



FIFTH THIRD BANK

# DRACULA

originally dramatized by **John L. Balderston** and **Hamilton Deane**  
from **Bram Stoker**'s world-famous novel, ***Dracula***  
adapted and originally directed by **William McNulty**  
directed by **Drew Fracher**

**Sept. 6 – Oct. 31, 2019**

# PLAY GUIDE

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## ABOUT THIS PLAY GUIDE

This play guide is a resource designed to enhance your theatre experience. Its goal is twofold: to nurture the teaching and learning of theatre arts and to encourage essential questions that lead to an enduring understanding of the play's meaning and relevance. Inside you will find information about the plot and characters within the play, as well as articles that contextualize the play and its production at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Oral discussion and writing prompts encourage your students to reflect upon their impressions, analyze key ideas and relate them to their personal experiences and the world around them. These prompts can easily be adapted to fit most writing objectives. We encourage you to adapt and extend the material in any way that best fits the needs of your community of learners. Please feel free to make copies of this guide, or you may download it from our website at [actorstheatre.org](http://actorstheatre.org). We hope this material, combined with our pre-show workshops, will give you the tools to make your time at Actors Theatre a valuable learning experience.

### **DRACULA STUDENT MATINEES & THIS PLAY GUIDE ADDRESS SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

#### **COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2  
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3  
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5  
Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6  
Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7  
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2  
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### **NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS**

TH.Re7.1 Perceive and analyze artistic work.

TH.Re8.1 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

TH.Re9.1 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

TH.Cn10.1 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

TH.Cn11.1 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding our play guides, please contact Abigail Miskowiec, Learning & Creative Engagement Associate, at 502.584.1265 x3065.

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FIFTH THIRD BANK



Van Helsing (Grant Goodman) uses a crucifix to repel the demon that threatens Lucy (Rin Allen). Photo by Jonathan Roberts, 2018

## SYNOPSIS

Professor Van Helsing, a notable expert in the occult, arrives at the estate of an old friend, Dr. Seward, amid whispers of gruesome attacks and strange goings-on. Seward's fiancée, Mina, has recently died of a sudden and mysterious illness, and Mina's friend, Lucy, has begun to display the same symptoms. Could it be that Mina, and now Lucy, have suffered at the hands of a vampire? How will Van Helsing and Seward fight this supernatural fiend?

## SETTING

In and around Dr. Seward's sanatorium in Purley, England, and Dracula's Castle in Transylvania. 1893.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**DR. SEWARD** Head Doctor at the asylum; mourning the death of his fiancée, Mina.

**COUNT DRACULA** Dr. Seward's new neighbor; recently moved from Transylvania.

**PROFESSOR ANNA VAN HELSING** Old friend of Dr. Seward; comes to help Lucy.

**MINA** Dr. Seward's fiancée; recently died of a mysterious illness involving a sudden loss of blood.

**LUCY** Mina's friend; displaying the same troubling symptoms as Mina.

**JONATHAN HARKER** Lucy's fiancé; he went missing during a trip to Transylvania.

**RENFIELD** Psychiatric patient; receiving treatment from Dr. Seward.

**MISS SULLIVAN** Dr. Seward's assistant.

**MR. BRIGGS** Dr. Seward's orderly; responsible for maintaining order among the patients.



# VLAD THE IMPALER: THE REAL DRACULA

Vlad Dracula, later named Vlad the Impaler after his favorite form of torture, was a 15th-century prince who ruled with an iron fist. This infamous ruler controlled his subjects with such violence that he is now referred to as the bloodiest ruler in history.

Vlad was born in Transylvania in 1430 or 1431. His father, the warrior Vlad Dracul, was a member of a secret society of knights called the Order of the Dragon. This society was formed to fight and defeat the Turks, as well as secure the throne of Wallachia (a town located in present-day Romania). The Order brothers dressed in long green capes except on special occasions, for which they would wear long black capes and drape gold medallions stamped with the image of a dragon around their necks.

Young Vlad was nicknamed Dracula after his father. In Romanian, Dracul translates to “dragon” or “devil,” and the “a” stands for “son of.” So Dracula literally translates to “son of the dragon” or “son of the devil.” In 1444, Dracul was traveling with Dracula and Dracula’s younger brother across the Danube River when they were captured by the Turks. Dracula was imprisoned for four years. These years are thought to be the beginning of Vlad Dracula’s violent nature. It wasn’t long before Dracul was assassinated and Dracula’s brother was buried alive by János Hunyadi, the ruler of Hungary. Fearful for his life, Dracula joined Hunyadi, who taught him cunning and severe military tactics that would soon secure Dracula the throne of Wallachia.

As Prince, Vlad Dracula continued to battle the Turks. Those taken hostage were impaled (i.e., large poles were driven through their bodies). But it was not only Dracula’s enemies who suffered. Many townspeople were also subject to his wrath. One story tells of Dracula noticing a peasant man who was wearing a shirt that was too short. When Dracula asked the man’s wife why the man was improperly dressed, she said she was too busy cooking and cleaning to sew. She was immediately impaled. Graciously, Dracula chose a new wife for the man. He made sure to show the new wife what had happened to the old one so that she would not make the same mistake.

Dracula died in battle in 1476. He was promptly decapitated by order of the Turkish sultan. His head was then sent to the sultan, who displayed it, fittingly, on a stake for all to see. Although gone, rumors of Vlad Dracula and his relentless temper spread throughout Europe. Stories of his villainy were published, read, and reread, and it was these stories that inspired Bram Stoker to create the character of the infamous Count Dracula we know today.

## BRAM STOKER: THE MAN BEHIND THE MONSTER

Bram Stoker always liked scary stories. He was born near Dublin, Ireland, on November 8, 1847. Sick during most of his childhood, he read in bed a lot and liked to listen to the stories his mother, Charlotte, told. Her stories were sometimes spine-chilling, like the ones about victims of the 1832 Irish cholera epidemic who were buried before they were entirely dead. As he grew up, Stoker got stronger and even played sports and joined clubs when he went to Trinity College. He still liked to read strange stories, such as the influential 1871 vampire novel *Carmilla*, by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Stoker wrote his own horror story, “The Chain of Destiny,” which appeared in a magazine in 1875. Stoker also wrote non-fiction. *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland* didn’t raise hairs on the backs of readers’ necks, but it was an important resource for other clerks in Ireland.

Stoker first worked for the Irish government, but loved putting his imagination to use and loved the theatre. In college he saw *The Rivals*, starring Henry Irving, and was blown away. The show inspired Stoker to write a theatre review column for the newspaper the *Dublin Mail*. Years later, he wrote a good review about Henry Irving’s performance in *Hamlet*, and the actor invited him backstage. The two began a close friendship, and Stoker moved to London with his young wife, where he became the business manager of Irving’s Lyceum Theatre.

Stoker continued writing fiction while working at the Lyceum. He published a collection of scary children’s stories called *Under the Sunset* in 1881. In the 1890s, he wrote some romantic novels, but was also working on his vampire thriller. Stoker painstakingly researched places, superstitions and myths while writing the novel *Dracula*. He visited many of the locations he wrote about in the book, including the Regent’s Park Zoo, where he observed animals that would appear in *Dracula*. Stoker stayed up nights discussing dark matters with his friends. Diary entries, letters, newspaper articles, verbal testimonies and other first-hand accounts form Stoker’s frightening narrative. He creatively used many fictional sources to make the story seem more authentic. When *Dracula* finally reached readers in 1897, reviewers generally praised it. They enjoyed its “ingenious and gruesome details” and how exciting it was for readers. Stoker had successfully written a thrilling horror novel that would terrify generations. He wrote other novels before he died in 1912, but none could compete with the legend he created in *Dracula*.



# ***DRACULA'S*** **THRILLS AND** **CHILLS**

Heart-stopping fear: it really brings people together. *Dracula* might seem like unlikely social glue, but sharing a suspenseful or frightening experience has long been known to build a sense of unity. Heartbeats quicken in sync, muscles tense, and it's as if the whole audience is holding its breath—until you laugh when you and the person next to you jump at the same time. Communal fear used to be only a survival mechanism, the spark of instinct we needed to run from danger or team up to fight back. Now we can scare ourselves senseless just for fun, and while watching a horror movie alone is spooky in its own right, there's something special about experiencing a monster's reign of terror together as it unfolds right in front of us. That's why Actors Theatre's production of *Dracula* has become an annual tradition for local audiences, including thousands of students.

Get ready to meet *Dracula*—and a theatre full of people who might become your new closest friends—by looking back at particularly chilling moments from recent years' productions. But as you peruse these pages, know that even bigger frights await you this fall. After all, what's most scary is what you can't see yet—because it's right behind you.



Clockwise from top: Under Dracula's influence, Renfield (Neill Robertson) is tormented by guilt and shame. Photo by Bill Brymer, 2017. Miss Sullivan (Silvia Daly Bond) fights as Dracula (Santino Craven) attempts to control her. Photo by Jonathan Roberts, 2018. Dracula's minions rise to fight against the powers of good. Photo by Jonathan Roberts, 2018. Lucy (Rin Allen), slipping under Dracula's spell, threatens her fiancé, Jonathan Harker (Crystian Wiltshire). Photo by Jonathan Roberts, 2018.

# BLOODLINES: TAKING A BITE OUT OF VAMPIRE HISTORY

We've always had a dark fascination with vampires. From the earliest accounts of these monsters to today's popular interpretations, vampires continue to capture our collective imagination. The image of the thirsty undead has permeated popular culture in everything from books to television series, graphic novels to feature films. Whether evil bloodsuckers or nice guys who just happen to have fangs, vampires come in all shapes and sizes. Here's a look at how some of these stories emerged and how they have evolved over time.



**1400s** The Transylvanian-born ruler of Wallachia, Vlad III (often called "Vlad the Impaler," "Vlad Dracula," or just "Dracula"), sadistically kills tens of thousands of people who have offended him in any number of ways. His preferred method is impalement, and so the vampire rumor mill starts a-turning; Vlad effectively becomes the prototype for the most famous vampire of all time.

**1897** Bram Stoker writes *Dracula*. The Irishman, a sometime theatre critic/manager, crafts the novel as a series of journal entries, correspondence between characters, and newspaper clippings. Though it's initially slow to sell, it meets high critical praise and ultimately becomes one of the greatest classics of all time.

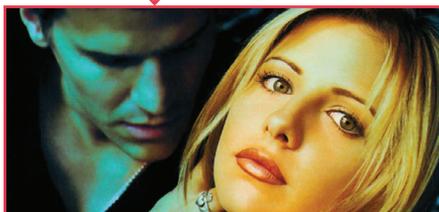
**1600s** Thought to have tortured and murdered hundreds of young women in her later years, Erzsébet Báthory is also rumored to have feasted on their blood. In all likelihood, the Hungarian countess is probably less vampire, more serial killer.



**1972** Count von Count joins the cast of *Sesame Street* on PBS. This polyester Count doesn't bite people, sleep in a coffin, or cause trouble of any kind. He counts. Meet the world's first cuddly vampire. Mwah ha ha! *Thunder clap.*

**1990s** The '90s see vampires brought to film in record numbers, and in a variety of styles. This decade brings us *Innocent Blood*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *From Dusk Till Dawn*, and *Blade*, among others. We also get two new takes on the Dracula story: Francis Ford Coppola casts Gary Oldman as a chilling version of the Count in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, and Mel Brooks gives us a goofier take with Leslie Nielsen in *Dracula: Dead and Loving It*.

**1970s-1980s** Vampires are nearly ubiquitous, popping up in everything from blaxploitation to campy cult films. Several more serious treatments are Stephen King's novel *Salem's Lot* and the next two Dracula films, one with Jack Palance and the other starring Frank Langella (another stage Dracula) and Sir Laurence Olivier.



**1997** *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer*, the popular spin-off series launched by the 1992 film, chronicles the adventures of Buffy Summers, her gang of outcast friends, and their sunny California high school perched on the mouth of hell. The age of the relatable vampire story has officially arrived, complete with teenage angst and snappy dialogue. Angel, the Slayer's tormented vampire love interest (who later gets his own series), is among the new breed of kinder, gentler bloodsuckers.

**2005** Maybe you've heard of *Twilight*? Stephenie Meyer's quartet of novels has sold over 200 million copies so far, and inspired 5 successful motion pictures. Part vampire story, part heart-pounding teen romance, Meyer further explores the idea of vampires with consciences.

**2013** *Being Human*, *True Blood*, and *The Vampire Diaries* are popular television series that offer contemporary vampire stories to modern audiences—among other supernatural creatures.

**2016** *American Horror Story*, an anthology series that has featured everything from murderous clowns to mysterious cults, takes on the bloody work of portraying glamorous vampires. Lady Gaga portrays the Countess, who preys upon the guests at the season's titular Hotel Cortez.



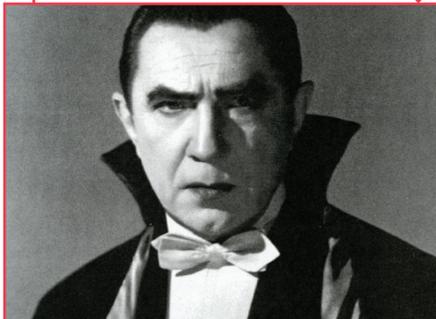
**1922** F.W. Murnau's horror classic *Nosferatu* is the first time Dracula sees the big screen...just don't call him Dracula. Unable to obtain the rights to the story from Stoker's estate, Murnau isn't allowed to use the name or even the word "vampire." But Max Schreck's spooky monster still manages to horrify and thrill film audiences.



**1966** The twisted romance of the seduction, the pathos and tragedy of the attack: is it any wonder that the next destination for vampires is the world of soap operas? *Dark Shadows* brings good old-fashioned gothic horror to daytime television.

**1924** *Dracula* is adapted for the stage by Hamilton Deane and premieres in London. Three years later, the adaptation is revised by John L. Balderston for the New York production.

**1958** Hammer Film Company's remake stars a terrifying Christopher Lee in the title role.



**1931** The first authorized *Dracula* film is worth the wait: based on the stage adaptation, it stars Hungarian actor Bela Lugosi, reprising his role from the 1927 Broadway production, as an unforgettable Count.

-Timeline by Rosie Chevalier



To set her soul free, Dr. Seward (Kurt Uy) must drive a stake through the heart of undead Mina (Kayla Peters). Photo by Jonathan Roberts, 2018

# TELLING A STORY THROUGH PHYSICAL SPECTACLE

As the *Dracula* creative team was gearing up for another year of blood-curdling and thrilling vampire horror, Resident Dramaturg Hannah Rae Montgomery met up with director Drew Fracher and fight director Jake Guinn to chat about the latest action-packed version of the production.

*(Continued on next page)*

**SEPT. 6 – OCT. 31, 2019**

**HANNAH RAE MONTGOMERY:** What does a fight director do? Why is having a fight director important for a show like *Dracula*?

**DREW FRACHER:** A fight director collaborates with the director to tell the story through physical action. Being able to create realistic acts of violence between characters, while keeping the actors safe, is the fight director's responsibility. *Dracula* has a very long run (70 performances), so we need fight choreography that's repeatable without being too taxing on the actors' bodies. A great deal of rehearsal time is dedicated to these action moments, working out each move and then practicing the sequence until it can be done safely at performance pace.

**JAKE GUINN:** Fight directors coordinate all the action moments in a production; it's my job to develop choreography that's safe as well as fun to watch. On a project like *Dracula*, since the action is so integral to the plot, I get to help with some character-building as well.

**HRM:** Drew, you worked on the fights in *Dracula* for years before taking the helm as the show's director. What did you love most about that work as the fight director, and what's been most exciting about bringing a new fight director on board? Jake, what's been your favorite part of joining the *Dracula* team?

**DF:** *Dracula* is a fun show to fight-direct because there's a ton of action and it's a lot more elaborate than your standard swordfight. I've especially enjoyed collaborating with the Props Department to develop special effects that enhance the action; things like blood effects, pyrotechnics and disappearances. We try to add new twists and surprises every year.

The current fight director, Jake Guinn, is the son of one of my best friends and favorite fight director colleagues. I've known Jake since he was born and watched him develop into a terrific fight director in

his own right. When I got the offer to direct *Dracula*, Jake was the first person I thought of to take over the fights. I'm so proud of him, and it's a treat to have him in the room.

**JG:** The culture and sense of community surrounding this production blows me away. It's a joy to play with such a larger-than-life story of heroism.

**HRM:** What inspired some of the recent changes you've made to the fights in *Dracula*, and what new elements can audiences look forward to this fall?

**JG:** Last year, we reimagined a lot of the choreography. Most of the action had been set for several seasons and we wanted to break that cycle. We ended up keeping some things because they were really fun for the audience, but we were also interested in using action to showcase new versions of certain characters, the women especially; in this production, the ladies are awesome monster hunters. I'm especially excited for the closing action sequence this year. The final conflict between Dracula and Van Helsing is going to be totally redone and will be truly epic!

**DF:** Jake and I set out to make the show even more of a swashbuckling spectacle. We added a group of new ensemble characters to give Dracula more victims, and we also tried to find ways for the women to have a more central role in the action sequences. Since the story is largely about this evil supernatural being going after women, we felt that the vampire's female victims (Lucy, for example) should get justice by directly contributing to his downfall. To that end, this year's cast will feature a female actor playing Van Helsing. I can't say everything that might change since we haven't started rehearsals yet, but I can promise that this year's *Dracula* will be full of strong women.

—Hannah Rae Montgomery

# COMMUNICATION PORTFOLIO

## NARRATIVE: CCRA.W.3

Where is the scariest place you have ever been? Write a story narrating the event for your reader. What made it scary at the time? Were you in a strange location? Was it dark? Were you with someone who was also scared? Lead the reader through the experience moment-by-moment using lots of details and clear, descriptive images.

## ARGUMENTATIVE: CCRA.W.1

*Dracula's* ending leaves the story open to the audience's interpretation. What do you think happens next? If you could imagine one more scene at the end of our *Dracula*, what would it be? Which characters would be in it? What do they still need to do? Back up your claims based on what you already know about the characters and circumstances within *Dracula*.

## INFORMATIVE: CCRA.W.2

Write a review of the performance of *Dracula* that you saw at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Which parts of the play (the actors' performances, the set, the props, costumes, lighting and sound design, etc.) were most effective? Which parts were least effective? Back up your claims with evidence and details from your experience of watching the performance. Then make a copy and send it to the education department:

Actors Theatre of Louisville  
c/o Abigail Miskowiec  
316 West Main Street  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

We will share your thoughts with the creative team.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. *Dracula* is performed in the Bingham Theatre, which has an arena stage, where the audience surrounds the stage. How might the actors, director and designers use this kind of stage and seating arrangement to heighten *Dracula's* fright factor? What other technical elements do you think will be used to establish the mood? What kind of set do you expect to see? What style and colors?
2. Actors Theatre of Louisville's production of *Dracula* is part play and part haunted house. The set, lighting and sound design all work together to create a sinister atmosphere. Some people love being scared by horror movies and plays, while others have mixed feelings. How will you prepare to see *Dracula*? How is seeing a play different from seeing a movie? As an audience member, what types of things do you need to keep in mind when going to see a live performance?

## POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. *Dracula* is often seen as a story about good versus evil, but not all of the characters are just one or the other. Why do you think the writer and actors would show characters that are a mix of good and evil? Which characters show traits of both? Do you feel any empathy for them? Why or why not?
2. Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* in 1897, over a hundred years ago, and Actors Theatre has been performing *Dracula* for over 20 years. Why do you think vampire stories are still popular today? How has our perception of vampires changed over the years? How has it stayed the same?