

CELEBRATING  
**30**  
YEARS

# STUDY GUIDE



# DRACULA

## PRINCE OF BLOOD

**AUGUST 31 - NOVEMBER 11**  
BY SCOTT DIXON, ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY BRAM STOKER

photo: Peterson Creative Photography & Design

Compiled by Lauren Schulke

# DRACULA: PRINCE OF BLOOD

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by **Scott Dixon**  
adapted from the **Bram Stoker** novel

Director	Craig Johnson
Assistant Director	David Hennessey
Stage Manager	Bailey Otto
Assistant Stage Manager	Gabriel Peñaloza-Hernandez
Set Designer	Justin Hooper
Costume Designer	Janis Martin
Lighting Designer	Jason Underferth
Sound Designers	Thomas White, Stela Burdt
Props Design Team	Brandon Cayetano, Kelsey Heathcote, Brandt Roberts, Lauren Schulke, Adrienne Sweeney

## CAST

Renfield	Brandt Roberts
Jonathan Harker, a solicitor	Ian Sutherland
Dr. John Seward	Ben Gorman
Mina Harker, married to Jonathan Harker	Lizzy Andretta
Lucy Westenra, Mina's childhood friend	Elizabeth Dunn
Professor Abraham Van Helsing	Hal Cropp
Count Dracula	Jeremy van Meter

## Setting

Dr. Seward's sanitorium at Carfax Abbey, outside London. October, 1897.



# Dracula

## PRINCE OF BLOOD

by Scott Dixon, adapted from the Bram Stoker novel

**World Premiere**  
presented by the  
**Commonweal Theatre Company**  
**August 31 - November 11, 2018**

### ESSENTIALS

## The Plot

It is 1897. The play opens in Dr. Seward's office in Carfax Abbey Sanatorium, outside London. Jonathan Harker, a solicitor, is waiting to meet the doctor. A man Mr. Harker assumes is Dr. Seward appears from a secret passageway and greets him. When the real Dr. Seward arrives, we discover the imposter is Renfield, one of Seward's delusional asylum patients.

Upon Renfield's exit, we learn that Harker and his wife, Mina, are visiting Carfax to aid Seward in the care of Mina's friend, Lucy, who is suffering from an unknown illness.

Harker himself has suffered an unaccountable loss of memory covering the time he was visiting a Rumanian nobleman, Count Dracula, who has purchased properties in England. Seward agrees to help him recover his memories.

In Lucy's rooms, Lucy and Mina converse. Recalling a persistent and terrifying dream, Lucy panics. Dr. Seward arrives to calm and sedate her. Mina recounts a shipwreck that the two women had witnessed earlier.

One of Seward's former teachers, Professor Van Helsing, arrives from Amsterdam to assist in Lucy's case. Lucy, bright and chipper at first, suddenly relapses; Van Helsing discovers she is lacking blood and conducts a blood transfusion from Seward to Lucy. He notices twin puncture marks on her neck. When he exits, Lucy suddenly awakens and tries to seduce Seward, who pushes her away; she recovers as if from a trance and is embarrassed and fearful of what is happening.

Later, Harker nearly passes out, during which we glimpse part of his memories of meeting Dracula. Though Harker remembers nothing when

revived, Van Helsing is intrigued. Renfield suddenly appears again and while Seward tries to corner him, the slippery inmate reveals odd clues about a Master who "loves him best."

We return to Lucy's room which is festooned with garlic, per Van Helsing's instructions. Again, Lucy behaves strangely, insulting her friend then suddenly recovering herself. They drink a toast to friendship, but both fall suddenly asleep. Renfield appears, removes all the garlic strands, then slips out. Dracula appears and feeds on a terrified Lucy, but Mina does not awaken. Lucy's screams bring the men running. They discover the women's brandy was drugged with laudanum, and fresh puncture marks on Lucy's neck. She requires a second blood transfusion, this time from Harker. Seward suspects Renfield but Van Helsing insists they ignore the madman.

Later, Van Helsing hypnotizes Harker so they can recover his memories of Transylvania. With horror, Harker relives everything. Mina enters, sobbing, with news that Lucy has died. Seward is distraught, and Van Helsing urgently returns to Amsterdam to gather needed tools.

Act Two opens three weeks later, with Mina seeming to relive the horrible fate of the *Demeter* and her crew—the ship that Lucy and Mina saw wrecked at Whitby—as if from her own memories. Renfield saves her from falling off the balcony. He speaks evasively as Mina probes him for information. Sensing a presence, he exits quickly.

Meanwhile, the men have gathered in the mausoleum where Lucy was interred, where they find Lucy's coffin empty. Seward suspects grave-robbers, but Van Helsing asks his patience. Lucy



photo: Peterson Creative Photography & Design



appears dressed in a bloodied white gown. The men drive her back into her coffin; at the professor's insistence, Seward reluctantly slays the undead thing that was Lucy.

Renfield sneaks into Mina's room while she sleeps, in torment with his conscience, but he cannot resist Dracula's power.

Recovering from their ordeal in Lucy's crypt, the men learn about vampires from Van Helsing. Renfield appears, seemingly lucid, demanding they remove him from the abbey for a certain person's safety. When Mina enters, fainting for breath, they discover Dracula's marks on her neck.

After Mina recovers from another transfusion, she insists Jonathan tell her what happened to Lucy; reluctantly, he does. Van Helsing and Seward arrive, and the professor realizes that Mina's journal has been Dracula's way, via Renfield's theft, to know their plans. He says that Mina is falling deeper under Dracula's power, and they must save her soul.

Shortly afterward, in Seward's office, Harker tells Mina his plan to escape with her, as he be-

lieves Van Helsing would have her killed. They argue, but Dracula appears and puts Harker to sleep. He then lets his own blood for Mina to drink, forcing her to become his bride. Renfield appears and tries to stop the ritual, but Dracula crushes his throat. Dracula exits with Mina through the secret passage just before Van Helsing and Seward arrive; they find Renfield, who tries to show them the way before he dies. They find the passageway and prepare their attack.

In the catacombs beneath Carfax Abbey, the three men find Dracula's empty coffin. He appears and subdues them one by one. Just as we think she is forever lost to humanity, Mina attacks him, aided by Harker, who then finishes Dracula off an axe. But she finds that she has not been set free by his death. She puts Jonathan to sleep and exits.

In the last scene, we hear Van Helsing's final, warning entry in the journal. The men part ways, Van Helsing returning to Amsterdam. As Seward walks him the Professor out, Harker has a final reminiscence about his horrible experiences, which may not yet be over..

## Scott Dixon—Playwright



Scott has been with the Commonwealth since 2001 and currently serves as Director of Development. He is a lifetime fan of horror fiction and all things Halloween. He published an anthology of horror fiction, *Beyond*

*Midnight*, in 2010. Onstage at Commonwealth, Scott's favorite work has been in *The*

*Master Builder*, *Pillars of Society*, *Arcadia*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Parfumerie* and *Blithe Spirit*. Scott also directed *An Enemy of the People*, *Miss Julie* and *Scotland Road*.

As a playwright, Scott's produced scripts include *A Midnight Dreary* and adaptations of *The Nutcracker & the Mouse King* and *Little Women*. He earned his M.F.A. in Acting at Wayne State University and makes his home in Lanesboro with his wife, Stela Burdt, and their son, Kieran.

## Bram Stoker—Novelist



Bram Stoker was an Irish author, best known in his day as the business manager of the Lyceum Theatre in London and the personal assistant of famous English classical actor Sir Henry Irving.

Stoker was often ill growing up and had to spend sev-

eral hours a day in bed. His mother would combat his boredom by telling him horror stories; these stories later influenced his writing. In 1864, Stoker entered Trinity College Dublin. While attending, he began working as an Irish civil servant. He also spent his evenings attending plays as a theatre critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail*. He turned this part-time job into a career when he began managing for the Lyceum Theatre. He wrote his first novel, *The Primrose Path*, in 1875, continued to publish short stories and completed his masterpiece, *Dracula*, in 1897.

## A Brief History of Vampires

“The truth of the vampire is shrouded in a dozen myths, but there are points where the stories converge. Immortal, but like a leech, needing to drink the life of its victims.”

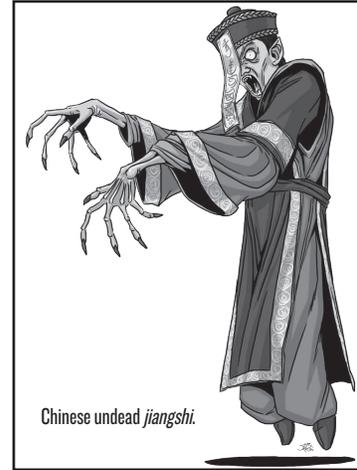
—*Dracula: Prince of Blood*, p. 62

Matthew Beresford, author of *From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth*, notes, “There are clear foundations for the vampire in the ancient world, and it is impossible to prove when the myth first arose. There are suggestions that the vampire was born out of sorcery in ancient Egypt, a demon summoned into this world from some other.” There are many variations of vampires from around the world. There are Asian vampires, such as the Chinese *jiangshi* (pronounced chong-shee), evil spirits that attack people and drain their life energy; the blood-drinking Wrathful Deities that appear in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and many others. An old record of the bloodsuckers suggests that there was a female demon in the Sumerian culture called the *Akhkharu*. At night they would attack babies or pregnant women. In India, they have stories of the *Vetal*, beings that dig up graves and possess the bodies, terrorizing

nearby villages. They are a closer example of the modern-day depiction of a lifeless creature. Some even say that the *Vetal* hang upside down near cemeteries or crematoria.

The ancient Slavs have the most ingrained myth of the vampires. The myth says that they are the spirits of suicides or criminals who can transfer their balances to an innocent victim. They kill their victims by drinking blood but also by asphyxiation.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, New England families are documented as excavating their loved ones and burning their hearts because they believed that the dead were to blame for cursing their families and would return to torture them.



## Vlad the Impaler

Vlad Tepeș (Vlad the Impaler) was a prince of Wallachia, a region of Romania, who ruled in the 15th century. Vlad III was born to a noble family during a time when the Christian Holy Roman Empire was fighting with the



Vlad Tepeș III, Dracula

Muslim Ottoman Empire and Wallachia was caught in the middle. Vlad III's father, Vlad II Dracul (meaning “dragon”), was a member of the secret order of the dragon, created

by the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Dracula means “son of Dracul.”

Impaling is a method of torture and death where the victim is skewered through the center of their body by a large pole. It was practiced not to kill immediately, but slowly and painfully. Vlad III was famous for using it against his enemies. Many other European countries were frightened of Vlad III because he was a ruthless ruler and soldier. German papers printed engraved images of Vlad III eating dinner amongst a sea of impaled bodies and also told stories about Vlad III drinking the blood of his enemies. Some of these rumors and myths are what made Vlad III a likely candidate to inspire the most famous blood-drinking character in literature, Count Dracula.



## Copyright of Dracula

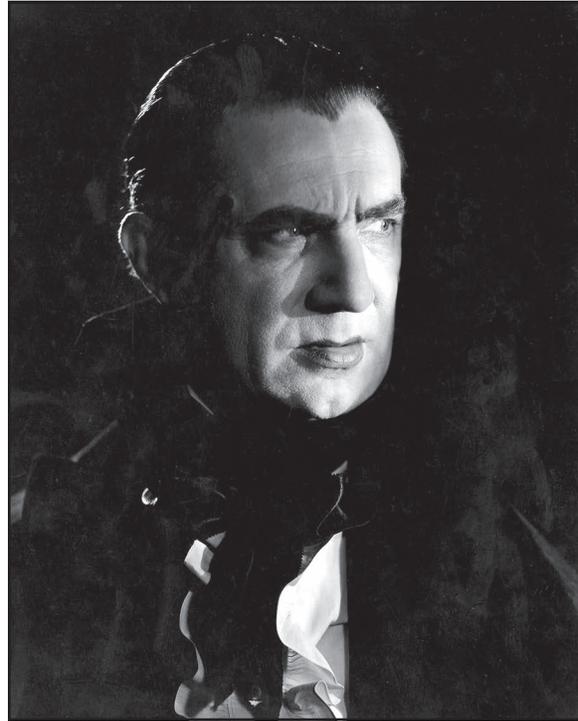
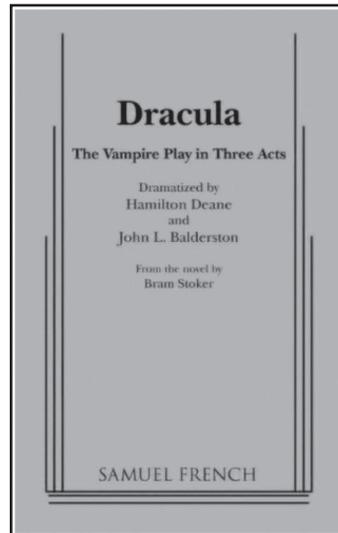
“That is one of the vampire’s greatest strengths. He hides inside legend and shadow, murders with impunity, and then disappears.”

—*Dracula: Prince of Blood*, p. 62

According to a 2009 survey, the character of Dracula is the second-most-often adapted literary character behind only Sherlock Holmes. Bram Stoker, as Henry Irving’s assistant, may have been inspired to create the character of the Count by the great actor, and Stoker intended to make a stage adaptation of the novel as a vehicle for Irving, but it never materialized. Stoker died in 1912, setting off a flurry of suitors for the rights to *Dracula*, but his widow, Florence, was extremely protective of her late husband’s work.

In 1922, German film director F. W. Murnau produced *Nosferatu*—a silent film marketed as “freely adapted from the novel *Dracula*”—without her permission. Florence sued for copyright infringement, winning a small cash settlement and court-ordered destruction of the film. One print survived, however, having already been copied and distributed around the world.

In 1924, Florence did license the stage rights for *Dracula* to playwright Hamilton Deane, an old family friend and fellow theatre company member of Stoker and Irving. The play premiered in London to great success and in 1927 crossed over to Broadway, where it was revised for



Bela Lugosi as Count Dracula.

the American stage by John Balderston (who later wrote the screenplays for *Frankenstein* and *The Mummy*). The lead actor was an unknown Hungarian immigrant named Bela Lugosi.

The play, and its national tour with Lugosi, was such a smash hit that producer Carl Laemmle Jr. wanted to adapt it for Universal Pictures and intended for it to star established film great Lon Chaney (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Phantom of the Opera*). But Chaney died unexpectedly, and the studio had great difficulty finding another star with both the interest and the availability for the lead role. Lugosi, who was touring the west coast in *Dracula* at the time, campaigned fiercely for the role and was willing to accept a below-average salary for it. The first official film version of *Dracula* premiered in 1931, making Lugosi a star and launching Universal Studios as a major purveyor of horror movies.



## Other Notable Draculas

**1973**—*Dracula*, a made-for-TV movie starring Jack Palance, written by Richard Matheson (author of seminal sci-fi vampire/zombie novel, *I Am Legend*) and directed by Dan Curtis (creator of the cult soap opera classic *Dark Shadows* and its own iconic vampire, Barnabas Collins). This 1973 adaptation is generally thought to have introduced the trope of Count Dracula as a tragic Romantic figure, searching through the centuries for the reincarnation of his lost love. Coincidentally, the year before, Marvel Comics had begun publishing *The Tomb of Dracula* as a monthly series, and the artists had used Jack Palance’s likeness as inspiration for the character.

**1979**—History repeats itself. After a Tony-award winning Broadway revival of Deane and Balderston’s *Dracula* (with sets and costumes designed by Edward Gorey), Universal releases a new film adaptation starring Frank Langella as Dracula and Sir Laurence Olivier as Van Helsing.



Eric Knutson & Scott Dixon in our 2007 production of *The Mystery of Irma Vep*.

**1992**—*Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and starring Gary Oldman as Dracula and Anthony Hopkins as Van Helsing. The most faithful to the original novel of all major film adaptations, while still including the tragic-romantic trope.

**2007**—*The Mystery of Irma Vep*. Charles Ludlum’s hilarious spoof of the vampire story (along with pretty much all Gothic/Romantic horror) was produced by Commonweal in 2007, next door at the St. Mane Theatre. Set at the iconically fictitious “Mandacrest” estate, the home of Lord Edgar, an Egyptologist, and his new wife, Lady Enid, it is full of bad puns and *very* quick costume changes. Two male

actors are required to play Lady Enid (Lord Edgar’s second wife), a maid named Jane and a swineherd named Nicodemus, as well as several other characters, living and undead. It’s an absurd romp through the Gothic horror genre.

## Can’t Get Enough of Dracula—For Funsies!

Rolling Stone’s run-down of the best vampire-themed music:  
[www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/the-15-greatest-songs-about-vampires-22357](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/the-15-greatest-songs-about-vampires-22357)

Television’s many offerings to the genre, ranked:  
[www.indiewire.com/2017/03/best-vampire-shows-buffy-dark-shadows-1201792032](http://www.indiewire.com/2017/03/best-vampire-shows-buffy-dark-shadows-1201792032)

For readers, this list of vampiric literature includes titles that predate Stoker’s novel:  
[www.theguardian.com/books/2014/oct/29/top-10-vampire-books](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/oct/29/top-10-vampire-books)



The very engaging 2008 Swedish cinematic entry into the vampiric canon.



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