

Vampires Suck

by Hugh Barlow

The little clapboard church sits stiffly in the sun. It's steeple marking time with it's shadow on the sidewalk. It is the last place most people would think to look for a vampire, but I am sure that one is in there. Contrary to popular opinion, there is no such thing as a noble savage. There is also no such thing as a noble vampire. I get angry when I see all the vampire based novels in the science fiction section of my favorite bookstore. "Twilight" has it all wrong.

Dealing with vampires is more like the movie "The Lost Boys" than the TV show "Forever Knight." I ain't no scientist, and I don't have a degree in biology, but I do have some practical experience in dealing with these suckers (pun intended). I discovered my first vampire quite by accident. Actually, it wasn't a human vampire, but was one of the animal variants most people don't realize are related. I have come to find out that the old stories of werewolves and were-cats are actually based on facts. Oh, the stories are twisted and exaggerated all out of proportion, but they are based on fact none the less. I had the misfortune run across one of these critters when I was out deer hunting back home, and the damned thing nearly got me. It seems that it and I were tracking the same prey, and when I shot the deer, the werewolf decided to go for me. After I shot the werewolf, I took it to a vet because it certainly looked odd. I thought I had killed a chupacabra, but instead I found that I had shot a wolf that had been genetically modified by a virus. You see, the vet was a friend of mine, and HE was trained in molecular biology. He got quite excited when he discovered the mutation, and he charged me with the task of going out and looking for more of these modified wolves. Once I knew to look for them, they were not hard to find. I just wish my buddy had simply left the task to ME.

Instead, he tried to create some himself, and it cost him his life. What I learned from him before his death was that the virus seems to thrive in animals that hunt for food. Carnivores are it's primary target. It doesn't seem to work in herbivores. At least I have never

seen a were-cow or were-rabbit. The virus does cross species lines, and a human can become infected by a werewolf or other were-animal. My buddy suggested that it was some kind of space virus, and that it was acting like something from the movie "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" in that it was designed to take over the host body and completely re-program it to create more of itself. At least this is what I was able to understand from what he said. He used a bunch of science lingo that I did not understand, but he simplified it for me. I have discovered that it not only re-programs the body, but it seems to re-program the mind as well.

If what all you know about vampires and werewolves comes from books and movies, then you have been fed a boatload of misinformation. While vampires don't LIKE garlic, it will not kill them. It seems that the virus makes them slightly allergic to it. Vampires also have a sensitivity to onions, shallots, leeks, and chives. I don't know what it is that is in these plants, but when exposed to them, vampires and the like get a severe rash. Holy water has NO effect unless you mix it with garlic. Wooden stakes are effective only because anything will die if you put a stake in it's heart. A cross? Oh, SOME vampires might shy away from one but only for comic effect. I find a cross most effective if you sharpen one end and use it as a stake. Daylight? Oh, yeah. THERE is a bit of exaggeration for you! While vampires are sensitive to sunlight, they can certainly go out during the day. They use plenty of sun screen, cover up, and use really dark glasses. The sunlight does hurt their eyes. Bright light from any source can make them skittish. I always carry a bright LED spotlight with me when I go hunting now. It has saved me on more than one occasion. Silver bullets? Use lead... it is cheaper and just as effective. Which is to say, not much effective unless you use a LARGE caliber gun. Something about the virus makes the circulatory system much more effective in the affected creature, animal or human. The virus also makes them much more aggressive and intelligent. One of the key indicators that someone has been affected by the virus is a marked increase in intelligence. If Uncle Bubba all of a sudden gets smart, stay away! If you notice

that he takes off coon hunting more often and doesn't use the dogs, there is another sign. Bubba suddenly buying stock in Cover Girl and getting flesh tone base when he ain't even got a girlfriend? That grayish pallor that he has started using makeup to cover up? Sign number three. Drinking Bloody Marys instead of beer, and there ain't a can of tomato juice in the house trailer? Sign number 4. All the dogs under the porch getting lean and mean? Well, that may be a sign or not. Maybe Uncle Bubba liked mean dogs to begin with. Maybe he infected them, or they infected him. Hard to tell.

Something about the virus causes the victim to crave fresh blood. The modern vampire can beat this by using refrigerated blood--my buddy did--but they often use that as a last resort. There is something about the fresh kill that makes the blood more satisfying. They need the thrill of the hunt. Sucking blood from a cow just doesn't quite satisfy. Oh, you know those animal mutilations that always seem to get blamed on aliens? Usually that is Bubba and his dogs gone wild on a tear. That is why he doesn't take the dogs coon hunting any more. He doesn't want the competition. You get a pack of coon hounds turned werewolf out on a tear, and people are going to notice. Usually Bubba just kills the dogs after he gets infected.

He knows that he cannot afford the competition or the accidental chance of exposure. Infected animals will not attack each other for blood... there is something about the infected blood that makes it unpalatable, but they will kill each other to survive. That is the name of the game for vampires... survival.

The autopsy that my buddy did on the infected wolf showed that the heart and brain were completely remade. So was the intestinal tract, the musculature, and the entire cardiovascular system. The lungs were also redesigned. That was why he was so excited about the discovery. He wanted to see if he could use the virus to do some gene engineering. He figured that with a bit of splicing, he could remove the aggressive tendencies and the need for fresh blood, and help people who had genetic pre-dispositions to illnesses of all sorts. Unfortunately, it was his experimentation with animals in his care that did him in. He was not as careful as he should have been and

he was infected himself. Attacks from a vampire rarely lead to a successful conversion from human (or animal) to vampire (or were-beast). The reason for this is that the attacker usually does not leave a living creature behind after the attack. In order to have a successful conversion, there needs to be enough blood left in the body for the victim to survive the attack. This rarely happens.

Unfortunately for my buddy, it wasn't a case of him getting his blood sucked out. An errant needle is what did him in, or maybe he stuck himself on purpose, I don't know. Even when the victim does survive the initial attack, the virus doesn't always run true. It often mutates into something else. AIDS? My buddy suggested that AIDS may have been a mutation of the vampire virus. I will probably never know, though, since I have dedicated my life to wiping this scourge from the planet. I started with my uncle, Bubba, but I just took out my buddy. His is the body in the church. In a little while, the preacher will come and tell about what a great man he was, and how it is a shame that he was cut down in the prime of his life.

Everyone will be weeping for their loss except me. I know his secret. I saved him.

