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GOTHIC POWER

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is one of the most lasting and influential examples of the Gothic novel. The Gothic as a literary genre emerged in the 18th century with novels such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle Of Otranto* (1765) and William Beckford's *Vathek* (1782), and it flourished in the 19th century, when *Frankenstein* (1818) and *Dracula* (1897), to mention two of the most famous novels, were published. All Gothic novels share some distinguishing features, for example their setting, which is usually a castle, an abbey, a dungeon, a laboratory, or any other place associated with the underworld, as well as a general atmosphere of fear and terror.

OVER TO YOU!

 **WEB** Search online for other distinctly Gothic elements.

V for Vampire

As for vampires, despite their relative popularity in orally transmitted folktales, little had been written about them before Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* in 1872. There had been folktales about creatures feasting on the blood of the living in ancient cultures such as Persia, Greece and Babylon, as well as a surge of myths in medieval Europe, but it was only in the eighteenth century that vampires made their appearance in serious literature, following a 'vampire craze' in Eastern Europe.

- **afflicting:** causing problems for
- **dungeon:** underground prison
- **embodied:** expressed
- **feasting on:** (here) eating a lot and well
- **flourished:** developed quickly
- **imperial:** of the empire
- **sinister:** evil and frightening
- **surge:** great increase
- **transmitted:** (here) told



Gothic times

250 years later, Gothic fiction is still very popular, so much so that contemporary Gothic-influenced author Angela Carter has said: “We live in gothic times”. What can account for this extraordinary popularity? It is generally agreed that Gothic fiction has always reflected the ethical issues of the period when it was written. In a way, it is a ‘barometer’ of the anxieties afflicting a certain culture at a given moment in history. Indeed, the creation of Dracula and other gothic figures reveals a lot about the anxieties of the Victorian period. The sinister Count is a distinctly Victorian monster, and he can be seen as a response to a series of fears of that time, including moral corruption and imperial decline. *Dracula* questioned Victorian certainties about sexuality, progress and science, and embodied the fears of the more conservative classes in society of the supernatural and of dangerous, unnatural desires.

Find out more about the books mentioned on this page. What have they got in common?





DRACULA

Count Dracula



Mina Murray/Harker



Jonathan Harker



Professor Van Helsing

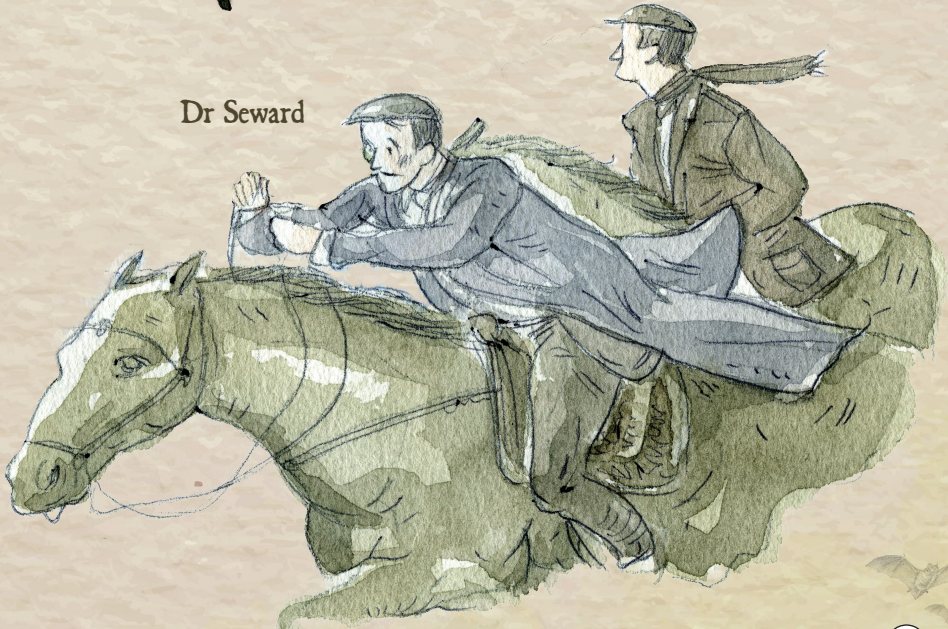


Lucy Westenra



Arthur Holmwood

Quincey Morris



Dr Seward

BEFORE READING

- 1 Look at these pictures of some of the main characters from the story. Write some sentences to describe each of them. What do you think each person is like?

a



Jonathan Harker

b



Count Dracula

c




Professor Van Helsing

d



Mina Murray/Harker

- 2  Work with one or two other people. Compare your descriptions of the characters.
- 3 Jonathan Harker is a solicitor. Which of these descriptions explains what a solicitor does? Tick (✓).
- a A person who makes decisions in a court of law, and says what should happen to criminals.
 - b A person who defends a criminal in a court of law.
 - c A person who advises people about law and prepares legal documents about businesses, property, etc.



4 Count Dracula is a vampire. What animals are associated with vampires? Tick (✓). Why?



a rat



b wolf



c bat

d owl



5  What do you know about vampires? Make some notes, then share your ideas with a partner.

6 Dracula is a horror story. What kinds of things do you expect to find in a horror story? Make lists under these headings:

- characters
- animals
- places
- weather
- actions
- time

 Discuss your thoughts with a partner.

CHAPTER 1



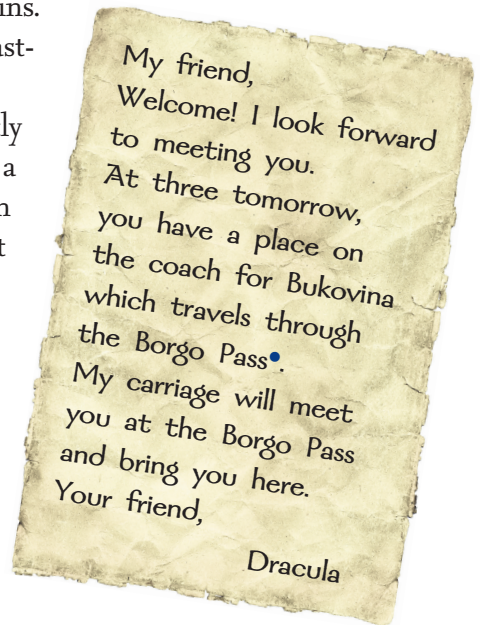
Where we meet Jonathan Harker, a young solicitor • from London, and learn about his journey to Transylvania to the castle of Count Dracula.

Jonathan Harker's Journal

3 MAY, BISTRITZ. I have passed through Munich, Vienna and Budapest, and am on my way to Transylvania. My impression • is that we have left the West and have entered the East. My client, Count Dracula, lives on the borders of three states: Transylvania, Moldavia, and Bukovina, in the centre of the Carpathian Mountains. It seems to be one of the wildest and least-known places in Europe.

I could not find a map showing exactly where he lives, but I found Bistritz, a town nearby. As I travelled towards it on the train, I looked out of the window at little towns and castles on steep • hills, and at wide rivers and streams. The countryside was beautiful, but strange.

When I arrived at the hotel in Bistritz, there was a letter waiting for me:



My friend,
Welcome! I look forward
to meeting you.
At three tomorrow,
you have a place on
the coach for Bukovina
which travels through
the Borgo Pass •.
My carriage will meet
you at the Borgo Pass
and bring you here.
Your friend,
Dracula

- **impression:** idea
- **pass:** opening in the mountains one can travel or pass through
- **solicitor:** legal representative or adviser
- **steep:** becoming quickly high (see hills in picture)



4 MAY. As I was leaving the hotel, I asked about Count Dracula, but the landlord and his wife made the sign of the cross and refused to speak. The landlady said: ‘Must you go, Herr Harker? Must you go? It is the eve of St George’s Day•, and after midnight, all the evil things in the world will be out.’

She then gave me the crucifix• from her neck to wear. I felt frightened.

5 MAY, THE CASTLE. From the coach, I heard the driver and landlady repeating some words which I didn’t understand. I checked them in my polyglot• dictionary: “Ordog” – Satan, “pokol” – hell, “stregoica” – witch, “vrolok” and “vlkoslak” – werewolf or vampire. (I need to ask my client about these things.)

As I was leaving, the people outside the hotel made the sign of the cross and pointed two fingers towards me. One of the other passengers explained that this was to guard me against the evil eye•.

- **crucifix:** religious cross
- **evil eye:** look given that is believed to cause injury or bad luck
- **polyglot:** multi-language

- **St George’s Day:** day celebrated by several nations and cities of which St George is the patron saint, dates can vary from 23 April to 6 May

We drove fast into the Carpathian Mountains. The driver only stopped once to light the lamps on the coach. At last, we saw the Borgo Pass in front of us. There were dark clouds above it, and the air was heavy and oppressive. The only light was from our own lamps. The white sandy road stretched in front of us, but there was no carriage waiting for me. Finally, the driver said: 'There is no carriage here. Come to Bukovina with us, Herr Harker. You can return tomorrow.'

But, when he finished speaking, our horses began to neigh and snort• and suddenly, four coal-black• horses appeared beside our coach. They were driven by a tall man with a long brown beard and a black hat that hid his face. His eyes seemed red in the light of the lamps, and he had red lips and sharp-looking teeth that were as white as ivory•.

He said to the driver, 'You are early tonight, my friend.'

I got into the carriage and, without a word, we drove off into the darkness. It was cold, and I pulled a cloak• around my shoulders and a blanket across my knees. I felt frightened. It was nearly midnight. I heard the howling• of wolves from the mountains. The horses shook with fear, but the driver was not disturbed• at all. It suddenly got much colder. Snow fell, and soon everything was white. The wolves' howling got nearer.

DARKNESS

What happens in the darkness?

What do you associate with darkness?

Are you afraid of the dark?

- **cloak:** long warm coat with no sleeves
- **coal-black:** very black (coal is a black mineral)
- **disturbed:** worried
- **howling:** long sad sound wolves make
- **ivory:** creamy-white colour of elephants' tusks
- **neigh and snort:** sounds horses make when they are excited or scared

Then I saw a faint blue flame through the darkness. The driver stopped, jumped down, and disappeared towards it. The howling got closer, and the driver appeared again. We continued, but I think we were driving in circles. It was like a nightmare.

The driver got down again and again. The last time, he moved further away than before. Just then, the moon came out from behind the clouds, and I saw a ring of wolves around us with white teeth and red tongues. I called out and suddenly, I saw the driver standing in the roadway, moving his arms as if pushing something away. The wolves moved backwards and disappeared.

We moved quickly through the darkness, until we stopped in front of a huge dark ruined castle.



AFTER READING VOCABULARY

1 Use five of the words in the box to complete the sentences.

lizard razor coal edge lid task spare harbour

- a Quick, there is not a moment to
- b 'Black as' means very black.
- c A is a small knife used for shaving.
- d A is a small reptile.
- e A is a safe place for boats.

2 In pairs, write sentences with the words left out in Exercise 1.

3 Make questions about the underlined information.

Example: The driver stopped. → What did the driver do?

- a Jonathan felt the Count's hand on his shoulder.
- b No, nobody has heard from Jonathan since that last letter.
- c The bigger tomb had just one word on it.
- d The beautiful lady asked the children to go for a walk with her.
- e I am writing this in case anything happens.
- f She has been dead a week.
- g Mrs Harker copied my diaries with her typewriter.
- h The last thing I remember was a white face bending over me.

4 Unscramble the words in the box, then use them to complete the sentences.

segetrni arlep onwhigl taedrm bertrile

- a We all shivered when we saw that a dead man was tied to the wheel.
- b Jonathan has had a shock and doesn't remember anything.

P B1 Preliminary English Test Reading Part 5

1 Complete each sentence by choosing the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

- 1 A solicitor, Mr Billington, has formally possession of the boxes.
A given B asked C had D taken
- 2 The landlord and his wife the sign of the cross and refused to speak.
A made B had C showed D saw
- 3 'It is difficult to believe, but tonight I prove it.'
A will B would C should D was
- 4 I also got copies of the letters and from Carter Paterson in London.
A to B written C for D arrived
- 5 There was horror in Mina's eyes. I was happy because it means she is not one of them.
A as B just C yet D then
- 6 'Mina, your work is ended now. You are too precious to at risk.'
A become B get C put D make
- 7 We given a crucifix, a wreath of garlic flowers, a revolver, a knife, an electric lamp, and an envelope containing holy wafers.
A had B were C have D only
- 8 He said that six boxes left at 197 Chicksand Lane, and six at Jamaica Lane.
A had B turned C could D were
- 9 There was no way to get out through the windows.
A going B except C only D coming