

Vampires

Exposé for a mini-series

by

Friedrich K. Rumpf

Kerstin Mehle

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As a family secret is revealed, the 100-year-old agreement between over 150 governments and the global vampire community can no longer be hidden from the public. At the same time, the actions of a mad scientist threaten to break the truce mankind has with the vampires. An absolute catastrophe can be prevented only at the last minute.

North Bohemia, at the foot of the Erz Mountains. Dusk is quickly approaching. An ambulance drives up to a run-down estate. It stops in front of the main entrance. Two men get out and unload boxes which they carry into the house. The sun goes down. The two men are obviously in a hurry. They drive off, tyres spinning.

She's pale, she's beautiful. Ludwig draws nearer because she invites him in with her seductive smile. Then everything stops abruptly, and he wakes up soaked in sweat...

Vampires strike terror into people's heart up until the twentieth century, first in Europe, then in the United States and finally in Asia. They terrify the general public and all precautions are in vain. The blood shed incessantly increases along with the number of vampires and an understanding of basic maths is enough to know that mankind's very existence is under threat. At least that is what can be read in the tabloids of the time, without a reporter ever actually managing to capture a vampire on photo...

But: Who still believes in vampires at the beginning of the twenty-first century? There has been no evidence for over 100 years and science has put an end to that superstition.

Who is this lucid beauty that does not want to let him go? Why does she keep reappearing in the same consistent dream? Why can he not stop thinking about her? Has he fallen in love with a phantom?! It has been going on like this for months!

The last mention of a vampire dates from the year 1914 in New York. The article in the New York Herald makes fun of a nigger who claims to have seen a vampire killing his daughter. However, the article also notes that the body of the child disappeared inexplicably, never to be seen again, which finally drove the parents insane.

Ludwig is at his mother's, who, after the death of his father, is planning to move into a smaller flat. Tidying and packing up; what can stay, what can go? He decides to keep a box of old photos. At home he rummages through them. Maybe he'll make an album for his mother. Pictures of him, his mother, rarely of his father, some of his sister – with a reddish hue, in old-fashioned clothes, on the first day of school, at their grandparents, standing on the three metre diving board in old-fashioned swimming costumes.



President Woodrow Wilson signing the document regulating the collective fight against the vampires. To conceal the true reason for the gathering, the White House has always claimed that it shows Wilson signing the Federal Land Bank Act, which was inspired by the German system

Just the normal things that a family acquires over the years. But he suddenly stops – the woman on the sepia photo, she is, without a doubt, the woman that keeps reappearing in his dreams. The back is dated: Agnes, July 1912, Biarritz. The young woman looks playful, happy, without a care in the world. It is – his great-grandmother, how could he forget? The great-grandmother who disappeared from her estate in Bohemia before the outbreak of the First World War, leaving husband and children behind without ever showing another sign of life. The family did not talk much about Agnes, only that she was, apparently, very eccentric and could presumably no longer stand life on the estate, choosing, so one thought, to elope to Paris with an officer. But why was he dreaming of her? Why did she appear so helpless? What did all this have to do with him?

In 1916, with the First World War waging, the American president Woodrow Wilson convenes a secret meeting attended by all ambassadors represented in the United States. There is no transcript, only short press articles. Officially, the diplomatic corps convenes on the 28th December to celebrate the president's birthday. Reportedly, the atmosphere is relaxed, despite the war, however the press was only allowed to attend the official welcoming ceremony. The truth about the meeting lies in a document which is, even after over 100 years, still classified as "top secret". Copies are held by every state represented by their ambassadors. But the content of the document is only revealed to the highest governmental positions of the state, and only by word of mouth, without any written evidence. For more than 100 years.

His mother does not know anything about Agnes, how would she? When she was born, Agnes had already been gone for over 20 years. Nobody talked about her much. The grief is said to have driven her husband, his great-grandfather, to start drinking and eventually lose the estate. He shows her a photo, but she does not recognise anything. It is a family portrait in front of an imposing building. Agnes and her husband, the children: Cäcilie, Luisa, Robert, Ännchen, the youngest, two dogs. There is no date, but presumably it is the estate in Bohemia. His mother does not even know where the estate was, only vaguely, somewhere in North Bohemia. The same building the ambulance had driven up to.

The unofficial reason for convening at the White House on 28th December 1916 is stated in a top-secret document: The American government, together with France, Germany and England, found a way to put an end to their vampire troubles – a pact which declares that the governments of all states will provide the vampire communities around the globe with fresh blood as long as the vampires stop their attacks on humans. Initially, so-called live donations were used, in which a donor gave blood through an arm vein in the presence of one or more vampires who consequently shared the blood. However, this led to some infringements by the vampires which halted the agreement for some time.



Ludwig's family's estate in the Erz Mountains. Great-grandmother Agnes' soft spot for everything French is unmistakable. The opulence of the manor house suggests considerable wealth.

A solution was finally found due to the advances of sciences. Since the invention of blood banks in 1915 by Richard Lewisohn from the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, the vampires only receive banked blood. Despite the occasional complaint about the taste of the blood, this has greatly diffused the situation. Occasional outbreaks of individual vampires during the blood bank shortages of the Second World War were subdued by special V-brigades. However, these V-brigades have not been called into action since the 1950s. In fact, in the 90s a lot of states disbanded this police unit entirely!

A group of teenagers approach the estate in Bohemia. As their car comes to a stop outside the main entrance it is dark outside. They are in the mood to party, have brought alcohol. Evidently, they want to use the empty rooms of the abandoned house to have a party. They disappear inside, followed shortly after by the muffled sound of rock music. Suddenly the night is pierced by a scream before the music ends abruptly.

Urgent! To all participating states! First vampire attack in 60 years. Four teenagers turned into vampires; the danger eliminated by Professor Wolfskehl in Dresden. Official version: Hiking accident in the Erz Mountains. The bodies were prepped in such a way, that nobody would think to doubt the official cause of death. In the meantime, they have been buried. A state of increased danger is to be assumed until further notice. All V-brigades are to be on standby!

There it is again, his dream. Agnes seems to be desperate; she's crying. He wakes up! It is three o'clock in the morning. Laetitia, his girlfriend, also wakes. The same palaver again, night after night. It is time to make a decision. He wants to get to the bottom of this mystery.

He googled the exact location of the estate weeks before, and now he wants to go. Laetitia doesn't want him to go alone. But he leaves, without Laetitia. In Dresden he visits his sister Agnes, who was named after their missing great-grandmother. He gives her only vague details of his plan, tells her about the photo and the abandoned estate. As they leave, Agnes believes they're going on a weekend trip.

Attention, urgent! A North Korean defector reports that the whole of the country's leadership is made up of vampires. This claim cannot be verified as no top North Korean official has been seen for months. However, this only supports the defector's story. Secret missions have already been put in place to shed some light on the situation in North Korea, but it's unlikely there will be any prompt findings.



The parlour in Ludwig's familial ancestral seat.

Following an extensive search, it's evening by the time they arrive at the estate. But they've arrived at the right place, as reference to the old photograph shows. The door is open, which seems strange as it looks like the house is still being lived in. You can hear the radio coming from the kitchen, the rooms are still furnished as they would have been at the beginning of the 20th century. Heavy armchairs, velvet curtains, candelabra. The large table in the dining room is set for a dinner party. Agnes runs her finger along a chest of drawers. No dust. It is eerie. She wants to leave. They saw a hotel on the main road, which still has a vacancy. Agnes is tired, falls asleep almost instantly, but he is fascinated by the estate and can't get to sleep. Around 11pm he sneaks out. The porter is dosing behind the counter. As Ludwig opens the door, he wakes. "Be careful, there are wolves in the area," he calls after him. But he's already in his car and drives off. The destination is apparent. When he arrives, a slither of light falls on the ground outside, coming from the dining room. The door is ajar and quiet piano music can be heard from inside the house. It's Prelude N.1 from Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier. He follows the sound of the music and arrives at a room bathed in soft candlelight. A woman is sat at the grand piano, with her back to the door. As he stands in the doorway, she stops playing and slowly turns around. "There you are," she says to him. It is – Agnes! His great-grandmother!

Attention, amber alert! There are more and more signs of a growing unrest in many vampire communities. The incident in North Bohemia could be the first of many similar attacks, resembling those last seen during the war-stricken winter of 1943. As there are not many witnesses left from that time, it is strongly recommended to read the operation protocols from '43. Our informants are instructed to forward any changes immediately.

Early morning. Dawn is just starting to break as he returns to the hotel. What happened in the old manor house? He is agitated and he enters the hotel room. He flinches. His sister is missing...

New leads on the cause of the unrest in vampire communities around the globe. Allegedly, members were kidnapped from numerous communities. The reasons for this remain unclear. Apparently, a group of scientists is behind it who call themselves "Communio Vitae Aeternae". It's all in the name: they want to use the kidnapped vampires in order to discover the secret of eternal life. But caution: until now these are all still unconfirmed rumours. However, noticeably the same name comes up repeatedly from different sources: Professor Dr. Wolfskehl from Dresden. He has been unobtainable for some days, apparently he is at a symposium in Vladivostok. Our Russian colleagues are trying to track him

Update: Wolfskehl is said to have crossed the border to the Ukraine onboard a large lorry. After that his tracks disappear, which all points to him having accomplices who cover his tracks. Wolfskehl's destination is unknown. Possibly Ulan Bator or Pyongyang.



The vault in the villa. The coffins date to a time presumably before the current house was built. Evidently, Ludwig's ancestral home was built on the foundations of a much older building.

Update: The four teenagers from the Erz Mountains were not buried as presumed. The exhumation brought up only sandbags in the coffins. It is to be assumed that the bodies are in the lorry with Wolfskehl.

Update: Jewgenij Ruslan from the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, Liu Huan from the Institute for Genetics and Anthropology Shenzhen, China, and Tom Henson from Harvard have also been reported missing. Destination: unknown.

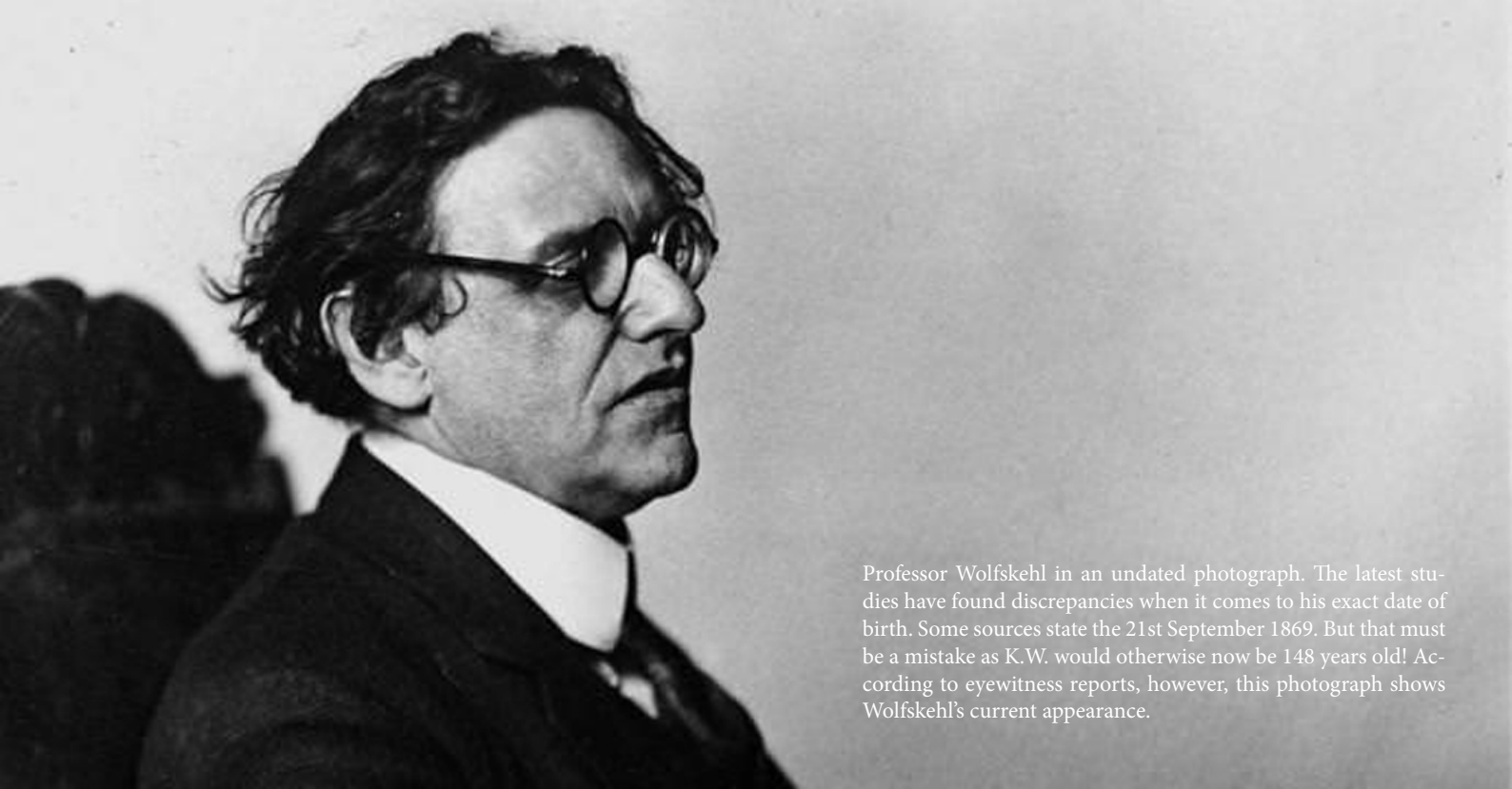
Ludwig is distraught: his sister is nowhere to be found. Agnes, the great-grandmother, has a short note from her: She has had enough of her old life as a carer and wants to live with Henrik, a very attractive young undead from an old Bohemian family. Now Agnes has disappeared, along with Henrik.

Update: Agnes R. from Dresden, 27, has also disappeared. Was last known to be with Henrik Smetana, a Czech undead. It is unknown whether there is a connection to Wolfskehl going to ground, but it is deemed probable. Consequently Wolfskehl, to current knowledge, is on the move with at least 6 other people. Presently, he has completely disappeared from the radar. If he is headed east, he will, at some point, have to cross the border to Russia.

Update: Wolfskehl is said to be on a ferry which left the harbour in Odessa a few days ago. There has been no radar signal for over 48 hours, the ferry has disappeared. The Russian Black Sea fleet is searching for the "Mir". The Russian government has been informed.

Agnes, the great-grandmother, has given up any hope of Ludwig fulfilling her wish. Especially since she has lost her pawn: Agnes, Ludwig's sister, did a runner with Henrik. It pains the older Agnes to see her great-grandchild making the same mistake she made. At the same time though she can remember how seductive life alongside an undead can be: The bustling balls, the freedom from so many constraints, the travel through time without the fear of death. But now she fears she has condemned her own descendant to the same fate she herself has been suffering for the past century.

That is why she has decided to take her fate into her own hands.



Professor Wolfskehl in an undated photograph. The latest studies have found discrepancies when it comes to his exact date of birth. Some sources state the 21st September 1869. But that must be a mistake as K.W. would otherwise now be 148 years old! According to eyewitness reports, however, this photograph shows Wolfskehl's current appearance.

Ludwig is woken in the middle of the night by an undead in his hotel. His great-grandmother sent for him, he needs to hurry, the sun would soon begin to rise. Hastily Ludwig gets dressed. Since his sister disappeared, he has scarcely been able to get any sleep. Agnes is standing on a small hill behind the house. She is dressed only in white. She bids farewell to Ludwig, who doesn't quite understand what she has planned. But as the very first sunbeams fall onto Agnes and Ludwig, first her dress catches fire and then her face. Shortly after she crumbles to a heap of ashes on the ground.

Update: Agnes R. is said to be Wolfskehl's guinea pig to test his new elixir for eternal life. He carried out first tests on himself, but evidently without the desired success. Some colleagues report a rapid ageing process in the last ten days before his disappearance.

Narrative style

The story of Ludwig's great-grandmother and the search for his sister is told using different time periods, slowly unravelling his family history. Out of boredom his great-grandmother had once devoted herself to an exciting young man who made her into a vampire. She has now been living as one of the living dead for over 100 years, a life, again, full of boredom that cannot even be alleviated by television, radio, film, music or any other modern-day entertainment. Her deepest wish and the reason for her getting in contact with him: she wants him to set her free, drive a wooden stake through her chest, so she may finally find peace. Simultaneously unravelled is the story of Wolfskehl, who, hoping to find the secret of eternal life through the living dead, formed the secret society "Communio Vitae Aeternae" together with a handful of other scientists and abducted Agnes and her lover Henrik Smetana.

USP

Vampires for adults, freed from the teen-ghetto, combined with suspense and crime story!

6 x 60 min.

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