

Beloved Vampire of the Blood Comet

by Ian Watson & Roberto Quaglia

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4,300 Words.

Nowadays aristocratic vampires hang out far away from Transylvania, which is only for tourists. Aristo-vamps live in posh places such as Antibes and Baden-Baden or Venice, and they bank in Switzerland.

Incidentally, they only bank money and gold and jewels, never blood. Plenty of blood-banks exist, but after a few months bottled blood isn't at its best – and supposing interest was paid on a blood deposit, would this come from the veins of shareholders? Blood must continue circulating, otherwise it loses value.

A few hundred years ago Transylvania was *the* cutting-edge place to be, as my beloved vampire explained to me.

His name was Silviu Romanescu. He was tall and slim, with shoulder-length white hair, and he looked about forty years old, though probably he was at least 200. Silviu's charm was extraordinary. By now I had been captivated for a year.

“Well now, my little dove,” he narrated to me, “the first expedition into outer space was actually an expedition of vampires led by Vlad Tsepesh (speaking phonetically, as one usually speaks), aka Dracula. History tells a lot of nonsense about Vlad. That business about him impaling his enemies on account of sadism and to inspire horror, for example! Horror wasn't the reason at all. Vlad needed a method of propulsion to lift a heavy body into outer space.”

“There were no rocket fuels at the time...”

“Exactly. So he needed to use a paranormal method.”

“He needed to find people who could levitate something by the power of mind?”

“What better motive to levitate a heavy weight than if that weight is yourself impaled on a semi-sharpened stake! So he, shall I say, *auditioned*, tens of thousands of, shall I say, *candidates*. Those who succeeded, he used as strap-on boosters and as on-board propulsion – the Impalement Drive—for the Transylvanian spaceship.”

“It sounds cruel. This is supposed to be my bedtime story, Silviu!”

Silviu and I were lying on a bed of compost in an open twin-size coffin, and Silviu liked to have worms in the compost, which would tickle me, sometimes very intimately like boneless fingers. *The worms keep the soil fresh*, was his reason. I was accustomed to unusual bedtime stories, told at dawn of course since dawn was bedtime in his heavily curtained palazzo in Venice. However, this story was making me shivery, and to cling to him was of little help since his body wasn't at blood-heat but many degrees lower. That's why I usually had a rug over me except in the hot smelly Venetian summer, when the touch of Silviu's cool limbs was enchanting.

By the way, vampires never empty a victim's veins – would *you* want to drink five litres of soup for supper? – but often on a Friday or Saturday night vampires are thirstier than usual and their victim's blood pressure drops too low to sustain life. Thus not too many vampires tend to live in the same city, otherwise the number of semi-exsanguinated corpses might arouse suspicions.

Silviu had mesmeric powers, and influential local contacts. Consequently stories appeared in *Il Gazzettino di Venezia*, blaming McDonald's for the semi-exsanguinated corpses which the Carabinieri fished out of the canals or found in alleyways. Anti-Americanism was popular, and it's well known that capitalists are blood-suckers, so many people believed that the seats in McDonald's contained anaesthetising needles which sucked blood from customers, to be replaced with cholesterol. Thus Venetians ate their hamburgers standing up, whereas Americans always need to sit down. Where possible at the weekend, Silviu hunted fat tourists.

"Vlad's spaceship was made of armour in Gothic style held together by interior leather straps riveted to the plates—and reinforced with internal braces so it wouldn't be too flexible, unlike armour which needs to be flexible."

"How do you know all this?"

"I was on that expedition." Quickly I revised my estimate of Silviu's age.

I didn't much wish to ask the next question, but the point had been niggling.

"Um, why were those candidates' stakes only *semi*-sharpened?"

"Because otherwise they might die too suddenly from shock. However, after leaving Earth's gravity behind, the stakes used for the Impalement Drive were fully sharpened because in outer space there's no weight to impale you."

"Um, what happened to the strap-on boosters?"

"Once we achieved escape velocity, those were unstrapped from within the ship. By then the bodies were frozen solid. Ice-corpses rained on what are now Romania and Hungary."

"Were you all wearing space-armour inside the ship?"

"No, my little dove. Vlad needed to limit the weight. As you know, cold means little to a vampire and we don't need to breathe, although sometimes we pretend to, as when I make love to you. Vampires are the best astronauts."

"But what about those Impalement Drivers? Didn't *they* need air?"

“You mean the successful candidates who pushed the ship along paranormally, strapped to the inside?”

“Yes, them.”

“Little dove, are you by any chance trying to poke holes in your bedtime story?”

“I’m just fascinated by the details.”

“Well, we had alchemical apparatus that stored solid air created earlier. You’d be amazed at how much air you can solidify into something as small as a brick. The Impalement Drivers, as you call them, wore bladders over their heads joined by tubes to the alchemical apparatus. Also, we used the drivers now and then as food-animals, akin to the way the Martians behave in *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells. Do you realize that Orson Welles named his radio company the Mercury Theatre, and that Hg is the chemical symbol for mercury?”

Seemingly I couldn’t fault Silviu on any detail!

“But what was the reason for this expedition?”

“To discover if our kind dwell on the Moon!”

Once again, how I envied and admired Silviu. He was undoubtedly a superior being. Admittedly he was also dead—all vampires are dead—but Silviu only smelled slightly sweet in a nice way, like Parma Violets. Didn’t Nietzsche say God is dead? Being dead may be why God is a superior being. The crucifixion was a cunning plan.

“Will you ever make me into a vampire?” I asked wistfully.

“That would spoil our relationship, my pigeon. I like it as it is.”

You could call me a vampire-virgin. That’s because Silviu’s teeth never once pricked me. I was like a pussy cat to him, to be stroked, or maybe more like a musical instrument, for when his skillful fingers played with me I moaned melodiously; which he enjoyed. Better than Albinoni, he commented. Very soothing, and melancholy in a delicious way. Mature vampires experience aesthetic and metaphysical desires rather than physical ones. In the case of male vampires, I was led to believe, their penises never stiffen with blood flow.

I first met Silviu while I was returning to my hotel on the Riva degli Sciaconi late at night. I had stared in wonder at his beautiful white hair and the long black velvet cloak he wore over a harlequin costume. I, Colombe Duval, had come to Venice from Paris with my camera for carnival time. I was in advertising and was preparing a campaign for an expensive new mascara containing depleted uranium dust, called Maskara, to give eyelids that heavy, sultry, radioactive look.

Silviu was wearing a minimal black mask, emphasizing his mesmeric gaze. I gazed, mesmerized. He also gazed in admiration at my long red hair—and then in a trice he had *collected* me, in his very strong arms, and he ran swiftly and effortlessly along the waterside promenade while I offered no resistance.

Did a maiden struggle when abducted by a Greek god? I think traditionally she did, fearing rough sex

followed by a dose of homeric herpes Zeustor. I didn't struggle.

Soon my adoration for Silviu grew and grew. Forget about depleted uranium mascara! Forget about Paris! Forget photography, since flash offended Silviu's eyes and in any case nothing of him appeared on any photos despite the longest exposure in the dim palazzo. After I'd been awake only nocturnally for a few months, my flesh grew white as alabaster, which Silviu liked.

And he told such wonderful bed-time stories. Never before did I know that Marie Antoinette was a vampire. "Qu'ils mangent *dusangfroid*," is what she really said about the bread riots in Paris, not *de labrioche*. 'Sangfroids' were a favourite speciality made to a recipe of Grimod de La Reynière – little cold blood-puddings that looked like buns. So she making an elegant pun. Due to my comparative inactivity, aside from wonderful orgasms at dawn and dusk, I had to be careful not to put on weight. Consequently delicacies were essential, being delicate. Silviu himself only ever ate sparsely, to restore trace elements which his body lost.

"Where were we, my little dove? Ah yes, in outer space, heading for the Moon in a spaceship of best-quality armour powered and steered by the paranormal avoidance of impalement."

"Would the armour be from Milan? Would it be called 'Avant' armour?"

I knew a bit about armour because I'd taken a lot of photos of armour for an ad campaign: Tough Guys Wear Condoms Too. The erect penis of the male model wearing a condom had stuck out through a special hole in the miniskirt of chainmail. We had to show him a turkey porn movie before he erected. There was just no other way to get through to him. And then, the first time, he jammed – but at least the condom didn't tear, which pleased the manufacturers. By turkey I don't mean it was a bad movie. It was about sex with a turkey, digi-animated. By then it was too late to hire a different male model whose childhood au pair hadn't played with him during Disney cartoons.

"My pigeon, I told you it was *Gothic* armour – so that means made in Germany. Well, after three days we landed near the South Pole on the backside of the Moon during the lunar night that lasts a fortnight, and we discovered the frozen lake produced by the blood comet."

"Wait a minute, Silviu. I understand how you took off, but how did you land? Did you threaten the drivers with being unimpaled or anti-impaled or whatever the word is?"

"No no, we steered the ship by turning the main driver around until we were over the place we wanted, and upright. Then Vlad buggered the driver. This was such a relief after the sensation of the stake that the driver felt more relaxed. So the paranormal levitation became less than the Moon's gravity. We sank down gently, controlled by Vlad's thrusts and withdrawals."

"Quite a man, Vlad."

"Much misunderstood. The first space commander."

"How come Vlad's dead penis stiffened for buggery, whereas yours doesn't?"

"That, my dove, is the measure of what sort of dead man Vlad was! He alone fulfills the prophecy, *The Dead Shall Rise*. He was out of this world."

“Was? Did he die on the Moon? I mean, did he expire?”

“Since I was part of that expedition, obviously we returned to Transylvania and touched down successfully. However, Vlad then had an even greater inspiration – no less than travel to the stars by an FTL drive, *Faster Than Levitation*. Ordinary Impalement Drivers, inspired to levitate by wooden stakes, wouldn’t be adequate to reach the stars – but Impalement Drivers converted into powerful vampires and then inspired by *silver-tipped* stakes: those could provide the levitation power for starflight! So I suppose Vlad is still out there somewhere, unless the light of an alien sun has burned him to dust.”

A dramatic pause. We broke off so I could have some orgasms, first from Silviu’s fingers, then from his cool tongue. Just then I was having my period, Silviu’s favourite time for cunnilingus.

Afterwards I asked, “What about the lake of frozen blood? And did you meet lunar vampires?”

“Oh yes, we met the lunar vampires. They colonised the Moon tens of thousands of years ago by using impalement technology, which Vlad had re-invented. Von Däniken was right about prehistoric technology, though wrong about details. Initially, the lunar vampires fed entirely on the blood of the crews of flying saucers. Flying saucers usually stop at the Moon on their way to interfere with the Earth. The Moon’s a convenient rest-stop if you forget about the vampires— the UFO crews always forget because of vampiric mesmerism. So the UFO crews get sucked quite a lot. That’s why they’re the Greys. When they first leave home, they’re the Pinks. This explains why the Greys behave so confusingly when their UFOs reach Earth.”

“So the lunar vampires are like antibodies in the immune system? Protecting the body of the Earth from invasion? Weakening the invaders?”

“But unintentionally. Ever since that blood comet crashed into the Moon and formed a frozen lake, the lunar vampires have had an alternative source of blood. However, they still like to suck Pinks into Greys for old times sake. Nowadays UFO crews are like dessert. Or maybe like blood sorbet, a palate cleanser.”

“You mentioned a blood comet. How can something like that come into existence?”

“The universe is never stingy of mysteries, my dear. How do ordinary comets, made from dirty water, come into existence? Nobody really knows. The same with blood comets. Of course the blood is frozen, but originally it must have been liquid, just as the water of the comets must have been. The mystery of the origin of blood comets will one day be solved, but not by human scientists. It will be one of us, a vampire, who finds out the truth. Maybe our forever beloved Vlad Dracul will, if he is still out there.”

“But if blood comets actually exist, wouldn’t vampires like to take a ride on them?”

“You’re really starting to think like a vampire, Colombe,” Silviu told me with an appreciative smile.

“Maybe I should give you a bite one day, you’d deserve it.”

“But you won’t. Or will you?”

“Not in the near future.”

“So tell me: would vampires ride blood comets?”

“That’s entirely possible. It’s beautiful to think of the vastness of the sidereal spaces ploughed by thousands of blood comets like spatial vessels. Outer space is the natural environment for a vampire, us being dead and not needing air or tourist comfort, and cosmic darkness protects us from the deadly rays of suns. Imagine an ancient primitive vampire form of life! Maybe proto-vampires originally came to Earth on a blood comet millions or even billions of years ago, and the panspermia theory of the propagation of life though the universe is true – for vampire beings, which have moved through the universe inside blood comets since forever. Life on every populated planet could derive from this proto-vampire form of life, and successive mutations would create the first and little known bifurcation of evolution: superior vampire life in one direction and inferior non-vampire life in the other. The creation of the banal mortal form of life of non-vampires is needed by nature for its trivial tragedies, and even more for producing all the necessary blood which vampires need. Vampires cannot drink the blood of other dead and immortal beings. A vampire’s food source must be alive and mortal.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

“Nature *loves* complications, my dear. Look at the tail of a peacock.”

It was time for more orgasms, since my menstruation was at its peak and Silviu wouldn’t miss a drop, which typically results in more and more pleasure for me – and who was I to refuse that? If only I could have permanent menstruation – I’d often thought – I’d be the happiest of the women, since I would be licked almost incessantly by a competent male like Silviu, with hundreds of years of haematocunnilingual experience!

Because Silviu had waited a whole year (which was nothing to a vampire) before revealing something as momentous as his journey to the Moon, reluctantly I decided that his account must be no more than a wonderful invention to enchant me. But then, three months later —

In the vast bedroom of the palazzo we had a plasma-screen TV because Silviu liked to watch operas, particularly ones by Mozart. Early one night, a news flash interrupted *The Marriage of Figaro* performed at Venice’s own La Fenice. On the other side of the Atlantic, where it was afternoon, an unidentified spacecraft was heading for Florida—just as American astronauts were preparing to board the re-repaired space shuttle, watched by President Bush himself. Space experts and Homeland Security thought the intruder was an alien spacecraft. The launch was put on hold. George Bush decided not to leave hastily in Air Force One because this might be ‘a moment of destiny.’

We watched the ‘alien’ spaceship descend slowly, as if by antigravity, while American fighter jets circled. Cameras zoomed – and we saw a ship made of medieval armour, pitted by micrometeorites.

“It’s the return of Dracula,” said Silviu, almost in awe.

I spoke without thinking: “No, my love, *The Return of Dracula*’s on Channel Three.” Blushing, I asked more sensibly, “How could he be away for so long?”

“For him, my pigeon, much less time will have passed because of time dilation due to Faster Than Levitation travel.”

The ship of Gothic armour touched the ground quite close to the shuttle launch pad, near where the seven brave spacesuited astronauts still sat holding their helmets, each in his or her own stretch-golf-buggy. Gantry and shuttle with booster rockets towered high overhead, dwarfing the armour-ship which slumped slightly as if relaxing. Towards the bottom of the Gothic spaceship, a big plate hinged open.

Already the presidential limo was speeding towards the landing site, secret service agents clinging to the sides, police motorbikes accompanying. TV crews raced after the limo.

Down from that doorway in the armour jumped a person dressed in a bear skin with a few big buttons. He had long ringlets of brown hair and a long nose curving over big moustaches. The person staggered because of gravity then drew himself upright.

Zoom-mikes picked up Vlad Tsepesh's voice—which Silviu translated for me, him being fluent in medieval Romanian and many other languages – as he bellowed triumphantly at the seated NASA astronauts:

“I bring news that the Milky Way is not a milky way... but the Bloody Way... I bring news of many blood comets... Hmm, he says many planets are made of flesh... The more you approach the center of the galaxy, the more often the planets are made of flesh... Old-fashioned non-flesh planets are still a majority only in the periphery of the galaxy, where things happen more slowly and evolution is retarded... Planets are converted to living flesh because of nano-viruses... in a cosmic war between Flesh and Machines... The pressure of shit accumulating inside a living planet often explodes it... Asteroids are haemorrhoids... Vampire life is generally far more common in the universe than the human sort of life... My dove, these are remarkable discoveries. This fully explains the frozen blood lake on the Moon!”

The limo arrived before Vlad could declare more remarkable facts about the cosmos. The car doors opened. The eyes of the world were upon George Bush. He couldn't go on holiday this time. No more New Orleans. Followed by several advisers, he had little choice but to advance, holding out his hand to Vlad Tsepesh, though he could have little idea who Vlad was, even if Vlad bore a certain resemblance to Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Vlad also looked a bit like Osama bin Laden (though not so soulful and dewy-eyed), but George Bush had seen too many fake videos of Osama bin Laden produced by the CIA to recognize the leader of Al Qaida, if Al Qaida actually existed.

Vlad glanced up at the towering space shuttle pointing at the sky.

“You impale *big*,” Silviu translated for me. “But I impale more.”

There was a swaggering braggadocio about the vampire commander.

Bravely, or stupidly, George Bush decided to embrace Vlad in the French fashion since evidently he was a foreigner.

Vlad promptly sank his vampire teeth into the President's neck, sucked for a while, then exclaimed in medieval Romanian (as translated by Silviu), “God, I was thirsty.”

Whereupon he spun George Bush around and pulled down his trousers and polka-dot underpants. Obviously Vlad wished to assert himself. The thrust of his penis poking through the bear skin lifted George Bush a little into the air, and not by levitation.

Microphones picked up the President's shaky words:

"Oh my God! ARE YOU GOD, COME TO GUIDE ME?"

For many years to come, the most devout Americans would chant in their churches these inspired and anguished words of their president, and would undergo a sacrament of impalement in the form of a quick colonoscopy performed by zealous preachers...

In the days following the historic meeting between Dracula and President Bush, all TV channels broadcast again and again the already immortal images of the event, just as happened previously with the Twin Towers attack. Publicity spots sold very well. To the surprise of TV viewers, the secret service had done nothing to stop Dracula from taking advantage of Bush. Those men can't be stupid because they work for the Bureau of the Treasury, not the CIA, so they knew perfectly well that vampires are immortal and can't be killed, and that frustrating them makes them really mad. The fairy tale of those wooden stakes which are supposed to destroy vampires is only a cinematographic invention. The only things that can terminate a vampire are an eternally unsatisfied thirst or falling into a black hole (which some vampire-philosopher consider to be equivalent). Oh, and of course blazing sunshine too, but Florida was cloudy that day and none of the secret service agents had a portable sun with them. Plus, the security guys probably didn't themselves much want to be bitten by Vlad Tsepesh, and be vampirized. This may have been ill-advised, since later it would become a status symbol to be a vampire. Another explanation is that they didn't react because Vlad mesmerised them, with the typical psychic emanation which makes vampires such erotic creatures. But these are all hypotheses.

George Bush became a vampire, and presently he was impeached, not for being a vampire – this actually would be a point in his favour – but on Homeland Security grounds for letting himself be buggered in public on TV by an illegal Romanian immigrant without a visa. The American people love impaling presidents, but not impaled ones. Imagine if Monica Lewinski had used a dildo instead of her mouth. Many millions of Americans who viewed the Bush-Tsepesh encounter (a Bottom, rather than a Summit) got psychosomatic irritations of their anuses, and male homosexuality in the United States rose significantly, though this was outstripped by vampirosexuality.

A new President of the United States was needed. The American Constitution had already been modified so that Schwarzenegger, not born in America, could be elected—but because of this Vlad Tsepesh could become a candidate too, and finally Vlad the Genuine Impaler of History beat Arnie the Fake Terminator of Fiction. The fact that when Vlad was speaking medieval Romanian nobody in America could understand him turned out to be an advantage for his campaign. It wouldn't be so easy as before to disagree with the statements of the President of the United States. What's more, the vampire who came back from the stars had revealed to the world by his pioneering voyage mysteries of the universe that were previously unknown. Mankind could dream about new horizons. The American dream became a Romanian dream. As a result, the White House was completely remodelled in the style of the monumental People's Palace of Ceausescu.

Henceforth American foreign policy found it much easier to prevail. The impalement of terrorist suspects, which became the speciality of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, established a new standard of potent folklore worldwide. I thought this was quite bizarre, since Silviu had told me that Vlad mainly impaled people for propulsive purposes. Vlad thus became a victim of his popular persona. At the

next G8 meeting, he bit the leaders of the world's eight most industrialised countries, transforming them into immortal vampires. Were they lucky! Polls reveal that the majority of mankind would happily be vampirized – however, the world vampire élite reserve their magic bites for an increasingly restricted circle of privileged people. I'm really afraid that Silviu will never bite me.

However – and this is the scary bit—I still don't really know if Silviu has told me the whole truth. Could the bizarre encounter between Bush and Dracula have been a complete coincidence? Is there really a vampiric shield on the Moon that protects us from the full effects of UFOs? Are most planets in our galaxy made of flesh? And do my menstruations really have a subtle flavour of ginger?

The most ominous doubt emerges occasionally in the dreamy mists of early dawn, as my eyes open from the sleep that each night makes them innocent again. It's then, while I'm neither fully awake nor asleep, that I sometimes wonder this:

Now that the world is ruled by vampires, and people believe in them and piously pray during ceremonial colonoscopies, *do vampires actually exist*, or are they state-of-the-art from the élite's myth factory? Is Silviu Romanescu, now a top figure of the Vlad Tsepesh administration, really the vampire that he purports to be?

An invasion by aliens mightn't be noticed if the aliens imitated, not the widescreen technicolor special effects of *Independence Day* or *The War of the Worlds*, which would shout *invasion*—but instead the black-and-white erotic-noir of B movies of beloved memory set in Transylvania, with which we all feel at home. Imagery is everything nowadays.

About the Authors

[Ian Watson](#) wrote the screen story for Spielberg's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, and *especially* the last 20 minutes of it which many people seem not to realise is very bleak, not schmaltzy. That was after 9 months spent in Stanley Kubrick's kitchen and snooker room. He also annoyed the SF community by writing 4 Warhammer 40K novels for Games Workshop under his *own name*, yet he receives more fan mail for those, on account of life-altering epiphanies, than for his other 40 odd novels and story collections. (Should "40 odd" have a hyphen? No!) Games Workshop reacted to the great popularity of one of these, *Space Marine*, by banning its republication on grounds of heresy; so tattered old copies usually cost a lot of eBay. Like many sorcerers, Ian lives with a female black cat in a tiny village in rural England. His Hungarian publisher and his Spanish translator maintain a [web-site](#) to honour the almost unknown though admirable and peculiar Colombian poet Miguel Ajeno.

[Roberto Quaglia](#) from Genoa usually lives in Bucharest speaking Romanian, although he can now also imitate enough Russian to make Russians believe that he's speaking Russian. As a result, he recently posed for the Russian *Penthouse*. Admiration of Bob Sheckley caused Roberto to invite Sheckley to Italy, then drive him around Europe for several years in his big white Mercedes labelled

www.surrealism.info until the letters fell off the rear window. Ex-barman, prize photographer, and one-time surrealist City Councillor for Genoa, Roberto's hilarious double novel *Bread, Butter and Paradoxine* is [available in English](#) – and he's Vice-President of the European SF Association, which presides over the Eurocons held in different countries such as Bulgaria and Ukraine recently, and in 2007 in Denmark. He and Ian started writing stories together in a strangely deserted hotel in a hilly forest near the Hungary/Slovakia border in 2003, and now there's a complete book, *The Beloved of My Beloved*, eagerly seeking a brave and demented publisher. Two other stories from this projected volume are on *Helix* and *Clarkesworld*.

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