
That is a fact.**

**For I hate to finish something  
Which we can never start  
And I hate you for even thinking  
That in death we should ever be apart.**

***Dedicated to Glen.***

by **Pamela Logue**  
pam@acrimony.org  
**www.Acrimony.org**

# Innuendo

## *Metalcore at it's best*

by **Tom Scott**

necromancer@acrimony.org  
<http://www.UndeadRadio.com>

A few days ago, I went to see a Battle of the Bands competition at a club called "Da Bridge Club" in Allentown, PA. It showcased many of the up-and-coming hardcore/metalcore bands in the area. But none stood out to me more than Innuendo, a band from the suburban Philadelphia area whose words have meaning, melodies have depth, and sound has bass. Sure there were other bands at Da Bridge Club that seedy July evening, but many of them were quite predictable, which is never a remarkable trait. On the other hand, Innuendo completely blew me away when I saw them. They filled up the room, they had a heavy sound, and their words actually spoke to me. In my experience, something rarely seen or experienced from other bands.

Lots of energy, great songs, and a loud sound allowed Innuendo to shoot to the second round in the Battle of the Bands competition that night. They performed all new material, written only weeks earlier. The song "Guilty" allowed for

them to step into the limelight for a while. They were the first radio-worthy band I'd heard all night, and 3-4 bands played before them. But it wasn't until the second round that I actually heard their true potential. "Reflect Yourself" allowed the vocalist Bill to "break the security barrier" and step out into the pit to scream and speak a few words. While "Reflect Yourself" and "Guilty" were a bit deeper, "Life of the Murderer" seemed to me as more of a concept song. Although it was deep in its own right, it truly was a song that stood out (additionally because of the many spoken parts hidden within the song). Bill and Nelson, the bassist, slammed into each other in the middle of the song. I learned after the show that the Halloween Theme played before "Life of the Murderer" was completely improvisational, and that Andy, the guitarist, had never done it before in his life. It sounded perfect.

Well, Innuendo did not make it to the semi-finals, but it was "\$50 well spent" in Bill's own words. I believe that the band knew they were not going to make semi-finals, and so they gave it their best shot in the second round. It was a

great show nonetheless, and Innuendo is sure to be moving onto bigger and better things. I wouldn't be surprised if you end up seeing Innuendo (or some of its band members) in the coming years.



*Listen to Innuendo and other bands just like it on the  
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# Requiem For A Sunset

a long drive home from concrete and asphalt, tiled roofs and stucco that masquerade a romanticized ideal of desert dwellings

i leave the facade intending to put my manic eight hours behind me

chaos rings through me as news of moral personal dramas are retold and set aside

my anger is not set aside as easily as the bile at the back of my throat; my tongue is black and blue from biting it too many times

loud music which mirrors my mood helps but only by the act of shouting at someone who is only with me in words

as i near the true desert, the one that is yet to be paved over and smothered in airborne carcinogens, i see a glorious sunset

the fractal peaks of white tanks cast a dark amethyst majesty crowned by a rich grenadine and orange juice

low strips of cirrus burst crimson as an electric lemon creeps below the pavement

i find a place to pull over so that the traffic race does not steal the vision

heaven's blueprint unfolds before me and i  
spy old familiar friends in the pinpricks of  
distant flares

at the fork where the road ends i saw infin-  
ity

it has been there before me

it will be there when i am not

while i am here i shall revel in the time i  
can share with it

by **Dan Shaurette**  
Daniel@acrimony.org  
<http://lurk.us>

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# Father...

## **Could You Forgive The Sins of the Vatican?**



by **Pamela Logue**  
pam@acrimony.org

his eyes and ears. Truly, is this what we would call mercy and humaneness by the Pope and the Catholic Church? I judge it as an act of extreme cruelty and that compassion and justice were thrown out savagely as valueless vestiges into the wind.

The Catholic Church prides itself on its mercy and compassion in both the past and present. However, in the past they have committed some of the worst atrocities mankind has seen. Of these events, one of the most heinous may have been the execution of Giordano Bruno as they took his life by fire. He was put to death by the Church on February 17th, 1600 in Campo dei Fiori (The Field of Flowers) for his Pantheist beliefs.

Looking at this photograph you can imagine the flames licking around his torso raising blisters on his skin. The terrible suffering and pain he felt as his insides melted and his brains liquefied and ran out of



**Burnt alive at the stake by the  
Catholic Church**

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Giordano Bruno

### Portrait of Giordano Bruno

It is inconceivable to think that it took until the year 1992 for the Pope to publicly admit that the world was round and that it orbited about the sun. This was also an admission that Galileo was right. He received a pardon and apology from the Vatican. In my opinion this earth moving announcement from the Catholic Church was delayed because it meant that fundamentally the Bible was flawed in its teachings. Psalms 43 states, "The world is also established and cannot be moved." In recent times however, the Catholic Church has admitted that condemning people as heretics and witches was wrong, but many of the Vatican's victims (including

Giordano Bruno) are still waiting for pardon and apology. It is unfortunate that Giordano lived in the 17th century during a time that could not and would not accept his theology and beliefs.

Giordano Bruno was an Italian mathematician, philosopher, astronomer, humanitarian, logician, and occultist. His concepts and ideas anticipated modern science. The most notable of these were his theories on an infinite universe and the multiplicity of worlds in the Copernican heliocentric (Sun-centred) theory. This theory stated that the sun was the center of the Universe and that the planets (including the Earth) revolved around it. His rejection of the then traditional geocentric finite universe of fixed stars (or Earth-centred) theory, that most people believed in and in which the Church supported, made him very unpopular with the Vatican. Giordano's timing to voice such an opinion could not have been worse. Both the Roman Catholic and Reformed churches were reaffirming rigid Aristotelian and Scholastic principles in their struggle for the evangelization of Europe. In this same period, Martin Luther formed the Protestant Church and sought independence from Papal jurisdiction.

This was not the time to stand and say loudly that

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the Universe was infinite and that the Earth revolved in three directions. The Catholic Church was reforming and trying to revive Christian law in response to the growth of Protestant popularity. These theories were controversial for the time and contradicted teachings of the Bible. Furthermore, they questioned Aristotle's philosophy and meant to question the teachings of the Catholic Church itself.

Giordano Bruno was passionate and outspoken about his beliefs. He freely discussed Arianism with anyone who would listen. He denied the divinity of Christ. This resulted in the preparation of a heresy trial against him. In an attempt to escape he fled France to Rome in February of 1576.

Dorothea Waley Singer describes Giordano Bruno as being, "Unsuccessful in human relations, devoid of social tact or wordly wisdom, unpractical to an almost insane degree." The fact that Giordano lived so close to Rome in Nola showed his inability in expressing himself tactfully. The Inquisition was the prevailing force

there, and he gained their attention as his voice was noted. He also had gained a following and was accused of starting a sect. The Catholic Church could not afford further questioning of their teachings and because Bruno questioned both religious and cosmological issues he was arrested. There were 130 charges brought against him including anti-religious, cosmic, and Arian heresy. There were further charges, including sins of the flesh. Bruno enjoyed women a little too much and considered premarital relations not important.

Rome wasted no time in the expedition of Giordano's trial. Afterwards he was promptly executed by way of being burned alive. He dared to say at his trial, "I believe that it is not physically impossible for a virgin to conceive, but I maintain that the Blessed Virgin did not conceive Christ physically, but through a miracle of the Holy Spirit."

Truly, I admire this man. His bravado and tenacity makes him a super hero. His misfortune was to live before his proper time. People in his era were incapable of grasping or understanding his intellectual ideals. He had no support when the Inquisition marched him to the gallows.

Giordano, upon hearing what his punishment was, cried

out, "Perhaps you deliver my punishment with more fear than I receive it." One has to admire his bravery, courage, and stamina of life. When he was engulfed with flame and his heart was upon the brink of stopping, he stood firm in his beliefs and strong in an everlasting world. His theories influenced 17th-century scientific and philosophical thought. In the 18th century his ideals were absorbed by many philosophers.

It is difficult to absolve the Church in Giordano's case. After his death, the Pope called Giordano a coward. The Pope's voice was full of brutality and hypocrisy, as it was them who cowered when confronted with Giordano's beliefs. It is with this final thought that I consider the Vatican guilty of crimes against humanity.



**Statue of Giordano Bruno  
that still stands in the  
Campo dei Fiori**

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1. E-mail your content to [editor@acrimony.org](mailto:editor@acrimony.org) or mail it to Acrimony, P.O. Box 215, Ontonagon, MI 49953.
2. Include an email or written letter stating that you own all of the rights to the content and grant Acrimony the right to publish the work.
3. Payment for work published is handled through PayPal.com. Include in your correspondence your PayPal account name. If you do not have a PayPal account, you can sign up for free at <http://ad2.acrimony.org>

# Sweet Revenge

Countless nights under a sky,  
Of growing winds of cold defy;  
A black of such a deep tint,  
Smiling down to me a hint:  
It's time to blow you off your feet!

Countless times of crying rain,  
Striking my face, mean and vain;  
Crashing hurricane of wind,  
The devil busting off my feet,  
I think I know where this could lead...

An army of powers against me runs,  
A raging fury of 'em that hunts,  
Runs against me, hits me straight,  
Busts me off my very feet,  
I think I want to raise and I think I want to hit...

Many lights of fire and ice,  
Scratching my face once and twice,  
Many raging fists of wind,  
Cutting my chance to breathe,  
Many children, children of the devil's seed!

I walk and walk and never mind,  
The wind slowly makes me blind,  
There's no mercy I could find,  
It's just the courage I left behind,  
The busting anger, my other face, my other side...

I raise against the raging wind,  
Up again on my very feet,  
Kill me, to sink in hell's dark grave,  
Under your ruthless tidalwave,  
And leave me alone already, for the price I gave...

But it strikes and hits me further,  
My life doesn't really matter,  
The snow just cuts my face to blood,  
The breeze whispers it up to God:  
Let us kill him, Lord, let us take him with a flood...

No! Says the voice of the only One,  
I said no more floods, the first is done,  
Bust him on and on again,  
Kill him if you think you can!  
But no more floods I said before, no more floods,  
never again.

So, I walked on: never mind,  
It's a mind's peace that I could find,  
Before I saw the angry wind,  
And it's black sky's reddish tint,  
Anger's bitter as revenge is sweet!

Thousands of snowflakes seek my eyes,  
Hit their victim, wait as it blinds,  
They make their way to get into it's face,  
It's the death's defyingly warm embrace,  
It's my doom as I see, there's no worse place!

I fight 'em with my hands and feet,  
I hit the wind with my bare fist,  
But the rain crowds in my eyes as well,  
They want to burn me, send me to hell,  
This seems to be my end, my very end as I can tell...

A stronger enemy they could not find,  
So they blow my face now and then,  
They try to make me mad again,  
They seem to think that I am blind...  
They do not know my other face, they do not know my  
other side...

I leave the night and lonely skies,  
Enter my dome, a palace of ice,  
And laugh into their face at last: :  
I pity you if that's your best,  
Blow of anger and grasp with who you've messed!

I am small... is that right,  
I am weak and cannot fight,  
Well, bust me now, do it fast,  
Do it well, and do your best!  
As you always do, as you did with the rest...

'cos I am small but I am strong,  
To you I'm the devil's song,  
Singing in your ears my pledge,  
I'll give you my sweet revenge,  
You busted me enough for now, it's time to avenge!

I'm sitting alone in my lonely castle,  
Listening to the waving hustle,  
But you cannot reach me here,  
You can eat your anger, dear,  
It's time to turn the dice, it's your turn to fear...

...

Because your words I can no longer hear!

...

**Marcus Armand Forsythe**  
**Romania, Transylvania**  
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# Calendar

**September 1st      Kalends of September, Celtic Tree Month of Coll Ends, Zoroaster**

The Persian mystic Zoroaster was born on this day in the sixth century BCE.

**September 2nd      Grape Vine Festival, Celtic Tree Month of Muin Begins**

Today was the festival of the grape vine in ancient Greece, in honour of Ariadne and Dionysus.

Harvest time commences. The month of Muin releases prophetic powers, and is sacred to the Celtic god Lugh, for intellect and spiritual illumination.

**September 5th      Nones of September, Goddess month of Hesperis Ends, Games for Jupiter**

The Romans held games beginning on this day in honour of Jupiter.

**September 6th      Goddess Month of Mala Begins**

**September 7th      Asclepigenia, Horned Dance at Abbots Bromley**

Asclepigenia, a priestess of the Greek Eleusinian mysteries, is commemorated today.

The horn dance at Abbots Bromley venerates the horned god, Herne or Cernunnos.

**September 11th      Day of the Queens**

A festival in honour of Hatsheput, Nefertiti and Cleopatra is celebrated on this day in Egypt.

**September 13th      Ides of September, Lectisternia, Runic Half-Month of Ken begins, Lighting the Fire**

Lectisternia is a Roman festival for the gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva.

The rune Ken is a flaming torch within a royal hall, the forge by which natural materials are transmuted into mystical

substances.

In ancient Egypt, this day was the Ceremony of Lighting the Fire, in which lighted lamps were placed before images of the Egyptian gods.

### **September 14th      Feast of September**

### **September 15th      Harvest Moon**

The observance of the Harvest Moon traditionally begins with the first full moon after this date. This is considered to be a time of power for those involved with witchcraft, divination, and fertility magic.

### **September 17th      Demeter**

On this date in ancient Greece, rites for the goddess Demeter were performed. Demeter is an earth goddess, the protectress of agriculture.

### **September 18th      Scouring the White Horse**

On this day in Berkshire, England, the festival of Scouring the White Horse begins. It takes place on a nearby hillside into which has been carved a neolithic running horse.

### **September 19th      Fast of Thoth**

This is a day-long fast in honour of the Egyptian god Thoth, for learning, wisdom, and magic. Thoth gave the Egyptians hieroglyphic writing and the knowledge of arithmetic.

### **September 20th      Alexander the Great's Birthday in 356 BCE.**

### **September 21st      Feast of the Divine Life, Athena**

Today is the Egyptian feast of divine life, for the three-fold goddess. The mother, creator of all things, the daughter, the re-nower, and the crone.

Today marks the birth of the Greek goddess Athena.

### **September 22nd      Autumnal Equinox, Second Station of the Year, Time of Carpo and Carman**

Today is the observance of the autumnal equinox, the time when darkness overtakes light. It is the Druidic festival of Alban Elued, the light of the water, when the sun begins to descend into the ocean of winter.

The goddesses Carpo and Carman represent autumn and poetry.

**September 23rd Sacred Festival of Greater Eleusinia**

Beginning on this day in ancient Greece, the sacred festival of greater Eleusinia was celebrated in honour of Demeter and her daughter Persephone.

It was a secret observance. open only to initiates of Eleusinian mysteries. The rites of the Eleusinia commemorate the descent of Persephone into the underworld for the winter months of the year.

**September 24th Osiris**

The death and rebirth of Osiris was celebrated on this day in ancient Egypt.

**September 25th Pyanepsia**

The Pyanepsia was a festival celebrated on this day in ancient Greece. It bid farewell to Apollo, the god of summer.

**September 26th Theseia**

Theseus was honoured on this day in ancient Greece. In Greek legend, he was beloved of Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos. Ariadne gave him a thread which allowed him to navigate the Labyrinth, slay the Minotaur and find his way out again. He later became the ruler of Athens.

**September 28th Runic Half-Month of Gyfu Begins, Thesmophoria**

The half month of Gyfu represents unity, as between the giver and recipient of a gift.

This day marks the beginning of the Thesmophoria of ancient Greece, in honour of Demeter.

**September 29th Gwynn ap Nudd, Heimdall, Celtic Tree Month of Muin Ends, English Quarter Day**

Today is the festival of warrior gods. It's sacred to Heimdall, the son of Odin and the nine virgin daughters of Geirrendour. The legend of Heimdall's birth has it that none of Geirrendour's daughters would admit to not being a virgin. Heimdall is the Norse god of light and the guardian of Bifrost, the bridge between Asgard and earth. Himinbiorg, his castle, is built at the apex of the bridge.

In some traditions it is unlucky to pick berries after this day.

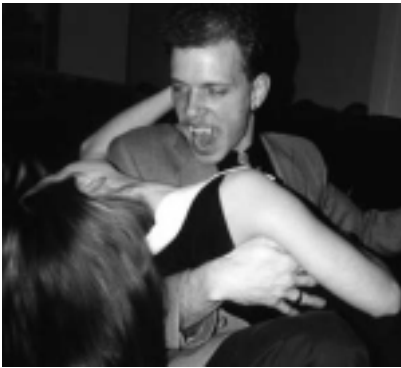
**September 30th Medetrinalia, Themis, Celtic Tree Month of Gort Begins**

The festival of Meditrina, the Roman goddess of medicines,

was celebrated on this day.

This day in ancient Greece was sacred to the goddess Themis, the goddess of justice and order. She also protects the oppressed.

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# Personals

Hi

Hey all what's up? not much here just bore so i thought, i'll make an "AD" anyone in Lousiana 18-23. 21.f.lousiana short blk hair brown eye's looking for friend's.

briansbabygirl20042005@yahoo.com

.....

## LOOKING FOR MY PRINCE OF DARKNESS

I AM VERY MUCH A GOTH CHICK LOOKING FOR A GOTH GENTLEMAN. I AM FROM CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, I AM 24 YEARS OLD, ITALIAN, AND I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA OF WHAT I WANTR MY LIFE TO BE LIKE AS FAR AS FINANCIAL, PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS GO...BUT I NEED THAT CERTAIN SOMEONE WHO CAN BRIGHTEN UP MY DARK AND DREARY DAYS SO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME ASAP!

.....

## who want to see with me something verry interesting?

hi

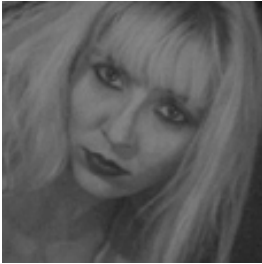
i am a boy from ROMANIA,i have 26 years and i live at last 2 mounth a great experience,i was at montagne and i see a few persones,but not from TERRA,who dancing an interesting dance i try to make a photo,but when i look at the photo,they not was in my photo i looking for somemody verry interesting who want to see this i wans every week in there place and they are there every night contact me at stso1806@yahoo.com

.....

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# Ask Jenny!



by **Jenny Slocum**  
lilwhip@acrimony.org

Dear Jenny,

It seems that people are always misunderstanding what I say or what I mean. I don't get it, I think I am a well spoken person. I don't know if it's that people are just easily offended or what... But it's making me think I should stop talking to people altogether and keep to myself!

Misunderstood

Dear Misunderstood,

What kind of tone do you use when talking? Tone is a wondrous thing that can change every word out of your mouth. And what are you talking about? Politics? Religion? Both are VERY bad topics to deal with. Especially when people do not believe as you

do. So my advice: watch your tone and do not talk to a preacher that is not republican!!

Dear Jenny,

How do you feel about interracial dating, porn, drugs, and the Houston Rockets?

Your Friend,  
Ménage à Trois :)

Dear Ménage,

## 1. Interracial dating

I think anyone who wants to date some one should go right ahead and not worry about what other people might say. After all, they are not the ones who have to wake up next to them the next morning!

## 2. Porn

I am ALL for it! Long live porn!!

### 3. Drugs

I like them in brownies

### 4. Houston Rockets

Several hotties on the team. Enough said. (That's at least all \*I\* need to know!)

Dear Jenny,

I was dating a guy for about 3 months before he started getting abusive. I left him and now he is going through anger management classes and he just recently asked me to marry him. I want to marry him in the worst way possible but every time I see him I have this amazing time with him and then he disappears for weeks or sometimes months at a time. What should I do? I really love this guy very much and I do not wanna lose him despite the past which is forgiven...

From,  
Forgiving

Dear Forgiving,

You might forgive, but do not forget. I think anger management classes are fine and good, if the person WANTS help. You did not mention how long he has been involved with the class, or how long you were apart before he sought help. But let me tell you this: I have a very dear friend of mine who was with an abusive boyfriend.

He would beat her near death. She would still go back to him after her hospital stay because she "loved him and did not want to lose him". He beat her even when carrying his child, and when the child was 3, his anger vented in the baby's direction. Then, only then, did she have the nerve to leave. And she was a mess. But guess what? She is alive! (And in an healthy, loving relationship for both her and her child) Now maybe your guy has seen the light. (I hope to God for your sake he has) And maybe your abuse is over. But is it worth the risk of not only your self-esteem, but your life? You deserve better than to flinch when he is only reaching for the remote out of reflex for past beatings. I suggest that you take classes as well. There are all kinds of battered women programs that are wonderful. You need to be secure for yourself, and believe it or not, for him. One thing about a man that hits a chick... He is a wuss. You would be surprised to see that most battered women are not strong within themselves, and become easy prey to violent men. Be careful girl! You're worth more! If need be, email me privately so we can discuss this further. Luv, Jenny

Dear Jenny,

How many dates do you make a guy wait before having sex with him?

Love,  
The Wannabe Lover

Dear Wanna,

That is not something I can answer for you. I mean if it's Gary Oldman, FIRST DATE!!!!!! But if not, I would wait until the time was right. Get to know him. Well at LEAST his last name, before hitting the hay with him. Believe it or not, not many guys would probably call you the next day. To guys, having sex on the first date is a conquest. It make them feel as a stud. If it's a chick who has sex the first time out, they are the total opposite of a stud. Sad but true, and something to think about.

Dear Jenny,

When is the next terrorist attack on US soil going to happen?

Bomb Scared

Dear Bomb,

If I knew that, I would also know what my winning lottery ticket would say.

Dear Jenny,

So how long has it been since you where in hooters picking up other peoples pick ups? HMMMMMMMMM?

DarkAdmin

Dearest Darling DA,

Why, none since our last outing. It is no fun at all unless I see the look on your face as she picks me! hehehehehehe (smooch)



*Jenny's column is run exclusively in Acrimony. Email your question to her at [lilwhip@acrimony.org](mailto:lilwhip@acrimony.org)*

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# Horoscopes

by Michael Ramses



**ARIES** (March 21 - April 19): You're going to need to be more honest than usual this month. Your attention will be drawn to an unpleasant situation that needs to be dealt with. It will be uncomfortable at first, but once the confrontation is underway you will shine.



**TAURUS** (April 20 - May 20): A much needed break is heading your way in September. This break may or may not take the form of an actual vacation. In any event, you will feel relief from your routine stresses. Take in the opportunity and recharge yourself.



**GEMINI** (May 21 - June 20): A young person will be demanding your attention in September, and you had better give it to them. If you don't, you're in for a headache. Maybe this is your situation every month. If that's the case, it will only be more so in

September.



**CANCER** (June 21 - July 22): As summertime winds down the leaves begin to change. Cancer would prefer things stay the same, but such things are out of the control of the crab. Embrace the change this year. Head into autumn with a smile and good things will come your way. Business prospects look better than normal.



be smiling.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22): Spring is supposed to bring change, but this year the change for the lion is an autumn. The last few months have been difficult but things are starting to even out and take shape. Hardship is replaced with contentment. You should



alignment to occur.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22): It's all good for the virgin. September looks wonderful in the three main aspects: love, health, and finances. Anything that you have been contemplating doing should be done this September. It's unusual for this type of



affairs.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): The wisdom of a mature friend should be heeded. Listen to their voice wholeheartedly. While your first inclination may be to ignore their advice, you shouldn't. You should also concentrate on improving the state of your financial



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21): It's possible you've been stressing family members. If this is the case, stop! The scorpion can be a willful creature. Sometimes far too willful. On a more positive note, look for a new friendship to appear.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Look for love in an unusual place this month. It's hiding somewhere you've overlooked up to this point. A friend will also come to you in need near the end of September. Take a little time out and give them a helping hand.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): The strong and steady goat sometimes needs to take a break and relax. That's what you should do in September. Don't push too hard, don't try to over-achieve. If you do, you can expect failure and disappointment as your reward. Things will improve in October.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): We (humans) often think we are alone. That is never the case. The universe is more interconnected than we realize, and everything we do has consequences. This is an overly-grand philosophical idea, but try to keep it in mind as the events of September unfold before your eyes.



PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20): The Pisces is a gentle creature, until someone stirs them up. Watch out for someone that is going to try and provoke you this month. Their purpose will be to illicit an enraged response. If you don't give it to them, you win.



*Michael Ramses has been a horoscope writer for over 12 years. His speciality is personal natal charts. Look for his column right here in Acrimony each month.*

<http://www.MichaelRamses.com>

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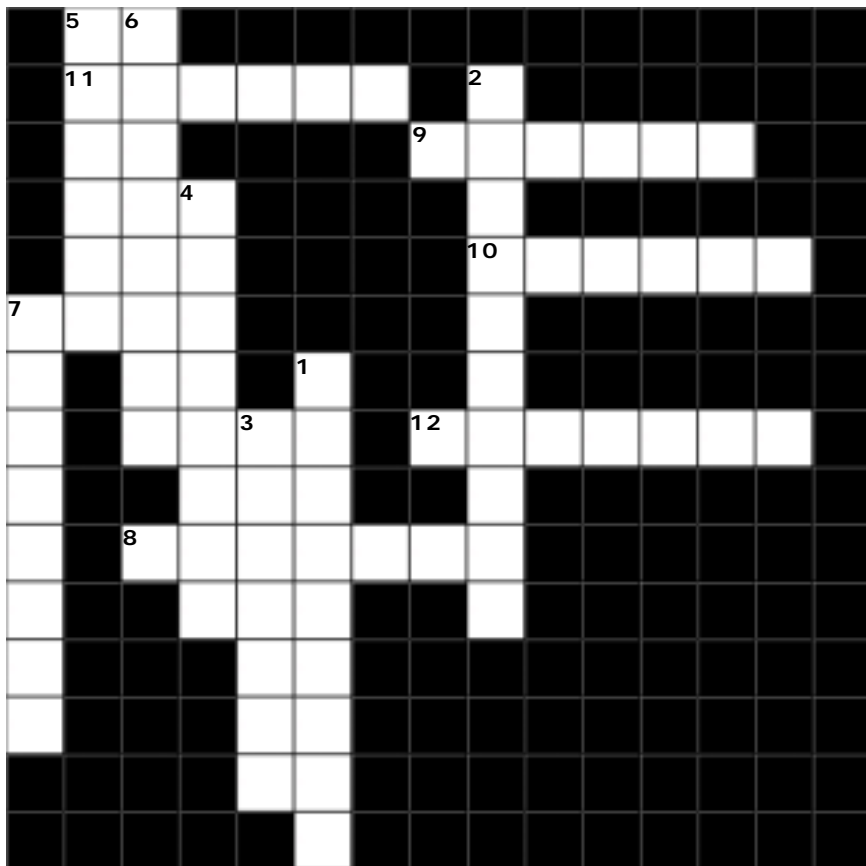
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# Gothic Crossword



## Down

1. A four-footed animal
2. The dead
3. A female spirit in Gaelic folklore believed to presage, by wailing, a death in a family
4. A man who seduces women
5. An old woman, especially one who is considered ugly
6. The first non-Caucasian vampire
7. Relating or belonging to the Middle Ages

## Across

8. A violent, anti-social, cannibal
9. Movie about the night that Mary Shelley gave birth to the horror classic
10. King Arthur's mage
11. Mistress of the Dark
12. Characteristic of a much earlier, often more primitive period, especially one that develops into a classical stage of civilization

# Blood and Water



by **Jennie Breeden**  
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<http://www.thedevilspanties..com>

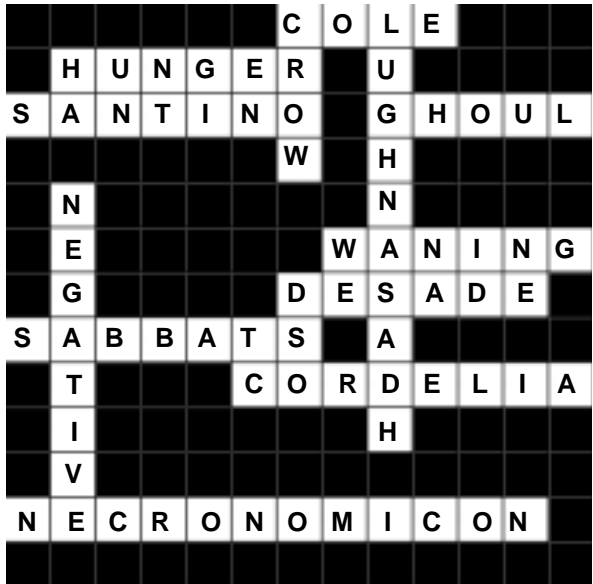
## August Crossword

### Brain Teaser

The 22nd and 24th presidents of the United States had the same mother and the same father, but were not brothers. How can this be possible?

### August Brain Teaser

Cain (who killed Abel, leaving only himself, Adam and Eve).



Hooray for the US Olympic athletes in winning 103 medals!

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