

DRACULA

TPAC
Education!

THE CASE OF THE SILVER SCREAM

CONCEIVED BY DAVID GRAPES



Tennessee Repertory Theatre

Adapted by
Robert Neblett
from the novel by Bram Stoker

Guidebook Researched and Compiled by Kristin Dare-Horsley
General Editing by Susan Sanders

JAM SOUTH BANK

Tennessee Performing Arts Center gratefully acknowledges the generous support of corporations, foundations, government agencies and other groups for TPAC Education in 2003-2004.

AM SOUTH BANK

Because of generous underwriting by AmSouth Bank and the AmSouth Foundation, we are able to publish the guidebook materials and mail them to teachers attending the HOT Season for Young People free of charge.

METROARTS

Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission



This project is funded under an agreement with the Tennessee Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

American Airlines
AmSouth Bank
Aspect Community Committee Fund
Bank of America
BellSouth Communications, Inc.
Bridgestone/Firestone Trust Fund
Caterpillar Financial Products
Central Parking System
The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
The Danner Foundation
Davis-Kidd Booksellers, Inc.
Deloitte & Touche
Deutsche Bank
Earl Swensson Associates
The Frist Foundation
Gannett Foundation/The Tennessean
Gaylord Entertainment Company
General Motors Corporation
The HCA Foundation
HCA, Inc.
Helping Hands Foundation
The Hermitage Hotel
Ingram Arts Support Fund
Ingram Charitable Advised Fund
Ingram Industries Inc.
LifeWorks Foundation
The Memorial Foundation
Metropolitan Action Commission
Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission
Miller & Martin LLP
Neal & Harwell PLC
New England Foundation for the Arts
Mary C. Ragland Foundation
Southern Arts Federation
SunTrust Bank
Tennessee Arts Commission
Ticketmaster Corporation
US Bank
Vanderbilt University
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

TPAC
Education!

For more information about TPAC's arts-in-education activities for students, teachers and artists, and the HOT Season for Young People, please visit our website: www.TPAC.org/education.

Please contact Susan Sanders, SSanders@TPAC.org for questions or comments about the season guidebooks.²

Note from the Director

By David Grapes

This production of *Dracula* is the result of a unique creative process. Many artists have collaborated over several months to create an original work of art for the stage, adapted from one of the most chilling novels of the past two centuries. While any theatrical production is a collaborative effort, the development of a new script for a specific company and audience is a responsibility that is not taken lightly. Beyond the weeks of individual writing, the creation of this play was aided by input from directors, designers, actors, and friends in a workshop setting prior to the rehearsal period. This process has permitted the script to grow quickly from a conceptual germ to the full-blown production that will be staged in October and November 2003 at TPAC.

The film noir style of the 1940s and 1950s derives from the Expressionistic cinema style developed by experimental filmmakers in Europe in the 1930s. This style explored the emotional impact made on an audience by exaggerating the contrast between light and darkness to emphasize the world of shadows that lurks underneath the surface of “normal” society. Film noir was used by American directors and writers to create movies with a sense of heightened suspense, most often following the seediest cases from the files of hard-boiled detectives like Sam Spade or Philip Marlowe. The standard cast of characters included a helpless damsel-in-distress who turns out to be a wolf in sheep’s clothing, a man wrongfully accused of a crime he didn’t commit, the disreputable low-life from the underground who turns out to be not such a bad guy after all, and the classic vamp (a seductive woman who looks like trouble and usually is).

The distinctive visual world of *Dracula* is the brainchild of the Tennessee Repertory Theatre’s resident scenic designer Gary C. Hoff. Gary created some very memorable stage designs that teachers may remember from past HOT performances such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Gary wanted to create an elegant Hollywood world for the Whitby Hill Sanitarium that suggested a strong

influence from the world of Art Deco, lending a twentieth-century equivalent of the Gothic style to the play’s setting. Not only do the building materials within this monochromatic hospital evoke the antiseptic nature of the

Note:

Tennessee Repertory Theatre will adjust *Dracula* appropriately for student audiences. Nighttime performances are geared to adult audiences.

DRACULA:

THE CASE OF THE SILVER SCREAM
CONCEIVED BY DAVID GRAPES

Table of Contents

Director’s Notes	3
Plot Outline	5
Cast of Characters	5
About Film Noir	7
Activities	
Film Noir Style	8
Adapting for a new interpretation	9
Excerpts from the script	10
Bram Stoker and <i>Dracula</i>	13
Internet Resources	14

Copyright August 2003, Tennessee Performing Arts Center. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center Education Program, P. O. Box 190660, Nashville, TN 37219.

mental health profession, but the lines of various scenic elements subtly suggest the shapes of bat wings, spider webs, and other familiar aspects of the classic Dracula story.

Because the original novel has become such a recognizable part of our popular culture, we decided to take the liberty of putting a new spin on it by employing the film noir style in order to emphasize the book's suspense and Bram Stoker's own fondness for mystery stories. In our version, the narrator is Van Helsing, a private investigator who is pulled into the world of the supernatural against his will by taking on the case of a beautiful woman who feels endangered by strange events on a movie set. Instead of the sprawling series of grand international locations that Stoker paints in the pages of his book, we have confined the action of the play to Dr. Seward's sanitarium, a common device for stage versions of *Dracula*. Our intent behind this choice is to create a sense of claustrophobia and paranoia among the characters, a fear that the Count himself feeds off of as much as the blood of his victims. The playwright has consulted many versions of the story in his research for the writing of the script to derive those elements that each version has in common, as well as those elements that audiences will be expecting. By doing so, he hopes to reinforce the terror of Stoker's creature of the night, as well as inventing some new frights for a new generation. Characters such as Renfield and Dr. Seward have stayed fairly intact to the original text, while others, such as the film critic Jessica Sheridan and heroic actor Dean Quincey, are original creations specific to this production. The potentially romantic relationship between Lucy and Dracula has been fleshed out, and, contrary to many stage versions, Dracula is present onstage for a great deal of the play's action.



Curriculum Connections and Related Topics

- The novel, *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker
- Good vs. Evil in literature and popular culture
- Setting for stories, plays
- Use of Narration/Voice Over
- Reinterpretation of existing work
- Film history and genres: Film Noir
- Urban legends



Dracula

The Case of the Silver Scream

Conceived by David Grapes

Adapted for the stage by Robert Neblett

Cast of Characters

Det. Abe Van Helsing: a hard-boiled private investigator, hired by Lucy to investigate several unexplained disappearances and murders at the Whitby Hills Sanitarium in Los Angeles

Lucy Murray: a beautiful Hollywood actress who becomes Dracula's love interest and victim

Jonathan Harker: a horror film writer and director, the former love interest of Lucy Murray

Dr. Jack Seward: director of the Whitby Hills Sanitarium in Los Angeles

Nurse Mary Westfall: head nurse of the Whitby Hills Sanitarium in Los Angeles

Count Vlad Dracula: a sophisticated yet bloodthirsty European nobleman and vampire

Renfield: a madman with an obsession for devouring insects, a patient at the Whitby Hills Sanitarium in Los Angeles

Dean Quincey: a Hollywood actor, the male lead of Harker's latest horror film

Mina Holmwood: a young accountant and Jonathan Harker's current love interest

Simmons: an orderly at the Whitby Hills Sanitarium in Los Angeles

Nurse Wallace: a nurse at the Whitby Hills Sanitarium in Los Angeles

Female Patient: an emotionally disturbed resident at the Whitby Hills Sanitarium in Los Angeles

Lorna Mills: a murdered Hollywood actress

Jessica Sheridan: an unpopular film critic who has panned all of Jonathan Harker's previous movies

Emily Van Helsing: the ghost of Det. Van Helsing's dead wife

Plot Outline

Act One Prologue / Foggy Street Corner

Van Helsing, a hard-boiled detective, introduces the audience to the, seedy world of Hollywood crime and to the case which changed his life forever.

Act One, Scene One / Sanitarium Lobby

A crazed mental patient, Renfield, interrupts the on-location filming of a monster movie starring Lucy Murray. The film's writer and director, Jonathan Harker, argues with Dr. Seward, the sanitarium's chief administrator about the impossible working conditions he is experiencing. This is heightened by the fact that Lucy, Harker's ex-fiance, has been brought in to replace Lorna Mills, an actress who disappeared mysteriously the week before. After another of the patients has a severe neurotic episode, Dean, Lucy's male co-star, discovers Lorna's dead body, stuffed into a closet and drained of blood.

Act One, Scene Two / Sanitarium Lobby

Lucy has a nightmare in which Lorna warns her that she will be the next victim of the mysterious killer. Dr. Seward interrogates Renfield about his recent habit of collecting and consuming insects.

Act One, Scene Three / Van Helsing's Office

Lucy attempts to hire Van Helsing to investigate the horrific goings-on at the sanitarium, but he refuses, until she reveals that Lorna was drained of blood. Van Helsing's last murder case in London involved a similar method of death, and we learn that his wife was the final victim of a serial killer. Lucy invites him to a party being thrown the next night by Jonathan and Seward to solicit donations from a wealthy new neighbor, Count Dracula.

Act One, Scene Four / Sanitarium Lobby

At the party, a flamboyant film critic, Jessica Sheridan, infuriates everyone present with her insults and arrogance. Jonathan has invited Mina Holmwood, a young accountant from the studio, to help convince Dracula to make a contribution to the financially-ailing film. Dracula finally arrives and is smitten with Lucy. He agrees to help Jonathan

fund his movie, if only to get closer to its beautiful star. After spending some time alone with the Count, Mrs. Sheridan returns to the party and passes out in a chair. Renfield causes havoc with a platter of dead animals that he regards as hors d'oeuvres. Dean discovers Sheridan is dead, and the killer has left Van Helsing a taunting note.

Act One, Scene Five / Van Helsing's Office

Van Helsing drinks himself into oblivion after the party, even though he knows he cannot refuse Lucy's request for aid anymore.

Act One, Scene Six / Street Corner

Dracula berates Renfield for making such a public spectacle of himself at the party and forces him to watch over Lucy during the daylight.

Act One, Scene Seven / Sanitarium Courtyard

Lucy sleepwalks outside and finds Dracula waiting for her. She confesses her love for him, and he kisses her, then bares her neck and drinks her blood.

Intermission

Act Two, Scene One / Van Helsing's Office

Van Helsing has a nightmare about his dead wife and begins to suspect Dracula may be at the center of the murders in his past, as well as those at the sanitarium.

Act Two, Scene Two / Sanitarium Courtyard

Lucy and Dean shoot the final scene for the film, with no interruptions. Everything seems to have returned to normal. Even Renfield has become a model patient. Jonathan and Seward request that Van Helsing abandon the case, since there have been no further strange occurrences since the party. Dean notices that Lucy has two unusual marks on her neck, but she brushes him off on her way to a date with Dracula. She then faints; Seward diagnoses her with a mild case of anemia.

Act Two, Scene Three / Sanitarium Courtyard

Mina has begun to show a romantic interest in Dean, and they discuss the bizarre transformation that has come over Lucy since Dracula arrived. Dean describes a vampire movie he once worked on, as well as the similarities between it and their current situation. Dracula and Lucy return from the opera, and Mina and Dean hide in the shadows, observing them. Lucy thinks Dracula is about to propose to her, but in reality he drinks her blood

then forces her to drink his, in order that she may be his eternal bride. Dean tries to interfere and is killed. Lucy screams in horror and Dracula disappears with Dean's body.

Act Two, Scene Four / Street Corner and Van Helsing's Office

After witnessing Dean's death, Mina calls Van Helsing from a street corner to come help her. She mentions Dean's theory about Dracula being a vampire. Dracula steps out of the shadows and fog to dispose of her as well.

Act Two, Scene Five / Sanitarium Courtyard

Van Helsing arrives, only to find Nurse Westfall being held at knifepoint by Renfield. Dracula has accused him of failing him, and now he is trying to prove his allegiance to his "Master" by getting rid of those who would stand in the vampire's way. Jonathan comes in with a hysterical Lucy, who insists that he leave, because she is afraid that she will kill him when she finally transforms into a vampire. Dracula suddenly appears in a mist and swears to feast on the blood of all who oppose him and that Lucy's soul will belong completely to him by the end of the following night. He calls Lucy to him; she cannot resist. As he holds her in his arms, they vanish into the mist.

Act Two, Scene Six / Van Helsing's Office

Seward brings Renfield to Van Helsing's office. Van Helsing questions Renfield for the whereabouts of Dracula, and the lunatic reveals that the Count has been hiding literally under their noses - in the unused mortuary beneath the sanitarium.

Act Two, Scene Seven / Sanitarium Morgue

Renfield escorts Jonathan, Seward, and Van Helsing to the morgue. He pulls a coffin out of the unused crematorium oven. He opens it, and Lucy is inside. Jonathan attacks Renfield. When she sees Jonathan bleeding, Lucy begins to feel the desire to feed. Van Helsing tries to hold her back. Dracula appears and taunts Van Helsing's imminent failure. Van Helsing shoots Dracula with a silver bullet made out of his dead wife's locket, and the vampire vanishes into dust as dawn breaks.

Act Two, Scene Eight / Van Helsing's Office

In a closing monologue, Van Helsing ties up the story's loose ends, then hangs up his hat after deciding to retire from the crime fighting business.

About Film Noir

Film Noir was a term coined by French film critics to refer to a style of American film that emerged in the 1940s and remained an influential force in Hollywood until the late 1950s. *Film noir* literally means “black cinema or film,” a term which reflects both its visual and thematic elements. These films were primarily shot in blacks and grays, thus reflecting the dark, often violent side of human nature they portrayed. Film noir refers to the mood of a film rather than a genre, and borrows from other genres such as detective films, horror films, and science fiction thrillers.

The visual style of film noir is derived from German expressionism of the 1920s and 30s, in which narrow shafts of light are utilized to illuminate a person’s smallness in a world that seems to be closing in upon them. Similarly, characters in the film noir often have a sense of dread concerning fatalistic forces they cannot escape (e.g. Dracula). American film noir became popular after World War II as it reflected the public’s general feelings of anxiety, suspicion, and pessimism in its dark shadows and swirling cigarette smoke. Incidentally, the shadowy, stark sets of the film noirs were often necessitated by reduced budgets and war-time scarcities.



Jean Wallace and Cornel Wilde in *The Big Combo*.



The first film noirs were generally adaptations of best-selling crime fiction novels, such as the pivotal 1941 classic *The Maltese Falcon* from the book by Dashiell Hammett. The film noir plot is usually focused on a male protagonist (i.e. Humphrey Bogart) and a seductive femme fatale who manipulates him to follow a path of self-destruction. Archetypal noir narratives are convoluted and often feature flashbacks. Also typical, is reflective voice-over narration by the protagonist that helps explain the character’s perspective, which is usually quite cynical.

The protagonists of film noir are normally driven by their pasts, and by their tendency to repeat previous mistakes. It is the goal of the protagonist to right past transgressions or to expose corruption, but he is generally destroyed by the lure of a femme fatale before the task is completed. The femme fatale plays a critical role in the film noir. With her breathy voice and come-hither looks, she inevitably leads the male protagonist away from the trustworthy “good-girl” and spurs him to commit a crime of passion.

Whether it is the femme fatale, or some other malevolent, fatalistic force, it is forever a struggle to survive in the world of the film noir, where corruption and evil lurks in every dark shadow.



Film Noir Style

Activity

Read the Plot Outline and About Film Noir segments of this guidebook (pp 5-7). The crime and detective movies of the 1940s and 50s are a familiar example of film noir techniques, and many of the devices found in those old movies are employed in The Rep's new adaptation of Dracula.



Introduce students to the style of film noir detective stories by viewing excerpts of videos. Almost all of them have an opening monologue.

Ask students to write their own monologue in the “detective” style similar to the prologue below. Use a familiar story (Snow White, Red Riding Hood, etc.) and adapt it to this style. They must pick a character in the story to be the “narrator,” and write from this character’s point of view. Include the stage directions.

Prologue

[A foggy street corner with a dim street lamp and bench. It is midnight. We hear the echo of approaching footsteps on the pavement. Suddenly, a shadow appears through the mist. VAN HELSING, a hard-boiled detective in classic 1940s trench coat and hat, steps into the light, leans against the lamp post, and lights a cigarette.]

VAN HELSING

When you gaze out into the dead of night that hangs over the city like a shroud, a million lights from a million windows stare back at you. A flickering beacon for each soul scratching out a poor, meager existence out there in the urban jungle; each one attempting to feed an insatiable appetite, each one desperate for the sensation of being alive. These winking glimmers of humanity prove that there is warm blood pulsing through the heart of the chilly void that engulfs the city with the arrival of each nightfall. Slowly, one by one, each spark dies and is replaced by the inky gloom that holds the night together. This is my world, a dusky landscape that speaks an ancient language of shadows and whispers, of dreams and fear. It opens unseen prison cells, freeing savage creatures that are afraid to be caught in the light of day, who satisfy unnatural thirsts with the misery of others, who devour innocence as if it were their last supper.

(Takes a drag on his cigarette, exhales slowly.)

Things get lost in the dark, sometimes never to be found again. And sometimes things wish to stay lost. That’s where I come in. The name’s Van Helsing, I’m a private eye. My specialty is recovering lost things: cash, jewels, husbands. I never suspected that I would let myself get pulled into a case where I would be fighting pure evil to retrieve lost souls.

(Chuckles.)

I used to believe only in what I could see and touch. Then I stood face to face with the impossible; I entered into the murky world of the night and barely escaped with my life.

(Turns and walks away as the lights fade.)

Resource for further exploration

For examples of Film Noir and movie titles:

<http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue02/infocus.htm>



Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart in *The Big Sleep*.

Adapting for a New Interpretation

Activity

Ask students to work in pairs to write a scene from *Dracula* or another familiar story in a different setting and style. They may choose any writing style. Familiar stories may include: *Frankenstein*, *Cinderella*, *Romeo and Juliet*, etc.

Examples:

Setting: Old West, outer space/future, present time at your school, Elizabethan, 1970s, 1950s

Style: Cartoonish (where unreal things can happen), realistic, soap opera, comedy, TV drama "cop" show



Begin by developing a list of character descriptions, places and props that fit the style and setting. Use The Rep's list (below) as an example.

Working on the Script

For this production of *Dracula*, Tennessee Repertory Theatre commissioned an original script in a style and setting that is different from the novel. Part of the creative writing process was to brainstorm a shared vision for the setting and atmosphere. This is the list Director David Grapes and writer Robert Neblett compiled to summon to mind the setting for *Dracula*:

Window Blinds	"M O"
Narration	No Alabi
Evocative Music	Alias
Rain/Fog/Mist	Winding Stairs
A Masculine Office	Servants
Fedora Hats	Large Heavy Cars (Packard)
Shadows	Happy Endings
Husky Female Voices	Suspense/Nail Biter
Dark Lipstick	Trenchcoat
Shoulder Pads	Cigarette
Cigarettes	Fog
Secret Letters	"Dame"
Suspenders	Copper
Sweat Stained Shirts	Shadows
Heat/ No Ac	Ceiling fan
Glasses Of Ice Cubes	Chase
Damsel In Distress	Double Indemnity
People Keeping Secrets	Sam Spade
Hiding The Truth	Gangster
Men In Suits	G-Man
Hats On Women	Telegram
"Packing Heat"	Black and white
Surprise Revelations	Femme fatale
Deception	Spider woman
Newspapers	"Doll"
"Gumshoe"	Revolver
"Hack Reporter"	Speakeasy
Manual Remington Typewriters	Hooch
Secretaries	

DRACULA

The Case of the Silver Scream

Excerpts

Dracula/Lucy – Act I

SETTING: *Party at the Sanitarium. LUCY is fixing her makeup in her compact mirror. DRACULA walks up behind her. She doesn't see his reflection.*

Dracula So we meet again, Miss Murray.

Lucy Oh, Count! You startled me.

Dracula I am sorry. Where are my manners?

Lucy No, no. It's all right. It's me. I'm just a little jumpy lately. I haven't sleep well for several nights.

Dracula Bad dreams?

Lucy Among other things, yes.

Dracula Ahh. Dr. Seward informed me of the events of the past week or so. It is unfortunate that you should witness such terrible things.

Lucy What's unfortunate is that you and I have nothing better to talk about at a party!
[Laughs.]

So Jonathan tells me you recently purchased that dilapidated old mansion next door?

Dracula *[Smiles.]*
I see that even in America, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Yes. I tend to think of it as a testament to a style of architecture that will never be seen by men again in this lifetime.

Lucy That's certainly a poetic way of putting it. I'd probably just say that people are lazy nowadays.
[Chuckles.]
I always thought the building was condemned and should be bulldozed.

Dracula It will be within the month.

Lucy What?

[During the next speech, LUCY becomes mesmerized by his romantic, poetic tone.]

Dracula I am transferring the original masonry from my family's estate in Transylvania, and I plan to reconstruct the castle I was born in, stone by stone. As fond as I am of your country, there is a rich tradition in my homeland of pride and respect for the soil. We are a solitary people, those who have lived in the Land Beyond the Forest for centuries. We fought and spilled our blood for that land, and it is as precious to us as life itself. We

even have a tradition, which you may find a trifle quaint, that we must be buried with a layer of the soil of the place we were born inside of the coffin where we will spend eternity, to remind us of the homeland, even in that cold darkness beyond the grave.
[Takes a step toward her.]

Lucy *[Shivers.]*
Do you feel that? It's freezing all of a sudden.

Dracula I am quite used to drafts, so the evening chill does not affect me much anymore. Would you like this?
[Offers his cape.]

Lucy Thank you, yes. That's very kind.

Dracula *[Wraps cape around LUCY, pausing to stare at her amorously.]*
My business associates have always said that I'm very hot-blooded, even in the dead of winter. It must be the temper I inherited from my father. But I suppose we Europeans have always had a reputation for passion, yes?

From somewhere in the distance outside, a lone wolf howls.]

Lucy Oh! A wolf! Jonathan and Dr. Seward don't believe me, but I've seen one of those disgusting animals outside my window every night since we arrived.

Dracula Disgusting? Quite the contrary, miss. In Romania, wolves are creatures of great majesty, worthy of respect and reverence. Listen to them!
[The wolf howls again, forlornly.]
They are the children of the night. What music they make!



Lucy and Jonathan, Act II

SETTING: Sanitarium Courtyard; night.

Jonathan Lucy, what are you doing out here? Dr. Seward specifically said that you weren't supposed to leave your room...

Lucy Dr. Seward can't protect me from him. No one can. Not even you, Jonathan.

Jonathan Who are you talking about?

Lucy The man in my nightmares. With the red eyes that burn into my soul. He gets closer every day. Soon he will devour me whole.

Jonathan You're delirious. Let's get you back inside.

Lucy Don't touch me!

Jonathan Lucy!

Lucy Can't you see? It's you I'm trying to save! As long as you're near me, you're in danger. Why else do you think I've been so distant lately? Because I stopped loving you?

Jonathan Well, I wouldn't blame you if you had.

Lucy I still love you more than ever. So much that it hurts. But how can you love this thing I've become? Van Helsing says in a few days, the transformation will be complete. After that, there is no turning back.

Jonathan Van Helsing doesn't know what he's talking about. This isn't some curse; it's a disease. And we will find a cure.

Lucy Open your eyes. Stop being so logical. Have you looked at me lately?

Jonathan Yes.

Lucy What do you see?

Jonathan I see a woman who needs me.

Lucy Stop trying to play the hero!

Jonathan But Lucy...

Lucy When I look at my reflection in the mirror, all that's left is a faint shadow of my former self. And it's pale and thin with hunger. My soul is dying. Why can't you see what's right in front of you?

Jonathan You've lost a lot of blood. You're hysterical.

Lucy And how did I lose it? Some new rare strain of anemia? No! There is evil coursing through my veins. If you want to help me, leave. Go far away and never look back. Forget about me. If you don't, I'll kill you.

Jonathan What?

Lucy That's what I dream when I close my eyes. Your body lying in front of me, throat ripped out, my hands and mouth covered in blood. And hot liquid running down my throat. Is this the Lucy you love?



BRAM STOKER AND DRACULA

First published in 1897, *Dracula* has become the world's most enduring classic gothic novel. It is the biggest selling novel in the world, with the Bible as the only book to sell more copies. Since its initial publication, *Dracula* has never gone out of print and has been translated into every major language in the world, as well as many minor languages.

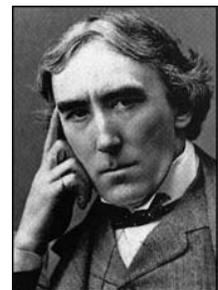
Undoubtedly, *Dracula* is the book that made Bram Stoker a familiar name though he wrote a total of eighteen novels in his lifetime. Several theories are debated as to the inspiration and characterization of Count Dracula. One subsisting theory is that Stoker based his famed Dracula on the historical figure Vlad Tepes who was called Vlad the Impaler by Ottoman chroniclers for his brutal executions of an estimated 20,000 men, women, and children. Vlad Tepes was born in 1431 in Transylvania, and later ruled an area of Southern Romania know as Wallchia. Vlad's father was a knight in the chivalric institution, Order of the Dragon, which was concerned with the rising Ottoman Empire, and was known as "Dracul," meaning dragon, or devil, in Romanian. The younger Vlad then adopted the sobriquet "Dracula," meaning son of the dragon, or devil. Although Vlad Tepes was notorious for his cruelty, he was also highly respected by his subjects for his fierce campaigns against the Ottoman Turks.

Another theory promotes the idea that Stoker based the character of Count Dracula on his longtime friend and famous actor Henry Irving. Stoker first admired Irving's work and wrote glowing reviews in local newspapers and theatre reviews. He eventually became Irving's business manager and traveling companion, promoting him for over 25 years. Critics and scholars disagree as to whether or not Irving was a model for Dracula, some stating Stoker would never project such evil qualities onto someone he held so dear. Others believe Irving was, at least, a physical inspiration for Count Dracula.

His face was very strong. . .aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily around the temples but profusely elsewhere. . .the mouth. . .was fixed and rather cruel-looking. . .the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.

- Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Chapter II

Dracula has in some ways inspired or influenced over 700 films. One of the most famous films, F.W. Murnau's "Nosferatu," was so similar to the novel that Stoker's widow charged Murnau with plagiarism, thus forcing him to change its title and character names. From *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to Anne Rice's thrilling novels, *Dracula* has forged an important place in our popular culture. Stoker even coined the now familiar term "undead" in *Dracula*.



Henry Irving

What or who Stoker's novel is truly based upon is unknown. What is certain, however, is that his interpretation of vampire folklore has powerfully shaped depictions of the legendary creatures ever since, and continues to do so today.

WebSites

About Film Noir

<http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue02/infocus/filmnoir.htm>

Dracula's Homepage

<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~emiller/>

Elizabeth Miller

[Elizabeth Miller is Professor of English at Memorial University of Newfoundland and an internationally recognized authority on Dracula. Her book, REFLECTIONS ON DRACULA, was published in 1997.

- [20 Common Errors and Misconceptions](#)
- [Brief Chronology of Stoker's Life](#)
- [Origins of Count Dracula](#)
- [Vampire Traits of Count Dracula](#)
- [Bats, Vampires, and Dracula \(by Elizabeth Miller\)](#)

Online Literature Library - Bram Stoker - Dracula

www.literature.org/authors/stoker-bram/dracula/

Dracula Literature Lesson (Grades 9-12)

Discovery.com

<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/dracula/>

"ClassicNotes: Bram Stoker." *GradeSaver.com*.

11 April 2003 http://www.gradesaver.com/ClassicNotes/Authors/about_bram_stoker.html





Tennessee Performing Arts Center
P.O. Box 190660
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

www.TPAC.org