

Dracula Study Guide Questions

Chapter 1

1. 'Transylvania' means 'the land beyond the forest'. In what ways does Stoker create the impression that Jonathan is traveling to a part of the world beyond the reach of an ordinary Victorian reader?
2. What do we learn about Jonathan from the observations he makes about his exotic surroundings?
3. How does Stoker create an atmosphere of suspense in the opening sections of this chapter?
4. How does Jonathan react when faced with sights for which he can find no rational explanation?

Chapter 2, 3 and 4

5. How do the descriptions of Castle Dracula fit in with Gothic Literature conventions?
6. How does Stoker describe the Count? What are the effects of this description?
7. "I think strange things which I dare not confess to my own soul." What is the significance of this statement?
8. What two strange things happen when Jonathan is shaving?
9. How does Jonathan respond to the realization that he is a prisoner? Why is it ironic that he considers his crucifix to be a "comfort and a strength"?
10. What does Jonathan turn to "for repose"?
11. How does Stoker create a sense of horror in Jonathan's encounter with the women?
12. How does Stoker convey Jonathan's despair when he sees he count sliding down the wall carrying the "terrible bag"?
13. Who does Jonathan turn to for help when the Count 'leaves' and Jonathan sees the women again?
14. How has the Count changed when Jonathan sees him in his 'coffin' for the final time?

Chapter 5 and 6

15. What do we learn about Lucy and Mina from their early letters to each other?
16. How does Dr. Seward decide to cope with Lucy's rejection of him?
17. What do we learn about Renfield from Dr. Seward?
18. How is Whitby presented as a somewhat mysterious town?
19. How does Stoker create a sense of danger and revulsion in the section where Renfield begs for a kitten?
20. Why is Mina worried about Lucy?
21. What is the significance of Mr. Swales to the narrative?

Chapter 7 and 8

22. What is the effect of including a newspaper report within the narrative?
23. How does Stoker use the story of the Demeter to create suspense?
24. How is Gothic imagery used in the section where Mina searches for and finds Lucy?

25. “..something long and dark with red eyes...something very sweet and very bitter.” In what ways is the approaching evil described? What is the effect of these descriptions?
26. What are the changes that Dr. Seward notices in Renfield?
27. How are religious ideas used in the conversation between Dr. Seward and Renfield?
28. What is the significance of the fact that Renfield escapes to the chapel at Carfax?

Chapter 9 and 10

29. How has Jonathan changed from the figure we met at the start of the novel?
30. Mina decides she will not read Jonathan’s journal. What is the significance of this decision?
31. What do we learn about Van Helsing from Dr. Seward?
32. Why does Dr. Seward think Renfield may be influenced by the sun or the moon?
33. Why do you think Van Helsing asks Dr. Seward to keep everything about Lucy a secret?
34. How does Stoker describe Lucy’s appearance on the morning of the 10th of September?

Chapter 11, 12 and 13

35. How does Van Helsing react when Mrs. Westerna tells him about removing the flowers?
36. What is the significance of the newspaper article about the escaped wolf?
37. How do you think a Victorian reader would have reacted to Dr. Seward’s description of the sights awaiting him at Lucy’s house on 18th of September?
38. Seward notices that Lucy seems to be fluctuating between two states. With which other character does this associate her with?
39. With which characters does Lucy become associated when she tries to kiss Arthur?
40. In what manner does Van Helsing try to persuade Seward that they must mutilate Lucy’s body?
41. What is Arthur’s state of mind now that he has lost his father and his fiancée?
42. Why does Jonathan have a “nervous fit”?
43. What is the effect of the Bloofer Lady article?

Chapter 14, 15 and 16

44. In terms of the novel’s theme, why is the moment when Mina gives Van Helsing her transcript of Jonathan’s journal so important?
45. Why is Van Helsing shaken by the newspaper article he sees?
46. In these chapters, Jonathan and Seward start keeping a diary again. What do you think is the significance of this?
47. How does Seward react to Van Helsing’s claim that Lucy is the Bloofer Lady?
48. How does Stoker use language to describe Lucy’s appearance when she returns to her tomb?
49. How is language used to convey the horror of the ceremony that men perform on Lucy’s body?

Chapter 17, 18, and 19

50. How does Mina convince Seward to allow her to listen to the phonograph cylinders?

51. What change seems to occur in Jonathan when he starts applying himself to the task of tracking down the Count?
52. What do you think is the significance of the moment when Arthur cries in front of Mina?
53. Why is the moment when the 'vampire hunters' make a pact to work together so important, in terms of both plot and theme?
54. How is language used to describe Carfax Abbey? What is the effect of this description?
55. What clues does Stoker provide to make us realize that Mina is in danger of being possessed by the Count?

Chapter 20, 21, 22 and 23

56. What does Jonathan think the Count intends to do with all his boxes of earth?
57. What causes Seward to begin to change his opinion of Renfield?
58. How is language used to make Renfield's death effective?
59. How language is uses to convey the horror of the sight which greets the men when they see the Count and Mina together?
60. How does Jonathan react to what has happened to Mina?
61. Why do you think the Count 'bleeds' money and gold when Jonathan tears his clothes?
62. Why is it appropriate that Mina should be able to communicate with the Count when she is in a state of hypnosis?

Chapter 24 and 25

63. According to Van Helsing, why has Dracula decided to 'invade' England?
64. How does Stoker describe the change that is coming over Mina?
65. Why does Mina insist that the men take her with them to Transylvania?
66. The notion of 'euthanasia' and Mina's request to be killed before she becomes a vampire would have been extremely shocking to Victorian readers. How does Stoker use language to make Mina's request effective?
67. Why do Mina and Van Helsing seem to draw some comfort from their deduction that the Count is a 'criminal type'?

Chapter 26 and 27 and note

68. Why do the characters decide to split up at this final stage of their chase?
69. How does Mina view the countryside around her during her journey with Van Helsing?
70. How is language used in the incident when the vampire women try to tempt Van Helsing out of the protective circle?
71. How are the last few pages of the novel made effective? How does Stoker resolve his themes and ideas?
72. What is the significance of the concluding 'note'?