

# DRACULA & DAUGHTERS

by  
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## Ages 9+ Discussion Notes

The activities, notes and reading questions included here are suitable for classroom, library or book group sessions.



# Pre-reading...

## Book Cover Clues

- **What's your first impression of the cover?**  
What words come to mind when you look at the cover?  
Does it feel spooky or mysterious? Why do you think that is?
- **What stands out most, and why?**  
Which image or colour captures your attention right away?
- **Who do you think the 'daughters' are, based on the picture?**  
What clues on the cover hint at their personalities or relationships?
- **How do the daughters appear? Are they alone, together, powerful, frightened, or proud?**  
What does that signal about their role in the story?
- **Where and when do you think the story takes place?**  
What do details like architecture, clothing, or surroundings suggest?
- **What mood does the cover create?**  
How do the colours, shadows, or perspective contribute to that mood?
- **What symbols can you spot?**  
Think of bats, blood, full moon, silhouettes, old houses. What might they represent?
- **Do you think Dracula is on the cover, or is it just the daughters?**  
If he is there, how is he shown? If not, why might he be missing?
- **What do you expect will happen in this story?**  
Do you think it's meant to scare you or to inspire you?
- **Does the cover remind you of any other book, film, or story you know?**  
How might this be similar or different?
- **If you could add one element to this cover, what would it be?**  
Why would that addition make the cover even better or more interesting?
- **Who do you think the cover was created for?**  
Is it aimed more at readers who like horror, adventure, history, or something else?
- **What do you find most about the cover now that you've explored it?**  
What questions would you ask the cover designer?





## Pre-reading...

### Vocabulary Check

- Here are some words and phrases you will come across in the first chapter of the book. Can you find out what they mean? What atmosphere do they help to create?

ferryman

jetty

Necropolis

vampire

desolate

undertaker

murky

Contagion

gravediggers

devilishly

cemetery

### Background Check: Discovering Dracula

- What do you think of when you hear the word “vampire”?  
Draw what you see and label with anything that comes to mind (bats, blood, castles, garlic, night-time etc.).
- In pairs or small groups, find and write down three key facts:
  1. Who is Dracula?
  2. Where does he come from?
  3. Who tries to stop him?
- Share your answers with the group. As a class, create a simple “Dracula Fact File”.
- Draw your own version of Count Dracula’s castle or design a ‘Wanted’ poster for Dracula, including the facts you discovered.
- Many of the character names from the original *Dracula* story are used in *Dracula & Daughters*. See if you can guess which ones as you read.



# Pre-reading...

## Themes

- **Themes are the main ideas that lie beneath the surface of a text.** There are many themes in *Dracula & Daughters*. Use this 'theme sheet' to record ideas as you read. How is each theme explored in the story?
- **Which are the most important? Why?**
- **Try to add at least two themes of your own.**

THEME	NOTES
Family	
Fear	
Power	
Feminism/ Equality	
Healing	
Teamwork	
Courage	



# During reading...

## Discussion Questions:

- Who or what brings Mina and Bella together?
- What are your first impressions of these characters?
- Which of the three cousins do you relate to most, and why?
- Mina wants to be a doctor, even though girls at the time weren't expected to. What does this tell us about her character?
- How does the author build a sense of tension and danger throughout the story? Create a "tension graph" as you read identifying where the tension rises and falls.
- How do the girls react once they realise their family history? How do they try to help?
- Family is very important in the story. What does "family" mean to some of the characters (e.g. Mina, Varney, Helsing)?
- What is a "dhampir"? How does a dhampir differ from a vampire?
- Why do you think the girls work better when they work together?
- How do the animals in the story make it more meaningful? What do they help us understand about the characters or themes?
- The daughters want to heal rather than hunt or harm the vampires. What does this show about kindness and empathy?
- How do you think the book challenges the idea that only men can be strong or powerful?
- Who are the strong female characters in the story?
- How do the daughters show bravery in the story? Can you give an example?
- What does Mina discover about her sister Buffy's special qualities, and how does her view of Buffy change during the story?
- Who or what is the villain in the story? Could there be more than one?
- What are Helsing's motivations? Why does his plan backfire?
- Did the book ever make you feel scared, excited, or inspired? Which moment and why?
- What lesson or message do you think Emma Carroll wants readers to take away from this story?
- What do you think might happen in the next book of the *Dracula & Daughters* series? Which characters are you most excited to see again?





# After reading...

## 5 Quick Creative Activity Ideas

### 1 Vampire Tin

In the story, the people of Temstown carry a 'vampire tin' to keep them safe. What is inside it? Design and label your own vampire tin. Write a short paragraph explaining why each item is essential.

### 2 Map of Temstown

Using descriptions from the book, create a map of Temstown or draw your favourite setting in the story (e.g. North Side Necropolis, the river, the cemetery, the Silver Quarter, the Garlic Quarter, Dr Polidori's townhouse, the Infirmary, the theatre).

### 3 Vampire Mood Board

Use dark colours, magazine cutouts, or drawings to create a gothic "mood board" inspired by the atmosphere or setting of the book.

### 4 Vampire Diary

Write a diary entry from Varney's point of view the day he is bitten by Elsie Irving. Include his emotions, fears, and motivations.

### 5 Character Interviews

In pairs, one student is a journalist, the other is a character (e.g. Mina, Bella, Buffy, Varney, Polidari, Helsing). Create and perform a short interview about what happened during the story and how it changed them.

