

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,000

This is not a place that I want to be after Dark Evo.

2

00:00:05,000 --> 00:00:08,540

For thousands of years, our nightmares have had one name.

3

00:00:08,540 --> 00:00:11,540

Vampire.

4

00:00:11,540 --> 00:00:15,540

The concept of the vampire is something that has real roots in Romania.

5

00:00:15,540 --> 00:00:17,540

But in the home of the Dracula legend...

6

00:00:17,540 --> 00:00:20,040

There is an open sarcophagus.

7

00:00:20,040 --> 00:00:23,540

Can I finally dig up the truth behind our fears?

8

00:00:23,540 --> 00:00:26,540

Okay, creepy cemetery check.

9

00:00:26,580 --> 00:00:29,580

You dig up a body and eat a heart, you're gonna get a little attention.

10

00:00:29,580 --> 00:00:32,580

Holy s***, are you kidding me?

11

00:00:32,580 --> 00:00:34,580

Something just cracked.

12

00:00:41,580 --> 00:00:45,580

Since the dawn of man, monsters have appeared in our myths,

13

00:00:45,580 --> 00:00:47,580

our culture, and our nightmares.

14

00:00:47,580 --> 00:00:52,580

And there's one type of monster that casts a long shadow over all the rest.

15

00:00:52,580 --> 00:00:54,580

Or no shadow at all, actually.

16

00:00:54,580 --> 00:00:55,580

Vampires.

17

00:00:57,540 --> 00:01:01,540

But where did the legend of these nocturnal bloodsuckers come from?

18

00:01:01,540 --> 00:01:03,540

And could it be based on something real?

19

00:01:03,540 --> 00:01:05,540

Nonsense, right?

20

00:01:05,540 --> 00:01:07,540

Well, that's what I thought.

21

00:01:07,540 --> 00:01:12,540

But a series of strange reports from Eastern Europe has many people sleeping with the lights on.

22

00:01:12,540 --> 00:01:16,540

In a village in southern Romania, a group of residents made headline news

23

00:01:16,540 --> 00:01:20,540

when they claimed a recently deceased man came back from the dead.

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00:01:20,540 --> 00:01:25,540

They exhumed his body and performed ancient anti-vampire rituals on the corpse,

25

00:01:25,540 --> 00:01:28,540

including burning and eating his heart.

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00:01:28,540 --> 00:01:33,540

And across the border in Bulgaria, archaeologists have just made a ghastly discovery.

27

00:01:33,540 --> 00:01:38,540

At a mystical site high in the mountains, they've uncovered a vampire grave.

28

00:01:38,540 --> 00:01:41,540

Was this strange burial the result of superstition?

29

00:01:41,540 --> 00:01:45,540

Or was there something about this corpse that made it more than human?

30

00:01:46,540 --> 00:01:50,540

What in the name of the living dead is going on in Eastern Europe?

31

00:01:50,540 --> 00:01:55,540

I intend to find out by getting to the bottom of these long-held beliefs.

32

00:01:55,540 --> 00:01:59,540

So pack your holy water, a few wooden stakes and a clean pair of underwear, kids,

33

00:01:59,540 --> 00:02:02,540

because we're going vampire hunting.

34

00:02:07,540 --> 00:02:09,540

My name is Josh Gates.

35

00:02:10,540 --> 00:02:14,540

With a degree in archaeology and a passion for exploration.

36

00:02:15,540 --> 00:02:18,540

I have a tendency to end up in some very strange situations.

37

00:02:18,540 --> 00:02:21,540

God, Lord have mercy!

38

00:02:22,540 --> 00:02:25,540

My travels have taken me to the ends of the earth,

39

00:02:25,540 --> 00:02:28,540

as I investigate the greatest legends in history.

40

00:02:28,540 --> 00:02:30,540

We're going to fly a star.

41

00:02:30,540 --> 00:02:32,540

This is Expedition Unknown.

42

00:02:37,540 --> 00:02:40,540

Morning in Bucharest, Romania.

43

00:02:40,540 --> 00:02:43,540

This is Eastern Europe at its most confusing,

44

00:02:43,540 --> 00:02:48,540

a place where stunning Orthodox churches share real estate with drab Soviet apartment buildings.

45

00:02:48,540 --> 00:02:52,540

If you're not careful, Bucharest is the kind of city that's easy to be unimpressed by.

46

00:02:52,540 --> 00:02:54,540

That's the truth.

47

00:02:54,540 --> 00:02:57,540

It doesn't have the architectural sex appeal of Prague.

48

00:02:57,540 --> 00:02:59,540

It doesn't have the opulence of Vienna.

49

00:02:59,540 --> 00:03:01,540

After 30 years of brutal communist rule,

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00:03:01,540 --> 00:03:04,540

much of the city that once was is gone.

51

00:03:08,540 --> 00:03:11,540

But something amazing is happening in Bucharest.

52

00:03:13,540 --> 00:03:15,540

The bricks of communism have crumbled,

53

00:03:15,540 --> 00:03:18,540

and the city is getting a serious second wind.

54

00:03:22,540 --> 00:03:25,540

Restaurants are bustling, there's music in the air,

55

00:03:25,540 --> 00:03:29,540

and on the streets, there's a kinetic energy that's impossible to deny.

56

00:03:37,540 --> 00:03:41,540

I'm here to begin my quest to understand the long-standing belief in the vampire.

57

00:03:41,540 --> 00:03:45,540

And to do that, I'm going to have to dig up the perfect ride.

58

00:03:53,540 --> 00:03:58,540

This is a Russian Euro motorcycle with optional oak coffin sidecar.

59

00:03:58,540 --> 00:04:02,540

It is amazing what you can find on Romanian Craigslist.

60

00:04:02,540 --> 00:04:04,540

How are you guys doing?

61

00:04:05,540 --> 00:04:08,540

I'm calling it, greatest vehicle of all time.

62

00:04:08,540 --> 00:04:11,540

It's fuel efficient, it's a serious head turner,

63

00:04:11,540 --> 00:04:14,540

and if you crash it, you can just roll right into your final resting place.

64

00:04:15,540 --> 00:04:17,540

Hi guys!

65

00:04:17,540 --> 00:04:20,540

Romania and vampires go hand in hand.

66

00:04:20,540 --> 00:04:24,540

After all, this is the home of Transylvania and the legendary Dracula.

67

00:04:25,540 --> 00:04:27,540

On my way to meet my first contact,

68

00:04:27,540 --> 00:04:30,540

I ride over to check out the offerings at the peasants market.

69

00:04:32,540 --> 00:04:35,540

In these stalls, every native dish of Romania is here for the tasting,

70

00:04:35,540 --> 00:04:38,540

including their insane version of a churro.

71

00:04:40,540 --> 00:04:42,540

Woo! Hot! Hot!

72

00:04:42,540 --> 00:04:45,540

Good lord, sir!

73

00:04:45,540 --> 00:04:49,540

That is a boiling hot tube bread.

74

00:04:52,540 --> 00:04:53,540

That's it.

75

00:04:53,540 --> 00:04:55,540

People say, what do you think heaven looks like?

76

00:04:55,540 --> 00:04:56,540

I can tell you what heaven looks like.

77

00:04:56,540 --> 00:04:59,540

It looks like this, a tube of buttery, sugared bread.

78

00:04:59,540 --> 00:05:00,540

That's it.

79

00:05:00,540 --> 00:05:01,540

This is my baby now.

80

00:05:01,540 --> 00:05:02,540

I'm going to eat it.

81

00:05:02,540 --> 00:05:04,540

I'm going to eat my baby.

82

00:05:04,540 --> 00:05:06,540

Eat my hot buttery baby.

83

00:05:10,540 --> 00:05:12,540

This is more than a market, though.

84

00:05:12,540 --> 00:05:14,540

It's also a kind of time capsule.

85

00:05:14,540 --> 00:05:18,540

On every table, Romania's history is sprawled out to be haggled over.

86

00:05:18,540 --> 00:05:22,540

The market itself is situated in a nearly forgotten graveyard,

87

00:05:22,540 --> 00:05:24,540

with headstones surrounding the vendors.

88

00:05:29,540 --> 00:05:32,540

Romania's past is steeped in eastern Orthodox Christianity,

89

00:05:32,540 --> 00:05:35,540

co-mingled with ancient pagan beliefs and symbols,

90

00:05:35,540 --> 00:05:38,540

used to ward off evil forces like the vampire.

91

00:05:44,540 --> 00:05:46,540

It smells funky inside that desk.

92

00:05:50,540 --> 00:05:53,540

Only a few blocks away are the eerie remains of Kurti Vecce,

93

00:05:53,540 --> 00:05:56,540

the 15th century fortress of Vlad the Impaler,

94

00:05:56,540 --> 00:05:58,540

Romania's most famous leader.

95

00:05:58,540 --> 00:06:01,540

A meeting with historian Olivia Krasnik,

96

00:06:01,540 --> 00:06:03,540

who leads me down into the catacombs of the castle.

97

00:06:03,540 --> 00:06:06,540

We are going to the older parts of the fortress.

98

00:06:06,540 --> 00:06:07,540

Please watch your step.

99

00:06:07,540 --> 00:06:09,540

It's pretty dark down there.

100

00:06:09,540 --> 00:06:10,540

Sure, it's Dracula's basement.

101

00:06:10,540 --> 00:06:11,540

Of course it's dark.

102

00:06:17,540 --> 00:06:18,540

This is spooky.

103

00:06:22,540 --> 00:06:24,540

This was Dracula's fortress.

104

00:06:24,540 --> 00:06:25,540

Dracula was here.

105

00:06:25,540 --> 00:06:26,540

The real one.

106

00:06:26,540 --> 00:06:27,540

Amazing.

107

00:06:29,540 --> 00:06:34,540

Surprisingly, Vlad Tepes is nothing short of a national hero here in Romania.

108

00:06:34,540 --> 00:06:38,540

He viciously defended Christianity from the invading Islamic Ottomans,

109

00:06:38,540 --> 00:06:41,540

and he had a penchant for impaling his enemies on spikes.

110

00:06:41,540 --> 00:06:46,540

Vlad's family was inducted into the Nightly Order of the Dragon, or Drakuul.

111

00:06:46,540 --> 00:06:48,540

400 years after Vlad's death, though,

112

00:06:48,540 --> 00:06:52,540

writer Bram Stoker took more than a little dramatic license with the story.

113

00:06:52,540 --> 00:06:55,540

With the stroke of a pen, Vlad became Count Dracula,

114

00:06:55,540 --> 00:06:58,540

and Dracula became a vampire.

115

00:06:58,540 --> 00:07:01,540

But the roots of vampire belief run much deeper here.

116

00:07:02,540 --> 00:07:06,540

The idea of the vampire, or the concept of the vampire,

117

00:07:06,540 --> 00:07:09,540

is something that has real roots in Romania, right?

118

00:07:09,540 --> 00:07:11,540

Yes, of course.

119

00:07:11,540 --> 00:07:14,540

The word vampire is not used in Romanian lore.

120

00:07:14,540 --> 00:07:16,540

We mostly call them Strigoi,

121

00:07:16,540 --> 00:07:18,540

which is the main word for the vampire.

122

00:07:19,540 --> 00:07:22,540

The Strigoi are the original vampires of Romania.

123

00:07:22,540 --> 00:07:25,540

Belief in these creatures is older than the Bible.

124

00:07:25,540 --> 00:07:30,540

These are tortured souls that rise from the dead to drain the energy of the living.

125

00:07:30,540 --> 00:07:35,540

Do people in Romania today still believe strongly in the Strigoi?

126

00:07:35,540 --> 00:07:36,540

In the cities, no.

127

00:07:36,540 --> 00:07:40,540

But still, there are some villages which believe the Strigoi exist.

128

00:07:40,540 --> 00:07:43,540

Not too far from here, there's even an abandoned church.

129

00:07:43,540 --> 00:07:47,540

Some people believe there's a Strigoi there coming out at night.

130

00:07:47,540 --> 00:07:48,540

You may want to check it out.

131

00:07:48,540 --> 00:07:50,540

Sounds like a place I do not want to check out.

132

00:07:50,540 --> 00:07:52,540

If you are wearing a cross, you'll probably be safe.

133

00:07:52,540 --> 00:07:55,540

And so what do you think? Do you think that there's a Strigoi there?

134

00:07:55,540 --> 00:07:59,540

I think we should keep an open mind to the mysteries of the universe.

135

00:07:59,540 --> 00:08:02,540

I think we should investigate, but we still rely on facts.

136

00:08:02,540 --> 00:08:03,540

And that's not far from the city?

137

00:08:03,540 --> 00:08:05,540

Not far from the city.

138

00:08:06,540 --> 00:08:10,540

I'm not exactly buying Olivia's story that there may be an actual vampire

139

00:08:10,540 --> 00:08:12,540

wandering around the grounds of a nearby church,

140

00:08:12,540 --> 00:08:15,540

but this kind of belief is exactly why I'm here to investigate.

141

00:08:15,540 --> 00:08:19,540

So I drive to the very outskirts of Bucharest to see for myself.

142

00:08:21,540 --> 00:08:24,540

Just as the sun goes down, I make it to the abandoned church,

143

00:08:24,540 --> 00:08:27,540

where the Strigoi is rumored to be lurking.

144

00:08:31,540 --> 00:08:34,540

This was one of hundreds of Orthodox churches that were closed

145

00:08:34,540 --> 00:08:38,540

and abandoned after the Communists took over Romania in 1947

146

00:08:38,540 --> 00:08:42,540

and tried to eliminate what they called a remnant of the capital estate.

147

00:08:44,540 --> 00:08:48,540

Church here at night, not at all scary.

148

00:08:50,540 --> 00:08:52,540

Look at this place.

149

00:08:54,540 --> 00:08:57,540

This place is incredible.

150

00:08:59,540 --> 00:09:01,540

Okay, let's see what's inside.

151

00:09:01,540 --> 00:09:03,540

Oh my God, look at this.

152

00:09:06,540 --> 00:09:08,540

This is crazy.

153

00:09:08,540 --> 00:09:12,540

The entire tower has collapsed down into the middle of the church.

154

00:09:12,540 --> 00:09:14,540

That is insane.

155

00:09:14,540 --> 00:09:16,540

I've never seen anything like that.

156

00:09:16,540 --> 00:09:19,540

Whole tower just fell into the room.

157

00:09:21,540 --> 00:09:23,540

This church was dedicated to St. Andrew,

158

00:09:23,540 --> 00:09:27,540

which is a saint that actually has ties to this Strigoi vampire legend.

159

00:09:27,540 --> 00:09:29,540

There's actually a St. Andrew's night here in Romania

160

00:09:29,540 --> 00:09:32,540

where people go out and kind of protect against the Strigoi.

161

00:09:32,540 --> 00:09:34,540

It's like a Halloween-type night.

162

00:09:34,540 --> 00:09:37,540

So it's no wonder that a church dedicated to this saint

163

00:09:37,540 --> 00:09:39,540

that has been ripped apart and destroyed

164

00:09:39,540 --> 00:09:43,540

that people might think that there could be, you know, living dead here.

165

00:09:46,540 --> 00:09:48,540

Total destruction.

166

00:09:51,540 --> 00:09:54,540

If I was a Strigoi, where would I come from?

167

00:09:58,540 --> 00:10:00,540

Probably right here.

168

00:10:01,540 --> 00:10:03,540

Okay, creepy cemetery check.

169

00:10:06,540 --> 00:10:07,540

Oh boy.

170

00:10:08,540 --> 00:10:10,540

Holy s***.

171

00:10:10,540 --> 00:10:11,540

Look at this.

172

00:10:11,540 --> 00:10:13,540

There is an open sarcophagus.

173

00:10:16,540 --> 00:10:18,540

Let's see what's going on here.

174

00:10:20,540 --> 00:10:23,540

You can see these holes that drop down to the crypt.

175

00:10:23,540 --> 00:10:25,540

We'll avoid those.

176

00:10:27,540 --> 00:10:29,540

Let's see what's inside of this thing.

177

00:10:29,540 --> 00:10:30,540

Good lord.

178

00:10:46,540 --> 00:10:49,540

In an abandoned Orthodox church just outside of Bucharest,

179

00:10:49,540 --> 00:10:52,540

I'm investigating the legend of the Strigoi,

180

00:10:52,540 --> 00:10:56,540

the Romanian vampires who are said to rise from their graves after dark.

181

00:10:56,540 --> 00:10:59,540

Locals claim that a Strigoi has been sighted here,

182

00:10:59,540 --> 00:11:01,540

and while I'm not as convinced,

183

00:11:01,540 --> 00:11:05,540

I am feeling creeped out as I try to get to the bottom of their story.

184

00:11:06,540 --> 00:11:08,540

Let's see what's inside of this thing.

185

00:11:08,540 --> 00:11:09,540

Good lord.

186

00:11:20,540 --> 00:11:23,540

Cat, come on!

187

00:11:24,540 --> 00:11:26,540

That is nonsense.

188

00:11:27,540 --> 00:11:29,540

The old cat in the sarcophagus.

189

00:11:30,540 --> 00:11:33,540

I should've seen that coming a mile away.

190

00:11:34,540 --> 00:11:38,540

I am here by calling this no Strigoi in this abandoned church and cemetery.

191

00:11:38,540 --> 00:11:41,540

I think what we've got here is a very powerful piece of folklore

192

00:11:41,540 --> 00:11:48,540

and a very scary location working in concert to create, you know, a boogeyman.

193

00:11:49,540 --> 00:11:51,540

Okay, let's go.

194

00:11:51,540 --> 00:11:54,540

If I find that cat, I'm gonna kill it.

195

00:11:59,540 --> 00:12:04,540

The next morning, I trade in my coffin for a rattle-y 4x4 to make room for Petra Rotar,

196

00:12:04,540 --> 00:12:09,540

a Romanian journalist and author who's well-versed on the modern belief in the vampire.

197

00:12:09,540 --> 00:12:14,540

In America, when we think of Romania or Transylvania in particular,

198

00:12:14,540 --> 00:12:16,540

all we think about is vampires.

199

00:12:16,540 --> 00:12:21,540

But then you do have these old, strong folklore beliefs about things like the Strigoi.

200

00:12:21,540 --> 00:12:25,540

So there is kind of a vampire belief thing happening here.

201

00:12:25,540 --> 00:12:30,540

Yes, it is a very ancient belief and a very strong one in the countryside, not in the cities.

202

00:12:30,540 --> 00:12:31,540

Right.

203

00:12:32,540 --> 00:12:38,540

It's one of those rural areas Petra mentioned where a horrific incident recently made international headlines.

204

00:12:38,540 --> 00:12:42,540

From Bucharest, we drive three hours west toward the town of Cryovon.

205

00:12:43,540 --> 00:12:49,540

Petra arranges access to visit the local police station and the prosecutor

206

00:12:49,540 --> 00:12:53,540

who can unseal the case files and explain the details of the event.

207

00:12:55,540 --> 00:12:59,540

Daniela Barbou had the unpleasant duty to charge six villagers in her jurisdiction

208

00:12:59,540 --> 00:13:03,540

with exhuming and desecrating a man's fresh grave.

209

00:13:03,540 --> 00:13:08,540

The villagers claimed that they were preventing the man from rising as a Strigoi or vampire.

210

00:13:08,540 --> 00:13:10,540

So tell me about this case.

211

00:13:10,540 --> 00:13:15,540

This incident happened in 2004.

212

00:13:16,540 --> 00:13:21,540

The prosecutor's office got a complaint by the daughter of a man named Petra Toma.

213

00:13:21,540 --> 00:13:25,540

She said that the dead body of her father was desecrated.

214

00:13:27,540 --> 00:13:32,540

He was buried in the town and very short after they buried Petra Toma,

215

00:13:32,540 --> 00:13:39,540

the villagers started feeling ill and having nightmares where they saw Petra Toma.

216

00:13:39,540 --> 00:13:44,540

Believing that Petra Toma has become a Strigoi,

217

00:13:44,540 --> 00:13:49,540

six people from the village went into the cemetery during the night.

218

00:13:49,540 --> 00:13:54,540

They dug up the body, they pulled out the heart, they grilled it,

219

00:13:54,540 --> 00:14:03,540

and with the ashes they prepared the potion and everybody who was ill in that village drank that potion.

220

00:14:04,540 --> 00:14:08,540

Wow, that is dramatic.

221

00:14:08,540 --> 00:14:15,540

The six men were convicted to six month jail for desecrating graves.

222

00:14:15,540 --> 00:14:17,540

And did they serve the six month term?

223

00:14:17,540 --> 00:14:19,540

It was suspended.

224

00:14:19,540 --> 00:14:20,540

It was suspended?

225

00:14:20,540 --> 00:14:21,540

Yes.

226

00:14:21,540 --> 00:14:22,540

Wow.

227

00:14:22,540 --> 00:14:24,540

And is it possible to look at the report?

228

00:14:27,540 --> 00:14:30,540

I can imagine how many people are in the family.

229

00:14:30,540 --> 00:14:36,540

Yes, but the autopsy photos are there and they're quite disturbing.

230

00:14:36,540 --> 00:14:38,540

These are the autopsy photos?

231

00:14:38,540 --> 00:14:39,540

Yeah.

232

00:14:43,540 --> 00:14:46,540

The gruesome autopsy photos need no translation.

233

00:14:48,540 --> 00:14:51,540

This crime is a horror in any language.

234

00:14:54,540 --> 00:14:57,540

Wow, it's really, it's hard to look at.

235

00:14:57,540 --> 00:15:00,540

It's very violent, very graphic.

236

00:15:00,540 --> 00:15:03,540

And how far is this village from here?

237

00:15:03,540 --> 00:15:05,540

Less than one hour away.

238

00:15:08,540 --> 00:15:10,540

So what's the name of this village?

239

00:15:10,540 --> 00:15:11,540

Marotino de Sus.

240

00:15:11,540 --> 00:15:12,540

Marotino de Sus.

241

00:15:12,540 --> 00:15:15,540

Have other people gone down to this village to talk to them?

242

00:15:15,540 --> 00:15:16,540

Yes.

243

00:15:16,540 --> 00:15:17,540

How did that go?

244

00:15:17,540 --> 00:15:20,540

And the last group that went there, they were chased away by the villagers.

245

00:15:20,540 --> 00:15:22,540

Like actually chased out of the town?

246

00:15:22,540 --> 00:15:23,540

Yes.

247

00:15:24,540 --> 00:15:28,540

Well, you dig up a body and eat a heart, you're going to get a little attention.

248

00:15:28,540 --> 00:15:30,540

I mean, right?

249

00:15:30,540 --> 00:15:33,540

They would like to bury all that stuff.

250

00:15:33,540 --> 00:15:36,540

That's what we call a bad pun, Petra.

251

00:15:36,540 --> 00:15:41,540

After several hours on the road together, Petra and I have kind of a Tracy Hepburn thing going on.

252

00:15:41,540 --> 00:15:45,540

And I will hide behind mostly, I'm just hoping she keeps me from getting my ass kicked in this town.

253

00:15:46,540 --> 00:15:47,540

Do you have a gun?

254

00:15:47,540 --> 00:15:49,540

Oh, I don't have a gun. Do you have a gun?

255

00:15:49,540 --> 00:15:50,540

No.

256

00:15:50,540 --> 00:15:51,540

Do you know how to fight?

257

00:15:51,540 --> 00:15:52,540

Do I know how to fight?

258

00:15:52,540 --> 00:15:53,540

No karate moves, no.

259

00:15:53,540 --> 00:15:55,540

Nothing, no karate moves.

260

00:15:55,540 --> 00:15:57,540

I'm a lover, not a fighter, Petra.

261

00:16:00,540 --> 00:16:02,540

My weird s***.

262

00:16:08,540 --> 00:16:10,540

Marotino de Sus.

263

00:16:13,540 --> 00:16:15,540

Looks friendly enough.

264

00:16:19,540 --> 00:16:20,540

Do we have shivers?

265

00:16:20,540 --> 00:16:21,540

Not yet.

266

00:16:22,540 --> 00:16:26,540

There is the cemetery.

267

00:16:26,540 --> 00:16:28,540

There she is.

268

00:16:46,540 --> 00:16:51,540

Since the villagers have been extremely hostile toward outsiders, I'm eager to see Tomas Gravestone firsthand,

269

00:16:51,540 --> 00:16:54,540

and then get out of here as fast as possible.

270

00:16:59,540 --> 00:17:00,540

This is it.

271

00:17:00,540 --> 00:17:01,540

You found it?

272

00:17:01,540 --> 00:17:02,540

Yeah.

273

00:17:03,540 --> 00:17:04,540

Tomas Petra.

274

00:17:07,540 --> 00:17:08,540

Here?

275

00:17:11,540 --> 00:17:14,540

So Tomas Petra, born 1937.

276

00:17:16,540 --> 00:17:17,540

So this was what they removed?

277

00:17:17,540 --> 00:17:20,540

They broke out the edge of the tomb?

278

00:17:20,540 --> 00:17:21,540

Yes.

279

00:17:24,540 --> 00:17:32,540

That's amazing that it's just incredible to think that something like this could happen in the modern world, you know?

280

00:17:32,540 --> 00:17:36,540

I don't know. This is shocking for me too.

281

00:17:40,540 --> 00:17:43,540

I don't know, just being here makes it seem... oh, we got incoming.

282

00:17:48,540 --> 00:17:49,540

You got this?

283

00:17:49,540 --> 00:17:50,540

They're upset.

284

00:17:50,540 --> 00:17:52,540

Yeah, thank you. I get that.

285

00:18:00,540 --> 00:18:02,540

Oh, we got incoming.

286

00:18:04,540 --> 00:18:09,540

While examining the grave of a Romanian man believed by villagers to be a real life vampire,

287

00:18:09,540 --> 00:18:14,540

my translator and I are accosted by several members of the local welcome wagon.

288

00:18:14,540 --> 00:18:15,540

You got this?

289

00:18:15,540 --> 00:18:16,540

They're upset.

290

00:18:16,540 --> 00:18:18,540

Yeah, thank you. I get that.

291

00:18:19,540 --> 00:18:20,540

Hello?

292

00:18:20,540 --> 00:18:22,540

We have permission from the first to be here.

293

00:18:22,540 --> 00:18:23,540

What are you talking about?

294

00:18:23,540 --> 00:18:25,540

We have... we have... we don't know, right?

295

00:18:25,540 --> 00:18:27,540

Well, first in all.

296

00:18:27,540 --> 00:18:30,540

So we have a white-haired man, don't you know Romanian?

297

00:18:30,540 --> 00:18:33,540

I... let's all just... let's all just... just stay calm.

298

00:18:33,540 --> 00:18:36,540

Petra does some quick talking and diffuses the situation.

299

00:18:36,540 --> 00:18:42,540

She explains that we're only here to learn about the Strigoi and the men calm down enough to talk.

300

00:18:42,540 --> 00:18:47,540

He's saying that they're upset that we're here.

301

00:18:47,540 --> 00:18:50,540

Okay, so we can leave? It's okay, we can leave.

302

00:18:50,540 --> 00:18:52,540

We'll leave, we don't want to die.

303

00:18:52,540 --> 00:18:55,540

We don't want to disturb, we don't want to film others dying.

304

00:18:55,540 --> 00:18:56,540

Give me your hand.

305

00:18:56,540 --> 00:18:57,540

Yes, yes.

306

00:18:57,540 --> 00:18:58,540

What's his name?

307

00:18:58,540 --> 00:19:02,540

This guy is related to the man who dug up the body.

308

00:19:02,540 --> 00:19:05,540

He's related to one of the people that dug up the body?

309

00:19:05,540 --> 00:19:07,540

He's in your family?

310

00:19:07,540 --> 00:19:08,540

Yes.

311

00:19:08,540 --> 00:19:10,540

Does he think it's possible that we could talk with him?

312

00:19:10,540 --> 00:19:12,540

Yes, yes, yes.

313

00:19:12,540 --> 00:19:14,540

He can take us to him.

314

00:19:14,540 --> 00:19:15,540

You can?

315

00:19:15,540 --> 00:19:16,540

Yes.

316

00:19:16,540 --> 00:19:17,540

Okay.

317

00:19:17,540 --> 00:19:20,540

The man, whose name is Florin, agrees to introduce us to his relative.

318

00:19:20,540 --> 00:19:22,540

It's an offer I can't refuse.

319

00:19:22,540 --> 00:19:27,540

Petra, on the other hand, isn't so eager to continue here after dark, so we part ways.

320

00:19:27,540 --> 00:19:33,540

This means that I'll be traveling alone with a complete stranger to meet a cannibal Romanian vampire killer.

321

00:19:33,540 --> 00:19:35,540

Not my ideal Saturday night.

322

00:19:38,540 --> 00:19:39,540

Whoa.

323

00:19:41,540 --> 00:19:42,540

A lake.

324

00:19:43,540 --> 00:19:44,540

He lives here?

325

00:19:44,540 --> 00:19:46,540

He lives across.

326

00:19:46,540 --> 00:19:47,540

He lives over there?

327

00:19:47,540 --> 00:19:48,540

Yes.

328

00:19:49,540 --> 00:19:56,540

Florin's cousin, Matrica, the man who helped exhume Petra Toma, lives on a swampy island across the lake.

329

00:19:57,540 --> 00:19:58,540

You ready?

330

00:19:58,540 --> 00:19:59,540

Ready.

331

00:19:59,540 --> 00:20:00,540

Here we go.

332

00:20:10,540 --> 00:20:13,540

Did not think I was going to end up in a rowboat today.

333

00:20:21,540 --> 00:20:22,540

Very nice night.

334

00:20:22,540 --> 00:20:23,540

Yes.

335

00:20:23,540 --> 00:20:24,540

Beautiful.

336

00:20:24,540 --> 00:20:25,540

Beautiful.

337

00:20:25,540 --> 00:20:26,540

Yes.

338

00:20:26,540 --> 00:20:28,540

I think I'm on a date out here.

339

00:20:34,540 --> 00:20:36,540

Have you ever seen a little mermaid?

340

00:20:36,540 --> 00:20:37,540

Do you know a little mermaid?

341

00:20:37,540 --> 00:20:38,540

Little mermaid?

342

00:20:38,540 --> 00:20:39,540

No?

343

00:20:39,540 --> 00:20:40,540

I don't know.

344

00:20:41,540 --> 00:20:43,540

Just trying to do something.

345

00:20:47,540 --> 00:20:50,540

By the time we reach the island, darkness is falling.

346

00:20:50,540 --> 00:20:51,540

Okay.

347

00:20:51,540 --> 00:20:52,540

Okay.

348

00:20:52,540 --> 00:20:57,540

As we leave the boat and head into the woods, I'm both intrigued and nervous about meeting Florin's cousin.

349

00:20:57,540 --> 00:20:58,540

This way.

350

00:20:58,540 --> 00:21:04,540

What kind of a man could commit such a horrific act, and how will he react to meeting me?

351

00:21:05,540 --> 00:21:13,540

Soon, I see the light of a ramshackle cabin, and I come face to face with Matrica Mersella.

352

00:21:13,540 --> 00:21:14,540

Nice to meet you.

353

00:21:14,540 --> 00:21:19,540

He greets me with a handshake, but I can't say that I feel at ease out here in the middle of the woods.

354

00:21:22,540 --> 00:21:24,540

Thank you very much for talking with me.

355

00:21:24,540 --> 00:21:25,540

I appreciate it.

356

00:21:25,540 --> 00:21:27,540

Thank you very much.

357

00:21:27,540 --> 00:21:29,540

I can tell you...

358

00:21:29,540 --> 00:21:31,540

Thank you very much.

359

00:21:31,540 --> 00:21:36,540

I've read about this story about this man, Petra Toma.

360

00:21:36,540 --> 00:21:40,540

You were involved in that story, yes?

361

00:21:40,540 --> 00:21:44,540

Yes, I was the leader of the group.

362

00:21:44,540 --> 00:21:46,540

Several people in the village became ill.

363

00:21:46,540 --> 00:21:52,540

In their sleep, they saw visions of Petra Toma who had recently died, so we took action.

364

00:21:53,540 --> 00:21:58,540

When you opened the grave, did the man look like Astrigoi?

365

00:21:58,540 --> 00:22:00,540

Was there anything strange about his body?

366

00:22:00,540 --> 00:22:05,540

When I opened the grave, Toma had blood in the corners of his mouth, and his beard and nails had grown.

367

00:22:05,540 --> 00:22:08,540

These are the signs of the Strigoi.

368

00:22:10,540 --> 00:22:14,540

Do you understand why somebody would be upset that this happened?

369

00:22:16,540 --> 00:22:17,540

People were sick.

370

00:22:17,540 --> 00:22:21,540

We performed the ceremony and they got better, immediately better.

371

00:22:21,540 --> 00:22:23,540

What we did saved them.

372

00:22:24,540 --> 00:22:28,540

Matrika isn't backtracking a single step on his actions.

373

00:22:28,540 --> 00:22:33,540

Not only is he not sorry, he's convinced that he was right to dig up his neighbor's grave.

374

00:22:37,540 --> 00:22:43,540

I saw the photographs of what you did to that body.

375

00:22:43,540 --> 00:22:48,540

And what about guilt? Do you ever feel bad about what you did?

376

00:22:48,540 --> 00:22:52,540

Absolutely not. You do not understand. This is not one event.

377

00:22:52,540 --> 00:22:54,540

This has happened many times.

378

00:22:55,540 --> 00:22:58,540

To learn that this is not an isolated incident is shocking.

379

00:22:58,540 --> 00:23:04,540

It turns out that in many Romanian burials, people's hearts are pierced with a pin or thorn

380

00:23:04,540 --> 00:23:07,540

to prevent them from becoming Strigoi in the first place.

381

00:23:08,540 --> 00:23:10,540

What we did, we did to save people.

382

00:23:11,540 --> 00:23:16,540

I can certainly see that. You really believe that what you did was for a good cause.

383

00:23:16,540 --> 00:23:18,540

Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

384

00:23:19,540 --> 00:23:23,540

Matrika may have conviction, but that doesn't make him a medical expert.

385

00:23:23,540 --> 00:23:28,540

It turns out that blood often appears in the corner of corpses mouths due to internal hemorrhaging.

386

00:23:28,540 --> 00:23:34,540

And hair and nails do not continue to grow after death, but appear to as the skin shrinks around them.

387

00:23:34,540 --> 00:23:41,540

As to why the villagers fell ill, had visions of Petritoma, or were cured by the ritual, I simply don't know.

388

00:23:41,540 --> 00:23:47,540

I want to say it's the power of hysterical belief, but I'm not going to hang around these woods to find out.

389

00:23:49,540 --> 00:23:57,540

My trip through Romania has been a first-hand lesson in the power of folklore and superstition.

390

00:23:57,540 --> 00:24:02,540

But where do these beliefs come from, and could they be based on something real?

391

00:24:02,540 --> 00:24:11,540

To continue my search for answers, I'm headed to Bulgaria, where archaeologists have recently made a stunning discovery of an ancient vampire grave.

392

00:24:11,540 --> 00:24:17,540

I head due south and approach the border crossing of the two countries which is delineated by the Danube River.

393

00:24:17,540 --> 00:24:22,540

After adding a passport stamp to my collection, number 97, not that I'm counting,

394

00:24:22,540 --> 00:24:25,540

I board a ferry to cross the river into Bulgaria.

395

00:24:28,540 --> 00:24:34,540

We set sail under light rain and ominous skies, which I hope aren't a portent of doom for the expedition ahead.

396

00:24:35,540 --> 00:24:39,540

The vessel docks in the town of Vadim, but I'm not in Bulgaria yet.

397

00:24:39,540 --> 00:24:44,540

I hand the officials my paperwork, but I suddenly hit an unexpected snag.

398

00:24:45,540 --> 00:24:53,540

A little bit of an issue here, the car registration here in my Romanian 4x4 is a photocopy and not the original.

399

00:24:53,540 --> 00:24:55,540

That is not going over well.

400

00:25:05,540 --> 00:25:13,540

I'm doing my best to cross from Romania into Bulgaria, where a major archaeological find may shed some light on the origins of the vampire legend.

401

00:25:14,540 --> 00:25:17,540

While Garian customs though may be tougher to clear than I thought.

402

00:25:17,540 --> 00:25:25,540

A little bit of an issue here, the car registration here in my Romanian 4x4 is a photocopy and not the original.

403

00:25:25,540 --> 00:25:28,540

That is not going over well.

404

00:25:28,540 --> 00:25:31,540

If I don't make it through this crossing, my vampire hunt is over.

405

00:25:31,540 --> 00:25:37,540

They ask me for more documentation, which unfortunately is the one thing not in my glove compartment.

406

00:25:38,540 --> 00:25:41,540

I have a pine cone, I don't know if that's probably not what you're looking for.

407

00:25:41,540 --> 00:25:46,540

After an hour of watching the border police argue over my fate, they do something unexpected.

408

00:25:46,540 --> 00:25:48,540

They let me through.

409

00:25:48,540 --> 00:25:50,540

I'm guessing the pine cone did the trick.

410

00:25:50,540 --> 00:25:52,540

Okay, we're okay.

411

00:25:54,540 --> 00:25:57,540

Thank you. Thank you. Ciao.

412

00:26:07,540 --> 00:26:14,540

For a country on the losing side of every world conflict of the 20th century, Bulgaria has proven to be surprisingly resilient.

413

00:26:14,540 --> 00:26:21,540

Glimmering church domes, cobblestone streets, and the people, well their hospitality defined.

414

00:26:37,540 --> 00:26:43,540

To meet my next contact, I'm headed southeast past the capital of Sofia and to the city of Plovdiv.

415

00:26:43,540 --> 00:26:47,540

Outside of town, Bulgaria's true character begins to emerge.

416

00:26:47,540 --> 00:26:53,540

This is a land of empty spaces, with pristine forests covering nearly 40% of the nation.

417

00:26:53,540 --> 00:27:01,540

It is also a place of mountains, and as I make my way over the narrow 5,000-foot shipcapass, the roads get a little rustic.

418

00:27:01,540 --> 00:27:03,540

Is this road a seat better days?

419

00:27:04,540 --> 00:27:10,540

I reach the top of the peak and catch sight of what appears to be a spaceship.

420

00:27:18,540 --> 00:27:23,540

Welcome comrades to the skeletal remains of Bulgarian communism.

421

00:27:24,540 --> 00:27:32,540

This is Basluja. It's Bulgarian for glacial or ice, which seems appropriate since it is absolutely freezing up here.

422

00:27:32,540 --> 00:27:36,540

As you can see, it's in a pretty terrible state of ruin.

423

00:27:37,540 --> 00:27:43,540

I squeeze inside the decaying monument for a look at one of the world's most breathtaking modern ruins.

424

00:27:45,540 --> 00:27:48,540

Look at this. Wow.

425

00:27:49,540 --> 00:27:52,540

This is the definition of spooky.

426

00:27:52,540 --> 00:28:00,540

This mountain was the site of an incredible battle between Bulgarian and Russian forces as they fought back against the Ottoman Empire.

427

00:28:00,540 --> 00:28:05,540

Later, this was the birthplace of socialism in Bulgaria.

428

00:28:05,540 --> 00:28:09,540

Basluja was once a symbol of glory.

429

00:28:09,540 --> 00:28:15,540

A gleaming and space age structure to celebrate Bulgaria's socialism.

430

00:28:15,540 --> 00:28:22,540

But as the winds of democracy swept through the Balkans in the 1990s, the future became the past and Basluja fell silent.

431

00:28:26,540 --> 00:28:31,540

I leave the crumbling remains in the rearview mirror and press on with my search.

432

00:28:31,540 --> 00:28:42,540

Before I drive to an archaeological site where a vampire grave has been discovered, an anthropologist here has received a call to perform an anti-vampire ritual for a local village.

433

00:28:42,540 --> 00:28:45,540

And he's invited me to assist him.

434

00:28:45,540 --> 00:28:51,540

Our meeting place is in the Rodope Mountains where the River Arda snakes through dark and foreboding forests.

435

00:28:51,540 --> 00:28:57,540

I'm meeting Ivo Meev, an anthropologist and expert in the vampire legend in Bulgaria.

436

00:28:57,540 --> 00:29:02,540

Hello, Josh. Ivo. Yeah, nice to meet you. Nice to meet you too.

437

00:29:02,540 --> 00:29:07,540

What a dramatic spot. This is incredible. It's called Devil's Bridge. Devil's Bridge.

438

00:29:07,540 --> 00:29:15,540

It's a very sinister-sounding name for a bridge. Yes, because there is a legend here. The man who built the bridge made deal with the devil.

439

00:29:15,540 --> 00:29:19,540

And you see, it's still stable. Still standing. Seven centuries.

440

00:29:19,540 --> 00:29:24,540

Legends like that are exactly why I'm here. There is an abandoned village not far away from here.

441

00:29:24,540 --> 00:29:33,540

Last person who lived in this village died recently. And people are afraid really of him because he could be transformed into a vampire.

442

00:29:33,540 --> 00:29:39,540

Okay. That sounds scary. They asked me to perform an anti-vampire ritual. What is the ritual?

443

00:29:39,540 --> 00:29:46,540

We have to find a special plant and to plant this herb around the grave. Okay. Sounds interesting.

444

00:29:46,540 --> 00:29:51,540

Are you ready to begin? I'm ready. Let's go. Okay. Follow me. Yeah. That way.

445

00:29:53,540 --> 00:29:58,540

These rituals seem to be a less gruesome variation of their Romanian cousins.

446

00:29:58,540 --> 00:30:04,540

The plants we need lie some distance away. And as we hike on, we come to a minor obstacle.

447

00:30:04,540 --> 00:30:07,540

Holy ****. Are you kidding me?

448

00:30:10,540 --> 00:30:16,540

It's safe? Absolutely. Just try to step over the rope here very slowly.

449

00:30:17,540 --> 00:30:22,540

When was the last time anybody walked across this bridge? I walked across it. You walked across it? Yeah. Yeah.

450

00:30:22,540 --> 00:30:29,540

In 1754? No, 1754. Just two months ago. We can cross. We can cross. Okay. Here we go. Nice and slow.

451

00:30:34,540 --> 00:30:39,540

Though the bridge is still technically standing, the walkway is rotting into mulch. And it's a long way down.

452

00:30:40,540 --> 00:30:45,540

Slowly. Something just cracked.

453

00:30:53,540 --> 00:31:04,540

In the backwoods of Bulgaria, my guide, Ivo and I are having a temple of doom moment. We're seeking out a plant used in anti-vampire rituals.

454

00:31:04,540 --> 00:31:13,540

But the wood planks of this bridge are disintegrating beneath our feet. You okay? Yeah, I'm fine. Come on. You're here. Okay. Okay.

455

00:31:13,540 --> 00:31:20,540

Everything's cool. Everything's cool. Nice and slow. Yeah, I'm fine. The bridge, not so much. This is the only way how we can cross.

456

00:31:20,540 --> 00:31:24,540

I know. No, I'm with you. Here we go. I'm going very slowly. Here we go. Okay.

457

00:31:30,540 --> 00:31:44,540

A couple more steps. Okay. Yeah. We're alive. Absolutely. I told you. You have any doubt? Yeah, I had a lot of doubts. Okay, let's find the stupid plant and get out of here. Come on.

458

00:31:45,540 --> 00:31:51,540

Ivo and I set to work collecting the elements for an ancient ritual meant to ward off or kill vampires.

459

00:31:51,540 --> 00:32:00,540

Nearby villagers believe a fresh grave on the outskirts of town may give rise to a vampire, so they've asked Ivo to collect samples of a verbena plant.

460

00:32:00,540 --> 00:32:11,540

Aha. There you go. You found it? Yeah. Let me see. Oh, look at that. See? It's quite pretty, actually. But it's poisonous. Poisonous, especially the root.

461

00:32:12,540 --> 00:32:20,540

Anything the roots will go down and poison the body? Yeah, poison the body. How much do we need? We need a few plants. Just a few? Yeah. Okay.

462

00:32:28,540 --> 00:32:36,540

We cross back over the world's f*****gest bridge and pass into some place even more unsettling, a Bulgarian ghost town.

463

00:32:42,540 --> 00:32:50,540

With a shrinking population in these mountains, the villagers have abandoned this part of town.

464

00:32:58,540 --> 00:33:01,540

This is not a place that I want to be after dark, Ivo.

465

00:33:12,540 --> 00:33:18,540

This is it? Yeah, this is the grave.

466

00:33:19,540 --> 00:33:25,540

Nearby lies the lonely grave of this area's last inhabitant, the man whose soul Ivo is here to save.

467

00:33:25,540 --> 00:33:31,540

No headstones, just loose stones? Yeah, and nobody knows what's happened with this guy.

468

00:33:31,540 --> 00:33:38,540

And bones? Look. Animal bones? Animal bones. Cow maybe? Yeah.

469

00:33:38,540 --> 00:33:43,540

So why are these bones here? Yeah, I don't know. Could be a ritual.

470

00:33:43,540 --> 00:33:59,540

Okay, so what do we do with the verbena? My idea is to plant verbena here, near to the head, the legs, both sides. Just to organize a symbolic cross over the body.

471

00:33:59,540 --> 00:34:03,540

Okay, let's do it. Here's the verbena. Yeah.

472

00:34:04,540 --> 00:34:12,540

We transplant the verbena onto the grave, hopefully laying to rest any fears in the village that a new vampire will be lurking in the night.

473

00:34:12,540 --> 00:34:16,540

So this completes the cross? Exactly.

474

00:34:18,540 --> 00:34:21,540

Let's go back to the town and let them know, okay?

475

00:34:22,540 --> 00:34:29,540

We walk back down the hill, but instead of a sleepy town preparing for bed, we find a lively celebration.

476

00:34:30,540 --> 00:34:37,540

This dance is meant to ward off evil, and is, without a doubt, a dangerous affair.

477

00:34:39,540 --> 00:34:50,540

Now they spread the embers in the shape of the coals. This is traditional way how they start their ritual, before they start dancing inside the fire.

478

00:34:50,540 --> 00:35:03,540

The coals are glowing hot as the men kick through the embers. Thrown into a trance-like state, they feel no pain, even when they take the coals in their bare hands.

479

00:35:07,540 --> 00:35:13,540

Hey, hey! Thank you very much. That was amazing.

480

00:35:14,540 --> 00:35:27,540

The next morning I press on to the east and pass through the city of Klobdiv. Nearby, there may be proof that the ancient fear of vampires had a scientific origin.

481

00:35:34,540 --> 00:35:40,540

I'm bound for the ancient city of Piperaqan. This is probably the most famous historic site in all of Bulgaria.

482

00:35:41,540 --> 00:35:48,540

I've arranged to meet with archaeologist Nikolai Ocherov and his team, who recently made an astounding vampire discovery.

483

00:35:49,540 --> 00:35:50,540

Hi!

484

00:35:50,540 --> 00:35:51,540

How are you? I'm Josh.

485

00:35:51,540 --> 00:35:52,540

Hi, Dmitriy.

486

00:35:52,540 --> 00:35:53,540

Nice to meet you.

487

00:35:53,540 --> 00:35:54,540

How are you?

488

00:35:54,540 --> 00:35:55,540

Hi, Dmitriy.

489

00:35:55,540 --> 00:35:56,540

Welcome.

490

00:35:56,540 --> 00:35:57,540

Victoria.

491

00:35:57,540 --> 00:36:03,540

Victoria, nice to meet you. I've been reading about your work. You're a very prominent guy here in Bulgaria.

492

00:36:03,540 --> 00:36:06,540

They call me the Bulgarian Indiana Jones.

493

00:36:06,540 --> 00:36:08,540

They call me the Bulgarian Indiana Jones.

494

00:36:08,540 --> 00:36:10,540

Bulgarian Indiana Jones. Right down to the hat.

495

00:36:11,540 --> 00:36:17,540

I've read a lot about the work that you've been doing here. This vampire skeleton that you found got a lot of attention in the press.

496

00:36:21,540 --> 00:36:25,540

Yes, indeed. It attracted the attention of the people all over the world.

497

00:36:26,540 --> 00:36:34,540

The medieval skeleton they unearthed was found with a metal spike driven through its neck. Needless to say, the vampire grave made some headlines.

498

00:36:35,540 --> 00:36:39,540

Well, I'm really excited to see the site. And I can't wait to see what you've been doing up there.

499

00:36:39,540 --> 00:36:41,540

Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of light left in the day.

500

00:36:45,540 --> 00:36:50,540

The spirit of this place is more important and maybe it's even better at night.

501

00:36:50,540 --> 00:36:51,540

Okay.

502

00:36:56,540 --> 00:36:58,540

Get ready for a nice ride.

503

00:37:01,540 --> 00:37:02,540

Good floor.

504

00:37:05,540 --> 00:37:17,540

In ancient times, Perpericon was visited by leaders like Alexander the Great and the Emperor Augustus, who came to consult a pagan oracle here.

505

00:37:17,540 --> 00:37:24,540

In the past 4,000 years, this land has been home to Greeks, Thracians, Romans, Byzantines and Bulgarians.

506

00:37:24,540 --> 00:37:28,540

So the ruins of Perpericon are like an archaeological slot machine.

507

00:37:28,540 --> 00:37:32,540

When you dig here, you never know what kind of marvelous discovery you'll make.

508

00:37:35,540 --> 00:37:43,540

With night falling, we trek through the maze of ruins, threading our way to Professor Ofcheros' latest find.

509

00:37:48,540 --> 00:37:49,540

Oh my God.

510

00:37:49,540 --> 00:38:05,540

An archaeological dig in the ancient Bulgarian city of Perpericon has uncovered an amazing specimen that could change the way we look at the vampire legend.

511

00:38:10,540 --> 00:38:11,540

Oh my God.

512

00:38:13,540 --> 00:38:14,540

Amazing.

513

00:38:15,540 --> 00:38:22,540

We're looking at a unique gift from the past, an almost perfectly preserved skeleton over 800 years old.

514

00:38:22,540 --> 00:38:26,540

And the people that buried it went to extreme lengths to make sure that it stayed dead.

515

00:38:26,540 --> 00:38:29,540

So this is the metal. And what is it exactly?

516

00:38:29,540 --> 00:38:35,540

It's a plowshare, the tool that the local people used to plow the ground.

517

00:38:35,540 --> 00:38:40,540

So this is something that was done after the person died, this was then driven into them.

518

00:38:40,540 --> 00:38:47,540

Definitely it happened after death and it shows evidence that this is a ritual preventing this person from becoming a vampire.

519

00:38:50,540 --> 00:38:57,540

It's quite gruesome really in a way. What do you think it was about this person that caused other people to perform this ritual?

520

00:39:01,540 --> 00:39:08,540

Many different things could be. It could be a health condition, could be an unknown disease, scary for the family, for the others.

521

00:39:09,540 --> 00:39:11,540

Or it could have been suicide.

522

00:39:13,540 --> 00:39:17,540

And this is the plowshare. You can see that.

523

00:39:17,540 --> 00:39:27,540

This is so incredible to think that this was buried inside of someone is, it shows how powerful the belief must have been.

524

00:39:27,540 --> 00:39:33,540

It makes this whole idea of vampires real in a way.

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00:39:34,540 --> 00:39:38,540

We would love to be able to test the DNA. Would it be possible for us to take a sample to test?

526

00:39:43,540 --> 00:39:50,540

Of course it is possible and we would be very thankful if we learn something more about this person.

527

00:39:50,540 --> 00:39:51,540

Yeah?

528

00:39:51,540 --> 00:39:52,540

Great.

529

00:39:53,540 --> 00:40:00,540

In order to figure out if there was any genetic condition or abnormality that could explain why this poor soul was staked to the back of his coffin,

530

00:40:00,540 --> 00:40:07,540

I'm taking DNA to be tested in the United States. The sample? A tooth from the skull of the purported vampire.

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00:40:10,540 --> 00:40:18,540

Back in the U.S. the tooth we recovered from perpericon has been analyzed for disease and genetic abnormality and the results are intriguing.

532

00:40:20,540 --> 00:40:26,540

The DNA in the tooth shows signs of a genetic disorder and may be an indicator for porphyria.

533

00:40:26,540 --> 00:40:33,540

This blood disease causes victims to become sensitive to sunlight. Their gums shrink, making their teeth look fang-like.

534

00:40:33,540 --> 00:40:36,540

Victims even develop an aversion to garlic.

535

00:40:36,540 --> 00:40:41,540

Other so-called vampire skeletons found in Europe show signs of plague or cholera.

536

00:40:41,540 --> 00:40:47,540

Diseases that may have inspired people to believe that the victims weren't just sick, but possessed.

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00:40:48,540 --> 00:40:57,540

Like the devil himself, the vampire has had dozens of faces. In antiquity it was a demon. In the Middle Ages, a rotting corpse.

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00:40:57,540 --> 00:41:04,540

Now, in modern times, it has become a romantic figure. Vampires both transcend death and inflict it.

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00:41:04,540 --> 00:41:09,540

They embody our fear of mortality and our desire for everlasting life.

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00:41:09,540 --> 00:41:14,540

But for all the hold they have over our imaginations, they are in the end just a myth.

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00:41:15,540 --> 00:41:19,540

One that, over the centuries, has had a tragic human cost.

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00:41:22,540 --> 00:41:28,540

I've seen that cost first-hand. In Romania, I visited the disturbed grave of an innocent person

543

00:41:28,540 --> 00:41:33,540

and met a man who let superstition drive him to an obscene purpose.

544

00:41:33,540 --> 00:41:39,540

In Bulgaria, I witnessed the persecution of an unfortunate soul with an untreatable disease.

545

00:41:40,540 --> 00:41:45,540

Perhaps human beings created the vampire myth so we don't have to admit our own cruelty.

546

00:41:45,540 --> 00:41:53,540

After all, if there's no such thing as a vampire, then the monsters that haunt our nightmares are ourselves.