

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

Bram Stoker
DRACULA (1897)



AUTHORITATIVE TEXT

CONTEXTS

REVIEWS AND REACTIONS

DRAMATIC AND FILM VARIATIONS

CRITICISM

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~ CONTEXTS ~

Bram Stoker didn't invent the vampire in literature; the motif had a distinguished pedigree decades before his birth, beginning with Dr. John Polidori's "The Vampyre: A Tale" (1820), originally attributed to Lord Byron. Polidori was Byron's physician and travel companion; "The Vampyre" was the result of a writing contest proposed by Byron at a literary house party on Lake Geneva in 1816; the most famous product of the challenge was Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Polidori's story was first adapted to the stage in 1820 and became an opera in 1828. Actor Dion Boucicault produced his own theatrical elaboration on Polidori, called *The Vampyre: A Phantasm* (1852), which was revived in America as *The Phantom* (1856). Stoker was also influenced by James Malcom Rymer's melodramatic, nine-hundred-page "penny dreadful" *Varney the Vampyre: Or, the Feast of Blood*, originally published in installments between 1845 and 1847, as well as J. Sheridan Le Fanu's elegant vampire novella *Carmilla* (1872), which evidently gave him the initial idea of setting his novel in the district of Austria known as Styria, later changed to Transylvania. Much has been made, in recent years, of the fictional Dracula's relationship to his historical namesake, Vlad "the Impaler" Tepes, warlord of Wallachia (1431-1476). "Dracul" means devil or dragon, and "Dracula" refers to such a creature's offspring. But Stoker himself never visited Transylvania and seems to have limited his library research on Tepes to a single volume by William Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia: with Various Political Observations Related to Them* (1820), which briefly mentions Vlad's exploits. It is entirely possible that Stoker never knew of Vlad's sobriquet "the Impaler" and intended no specific connection between the ruler's favorite method of dispatching enemies via the wooden stake and the traditional method of destroying, or at least immobilizing, vampires. Though Vlad was indeed bloodthirsty, there is no evidence connecting him to any folklore tradition of vampirism. Therefore, the following selection of contextual pieces will focus on literary rather than historical antecedents and on Stoker's methods of devising his plot. Also included is the short story "Dracula's Guest" (1914), an abandoned opening chapter to *Dracula* published posthumously by Stoker's widow.

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and a great concern seemed to come on him. 'Oh that we had known it before!' he said, 'for then we might have reached him in time to save poor Lucy. However, "the milk that is spilt cries not out afterwards," as you say. We shall not think of that, but go on our way to the end.' Then he fell into a silence that lasted till we entered my own gateway. Before we went to prepare for dinner he said to Mrs Harker:—

'I am told, Madam Mina, by my friend John that you and your husband have put up in exact order all things that have been, up to this moment.'

'Not up to this moment, Professor,' she said impulsively, 'but up to this morning.'

'But why not up to now? We have seen hitherto how good light all the little things have made. We have told our secrets, and yet no one who has told is the worse for it.'

Mrs Harker began to blush, and taking a paper from her pocket, she said:—

'Dr Van Helsing, will you read this, and tell me if it must go in. It is my record of today. I too have seen the need of putting down at present everything, however trivial; but there is little in this except what is personal. Must it go in?' The Professor read it over gravely, and handed it back, saying:—

'It need not go in if you do not wish it; but I pray that it may. It can but make your husband love you the more, and all us, your friends, more honour you—as well as more esteem and love.' She took it back with another blush and a bright smile.

And so now, up to this very hour, all the records we have are complete and in order. The Professor took away one copy to study after dinner, and before our meeting, which is fixed for nine o'clock. The rest of us have already read everything; so when we meet in the study we shall all be informed as to facts, and can arrange our plan of battle with this terrible and mysterious enemy.

Mina Harker's Journal

30 September.—When we met in Dr Seward's study two hours after dinner, which had been at six o'clock, we unconsciously formed a sort of board or committee. Professor Van Helsing took the head of the table, to which Dr Seward motioned him as he came into the room. He made me sit next to him on his right, and asked me to act as secretary;⁷ Jonathan sat next to me. Opposite us were Lord Godalming, Dr Seward, and Mr Morris—Lord Godalming being next to the Professor, and Dr Seward in the centre. The Professor said:—

'I may, I suppose, take it that we are all acquainted with the facts

7. Stoker notes shrewdly the characteristic behavior of all-male committees toward their sole female member.

that are in these papers.' We all expressed assent, and he went on:—

'Then it were, I think good that I tell you something of the kind of enemy with which we have to deal. I shall then make known to you something of the history of this man, which has been ascertained for me. So we then can discuss how we shall act, and can take our measure according.

'There are such beings as vampires; some of us have evidence that they exist. Even had we not the proof of our own unhappy experience, the teachings and the records of the past give proof enough for sane peoples. I admit that at the first I was sceptic. Were it not that through long years I have train myself to keep an open mind, I could not have believe until such time as that fact thunder on my ear. "See! see! I prove; I prove." Alas! Had I known at the first what now I know—nay, had I even guess at him—one so precious life had been spared to many of us who did love her. But that is gone; and we must so work, that other poor souls perish not, whilst we can save. The *nosferatu* do not die like the bee when he sting once. He is only stronger; and being stronger, have yet more power to work evil. This vampire which is amongst us is of himself so strong in person as twenty men; he is of cunning more than mortal, for his cunning be the growth of ages; he have still the aids of necromancy, which is, as his etymology imply, the divination by the dead, and all the dead that he can come nigh to are for him at command; he is brute, and more than brute: he is devil in callous, and the heart of him is not; he can, within limitations, appear at will when, and where, and in any of the forms that are to him; he can, within his range, direct the elements: the storm, the fog, the thunder; he can command all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat—the moth, and the fox, and the wolf; he can grow and become small; and he can at times vanish and come unknown. How then are we to begin our strife to destroy him? How shall we find his where; and having found it, how can we destroy? My friends, this is much; it is a terrible task that we undertake, and there may be consequence to make the brave shudder. For if we fail in this our fight he must surely win; and then where end we? Life is nothings; I heed him not. But to fail here, is not mere life or death. It is that we become as him; that we henceforward become foul things of the night like him—without heart or conscience, preying on the bodies and the souls of those we love best. To us for ever are the gates of heaven shut; for who shall open them to us again? We go on for all time abhorred by all; a blot on the face of God's sunshine; an arrow in the side of Him who died for man. But we are face to face with duty; and in such case must we shrink? For me, I say, no; but then I am old, and life, with his sunshine, his fair places, his song of birds, his music, and his love, lie far behind. You others are young. Some have seen sorrow; but there are fair days yet in store. What say you?'

Whilst he was speaking Jonathan had taken my hand. I feared, oh so much, that the appalling nature of our danger was overcoming him when I saw his hand stretch out; but it was life to me to feel its touch—so strong, so self-reliant, so resolute. A brave man's hand can speak for itself; it does not even need a woman's love to hear its music.

When the Professor had done speaking my husband looked in my eyes, and I in his; there was no need for speaking between us.

'I answer for Mina and myself,' he said.

'Count me in, Professor,' said Mr Quincey Morris, laconically as usual.

'I am with you,' said Lord Godalming, 'for Lucy's sake, if for no other reason.'

Dr Seward simply nodded. The Professor stood up and, after laying his golden crucifix on the table, held out his hand on either side. I took his right hand, and Lord Godalming his left; Jonathan held my right with his left and stretched across to Mr Morris. So as we all took hands our solemn compact was made. I felt my heart icy cold, but it did not even occur to me to draw back. We resumed our places, and Dr Van Helsing went on with a sort of cheerfulness which showed that the serious work had begun. It was to be taken as gravely, and in as businesslike a way, as any other transaction of life:—

'Well, you know what we have to contend against; but we, too, are not without strength. We have on our side power of combination—a power denied to the vampire kind;⁸ we have resources of science; we are free to act and think; and the hours of the day and the night are ours equally. In fact, so far as our powers extend, they are unfettered, and we are free to use them. We have self-devotion in a cause, and an end to achieve which is not a selfish one. These things are much.

'Now let us see how far the general powers arrayed against us are restrict, and how the individual cannot. In fine, let us consider the limitations of the vampire in general, and of this one in particular.

'All we have to go upon are traditions and superstitions. These do not at the first appear much, when the matter is one of life and death—nay of more than either life or death. Yet must we be satisfied; in the first place because we have to be—no other means is at our control—and secondly, because, after all, these things—tradition and superstition—are everything. Does not the belief in vampires rest for others—though not, alas! for us—on them? A year ago which of us would have received such a possibility, in the midst of our scientific, matter-of-fact nineteenth century? We even scouted a belief that we saw justified under our very eyes. Take it, then, that the vampire, and the belief in his limitations and his cure, rest for the moment on the same

8. Van Helsing's insistence that Dracula is isolated by definition is inconsistent with the vampire's power to command animals and the elements and to reproduce himself—a power scarcely evident in Stoker's novel.

base. For, let me tell you, he is known everywhere that men have been. In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourish in Germany all over, in France, in India, even in the Chersonese;⁹ and in China, so far from us in all ways, there even is he, and the people fear him at this day. He have follow the wake of the berserker Icelander, the devil-begotten Hun, the Slav, the Saxon, the Magyar. So far, then, we have all we may act upon; and let me tell you that very much of the beliefs are justified by what we have seen in our own so unhappy experience. The vampire live on, and cannot die by mere passing of the time; he can flourish when that he can fatten on the blood of the living. Even more, we have seen amongst us that he can even grow younger; that his vital faculties grow strenuous, and seem as though they refresh themselves when his special pabulum¹ is plenty. But he cannot flourish without this diet; he eat not as others. Even friend Jonathan, who lived with him for weeks, did never see him to eat, never! He throws no shadow; he make in the mirror no reflect, as again Jonathan observe. He has the strength of many in his hand—witness again Jonathan when he shut the door against the wolfs, and when he help him from the diligence too. He can transform himself to wolf, as we gather from the ship arrival in Whitby, when he tear open the dog; he can be as bat, as Madam Mina saw him on the window at Whitby, and as friend John saw him fly from this so near house, and as my friend Quincey saw him at the window of Miss Lucy. He can come in mist which he create—that noble ship's captain proved him of this; but, from what we know, the distance he can make this mist is limited, and it can only be round himself. He come on moonlight rays as elemental dust—as again Jonathan saw those sisters in the castle of Dracula. He become so small—we ourselves saw Miss Lucy, ere she was at peace, slip through a hairbreadth space at the tomb door. He can, when once he find his way, come out from anything or into anything, no matter how close it be bound or even fused up with fire—solder you call it. He can see in the dark—no small power this, in a world which is one half shut from the light. Ah, but hear me through. He can do all these things, yet he is not free. Nay; he is even more prisoner than the slave of the galley, than the madman in his cell. He cannot go where he lists; he who is not of nature has yet to obey some of nature's laws—why we know not. He may not enter anywhere at the first, unless there be some one of the household who bid him to come; though afterwards he can come as he please. His power ceases, as does that of all evil things, at the coming of the day. Only at certain times can he have limited freedom. If he be not at the place whither he is bound, he can only change himself at noon or at exact sunrise or sunset. These things are we told, and in this record of ours we have proof by inference. Thus, whereas

9. An ancient Thracian peninsula, west of the Greek Hellespont.

1. Food, diet.

he can do as he will within his limit, when he have his earth-home, his coffin-home, his hell-home, the place unhallowed, as we saw when he went to the grave of the suicide as Whitby; still at other time he can only change when the time come. It is said, too, that he can only pass running water at the slack or the flood of the tide. Then there are things which so afflict him that he has no power, as the garlic that we know of; and as for things sacred, as this symbol, my crucifix, that was amongst us even now when we resolve, to them he is nothing, but in their presence he take his place far off and silent with respect. There are others, too, which I shall tell you of, lest in our seeking we may need them. The branch of wild rose on his coffin keep him that he move not from it; a sacred bullet fired into the coffin kill him so that he be true dead; and as for the stake through him, we know already of its peace; or the cut-off head that giveth rest. We have seen it with our eyes.²

Thus when we find the habitation of this man-that-was, we can confine him to his coffin and destroy him, if we obey what we know. But he is clever. I have asked my friend Arminius,³ of Buda-Pesth University, to make his record; and, from all the means that are, he tell me of what he has been. He must, indeed, have been that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk, over the great river on the very frontier of Turkey-land. If it be so, then was he no common man; for in that time, and for centuries after, he was spoken of as the cleverest and the most cunning, as well as the bravest of the sons of the "land beyond the forest."⁴ That mighty brain and that iron resolution went with him to his grave, and are even now arrayed against us. The Draculas were, says Arminius, a great and noble race, though now and again were scions who were held by their coevals to have had dealings with the Evil One. They learned his secrets in the Scholomance, amongst the mountains over Lake Hermanstadt,⁵ where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due. In the records are such words as "stregoica"—witch, "ordog", and "pokol"—Satan and hell; and in one manuscript this very Dracula is spoken of as "wampyr", which we all understand too well. There have been from the loins of this very one

2. Van Helsing's systematic rules are a melange of research and invention on Stoker's part. Dracula's inability to cross running water and his susceptibility to the wild rose and sacred bullet were available in such folklore sources as Emily Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest*. But Dracula's malleability of being—his ability to shapeshift, to transform his victims into his likeness—is Stoker's contribution to the legend.

3. A compliment to Arminius Vambéry (1832–1913), Professor of Oriental Languages at Buda-pest. Stoker met Vambéry in 1890, at one of Irving's stylish dinners in the Lyceum's Beefsteak Room; presumably Vambéry introduced him to Transylvanian history and legend.

4. The literal English translation of "Transylvania."

5. According to Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest*, the Scholomance is a school where "the secrets of nature, the language of animals, and all magic spells are taught by the devil in person." Lake Hermanstadt, "immeasurably deep," is the repository for the thunder and a sleeping dragon. The descendants of the children lured away by the Pied Piper live on its banks.

great men and good women, and their graves make sacred the earth where alone this foulness can dwell. For it is not the least of its terrors that this evil thing is rooted deep in all good; in soil barren of holy memories it cannot rest.⁶

Whilst they were talking Mr Morris was looking steadily at the window, and he now got up quietly, and went out of the room. There was a little pause, and then the Professor went on:—

'And now we must settle what we do. We have here much data, and we must proceed to lay out our campaign. We know from the inquiry of Jonathan that from the castle to Whitby came fifty boxes of earth, all of which were delivered at Carfax; we also know that at least some of these boxes have been removed. It seems to me, that our first step should be to ascertain whether all the rest remain in the house beyond that wall where we look today; or whether any more have been removed. If the latter, we must trace—'

Here we were interrupted in a very startling way. Outside the house came the sound of a pistol-shot; the glass of the window was shattered with a bullet, which, ricocheting from the top of the embrasure, struck the far wall of the room. I am afraid I am at heart a coward, for I shrieked out. The men all jumped to their feet; Lord Godalming flew over to the window and threw up the sash. As he did so we heard Mr Morris's voice without:—

'Sorry! I fear I have alarmed you. I shall come in and tell you about it.' A minute later he came in and said:—

'It was an idiotic thing of me to do, and I ask your pardon, Mrs Harker, most sincerely; I fear I must have frightened you terribly. But the fact is that whilst the Professor was talking there came a big bat and sat on the window-sill. I have got such a horror of the damned brutes from recent events that I cannot stand them, and I went out to have a shot, as I have been doing of late of evenings whenever I have seen one. You used to laugh at me for it then, Art.'

'Did you hit it?' asked Dr Van Helsing.

'I don't know; I fancy not, for it flew away into the wood.' Without saying any more he took his seat, and the Professor began to resume his statement:—

'We must trace each of these boxes; and when we are ready, we must either capture or kill this monster in his lair; or we must, so to speak, sterilize the earth, so that no more he can seek safety in it. Thus in the end we may find him in his form of man between the hours of noon and sunset, and so engage with him when he is at his most weak.

'And now for you, Madam Mina, this night is the end until all be well. You are too precious to us to have such risk. When we part to—'

6. This is the first time we hear that Dracula's boxes hold not simply his native earth, but soil consecrated according to traditional Christian procedures—a rule Stoker apparently invented, leaving us wondering why already-sacred soil must be "cleansed" once more with the Host.

night, you no more must question. We shall tell you all in good time. We are men, and are able to bear; but you must be our star and our hope, and we shall act all the more free that you are not in the danger, such as we are.'

All the men, even Jonathan, seemed relieved; but it did not seem to me good that they should brave danger and, perhaps, lessen their safety—strength being the best safety—through care of me; but their minds were made up, and, though it was a bitter pill for me to swallow, I could say nothing, save to accept their chivalrous care of me.

Mr Morris resumed the discussion:—

'As there is no time to lose, I vote we have a look at his house right now. Time is everything with him; and swift action on our part may save another victim.'

I own that my heart began to fail me when the time for action came so close, but I did not say anything, for I had a greater fear that if I appeared as a drag or a hindrance to their work, they might even leave me out of their counsels altogether. They have now gone off to Carfax, with means to get into the house.

Manlike, they have told me to go to bed and sleep; as if a woman can sleep when those she loves are in danger! I shall lie down and pretend to sleep, lest Jonathan have added anxiety about me when he returns.

↓
—————
Dr Seward's Diary

1 October, 4 a.m.—Just as we were about to leave the house, an urgent message was brought to me from Renfield to know if I would see him at once, as he had something of the utmost importance to say to me. I told the messenger to say that I would attend to his wishes in the morning; I was busy just at the moment. The attendant added:—

'He seems very importunate, sir. I have never seen him so eager. I don't know but what, if you don't see him soon, he will have one of his violent fits.' I knew the man would not have said this without some cause, so I said: 'All right; I'll go now;' and I asked the others to wait a few minutes for me, as I had to go and see my 'patient.'

'Take me with you, friend John,' said the Professor. 'His case in your diary interested me much, and it had bearing, too, now and again on our case. I should much like to see him, and especial when his mind is disturbed.'

'May I come also?' asked Lord Godalming.

'Me too?' said Quincey Morris. I nodded, and we all went down the passage together.

We found him in a state of considerable excitement, but far more rational in his speech and manner than I had ever seen him. There

was an unusual understanding of himself, which was unlike anything I had ever met with in a lunatic; and he took it for granted that his reasons would prevail with others entirely sane. We all four went into the room, but none of the others at first said anything. His request was that I would at once release him from the asylum and send him home. This he backed up with arguments regarding his complete recovery, and adduced his own existing sanity. 'I appeal to your friends,' he said; 'they will, perhaps, not mind sitting in judgment on my case. By the way, you have not introduced me.' I was so much astonished that the oddness of introducing a madman in an asylum did not strike me at the moment; and, besides, there was a certain dignity in the man's manner, so much of the habit of equality, that I at once made the introduction: 'Lord Godalming; Professor Van Helsing; Mr Quincey Morris, of Texas; Mr Renfield.' He shook hands with each of them, saying in turn:—

'Lord Godalming, I had the honour of seconding your father at the Windham;⁷ I grieve to know, by your holding the title, that he is no more. He was a man loved and honoured by all who knew him; and in his youth was, I have heard, the inventor of a burnt rum punch, much patronized on Derby night.⁸ Mr Morris, you should be proud of your great state. Its reception into the Union⁹ was a precedent which may have far-reaching effects hereafter, when the Pole and the Tropics¹ may hold allegiance to the Stars and Stripes. The power of Treaty may yet prove a vast engine of enlargement, when the Monroe doctrine² takes its true place as a political fable. What shall any man say of his pleasure at meeting Van Helsing? Sir, I make no apology for dropping all forms of conventional prefix. When an individual has revolutionized therapeutics by his discovery of the continuous evolution of brain-matter,³ conventional forms are unfitting, since they would seem to limit him to one of a class. You, gentlemen, who by nationality, by heredity, or by the possession of natural gifts, are fitted to hold your respective places in the moving world, I take to witness that I am as sane as at least the majority of men who are in full possession of their liberties. And I am sure that you, Dr Seward, humanitarian and medico-jurist⁴ as well as scientist, will deem it a moral duty to deal with me as

7. An exclusive gentlemen's club with a literary ambience.

8. The Derby is England's famous and elegant annual horse race, founded by the twelfth earl of Derby.

9. Texas became a state in 1845.

1. Alaska and Hawaii. Renfield, or Stoker, is prescient here: Alaska and Hawaii were admitted into the Union in the mid-twentieth century.

2. In 1823, President James Monroe declared the Spanish-American states in the Western Hemisphere under the jurisdiction of the United States, and thus closed to colonial invasion from Europe.

3. This grandiose tribute is as close as we come to learning the nature of Van Helsing's work.

4. This establishes Dr. Seward as a practitioner of forensic medicine, linking him, as well as his teacher, Van Helsing, to the field of law.