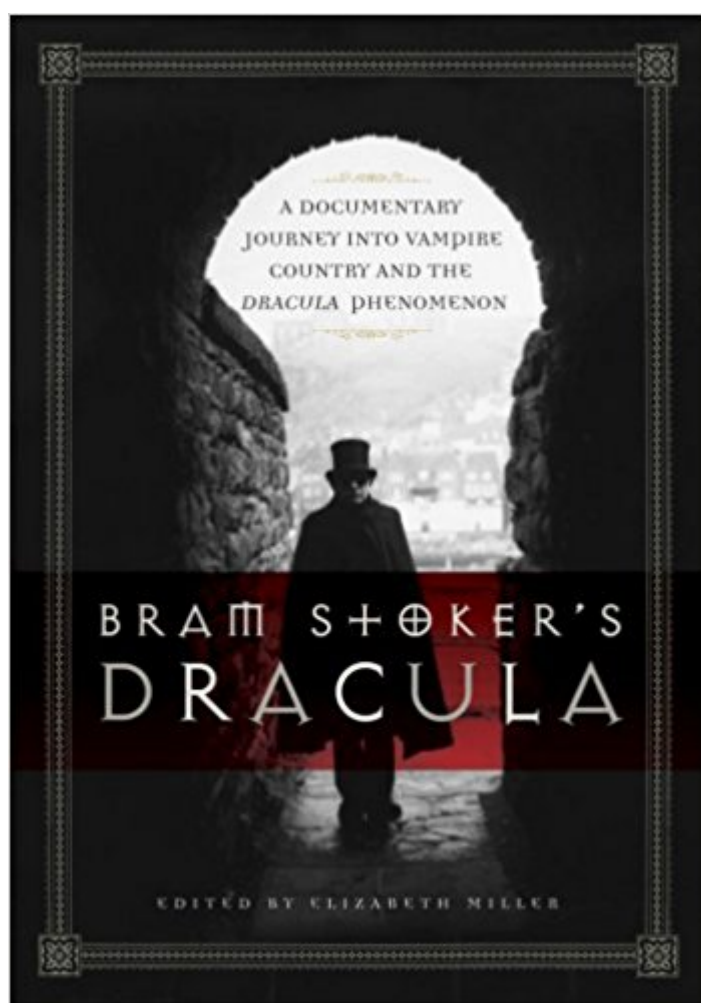


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Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Documentary Journey Into Vampire Country And The Dracula Phenomenon



Synopsis

When Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published in 1897, the ghoulish tale shocked, captivated, offended and thrilled readers. How Stoker became the creator of the mysterious, seductive count from a castle (and coffin) in Transylvania was a story in and of itself. Over the past century, *Dracula* has never been out of print and has become its own cultural phenomena, starting with Bela Lugosi's famed rendition in 1931, to Mel Brooks, Francis Ford Coppola, Christopher Lee, Buffy, Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* and the hugely popular *Twilight* series. This generously illustrated documentary collection explores in full the scope of the *Dracula* phenomenon, from the folkloric origins of the vampire legend to its unending legacy as a vital influence on the literary and performing arts, not to mention the Romanian tourist industry. Nor does it overlook Bram Stoker himself, and includes his working notes and exceptional primary documents.

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Customer Reviews

Elizabeth Miller is recognized internationally for her expertise on Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. Dr. Miller has been interviewed by ABC, CBS, the BBC, U.S. News and World Report, the New York Times, Entertainment Weekly, the Los Angeles Times, and the Wall Street Journal about *Dracula* and its influence on popular culture. She lives in Toronto.

Dr. Elizabeth Miller is the foremost authority on Bram Stoker's book *DRACULA*. She has done extensive amounts of research on all aspects of vampire lore, Stoker himself, the research he did while preparing to write the book, other author's takes on both vampire's and *Dracula*, and the far

reaching influence DRACULA has had on books, movies, TV, theater and our culture. She has taught university courses on DRACULA. Her book, *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA, A Documentary Journey into Vampire Country and the DRACULA Phenomenon* covers all of these areas and more. It took me several months to get through this book. It is more like a text book than a leisure reading book. It is not light reading. It is 375 pages in small font print. But, it is very interesting, and I will go so far as to say that every serious Dracula enthusiast should read it. It is the Everything-You-Ever-Wanted-To-Know book on DRACULA and vampires. The first part is about Bram Stoker who he was, his work, education, family and background. This was a little bit boring, as I wasn't all that interested in him. If, however, you've ever tried to read a horrible book called THE DRACULA DOSSIER, you will find the information connected, and helpful. (It doesn't make DOSSIER any better, but it will help you to understand who the characters are.) Chapter two is about vampires before the book DRACULA was published. It goes back several centuries and tells about old folklore and superstitions in several countries. The book also contains entire vampire short stories that were published in newspapers, magazines and books. This chapter was the most difficult for me because it is written in a manner that supposes that the reader has a degree in Literature that I do not have, so it was a bit over my head. Chapter three is about contexts: social, cultural, sexual, Gothic, medical, criminal, spiritual and theatrical. Chapter four is about the things around Stoker that influenced his writing: the people around him, his government job, the theater where he was manager, his being Irish and the state of Ireland at the time, other Gothic or literature of the horror genre. It also delves into what research he did about Transylvania and vicinity, the people, their cultures, their folklore and whether or not the character Dracula was really taken from Prince Vlad III of Wallacia. Then, it covers (chapter five) the different editions published over the hundred+ years. It turns out that the editions that most people find at their local bookstore has been highly abridged to the tune of a hundred pages. The original manuscript was bogged down with a lot of droning on about things that did not move the story forward. When I was reading chapter two, and she was referring to all these Shakespeare quotes that I had no memory of ever seeing in the book, I was wondering how I could have missed so much. Then she devoted a whole chapter to the deleted scenes and I realized that the versions that I've read were much tighter stories, made better by the abridgment. I considered trying to hunt down an unabridged copy to read the book as it was originally intended, but have decided against it. Much of the deleted material is contained in Dr. Miller's book. The rest of the book is much more fun, and much easier reading. The Legacy of DRACULA is mind-blowing because it illustrates the vast, and I mean VAST amount of things in our world that have been directly or indirectly influenced by DRACULA. There are a huge

number of books, articles and essays that have been written that analyze DRACULA from every perspective: sexual, political, feminist, literary, religious, psychoanalytical, homosexual, medical, racial, and legal. She lists all the movies, TV shows, actors, plays, books, memorabilia, breakfast cereals, etc., etc., etc. The list is extensive. Everybody connects Dracula (the character) with vampires world wide over a hundred years, even if they've never read (or even heard of) the book. It tells how the people of Romania are effected by the tourism generated by people who want to see where the vampire lived, and places described in the book. All in all, I found the book fascinating. I feel like I should have three credit hours for the education I got from this book. I never, in a million years, would have imagined that this one book has had such a profound impact on so many people for such a long time.

This is a compendium of articles from various sources about Bram Stoker, his life, his work, and his character Dracula. It is rather dry, heavily detailed and footnoted. But for anyone who wants to dig deep into the Dracula genre it is a great book. It is for researchers and avid readers. If you have ADD or are only interested in internet bits and bytes, this is NOT the book for you. The articles are all well written and well researched. It's got a wealth of interesting information. Like finding out that Oscar Wilde was totally in love with and broken hearted about Bram's wife marrying Stoker! Also hadn't known that Bram once rescued a suicide's body and brought it to his brother (a surgeon) to try and see if he could be revived...a bit morbid...Anyway, weall worth it for those with scholarly libraries and a penchant for actually understanding something!

"Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Documentary Journey into Vampire Country and the Dracula Phenomenon", edited by Elizabeth Miller, is the same book as the Dictionary of Literary Biography 304 "Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Documentary Volume", but in paperback at one-tenth the price of the DLB volume. The list of available books of "Dracula" scholarship, history, criticism, and combinations thereof grows every year, but this volume is among the most interesting and essential for "Dracula" fans and serious scholars. I've read a couple dozen books about the novel and the Dracula phenomenon, and I still found a lot of material that was new to me in this volume. It lives up the high standards of the DLB series in presenting both depth and breadth on its topic. In her introduction, Elizabeth Miller addresses the question of "why another book about `Dracula'". She answers that "no existing study of the novel encompasses the entire range of it pretextual, textual, and posttextual stages". True enough, but I love the combination of primary and secondary source materials, in quantity and to that stated purpose. There are six chapters, each dedicated to a

different facet of Dracula scholarship: the author Bram Stoker, vampires in folklore and literature before "Dracula", literary and cultural contexts for the novel, writing the novel, its publication history and reception, and "Dracula"'s legacy in popular culture. These encompass about 150 articles and 31 facsimiles (of documents), plus many smaller blurbs. "A Documentary Volume" collects the work of scholars of diverse expertise in one place. "Dracula" fans will recognize Clive Leatherdale's work on Stoker's sources, William Hughes on Stoker himself, Carol A. Senf on literary vampires, J. Gordon Melton on vampires and Christianity, Robert Eighteen-Bisang on editions, David Skal on theatrical adaptations, and, of course, Elizabeth Miller debunking the myths. But there is a lot more here, including primary documents I have not seen in other Dracula books, examples of Bram Stoker's other fiction and nonfiction, and many terrific essays from sources farther afield of typical "Dracula" studies. It's an invaluable reference for "Dracula" fans and a goldmine of interesting tidbits. Thanks to Pegasus Books for making this volume affordable.

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