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The Magazine for the Night People

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Issue 13

Dare you read it?

Britain's Buffy is Born

Behind the Scenes of Cursed and Blessed

Vampire wannabees from around the world

From Sweden, Canada and Scandinavia

How to make a monster

B-movie special

Weird!

Meet the world's only gothic cryptozoologist

13 things you never knew about

☪ NUMBER 13 FACTS

☪ TOP 13 EDGAR ALLEN POE BOOKS

☪ VAMPIRES FROM OUTER SPACE

WATCH OUT!

GIANT BATS!

DRACULA UNLEASHED!

Interactive DVD Games to be WON!



NEWS † PEOPLE † EVENTS † INTERNET † ART

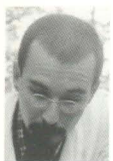


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Contributors



Sarah Kerr lives in a 13th century English cottage with a ghost that likes to turn off the kettle! A writer and researcher, she is paranormal advisor for many books and television series. She spends her time travelling from county to county searching for anything strange, and she runs the Paranormal Photographic Library. Oh, and she can dowse, read tarot and runes and interpret dreams. Read about her quest for the mystery of the number 13.



Dr Mark Benecke is a forensic biologist from Germany. He is currently listed in *Who is Who in the World*, America's leading biographical reference source, for his contributions to forensic science. He has worked in New York City's Chief Medical Examiner's Office. In his spare time he is European Vice President of New York's Vampire Empire organisation.



Rosemary Ellen Guiley Ph.D. is a best-selling author of 30 books on paranormal, mystical, spiritual and visionary topics. She is an honorary fellow of the College of Human Sciences, the professional division of the International Institute for Integral Human Sciences in Montreal, Canada. She has also served on the boards of the Association for the Study of Dreams and the Association for Religion and Psychical Research in the United States. Find out more about the Vampires from Outer Space!

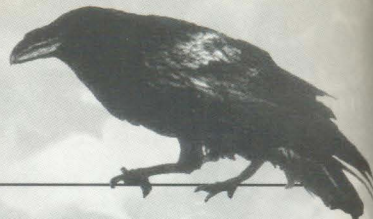


Richard Freeman is one of Britain's few professional cryptozoologists. He has travelled extensively in East Africa, Europe and the US studying the native fauna. In October 2000 he visited the remote jungles, rivers, and caves of Northern Thailand in search of the Naga, a giant crested serpent said to lurk in the primal morasses of Indo-China. Read about his search for giant bats in this issue.



Scott Richard Stets is a Boston researcher and photographer for best-selling author and vampire expert, Dr. Raymond McNally. Scott is a professional musician and has played live with Les Paul and Tony Bennett. He is also a trained Shakespearean actor. In this issue he shares his memories of his Raymond McNally.

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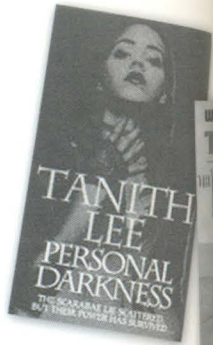
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The Dracula Society Presents...

TANITH LEE

Dracula Society member Tina Rath recalls an evening spent with the fantasy fiction author.




Tanith Lee was born in London and began writing when she was only nine. She worked variously as a library assistant, shop assistant, filing clerk and waitress before having three children's books published in the early seventies. When Daw Books released her novel *The Birthgrave* in 1975 followed by twenty six other titles, she became a full-time writer. She has published more than seventy books and nearly two hundred short stories to date. Her work has been translated into more than fifteen languages. She has won two World Fantasy Awards for short fiction, and the 1980 British Fantasy Award for her novel *Death's Master*. Four of her plays have been broadcast by BBC radio, and she scripted two episodes of the cult BBC TV series *Blake's Seven*, including the 1980 space vampire story *Sarcophagus*. Her vampire fiction includes *Sabella*, *The Blood of Roses*, and *The Blood Opera* sequence, *Dark Dance*, *Personal Darkness* and *Darkness, I*, besides numerous short stories.

I met Tanith Lee when we were both signing copies of Steve Jones' collection, *The Mammoth Book of Vampire Stories by Women* last year. She has long been one of my favourite writers and I plucked up the courage to ask if she would come to talk to the Dracula Society. She very kindly agreed and last year she came to a meeting of the Society to tell us about her long and prolific career in fantasy fiction.

Tanith told the Dracula Society that she had chosen to write fantasy fiction right from the start. She had wanted something other than real life, something more spiritual. I asked her about her children's fiction, mentioning that, on re-reading the *Blood Opera* series in preparation for the interview I had been struck by the bad things which happen to the children in it, including a whole plane-load of children being vapourised.

Tanith said that she was fiercely protective of children, and their rights, but when she wrote




 "We all have a limited amount of time at our disposal, but vampires are quite different – what will they choose to do with their extra allowance of time?"

she felt she had to "take dictation." She had been appalled by the death of the children in the book, but it was the responsibility of the character Cain, who will, hopefully, get his just deserts in the fourth book of the series. (Disappointingly her publishers are not currently interested in producing this title, but we must live in hope – I would certainly buy it). She had been fascinated by the Scarabae family, the strange, beautiful, possibly vampiric characters of *Blood Opera*, with a foothold in the present, the future and other possible dimensions.

On the subject of writing for children (her *Wolf Tower* series was short-listed for the Guardian's Children Fiction Award) she said that she did not find it any different to writing for adults, apart from reining back on sexually explicit scenes and violence. She does use syntax that might possibly be in advance of children's understanding, but she feels it is good for readers to be stretched. She gets appreciative letters from eight year olds who often display understanding of thirty year olds. She feels that children are like young birds, with their beaks wide open – their imagination demands to be fed.

There was general agreement from the Society that the *Wolf Tower* books could certainly be enjoyed by adults as well as children. There is a fourth book in the series, which came out this year. Tanith is also planning to bring out a book for children called *Piratica*, about a young girl who follows her mother's career of piracy on the high seas, under the flag of the Jolly Roger – but a pink Jolly Roger, with a little lace trim.

In her introduction to the *Wolf Tower* books Tanith says: "When I write I go to live inside a book." But in many of her books, although the worlds can be very beautiful, rich and exotic, they can also be rather grim and very uncomfortable to live in. However, she also says she "has to let things take their course ... when I write I don't have a choice ... I'm the translator." For instance in one of her latest series *The Venus Quartet*, something happens at the end which "floored me ... but it had to happen." She feels she has to tell the truth as it comes through. Bad things do happen to nice people, but she does try to get some sort of justice: in *The Book of the Mad*, the lunatics do escape to a kind of Heaven, while the evil mad-house attendants are drowned in a tidal wave of gin.

The conversation then turned specifically to vampires. We were, as Tanith so rightly said, all there because we were interested in vampires. She herself feels that vampires are "very erotic ... beautiful... full of angst ... so romantic ... eternal but limited." She first read *Dracula*, "the first great vampire novel" when she was fourteen. She thinks it gave writers and fantasists the blueprint for vampire fiction and modern vampire fiction could all be said to be derived from *Dracula*. Vampirism is about personal continuation. We all have a limited amount of time at our disposal, but vampires are quite different – what will they choose to do with their extra allowance of time?

Asked if she could imagine writing a vampire story for children Tanith agreed that it would present a problem in that the overt eroticism which characterises the vampire would be unsuitable for children, but the vampire romanticism could easily work. Her next book is a fantasy trilogy with some elements of vampirism. The hero is the son of a schizophrenic god who inherits both his power and his schizoid tendencies and the setting is an Arabian Nights Ice-Age. Her vampire stories will also be published in France in a beautifully illustrated edition, and Miramax will be filming *Silver Metal Lover*.

Tanith told us something about her writing methods: she writes her first drafts in long-hand, typing them up later – indeed she wrote one book dealing with the French Revolution in pen and ink (she considered using a quill pen, but the result was just too messy). For her, writing is part of being alive and she feels uncomfortable if she is not working on a book.

Questions from the Society members concentrated heavily on Tanith's work on *Blake's Seven*. She told us how much she had enjoyed working on the scripts of *Sarcophagus* and *Sand*, both of which have vampiric themes. She was interested in the characters and found the actors, crew and producers very easy to work with. She was also asked about her vampire story based on Snow White, *Red as Blood*, in which the Wicked Stepmother is good and beautiful while Bianca, the Snow White figure, is a dangerous vampire although she is redeemed in the end in a rather Wildean finale. Tanith wrote this story after she had been working on a series of paintings of

stained glass windows. *Red as Blood* appeared in a collection of short stories, *Stories from the Sisters Grimm*, re-tellings of fairy tales with a peculiarly Tanith-like twist.

I mentioned another story from the collection, Tanith's version of *The Frog Prince* which I once read to the Dracula Society as part of an evening dealing with "Nameless Terrors" – the ultimate form the Prince takes certainly comes under this heading. Tanith was also asked about her other versions of *Snow White*, including her novel, *White as Snow*. It has a medieval setting, but there is a strong tie back into Greek legend, with the story of Persephone and Demeter. Neither the characters, nor the reader, are spared any horrors: the queen, who is not wholly wicked, but certainly very badly done by, does dance in red hot shoes (at the end of a rope) and the handsome prince is "a thing from outer space" but the dwarfs are given back their dignity and their leader, Stormy, is the romantic hero.

Finally Tanith revealed that her name really is her given name. When her mother was fifteen, she told us, she decided that when she had a daughter she would call her after Tanith, the Carthaginian Sky goddess – possibly rather disappointing some of the society members who rather hoped that she had been influenced in her choice by Dennis Wheatley's heroine of *The Devil Rides Out*.

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