

DRACULA

STUDY GUIDE



by Kate Hamill
Based on the Novel by Bram Stoker

DRACULA

Adapted by Kate Hamill from the novel by Bram Stoker

Performed by Barter Theatre's Resident Acting Company, Fall 2026

NOTE: Standards listed below are seeing a performance of *Dracula* and completing the study guide

VA Standards of Learning

6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, 6.14, USII.1, TA1.1, TA2.1, TA3.1, TA4.1, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, 7.12, 7.13, USII.2, TA1.2, TA2.2, TA3.2, TA4.2, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, USII.3, TA1.3, TA2.3, TA3.3, TA4.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 9.10, 9.11, 9.12, 9.13, 9.14, USII.4, TA1.4, TA2.4, TA3.4, TA4.4, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10, 10.11, 10.12, USII.5, TA1.5, TA2.5, TA3.5, TA4.5, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 11.10, 11.11, USII.6, TA1.6, TA2.6, TA3.6, TA4.6, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.9, 12.10, USII.7, TA1.7, TA2.7, TA3.7, TA4.7

TN Academic Standards

6.RL.KID.1, 6.RL.KID.2, 6.RL.CS.4, 6.RL.IKI.9, 6.SL.CC.1, 6.SL.PKI.4, 7.RL.KID.1, 7.RL.KID.2, 7.RL.CS.4, 7.RL.IKI.9, 7.SL.CC.1, 7.SL.PKI.4, 8.RL.KID.1, 8.RL.KID.2, 8.RL.CS.4, 8.RL.IKI.9, 8.SL.CC.1, 8.SL.PKI.4, 9-10.RL.KID.1, 9-10.RL.KID.2, 9-10.RL.CS.4, 9-10.RL.IKI.9, 9-10.SL.CC.1, 9-10.SL.PKI.4, 11-12.RL.KID.1, 11-12.RL.KID.2, 11-12.RL.CS.4, 11-12.RL.IKI.9, 11-12.SL.CC.1, 11-12.SL.PKI.4, TA.6.1, TA.6.2, TA.6.3, TA.7.1, TA.7.2, TA.8.1, TA.8.2, TA.9.1, TA.9.2, TA.10.1, TA.10.2, TA.11.1, TA.11.2, TA.12.1, TA.12.2

NC Student Success Standards

RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.4, RL.6.7, SL.6.1, SL.6.2, SL.6.5, RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.3, RL.7.4, RL.7.7, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.5, RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.8.7, SL.8.1, SL.8.2, SL.8.5
RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.7, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.5
RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.7, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.2, SL.11-12.5, TA.6.1, TA.6.2, TA.6.3, TA.7.1, TA.7.2, TA.8.1, TA.8.2, TA.9.1, TA.9.2, TA.10.1, TA.10.2, TA.11.1, TA.11.2, TA.12.1



**BARTER
THEATRE**

A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. When Porterfield and some of his actor friends found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City, Porterfield suggested they sojourn to his home in southwest Virginia where there was an abundance of food but no live theatre. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, "With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh." The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce; the concept of trading "ham for Hamlet" caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

In 1946, Barter Theatre was designated the state theatre of Virginia and became a launching pad for the careers of many iconic actors and actresses. Barter has also become one of the nation's longest running professional theatres, receiving countless awards and accolades.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, a former Barter actor and stage manager, became Barter's chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In October 1992, Richard Rose was named the Producing Artistic Director. During his tenure, attendance grew from 42,000 to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements were also made, including renovation of the main stage (now Gilliam Stage) in 1995 and the 2006 addition of The Barter Café at Stage II (now the Smith Theatre).



Rose also created Barter's Equity Resident Acting Company, who performs year-round, as well as a company of designers and technicians. Rose retired in December of 2019 and Katy Brown, who had been at Barter since 1998 as the Director of the Barter Players and Associate Artistic Director, was named the fourth Producing Artistic Director – and is the first woman to hold the position.

Barter represents two distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre's Gilliam Stage, and Barter's Smith Theatre. Gilliam Stage, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter's Smith Theatre offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. Barter Theatre is also home to The Barter Players, a talented ensemble of actors who produce plays for young audiences throughout the year.

In 2020, during the global pandemic, Barter was able to continue producing by creating a new venue at the Moonlite Drive-in, where the audience sat safely distanced in their parking spots while watching the actors on stage/simulcast on the big screen. History is always in the making at Barter. Building on legends of the past, Barter Theatre looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.



Bartering for tickets
with Robert Porterfield

Anatomy of a Theatre

Types of Stages

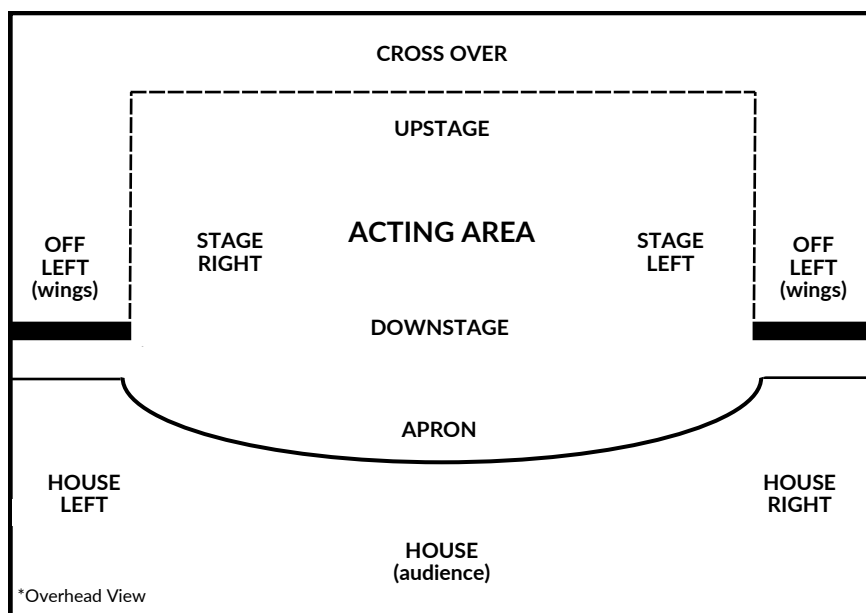
PROSCENIUM STAGE - The classic type of stage most commonly used in theatre. It is framed on all sides and raised higher than the audience. Barter's Gilliam Stage is a proscenium stage.

THRUST STAGE - This type of stage is literally thrust into the audience on 3 or 4 sides and is often not raised or is raised very little. One of the most common thrust stages in the world is Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Barter Theatre's Smith Theatre is a 3/4 thrust stage with the first row of audience seating on the same level as the actors.

ARENA STAGE - Also called "theatre-in-the-round" an arena stage is surrounded by the audience on all sides.

BLACKBOX THEATRE - A simple, flexible space that is typically used for smaller performances with minimal sets, props, and technical pieces. It is usually painted black and is draped with black curtains

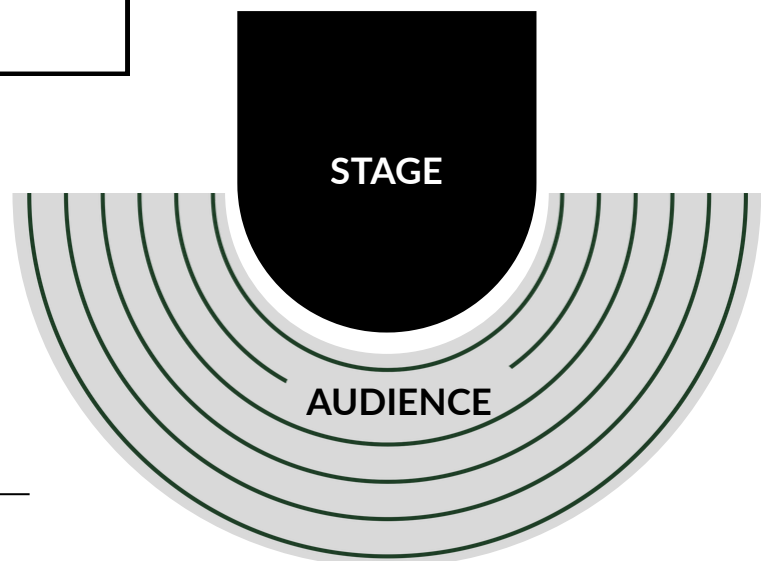
AMPHITHEATRE - An open-air, outdoor venue made famous by ancient Romans. The stepped seating arrangement allows for perfect views from any area of the audience.



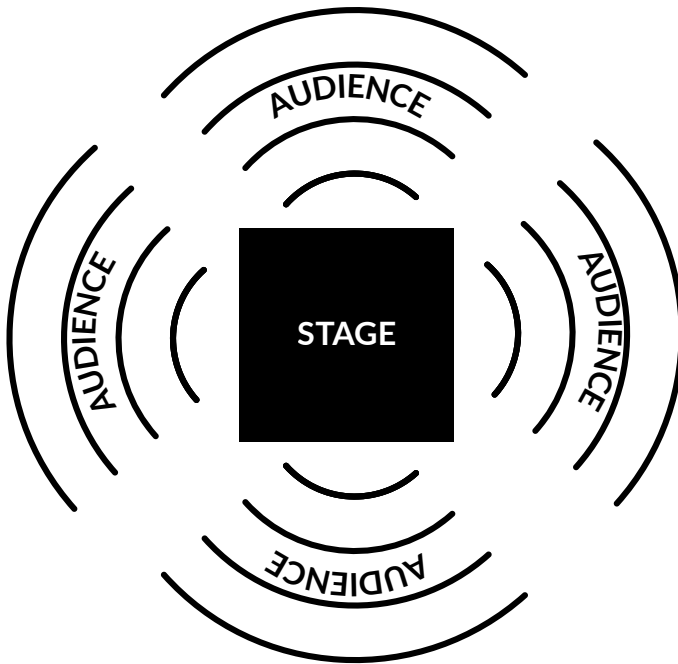
Identify each
type of stage

STAGE TYPE _____

STAGE TYPE _____



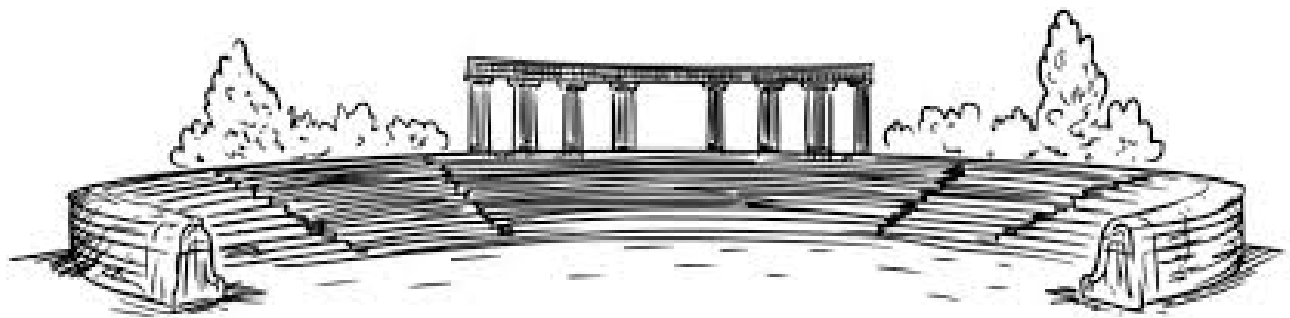
More Stages...



STAGE TYPE _____



STAGE TYPE _____



STAGE TYPE _____

Theatre Terms

STAGE TERMS

Apron: The front part of the stage that is closest to the audience

Backstage: The area of the stage that is not visible to the audience

Backdrop: A large curtain or drop that hangs at the back of the stage

Orchestra: The section of seats closest to the stage, on the main floor of the theater. These are often the most prized and expensive seats in the theater

Proscenium: An arched opening in the stage that the audience looks through

Wings: The areas to the left and right of the stage that are not visible to the audience

AUDIENCE TERMS

Auditorium: The part of the theater where the audience sits

Balcony: An elevated area of seating in the back of the auditorium

House: The area of the theater where the audience sits

Front of House: The part of the theater that is used by the audience. For example, a theater's lobby, box office, and refreshment stand are front-of-house areas

Usher: One who escorts persons to their seats in a theatrical setting

Vom: An entrance or exit for the audience passing under the seating tiers (common in arena/thrust stages)

PERFORMANCE TERMS

Act: A division of a play, which may be further divided into scenes

Ad-lib: When an actor improvises a line on stage

Aside: A line spoken by an actor directly to the audience, but not heard by the other actors

Audition: When actors perform for the director or casting director to get a role in a production

Choreographer: Responsible for telling the story through dance

Director: The captain of the ship, ultimately responsible for all creative & artistic production decisions

Matinee: A musical or dramatic performance held in the daytime and especially the afternoon

Off-Broadway: Any professional theatre venue in New York City with a seating capacity of 100-499

Producer: Plans and coordinates all aspects of a production, usually puts up and helps raise money to make the show possible

OTHER TERMS

Ensemble: The collaboration between the artists involved in the production

Genre: A specific type of drama, such as a comedy, tragedy, or melodrama

Preview: A final dress rehearsal where the audience is invited to see the show



Bram Stoker

Irish writer, born in Dublin. Worked for years as a civil servant before becoming business manager for actor Henry Irving at London's Lyceum Theatre, a job that put him deep in the theater world and shaped his sense of drama and spectacle. He published *Dracula* in 1897, drawing on Eastern European folklore, Victorian anxieties about disease, sexuality, and foreign "invasion," and his own research into vampire legends. Though *Dracula* wasn't a major success in his lifetime, it became one of the most adapted and influential horror novels ever written. Stoker wrote several other novels and stories, none as enduring.

Kate Hamill

American playwright and actor known for reimagining classic literature for the stage with a sharp, contemporary, often comic voice. She's adapted *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Little Women*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The Scarlet Letter*, among others, and is one of the most-produced playwrights in America. She frequently performs in her own adaptations. *Dracula* marked her turn from social comedy toward gothic horror, reworking Stoker's novel with her signature blend of wit and dark drama.



Character List



Count Dracula	A centuries-old Romanian boyar. Charming, powerful, casually cruel. Plans to vanish into London society and rule from the shadows.
Jonathan Harker	Proper young English solicitor. Broken by his imprisonment at Dracula's castle; returns changed and volatile.
Mina Harker	Smart, loyal, pregnant, underestimated. Pushed into an active, dangerous role; delivers the killing blow.
Lucy Westenra	Engaged best friend, funny and restless. First victim; sickens, dies, returns as a vampire.
Dr. Van Helsing	American woman, blunt and scarred. Vampire hunter; forces everyone to rethink what "natural order" means.
Dr. George Seward	Asylum physician, once engaged. Starts rigidly scientific; grows to trust an unconventional colleague.
Renfield	Asylum patient who worships Dracula as a god. Functions as a haunting, poetic chorus.
Marilla	Vampire wife. Predatory, vicious, doubles as the Maid.
Drusill	Vampire wife. Predatory, vicious, doubles as the Merchant/Miller.

Synopsis

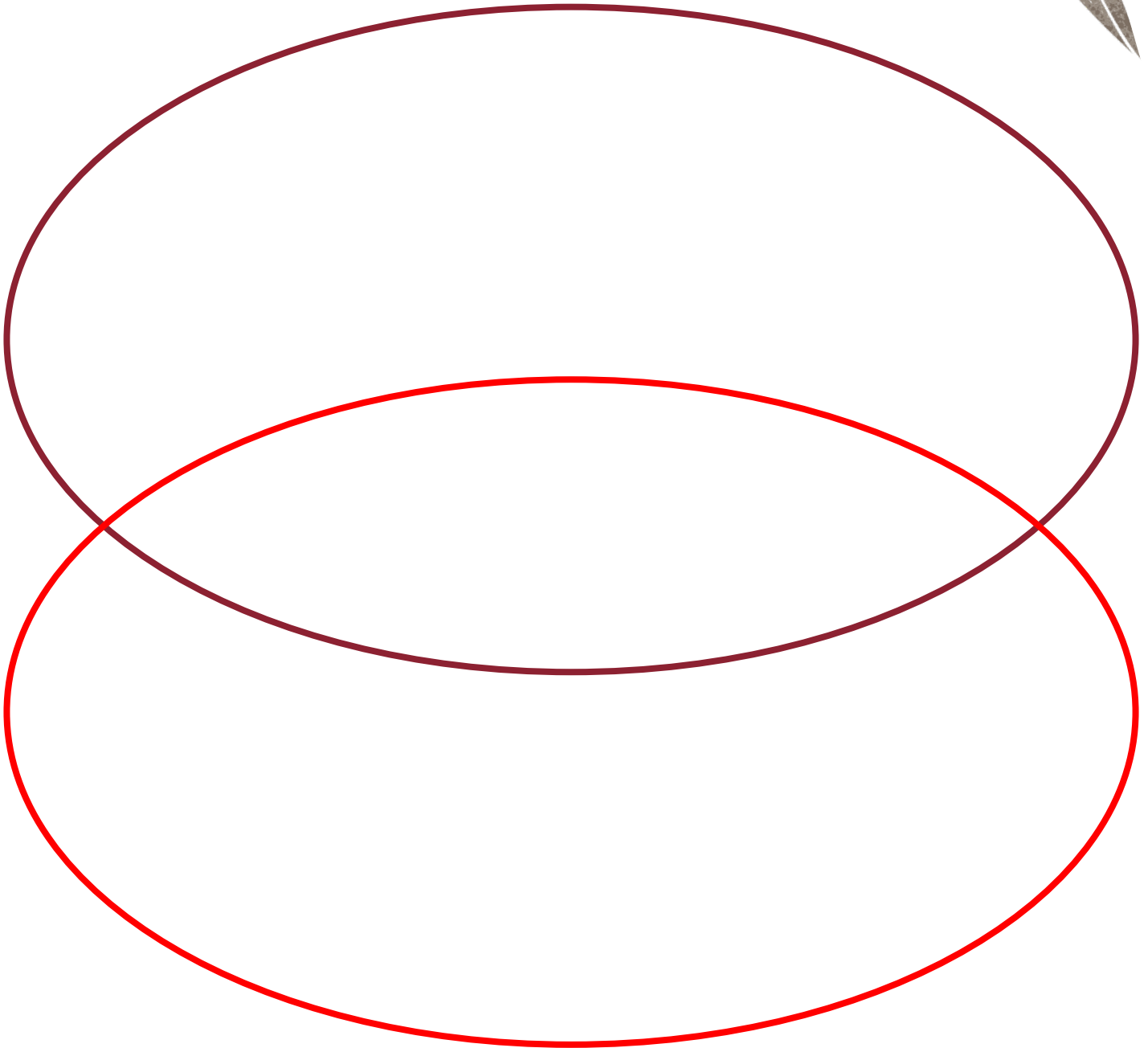
When your survival is at stake...will you be able to distinguish the monster from the man? Both terrifying and riotous, Kate Hamill's imaginative adaptation is like no *Dracula* you've ever seen, exploring the nature of predators and reinventing the story as a smart, darkly comic drama. Hamill's signature style upends this familiar tale of Victorian vampires, driving a stake through the heart of the familiar and giving us a play we can sink our teeth into. Perfect for the Halloween season!

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Compare and contrast two characters from *Dracula*. What do they have in common? How are they different? What are their virtues and faults? What do you admire or dislike about each of these characters? Discuss your results with the class.



Character 1: _____



Character 2: _____

From the Page to the Stage!

How does a book become a stage play?

1. The Script

It all starts here. A playwright (in this case, Catherine Bush) turns the prose of literature into dialogue and direction. This is called “adapting.”

Try it yourself!

Pick a scene from your favorite story and adapt it for the stage. Try not to use the narrative voice.

Focus on character dialogue

2. Director / Actors

The director & actors begin the rehearsal process. The director “blocks” the play, which means he tells the actors where to move and stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character’s motivation and creating the world of the play.

3. Set Design

The director & actors begin the rehearsal process. The director “blocks” the play, which means he tells the actors where to move, stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character’s motivation and creating the world of the play.

Try it yourself!

Using your adapted scene, design a set that will visually serve the story & function effectively for the actors

4. Costumes / Wigs

The costume designer is responsible for creating a different look for each character while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the production. Each actor’s costume must be tailored to fit and be built to take the wear-and-tear of 8 shows a week! The wig designer is responsible for designing, building & styling the wigs that will appear in the show. Like the costumes, wigs are necessary to help distinguish characters

Try it yourself!

Design costumes and wigs for the characters in your scene.

5. Props

A breakaway chair! The Cardinal’s ring! Milady’s vial of poison! These are a few examples of the props designed and built by Barter’s props department for this production. A prop is defined as an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot or story line of a theatrical production.

Try it yourself!

Design and build the props you will need for your scene.

6. Lights & Sound

Lights not only illuminate the actors and pull focus to various spots on the stage but, together with sound, help create a mood. Lights and sound can also, along with the set, help establish location. The sound of horses hooves, the glow of moonlight, and voila! We are on a dark road in France in the year 1628!

Try it yourself!

Put together a soundtrack for your scene that establishes place & mood. Feel free to use recorded music/sound effects or perform it live!

7. Stage Manager / Crew

The Stage Manager attends all the rehearsals and once the show goes into production, is “in charge”, calling all the sound and light cues and maintaining the integrity of the piece during its run. The SM is aided in these endeavors by the Crew, the unsung heroes who work backstage moving sets, changing wardrobe, placing props – whatever is necessary for the show to go on!



Word Search



Find all vocabulary words from *Dracula* in the puzzle below.

Words may run forward, backward, or diagonally

W	J	V	D	A	E	D	N	U	I	J	A	N	X	C	C
G	O	T	Z	I	C	R	Y	P	T	R	O	N	H	R	E
A	T	T	E	N	D	A	N	T	E	I	O	I	G	A	R
Z	B	X	J	H	V	J	S	N	T	I	V	O	Z	R	O
C	V	R	P	R	T	H	A	P	T	A	T	E	E	T	L
E	M	W	O	R	T	I	M	I	L	H	A	T	P	L	K
O	M	L	Z	R	R	U	T	R	I	L	N	Z	A	O	L
G	O	H	I	O	S	S	O	C	O	A	I	U	T	I	O
K	X	G	T	N	R	U	F	T	C	Q	D	H	R	B	F
E	A	C	O	E	S	I	R	E	W	A	J	M	I	O	B
H	I	C	P	D	C	Y	D	G	N	O	Z	L	C	Y	O
V	Q	U	L	T	Q	P	A	U	T	Y	Y	X	I	A	Z
W	S	L	I	M	G	F	M	U	L	Y	S	A	A	R	L
P	R	O	T	I	C	I	L	O	S	X	V	M	N	F	Q
Y	N	O	I	T	A	R	R	U	S	U	S	E	N	F	P
Q	G	Z	M	U	I	R	O	T	A	N	A	S	G	U	X

Boyar

Vrolok

Shtriga

Susurration

Laudanum

Solicitor

Patrician

Zealotry

Chivalrous

Asylum

Attendant

Crypt

Undead

Folklore

Superstition

Gothic fiction

Victorian era

Consumption

Decanter

Sanatorium

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Comprehension

1. Why does Jonathan travel to Transylvania at the start of the play, and what goes wrong once he arrives?
2. How does Lucy's illness progress across Act One, and who tries to help her?
3. What is unusual about how Van Helsing is introduced, and how do other characters react to her at first?
4. Describe Renfield's relationship to Dracula. What does she believe he will give her?
5. What is Dracula's actual plan for London, and why does he need Jonathan to carry it out?
6. Who ultimately kills Dracula, and why is that choice significant to the play?

Analysis

1. The playwright has the same actor play Dracula and the doctor who treats Jonathan. What effect does this doubling have on how you read Dracula's threat?
2. Compare Jonathan before and after his time in Transylvania. What specifically changes about how he treats Mina, and what does the play suggest caused that change?
3. Van Helsing tells Mina that Dracula and his kind might be "a natural evolution of the worst parts of human nature" rather than something separate from humanity. How does the play support or complicate that idea?
4. Marilla and Drusilla are both predators and victims. How does the play ask the audience to hold both of those truths about them at once?
5. What does the recurring idea of being "known by his acts" mean by the end of the play, and how does it apply to more than one character?
6. Why does the play end on an ambiguous note rather than a clean resolution? What is Hamill suggesting by having Mina carry a stake back into her "ordinary" life?



True or False?

Circle T or F to answer the question

1. Jonathan Harker travels to Transylvania to purchase property for his own family. T or F
2. Count Dracula lifts Jonathan's heavy trunk with no effort at all. T or F
3. Mina is pregnant at the start of the play. T or F
4. Lucy is already married when the play begins. T or F
5. Dr. Van Helsing is introduced as an elderly Dutch man. T or F
6. Renfield believes that submitting completely to Dracula will set her free. T or F
7. Dracula's vampire wives, Marilla and Drusilla, are given a backstory of abuse before he "rescued" them. T or F
8. Lucy dies and stays dead for the rest of the play. T or F
9. Jonathan returns to England completely unharmed and unchanged. T or F
10. Dracula's ultimate goal is to stay in Transylvania forever. T or F
11. Dr. Seward starts the play fully convinced that vampires are real. T or F
12. Van Helsing and Mina fight Marilla and Drusilla together in the crypt. T or F
13. Dr. Seward survives the final battle in the church without injury. T or F
14. Mina is the one who delivers the final, fatal blow to Dracula. T or F
15. At the end of the play, Van Helsing gives Mina a stake to keep "just in case." T or F

Matching

Match the person in the 1st column with the corresponding description in the 2nd.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Count Dracula | Restless bride-to-be turned into vampire |
| 2. Jonathan Harker | Charming boyar who preys on victims |
| 3. Mina Harker | Asylum patient who worships Dracula |
| 4. Lucy Westenra | Skeptical asylum physician, once engaged |
| 5. Dr. Van Helsing | Vengeful vampire wife, doubles as Merchant |
| 6. Dr. George Seward | Underestimated wife who kills Dracula |
| 7. Renfield | Scarred American doctor, vampire hunter |
| 8. Marilla | Proper solicitor broken by imprisonment |
| 9. Drusilla | Vengeful vampire wife, doubles as Maid |

Critical Thinking

A **director's** role is to move a script from the page to the stage. The director interprets the playwright's words, shapes performances, and guides design choices to create a unified production.

Theatre critics attend performances and publish informed opinions about what they experience. A critic's job is not to tell a playwright what should have been written, but to examine what is already present and explain why it succeeds or falls short.

Become a theatre critic!

After viewing the production, write a review.

The review should include one paragraph for each of the following:

Introduction – Identify the production you saw, where and when you saw it, and the purpose of your visit.

The Script – Evaluate the writing, story, and characters. Explain what was effective and what was not.

The Acting – Analyze the performances. Did the actors create believable, compelling characters? Support your opinion.

The Design – Respond to the set, costumes, and lighting. How did these elements contribute to the overall experience?

The Staging – Consider the director's choices, including how action or violence was staged. Was it clear and impactful?

The Audience – Describe how the audience reacted during key moments. What does this reveal about the production?

Conclusion – Reflect on what stood out most and what you will remember about the performance.

Share your thoughts, we would love to hear your analysis of our show!

Mail to:

Barter Theatre
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