

# Vampire Literature

# Put that green thumb to work in the garden

**Elizabeth Hitz**

*The Clackamas Print*

"[I] never really got mesmerized until, embarrassingly enough, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* – maybe because it features a female slayer and really wicked vampires."

These are probably not words that one would think a teacher would say, much less in regards to a literature class.

But Leslie Ormandy has a passion for vampires that she wants to share with the world.

Ormandy is teaching the new Vampire Literature course at Clackamas this term.

"I think it's important to teach literature about vampires because people connect to it," she said. "I don't think you can really discuss vampires without also discussing life, death, undeath, souls, victims

and victimization, and ideas of morality."

"After attending the conference (American Cultural Literary Conference, at Princeton), where I found I knew very few of the vampire versions being discussed, I began reading literature ... about vampires," she added. "Soon the obsession took hold.

"Knowing that I wasn't the only person in academia interested in vampires in literature allowed me to begin thinking about what it would take to create a class about my favorite supernatural."

The results of the experiment seem to want to speak for themselves.

"Even the die-hard vampire ... fanatics are learning things," said one of Ormandy's students, Ted Johnson. "I'm learning some really interesting stuff."

"I did a presentation on Malasian vampires ... the Phii

Krasue ... a crawling, long-tongued Penanggalan (another Malasian vampire) look-alike who feeds on blood, intestines and," Johnson laughed, "poop."

The class syllabus is full of early vampire literature, along with some modern literature. Students discuss why humanity invented the vampire myth, religious ideas and social conventions, issues of humanness, the state of the soul in its relationship to the vampire and how the myths change with different writers.

"[Ormandy] wants us to stay away from Dracula because she wants to teach a whole other class in the winter," Johnson said.

Ormandy explained, "I separated Dracula from the rest of the vampires in literature because introducing the Count – [the] really defining vampire from our western perspective – left no time to examine the ... vampires in literature prior to Dracula's entrance into the scene."

"She wants to teach 'Mummies, Werewolves and Zombies, Oh My,' in the spring," teased Johnson.

Ormandy hopes to eventually teach classes on the triad of angels, demons, the Apocalypse, witches and ghosts.

"I'm interested in the supernatural in all its various manifestations," she said.

Clackamas is one of the few colleges, or even universities, with a literature course concerning vampires.

"Perhaps people haven't ... taught literature about vampires because it doesn't fit into the traditional canon [of accepted literature]," Ormandy said. "It takes courage for a department to run non-canonical classes; it risks their academic credibility."

While the course is currently considered an elective credit, rather than English, she is working to change that.

The class meets in Randall 222 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 11:50 a.m.

Who knows? Maybe blonde bombshell vampire hunters do haunt the night and really wicked vampires exist on something other than a television screen. Want to find out?

**Jess Sheppard**

*The Clackamas Print*

How many places are there where the green-thumb can rent roughly 500 square feet of gardening space for only \$20 per season?

Clackamas is one.

Everyone who enters the campus from Beaver Creek Road passes them. Part of the jogging trail runs through them.

They're the Clackamas Community Gardens, where anyone – student or not – can rent a plot of land and grow whatever he or she wishes.

Unlike most other garden spaces, there is no contract riddled with fine print and terms of agreement. At Clackamas' Community Gardens, rented plots are maintained with the help of the Greenspaces Club, which is made up of plot owners and community volunteers like Kathy Vonstriver.

Vonstriver has been the head of the Community Gardens for almost four years and has had her plot for more than 15.

"It's my retreat," she said.

For others, gardening is an outlet as much as an escape.

But that escape has suffered over the past few years.

"Theft has been really bad," said Vonstriver.

In the past, thieves have stolen pipes and brass sprinkler heads to sell

as scrap metal.

Thankfully, law enforcement cracked down on scrap dealers, giving them to check their sources and take down information about their ers.

This year, the gardens have theft-free, and the staff is now only with the problem of being handed.

With about 130 plots available, the gardens have no lack of space. One person can rent as many plots as he or she desires, or two people can rent one plot and maintain it together. Some plots are available year-round for the winter and fall gardeners.

The college donates the water for the plots, and the Greenspaces Club waters them twice every week. The club also pitches in, pulling weeds, trimming and generally maintaining the spaces.

Now that it's fall, most of the plots are either being harvested or cleaned for the next season. The gardens are a lot of potential, Vonstriver said, nothing can be done without help.

Vonstriver hopes to put in raised flowerbeds, as well as improve the paths, put in some work and possibly even a picnic table. The sky is really the limit.

Anyone wishing to rent a plot need only contact Vonstriver at 503-655-0637 or by e-mail at [ccg@greenspaces@yahoo.com](mailto:ccg@greenspaces@yahoo.com). The Greenspaces Club also has a page on the college Web site.



Photo Illustration by Kyle Steele Clackamas Print

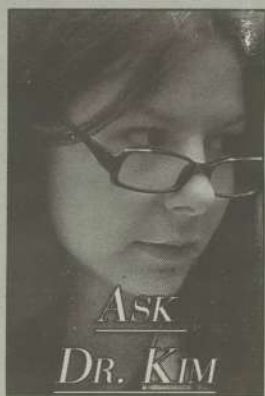
The legendary vampire Dracula is only one of many in literature. Take the Vampire Literature course to learn about more.



Josh Hudson Clackamas Print

The community gardens at the college are filled with beautiful plants and a scarecrow which has established it as its resident.

## A few words from the "Doctor" on how everything started



Disclaimer: Dr. Kim is not a real doctor, nor has she ever been. She's working on it, though.

To read more of "Dr. Kim," go to [askejean.com](http://askejean.com) and click on "Top Campus Sex Columnists."

To send Dr. Kim a question, e-mail her at [drmaier2006@yahoo.com](mailto:drmaier2006@yahoo.com).

When I was in fifth or sixth grade, my school started sex education.

I sat there in a classroom of 25 of my 12-year-old peers and our school nurse, both horrified and excited at the prospect of her saying dirty words like "penis" and "vagina." Ooooooh, dirty.

When she finished with her lecture about the anatomy and physiology of the human reproductive system, she collected the book that had horrified and threatened all the girls with the "curse" of their periods and asked if anyone had any questions they would like to ask.

I stared around the room at 25 silent prepubescents, all sitting on their hands for fear she would think someone scratching their hair wanted to know more about sex.

My hand shot up in the air proudly, for I had never been told that sex was an ugly secret. My schoolmates gasped.

"What does semen smell like?" I asked.

"Well, umm ..." the lazy-eyed nurse stammered. "Well ..."

She stopped and cleared her throat, confident that she could

answer this one while still upholding her dignity.

"You know ... uhmm ... just like any other bodily fluid, it has its own scent."

That was her answer, and she was sticking to it.

Two negative things happened as a result of this experience.

1) My friends thought I was completely disturbed.

2) I went on for years trying to determine if semen smelled like sweat, urine or worse – feces.

Let's jump forward in time, shall we?

Last year, I was lucky enough to convince the editorial staff at *The Clackamas Print* to let me write my own advice column. They even put my picture on it and allowed me to pass out flyers to attract questions for "Dr. Kim" on campus. It was not a sex column by any means.

As the letters came pouring in, it turned out that many of them were about relationships and sex. Six months into the column-writing experience, *Elle Magazine* columnist E. Jean Carroll asked me if I would contribute the column as a sex column on the *askejean* Web site.

I was reluctant at first, because I didn't think my lifestyle fit the description of a sex columnist. Then I decided that all you really need is a healthy reserve of synonyms for the words "penis" and "vagina" and an open mind. Now I write about everything from intimacy to anal sex.

Little did I know that I was about to encounter the same reaction from my peers in college that I did when I was just a wee youngster in sex ed. class. I should have listened when they all told me sex is a dirty secret that no one talks about.

In the beginning, I thought it was cool to be recognized from the paper. People would be reading *The Print* in the cafeteria, and they would ask, "Are you Dr. Kim?"

I quickly learned that, depending on what the content in my column was that week, sometimes the answer should be "No. I've never seen that woman before in my life."

Word started spreading that Dr. Kim is a vulgar, unclean slut.

My editorial staff started questioning whether the content in "Dr. Kim" was appropriate for a school newspaper. In a conservative room

of pure-minded, annoyed editors, was reminded once again that sex is a dirty secret, and if I talk about I'm a bad, bad girl.

The truth is, the judgment doesn't bother me. Having sex doesn't make you a bad, uncleared person, talking about it doesn't make you a temptress, and writing about it sure doesn't qualify you as a whore.

I'm a stay-at-home mother and full-time student. I can count the number of sexual partners I've had on one hand.

Sex is not a dirty secret, and you should talk about it. Think of the girls like me, who walk around afraid of sex because they think semen smells like urine.

If we all felt more comfortable talking about the natural event of sex, girls might be more honest with their parents about needing birth control. Women might be more open to telling their gynecologist the truth about their sexual history, and new couples would be brave enough to ask when the last time was their partner was tested for STDs.

I'm not just a sex columnist – I'm a sexual superhero!