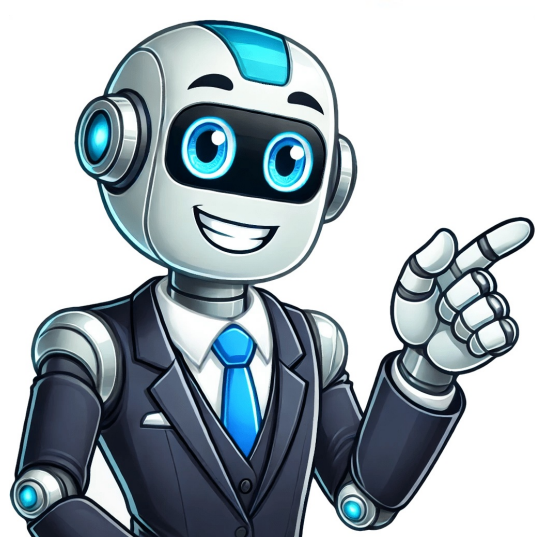


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to into barrels of sawnwood water. This allows the ma cā rōng to live undetected among humans during the day, before heading out to attack again by night.[125] Jiangshi, sometimes called "Chinese vampires" by Westerners, are reanimated corpses that hop around, killing living creatures to absorb life essence (qi) from their victims. They are said to be created when a person's soul (魂 pǔ) fails to leave the deceased's body.[126] Jiangshi are usually represented as mindless creatures with no independent thought.[127] This monster has green-white furry skin, perhaps derived from fungus or mould growing on corpses.[128] Jiangshi legends have inspired a genre of jiangshi films and television series, such as *Mr. Vampire* (1986) and *Mr. Vampire II* (1987), which are largely responsible for the monster's popularity in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

reasons.[25] Allegations of vampire attacks swept through Malawi during 2002 and in 2003, with mobs stoning one person to death and attacking at least four others, including Governor Eric Chiwaya, based on the belief that the government was colluding with vampires.[131] Fears and violence recurred in late 2011, with 6 people accused of vampire killings killed.[132] A vampire costume in early 1970, local press spread rumors that a vampire haunted Highgate Cemetery in London. Amateur vampire hunters flocked in large numbers to the cemetery. Several books have been written about the case, notably by Sean Manchester, a local man who was among the first to suggest the existence of the "Highgate Vampire" and who later claimed to have exorcised and destroyed a whole nest of vampires in the area.[133] In January 2005, rumours circulated that an attacker had bitten a number of people in Birmingham, England, fuelling concerns about a vampire roaming the streets. Local police stated that no such crime had been reported and that the case appears to be an urban legend.[134] The chupacabra ("goat-sucker") of Puerto Rico and Mexico is said to be a creature that feeds upon the flesh or drinks the blood of domesticated animals, leading some to consider it a kind of vampire. The "chupacabra hysteria" was frequently associated with deep economic and political crises, particularly during the mid-1990s.[135] In Europe, where much of the vampire folklore originates, the vampire is usually considered a fictitious being; many communities may have embraced the revenant for economic purposes. In some cases, especially in small localities, beliefs are still rampant and sightings or claims of vampire attacks occur frequently. In Romania during February 2004, several relatives of Toma Petre feared that he had become a vampire. They dug up his corpse, tore out his heart, burned it, and mixed the ashes with water in order to drink it.[136] Commentators have offered many theories for the origins of vampire beliefs and related mass hysteria. Everything from the effects of the bubonic plague to the effects of the Black Death has been cited as a possible cause. The vampire is also associated with the decomposition of a cadaver who did not look as they thought a normal corpse should when disinterred. Rates of decomposition vary depending on temperature and soil composition, and many of the signs are little known. This has led vampire hunters to mistakenly conclude that a dead body had not decomposed at all or to interpret signs of decomposition as signs of continued life.[138] Corpses swell as gases from decomposition accumulate in the torso and the increased pressure forces blood to ooze from the nose and mouth. This causes the body to look "plump", "well-fed", and "ruddy"—changes that are all the more striking if the person was pale or thin in life. In the Arnold Paole case, an old woman's exhumed corpse was judged by her neighbours to look more plump and healthy than she had ever looked in life.[139] The exhuming blood gave the impression that the corpse had recently been engaging in vampiric activity.[40] Darkening of the skin is also caused by decomposition.[140] The staking of a swollen, decomposing body could cause the body to bleed and force the accumulated gases to escape the body. This could produce a groan-like sound when the gases moved past the vocal cords, or a sound reminiscent of flatulence when they passed through the anus. The official reporting on the Petar Blagojevich case speaks of "other wild signs which I pass by out of high respect".[141] After death, the skin and gums lose luster and contract, exposing the roots of the hair, nails, and teeth, even teeth that were concealed in the jaw. This can produce the illusion that the hair, nails, and teeth have grown. At a certain stage, the nails fall off and the skin peels away, as reported in the Blagojevich case—the dermis and nail beds emerging underneath were interpreted as "new skin" and "new nails".[141] Vampire legends may have also been fueled by individuals being buried alive because of shortcomings in the medical knowledge of the time. In some cases in which people reported sounds emanating from a specific coffin, it was found that the coffin was not sealed properly. An alternate explanation for noise is the bubbling of escaping gases from natural decomposition of bodies.[143] Another likely cause of disorder and tomb robbing is grave robbery.[144] Folkloric vampirism has been associated with clusters of deaths from unidentified or mysterious illnesses, usually within the same family or without small form fresh air. An alternate explanation for noise is the bubbling of escaping gases from natural decomposition of bodies.[143] Another likely cause of disorder and tomb robbing is grave robbery.[144] Folkloric vampirism has been associated with clusters of deaths from unidentified or mysterious illnesses, usually within the same family or without small form fresh air. 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Pope Benedict XIV proclaimed that vampires were "fallacious fictions of human fantasy." Over the following century, a growing number of creative works would offer a fresh fantasy, giving vampires a major image makeover. Stories like 1819's The Vampyre by John Polidori (written as part of an infamous creative challenge that would also beget his friend Mary Shelley's Frankenstein), Carmilla, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's 1872 serial about a female vampire, and Dracula captivated audiences with romantic tales of gothic horror and charming, often well-heeled monsters. Varney the Vampire, another popular Victorian-era serial, first popularized the concept of the intimate vampire's kiss: "With a plunge he seizes her neck in his fang-like teeth," Hulton ArchiveAn illustration from 'Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood'. Dracula may have been inspired by a real person.All of these stories drew inspiration from eastern and central European folklore—Dracula perhaps most of all, as Stoker researched Transylvanian culture to write it. Count Dracula is widely believed to be inspired in part by the real Vlad III Dracula, popularly known as Vlad the Impaler. A 15th-century Romanian warrior prince, Vlad is infamous for his barbaric torture method on the battlefield: As the name suggests, he'd impale foes on stakes and leave them to bleed out by the thousands. PHAS//Getty ImagesGermanic illustration of Vlad the Impaler enjoying the carnage while eating lunch (NOT blood).It's been over one hundred years since the first vampire story craze of the 1800s, and the myth's have been taken in every direction imaginable since. Vamps go to high school (Vampire Academy, the Marked book series). They might be a superhero in a leather duster (Blade). Or, they live an average-Joe life rooming together out on Staten Island (What We Do in the Shadows). Today, most stories offer iterations of either the coldblooded parasite archetype or the more human version, with their own internal struggles and feelings—often, feelings for a human, from Buffy to Bella Swan. And here's why people think vampires drink blood.A lack of knowledge about the (very gross) things that happen to the human body certainly stoked the notion. "As a corpse's skin shrinks, its teeth and fingernails can appear to have grown longer," National Geographic points out. "And as internal organs break down, a dark 'purge fluid' can leak out of the nose and mouth." When a body suspected of vampirism was dug up, the appearance of that purge fluid could be mistaken for blood, giving the impression the deceased had consumed something (when they were actually expelling it).For more stories like this, sign up for our newsletter.Samantha VincentySenior Staff WriterSamantha Vincenty is the former senior staff writer at Oprah Daily.

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