

1

00:00:00,623 --> 00:00:04,620

Near Innsbruck stands a monument to perversity.

2

00:00:05,620 --> 00:00:10,616

Castle Ambrose, occupied during the 16th century by Archduke Ferdinand,

3

00:00:10,616 --> 00:00:16,612

harbors one of the most terrifying portrait galleries in the civilized world.

4

00:00:21,609 --> 00:00:27,605

Painted from life, these grotesqueries reflect the offbeat tastes of the collector.

5

00:00:30,603 --> 00:00:37,599

In this gallery of the Bazaar are images of those maimed in battle or deformed by nature.

6

00:00:42,595 --> 00:00:45,593

One portrait seems curiously out of place.

7

00:00:45,593 --> 00:00:52,589

It's that of a king who ruled not in Austria, but in a land to the east, now called Romania.

8

00:00:52,589 --> 00:00:57,585

His brutality earned him the nickname Vlad the Impaler.

9

00:00:57,585 --> 00:01:01,583

His real name was Vlad Dracula.

10

00:01:03,581 --> 00:01:09,577

Centuries later, Dracula's name and the land he lived in would be used to create a character

11

00:01:09,577 --> 00:01:17,572

so unredeemed by human qualities that we still recoil in fascination at his fiendish exploits.

12

00:01:27,565 --> 00:01:40,557

Horror has a special fascination for many, and filmmakers have done their best to exploit that fascination.

13

00:01:40,557 --> 00:01:45,554

Audiences have come to know Dracula well.

14

00:01:45,554 --> 00:01:49,551

They've seen him portrayed on the screen for more than 50 years.

15

00:01:50,550 --> 00:02:00,544

There's the black cape, the jutting canine teeth, the demonic eyes and nocturnal lust for blood.

16

00:02:00,544 --> 00:02:04,541

But what of the truth behind the legend?

17

00:02:08,538 --> 00:02:12,536

Romania is a land rich in romantic folklore and legends.

18

00:02:12,536 --> 00:02:17,532

The tale of the evil Count Dracula is not one of them.

19

00:02:17,532 --> 00:02:22,529

The rugged mountains and hidden valleys breed their own mythology.

20

00:02:22,529 --> 00:02:30,524

Called Romania's Olympus, Mount Ceflau rises nearly 6,000 feet in the Carpathian Mountains.

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00:02:30,524 --> 00:02:36,520

In pre-Christian times, it was believed to be the home of the gods.

22

00:02:36,520 --> 00:02:43,515

Each year, even now, on the first Sunday of August, a pagan ritual is reenacted.

23

00:02:43,515 --> 00:02:53,509

Thousands gather by torchlight on Ceflau's shadowy summit to celebrate friendship and love and the renewal of life.

24

00:02:53,509 --> 00:02:59,505

During the rest of the year, Ceflau yields its mysteries to few men.

25

00:02:59,505 --> 00:03:06,500

Dr. George Yacome is a surgeon who climbs mainly for adventure.

26

00:03:06,500 --> 00:03:12,496

The other, a shepherd, who has spent a lifetime in these alpine meadows.

27

00:03:12,496 --> 00:03:16,493

Both know the mountain and its hidden places.

28

00:03:16,493 --> 00:03:21,490

Both respect its awesome symbolic power.

29

00:03:21,490 --> 00:03:26,487

Though one is a simple peasant, the other is a man.

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00:03:26,487 --> 00:03:31,483

The mountain has given them a strong bond of friendship.

31

00:03:31,483 --> 00:03:38,479

They exchange stories of ancient superstitions of dark, frightening corners, where no one has yet ventured.

32

00:03:38,479 --> 00:03:46,474

The music seems to recall a distant time in these mountains when ghosts inhabit the mountains.

33

00:03:46,474 --> 00:03:53,469

Legends tell of a 15th century nobleman named Boudou who loved the king's daughter, Anna.

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00:03:53,469 --> 00:04:00,464

When he was killed in battle, the grief-stricken Anna asked the powerful witch to bring her lover back from the dead.

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00:04:00,464 --> 00:04:07,460

The witch raised Boudou from his grave and the king's daughter, Anna, was killed.

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00:04:07,460 --> 00:04:14,455

While passing over Ceflau, Boudou's ghost was struck by the rising sun, turning him into rock.

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00:04:14,455 --> 00:04:24,448

Till this day, on Ceflau's brooding summit, there is a stone megalith known as Boudou's Tower.

38

00:04:24,448 --> 00:04:34,442

In the nightmare world of super-cars, the king's daughter, Anna, is a man who has been killed in battle.

39

00:04:35,441 --> 00:04:42,437

In the nightmare world of superstition and fear, it often becomes difficult to separate fact from fiction.

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00:04:42,437 --> 00:04:46,434

The familiar story of Dracula is a case in point.

41

00:04:46,434 --> 00:04:56,427

Since its publication in 1897, Bram Stoker's classic novel of Gothic horror has been read or performed almost continuously.

42

00:04:56,427 --> 00:05:09,419

Yet few are aware that the character was based on a real prince of darkness, whose deeds are perhaps more shocking and more terrifying than those of the fictional vampire.

43

00:05:11,417 --> 00:05:24,409

Transylvania, stronghold of legend, a place dimly recalled from horror movies as a dark, forbidding region cloaked in superstition and terror.

44

00:05:26,407 --> 00:05:34,402

Here, according to popular myth, live the undead, the dreaded vampires who thrive on human blood.

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00:05:35,401 --> 00:05:42,397

Dracula, written by Bram Stoker, perpetuated one myth that has endured for nearly a century.

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00:05:49,392 --> 00:05:53,390

Along Transylvania's southern perimeter stands Castle Braun.

47

00:05:54,389 --> 00:06:01,384

In appearance, it corresponds to the castle described in the novel as the home of the bloodthirsty count.

48

00:06:03,383 --> 00:06:16,374

Haunted by his own childhood visions of threatening forests and spooky castles, Bram Stoker created an eerie world that became more than just a horrifying journey into the supernatural.

49

00:06:16,374 --> 00:06:19,372

It was also a parable of Victorian repression.

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00:06:20,372 --> 00:06:31,364

Locked inside Castle Dracula's dark walls were hidden passions and secret longings which erupted into violence and terror.

51

00:06:31,364 --> 00:06:53,350

The German film classic Nosferatu comes closer to capturing the mood of the original novel than the later interpretation of Bela Lugosi.

52

00:06:54,349 --> 00:07:00,345

In the book, the hero Jonathan Harker describes his first encounter with Dracula.

53

00:07:01,345 --> 00:07:12,337

Holding out his hand, he grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed as cold as ice.

54

00:07:13,337 --> 00:07:24,329

Taking Transylvania, a remote place he'd heard of but never seen as his setting, Stoker evoked chilling images of the living dead.

55

00:07:25,329 --> 00:07:40,319

Under the shroud of darkness, the fiendish apparition risen from its coffin begins to stalk its human prey.

56

00:07:40,319 --> 00:07:49,313

The nightmare becomes reality. The unknown clutches at our throats.

57

00:07:55,309 --> 00:08:08,300

The shrieking of a vampire bat evokes the horror of Dracula.

58

00:08:13,297 --> 00:08:17,294

Night flying hunters, they prey mainly on cattle.

59

00:08:18,294 --> 00:08:26,288

But one strange fact stands out. The vampire bat is found only in Mexico and South America.

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00:08:29,286 --> 00:08:35,282

Modern Romanians stubbornly deny the existence of vampire legends in Transylvanian peasant lore.

61

00:08:36,282 --> 00:08:44,276

To them, Dracula is the name of a 15th century tyrant whose story too was written in blood.

62

00:08:47,274 --> 00:08:51,272

Nicolai Paduraro is an official of the Ministry of Tourism.

63

00:08:52,271 --> 00:09:02,265

His search for the historical truths behind the Dracula legends brings him repeatedly to a small island on Lake Snagov near the capital city of Bucharest.

64

00:09:03,264 --> 00:09:09,260

It is on this island that the body of the real Dracula is supposedly buried.

65

00:09:14,257 --> 00:09:19,253

Nicolai knows the island's history and its few inhabitants intimately.

66

00:09:19,253 --> 00:09:26,249

A product of Romania's socialist present, he is fascinated by his nation's turbulent past.

67

00:09:33,244 --> 00:09:35,243

Parinte!

68

00:09:38,241 --> 00:09:45,236

Nicolai is greeted by the abbot who shares his interest in the story of the bloody king who bore the name Dracula.

69

00:09:46,235 --> 00:09:52,232

For the two men, the old church has become more than a religious shrine and national monument.

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00:09:52,232 --> 00:10:00,226

Its ancient doors are the gateway to a mystery that for centuries has baffled scholars and historians.

71

00:10:03,224 --> 00:10:13,218

Superstitious romantics have speculated that any robber entering the church would be met by Dracula's ghost rising in vengeance from its grave.

72

00:10:13,218 --> 00:10:18,214

And this, they say, is why he lies buried just inside the door.

73

00:10:18,214 --> 00:10:27,208

A more logical explanation was forwarded by archaeologist Dino Rosetti who uncovered the burial site in the early 30s.

74

00:10:28,208 --> 00:10:34,204

The decapitated body was placed in an unmarked grave to prevent vandalism.

75

00:10:36,202 --> 00:10:41,199

Saints and kings have begun to fade silently from Snagov's walls.

76

00:10:42,198 --> 00:10:47,195

The monastery enjoyed the protection of Vlad Dracula during the 15th century.

77

00:10:47,195 --> 00:10:55,190

But when one of the priests dared challenge the king's decisions, he was put to death slowly and painfully.

78

00:10:56,189 --> 00:11:04,184

The torturous method of execution favored by the king was so barbarous, his own countrymen branded him Vlad the Impaler.

79

00:11:04,184 --> 00:11:07,182

In Romanian, Vlad Sepes.

80

00:11:07,182 --> 00:11:14,177

Both men realize that the truth about a man's life is often buried alongside his corpse.

81

00:11:14,177 --> 00:11:24,171

But the infamous monarch whose name symbolizes evil incarnate might himself have been the victim of propaganda spread by his enemies throughout Europe.

82

00:11:25,170 --> 00:11:31,166

Seeking the truth can become an exciting adventure, and so a search begins.

83

00:11:31,166 --> 00:11:38,161

It will unravel some of the mysteries which surround the life of a king they called Dracula.

84

00:11:38,161 --> 00:11:43,158

Son of the King of the West, Vlad the Impaler.

85

00:11:43,158 --> 00:11:47,155

Transylvania, the heart of Dracula country.

86

00:11:47,155 --> 00:11:54,151

Transylvania spreads across northwestern Romania in an unbroken chain of fertile hills and sunlit valleys.

87

00:11:54,151 --> 00:12:01,146

The city of Transylvania is the capital of the city of Transylvania.

88

00:12:01,146 --> 00:12:06,143

Transylvania is the capital of the city of Transylvania.

89

00:12:06,143 --> 00:12:14,138

Transylvania spreads across northwestern Romania in an unbroken chain of fertile hills and sunlit valleys.

90

00:12:14,138 --> 00:12:27,129

Here the princes of Valachia sought refuge from fierce Muslim warriors who burned their villages, raped their land, and punished captives by mercilessly driving stakes through their bodies.

91

00:12:27,129 --> 00:12:34,124

In the works, a young Valachian prince named Dracula would learn all about impalement.

92

00:12:34,124 --> 00:12:41,120

Like an image from an old fairy tale, the town of Sigashura slumbers peacefully along the gentle slopes of the Transylvanian Highlands.

93

00:12:41,120 --> 00:12:48,115

Unchanged since the Middle Ages, Sigashura was once the capital of the city of Transylvania.

94

00:12:48,115 --> 00:12:54,111

The city of Transylvania is the capital of the city of Transylvania.

95

00:12:54,111 --> 00:13:01,107

Sigashura slumbers peacefully along the gentle slopes of the Transylvanian Highlands.

96

00:13:01,107 --> 00:13:10,101

Unchanged since the Middle Ages, Sigashura was once a bastion of Germanic military might and commercial enterprise.

97

00:13:10,101 --> 00:13:19,095

In this house in 1431, a son was born to the fearsome prince Vlad Drakuil, the dragon.

98

00:13:19,095 --> 00:13:24,091

He was called Dracula, son of the dragon.

99

00:13:24,091 --> 00:13:31,087

A coin bearing the family emblem is one of the few remaining artifacts from Dracula's reign.

100

00:13:31,087 --> 00:13:37,083

The symbol of the dragon reinforced Vlad's image as a fearless Christian crusader.

101

00:13:37,083 --> 00:13:43,079

As his notoriety grew, the name Dracula took on new meaning.

102

00:13:43,079 --> 00:13:48,075

The dragon would be increasingly interpreted as devil.

103

00:13:48,075 --> 00:13:52,073

Vlad belonged to an age of brutality.

104

00:13:52,073 --> 00:14:01,067

The Renaissance, which saw the rebirth of art and learning, also bred new tyrannies, unspeakable torture and oppression.

105

00:14:01,067 --> 00:14:08,062

To understand Vlad's cruelty, we must also understand his world.

106

00:14:08,062 --> 00:14:18,056

The nunnery at Tsuhevica was originally a fortified monastery, protected by walls 20 feet high and 10 feet thick.

107

00:14:18,056 --> 00:14:33,046

The traditional wood block, summoning nuns and monks to prayer, may at one time have also been a summons to battle.

108

00:14:33,046 --> 00:14:38,042

For the monasteries of Romania were more than strongholds of the Christian faith.

109

00:14:38,042 --> 00:14:43,039

They were part of a formidable defense perimeter to ward off invaders.

110

00:14:43,039 --> 00:14:58,029

It's likely that the young Dracula looked out from the battlements of such a monastery, watching men die in the brutal spectacle of war.

111

00:14:58,029 --> 00:15:11,021

Steeped in the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Vlad Dracula surely must have developed strong, simple notions of good and evil, of reward and retribution.

112

00:15:11,021 --> 00:15:21,014

The latter of virtues, the work of an unknown artist, shows that in the climb toward heaven, few are virtuous enough to reach it.

113

00:15:21,014 --> 00:15:27,010

Most topple along the way, headed toward eternal damnation.

114

00:15:27,010 --> 00:15:34,005

To a young prince, impressionable and bristling for power, such messages were clear.

115

00:15:34,005 --> 00:15:41,001

By punishing evil, salvation could be had.

116

00:15:41,001 --> 00:15:46,997

Until the 16th century, Tsuhevica was the capital of the province of Moldavia.

117

00:15:46,997 --> 00:15:54,991

Here, Vlad Dracula fled, deposed after briefly assuming the throne of Alacia at the age of 17.

118

00:15:54,991 --> 00:15:58,989

This was the beginning of his second exile.

119

00:15:58,989 --> 00:16:07,983

The first time, he'd been sent as a hostage to the Turkish court by his father, a guarantee against war with the Sultan.

120

00:16:07,983 --> 00:16:18,976

As Vlad waited in Tschevica to take power, he vowed to free Alacia from Turkish domination and break the power of the nobles and church.

121

00:16:18,976 --> 00:16:24,972

In 1456, the second reign of Vlad Dracula began.

122

00:16:24,972 --> 00:16:29,968

The greatest threat to his power centered in the German towns of southern Transylvania.

123

00:16:29,968 --> 00:16:34,965

Of these, Brasov was the largest.

124

00:16:34,965 --> 00:16:42,960

Convinced that her powerful merchants were conspiring with his enemies, furious at their defiance of his trade restrictions,

125

00:16:42,960 --> 00:16:51,954

Vlad launched a series of punitive raids against Brasov and neighboring towns, taking a terrible toll of their citizens.

126

00:16:51,954 --> 00:16:55,951

How many perished by his command, no one can say.

127

00:16:55,951 --> 00:17:03,946

That slow, torturous death by impalement was excessively barbaric, no one can deny.

128

00:17:03,946 --> 00:17:11,941

Yet since the only written accounts from that time come from Germany, it's conceivable the atrocity reports were exaggerated.

129

00:17:11,941 --> 00:17:16,937

Not so the massacre at Turgavisti, Vlad's capital.

130

00:17:16,937 --> 00:17:25,931

During his successful campaign against the Turks, he impaled thousands of enemy soldiers outside the city gates to frighten the invaders.

131

00:17:25,931 --> 00:17:30,928

He would be known now for all time as Vlad the Impaler.

132

00:17:30,928 --> 00:17:37,923

Viewed for the filter of time, another side to Vlad's character emerges.

133

00:17:37,923 --> 00:17:45,918

His bold strategies won the admiration of his Turkish opponents, who also regarded him as just and honest.

134

00:17:45,918 --> 00:17:54,912

On the threshold of victory, he was betrayed by his younger brother Radu and forced into political captivity in Hungary.

135

00:17:54,912 --> 00:18:01,907

After 12 years, Vlad was restored to the throne by his cousin, Stephen the Great.

136

00:18:01,907 --> 00:18:04,905

Faces from the present.

137

00:18:04,905 --> 00:18:10,902

A few among the million and a half who live in Bucharest, Romania's bustling capital.

138

00:18:10,902 --> 00:18:15,898

In their city, Vlad the Impaler made his last stand.

139

00:18:15,898 --> 00:18:23,893

Not far from the center of Bucharest, with its huge outdoor markets, are archaeological remnants of its past.

140

00:18:23,893 --> 00:18:33,886

Layers of history stripped away reveal fortifications dating back to the 13th century.

141

00:18:34,886 --> 00:18:43,880

Below ground level, there has been unearthed a portion of the original castle built by Vlad Dracula.

142

00:18:43,880 --> 00:18:49,876

It was in these haunted surroundings that Dracula planned his last campaign against the Turks.

143

00:18:49,876 --> 00:18:54,872

His third and final reign would last only two months.

144

00:18:54,872 --> 00:19:01,868

On December 14, 1476, he was killed in battle near Bucharest.

145

00:19:01,868 --> 00:19:08,863

And according to eyewitnesses, beheaded, perhaps mistakenly by one of his own troops.

146

00:19:08,863 --> 00:19:13,860

Vlad's remains were secretly buried at Snagov.

147

00:19:13,860 --> 00:19:19,856

In death's darkness, the prince may finally have found peace.

148

00:19:25,852 --> 00:19:29,849

If some light has been shared on the truth during this search for Dracula,

149

00:19:29,849 --> 00:19:33,847

it doesn't mean that belief in vampires will be dispelled.

150

00:19:33,847 --> 00:19:44,839

Bram Stoker's Dracula will always persist in our minds because in him, we have found the perfect symbol for unrepentant evil.

151

00:19:50,835 --> 00:19:56,831

In Nosferatu, Dracula is destroyed by the daylight, dissolving in a puff of smoke.

152

00:19:56,831 --> 00:20:04,826

But many would prefer to feel he can still be found lurking somewhere in the mist-shrouded mountains of Transylvania.

153

00:20:07,824 --> 00:20:15,819

Beneath storybook towers, the old Transylvanian city of Sigashura seems untouched by time.

154

00:20:15,819 --> 00:20:24,813

For people still bear traces of their medieval ancestry, clinging tenaciously to old traditions and religious faith.

155

00:20:25,812 --> 00:20:32,808

They are steeped in Sigashura's history, remembering that it once was a stronghold of wealth and power.

156

00:20:32,808 --> 00:20:37,804

The home of princes, the birthplace of a king.

157

00:20:37,804 --> 00:20:44,800

Vlad Dracula belongs to their heritage, Stoker's vampire, to our imaginations.

158

00:20:45,799 --> 00:20:47,798

Legends die slowly.

159

00:20:47,798 --> 00:20:54,793

The myth of the human being who takes the form of a bat and drinks blood will survive because people choose to believe.

160

00:20:54,793 --> 00:20:58,790

Vampires, like werewolves and monsters, serve a purpose.

161

00:20:58,790 --> 00:21:01,788

They are representations of our hidden fears.

00:21:01,788 --> 00:21:10,782

By conquering these nightmare creatures, we purge ourselves of our darkest thoughts, and in so doing, reclaim the human spirit.