

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Bram (Abraham) Stoker** was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1847. His father was a civil servant<sup>1</sup>. Stoker was ill throughout his childhood, but later excelled<sup>2</sup> at sport when he went to Trinity College, Dublin, where he studied mathematics.

Stoker became a clerk<sup>3</sup> in the Civil Service in 1870, but his great interest was in the theater. He carefully followed the acting career of one of the greatest actors of the time – Sir Henry Irving. In 1878 Irving asked Stoker to become the business manager of the Lyceum Theater in London. In the same year, Stoker married Florence Balcombe. Their only son, Irving Noel, was born the following year.



From early on in his career Stoker published theater reviews<sup>4</sup> and some short stories in newspapers and magazines, and by 1890 he published his first Gothic horror novel, *The Snake's Pass*. In London he became well-known in the literary and artistic world, and was friends with many famous writers.

He also traveled abroad with Irving, and especially enjoyed trips to the USA, where he twice visited The White House and met the President. Real fame came to Stoker in 1897 with the publication of *Dracula*, which soon became very popular.

When Irving died in 1905, Stoker wrote a biography of him. He also suffered a stroke<sup>5</sup>, at this time. He recovered and continued writing until he died in 1912.

- 1 **civil servant:** someone who works for the government (Civil Service)
- 2 **excelled:** was very good
- 3 **clerk:** office worker
- 4 **reviews:** critical opinion of books, plays, etc.
- 5 **stroke:** type of sudden illness

## ABOUT THE BOOK

The story of *Dracula* (1897) takes place in Transylvania in Romania, London, Exeter and Whitby in England, and Varna and Galatz on the Black Sea. It is written in what is known as an epistolary style. This means that several characters tell their parts of the story through journal and diary entries, letters, telegrams, newspaper articles and a ship's log<sup>1</sup>.

In the story the young English solicitor<sup>2</sup>, Jonathan Harker visits Count Dracula in his Transylvanian castle to advise him on buying a property<sup>3</sup> in London. Harker has terrible experiences there, and realizes that Dracula and three women in the castle are all vampires.

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- <sup>1</sup> **ship's log:** record book the captain writes about a sea journey
  - <sup>2</sup> **solicitor:** legal adviser
  - <sup>3</sup> **property:** building; house
  - <sup>4</sup> **cope with:** when you cope with something you manage to live with it
  - <sup>5</sup> **deals with:** is about
  - <sup>6</sup> **scholars:** people who study

Dracula moves to England and Harker and his young wife Mina become involved in a life-and-death chase to catch and stop him before it is too late.

The story is a classic horror adventure, in which good defeats evil. It also brings up the theme of modernity, which was important at that time.

The Victorian age brought about great change and many people believed that society was unable to cope with<sup>4</sup> events. Other people have interpreted *Dracula* as an "invasion" story – Britain is invaded by an evil foreigner who will destroy everyone by turning them all into vampires until someone stops him.

The story also deals with<sup>5</sup> relationships between men and women. Some scholars<sup>6</sup> have suggested that the character of Dracula is based on Prince Vlad III of Wallachia (now Romania). He was known as Dracula, from the word for "dragon".

## 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** Mina Murray/Harker



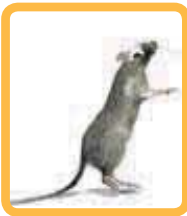
**d** Professor Van Helsing

-  **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?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) The person who makes decisions in a court of law, and says what should happen to criminals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) The person who defends a criminal in a court of law.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) The person who advises people about law and prepares legal documents about businesses, property, etc.

**4** Count Dracula is a vampire. What kind of animals are associated with vampires? Tick. Why?



a a rat ☐



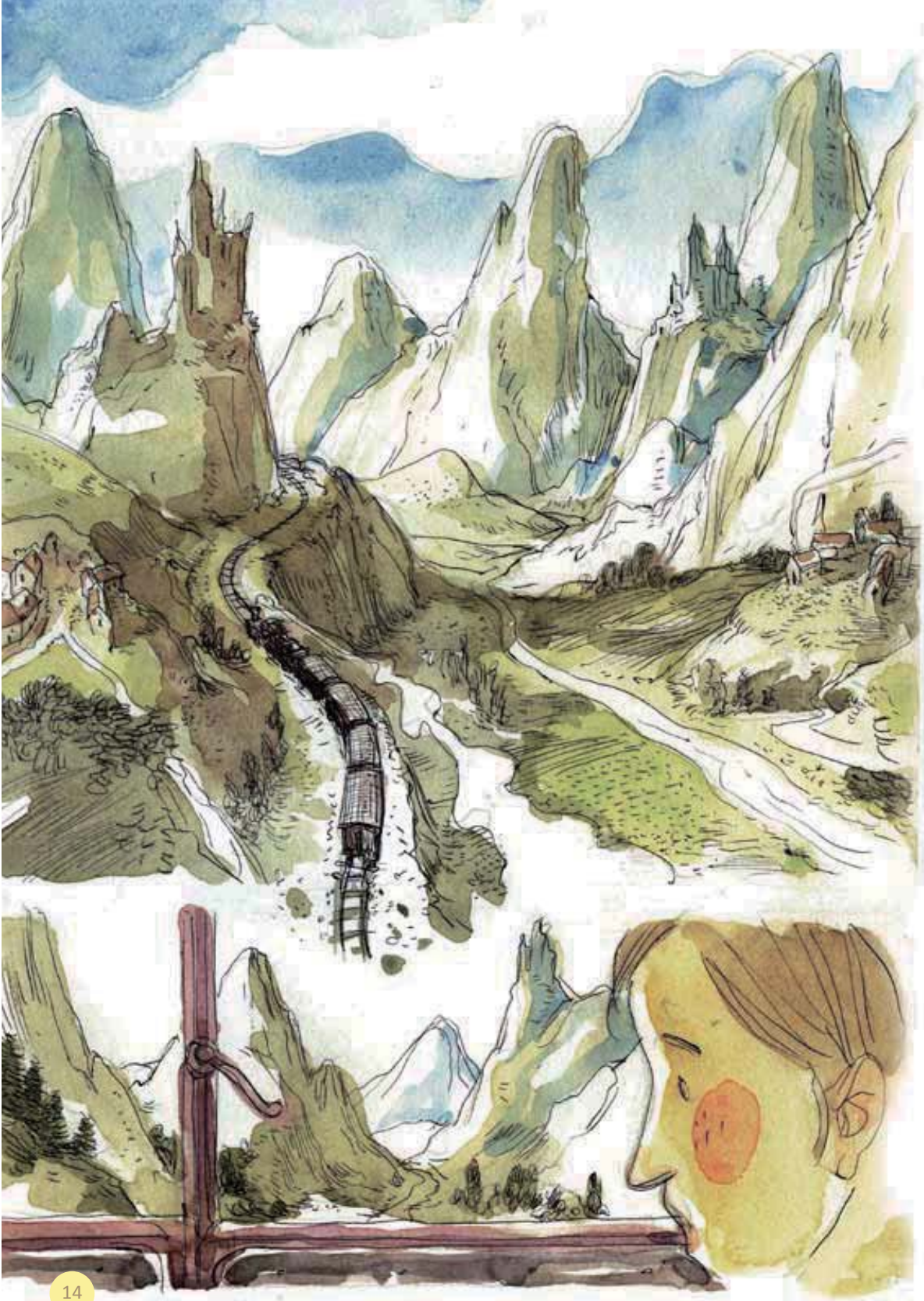
b a wolf ☐

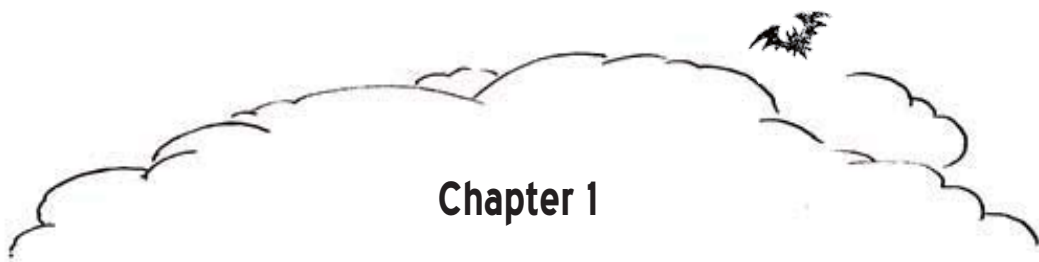


c a bat ☐



d an owl ☐





## Chapter 1



Where we meet Jonathan Harker, a young solicitor<sup>1</sup> 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 center 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 traveled towards it on the train, I looked out of the window at little towns and castles on steep<sup>2</sup> 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:

<sup>1</sup> **solicitor:** legal representative or adviser

<sup>2</sup> **steep:** quickly high (see hills in picture)



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<sup>1</sup>. My carriage will meet you at the Borgo Pass and bring you here.

Your friend,

Dracula

**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<sup>2</sup>, and after midnight all the evil things in the world will be out."

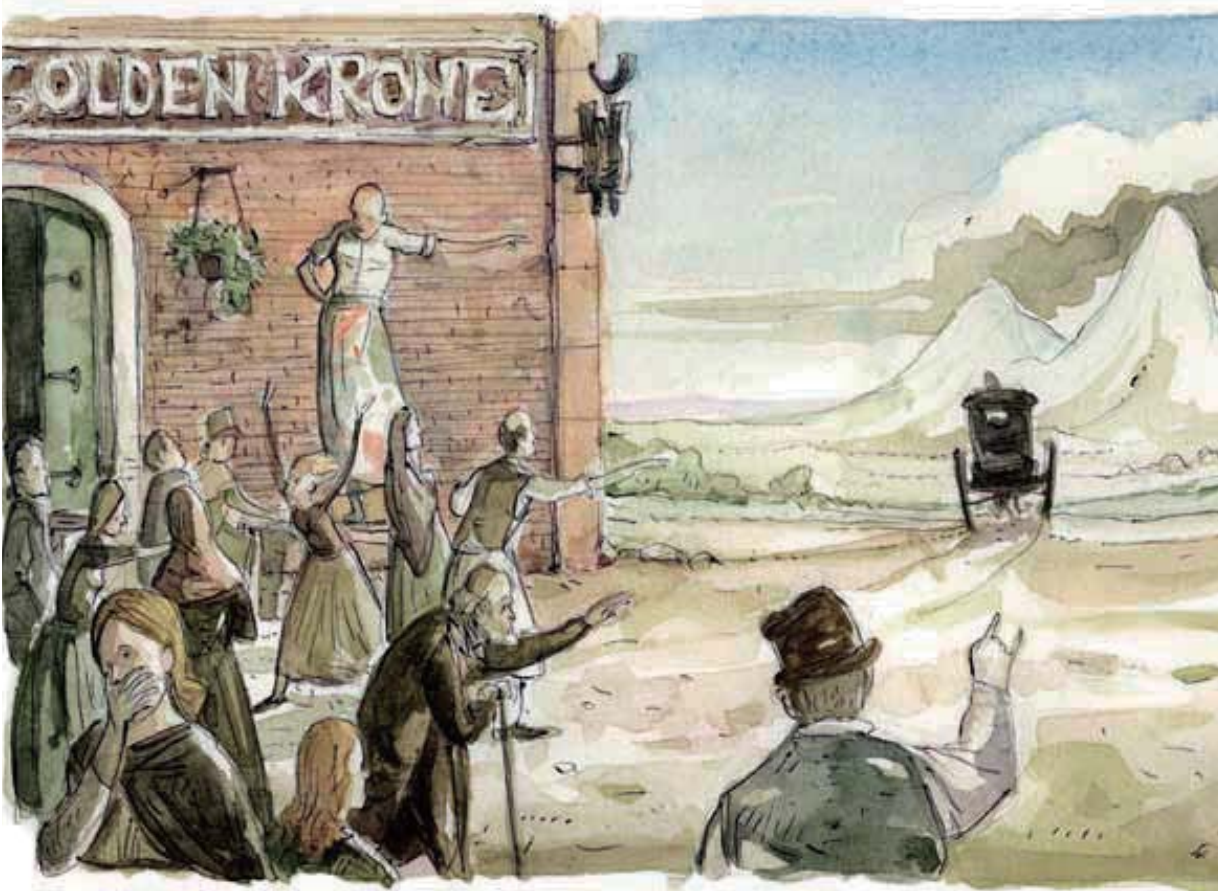
She then gave me the crucifix from her neck to wear. I felt frightened.

1 **pass:** opening in the mountains you can travel or pass through

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

3 **polyglot:** multi-language

4 **evil eye:** a look believed to cause injury or bad luck



**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<sup>3</sup> dictionary: "Ordog" – Satan, "Pokol" – hell, "stregoica" – witch, "vrolok" and "vlkoslak" – were wolf 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<sup>4</sup>.