

Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen

David J. Skal

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The primal image of the black-caped vampire Dracula has become an indelible fixture of the modern imagination. It's recognition factor rivals, in its own perverse way, the familiarity of Santa Claus. Most of us can recite without prompting the salient characteristics of the vampire: sleeping by day in its coffin, rising at dusk to feed on the blood of the living; the ability to shapeshift into a bat, wolf, or mist; a mortal vulnerability to a wooden stake through the heart or a shaft of sunlight. In this critically acclaimed excursion through the life of a cultural icon, David Skal maps out the archetypal vampire's relentless trajectory from Victorian literary oddity to movie idol to cultural commidity, digging through the populist veneer to reveal what the prince of darkness says about us all.

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