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**Jewish Vampires** (letters of comment by Gary McGath, Tim Merrigan, Keith F. Lynch, Joy Beeson, and Paul Dormer):

In response to [Mark and Evelyn's review of BLOOD RELATIVES](#) in the 11/18/22 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

The standard joke about Jewish vampires is that holding up a cross fails to ward them off. Does it do that? [-gmg]

Tim Merrigan responds:

That would depend on why the cross is significant. If it's as a representation of Christianity, then yeah, it shouldn't have any effect on non Christians, but if, for instance, it significance is as a representation of a Cross road (where two paths come together), long standing areas of strong magic\*, then the beliefs system of the person wielding it, or of the vampire, shouldn't matter.

I'll note that pre Stoker vampire lore included burying the vampire's, separated, head at a crossroad.

\*A Y or T intersection, where three paths come together is even stronger magic. [-tm]

Gary replies:

Another possibility: When a vampire victim dies, the soul goes to the Christian Heaven or Hell. The vampire spirit that takes over the body witnesses this happening and learns empirically that Christianity is true. The vampire, regardless of the person's previous beliefs, becomes cruciphobic as a result.

By the theory you suggest, vampires would hate Boston. [-gmg]

Keith F. Lynch adds:

Andrew Nadeau wrote, "Imagine you were a vampire nowhere near the Middle East and don't know who Jesus is but the day after he dies you gotta figure out why lower case t's started hurting."

That would indeed be mystifying. Especially since lowercase wasn't invented until several centuries later. [-kfl]

Joy Beeson asks:

Would a five-point intersection be stronger or weaker?

Does it matter whether it's five separate roads, or some of the roads continue through the intersection? (Every time I leave home, I have to deal with the intersection of Winona Avenue, King's Highway, Park Avenue, and Argonne Road. Chestnut Street was truncated and no longer participates.)

A roundabout replaces a four-point intersection with four three-point intersections. I sense a story here.

And if a five-point is weaker, replacing it with five strong three-pointers should be interesting. [-jb]

Keith responds:

There's a place aptly named "Seven Corners" here in Virginia. It's the corner of Route 7 (Leesburg Pike), East Broad Street, Route 50 (Arlington Boulevard), Sleepy Hollow Road, Hillwood Avenue, and Wilson Boulevard. It's easily found by name in Google Earth, but misplaced by half a mile to the southeast. The only magic I've noticed there is the power to cloud the minds of motorists (and apparently of Google).

Somebody please tell me whether it would be an especially good or especially bad place to bury a vampire, and whether this depends on whether there's a full moon and on whether it's midnight. I suspect it's a bad place for a burial, since at any hour of the day or night you'd be likely to be hit by a car if you're in the intersection.

Attempted burials would certainly explain all the potholes. [-kfl]

Paul Dormer responds to Tim:

In the 1989 Doctor Who story "The Curse of Fenric", set in Northumberland in WWII, a vicar (played by Nicholas Parsons) fails to ward off the vampire-like aliens because he has lost his faith. But a company of Soviet soldiers who have turned up ward them off with the hammer and sickle, because they are devout communists. [-pd]

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**This Week's Reading** (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

GOSLINGS (a.k.a. A WORLD OF WOMEN) by J. D. Beresford (MIT Press, ISBN 978-0-262-54335-4, also Project Gutenberg) was recommended by Michael Dirda. Much of what Beresford wrote in 1913 is still very accurate today, e.g., "Whenever he tried to think of some means to stay the progress of the plague his mind automatically began to consider what influence the adoption of such means would have upon the general election which must soon come..." The plague is called the "Russian epidemic."

There is a distressing amount of the casual anti-semitism that was common at the time(\*): references to "fat Jewesses" and such lines as, "Only yesterday I had to send one of 'em packing. A Jew woman she was, called 'erself Mrs Isaacson or something. She was a

caution."

(\*) And, alas, is becoming so again.

And speaking of the general attitudes of the time: "Eugenics was a proposition that grew out of the necessity of the time."

There is also a fair amount of misogyny. Beresford does not have it in for all women, but he is very dismissive of the women who would have been considered the epitome of womanhood at the time. So he writes of Mrs. Gosling, "She could learn to do without flour, butter, lard, milk, sugar and the other things, but she could not learn to think on unfamiliar lines." And he has Mrs. Gosling constantly talking as if nothing had changed, asking for things that were no longer available, and talking as if she would be going back to her previous life real soon.

Of another female character, he writes, "Her intelligence was of a somewhat more masculine quality in some respects than that of the average woman; she was slower, more detailed, more logical in her methods."

And of a third, "She was not gifted intellectually, she had no swift intuitions ... which enabled her to comprehend her work; she was naturally indolent, and all her emotions came to her through sensation.'

And again, "She desired the blood of Millie Gosling and Jasper Thrale with the same intensity that women had once desired a useless vote."

[-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

Books had an instant replay long before televised sports.  
--Bert Williams

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