

All Flesh Must Be Eaten™

introduction

Zombies.

You know what they are. Walking dead. They claw their way out of their graves, the moonlight glistening in rotting eyes. They slowly stagger across the lawn possessed with an eternal hunger for human flesh.

And that smell. Don't forget the smell. As they approach your home, the evening wind blows the stench into the air. Your dog barks wildly, frenzied by the smell. You awaken from a restless sleep, look out your bedroom window and see staggering corpses walking toward your house. Half-asleep and half-dressed, you rush down the stairs to barricade the door and block off the windows.

You are halfway down the stairs when the first window shatters. Damn, they move fast for dead guys! You run into the living room and pry open your gun cabinet. As you fumble to load the gun, the front door collapses from the weight of a pair of rotting corpses. They shamle into the hallway, arms stretched out, reaching for you. You unload your shotgun into their chests. Blood sprays the wall as they are thrown back.

A window explodes besides you, showering you with broken glass. Decaying hands reach for you, tugging at your shirt and hair. You manage to pull free and run for the back door. As you open the door, you freeze. A rotting corpse stands before you, jaw falling off, worms boring out of its nose and ears. You pull the trigger. The corpse reels back as you blow a hole where its stomach was. It falls onto the porch . . . then starts to get right back up!

You try to rush past, but a zombie grabs your leg from behind. Your world turns upside down as you lose balance. You fall onto your back. Looking up, you see the zombie that you blew away in the hallway has made his way across the house and is clawing at your leg. He's not dead! Not even down . . . then, you remember. Gotta shoot them in the head!

As the zombie on the porch and the one from the hallway descend on you, you try to raise your shotgun. Shoot them in the head . . . it's the only way to be sure.



What's in a Name?

Although the movies do a good job of showing us these creatures in a graphic and visually impressive way, they do not really give us a good name for them. They have been called Ghouls, Flesh-eaters, Cannibals, and Zombies -- but these are not really what they are.

Ghoul is definitely no good. Ghouls are described in any occult book or dictionary as a creature or spirit that robs graves and feeds on the corpses. That doesn't apply here; indeed, it's exactly backwards. An example of a Ghoul is our friend Bela Lugosi. On several occasions in many of his movies, we find him stealing corpses to conduct unspeakable experiments. In this case, we might also call Dr. Frankenstein a Ghoul.

Flesh-eaters is a closely related name we could use, but it's still too broad. Everyday people can be considered Flesh-eaters. Most people eat hamburgers and steaks. Eating cooked flesh from a pig or cow doesn't make us a zombie. The main difference is that we are still alive, and not a walking corpse.

Cannibals doesn't seem to work either. In the film *Dawn of the Dead*, the scientists explained that "cannibalism, in the true sense of the word, implies an intra-species activity. These creatures cannot be considered human, they prey on humans, they do not prey on each other! They feed only on warm human flesh."

Zombie is not entirely accurate either. A Zombie or Jumbie (the name given to them in the Virgin Islands) is described by the Island experts as "a soulless human corpse, still dead, but taken from the grave and endowed by sorcery with a mechanical semblance of life." These creatures are brought to life by sorcerers called "Houngans" who bring the dead back to work as their eternal slaves. Zombies do not complain about their "living" conditions, they do not sleep, and they do not ask for a paycheck. Also, it is common knowledge by the Islanders that if you feed a zombie meat or salt, it will realize that it is dead and return to its grave. Now if this were the case, the zombie movies we know and love would not be anywhere near as entertaining. Can you envision the zombie rising out of its grave at night, a thin fog hugging the moist ground? It approaches two lovers embraced in the forest. It comes up behind the half-naked victim and takes a bite out of her back. Suddenly, it realizes it is dead and returns to its grave. Roll credits. End of movie.

In the end, most people would describe these shambling piles of rotting flesh as zombies, and for want of a better or more familiar term, that is the one we will use.

A Short History

Not many are aware of it, but the walking dead have a history, one that pre-dates the movies. The best place to start would probably be pre-medieval Europe. Legend and folklore have long held that sometimes, when a person dies with unfinished business, he may rise from the dead to finish it, or to seek revenge for some evil doing. There have been numerous stories that describe an evil murderer being killed by the dead. These walking dead sometimes devour their victims and continue to live as long as they can eat living flesh and blood.

The early European stories always described these flesh-eating, blood-sucking creatures as being dead-looking. Their appearance ranged from very fresh (just a blue-white pallor) to very rotten (black, bloated and stinking). Besides the obvious differences between these creatures and true Zombies (or Jumbies), these pre-medieval European creatures do not follow any master. They are slave to no one, except their eternal hunger. They rise from the grave and seek the living all on their own. They hunt flesh . . . living flesh.

These creatures do seem very much like our favorite grave-leaving, flesh hunters that starred in cult movies like George Romero's *Dead* trilogy, Richard Matheson's *Last Man on Earth*, *Oasis of the Zombies*, and *Night of the Zombies*. What do you think these hideous, rotting corpses bent on eating human flesh, sucking blood, and exacting revenge were called by the early Europeans? Wampyres! (Pronounced: vam-pie-er) Yes, that's right! Vampires! They are the original vampires that have been re-written and romanticized by writers for centuries.

In time, some very interesting Rumanian rulers were labeled "vampires" for their indulgent, bloody criminal-punishing techniques. They became the subjects of many fiction writers, immortalized to most in the classic *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. These writers drew from actual historical writings and local legends and, with a little imagination, creatively devised their own creatures. Modern literature is so completely saturated with this fictional image of the vampires, that when anyone says "vampire," we don't see the original decaying creatures for which the name Wampyre was created, we see the fictional fang-growing, gothic, aristocratic rulers of a crumbling European empire.

Paralleling this evolution, movie-zombies have gone from being depicted as actual Zombies, to Wampyres, to a strange blend of the two. They have become a risen abomination of humanity, out of control, with a lust for living flesh.

Actual Zombies can be found in such films as *White Zombie*, *I Walked With a Zombie*, and *Serpent and the Rainbow*. These films show us Voodoo in action. We have Voodoo priests that turn the dead, and sometimes the living, into Zombies. Another movie that shows Zombies as slaves of a master (in this case a master race from outer space) is Ed Wood's *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. It shows us aliens from outer space asking the age-old question, "Hey! What do voodoo priests got that we ain't got?"

In movies like *Dawn of the Dead*, we're not sure what raised the dead. In one of the scenes at the beginning of the film, there is a struggle between the SWAT team and some people in a room. If you look closely, you can see a table in the foreground that is covered with what appears to be a Voodoo altar of protection. In Lucio Fulci's film *Zombies*, the director shows you that Voodoo can "make the dead stand up and walk." You constantly hear the Voodoo drums being beaten in the distance. We never discover if the drums are the handy-work of the Houngans creating the Zombies or if these are the drums of the Islanders trying to ward off the evil that is plaguing them. The creatures in *Zombies* are more like the Wampyres of old, but with a Voodoo twist. What we do know is that the dead have "come back to suck the blood from the living." Houngan Zombies also have no way of creating other zombies. However, if a vampire bites you and doesn't rip you apart, you become a vampire. Just like in the movie *Zombies*. This is a prime example of the initial blending of Zombie and Wampyre lore.

In the early fifties, an American writer named Richard Matheson wrote a book of fiction based on the European Wampyres and the modern romantic Vampires. The creatures in his book *I Am Legend* looked like the dead, rotting Wampyres, but grow fangs, hate sunlight and garlic, and can be killed by driving a stake through their hearts. The strange twist of this story is that man created these Vam-pyres. They were mistakenly risen by science. I suppose they could be called Z-am-pyres.

Richard Matheson's book *I Am Legend* tells the story about how society is ever evolving. Sometimes when we evolve too quickly, we undergo a revolution. His Wampyres are nothing more than a group of revolutionaries bent on the destruction of the Old World. They can attain their goals by killing the main character, Robert Neville. Neville is the last true human on earth, hence the movie adaptation of the book *The Last Man on Earth*. Later there was another, starring Charlton Heston, called *The Omega Man*, but we won't go into that.

In 1968, George Romero released *Night of the Living Dead*. In this movie, the Earth was plagued by zombies (really Wampyres) -- a revolutionary force that wrenches control of the Earth from human society and ultimately replaces it with its own. Sound familiar? Yes, Romero was inspired by Matheson's *I Am Legend*.

Night of the Living Dead has its differences though. The origins of George's zombies are never explained. Neither light, garlic, mirrors, or stakes through the heart damage them. Only destroying their brain can kill them. The zombies in *Night of the Living Dead* are really Wampyres of the ancient world. They are here for unfinished business, and that business is to destroy the human race before it destroys itself and everything else!

More recently, the movies have devised new causes for the creation of our dead friends. These range far beyond a Voodoo priest's ranting and raving, or the desire to right a wrong done to them. In films like *Astro Zombies*, *Garden of the Dead*, *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*, *Zombies 3*, and *Return of the Living Dead*, science either makes a very bad booboo, or intentionally creates zombies using something besides Voodoo magic.

In *Astro Zombies*, the creatures are created to work in the harsh conditions of outer space, but find themselves on Earth terrorizing young ladies.

In *Garden of the Dead*, some angry prisoners inhale formaldehyde to get high, die and return to destroy their captors.

In *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*, entomologists create a machine that only affects the underdeveloped nervous systems of insects. This machine causes the insects to attack and devour themselves leaving our farms and gardens insect free without harmful poisons. Perfect, except for one thing we didn't count on. The nervous systems of the dead have decomposed to the level of insects. They are affected by the machine and begin eating human flesh.

In *Zombies 3*, the germ warfare scientists in the military develop a means to create an army of the dead. These soldiers cannot be killed except by a shot to the head. The problem is that they also spread the germ through biting and scratching. Once the living are infected, they too become zombies. (The zombies in *Zombie 3* are some of the most spastic zombies ever shown on film next to those in *Return of the Living Dead*.)

Return of the Living Dead shows us how a military “screw-up” can put a dangerous germ warfare chemical into the hands of a couple of medical supply warehouse workers and ultimately destroy the world. The difference between all the Zombies/Wampyres depicted previously, and the dead in *Return of the Living Dead* is sheer aggressiveness! *Return* zombies are hell-bent for “BRAINS!” and cannot be killed. Hack off a limb and it will drag itself toward you for “BRAINS!” Thus, the legions of horror moviegoers have intertwined zombies and “BRAINS!” in a match made in Hell.

In sum, zombies in film have evolved from the reanimated slaves of Voodoo priests to Wampyres from ancient Europe, back to zombies raised by science, instead of Voodoo, that eat flesh like Wampyres and are totally out of control. George Romero once said, “I have always thought of the zombie as the ‘blue-collar’ monster.” Zombies are the kind of horror that anyone can someday become! So, no matter how average, weak or insignificant you may have felt while alive, once dead, if you can manage to sit up, even for a moment, you too could strike fear into the hearts of the living!”

Now zombies have moved into the realm of gaming. Computer gaming got its first real taste of zombie horror in *Alone in the Dark*, a terrific, terrifying and revolutionary title. Then the *Resident Evil* series reared its gruesome head on the PlayStation. This is a captivating bit of “survival horror” that combined Special Forces teams, bad acting and brain-eating zombies. Indeed, this might be seen as the beginning of the survival horror game genre.

Now comes *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, bringing survival horror to roleplaying. So, enough chatter! Read on and get playing. *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* should be something you can really sink your teeth into.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One: The Dead Rise presents these introductory remarks.

Chapter Two: Survivors details character generation. While *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* characters hail from diverse backgrounds and have a variety of strength and weaknesses, all are good at survival. This may be a result of innate toughness, or a guiding hand from above.

Chapter Three: Shambling 101 discusses game mechanics, from basic tests to combat to character development. *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* uses the Unisystem rules, found in other games such as CJ Carella's *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon*.

Chapter Four: Implements of Destruction describes a number of items useful for any character trying to survive in a world of zombie horror, from guns to vehicles to survival gear.

Chapter Five: Anatomy of a Zombie runs the gamut of zombie abilities. From locomotion to feeding to vulnerabilities, zombie capacities are described. Zombie Masters can mix and match these specific aspects to create unique zombies to terrorize their players.

Chapter Six: Worlds in Hell provides eleven entirely different campaign worlds. The world description, zombie menace and Story ideas vary widely in zombie lore. This chapter gives a thorough cross section of worlds for Zombie Masters to adopt.

How to Use

All Flesh Must Be Eaten

All Flesh is essentially two books in one. Some parts are intended for the players and others are meant for the Zombie Masters.

The first four chapters are filled with material for players. From introductory notes to character creation to rules to equipment, Zombie Masters should allow their players full access to these chapters.

The last two chapters are reserved for Zombie Masters. The description of zombie abilities in Chapter Five is comprehensive enough that players should not be able to guess at any particular combi-

nation that a Zombie Master chooses. Nonetheless, it is always more horrifying if the players cannot be sure exactly what a zombie's capacities might be. The same is true for Chapter Six. Part of the thrill of any *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* campaign is discovering how the zombies came about and how to stop them (assuming they can be stopped). This is all detailed in Chapter Six and should be shared with the players only through game play.

The unique feature about *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* is its suitability for either extended play or short story arcs. Some may enjoy *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* like a traditional roleplaying game. The Zombie Master chooses a world background, or creates his own, and the players experience that world over time and build characters into major “players” in that world. Alternatively, the Zombie Master could set up an *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* campaign as a limited series of adventures revolving around the discovery of the cause of the zombies and (possibly) a way to stop them. Once the menace is halted, or the characters have all been eaten, another story arc with new characters and a new backstory may be started.

Conventions

Text Conventions

This book has different graphic features that identify the type of information presented. This text is standard text, and it is used for general explanations.

Certain text is set off from the standard text in this manner. This is sidebar text and it contains additional, but tangential information, or supplemental charts and tables.

Other text is set apart in this way. It details Supporting Cast or Adversaries that may be used in Stories at the Zombie Master’s discretion.

Dice Notations

D10, D8, D6 and D4 mean a ten-sided die, an eight-sided die, a six-sided die and a four-sided die, respectively. When a number appears before the notation, that number of such dice should be rolled, and their results should be added together. For example, 2D6 means roll two six-sided dice, and generate a result between 2 and 12. Multipliers are expressed after the dice notation. For example, 3D10 x 4 means roll three ten-sided dice, add the results together, and multiply that total result by 4. This generates a number between 12 and 120. A number in parentheses after, or in the middle of, the notation is the average roll. This number is provided for those that want to avoid dice rolling and just get the result. So the notation D6 x 4(12) means that players who want to skip rolling just use the value 12. Some notations cannot provide a set number because their result depends on a variable factor. For example, D8(4) x Strength is used because the Strength value to be plugged into that notation will vary depending on who is acting.

Gender

Every roleplaying game struggles with the decision about third person pronouns and possessives. While the male reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female, there is no question that it is not entirely inclusive. On the other hand, the “he or she” structure is clumsy and unattractive. In an effort to “split the difference,” this book uses male designations for even chapters, and female designations for odd chapters.

Measurements

This book primarily uses U.S. measurements (feet, yards, miles, pounds, etc.). Metric system equivalents appear in parentheses. In the interests of ease of use, the conversions are rounded relatively arbitrarily. For example, miles are multiplied by 1.5 to get kilometers (instead of 1.609), meters are equal to yards (instead of 1.094 yards), pounds are halved to get kilograms (instead of multiplied by 0.4536), and so on. If a Chronicler feels that more precision is necessary, she should take the U.S. measurements provided, and apply more exact formulas.



Roleplaying

This book contains a roleplaying game, its setting, and its rules. So what is a roleplaying game? Simply put, it is a combination of board game, strategy game, and improvisational theater. It is a more mature version of the games of “let’s pretend” that we all played as children. The rules are meant to avoid the old disputes about exactly what happened (“I shot you! You’re dead!” “Am not!”). To enforce the rules and provide a coherent setting, one of the participants assumes the role of Zombie Master (known as Game Master, Chronicler or Referee in other contexts). The rest of the players take the role of one character each, a Cast Member. The player controls the actions of that character, which are limited only by the rules, the character’s abilities and limitations, and the player’s imagination.

Roleplaying games have been around for more than two decades. They run the gamut from mindless combat scenarios to nearly ruleless, story-driven acting exercises. The Unisystem, the game rules of *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, concentrates on the following elements. We consider these to be the main characteristics of a good roleplaying game.

Acting: Participants in a roleplaying game are acting out the part of a Cast Member, a fictional character (or, in the case of the Zombie Master, several characters). The character may be as similar or different from the player as desired. Some players prefer to take on the roles of heroic versions of themselves, while others want to “be in the shoes” of completely different people. Many elements of improvisational theater can be found in roleplaying. The player has to come up with the “lines” of her character as the storyline develops.

Storytelling: During a game, the Zombie Master and the players create a story, shaped by the actions of the Cast Members and the conflicts and situations provided by the Zombie Master. A Story is being experienced at the same time it is being written. Because there are a number of authors of this tale, however, the creators do not know exactly how it will end. Each character’s actions impact on the result, as do the conflicts and drama injected into the story by the Zombie Master.

The All Flesh Must Be Eaten RPG

Uncertainty: The uncertainty of not knowing the end of the story is enhanced in many games by the use of dice, cards and other randomizing elements. This gives roleplaying an aspect similar to sporting events and games of chance: what will the outcome be? This provides an excitement similar to the feeling that many experience when watching a football game or a boxing match. The skills of the participants play a big role in what the results will be, but the final outcome remains uncertain until it is over. Some gamers prefer to reduce or even eliminate randomness altogether, preferring to let the needs of the story dictate the outcome. The Unisystem is designed to please both those who like the chance element, and those who wish to minimize it, or eliminate it outright.

Imagination and Creativity: Instead of being a passive form of entertainment, like watching television or reading a book, roleplaying exercises the players’ imagination and creativity. Each shares the responsibility of producing a good and entertaining experience. Each brings humor, drama and suspense to the game. In roleplaying, the goal is not to win, but simply to have fun and help others have fun.

In sum, by playing a roleplaying game, the Zombie Master and the players weave a Story together. The adventures, triumphs, and tragedies of the characters are part of a larger tapestry. In effect, the gaming group is creating and experiencing a novel or play, experiencing the double thrill of the creative act and the enjoyment of reading a book or watching a movie.

All roleplaying games have at their hearts the “What if . . . ?” question. In *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, the question is “What if you were faced with a world gone to Hell, where ravenous undead sought living prey?” What if you had to fight for survival, sometimes against former friends and loved ones? Would you be curious to find out the cause of the horror? Would you delve into the heart of the zombie-infested areas to discover the truth? Would you brave death to end the threat? What if there were no cause, no solution? Would it be better to simply flee for safety to ensure the survival of the race. By taking on the role of an *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* character, players have the chance to answer these questions and more.

All Flesh Must Be Eaten is a game that combines elements of horror (there are walking dead in this world, and they feed on humans) with survival (characters have to rely on their skills and abilities to live through the night) and conflict (the characters may know the truth; what are they going to do about it?). The remainder of this book explains how to enter the worlds of survival horror and build Stories that challenge, amaze, thrill and delight players and Zombie Masters alike.