

Powers and weaknesses

Count Dracula is portrayed in the novel using many different supernatural abilities, and is believed to have gained his abilities through dealings with the Devil. Chapter 18 of the novel describes many of the abilities, limitations and weaknesses of Dracula and vampires in particular. Dracula has superhuman strength, which, according to Van Helsing, is equivalent to that of 20 strong men. He does not cast a shadow or have a reflection from mirrors. He is immune to conventional means of attack; a sailor tries to stab him in the back with a knife, but the blade goes through his body as though it is air. Why Harker's and Morris' physical attacks are able to harm him in other parts of the book is never explained although it is noteworthy that the failed stabbing by the sailor occurred at night and the successful attacks were during daylight hours. The Count can defy gravity to a certain extent and possesses superhuman agility, able to climb vertical surfaces upside down in a reptilian manner. He can travel onto "unhallowed" ground such as the graves of suicides and those of his victims. He has powerful hypnotic, telepathic and illusionary abilities. He also has the ability to "within limitations" vanish and reappear elsewhere at will. If he knows the path, he can come out from anything or into anything, regardless of how close it is bound even if it is fused with fire.

He has amassed cunning and wisdom throughout centuries, and he is unable to die by the mere passing of time alone.

He can command animals such as rats, owls, bats, moths, foxes and wolves. However, his control over these animals is limited, as seen when the party first enters his house in London. Although Dracula is able to summon thousands of rats to swarm and attack the group, Seward summons a pack of hounds to devour the rats. The rats are so frightened of the dogs that they flee, and any control which Dracula had over them is gone.

Dracula can also manipulate the weather and, within his range, is able to direct the elements, such as storms, fog and mist.

Shapeshifting

Dracula can shapeshift at will, able to grow and become small, his featured forms in the novel being that of a bat, a wolf, a large dog and a fog or mist. When the moonlight is shining, he can travel as elemental dust within its rays. He is able to pass through tiny cracks or crevices while retaining his human form or in the form of a vapour; described by Van Helsing as the ability to slip through a hairbreadth space of a tomb door or coffin. This is also an ability used by his victim Lucy as a vampire. When the party breaks into her tomb, they dismantle the secured coffin to find it completely empty; her corpse being no longer located within.

Vampirism

One of Dracula's most mysterious powers is the ability to turn others into vampires by biting them. According to Van Helsing:

"When they become such, there comes with the change the curse of immortality; they cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world. For all that die from the preying of the Un-dead become themselves Un-dead, and prey on their kind. And so the circle goes on ever widening, like as the ripples from a stone thrown in the water. Friend Arthur, if you had met that kiss which you know of before poor Lucy die, or

again, last night when you open your arms to her, you would in time, when you had died, have become nosferatu, as they call it in Eastern Europe, and would for all time make more of those Un-Deads that so have filled us with horror."

—Dr. Seward's journal, *Dracula*, Chapter 16

The vampire bite itself does not cause death. It is the method vampires use to drain blood of the victim and to increase their influence over them. This is described by Van Helsing:

"The Nosferatu do not die like the bees when they sting once. He is only stronger, and being stronger, have yet more power to work evil."

—Mina Harker's journal, *Dracula*, Chapter 18

Victims who are bitten by a vampire and do not die, are hypnotically influenced by them:

"Those children whose blood she suck are not yet so much worse; but if she live on, Un-Dead, more and more lose their blood and by her power over them they come to her."

—Mina Harker's journal, *Dracula*, Chapter 18

Van Helsing later describes the aftermath of a bitten victim when the vampire has been killed:

"But if she die in truth, then all cease; the tiny wounds of the throats disappear, and they go back to their plays unknowing of whatever has been."

—Mina Harker's journal, *Dracula*, Chapter 18

As Dracula slowly drains Lucy's blood, she dies from acute blood loss and later transforms into a vampire, despite the efforts of Seward and Van Helsing to provide her with blood transfusions.

He is aided by powers of necromancy and divination of the dead, that all who die by his hand may reanimate and do his bidding.

Bloodletting

Dracula requires no other sustenance but fresh human blood, which has the effect of rejuvenating him and allowing him to grow younger. His power is drawn from the blood of others, and he cannot survive without it. Although drinking blood can rejuvenate his youth and strength, it does not give him the ability to regenerate; months after being struck on the head by a shovel, he still bears a scar from the impact.

Dracula's preferred victims are women. Harker states that he believes Dracula has a state of fasting as well as a state of feeding. Dracula does state to Mina however that exerting his abilities caused a desire to feed.

Vampire's Baptism of Blood

Count Dracula is depicted as the "King Vampire", and can control other vampires. To punish Mina and the party for their efforts against him, Dracula bites her on at least three occasions. He also forces her to drink his blood; this act curses her with the effects of vampirism and gives him a telepathic link to her thoughts. However, hypnotism was only able to be done

before dawn.[26] Van Helsing refers to the act of drinking blood by both the vampire and the victim "the Vampire's Baptism of Blood".

The effects changes Mina' physically and mentally over time. A few moments after Dracula attacks her, Van Helsing takes a wafer of sacramental bread and places it on her forehead to bless her; when the bread touches her skin, it burns her and leaves a scar on her forehead. Her teeth start growing longer but do not grow sharper. She begins to lose her appetite, feeling repulsed by normal food, begins to sleep more and more during the day; cannot wake unless at sunset and stops writing in her diary. When Van Helsing later crumbles the same bread in a circle around her, she is unable to cross or leave the circle, discovering a new form of protection.

Dracula's death can release the curse on any living victim of eventual transformation into vampire. However, Van Helsing reveals that were he to successfully escape, his continued existence would ensure that even if he did not victimize Mina further, she would transform into a vampire upon her eventual natural death.

Limitations of his powers

Dracula is much less powerful in daylight and is only able to shift his form at dawn, noon, and dusk (he can shift his form freely at night or if he is at his grave). The sun is not fatal to him, as sunlight does not burn and destroy him upon contact, though most of his abilities cease.

"The sun that rose on our sorrow this morning guards us in its course. Until it sets to-night, that monster must retain whatever form he now has. He is confined within the limitations of his earthly envelope. He cannot melt into thin air nor disappear through cracks or chinks or crannies. If he go through a doorway, he must open the door like a mortal."

—Jonathan Harker's journal, *Dracula*, Chapter 22

"His power ceases, as does that all of all evil things, at the coming of the day. Only at certain times can he have limited freedom. If he be not at the place whither he is bound, he can only change himself at noon or exact sunrise or sunset. "

—Mina Harker's journal, *Dracula*, Chapter 18

He is also limited in his ability to travel, as he can only cross running water at low or high tide. Due to this, he is unable to fly across a river in the form of a bat or mist or even by himself board a boat or step off a boat onto a dock unless he is physically carried over with assistance. He is also unable to enter a place unless invited to do so by someone of the household, even a visitor; once invited, he can enter and leave the premises at will.

Weaknesses

Thirst

Dracula has a bloodlust which he is seemingly unable to control. At the sight of blood he becomes enveloped in a demonic fury which is fueled by the need to feed. Other adaptations call this uncontrollable state 'the thirst'.

Religious symbolism

There are items which afflict him to the point he has no power and can even calm him from his insatiable appetite for blood. He is repulsed by garlic, as well as sacred items and symbols such as crucifixes, and sacramental bread.

"at the instant I saw that the cut had bled a little, and the blood was trickling over my chin. I laid down the razor, turning as I did so half round to look for some sticking plaster. When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there."

—Jonathan Harker's Journal, *Dracula*, Chapter 2

Placing the branch of a wild rose upon the top of his coffin will render him unable to escape it; a sacred bullet fired into the coffin could kill him so that he remain true-dead.

Mountain Ash is also described as a form of protection from a vampire although the effects are unknown.[30] This was believed to be used as protection against evil spirits and witches during the Victorian era.

Death-sleep

The state of rest to which vampires are prone to during times of day is described in the novel as a deathlike sleep where the vampire sleeps open-eyed, is unable to awaken or move, yet also may be unaware of any presence of individuals who may be trespassing. Dracula is portrayed as being active in daylight at least once in order to pursue a victim. Dracula also purchases many properties throughout London 'over the counter' which shows that he does have the ability to have some type of presence in daylight.

He requires Transylvanian soil to be nearby to him in a foreign land or to be entombed within his coffin within Transylvania in order to successfully rest; otherwise, he will be unable to recover his strength. This has forced him to transport many boxes of Transylvanian earth to each of his residences in London. It should be noted however that he is most powerful when he is within his Earth-Home, Coffin-Home, Hell-Home, or any place unhallowed.

Further, if Dracula or any vampire has had their fill in blood upon feeding, they will be caused to rest in this dead state even longer than usual.

Other abilities

While universally feared by the local people of Transylvania and even beyond, Dracula commands the loyalty of gypsies and a band of Slovaks who transport his boxes on their way to London and to serve as an armed convoy bringing his coffin back to his castle. The Slovaks and gypsies appear to know his true nature, for they laugh at Harker when he tries to communicate his plight, and betray Harker's attempt to send a letter through them by giving it to the Count.

Dracula seems to be able to hold influence over people with mental disorders, such as Renfield, who is never bitten but who worships Dracula, referring to him over the course of the novel as "Master" and "Lord". Dracula also afflicts Lucy with chronic sleepwalking, putting her into a trance-like state that allows them not only to submit to his will but also seek him and satisfy his need to feed.

The Vampire has had some training in necromancy, as Van Helsing comments upon, being able to summon the souls of the dead as blue flames on St. George's Eve.

Dracula's powers and weaknesses vary greatly in the many adaptations. Previous and subsequent vampires from different legends have had similar vampire characteristics.

In addition to his supernatural abilities, Dracula is highly intelligent. He is fluent in multiple languages including English, German, and his native Romanian among others. As befitting a nobleman and former military commander, the vampire is well-read and an excellent planner. He was able to plot his entire journey to Carfax from his castle library, and—during their conversation—Jonathan was impressed at his knowledge of British law and business customs. For a time, Dracula was even able to adapt to and counter Van Helsing and the others' attempts to trap him. Finally, Dracula seems surprisingly skilled at mundane housekeeping for a 19th century nobleman: Jonathan observes that he seems to do all the tidying up in the castle himself and may have cooked his human guest/prisoner's meals which Jonathan enjoyed.