

MAGAZINE OF  
**HORROR**  
AND STRANGE STORIES

Volume 1

CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER

Number 2

THE SPACE-EATERS .....	<i>Frank Belknap Long</i>	7
THE FACELESS THING .....	<i>Edward D. Hoch</i>	34
THE RED ROOM .....	<i>H. G. Wells</i>	39
HUNGARY'S FEMALE VAMPIRE .....	<i>Dean Lipton</i>	49
A TOUGH TUSSELE .....	<i>Ambrose Bierce</i>	57
DOORSLAMMER .....	<i>Donald A. Wollheim</i>	65
THE ELECTRIC CHAIR .....	<i>George Waight</i>	70
THE OTHER ONE .....	<i>Jerryl L. Keane</i>	82
THE CHARMER .....	<i>Archie Binns</i>	86
CLARISSA .....	<i>Robert A. W. Lowndes</i>	103
THE STRANGE RIDE OF MORROWBIE JUKES .....		
	<i>Rudyard Kipling</i>	107

*Robert A. W. Lowndes, Editor*

MAGAZINE OF HORROR, Vol. 1, No. 2, November 1963 (whole number 2).  
Published bi-monthly by Health Knowledge, Inc. Executive and editorial offices  
at 119 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y. Second class entry pending, Buffalo,  
New York. Annual subscription (6 issues) \$2.50 in the U. S., Canada and Pan  
American Union. Foreign \$3.50. Single copy, 50c. Manuscripts, accompanied by  
stamped, self-addressed envelopes will be carefully considered, but the publisher  
and editors will not be responsible for loss or damage. © 1963 by Health Knowl-  
edge, Inc. All rights reserved under Universal, International and Pan American  
copyright conventions. Printed in U. S. A.

# Hungary's Female Vampire

by Dean Lipton

This is not another tale of the kinfolk of Dracula, those animated corpses which arise when the direct radiations of the sun are not playing on their particular part of the planet, and go forth seeking fresh human blood for sustenance. There is another type of vampire, known to psychopathology, of which Countess Elizabeth Bathory is not the only example. Her case, however, is a well-attested one.

DARKNESS HAD settled over the gloomy, forested estates of Countess Elizabeth Bathory in northern Hungary one wintry night in 1600. A young nobleman just back from the wars stopped at the edge of her land and turned back. Although he needed shelter against the cruel winds and he had proved his courage in combat a dozen times over, there was no power

in the world which could have made him seek shelter behind the grim stone walls on the other side of the woods.

As he crouched beneath a tree attempting to wrest what protection he could from its leafless limbs and barren trunk, a wild, terrified feminine scream rang out across the empty space. Then it was followed by the fiendish, gleeful

laughter of several women mixed with the insane howls of a man. The young man crossed himself and started to run fearfully, hoping that the cries would be drowned out by the wind.

In the whole history of human brutality Elizabeth Bathory has no equal. She was a vampire who it is said killed six hundred virgins to satisfy her lust for blood. The cold court records of the trial of her retainers admit to sixty of these deaths by torture, and it is probable that these admissions were only a drop in the bucket. Elizabeth claimed to be a witch, and she was a practitioner of the more odious forms of witchcraft. She was a worshiper of cats and said that she had an army of them ready to obey her commands. She composed chants and rites for the destruction of her enemies and for her own protection. She organized a "coven of witches" as her followers and on warm summer nights met with them in the dark secrecy of the most gloomy part of Hungary's forests.

**ELIZABETH BATHORY** was not only one of the most beautiful women who ever lived but the daughter of one of Europe's greatest noblemen. The Bathory family owned vast estates in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, where many of the

early legends about vampires and werewolves first originated, and members of her family were without exception famous and wealthy. One of her close relatives was Prince of Transylvania, and she had an uncle who became King of Poland. The prime minister to the King of Hungary during most of her adult life was her first cousin whom she cordially hated. The Bathory family produced sheriffs, governors, judges, and even a cardinal and a couple of bishops.

Like many of the Central European nobility whose blood had been mixed with Attila's Huns, the Bathorys were hard, cruel, and barbaric. By the time Elizabeth was born, sometime around 1560, the family had become completely decadent and was rife with homosexuality, sadism, and devil worship. Elizabeth's brother was what today's papers would call a sex fiend, and except for his powerful family, would have been executed a number of times. She herself was initiated into the fine art of witchcraft and black magic before she was in her teens by an uncle who was a devil worshiper. She had an aunt whom she loved even more than she did her parents. This aunt was an infamous lesbian. Every contemporary account of Elizabeth Bathory is smothered in heavy overtones

of devil worship, sadism, and lesbianism.

It was the custom of the Bathorys to marry off the girl members of their family early. Elizabeth was only fifteen when she married Count Nadasy who came from a family whose blood was only a little less blue than that of the Bathorys. Her father, who seems to have been one of the few likeable members of this unpleasant family, must have looked at his daughter with parental pride as she stood before the altar. Elizabeth had the figure of a grown woman, and her lovely black hair, which fell in curls to her waist, was matched by the amber color of her eyes. Her high cheekbones and slightly-slanted eyes only served to increase her strange beauty.

But, if the old Count could have seen into the future, he might have taken his razor-sharp hunting knife and cut his daughter's throat. However, even at fifteen, Elizabeth Bathory was self-willed and arrogant. Though married, she refused to change her name. When her husband became insistent and pointed out that Nadasy was as old and good a name as Bathory, she drew herself up proudly and announced: "As I was born a Bathory, I shall live as a Bathory, and when I die I shall die

as one." This prophecy turned out to be all-too-true.

The twenty-one-year-old Count Nadasy shrugged disdainfully. He was more interested in fighting in the dozens of little brush-fire wars that plagued Central Europe at the time than he was in his young wife anyway, and would eventually acquire a reputation as unenviable as hers as a leader of mercenary soldiers who never gave quarter, killing the wounded and civilians with the same lack of conscience that Elizabeth displayed in the torture chambers of her castles.

For several years this strange pair lived in connubial bliss — probably because they saw very little of each other. Nadasy was away to the wars, and Elizabeth tried to play the part of a great lady. It is doubtful if Elizabeth saw the Count more than once or twice a year during this period. Nadasy's reputation was growing, but Elizabeth had not yet acquired hers. True, neighboring nobles and the peasants saw that she had a penchant for punishing and whipping her servant girls; but this was common enough among the Hungarian nobility to be accepted as a matter of course.

Then when Elizabeth was twenty-six or twenty-seven, the first breath of scandal reached out and touched her. Count Nadasy was off fighting a war

against the Serbs when a young man visited the Nadasdy estate. He and Elizabeth became inseparable companions, despite the fact that he was several years younger than she was. The superstitious peasants immediately started whispering that he was a vampire. After all, this young man had all of the ear-marks that a vampire was supposed to have: He was tall and dressed always in black; the color of his skin was a palid white, and his eyes were sharp and black; his teeth seemed sharper than a normal man's. The peasants started keeping their families in at night, bolting the doors to their huts, and piling heavy logs against them.

BUT, IF THE YOUNG man were a vampire, his desire for blood had been sated before he had appeared because in spite of their fears there is no record of a peasant having his blood sucked during the young man's stay. Then one bright morning, Elizabeth's retainers awoke to find that she and the young man had left during the night. Immediately they started whispering about the poor Countess Bathory and the horrible vampire that she had run off with. But their concern should have been for the young man.

Months went by, and Count Nadasdy returned. In his absence he had grown a huge,

black beard which covered his face and made him look, some said, more like a bear than a man. He accepted his wife's elopement philosophically and turned for his pleasures to a string of peasant girls. Then one day Elizabeth returned. She seemed none the worst for her experiences with the "vampire," but the superstitious peasants believed that they could still see traces of wet blood on her lips as she moved her tongue feverishly back and forth over them. Anyway, no one saw or ever heard of the young man again.

Apparently Count Nadasdy wasn't the jealous type. He accepted Elizabeth back without so much as a reproachful word, but he had another complaint. They had been married for more than ten years and there were still no children. True, he was home only infrequently, but still he had bedded the woman often enough for there to have been at least one heir. He called Elizabeth to him and told her that he had married a woman and not a barren witch. If she were as good at witchcraft as she often boasted to him that she was, she had better come up with a chant which would produce a son. For once, Elizabeth, in her own fashion, played the part of a dutiful wife. She hurried to the darkest part of the woods, stripped her clothes off, and chanted. In

four years, she produced four children for the Count, three sons and a daughter. The only thing is that historians have never been quite sure that Count Nadasdy was their father.

THE ONLY ONE of Elizabeth's retainers at this time who seemed to share her desires to practice witchcraft and sadism was her old nurse, Ilona Joo. She was a gaunt old hag, who looked the way a witch was supposed to look. She was the one who apparently encouraged Elizabeth to forget about such prosaic forms of torture as whipping and beating, and to undertake the kinds of torture which depended upon the use of molten wax, knives, and fire. Eventually, Elizabeth's skill would make the Marquis de Sade look like a piker.

Living with Elizabeth at the time was her old mother-in-law, a woman as different from Elizabeth as day is from night. She tried to reason with her daughter-in-law and finding it of no avail, told her son. The Count wasn't averse to the occasional use of the lash, but even he had to admit that this was carrying things too far; the King of Hungary had just hanged a couple of lesser nobles for practices far less vicious. So he told his wife to forget about fire and knives, return to the use of the whip,

and to get rid of the old hag, Ilona Joo, who he had always disliked intensely, any way. These were the last orders he gave to Elizabeth or to anyone else.

Suddenly, and in the prime of life, Count Nadasdy died. No one is quite sure what caused his death; in those days, there was no such thing as an autopsy. The superstitious said that the Countess had killed him by smearing the blood of a black hen on his shirt. The worldly nobles talked about poison, and there were even some naive ones who said that he had died a natural death.

THE FIRST THING Elizabeth did thereafter was to send her mother-in-law packing. The next thing she did was to fire all her retainers except Ilona Joo and hire new ones closer to her own desires. She managed to collect a crew of monsters seldom seen outside the padded cells occupied by homicidal maniacs. They included her torturer-in-chief, Johannes Ujvary; a notorious sorcerer named Thorco; and two witches who had already earned unpleasant reputations — Dorottya Szentes and Darvula.

However, for a year or two everything went along much as it had been before. Elizabeth stuck to torturing her unfortunate servant girls. Then an accident occurred which made it

necessary for her to have an unlimited supply of girls. Elizabeth was vain about her beauty and she feared constantly that it was vanishing with age. Actually, it was a needless worry; if anything, she was more beautiful at forty than she had been at eighteen.

Each day, her maid spent hours giving her one beautifying treatment after another. One day, while the maid was combing Elizabeth's long, black hair, she accidentally yanked it. Elizabeth struck her hard across the face, and the blood from her smashed lips and nose covered the palm of Elizabeth's hand. Elizabeth first drew her tongue across her blood-smearred palm and a look of insatiable joy crossed her face. Then she smoothed the remaining blood back and forth over her skin with the tips of her fingers. It seemed to her that where the blood had been the skin was more beautiful than before. She had discovered the fountain of youth — bathing in the blood of virgins.

While the poor maid cowered in a corner of the room, Elizabeth called Thorko and Johannes Ujavy to her. At her orders, they tore the girl's clothes off and drained the blood from her body into a vat, and Elizabeth took off her clothes and covered herself with the red liquid. Elizabeth rose from her bath refreshed

and in her eyes, more beautiful than she had ever been. She then sent her retainers into the fields to recruit young girls. They did this at first by promising them jobs in the castle. But soon they were unable to get any girls by subterfuge, and so they resorted to kidnapping them. No one has ever been able to make an accurate estimate as to how many innocent girls vanished because of Elizabeth Bathory's insatiable lust for blood.

TO THIS DAY, we don't know why the authorities did not take action. We do know that they had some idea of what was going on, because in the early part of 1600 the ugly rumors turned into hard, even uglier facts. One of Elizabeth's captives managed to escape more dead than alive, and she let the entire country in on what was going on before she died. She told how hundreds of girls were kept in stalls in the castle's dungeons and cellars. They were well-fed and well-treated until their turn came to be tortured and have their veins pierced so their blood might be drained away. She even told of Elizabeth's favorite method of reviving a victim who had fainted because she could no longer stand the torture. Elizabeth would have one of her retainers stick burning pieces of paper between the

girl's bare toes; this was guaranteed to bring her to unless she were dead.

It may have been that her family was too powerful for ordinary people to buck, although it is known that among her worst enemies was her first cousin — the prime minister — Another cousin, Count Gyorgy Thurzo, was governor of the province in which she lived. It may have been that the powerful nobles did not see why they should move against one of their own because of a handful of unknown peasant girls. But though it sounds strange today, the most logical reason seems to have been the fear of her power as a witch which she played on and caused to be circulated all over Hungary.

Even the worldly nobles — who, for the most part, didn't believe in this mumbo-jumbo — shuddered when chants such as this one were broadcast over the land by Elizabeth Bathory:

"Isten, help me! Isten, help me! You little cloud, help me too! Give health, protection, and long life to Elizabeth. You little cloud, when I am in danger, send ninety-nine cats! I order you to do so because you are supreme commander of the cats. Give orders to the cats. Tell the cats to gather from wherever they be, on mountains, water, rivers, seas. Order ninety-nine cats to come with speed and bite

the heart of King Matthias. Order them to bite the heart of Moses Cziraky, and to bite also the heart of Red Megyeri. And keep Elizabeth safe from harm."

THE MINOR police officials whom she named in her chants feared her like a plague. As for the peasants, they would have rather faced any other evil than Elizabeth Bathory and her retinue of vampires, werewolves, and witches. So for ten years no one moved against her.

Then, in 1610, she made a mistake which was to prove fatal. In a small village bordering her estate there lived a simple, country priest whose name unfortunately has been lost to history. Elizabeth's retainers kidnapped the daughter of one of this priest's parishioners. The priest let out a howl of anger which carried from one end of Hungary to the other. It finally reached the King. King Matthias ordered an investigation, and when the nature of some of Elizabeth's chants were explained to him, he reacted violently and called his prime minister to him. "Your cousin," the King said bluntly, "is guilty not only of being a murderous fiend but of treason."

So on December 30, 1610, just when Elizabeth and her followers were in the midst of a wild New Year's Eve orgy, a raiding party of soldiers and local police descended on her castle. The party was led by cousin Count



Gyorgy Thurzo, governor of the province, who had been given to understand by the King that he wanted the matter cleaned up once and for all. Elizabeth's retainers were carted off to jail, and she was placed under virtual house arrest.

They were all placed on trial for their lives, and it was one of the largest and most important trials held in Hungary up to that time. It took the entire months of January and February, 1611, to hear all of the evidence. The presiding judge was Theodosius Syrmienensis de Szulo, chief justice of the Royal Supreme Court, and he was assisted by twenty associate judges. All the defendants except Elizabeth pleaded guilty. Elizabeth refused to enter plea and sulked in her castle. King Matthias had instructed the court to ignore all of the mumbo jumbo about witchcraft and vampires and to treat the case as they would any other murder trial.

ALL THE defendants were found guilty of murder; they were all beheaded except Elizabeth, Ilona Joo, and Dörttya Szentes. The two old women were tortured and then burned alive, even though the charges against them were murder and not witchcraft, and did not call for such a penalty.

A tug-of-war took place as to what should be done to Elizabeth Bathory. Because of the

prominence of her family, she was not sentenced by the court, even though found guilty. Her family — even those who despised her for the disgrace that she had brought to their name — rallied to her defense. At first, King Matthias insisted that she be put to death with the others; finally he gave in to the pressure of his prime minister and the other powerful nobles.

No sentence was ever passed against Elizabeth Bathory, but she was condemned nonetheless to what amounted to virtual solitary confinement for the rest of her life. King Matthias sent soldiers and workmen to her castle. They forced her into a small room and sealed the room so no one could enter or leave, leaving only a small slit so that food and water could be passed in and a few small air-holes at the top of the room.

There were some who thought that Elizabeth would turn into a bat and fly out of one of the small air holes, or use her knowledge of witchcraft to sail through the solid stone walls of the room. But she was never quite able to make it. In four years, she turned into an old woman, and in 1614 when one of the guards looked through the slit in the wall Elizabeth Bathory, the vampire who had terrorized an entire country, was lying face down on the floor, dead.