

Bram Stoker

Dracula



free Audiobook



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Dracula

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These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages linked to the listening activities.



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Bram Stoker (about 1880).

About the Author

Bram Stoker, who was born in Clontarf, Ireland in 1847, grew up listening to great horror stories. He was a sickly boy and his mother often helped him pass the time by telling Irish tales of banshees,¹ demons and ghouls.²

1. **banshees** : women spirits in Irish folklore that appeared screaming in front of the house of a person who was dying.
2. **ghouls** [gu:lz] : evil spirits that rob graves and eat the dead bodies.

Mrs Stoker was also a writer, a social worker³ and a feminist. She thought that the world's problems could be solved by 'equalising the sexes'.⁴ At first Bram accepted his mother's views, but when he wrote *Dracula* he had already changed his mind. As you will see for yourselves, Bram thought women should be the servants of men. In fact, the character Mina can be seen as Bram's ideal woman: courageous and intelligent, but always working to help her man.

Bram's father, a civil servant⁵ in Dublin, transmitted to Bram his passion for the theatre, a passion that influenced Bram's life even more than his passion for horror.

Bram went to Trinity College, after graduating, he worked for several years for the Irish civil service. He even used his own and his father's great experience to compose a book called *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*. But Bram continued to pursue his real passion, the theatre.

He spent all his free time going to the theatre and writing reviews⁶ for different newspapers. In 1867 Bram saw for the first time his own personal 'Dracula', the man who would suck out all of Bram's life and financial blood. This personal Dracula was Henry Irving, a great actor, the man who made acting into the respectable profession it is today.

After seeing Irving for the first time, Bram began to praise⁷ him in reviews and in December 1878 he became Irving's business manager.

3. **social worker** : someone who worked to make social conditions better, especially for the poor.
4. **equalising the sexes** : making men and women equal, i.e., giving the same rights to men and women.
5. **civil servant** : someone who works for the government.
6. **reviews** : articles in which he gave his opinion of what he saw.
7. **to praise** : to say very good things about.

He worked with complete devotion for this tyrannical actor for twenty-seven years. Bram made very little money, often worked fifteen hours a day, and sometimes wrote as many as fifty letters a day for Irving. Bram's death certificate says that he died of 'exhaustion'. And yet, even though Bram received little money for his work and was often in debt, he lived an exciting life. Irving ran a club in the back of his theatre, and after the actor's performance all sorts of people came to have dinner with Irving. Two things held these varied



Sir Henry Irving (1877).

people together: a love of good food and a love of good stories. Bram himself was a great storyteller, and both the food and tales of Irving's club were, according to Bram himself, the beginning of his greatest tale, *Dracula*. He said, 'The idea came to me in a nightmare. One evening I was dining with Henry Irving when I ate too much dressed ⁸ crab ⁹ and I spent all night long dreaming

8. **dressed** : with sauce.

9. **crab** : 

these weird ¹⁰ dreams about a dead/alive man preying on the living!’

In the first drafts of Bram’s novel, Count Dracula was called ‘Count Wampyr’, but in 1897 Bram read a book by William Wilkinson about Vlad Tepes, a cruel Transylvanian count also called Dracula, a name which means either ‘Dragon’, or by extension, ‘the Devil’. He was never considered a vampire, but he was known for his incredible cruelty in war. He fought against the Turks, and when he won a battle he impaled ¹¹ his prisoners. In fact he became known as the ‘Impaler’.

But the Count Dracula of the novel has little in common with this cruel count: rather, Bram’s vampire is a clear descendent of the Gothic tradition in English and European literature. Gothic novels often had old castles and ghosts, and of course, lots of primitive passions. All sorts of psychological conflicts which could not be discussed in any other way could come out in Gothic novels.

Dracula is full of passion and real fears; fears that are still very much alive today: the fear of death and the dead, and the fear of sexual passions. Bram himself wrote that ‘the only emotions which in the long run hurt are those arising from sex impulses...’

In *Dracula* people are buried, but we are never sure if they are really dead. The women in this book fear Count Dracula but at the same time they can feel his great charm, and the men hesitate before the beauty of the women vampires they should kill.

Bram Stoker’s book has been interpreted in a myriad of ways, and his character Count Dracula has appeared in more than 200 films.

10. **weird** : strange and supernatural.

11. **impaled** : pushed something sharp through their bodies.



Vlad IV Prince of Wallachia, known as ‘The Impaler’ (15th century).

Everybody knows who he is, from small children to adults without ever having read the novel. Who doesn’t know that the Count sleeps in a coffin, drinks blood, turns into a bat, hates garlic and dies if you drive ¹² a stake ¹³ through his heart? But of course, Count Dracula, who first appeared in 1897, is eternally young, and will, in one form or another, haunt our lives for many more years to come.

12. **drive** : push through with force.

13. **a stake** : 

Bram Stoker also wrote other books of horror:

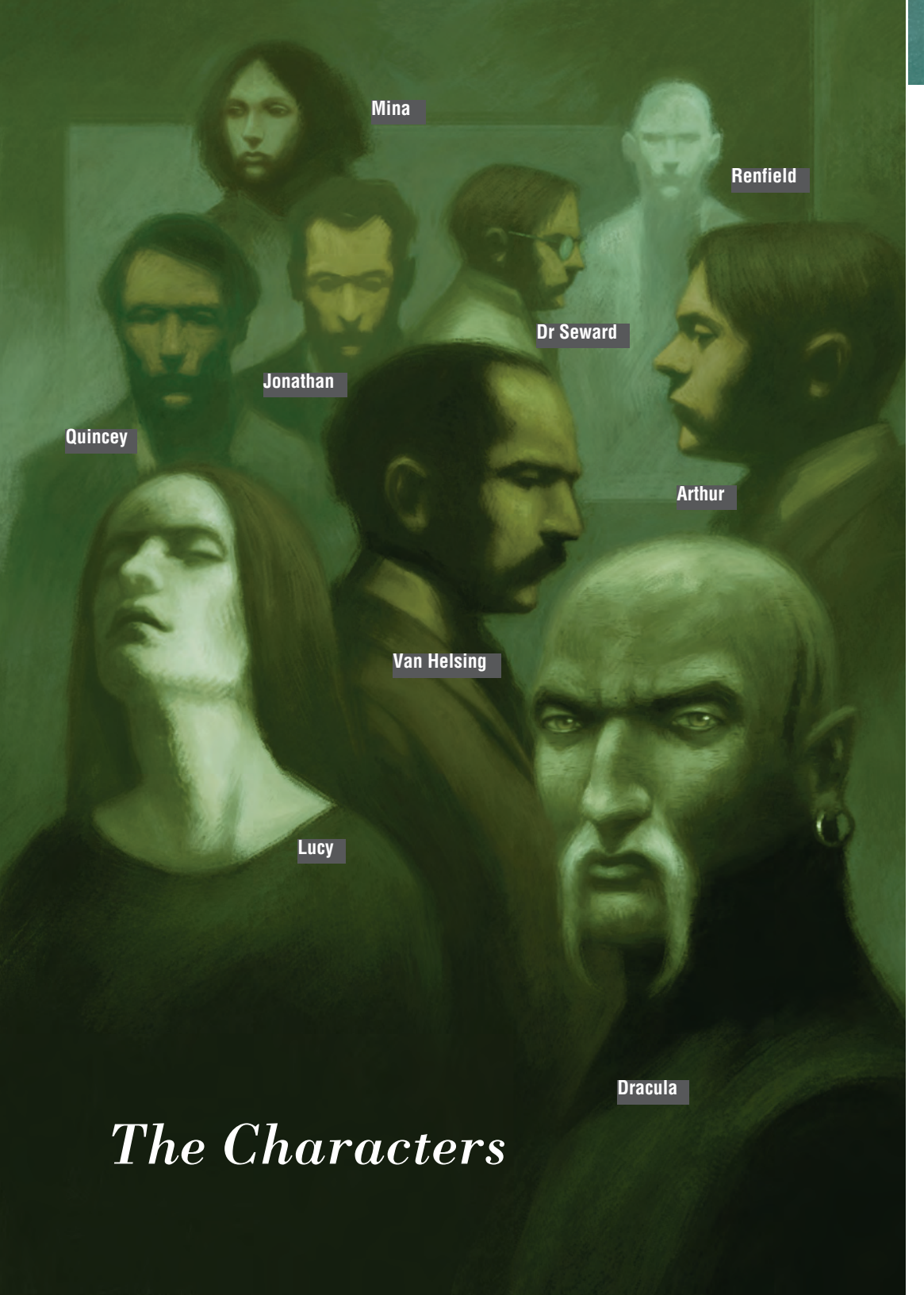
The Snake's Pass (1890), *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911).

He died in 1912.

1 Comprehension check

Say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), and then correct the false ones.

	T	F
1 Bram Stoker had a healthy childhood.	☐	☐
2 He did not like the stories his mother told him.	☐	☐
3 Bram's mother was an independent woman with strong opinions.	☐	☐
4 Mina, one of the characters in <i>Dracula</i> , is almost exactly like Bram's mother.	☐	☐
5 Bram's first job after university was with the government.	☐	☐
6 Henry Irving had an important role in the history of the theatre.	☐	☐
7 Working for Henry Irving was difficult but very stimulating.	☐	☐
8 Bram made a lot of money working for Henry Irving.	☐	☐
9 Bram got the idea for <i>Dracula</i> from his own dreams.	☐	☐
10 The historical Count Dracula was an incredibly violent man.	☐	☐
11 The fictional Count Dracula was closely modelled on the historical Count Dracula.	☐	☐
12 <i>Dracula</i> talks about things that still frighten us today.	☐	☐
13 The character Dracula has only appeared in a few films.	☐	☐
14 Most people know who Count Dracula is, even if they have not read the novel.	☐	☐



Mina

Renfield

Dr Seward

Jonathan

Quincey

Arthur

Van Helsing

Lucy

Dracula

The Characters

Before you read

1 What do you know about Dracula?

Work with a partner. Write everything you know about Count Dracula and vampires, then present your ideas to the class. Think about the following:

- looks
- powers
- way of talking
- likes
- dislikes
- where he lives
- how he can be destroyed



2 Listening

Listen to the first part of Chapter One. For questions 1-9, complete the sentences.

- 1 Jonathan learned about his future travel in
- 2 The eve of St George's Day frightened
- 3 After Jonathan received the crucifix, he felt
- 4 Jonathan was no longer during the journey.
- 5 Once the sun went down, the passengers wanted the coach to
- 6 They arrived at the Borgo Pass early.
- 7 A moment before the other coached arrived, the horses
- 8 When the strange driver heard a passenger say, 'The dead travel fast,' he
- 9 Jonathan had the impression that the strange coach in a big circle.



CHAPTER ONE

The Dead Travel Fast

Jonathan Harker's Diary (written in Bistritz)

3 May

I left Munich for Transylvania on 1 May. When I arrived there at the Golden Krone Hotel, the landlady,¹ a very friendly old woman, welcomed me at the door of the hotel and said, 'The English gentleman?' 'Yes,' I replied, and she gave me this letter:

*My Friend,
welcome to the Carpathians. Sleep well tonight.
At three tomorrow a coach will start for Bukovina. A place on it
is kept for you. At the Borgo Pass my coach will wait for you and
bring you to me.*

*Your friend,
Dracula*

1. **landlady** : the woman who owns a hotel, inn or apartment.



4 May

Just before I was about to take the coach, the landlady came up to my room.

‘Must you go? Oh! young gentleman, must you go?’

Then she asked me, ‘Do you know what day it is?’ I told her that it was 4 May.

‘No, no, more than that,’ she said. ‘It is the eve² of St George’s Day. Don’t you know that tonight at midnight all the evil³ things in the world will have complete power?’

She then fell down on her knees and told me not to go, but I had to go.

The landlady then stood up, and taking a crucifix from her neck, offered it to me. I did not know what to do. I was a member of the Church of England, and we see such things as somewhat idolatrous.⁴ But I did not want to offend the old lady.

She saw the doubt on my face and put the crucifix around my neck and said, ‘Take it for your mother’s sake.’⁵

I do not know why, but I am feeling worried. If this diary reaches Mina before I do, then it will be my good-bye. Here comes the coach!

5 May, the Castle

When I got on the coach the driver was talking with the landlady. Some people came and listened and then looked at me with pity. A number of words were repeated often. I looked them

2. **eve** : the night before.

3. **evil** : very bad, wicked.

4. **idolatrous** : considered divine. An idol is usually a sculpture that is considered a god.

5. **for your mother’s sake** : for the good of your mother.

The Dead Travel Fast

up in my polyglot⁶ dictionary. They were 'Ordog' – Satan, 'pokol' – hell, 'stregoica' – witch, 'vrolok' and 'vlkoslak' – both of which mean the same thing, one being Slovak and the other Serbian for something that is either were-wolf⁷ or vampire. (I must ask the Count about these superstitions.)

I soon forgot my fears as we travelled through this green hilly land of forests and farmhouses. The driver clearly wanted to arrive quickly to the Borgo Pass.⁸ After some time we could see the Carpathian Mountains above these hills.

As it became dark, the other passengers kept telling the driver to go faster. Then through the darkness I could see an area of grey light ahead of us. Then the mountains seemed to come nearer to us on each side: we were entering the Borgo Pass. Then the coach stopped and we waited for the Count's coach to arrive. The driver said softly to another passenger that we were an hour early. Then he said to me, 'You see, no one is here for you. You can go on to Bukovina and then return another day.'

Just then the horses became very excited. The passengers screamed and crossed themselves.⁹ A coach with four beautiful black horses arrived. Its driver was a tall man, with a long brown beard and a great black hat that hid his face. His eyes seemed red in the lamplight.

He said to our driver, 'You are early tonight, my friend.'

'The English gentleman was in a hurry,' our driver said.

6. **polyglot** : multilingual, with many languages.

7. **were-wolf** : a man that is part wolf.

8. **Pass** : an opening in the mountains through which you can travel.

9. **crossed themselves** : made the sign of the cross (in order to have the protection of Christ).

‘That is why you told him to go on to Bukovina. You cannot deceive me, my friend. I know too much and my horses are too fast.’ As this strange man spoke I could see his very red lips and his sharp teeth as white as ivory.

One of my companions in the coach whispered a line from a poem:

The dead travel fast.

The strange driver smiled at this and said, ‘Give me the gentleman’s luggage.’ Then he put my bags into his coach quickly and helped me in with a hand that held me strongly. Without a word we drove into the darkness of the Borgo Pass. The coach went extremely fast, and it seemed to me that we were simply going around in a big circle, so I took note of some distinctive point. I then discovered that we were in fact going around in a circle. Then I looked at my watch and discovered that it was almost midnight.



Suddenly, on our left, I saw a blue flame. The driver stopped the horses and, jumping to the ground, disappeared into the darkness. Then the driver reappeared. I think I fell asleep and kept dreaming of this incident because it seemed to be repeated endlessly. Now it seems like an awful nightmare.¹⁰

Once the flame appeared near the road and I could observe the driver making a strange construction of stones around it. Another time I saw the driver standing between me and the flame, and it seemed that I could still see it.

Then another time the driver stopped the coach and went even farther away. The horses began to tremble.¹¹ I could

10. **nightmare** : a very bad dream.

11. **tremble** : shake.

The Dead Travel Fast

not understand why. But just then the moon came out from behind some black clouds and I saw around us a circle of wolves. All at once, with the appearance of the moon, they began to howl.

I shouted for the driver and tried to scare the wolves away. Then the driver appeared and shouted some command and waved his arms. The wolves moved away. This was so strange that I became too afraid to move or speak. Then we travelled for an endlessly long time. Suddenly, I saw that we had arrived in the courtyard of a large ruined castle.

5 May

I probably fell asleep because I did not notice our arrival at the Count's castle. When the coach stopped the driver jumped down and helped me out and then jumped back on the coach and drove away.

What was going to happen? What kind of people lived here? Was this the usual kind of thing that happened to a solicitor¹² who was sent out to explain the purchase¹³ of a property in London to a foreigner?

Just then I heard the large door opening. Inside, stood a tall old man with a long white moustache and all dressed in black. The old man signalled with his right hand for me to enter, and said in excellent English with a strange accent, 'Welcome to my house! Enter freely and of your own will!' ¹⁴ He did not come

12. **solicitor** : lawyer, a person who prepares legal documents for buying land, etc.

13. **the purchase** : the buying, the acquisition.

14. **of your own will** : as you want.

closer to greet me, but stood like a statue. But the moment I entered, he moved forward and shook my hand so hard that it hurt. His hand felt more like the hand of a dead man than that of a living man. 'Welcome to my house,' he continued, 'Come freely. Go safely, and leave something of the happiness you bring.'

The strength of his handshake reminded me of the driver, so I said, 'Count Dracula?'

'I am Dracula,' he replied. 'Welcome, Mr Harker. Come in. You must eat and rest.'

He himself carried my bags up the stairs to a small room without windows and then into a great bedroom well lighted and warmed with a big fire.

I then washed and changed quickly because I was very hungry. When I went to the other room the Count said, 'Please be seated and eat as you please. Please excuse me if I do not join you, but I have already eaten.'

After dinner, I smoked a cigar and observed his face. His nose had peculiar nostrils.¹⁵ His eyebrows were large and almost met over the nose. The mouth under the heavy white moustache had peculiarly sharp teeth, which went over the lips. His lips seemed incredibly red for a man of his age. His ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed. The chin was broad and strong. His hands were broad with short fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palms.¹⁶ The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. In addition his breath stank¹⁷ which gave me a feeling of nausea.

15. **nostrils** :



16. **palms** :



17. **stank** : (stink, stank, stunk)
had a bad odour.



7 May

After breakfast I found a kind of a library. It was filled with books about England. While I was reading the Count came in and greeted me.

‘I am glad you found my library. Unfortunately, I only know your language through books. I hope you can teach me how to speak it.’

‘But, Count,’ I said, ‘you know and speak English very well.’

‘Thank you,’ he replied, ‘but I only know the words and grammar, I don’t know how to speak them. Everybody in London would know that I am a stranger. Here I am noble, but a stranger in a strange land is no one.’

I told him that I would be happy to teach him and then I asked if I could come into the library when I wanted.

‘Yes, certainly,’ he answered. ‘You may go anywhere you wish in the castle, except where the doors are locked, where of course you will not wish to go. We are in Transylvania and Transylvania is not England.’

This led to much conversation. I asked him about the blue flames. He said that it was believed that on certain nights of the year when all the evil spirits have complete power — the night before in fact — those blue flames appear over places where treasure has been buried. Foreign armies had invaded this region many times and each time the residents buried their treasures to hide them from the invaders.

Then the Count and I looked at all the papers regarding the house and he signed the necessary documents. He then asked me how I had found such a good place. I showed him some photographs and read the notes I had taken. This very old property is called Carfax and its house is large. One large house nearby has recently become a lunatic asylum.¹⁸

18. **lunatic asylum** : a hospital where people with severe mental problems live.

The Dead Travel Fast

8 May

I began to fear that I wrote too much in this diary, but now I am glad that I did. I need these facts so that my imagination does not get out of control.

This morning I got up and hung my shaving mirror by the window. I began to shave when suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, and heard the Count's voice saying to me, 'Good morning.' I jumped because I was surprised that I had not seen his reflection in my mirror. In jumping, I cut myself slightly. I said good morning to the Count and looked at the mirror again to see if I had been mistaken. Now the Count was near me and still I could not see him in the mirror. In that moment I could see that the cut was bleeding a little. When the Count saw my face, his face showed a horrible anger, and he tried to grab my throat. I pulled away and his hand touched the crucifix around my neck. It made an instant change in him. The anger went away so quickly that it was difficult to believe that it had ever been there. 'Take care,' he said, 'take care how you cut yourself. It is more dangerous than you think in this country.' Then he grabbed my shaving mirror and said, 'And this is the horrible thing, this toy of man's vanity, that has caused this trouble.' Then he pulled open the window and threw it out.

Afterwards, I went down to have breakfast, but the Count was nowhere around. It is strange that I haven't seen him eat or drink yet. Then I went to look around the castle. I looked south from the window. The castle is on a precipice a thousand feet high! Doors, doors, doors everywhere and all locked. The only exit from the castle is from the windows.

The castle is a veritable prison, and I am a prisoner!

The text and **beyond**



1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-7, choose the best answer — A, B, C or D.

- 1 Jonathan saw the crucifix as something that could
 - A ☐ only protect Transylvanians.
 - B ☐ not really protect anybody.
 - C ☐ only protect sons.
 - D ☐ only protect women.
- 2 What didn't the Count and his driver have in common?
 - A ☐ a large beard
 - B ☐ sharp white teeth
 - C ☐ very strong hands
 - D ☐ red lips
- 3 The voyage to the castle seemed like a bad dream because
 - A ☐ wolves came near the coach and howled.
 - B ☐ the driver did not talk.
 - C ☐ the horses were beautiful, black and very fast.
 - D ☐ the same strange events happened again and again.
- 4 The Count wanted Jonathan's help in purchasing the property and
 - A ☐ learning English grammar correctly.
 - B ☐ becoming like an English nobleman.
 - C ☐ transporting his possessions to England.
 - D ☐ speaking English like an Englishman.
- 5 People in Transylvania had often put their treasures underground
 - A ☐ to keep them away from witches and vampires.
 - B ☐ to give the dead money.
 - C ☐ to keep them away from nobility like the Count.
 - D ☐ to keep them away from foreign armies.

- 6 In the end, Jonathan was glad he had written so much in his diary because
- A ☐ it would help him to explain things to Mina.
- B ☐ writing helped him to relax and stay calm.
- C ☐ it kept him in touch with reality.
- D ☐ it helped him remember questions for the Count.
- 7 How was the Count supernatural?
- A ☐ He hated mirrors.
- B ☐ Blood excited him.
- C ☐ His breath stank.
- D ☐ He had no reflection.

2 The dead travel fast

The line 'the dead travel fast' comes from the narrative poem *Lenore* by Gottfried August Bürger (1748-94). What do you think its meaning is? Give reasons for your answer.

- A ☐ The dead always have the best horses and carriages.
- B ☐ The dead no longer have bodies and so they have no physical limits.
- C ☐ Other

T: GRADE 7

3 Speaking: national customs

Prepare a short oral report about customs or beliefs in your country to present to the class.

- Describe two superstitions or local customs.
- Say whether you believe in them or not.
- Say why people believe in superstitions.

4 Discussion

Bram Stoker got much of his information on Romanian superstitions from an essay called *Transylvanian Superstitions* (1885) by the British author Emily Gerard. She was married to a Hungarian officer, and lived for two years in Romania. She wrote that Transylvania could be called 'the land of superstition', in part because it was isolated from modern Europe and so old beliefs survived, and in part because several different cultures existed there.

Superstitions still exist in the modern world. Each country has its own. Who doesn't know that the number after 12 brings bad luck. But many don't know that the number after 3 brings bad luck in China, Japan and Korea.

Below are some superstitions from different countries. To see what these superstitions are, with your partner match the phrases in column A with those in column B. Report your answers to the class. Does everybody agree?

A

- 1 ☐ Turkey: If you stand between two people whose names are the same,
- 2 ☐ Argentina: If you find money — even a one-cent coin,
- 3 ☐ Italy: If somebody touches your feet with a broom while sweeping,
- 4 ☐ United States: If you spill salt,
- 5 ☐ Russia: If you give somebody knives as a gift,

B

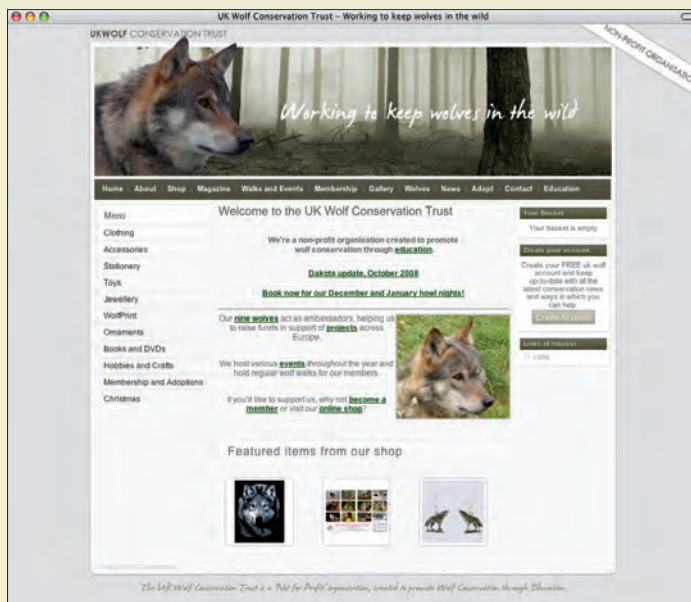
- A that person should give you a small amount of money.
- B you should take a pinch of it and throw it over your left shoulder 'right into the eye of the devil'.
- C then you will never get married.
- D you should wish for something because your wish will come true.
- E you will later receive money.

INTERNET PROJECT

When *Dracula* first appeared in 1897, wolves had a bad reputation in Britain and Europe. In fairy tales, *Little Red Riding Hood*, for example, wolves often represent evil. In real life, they were mostly feared. Now, things have changed considerably. Thanks to certain films like *Dances with Wolves* (1990), nature documentaries and numerous wolf organizations, wolves are now often admired. To find out more about these fascinating animals connect to the Internet and go to www.blackcat-cideb.com or www.cideb.it. Insert the title or part of the title of the book into our search engine. Open the page for *Dracula*. Click on the Internet project link. Go down the page until you find the title of this book and click on the relevant link for this project. Work with your partner and prepare a short report about wolves. Include some general information about them:

- ▶ where they live
- ▶ how big they are
- ▶ how they hunt.

You can also download some pictures and play some recordings of wolves howling.



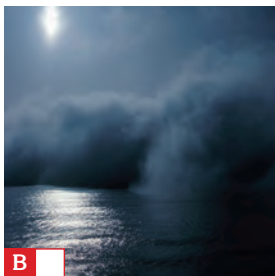
Before you read

1 Vocabulary

Match the pictures (A-F) to the words (1-6). You can use a dictionary to help you.



A



B



C



D



E



F

1 drop

2 lid

3 graveyard

4 lizard

5 shovel

6 moonlight

2 Reading pictures

Look at the picture on page 29 and discuss these questions.

1 What is the Count doing? Why?

2 What would you compare the Count to in this picture?