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Eripmav
by Damon Knight
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Originally published by Mercury Press in 1958

Fictionwise Contemporary
Science Fiction

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ON THE planet Veegl, in the Fomalhaut system, we found a curious race of cellulose vampires. The Veeglians, like all higher life on their world, are plants; the Veeglian vampire, needless to say, is a sapsucker.

One of the native clerks in our trade mission, a plant-girl named Xixl, had been complaining of lassitude and showing an unhealthy pink color for some weeks. The girl's parent stock suspected vampirism; we were skeptical, but had to admit that the two green-tinged punctures at the base of her axis were evidence of something wrong.

Accordingly, we kept watch over her sleep-box for three nights running. (The Veeglians sleep in boxes of soil, built of heavy slabs of the hardmeat tree, or woogl; they look rather like coffins.) On the third night, sure enough, a translator named Ffengl, a hefty, blue-haired fellow, crept into her room and bent over the sleep-box.

We rushed out at the blackguard, but he turned quick as a wink and fairly flew up the whitemeat stairs. (The flesh of Veegl's only animal life, the "meat-trees," or oogl, petrifies rapidly in air and is much used for construction.) We found him in an unsuspected vault at the very top of the old building, trying to hide under the covers of an antique bed. It was an eerie business. We sizzled him with blasts from our proton guns, and yet to the end, with unVeeglian vitality, he was struggling to reach us with his tendrils.

Afterward he seemed dead enough, but the local wiseheads advised us to take certain precautions.

So we buried him with a steak through his heart.

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