

## Bram Stoker's Dracula

The setting of the story begins in 19th century Europe, in the eerie country of Transylvania. A solicitor from England named Jonathan Harker is sent by a business man to meet with an old Count named Dracula at his castle located far from civilization. Residents of Transylvania who become aware of his destination begin crossing themselves and giving him garlic and blessings. As a result of these gestures, Mr. Harker soon develops an uneasy feeling about visiting the mysterious Count. He arrives at Castle Dracula regardless, and makes his acquaintances with Dracula. He soon realizes that the count is no normal human, but an evil, blood-sucking vampire, who can command animals and elements with the wave of his hand. Harker escapes but the Count has devised an intricate plan to move to London and exercise his evil forces on innocent people there. However, a group of friends, including an open-minded but ingenious professor, a psychologist, an American, a rich man, as well as Jonathan Harker and his wife Mina, learn of the Count's sinister plan and pledge to destroy him before he can create an army of un-dead vampires. They systematically destroy his coffins with holy wafers and chase him out of England back to Castle Dracula. There they carry out an ultimate plan to destroy Dracula.

The Author uses suspense as a storytelling device rather effectively throughout the story. There are a fair number of parts in which the reader is left suspended on the edge of seat, eager to find out what is to happen next. However, there were parts where suspense could be used in a manner that would enhance the gravity of the plot. Nonetheless, the book is written in a unique way that allows suspense to be used easily and effectively built up. Dracula is written in first person like many other novels but then it differs slightly. The book starts off as a first person Journal of the first character describing his experiences. But then it switches to someone else's journal, and then to letters between two characters, and later to a newspaper article. It follows this pattern roughly throughout the book. At various points, the plot builds up with one character's journal and then it jumps to another character's journal so that you must read a ways

through it before the exciting conclusion to that particular event is revealed. At other times deductions must be made on what a character has written to ascertain what has occurred. There is a good example of this when the first character, Jonathan Harker, is imprisoned in the castle close to sunset and knows that the Count will attack him that night. His journal ends as he describes what he might do to escape. But the success of his escape is not evident until the first part of his fiancée's journal is completed. This sort of suspense can be quite frustrating and annoying at times. Thus its purpose is often defeated and the plot suffers. But there is also the more prevalent type of suspense used where the character is on the verge of an important discovery or he is in a dangerous predicament but the author is slow to divulge what is to happen. When the suspense was used properly, it proved to be both interesting and very dramatic.

In conclusion, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* turned out to be a very exciting and fascinating novel. The plot was well structured and was very suspenseful. The author used his historical knowledge of Europe, particularly Hungary and Transylvania, very well in conveying a certain idea in the book. For example, Count Dracula was described as a noble of the Magyar peoples of eastern Europe who fought valiantly against invaders during the 14th and 15th centuries. Full insight was given into the minds and personalities of almost all of the well developed characters. Initially, the Count remained somewhat mysterious for a specific reason. This allowed for the main characters to slowly discover who the Count really was thus developing the character slowly for the reader. The intrigue built into his character intensified the mystery. Suspense was used extensively throughout the novel. The book probed deeply into people's superstitions, fears, and beliefs of the supernatural, and how others are skeptic of them are sometimes proved wrong. In all, *Dracula* is a clever, exciting, and suspenseful novel that uses a ruthless villain to terrify you but forces you to read more.