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I HAVE KILLED THEM!

You Will Find It Very Hard To Believe, But—!

*"I am prepared for the scoffer and the scorner.
. . . But I write of that which I know. . . I gripped
and gripped, exerting all my strength there. . .
The vampire had dissolved once more into the
formless state."*

FIGHTING FOR LIFE

By ALEISTER CROWLEY

I write this already visualising the smile of incredulity which my narrative may inspire in those who scoff at black magic and who regard vampires as a back number superstition of the Middle Ages.

They are apt to forget recent vampire murders on the Continent, and they have probably never heard of the numerous cases of vampirical attacks in the Balkans.

I have known instances where young girls have been found murdered, drained of their blood by a vampire.

On at least two occasions I have SEEN vampires, and have narrowly escaped serious harm at their hands. So I speak that which I know.

And there are vampires about to-day, as potent in their way as those who literally suck the blood of their sleeping victims, vampires who sap the vitality and mind of their victims in just the same way as the other variety sap the strength of those whose blood they take.

"LIFE AND SOUL"

There are many amongst you who have met them and not realised it. These are vampires of a lesser state, unknowingly vampires, but vampires nevertheless.

Doubtless you have been in a room full of people, all in a

state of complete harmony and equilibrium. Then—another being has entered. A cold, flabby, deathlike personality whose very entrance has created a chill sort of atmosphere over the whole assembly, sapping the very vitality from those present.

On the other hand, it may be the hearty, flourishing type, "the life and soul" of the party, and all the time one feels that state of weird depression creeping over one, that sense of physical and mental exhaustion as he or she extracts the "life and soul" from those present.

There are few people who have not had such an experience, but there are few who have realised that they were most likely in the presence of lesser vampires.

But it is not of these whom I would write. It is of the more evil, malignant type such as came to me at a time when I was setting out on my magical studies.

It was one of my earliest experiences of black magic, soon after I had come down from Cambridge, at a time when I was studying under the tuition of one of the greatest masters of the age, Allan Bennett.

JEALOUS ENEMY

I had attained some little prominence as a poet, and because of this I had roused the enmity of a well-known poet—living to-day, whose name I have given to the editor of the *Empire News*—who was anxious that my powers should be destroyed.

He was at that time living with a woman artist over whom he had attained a hypnotic ascendancy, and she used to act as his clairvoyant.

The woman was also beloved by a well known London publisher, who is now dead, and all three of them were steeped in black magic.

The publisher later on sought out the daughter of a hangman and married her for no other reason than to be regaled by the morbid recitals of all the gruesome details of executions which her father had carried out.

The poet was extremely jealous of me. I had money, social position, and was looked upon as likely to become a great poet.

At that time I may say my parents did not approve of the nature of my studies, and in order that they should be kept in ignorance I had assumed the title of a Russian nobleman and called myself Count Vladimir Svareff.

MY VISITOR

I was living in Chancery-lane, where I had set up a temple. And there I studied and practised magic with my friend Bennett.

He warned me that there was danger lurking ahead for me, and urged me on no account to have any dealings with the Goetia or black magic. He instructed me in the exercises and rites which I should perform, and bade me never to depart from them.

On day when I was resting in my flat the door opened and ---- (the mistress of the poet to whom I have referred) entered. I sensed that she had come for some occult purpose, and knew that she was just verging on becoming an absolute devotee to black magic.

I decided to put her to the test, and challenged her then and there to enter my temple, take the right-hand path, and throw over her "black master" once and for all.

She simply smiled and said that she would enter the temple on her next visit.

We talked for a while, and then on parting she managed to scratch my hand with the pin of a brooch she had brought.

I thought nothing of it at the time, and it was not until the next day that I realised the full potential of the occurrence.

I went to bed at the usual time, but when I awoke in the morning I could scarcely stand, so weak was I. I looked in the glass and beheld a terrible vision.

My eyes were dull and lifeless, there was an uncanny pallor about my face, and I felt as though every atom of my strength had been sapped from me.

"KILL IT!"

Presently Bennett arrived, and when he saw me he at once saw that something was wrong.

"You have been meddling with the Goetia," he declared, and then sniffing around said: "I smell evil."

I assured him that I had done nothing beyond the ordinary exercises and rites which he had ordered me to do, and he then asked who had visited me that day.

The moment I told him he smiled grimly. "I knew it," he said. "We must work." He ordered me to bring him certain rare substances and then he proceeded to inscribe them.

When he had finished, he handed the talisman to me, and

told me to sleep with it beneath my pillow.

"And remember—that drop of blood upon the pin point of that brooch," he warned me gravely, "was obtained to work you harm. You will be attacked. ----- will send them to you through that drop of blood. Whatever attacks you—*kill it—kill it*, or it will kill you.

He was in deadly earnest, and his words made a profound impression upon me.

THE WOMAN

You will understand, therefore, that when I retired that night I took great care to place beneath my pillow the talisman which Bennett had made for me. Very soon I fell asleep, nor did I dream.

Suddenly I found myself wide awake. I knew that something vitally important, yet dreadful—unholy—had happened.

I raised my head from the pillow, and there at my side beheld one of the most beautiful women it has ever been my lot to see.

As I gazed at her fascinated, with some impelling force, that I could not analyse drawing me to her, she began to speak lovely words.

In a moment she was in my arms. She rained burning kisses upon me and in that moment I was seized with a loathing.

The words of Bennett came back to me. "Kill it—whatever it is."

I struggled against the spell of fascination which gripped me, struggled to free myself from the embraces, and with a mighty effort wrenched myself away and sunk my fingers into the soft throat of the thing beside me.

I still shudder at the horror of that moment, for it was not living flesh into which my fingers found my way. It felt like a pneumatic tyre, yielding and resilient, yet not alive.

I gripped and gripped at the thing, exerting all my strength and crying aloud: "Kill it—Adonai—Adonai" until—suddenly—there was nothing there. The vampire had dissolved once more into the formless state.

For ten consecutive nights I suffered the same experience, then my deathly visitors ceased to worry me.

When I told Bennett he told me that I must still be on my guard, for ----- had exhausted the power of that drop of blood and would probably come back for more.

AMAZING SCENE

Sure enough, not many days elapsed ere she came to me at the flat in Chancery-lane, and this time I determined to make her enter my temple, where, once and for all, she should make her choice between black and white.

Again we talked for a time. Then I told her that she must keep her promise that she would enter into the temple. I opened the door and when she passed inside, hastily pulled the door to and locked it behind me.

I shall never forget the scene which then took place. I had purposely arranged the temple for this moment which Bennett had assured me would come.

Dimly lit, there was an altar of evil, which rested on the ebony figure of a negro. Near by stood a skeleton, a grinning thing, with bloodstained bones.

----- stood for a moment transfixed. Then as though impelled by some force stronger than myself, she walked slowly toward the skeleton and put her arms around it.

The next moment she was shrieking and in another second she had rushed from the place, having battered on the door till I unlocked it. She declared afterwards that she only remembers being at home. How she got there she did not know.

She had made her choice.

When I told Bennett what had happened he expressed himself satisfied I should not be worried any more.

There was a tragic sequel. Tragic for poor ----- . Her spectre-like poet lover went almost crazy at the failure of her influences to conquer me, and fled the place, leaving a note behind which said:

"You fool—they are after me. My life is not safe. Curse you."

This was from the man for whom she had sacrificed her soul.

Small wonder that she went to the publisher who had always desired her.

And it was this man, who, while living an apparently uneventful life in the West End, married the hangman's daughter for the morbid thrill of the tales he told.

I know it may all sound fantastic and unreal. But later I hope to tell you more of Bennett and a threat on his life.