



# Abraham Van Helsing

**Professor Abraham Van Helsing** (Dutch pronunciation: [ˈaːbraːɦɑm vɑn ˈɦɛlsɪŋ]) is a fictional character from the 1897 gothic horror novel *Dracula* written by Bram Stoker. Van Helsing is a Dutch polymath doctor with a wide range of interests and accomplishments, partly attested by the string of letters that follows his name: "MD, D.Ph., D.Litt., etc.",<sup>[4]</sup> indicating a wealth of experience, education and expertise. He is a doctor, professor, lawyer, philosopher, scientist, and metaphysician. The character is best known through many adaptations of the story as a vampire slayer, monster hunter and the arch-nemesis of Count Dracula, and the prototypical and the archetypical parapsychologist in subsequent works of paranormal fiction. Some later works tell new stories about Van Helsing, while others, such as *Dracula* (2020) and *I Woke Up a Vampire* (2023) have characters that are his descendants.

## Dracula

In the novel, Professor Van Helsing is called in by his former student, John Seward, to assist with the mysterious illness of Lucy Westenra. Van Helsing's friendship with Seward is based in part upon an unknown prior event in which Van Helsing suffered a grievous wound, and Seward saved his life by sucking out the gangrene. It is Van Helsing who first realizes that Lucy is the victim of a vampire, and he guides Seward and his friends in their efforts to save Lucy.

Van Helsing had a son who died. He says that his son, had he lived, would have had a similar appearance to Lucy's suitor Arthur Holmwood ("My heart bleed for that poor boy, that dear boy, so of the age of mine own boy had I been so blessed that he live, and with his hair and eyes the same"). Consequently, Van Helsing developed a particular fondness for Holmwood. Van Helsing's wife went insane from grief after their son's death, but as a Catholic, he refuses to divorce her ("with my poor wife dead to me, but alive by Church's law, though no wits, all gone, even I, who am faithful husband to this now-no-wife").<sup>[5]</sup>

Van Helsing is one of the few characters in the novel who is fully physically described in one place. In chapter 14, Mina Harker describes him as:

Van Helsing
<span></span> <div><i>Dracula</i> character</div>
<span></span> <div>Edward Van Sloan as Van Helsing in <i>Dracula</i> (1931)</div>
<b>Created by</b> <span> </span> Bram Stoker
In-universe information
<b>Alias</b> <span> </span> Van Helsing <div>Doctor Van Helsing<sup>[1]</sup></div> <div>Professor Van Helsing<sup>[2]</sup></div>
<b>Occupation</b> <span> </span> Professor, Doctor, Lawyer, Philosopher, Scientist, Metaphysician, and Vampire hunter
<b>Religion</b> <span> </span> Roman Catholic
<b>Nationality</b> <span> </span> Dutch
<b>Birth place</b> <span> </span> Amsterdam, <sup>[3]</sup> Netherlands

a man of medium height, strongly built, with his shoulders set back over a broad, deep chest and a neck well balanced on the trunk as the head is on the neck. The poise of the head strikes me at once as indicative of thought and power. The head is noble, well-sized, broad, and large behind the ears. The face, clean-shaven, shows a hard, square chin, a large resolute, mobile mouth, a good-sized nose, rather straight, but with quick, sensitive nostrils, that seem to broaden as the big bushy brows come down and the mouth tightens. The forehead is broad and fine, rising at first almost straight and then sloping back above two bumps or ridges wide apart, such a forehead that the reddish hair cannot possibly tumble over it, but falls naturally back and to the sides. Big, dark blue eyes are set widely apart and are quick and tender or stern with the man's moods.

—Mina Harker's Journal, chapter 14, *Dracula*<sup>[6]</sup>

Van Helsing's personality is described by John Seward, his former student, thus:

He is a seemingly arbitrary man, this is because he knows what he is talking about better than anyone else. He is a philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day, and he has, I believe, an absolutely open mind. This, with an iron nerve, a temper of the ice-brook, and indomitable resolution, self-command, and toleration exalted from virtues to blessings, and the kindest and truest heart that beats, these form his equipment for the noble work that he is doing for mankind, work both in theory and practice, for his views are as wide as his all-embracing sympathy.

—Letter From Dr Seward to Arthur Holmwood, chapter 9, *Dracula*<sup>[7]</sup>

In the novel, Van Helsing is described as having what is apparently a thick foreign accent, in that he speaks in broken English and he uses German phrases such as "Mein Gott" (English: My God).

Adaptations of the novel have tended to play up Van Helsing's role as a vampire expert, sometimes to the extent that it is depicted as his major occupation. In the novel, however, Dr. Seward requests Van Helsing's assistance simply because Lucy's affliction has him baffled and Van Helsing "knows as much about obscure diseases as anyone in the world".

## Development

In an 1897 interview in *The British Weekly*, Stoker said that Van Helsing was "founded on a real character".<sup>[8]</sup> In Stoker's 1898 introduction to the Swedish and Icelandic versions of *Dracula*, he writes from an in-universe perspective that "the highly regarded scientist, who appears under a pseudonym here, may likewise be too famous throughout the educated world for his real name – which I prefer not to mention – to remain hidden from the public, especially from those people who have learned firsthand to appreciate and respect his brilliant mind and masterly skill, though they no more adhere to his views on life than I do."<sup>[9]</sup>

Van Helsing may have been inspired by characters from Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871–72), including Dr Martin Hesselius, "who makes little comment upon the strange narrative he introduces",<sup>[10]</sup> and Baron Vordenburg, "who has read 'all the great and little works' on vampires and

who has 'extracted a system of principles' that govern vampire existence".<sup>[11]</sup>

## Narrative

Count Dracula, having acquired ownership of the Carfax estate near London through solicitor Jonathan Harker, moves to the estate and begins menacing England. His victims include Lucy Westenra, who is on holiday in Whitby. The aristocratic girl has suitors such as John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, and Quincey Morris, and has a best friend in Mina Murray, Harker's fiancée. Seward, who works as a doctor in an insane asylum – where one of the patients, the incurably mad Renfield, has a psychic connection to Dracula – contacts Professor Van Helsing about Lucy's peculiar condition. Van Helsing, recognizing marks upon her neck, eventually deduces that she has been losing blood from a vampire bite. He administers multiple blood transfusions. Van Helsing, Seward, Arthur, and Morris each donate blood to her, but each night she continues to lose blood. He prescribes her garlic, makes a necklace of garlic flowers for her, and hangs garlic about her room. He also gives her a crucifix to wear around her neck. Lucy's demise was brought by her mother, who cleared the room of garlic and opened the window for fresh air; a servant had stolen the gold crucifix.<sup>[12]</sup> Lucy dies and after the funeral returns as a vampire, seeking out children. Eventually, Van Helsing, Arthur, Morris and Seward free the undead Lucy from her vampiric curse: Arthur uses a hammer to drive the stake through her heart and Van Helsing cuts off her head and puts garlic in her mouth.

Mina, now married to Harker, becomes increasingly worried about his brain fever. Van Helsing reviews his journal and Harker's health returns when he learns that his experiences in Transylvania were real. Mina discovers that various letters and accounts provide further intelligence on Dracula's movements, and shares these with Harker, Seward, Morris, and Van Helsing. They learn that Dracula's residence in Carfax is near Seward's, and Van Helsing's research reveals Dracula's weaknesses and strengths. Seward and Van Helsing also write to a university acquaintance to aid in further research. Staying at Seward's residence to better plan strategies in their efforts to deal with Dracula, they have frequent meetings and each member is assigned duties.<sup>[13]</sup> At a later meeting a bat is seen at a window.

To destroy Dracula and prevent further spread of evil, the party enters his estate at Carfax and as a group encounters him for the first time. They discover that he has been purchasing properties in and around London, with plans to distribute 50 boxes of Transylvanian earth to them, used as graves so each property would become a safe lair. They visit these lairs and place sacramental bread in the boxes of the earth to "sterilize" them, preventing Dracula from further using them.<sup>[14]</sup> Dracula entices Renfield to invite him into Seward's residence. Renfield is found critically injured by Seward and Van



Colorized stills of Edward Van Sloan as Van Helsing confronting Béla Lugosi in *Dracula* (1931)

Helsing who operate on him, and Renfield informs them that Dracula went to see Mina. They go to Mina's room and find Harker hypnotized while Dracula is giving Mina the 'Vampire's Baptism of Blood', cursing her and the group for plotting against him. The party uses sacred items to repel Dracula, who flees into a different room as a vapor. Dracula then destroys all the texts Mina had produced, except for one which was hidden, and breaks Renfield's neck before leaving.

Van Helsing places a wafer of sacramental bread upon Mina's forehead to bless her but it burns her flesh, leaving a scar. Mina, feeling that she is now connected with Dracula, asks Van Helsing to hypnotize her before dawn, the only time she feels she could freely speak. Through this hypnosis they learn that Mina has a telepathic link with Dracula,<sup>[15]</sup> that she could tell everything he hears and feels, which could be used to track his movements. Mina agrees that any plans should be kept from her for fear that Dracula could read her thoughts. The group has additional encounters with Dracula as they continue to search for his residences throughout London and sterilize the boxes. Learning that his final grave is aboard a boat, Van Helsing deduces that Dracula is fleeing back to his castle.<sup>[16]</sup>

When the party pursues Dracula to Transylvania, they split into groups. While Mina and Van Helsing travel straight to Dracula's castle, the others attempt to ambush the boat on which Dracula is a passenger. Van Helsing's influence over Mina diminishes each day, and her behavior changes as she sleeps more during the day, loses her appetite for food, and ceases to write in her journal. He finds that she cannot cross a circle of crumbled sacramental bread. Later, Dracula's vampiric wives approach their camp but they too are unable to cross into the circle of bread. Failing at their attempts to lure Van Helsing and Mina out of the circle, they flee back to Dracula's castle just before sunrise. Van Helsing binds Mina at a cave to keep her from danger as he goes into Dracula's castle to kill the vampires.

As Van Helsing runs through the castle searching its rooms, he finds Dracula's empty tomb and the three female vampires he saw earlier. He begins to do his operation on the first vampire but finds himself entranced by her beauty and unable to bring himself to harm her. In his feelings of enchantment, he even contemplates love for her. He is broken out of this enchantment when he hears a "soul wail" from Mina, awakening him.<sup>[17]</sup> He proceeds to drive stakes into their hearts and sever their heads, one by one.

Van Helsing returns to Mina and they see the rest of their party as they chase a group of gypsies down the Borgo Pass and corner them. Armed with knives and firearms they overtake the gypsies and open the final box of Dracula; Jonathan Harker brings his Kukri knife down on Dracula's throat as the bowie knife of Quincey Morris simultaneously impales Dracula's heart in the final moments of daylight. At this moment Dracula's body crumbles to dust. After the struggle, Quincey is seen to have been fatally wounded.

Six years later, Van Helsing takes a grandfatherly role in regard to the young Quincey Harker, Jonathan and Mina's son.

## Equipment

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Van Helsing is seen utilising many tools to aid him and his party in fending off Dracula, warding off vampires and in general defeating the undead:

- Skeleton keys used for lock picking to open the doors to many of Dracula's lairs located throughout London.
- Wreath of withered garlic blossoms
- Silver crucifix
- Sacred wafer brought from Amsterdam contained in an envelope or crushed and sprinkled around him in a circle as a protective barrier.
- Electric lamps which could be attached or secured against the chest.
- Revolver and knife for use against enemies weaker than Dracula.<sup>[18]</sup>
- The branch of a wild rose could be placed on top of a coffin containing a vampire, immobilising it.<sup>[19]</sup>
- Mountain ash used to repel the undead.
- Wooden stake and hammer to pierce a vampire's heart.<sup>[20]</sup>
- Golden crucifix necklace, given to Lucy.

## On screen

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### Film adaptations of the novel

- *Nosferatu, a Symphony of Horror* (1922) was the first film version of *Dracula*. Although it followed the same basic plot as the novel, names were changed: Van Helsing is 'Professor Bulwer' (John Gottowt) and appears only in a few scenes. Unlike the book, he is a friend of 'Thomas Hutter' (the film's version of Jonathan Harker) before he meets 'Count Orlok' (a renamed Count Dracula), and he never meets the vampire face to face.
- In the initial 1931 Universal version of *Dracula* starring Béla Lugosi as the Count, Professor Van Helsing was portrayed by the actor Edward Van Sloan, who had previously played the part opposite Lugosi on stage. Van Sloan was the only cast member to reprise his role in the sequel *Dracula's Daughter* (1936).
- Eduardo Arozamena portrayed Van Helsing in Universal's simultaneously shot Spanish *Dracula* (1931).
- Peter Cushing's Doctor Van Helsing in the initial 1958 Hammer *Dracula* movie and its 1960 sequel *The Brides of Dracula* differed from the novel's in that the actor portrayed the character as a visibly younger man (as did Christopher Lee as the Count), and also one whose main vocation appears to be vampire hunting. His first name is never mentioned, though in the later Hammer Dracula films set in the 1970s (which apparently exist on a different timeline) Lee's Dracula battles Cushing's 'Lorrimer Van Helsing', a grandson of a previous vampire hunter, who appears as 'Lawrence Van Helsing' (also Cushing) in the prologue to *Dracula A.D. 1972*. In the final Hammer Dracula production *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* (set mainly in 1904) Cushing again plays the original Van Helsing from the Hammer series.
- Herbert Lom played Van Helsing in *Count Dracula* (1970). At the time of its production, the movie was declared to be the closest adaptation of the novel, though it actually differs from the plot of the book significantly.
- Walter Ladengast played Van Helsing in *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), a remake of the 1922 film.



Peter Cushing as Van Helsing in *The Brides of Dracula*



- John Badham's 1979 version of *Dracula* saw Laurence Olivier portray Van Helsing as a frail old man whose daughter becomes one of the undead, drawing him into a conflict with Frank Langella's Count that eventually costs the Professor his life.
- Anthony Hopkins portrayed Professor Van Helsing in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* in 1992. Once again implied to be a knowledgeable, and immensely experienced vampire hunter, this Van Helsing often comes across as somewhat eccentric and unbalanced, casually discussing how to kill the un-dead despite the brutal methods involved, and displaying ruthlessness when dispatching Dracula's brides, but he nevertheless leads a group of friends to victory over the Count.
- In the 1995 spoof film *Dracula: Dead and Loving It*, the movie's director Mel Brooks plays Professor Van Helsing.
- David Moroni portrayed Van Helsing in *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary* (2002), a black and white movie version of the Royal Winnipeg ballet adaptation of the novel.
- Rutger Hauer in *Dracula 3D* (2012). In this version it is revealed that he used to control an insane asylum called Carfax, and it was there that he first encountered vampires.
- Keith Reay in *Dracula Reborn* (2012). The setting is modernized to present-day California and Van Helsing here is a relatively young and brutal vampire hunter, who is ready to kill people if they get in the way of vanquishing vampires.
- Christine Prouty in *Dracula: The Original Living Vampire* (2022). Here, Van Helsing is gender-swapped, now being a detective who is Mina's girlfriend, and a friend of chemist Jonathan Harker and Doctor Jack Seward. She doesn't believe in vampires and always relies on logic in contrast to Harker, who is convinced that there are vampires among them. She only believes this when she is forced to near the end of the film, and even then she is reluctant. After the battle with Dracula, it is revealed she has become a vampire.

## TV adaptations of the novel

- Bernard Archard in *Dracula* (1968)
- Ota Sklenčka in *Hrabe Drakula* (1971)
- Nehemiah Persoff in *Dracula* (1973)
- Nigel Davenport in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1974)
- Frank Finlay in the BBC adaptation *Count Dracula* (1977)
- Giancarlo Giannini (as Enrico Valenzi) in *Dracula* (2002)
- Captain Raju in the Asianet adaptation *Dracula* (2005)
- David Suchet in *Dracula* (2006)
- Thomas Kretschmann in *Dracula* (2013)
- Dolly Wells (as Sister Agatha Van Helsing / Zoe Van Helsing) in *Dracula* (2020)



Van Helsing played by Nigel Davenport in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

## Other screen appearances of the character

### Films

- Jack Gwillim in the horror-comedy *The Monster Squad* (1987), in which Van Helsing opposes Duncan Regehr's Count Dracula.
- Peter Fonda in *Nadja* (1994)
- Christopher Plummer in *Dracula 2000* (2000). After defeating Count Dracula (Gerard Butler), Van Helsing finds that the vampire lord cannot die by the conventional means of destroying a vampire

and he only succeeded in paralyzing him in a deathlike state. When Dracula escapes after his coffin is stolen, Van Helsing's daughter and his assistant are able to defeat him after the elder Van Helsing's death.

- Hugh Jackman played **Gabriel Van Helsing**, in *Van Helsing* (2004), loosely based on Stoker's character. Having been found on the steps of a church several years before with total amnesia, Gabriel hunts monsters for a secret organization made up of the world's religions (known as the Knights of the Holy Order) to rid the world of evil "that the rest of mankind has no idea exists", although he is the most wanted man in Europe for his conspicuous actions. In the movie he is sent to Transylvania to kill Count Dracula. When he arrives, Dracula tells Gabriel that they have already met and have quite a history together, with Dracula revealing over the course of the film that Van Helsing was the one who originally murdered him, as well as claiming ownership of a distinctive ring that Van Helsing has worn as long as he can remember. It is heavily implied that Gabriel is actually the angel Gabriel, with vague references to Dracula's murderer as the "Left Hand of God". Jackman also voiced the character in the animated spin-off *Van Helsing: The London Assignment* (2004).
- David Carradine in *The Last Sect* (2006).
- Wallace Shawn in *Vamps* (2012).
- Mark Topping played Van Helsing in *Bram Stoker's Van Helsing* (2021).
- It was announced on 6 December 2020 that Julius Avery is set to direct a Van Helsing movie reboot for Universal Pictures, with James Wan producing the horror-thriller.<sup>[21]</sup>

## TV

- David Warner in *Penny Dreadful* (2014). Van Helsing here is a hematologist consulted by Victor Frankenstein. He eventually admits he has known about vampires for some time and offers to give Frankenstein some much-needed instruction in the area.
- Michael Eklund in *Van Helsing* (2019), original patriarch of the Van Helsing family who managed to previously trap the Dark One and meets with his descendant Vanessa Van Helsing.

## Animation

- *Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation* (2018) and its follow-up *Hotel Transylvania: Transformania* (2022), voiced by Jim Gaffigan.

## Appearances in other media

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### On stage

- In 1924 play *Dracula* by Hamilton Deane Van Helsing is portrayed as the arch-nemesis of Dracula. Deane himself played the role in British productions of the play. In 1927 the play was brought to Broadway by producer Horace Liveright, who hired John L. Balderston to revise the script for American audiences. The role of Van Helsing on Broadway was played by Edward Van Sloan. It's due to this play and its adaptation into 1931 film, that the notion of Van Helsing as Dracula's arch-enemy was introduced into popular culture (in the novel the two never had any conversations and Dracula never singled out Van Helsing out of the group of people, who were after him).
- Van Helsing was played by Stephen Henderson in 2004 Broadway production of *Dracula, the Musical* by Frank Wildhorn.
- Van Helsing was played by Pierre Flynn in 2006 French Canadian musical *Dracula – Entre l'amour et la mort*.

- Van Helsing was played by Aymeric Ribot in 2011 French musical *Dracula, l'amour plus fort que la mort*.
- Van Helsing was portrayed by Ashley Dixon in 2019 Northern Ballet's production of *Dracula* by David Nixon. The production was recorded and showed in UK cinemas on Halloween and then broadcast on BBC4 in 2020.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Novels

- The Robert Statzer novel *To Love a Vampire* (ISBN 978-1721227310) chronicles Van Helsing's days as a medical student, depicting his first confrontation with the occult during an encounter with Countess Elizabeth Báthory and her niece, Carmilla Karnstein. Originally published as a serial in the pages of *Scary Monsters Magazine* from March 2011 to June 2013, a revised version of *To Love a Vampire* was reprinted in paperback and Kindle editions in June 2018.
- In the 2009 Dacre Stoker novel *Dracula the Un-dead*, Van Helsing is now a 75-year-old man with heart problems, having apparently been disgraced in the medical profession for deaths caused by improper blood transfusions (although he defends his reputation by arguing that nobody knew about blood types until much later); he was also briefly a suspect in the Jack the Ripper murders due to his knowledge of anatomy and reputation for mutilating corpses for unspecified reasons. He later becomes a vampire himself after a meeting with Dracula revealed that Dracula was actually hunting the *true* monster of Elizabeth Báthory, but Van Helsing is killed in a confrontation with Arthur Holmwood, as Holmwood cannot accept the revelation that they were hunting the wrong threat. Holmwood throws himself at Van Helsing, causing the pair to fall out of a window and be impaled on the fence below.
- P. N. Elrod's novel *Quincey Morris, Vampire* takes up the story almost immediately after the conclusion of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but in this story (which shows vampires in a more sympathetic light) Van Helsing is unyielding and unwavering in his beliefs and his hatred of vampires to the point where he eventually alienates his former friends and allies.
- In Edward M. Erdelac's 2012 epistolary novel, *Terovolas*, Van Helsing suffers a bout of madness stemming from his encounter with Dracula's brides, and commits himself to Seward's care. Upon release, he voluntarily bears the personal effects of Quincey Morris back to the Morris family ranch in Texas, only to be embroiled in more supernatural doings related to a group of enigmatic Norwegian ranchers.
- The comic novel *Dracula's Diary* by Michael Geare and Michael Corby (ISBN 978-0825301438) completely re-tells the Stoker novel, with the young Count Dracula (who has been learning to act like a true British gentleman) becoming a secret agent for Her Majesty's government and Van Helsing an enemy agent for a foreign power who is continually thwarted by Dracula.
- In *The Dracula Tapes* (1975) by Fred Saberhagen, a psychotic, fanatical, bumbling Van Helsing opposes the urbane, if ruthless, Dracula.
- In *Fangland* by John Marks, the re-imagined Van Helsing is split into two separate characters, namely Clementine Spence and Austen Trotta.
- He also appears in the *Department 19* series by Will Hill.
- In the 2017 novel *A Betrayal in Blood* by Mark A. Lathan, Mycroft Holmes asks his brother Sherlock to investigate Van Helsing's 'Crew of Light' after they have been cleared of murder charges due to Dracula's vampiric nature. In the course of the investigation, Holmes and Dr. Watson realize that Van Helsing is actually a 'retired' German spy who manipulated Seward and the Harkers in assisting his campaign against Dracula, Seward through his loyalty and the Harkers through blackmail of their role in the death of Jonathan's former employer. He also arranged for the death of Quincey Morris, and is all but explicitly stated to have manipulated Holmwood into his new marriage to a woman who owes Van Helsing unspecified favours. Holmes deduces that in reality, Dracula was *never* a vampire; Van Helsing faked all relevant evidence, such as hiring an actress with a passing resemblance to Lucy to attack children after her death. In reality Dracula



was a reclusive old man and a former spy himself, whose only crime was a long-ago affair with Van Helsing's wife, this affair producing a son who was given up for adoption to become Arthur Holmwood. At the conclusion of the case, Van Helsing commits suicide by shooting himself in a train bathroom while Holmes and Watson are taking him back to England to stand trial after a final confrontation in Transylvania.

- At the end of the novel *Dracul*, the official prequel to the novel by Bram Stoker co-written by Dacre Stoker and J. D. Barker, it is suggested by a dialogue between Bram Stoker and Mina Harker that Van Helsing and Ármin Vámbéry could be the same person.

## Radio and audio

- In radio drama *Dracula* by *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*, which was broadcast in 1938, Van Helsing was played by Martin Gabel. Dracula was played by Orson Welles.
- In the Big Finish Productions audio drama *The Tangled Skein* (adapted from the novella by David Stuart Davies) Van Helsing, acting alone, joins forces with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson to investigate the presence of vampires in London. Although initially disbelieving of Van Helsing's convictions when they read about his lectures on vampires, the duo accept his word when they are confronted and nearly killed by a vampire in Hampstead Heath, joining Van Helsing in staking the vampire. While Van Helsing is forced to focus on his lectures over the next few days, he leaves his vampire-hunting equipment with Holmes and Watson, who track Dracula to Dartmoor, where he has hidden in Baskerville Hall, and are able to defeat him using Van Helsing's advice. After Dracula is defeated when trapped in the Grimpen Mire as the sun rises, Holmes gives Van Helsing Dracula's ring as a memento of their victory, concluding that Van Helsing's research is what enabled him to destroy Dracula.

## Comics

Abraham Van Helsing was also portrayed in *The Tomb of Dracula* Marvel Comics series, which was based on the characters of Bram Stoker's novel including his great-granddaughter Rachel Van Helsing.

In the Marvel Comics miniseries *X-Men: Apocalypse* *vs. Dracula*, Van Helsing joins forces with the immortal mutant Apocalypse and his worshipers, Clan Akkaba, in order to destroy Dracula, their common enemy. It is noted that Van Helsing had encountered Apocalypse before and previously believed him to be a vampire.

In the Italian comic book Martin Mystère and the spin-off series *Storie di Altrove/Stories from Elsewhere*, Van Helsing's name is Richard. He was originally a knight in the service of the Holy Roman Emperors but he was captured in 1475 by the undead warriors of the Order of the Dragon and turned into a vampire by the Wallachian Prince Vlad Dracula. Four centuries later, Van Helsing killed Dracula, and later came to London to solve the case of Jack the Ripper, eventually



Dracula and Rachel Van Helsing: *The Tomb of Dracula* No. 40 (Jan. 1976). Art by Gene Colan and Tom Palmer.

discovering that the murderers were mentally controlled by demons from another world. In 1902 he worked together with the resurrected Dracula to prevent the assassination of King Edward VII.

## Media involving Van Helsing's descendants

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There have been numerous works of fiction depicting descendants of Van Helsing carrying on the family tradition.

### Films

- Several of Hammer's Dracula films feature other members of the Van Helsing family alongside Peter Cushing as the Doctor; *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* (1974), set in the early 1900s, features his son 'Leyland', played by Robin Stewart. Meanwhile, the latter-day Van Helsing has a daughter named 'Jessica' in both *Dracula A.D. 1972*, played by Stephanie Beacham, and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, played by Joanna Lumley.
- The 1979 film *Love at First Bite*, is a comedic parody in which Dracula falls in love, and Jeffrey Rosenberg, grandson of Fritz Van Helsing, tries to kill him.
- In the 1989 film *Sundown: The Vampire in Retreat*, Bruce Campbell plays Robert Van Helsing, the great-grandson of Abraham Van Helsing.
- In the 2000 film *Dracula 2000* Justine Waddell plays Van Helsing's daughter Mary.
- In the 2000 Disney channel movie *Mom's Got a Date with a Vampire*, Malachi Van Helsing is hunting the vampire Dimitri, who is preying on the mother of the main characters.
- The 2004 direct-to-video film *Dracula 3000* features Captain Abraham Van Helsing (played by Casper Van Dien), a descendant of the original Van Helsing and the captain of a spacefaring salvage ship.
- The 2004 direct-to-video film *The Adventures of Young Van Helsing* depicts Abraham Van Helsing's great-grandson Michael (Keith Jordan) saving the world from Simon Magus.
- The 2006 film *Bram Stoker's Dracula's Curse* features a character named Jacob Van Helsing (Rhett Giles), who is implied to be a descendant of the original.
- The 2009 film *Stan Helsing* is a comedic film revolving around satirizing the Van Helsing descendant of the 2004 feature film.
- In the 2012 TV film, *Scooby-Doo! Music of the Vampire*, a book writer named Vincent van Helsing is the great-great-grandson of Abraham Van Helsing.
- In the 2013 film *Dracula: The Dark Prince* Van Helsing's 16th-century ancestor Leonardo is played by Jon Voight.
- Abraham Van Helsing appears in the 2018 movie *Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation* voiced by Jim Gaffigan. Besides being Count Dracula's arch-nemesis, Van Helsing managed to have a great-granddaughter named Ericka Van Helsing (voiced by Kathryn Hahn), the captain of the ship central to the film. By the present day, Abraham has been mechanized to avoid death where only his head and hands remained. Dracula falls in love with Ericka not knowing she is descended from his old arch-enemy until the climax. The movie's prologue also involves Van Helsing making numerous comedic attempts to kill Dracula.

- It was announced on May 20, 2020 that Peter Dinklage and Jason Momoa are to star in a vampire action-adventure movie *Good, Bad & Undead*.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Television

- The Thames Television 1988–1993 children's animation *Count Duckula* featured the character Dr. Von Goosewing, voiced by Jimmy Hibbert. A mad scientist and vampire hunter, Von Goosewing is a parody of Van Helsing. He is a goose that speaks in a German accent, and wears an outfit not unlike that of Sherlock Holmes. He pursues Count Duckula relentlessly, never able to comprehend that Duckula is actually completely harmless. He is a terrible scientist, often getting injured by his own crackpot inventions, and he is supremely unobservant, often bumping into Duckula and conversing with him for several minutes without realising to whom he is speaking.
- The 1990 series *Dracula: The Series* had Bernard Behrens as Gustav Helsing. He was looking after his two nephews, Christopher Townsend and Max Townsend. They fought Dracula, who in the contemporary world, had taken on the name of Alexander Lucard. In this version Gustav Helsing's son, Klaus Helsing (Geraint Wyn Davies), had been turned into a vampire by Alexander Lucard (Dracula).
- The 2006 CBBC series, *Young Dracula*, featured Mr. Eric Van Helsing – presumably the descendant of his more famous predecessor, though with none of his competence – trying to exterminate Count Dracula and his children, who had been chased out of Transylvania by an angry mob and were now living in rural Wales. Eric lives in a caravan with his son Jonathan. There are also references made to previous Van Helsing vampire slayers.
- The 2006 series *Tom and Jerry Tales* episode Monster Con, Van Helsing appears with Tom and uses some of his equipment to catch Jerry, but catches a few ghosts instead and turns into a werewolf cat when he is bitten by Jerry's friend, the werewolf.
- The 2009 ITV series *Demons* follows Abraham's great-grandson Luke Rutherford (Christian Cooke).
- Syfy is airing a *Van Helsing* episodic television series with Neil LaBute as creator. The lead character is Vanessa Van Helsing (Kelly Overton), said to be great-great-great-granddaughter of Abraham Van Helsing.<sup>[24]</sup> Abraham Van Helsing appears in the fourth season and other characters related to him have appeared as well.
- In the 2019 FX series *What We Do in the Shadows*, Guillermo, the devoted human familiar of Nandor the Relentless in Staten Island, who has accidentally killed two vampires, finds out through a DNA test that one of his ancestors was named Van Helsing. Horrified, he says "Van Helsing isn't real" but then reasons "Vampires are real." In season 2, he struggles with his ancestry which has made him an extremely adept vampire slayer, killing dozens in order to protect his master by the end of season 2.

## Books and stories

- The short story *Abraham's Boys* by Joe Hill is about the retired Abraham Van Helsing and his two sons, and how he passes along his knowledge to them. The story is included in the anthology *The many faces of Van Helsing*.
- According to *The Vampire Hunter's Handbook*, Abraham was not the first Van Helsing to encounter vampires. The book is supposedly written by Raphael Van Helsing in the 18th century. It has also been prequelled by *The Demon Hunter's Handbook* by Abelard Van Helsing (16th century) and *The Dragon Hunter's Handbook* by Adelia Van Helsing (14th century). The supposed writers refer to each other (in the cases where it makes sense) and other Van Helsing.
- Similar to the above-mentioned handbooks is *Vampyre: The Terrifying Lost Journal of Dr. Cornelius Van Helsing* which is written by Mary-Jane Knight but credited to Dr. Cornelius Van

Helsing. The book implies that Cornelius is the brother of Abraham.

- *Young Dracula* by Michael Lawrence mentions a farmer named Dweeb Van Helsing.
- In *Den hemliga boken* and sequels by Jesper Tillberg and Peter Bergting, the main character is Abraham's great-grandson Lennart Van Helsing (not to be confused with Lennart Hellsing).
- *Van Helsing's Gazette* is repeatedly referred to in Jasper Fforde's *Thursday Next* novels.

## Anime and manga

- In the manga and anime, *Hellsing*, modern day descendant Integra Hellsing leads a British government strike force against supernatural menaces. The story also includes her father, Arthur and uncle, Richard. It later turns out that the protagonist Alucard is in fact Dracula, and has become a servant to the Helsing family after being defeated by Integra's grandfather, Abraham Van Helsing. In this incarnation however, the Van Hellsings are Protestant rather than Roman Catholic.
- Abraham Van Helsing is also a character in the *Code: Realize* anime.

## Comics and graphic novels

- The comic book series *The Tomb of Dracula* featured Rachel Van Helsing, granddaughter of Abraham, as a major member of the principal vampire hunters. Minor characters were Abraham's wife Elizabeth and his brother Boris.
- The DC comic *Night Force* features Abraham's granddaughter Vanessa Van Helsing.
- *Sword of Dracula* is a comic book with Veronica "Ronnie" Van Helsing.
- *Helsing* is a Caliber Comics title about a Samantha Helsing and a John Van Helsing.
- The *Vampirella* comic books feature father-son vampire hunters Conrad and Adam Van Helsing.
- In *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, Van Helsing and the story of Dracula is hinted by main character Mina Murray (Dracula's chosen bride in the novel).
- Zenescope Entertainment's *Helsing* graphic novels (about a Liesl van Helsing) are credited as the inspiration for *Van Helsing* (TV series).

## Games

- Gabriel Van Helsing is featured in the 2004 video game, *Van Helsing*. The player uses the character to hunt down Dracula in Transylvania.
- In 2011, Team Fortress 2 added via update a costume set for the Sniper class, named 'Camper Van Helsing' which can only be used for Halloween events.<sup>[25]</sup> Three years later, a similar costume set for the Soldier was added with the same Halloween limitations, named the 'Sgt. Helsing'.<sup>[26]</sup>
- The 2013 game, *The Incredible Adventures of Van Helsing*, focuses on the trials of young Van Helsing, son of the legendary vampire hunter Abraham Van Helsing.
- Van Helsing was adapted as a character in *MechQuest*, where he plays a professional mech vampire hunter. He is portrayed as having a brother, another hunter, who looks identical to him and eventually replaces him.
- Van Helsing is a potential love interest for the protagonist in the otome visual novel *Code: Realize ~Guardian of Rebirth~*
- Van Helsing and Dracula were portrayed as tanks in *World of Tanks Blitz*, a popular online tank warfare game. Van Helsing was portrayed as a royal-looking tank destroyer with elaborate designs and scenes from the book on the side of the tank. Dracula is portrayed as a medium tank in pure black, very fast, and with no designs on it. The tanks were available in the 2016 Halloween Event.