

Bram Stoker

When people talk about horror stories they often think about the most famous vampire novel of all time – Dracula. Many people don't know that this spooky tale about a blood-sucking monster, which is set in Transylvania, was written by a Dublin man – Bram Stoker.



Bram, or Abraham, was born on 8th November, 1847 in Clontarf in Dublin. As a young boy, Bram was very ill but, luckily for him, he recovered in time to attend Trinity College, Dublin where he studied mathematics and was a talented athlete. He was always interested in philosophy, history, art and drama and began his career as a theatre critic with the Dublin Evening Mail. He would later go on to manage the famous Lyceum Theatre in London.

In 1878 Bram married Florence Balcombe from Marino in Dublin. Florence was very beautiful and had been a girlfriend of another famous writer, Oscar Wilde. Bram and Wilde would later become good friends. Bram and Florence had one son, Irving Noel Thornley Stoker. Bram had many notable friends including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who wrote Sherlock Holmes, and the American artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler.

Bram and Florence lived in London while he managed the Lyceum Theatre. He travelled to many countries with its owner Henry Irving during this time also. He visited the USA a lot and was even invited to the White House twice, where he met Theodore Roosevelt and William McKinley. Surprisingly, however, Bram never travelled to Eastern Europe even though his most famous work Dracula would be set there.



Bram began writing Dracula in 1897. He was inspired by visits to Whitby in England, Slains Castle in Scotland and the tombs in St. Michan's Church in Dublin. This gothic or horror novel is based on Vlad Dracula, a vampire, who lives in a castle in Transylvania. Bram

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was very interested in European folk stories and science at this time so many believe this led to some of the ideas he used in his writing. The original book was named *The Undead* but Bram later changed the title to *Dracula*. This script had been lost for many years until it was found in a barn in Pennsylvania in the early 1980s. It showed Bram's corrections and notes.

Stoker died in London on 20th April, 1912. His ashes are interred in Golders Green Crematorium. Later on his son's ashes were placed in the same urn. Many people still visit this site today.

Nowadays, *Dracula* is probably best known because of the many films and TV series that have been based on it. In Ireland, an annual Bram Stoker festival is held in Dublin each year to commemorate the writer's famous work and memory. He remains one of the country's most famous writers.



Bram Stoker Questions

Read each question carefully before writing a full answer. Remember to read through the text as you do this.

1. When and where was Bram Stoker born?

2. What was Bram like when he was a student in Trinity College?

3. How many children did Bram and his wife, Florence, have?

4. True or false – Bram decided to write Dracula after he travelled to Eastern Europe.

5. Why do people know so much about Bram Stoker's Dracula nowadays?

Bram Stoker **Answers**

1. Where was Bram Stoker born?

Bram was born in Clontarf in Dublin.

2. What was Bram like when he was a student in Trinity College?

Bram studied mathematics and was a talented athlete when he was a student in Trinity College.

3. How many children did Bram and his wife, Florence, have?

They had one son – Irving Noel Thornley Stoker.

4. True or false – Bram decided to write Dracula after he travelled to Eastern Europe.

False – Bram never travelled to Eastern Europe.

5. Why do people know so much about Bram Stoker's Dracula nowadays?

It has been made into many films and TV series.