

MONSTER STORY: VAMPIRE

I miss home. Shrouded as my memories are by the constant hunger, I still see glimpses of my past. The vaulted halls of our proud keep. My beloved husband.



I no longer recall whether there were children or not for the thoughts of young blood bring the red mist that veils my memories further.

So instead I dwell on what I remember of these bygone days. The walks on the parapet, our fields stretching all the way into the horizon. The sensation of wind in my hair. The setting sun – something I shall never feel again. All these moments – grains of sand, worn down by the merciless tides of time. That was well over a century ago.

I do not remember much of the cataclysm itself. A deep rumbling, seemingly shaking the very foundation of the keep. Screams of terror. Falling debris, people being crushed. The grey winds came soon after – strange, corrupting, harmless to some and deadly to others – picking its victims seemingly at random, some who inhaled the ash-like dust would convulse and cough up blood, dying within hours.

Walking dejected around the corpse-littered ruins of my former home, along with what was left of our people. Certainly, we've heard warnings of the dire consequences that the sorcerers' meddling could bring. Seduced by the power of their dark craft few cared. I did not. What the dark crystals and their magic made possible was worth any risk and now we were paying the price, greedy fools.

For most in my predicament the transformation itself is memorable. Not for me. After I have left the ruins of my keep wandering the decimated countryside, many dark creatures were emerging from the shadows. One such creature was the vampire that gifted me my immortality, ending my miserable living existence. I did not want immortality, I wanted release. I loathed my new form, I loathed my master and after a time, as his power over me waned, I have made arrangements to collapse a wall, exposing his hiding place to the cleansing rays of the sun. It screeched as it turned to ash.

The cataclysm has shifted the landscape of the countryside that was once familiar to me into a twisted and misshapen form. Murderous bands of greenskins roamed these scarred lands, living in constant strife. They made for easy prey at night and my survival in this new form was never under threat.

Years passed. Long years of solitude, of beastlike excitement of the hunt, the bloodlust overwhelming whatever was left of me. I gained notoriety as the deathly presence that haunts the shadow. I enjoyed being feared. It gave me purpose. I traveled south to the edge of the scarred lands to spread my legend until one day I came upon a hamlet – first sign that people were staking a claim for these lands once more. My curiosity was piqued.

That night I stalked the alleys of the hamlet, listening to the murmur of conversation in the inn yard, the singing, the rare burst of laughter. These sounds made me feel nothing, yet they fascinated me as a relic of my past. I fed well that night too – the greenskin blood is vile and humans offer much more agreeable sustenance. Finding the hamlet made me feel a connection to a place that I have not felt ever since the destruction of our keep and I decided to make it my new hunting ground.

A nearby complex of caverns offered a place to hide from the sun's deadly rays. It is a dangerous place with twisting tunnels leading into treacherous depths, with many hostile monster tribes vying for control over the more livable caves. Dark and terrible secrets lie within the moss-covered ruins that litter these caverns – ruins that remind me of the terrible events of that faithful night over a century ago.

But no matter. I am no longer a victim of the shadows – I am the shadow, I am the threat. The creatures of these depths will learn just what kind of creature I am. Their blood will sustain me along with the visits to the human settlement. And that delightful little hamlet will learn to love and fear their new Lady. I have finally found it. Twisted and blood-soaked, this will be my new home.