



The Blood of the Vampire

Florence Marryat , Brenda Hammack (Introduction)

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Miss Harriet Brandt, daughter of a mad scientist and a voodoo priestess, comes of age and leaves her home in Jamaica for the first time, travelling to Europe. Beautiful and talented, Harriet will gain the affections of many of the men and women she meets and a bright future seems assured for her.

But there is something strange about Harriet. Everyone she gets close to seems to sicken or die. Doctor Phillips has a theory: the blood of the vampire flows through Harriet's veins, and she is draining the life out of those she loves. Are the misfortunes that seem to follow Harriet merely coincidence? Or is she really afflicted with the curse of the vampire?

One of the strangest novels by the prolific Florence Marryat (1837-1899), "The Blood of the Vampire" was the "other vampire novel" of 1897, appearing the same year as "Dracula." Marryat's novel is fascinating not only for its sensational plot and bizarre characters, but also because of its engagement with many of the issues that haunted the late Victorian imagination, such as race, heredity, women's roles, Spiritualism, and the occult. This edition includes the unabridged text of the exceedingly rare 1897 first edition and a new introduction by Brenda Hammack.

The Blood of the Vampire Details

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Author : Florence Marryat , Brenda Hammack (Introduction)

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From Reader Review *The Blood of the Vampire* for online ebook

Ruth says

The social commentary alone makes this book worth reading. While feminist in nature, it shows conflicting ideals in a very true to life way.

Harriet is a multiracial heiress who comes from Jamaica, being of dubious birth tainting her history, but being wealthy allowing her to hide said history easier than most. After those she loves most, sicken & die when in close contact with her for long periods of time, she discovers she has been cursed with the Blood of the Vampire.

A definite page-turner that manages to discuss religion, spirituality, birthrights, race, sizeism, sexism & many other things help to make this classic a still relevant & entertaining read today.

Tina Rath says

This novel was first published in 1897 – yes, the same year as *Dracula*.

Readers may well find the poisonously racist views expressed by the old doctor, who, I think, is intended to be a fairly sympathetic character more chilling than the suggestions of vampirism and end up with a good deal of sympathy for the most unwilling vampire Harriet Brandt, with her sad heritage. Apart from her unfortunate tendency to cause the death of anyone she is fond of she is blamed by the other characters for having a good appetite for food, and for being sexually attractive – and the author seems, implicitly, to be blaming her as well.

Well worth reading as a companion to '*Dracula*.'

Jami says

This was - okay. Not great. And while I understand that the casual racism is historically correct it still bothered me.

Muriel Schwenck says

Great melodrama. Harriet is an orphan, who is desperate for friendship and affection. She has an insensitive, sensual, selfish, greedy and needy nature. Early in the book, there is a description of her eating so greedily in a restaurant, that one character describes her as "Feeding like a cormorant."

She is immodest, careless, thoughtless. She is blessed with great physical beauty and plenty of money.

There are some descriptions of her background and early life which might seem racist, Harriet is pretty brutal in her own descriptions, and really shocks other people. It is not the races that are the problems, but what the individuals actually do that is the problem. As the story progresses, racial things are not as important to the main characters. It is the supposed hereditary behavior which is the big problem.

Is Harriet a psychological vampire with fatal effects? Or just a really high maintenance friend and girlfriend?

Is the trail of fatalities she leaves in her wake a series of unfortunate coincidence or a sign of her literally fatal attraction?

I strongly recommend that a person ignore the introduction by Brenda Hammock until AFTER reading the novel. The intro is full of psychology, feminist theory and such. Fine reading for additional ideas, but way too much input before reading this story for the first time.

Treat Ms. Hammocks treatise on the book as an AFTERWARD, not an introduction.

Just enjoy the novel first.

Jill says

This is an okay little story even if it's a bit amateurish. But the best part of this edition is an essay at the end written by a doctor of the time about female masturbation. It's hilarious.

Charlotte says

This book was recommended to me by a lecturer last year and I have only just got around to reading it. Everything about the fin de siècle era fascinates me, which meant this book was already a winner in my eyes before I turned the first page. The promise of supernatural elements was another practically guaranteed win for this novel. The style was easy enough to read and enjoy, although Marryat's use of commas was frequently wrong and that disturbed the English student in me. I wouldn't say I agree with the blurb, which cites 'The Blood of the Vampire' as the "other vampire novel" of 1897. Aside from a few hints and superstitions, there is not one vampire in this book. Granted, the plot is a subjective one and the reader is left to draw their own conclusions but there is absolutely no evidence of a supernatural sub-plot. Not to say that this prevented me from liking the novel. Harriet was a fascinating character, flawed and yet sympathetic. I also loved every other character in the novel, even Miss Leyton and the Baroness. The prickliness of their personalities made them uniquely human and added an authentic feel to the story. I am glad I hunted this book down, even if it wasn't easy to find.

Ereck says

A compelling read, Marryat's novel is most shocking in how thoroughly it engages with cultural anxieties of fin-de-siècle Britain, including concern with eugenics and heredity, emergent psychology, feminism and social class, spiritualism, and imperialism. Brenda Hammack's historicist introduction and critical bibliography -- best read as an afterword, just as the initial footnote recommends-- are illuminating and balanced: not attempting to fix an interpretation of the novel but, rather, constructively encouraging further thought, related reading (primary and secondary), and ongoing historical exploration.

Sky says

I didn't finish this book; had to read it for a class, but didn't finish it due to the other reading material that was

assigned to me. From what I did read, I had a hard time paying attention. Good story in the beginning and great theory, but the writing didn't keep my interest as much.

Candice Lee says

I am actually torn by this book. On one hand, it is a novel that is ahead of its time. It features themes of otherness, racism, genetic inheritance, loneliness, and sexism to name a few ideas. On the other hand, it is not daring enough, and its conclusion punishes and sacrifices a supposed "bad" girl to make some purportedly "poor but more deserving" good girl rich. To put it concisely, this book is about slut-shaming more than anything else.

I know that today we have discovered that sociopathy is inheritable, but the main character is not a sociopath. She is not a rabid killer who wants blood and drains people to keep living. She wants love which is seen as unnatural in the story even for an orphan who was walled up in a nunnery for ten years. Her passionate and blooming sexual nature, which would be considered demure these days, is vilified (as are all displays of affection).

The main character is as unaware of her power of attraction as she is of her parentage. The type of persecution she suffers at the hands of the Doctor underlies every form of racism, sexism, homophobia and so on. This book promotes the idea of bad blood. A person may not mean to be bad. They just are born that way. We are right to not pity them and to stay away from them at all costs because look what happens when you befriend strangers who are not exactly like you: people start to die.

The only guy who is sympathetic to the cause of the poor and wants all people to be treated equally gets his for believing in human kind. He wanted a passionate woman like himself, and got punished for it. Stay with the boring waters you are familiar with, this novel says. Marry boring girls without passion who treat you coldly and prudishly because they are safe. And for the girls, marry handsome, vain, flirty guys who have wandering eyes because one day they will learn to appreciate you (Sure they will).

This book feels like an even more xenophobic rendition of "Jane Eyre." The Victorian women must have been terrified when foreign ladies showed up full of exotic passion. They felt so threatened by their ability to emote and be sexual they had to write many novels vilifying them and elevating themselves.

This story was a trail breaker at its time for women authors, but I am not liking where the trail is leading. It crushes one type of woman to raise up another. There seems to be good reasons for this book no longer being popular. Maybe there is a reason it should fade away into the past and not be read anymore except by scholars who can recognize and analyze the depth and destructiveness of its message.

Alex says

Oh god this is so excellent. I was expecting this to be really bad and/or poorly-written, but it's really worth the read if you're into vampires/Victorian ladies, as I am. Granted, Marryat has her moments when the prose isn't sparkling ("The what," said Elinor Leyton ungrammatically" springs to mind in particular), but it's an intriguing tale with a very interesting lead female character, and I don't know why more people haven't read

this book. Please check it out!

Pippa says

I was very disappointed with this. Didn't agree with the notes in it either.

Suzanna Gibbs says

I read this for my thesis. I enjoyed the different spin on the traditional vampire tale. It's a good contrast to Dracula and interestingly was published in the same year.

Juliana says

My review: <https://theblankgarden.com/2017/10/11...>

Nancy Oakes says

4.5 rounded up to a 5. Another excellent Valancourt reprint -- I've been so lucky in my choices with this publisher that I shouldn't be amazed, but I am every time I pick up one their books.

To say I was mildly surprised and very pleased with this book is an understatement. Although it came out in the same year that Stoker published his novel Dracula, the titular vampire in this story doesn't bite anyone in the neck, nor is there any bloodletting or bloodsucking here. As I generally do with any new author (or at least anyone new to me), I went into this novel with zero expectations and quickly realized that while there are definitely commonalities between the two, Marryat's book is vastly different. And it's really, really good, feeding my need for that perfect blending of truly dark and literary fiction that I crave. It's also another one of those books about which dissertations might be written because of what's going on underneath the surface. In short, it's probably not for everyone, but it's right up my alley.

I will say that it's not the sort of thing I'd recommend to someone who wants the standard sort of vampire-horror novel. Au contraire, it's something I'd definitely recommend to anyone like me who is fascinated by Victorian society and how it is captured in literature, most especially by women of the time. There are plenty of online reviews & dissections of this novel, but do read it first.

for plot, etc. (without spoilers, I promise), you can click here to get to my reading journal.

Lovely book -- sending me after more of Marryat's work.

Leaf Album says

I was expecting something original but alas it fell into the typical gothic trope fest half way through. The first half was very good while falling flat toward the end. Sad to see the author just cop out and say "well screw it let's just end this in the most gothic way possible." While it seems like in knocking this book through the loop it was t that bad as I did like it. I just don't see myself ever reading this again.

Max says

This was a great book. Although the cover and title lead me to expect a horror story in the vein of the novel's contemporary, *Dracula*, *The Blood of the Vampire* is much more like a romance novel in the vein of Jane Austen with a supernatural horror element added in. The protagonist, Harriet Brandt, is a psychic vampire who absorbs energy from the people she's closest too, and this does lead to a certain amount of horror, but it is not the entire focus of the plot. Much of the story is concerned with Harriet coming into her own as a member of society and trying to navigate the difficult world of upperclass Britain while finding love and happiness. She does leave awful things in her wake thanks to her cursed blood, but the novel is surprisingly sympathetic towards her. The secondary characters are all quite well written and interesting. These include Margaret Pullen, a loving mother, her soon-to-be-sister-in-law Elinor Leyton, who's rather aloof for much of the novel, and the absolutely fascinating Baroness who is horrible and yet compelling. There are also fun male characters, especially the feminist, socialist, and all around forward-thinking Anthony Pennell. The romance in the novel is cute and well done, while the horror I felt at Harriet's inescapable condition was also quite deep and enjoyable. Over all, I really enjoyed this book, and I hope that it will begin to be less obscure, since I think other people would like it as well.

????? says

Way more sophisticated than 99% of the vampire books out there, including *Dracula*, which was published the same year. This one will actually make you think about important things, like racism, colonialism, and redemption.

Debra Manskey says

Wonderful Gothic vampire fiction that I re-read for uni. The language is a little dated but the tensions, class and gender distinctions are all (to me) well handled.
Highly recommended to anyone who's interested in genre fiction.

Mirte says

This novel, published in the same year as *Dracula*, is also referred to as "the other vampire novel". I'd argue

this is an astute naming, indeed, on several levels.

Firstly, because I managed to finish this one easily, while having attempted to read *Dracula* several times now, and have every time given up at some point halfway through because it just didn't engage me. Well, this novel certainly did - it is grotesque, scandalous, posits some very problematic issues having to do with race, gender and class. In addition to this, it features several characters that are just deliciously bad, caricatures perhaps, but very well executed, and with enough of a kernel of reality to make one a little uncomfortable. This is popular fiction, clearly, and it does not pretend to be any more, though it is indeed a very interesting read to provide one with insights into current issues the fin de siècle.

Secondly, Marryat's vampire is a very different vampire from Stoker's. Expecting a kind of female *Dracula*, a femme fatale with fangs, this novel surprised me with its psychological incarnation of vampirism - one perhaps more scary than the traditional one exactly because the author keeps skirting around the issue, and the truth of the matter is never truly revealed - it could, in the end, still be bad luck rather than the vampire bat's curse. The essential difference, for me, was Harriet's own ignorance of the effect she has on others, and the tragic conclusion she comes to once she finds this out. It is a type of muted gothic that is still frightening in its 'realism'.

Thirdly, this novel is about women, and not dusty letters from one man to another. All different sorts of women, young and old, beautiful and ugly, rich and poor, powerful and powerless. Which made it very appealing to me; even the heroine is not an average Victorian heroine, with her mood swings and overt craving of affection - she has faults, and these are never fully redeemed. The novel, like *Dracula*, shows women can be victimized by society - by real men, not just fantastic vampires - as well as how they might attempt to take matters into their own hands.

As for critique: Marryat thinks of punctuation as a guide line rather than actual rules. The novel bursts with exclamation marks, which really bothered me at times. It is, furthermore, not a subtle novel, and the story line is fairly straightforward and unembellished, uncomplicated - perhaps a little too simple. But, in its defense, can I just say that it is truly a pleasure to read a novel in public that has a naked woman with bat wings on the cover?

Anna says

Just the other day I was reminded of an essay about Fanny Price in which she is described as being an emotional vampire for sucking the life out of those around her. Now here I am reading *The Blood of the Vampire* and starting to think that there is something to that phrase, emotional vampire. Harriet seems to drain the life out of her companions just by her presence. This is an interesting take on vampirism and I'm excited to read more.

Just finished this book and it is an interesting take on Vampire mythology. I can only wonder how different *Buffy* and *Twilight* might have been if Florence Marryat's vampire had been the one adopted into pop culture history. There is no blood in this tale, at least not in the traditional horror genre way. The Blood here refers to inherited traits, genetics and the idea that blood will out. Harriet Brandt is a vampire. She sucks the life out of those around her, but she does it through her sheer emotional intensity. The taint of her blood has to do with racial purity and Victorian morality. But yes, there is a bat.
