

Ejercicios resueltos > Write in your own words

Where Does Dracula Come From?

The English seaside town of Whitby is a fishing port which has changed little for the past 300 years. Critics say that it was this picturesque town, with the imposing ruins of a thirteenth-century abbey perched on a promontory, which gave the writer Bram Stoker the idea for his world-famous book *Dracula*. The writer, his wife and his son spent the summer of 1890 in Whitby, while he was probably engaged in planning the novel.

Dracula, published in 1897, is the story of a vampire from Transylvania who travelled to England. When his ship was damaged in a terrible storm, Dracula -the vampire- jumped to land at Whitby in the shape of a huge dog. Stoker, the author, is known to have consulted books on legends from Transylvania, Moldavia, and the Carpatians at the local library at Whitby and later in the British Library in London.

The Dracula of Transylvanian legend appears to originate from Vlad Dracul II, Prince of Walachia (1456-1476), known for his prodigious cruelties both to enemies -the invading Turks- and his own people. However, he was not a vampire. It is suggested that Stoker's Count Dracula was a composite figure derived from Vlad Dracul and the Countess Báthori. This lady was a Hungarian aristocrat who was arrested in 1610 for murdering girls. It was her habit to wash in the blood of her victims in order to stay young and to maintain her skin in a perfect condition.

In your own words and based on the ideas in the text, answer the following questions. (?)

a) *Why is Whitby important to understand the origin of the novel Dracula?*

Whitby is an essential town in the creation of *Dracula* because it was in this city where its author was planning the novel while he spent the summer there with his family.

Ayuda: La respuesta la encontramos al final del primer párrafo. Bram Stoker pasó un verano en la ciudad de Whitby, con sus imponentes ruinas, y es allí donde comenzó a planear su novela.

Vocabulario: *while*: mientras; *spent*: pasaba.

b) *What do you know about Countess Báthori and why is she mentioned in the text?*

Countess Báthori was a Hungarian lady who belonged to the aristocracy and was arrested in 1610 for murdering girls. She is mentioned in the text because her habit of washing herself in the blood of her victims reminds us of Dracula, who also used his victims' blood to stay young.

Ayuda: El tercer párrafo ofrece información sobre la Condesa Báthori y explica la conexión entre ella y el Drácula creado por Bram Stoker: ambos usaban la sangre de sus víctimas para mantenerse jóvenes.

Vocabulario: *belonged*: pertenecía; *murdering*: asesinar; *reminds us*: nos recuerda.