

**Title:** Sexual Anxiety and Death in Aleksei Tolstoy's Vampire Tales  
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Aleksei Tolstoy's vampires in the short works "Upyr" and "Family of the Vurdulak" are more a product of Western European Romantic literature than of his native folklore. Despite Rybarenko's insistence in Tolstoy's fantastic tale "Upyr" that the vampire is a purely Slavic phenomenon, the putative vampires described bear little in common with the Slavic folkloric vampire. The vampires in Tolstoy's "Family of the Vurdulak" are marginally closer to the folklore but based on these tales, it is questionable whether Tolstoy had any significant knowledge of the Slavic vampire. Nonetheless, all vampires, literary and folkloric, are effective metaphors for human anxieties. The anxiety expressed through Tolstoy's vampires is sexual in nature. The heroes of both "Upyr" and "Family of the Vurdulak" are enamored of a young woman, but in the former the hero marries his love who may have been saved from her vampire grandmother, while in the latter the hero barely escapes with his life because the young woman has become a vampire. In this presentation I argue that the hero of "Upyr" is saved through his appropriate marriage to a woman of his class, which allows for the transcendence of sexual love over death. In contrast, Count D'Urfe narrowly escapes with his life because the crucifix he wore as a token from the Countess he loves shows the Serbian peasant girl in her true form—death.

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