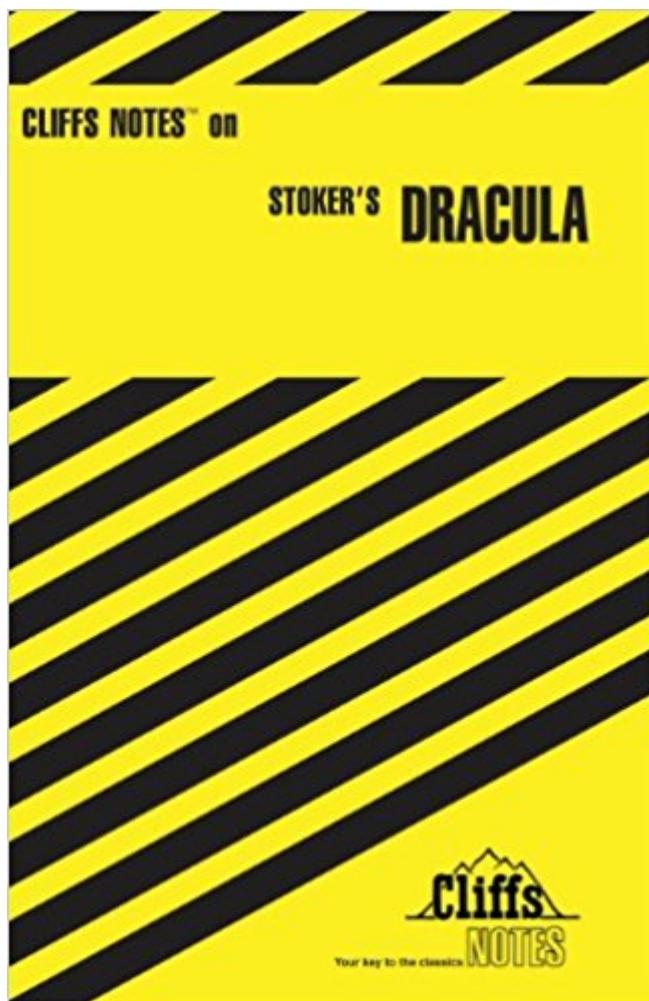


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Stoker's Dracula (Cliffs Notes)



Synopsis

The original CliffsNotes study guides offer a look into critical elements and ideas within classic works of literature. The latest generation of titles in this series also features glossaries and visual elements that complement the classic, familiar format. CliffsNotes on Dracula digs into the story of a count who survives by sipping the blood from living (and unsuspecting) donors. Following the hauntingly frightful tale of vampires and victims, this study guide provides summaries and commentaries for each chapter within the nineteenth-century novel. Other features that help you figure out this important work include:

- A look into the life of the author, Bram Stoker
- Character list
- Plot synopsis
- An essay exploring the influence of German Expressionism on the American horror film
- A list of Dracula film productions, with ratings for each
- Suggested discussion questions
- Classic literature or modern-day treasure

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Book Information

Series: Cliffsnotes Literature Guides

Paperback: 80 pages

Publisher: Cliffs Notes; 1 edition (July 28, 1983)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0822004178

ISBN-13: 978-0822004172

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.2 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #171,787 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #152 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > Study Aids > Book Notes #291 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European > British & Irish #413 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature > English Literature

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No Bio

It is ironic that Cliffs Notes state emphatically that they are to be used as a study guide and not as a substitute for reading the book, when summarizing the plot of Bram Stoker's "Dracula" is what these Notes do best. The critical commentary barely analyzes the novel's technique and gives no criticism of its content. It would be more useful to someone who hadn't read "Dracula" than someone who has, but still does a disservice by not telling the reader what there is of substance in the novel or why this Victorian pot-boiler is so imitated and hotly debated more than a century after it was written. The Cliffs Notes have eight sections: A short biography of author Bram Stoker, a plot summary, a list of characters, summaries and critical commentary by chapter, an essay on "German Expressionism and the American Horror Film", a selected filmography, a list of topics for discussion, and a bibliography. The bulk of the book are the chapter summaries, each of which is followed by commentary by Samuel Umland. There are a few little errors here and there, such as the assertion in the General Plot Summary that Jonathan Harker can "barely stave off" the female vampires he

encounters in Dracula's castle. In fact, he is nearly unconscious and makes no attempt to thwart them. The summary of chapters 2-4 states that everything in Dracula's castle is "old and musty". Old-fashioned, perhaps. But Dracula is an aristocrat, and his castle is very well-appointed. In the summary of chapters 26-27, the author claims that 6 people converge on the caravan of gypsies. Four people converge; the other two observe through field glasses from afar. In the filmography, the editors have attempted to compile a list of important "Dracula" films that can easily be obtained by American audiences. They have omitted the Spanish version of 1931's "Dracula", which is superior to the English version of the film. The Spanish version is available on DVD and is an essential Dracula film, so don't miss it. They have rated John Badham's 1979 film poorly, but it is an important adaptation of the novel nevertheless. Werner Herzog's 1979 film is called "Nosferatu" in the filmography, which is easily confused with F.W. Murnau's 1922 film. The full English name of Herzog's film is "Nosferatu the Vampyre". Note that Francis Coppola's 1992 film "Bram Stoker's Dracula" is also a significant interpretation and essential viewing. It was made after these Cliffs Notes were compiled, so did not make the list. While these Cliffs Notes excel at providing a reminder of the major plot points, they give next to no guidance as to the many contemporary discussions of "Dracula". The reader is therefore unprepared to say anything of substance about the book, and, even assuming he has read the novel, will not know what aspect of it preoccupies the current academic thinking. Although "Dracula" has been interpreted as representing just about every doctrine imaginable, the most common discussions these days are of the novel's psychosexual implications, the question of who is villain and who is victim, and the impotence vs helpfulness of science and technology in the face of ancient evils. There is also no mention of "Dracula"'s famously insufferable prose style. The novel is badly written -to the amusement of some academics and the consternation of others.

If you are able to read Bram Stoker's Dracula without any difficulty (I thought it was a simple read) or have followed the films, you can do without Cliff Notes on Stoker's Dracula. Googling through the internet on the book will yield an ample supply of analysis, plot summary, and commentary. As for Cliff Notes on Stoker's Dracula, the author does a good job of explaining what's going on for every set of two-three chapters. I am satisfied with the explanations. However, there is one erroneous fact about "cutting off the head, driving a stake through the heart, and stuffing the mouth with garlic" for Lucy when first posited as explained in Cliff Notes on Stoker's Dracula. The garlic part is not true until later restated with the specific flower included. Another is the statement that Dracula's castle is full of dust. Not true. Also, there is a commentary by the author about the blood transfusion work and

how that different blood types are in existence which may lead to one's accidental death if the wrong matched blood is transfused (page 37). I find the point totally moot because since, Lucy had already been administrated a Vampire Baptism, any blood will do for her. In the final chapter, the author incorrectly states that 6 characters were "converging" near the leiter-wagon when 4 of them were in fact doing so while the other two watched from afar. Finally, the chief reason for my big dock on the points of Cliff Notes on Stoker's Dracula is the unnecessary addition of author's film analysis. Honestly, what is the point? Cliff Notes on Stoker's Dracula is supposed to be about Bram Stoker's novel. Why would the readers care about the countless of useless vampire films? Instead, offer some real analysis on a figurative level or rather give some interesting historical facts about the Victorian England period. Ridiculous. All in all, like I typed, you are better off forgoing Cliff Notes on Stoker's Dracula if you will resort to the Internet to find out what was happening in every chapter in plain terms. The makers of Cliff Notes should do everybody a favor and redo the book because it was written in 1983.

this book needs to focus more on Dracula, especially at the end when Dracula just up and gets killed

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