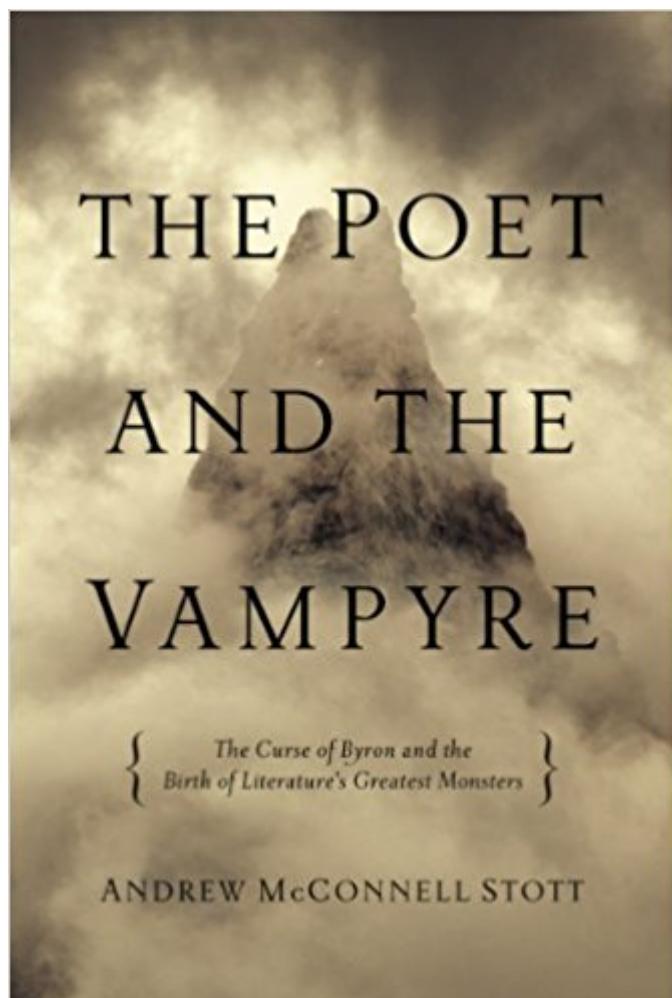


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The Poet And The Vampyre: The Curse Of Byron And The Birth Of Literature's Greatest Monsters



Synopsis

Love affairs, literary rivalries, and the supernatural collide in an inspired journey to Lake Geneva, where Byron, the Shelleys, and John Polidori come together to create literature's greatest monsters. In the spring of 1816, Lord Byron was the greatest poet of his generation and the most famous man in Britain, but his personal life was about to erupt. Fleeing his celebrity, notoriety, and debts, he sought refuge in Europe, taking his young doctor with him. As an inexperienced medic with literary aspirations of his own, Doctor John Polidori could not believe his luck. That summer another literary star also arrived in Geneva. With Percy Bysshe Shelley came his lover, Mary, and her step-sister, Claire Clairmont. For the next three months, this party of young bohemians shared their lives, charged with sexual and artistic tensions. It was a period of extraordinary creativity: Mary Shelley started writing *Frankenstein*, the gothic masterpiece of Romantic fiction; Byron completed *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, his epic poem; and Polidori would begin *The Vampyre*, the first great vampire novel. It was also a time of remarkable drama and emotional turmoil. For Byron and the Shelleys, their stay by the lake would serve to immortalize them in the annals of literary history. But for Claire and Polidori, the Swiss sojourn would scar them forever. 16 pages of color and B&W photographs

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Customer Reviews

Lord Byron's flamboyant and notorious reputation marks him as one of the best known of the Romantics. He was both lauded and reviled during his own lifetime for his excesses, including

massive debt, scores of affairs with both men and women and rumors of a scandal regarding his own half-sister. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest British poets, despite the scandalous reputation that haunted him. Although this book suggests that it was his wife who fed the rumor mill in an attempt to retain custody of their child, it is my belief that there was enough truth regarding his antics to lead a person to believe just about anything that was said about him. He was no angel, that is for certain, but it is possible that some of the things that were said of him weren't the whole truth. I was interested to read some background on the infamous Dr. John Polidori. What I found the most fascinating was how many, if not most, of the young people of their generation were forced into situations that were more pleasing to their parents than to themselves. It seems that their parents were given an excessive amount of control over their children's lives, the likes of which our parents today do not enjoy. John's father made him attend medical school. He wasn't particularly drawn to medicine, but obviously made the best of his situation. It seems to me if they weren't being forced into a career, they were being forced into loveless marital alliances, the purpose, it would appear, was to strengthen the wealthy family and bolster their dwindling coffers. All in all, it seemed that both Lord Byron and Dr. Polidori were ripe for each other at a time in their lives when for different reasons; they found themselves in need of the other.

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