

# Vampire trilogy: *The Diaries of Family Dracul*

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Lock your doors. Grab your crucifix. But most importantly, keep the faith.

Jeanne Kalogridis introduces a trilogy of vampire legend, historically minded fiction and monumental proportions with the series *The Diaries of Family Dracul*.

In 1476 Vlad Dracul was the most feared ruler in all Romania. Vlad was well known for his barbaric and cruel punishment to those who betrayed him or disobeyed. One of his many forms of torture, which gave him the name Impaler, was lancing long stakes through his many thousands of victims, leaving them dangling and writhing in pain and agony before dying.

Vlad considers himself "fair and just" to those who serve him well and don't betray him, and to those that do, may God have mercy on them and let the pain and suffering kill them quickly. In this year Vlad knew death was at hand, and in order to avoid dying he made a pact with the Lord of Darkness in order to defy death and become immortal.

Now, imagine being bound by an arrangement or pact controlled by your destiny something against your will. Though society speaks of arranged marriages all the time, what if your pact was something far less ap-

pealing, something far more sinister?

In the first book, *Covenant of the Vampire*, readers are told of Vlad Dracul (Son of the Devil), and how the covenant began. For Vlad to achieve true immortality, he had to give something to the Lord of Darkness.

In place of his soul, Vlad did what any power-hungry human monster would do: he sacrificed someone else. Vlad swore to relinquish the soul of his first-born son. The Lord of Darkness said it wasn't enough: in return for giving Vlad immortality he wanted the soul to every first-born son of the generations to come. The exchange was done,

sealed with a kiss—destined to damn every generation thereafter to eternal Hell.

There are agreements made in order to keep the power of immortality: 1) Vlad must become a Vampire and forever thirst for the blood of the innocent, 2) Vlad must never under any

books of her series. The *Covenant of the Vampire* also delves into the story of Arkady Tsepesh, son of Petru, and how he came to return home after many years to find his father dead and a strange uncle with secrets that could drive the sanest of persons over the edge. Arkady learns how he was driven by an unknown force to return home and take his father's place recruiting victims for his uncle.

Zsuzsanna, Arkady's sister, falls in love with her uncle for loving her crippled, crooked body. Vlad turns Zsuzsanna into a vampire to straighten her body and give her immortality. This creates a dent in the covenant whereby Vlad loses control of Arkady.

Arkady learns of a blood ritual that has bound and will forever bind him to this family and their evil. When Arkady returns he brings his wife Mary Windham, who carries his child. He soon learns that Mary carries a son who is destined to repeat the ritual and take on the task of recruitment in his place once he is gone. The blood ritual controls the minds of the sons until which time they no longer have control of themselves or their senses.

Arkady breaks away from the powerful hold Vlad has on him to tell Mary he doesn't want his son to be a part of it. In the most moving scene in the book, he declares, "Let it

end with me!" Mary must save her sanity, her husband and her child from the centuries old pact. Will she succeed?

In *Children of the Vampire* readers learn of Arkady and Mary's child Stephen, whom Vlad is trying so hard to control that he would sacrifice his own soul. Mary has had a lifetime of pain and suffering, and yet still she is plagued by the past that destroyed her husband's sanity and is trying to take his soul. This book takes place over 20 years later and touches on new characters who help oppose the evil Vlad has created. What will become of their efforts?

In *Lord of the Vampires*, Arkady resurfaces to help bring about the downfall of his uncle. Mary grows sick and old. Dying, she finds herself remembering her love for Arkady.

A relic of unforeseen power is introduced in this third and final story with which a vampire can walk in the daytime, and not cringe at the sight of a cross or other symbol of faith. In this book Abraham Van Helsing is destined to kill every vampire in the world. By destroying vampires it slowly kills Vlad, and he wants Vlad dead. Vlad destroyed his family. Will he satisfy his thirst for revenge?

Jeanne Kalogridis leaves readers on the edge of their seats grasping a crucifix and running to experience the chilling tales of Vlad the Impaler and the family Dracul.



## New Christian CDs inspire through song

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Smalltown Poets' long-awaited second album, *Listen Closely*, is out. The first CD was good. This CD is great. The album begins with a pseudo-anthem, "Call Me Christian." During the bridge of this song you will hear: *As a boy I put my steps in my brothers bigger tracks/ To match his stride and just like that/ I'll follow Jesus/ Jesus is my guide.*

In "There is Only You," they express clearing away distractions and presenting oneself to God as a temple. "Hold It up to the Light" gives an example of how to approach God with tough choices or decisions. Great sound. Good lyrics. This album has a couple of themes borrowed from the book of Proverbs, none so obvious as "Garland of Grace." This song speaks of wisdom as a woman. An old idea, yes, but one I am certain women today will not object to.

Go pick up this CD; it will

stay in your collection for a long time. Also, this Friday, April 9, the Smalltown Poets are playing a concert in the Portland area. This would be a good concert to which to bring a friend or youth group, or just to give Christian music a try.

Speaking of Christian music, the Sparrow label recently released the sophomore production of the Waiting, *UNFAZED*. As with their debut CD, this quartet uses their alternative/pop sound to drive home some "heart issues." The lyrics are powerful, filled with sharp reminders and encouraging praise.

In the third track, "I AM," the band lifts this prayer to God: *Tear this church down to its cornerstone/And build it up again/Build me up again.*

I recommend that any Christian who has not heard the Waiting to check this CD out. Try their self-titled debut album out as well; they are both very good. I also recommend this album to anyone who thinks that all Christian music sucks—much of it does, but certainly not all of it.

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