Dracula book review

I finished this book a while ago, and now I'm starting to wish I wrote this earlier so I wouldn't be sitting here eating ice cream trying to write a book letter a day before it's due. Well anyways! Moving on from my existential crisis, this book was definitely different from anything I've read.

I'll be honest, I've never really liked classic novels or ancient stories that apparently everyone seems to know. Actually it's not even about not liking it, it's just that I've never really had an interest in reading classic stories, especially since the language is so complicated and hard to decipher, until I read this book.

Dracula has not changed my mind at all about ancient novels written by long-dead people, in fact it seems to have strengthened my opinion on why I don't read books like that. No, just kidding, but were you expecting something else?

Honestly, this book was pretty OK for a classic novel, not too boring, but captivating enough with plenty of themes, quotes, and symbols to discuss.

Themes and quotes that I now have to discuss while crying and still eating my ice cream. Yeah I'm ok. Don't worry. Just move onto the next paragraph.

Well, I was planning on discussing quotes first, themes next, then symbols, and finally some other important notable things, but I feel like the format of all my book letters are the same, and that sounds boring, so let's start with symbols! The most important and obvious would be blood, which plays a big part in Dracula.

Initially, all the references to blood don't seem significant until Mina and Dr. Siward visit one of his patients, Renfield. His behavior is odd and he tells them "'…I tried to kill him for the purpose of strengthening my vital powers by the assimilation with my own body of his life through the medium of his blood…'" (Stoker 201).

According to him, consuming someone's blood is like consuming some vital part of their life, and consuming enough gives you their " vital powers." It's hard to take what Renfield takes seriously, since he is locked up in a mental asylum, but when you compare it to what Dracula is doing, it makes sense.

As Dracula feeds on Lucy, she gets weaker while he gets stronger and younger, so perhaps drinking someone's blood actually does give you their " vital powers." Sleeping and sleepwalking has a vital role too (though I'm not sure that it's an actual symbol, maybe more of a metaphor? Allegory?).

When Jonathan first arrives at Dracula's castle, he is warned to only sleep in his bedroom, and we see why when he falls asleep in another room and almost gets bitten by the Brides of Dracula. Lucy sleepwalks, which makes her an easy target.

When she sleepwalks, Dracula finds it easier to control and influence her to make her walk out of her house, so he can take her blood. But why is she an easy target? Half-asleep people are obviously defenseless, but the novel seems to suggest that they have a deep rooted, repressed desire to get bitten, and while they are asleep or sleepwalking, their mind isn't able to keep that desire repressed.

And now the themes. Of course we have our prominent theme of good vs. evil. At one point, Dr. Seward, Van Helsing, Arthur, and Quincey Morris visit Lucy's tomb. As promised, it is empty, but soon they see a figure in white, who is undoubtedly Lucy, carrying a child. As they get closer to her and surround her, her eyes are described as " Lucy's eyes in form and color, but Lucy's eyes unclean and full of hell fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew" (Stoker 181).

Lucy's eyes look the same, they are still the same color and shape, yet there is something different about them. They seem to be full of impurity and unnaturalness, a stark contrast to how her eyes usually are. Lucy still has the same features, but just looks crueler. That's when evil is at its worst, when it disguises itself as something or someone good. Mina is a perfect example of when good is tainted by evil.

Dracula has bit her several times and even fed her his blood, and only when he is killed, is the spell lifted off her. Van Helsing suspects that Mina has been corrupted by evil and tests her multiple times to see if Dracula has truly done something to her. When he places a Communion wafer on her head, "…it had seared it…had burned into the flesh as though it had been a piece of white-hot metal" (Stoker 254).

A permanent scar is left behind, which is a physical representation of the evil inside her and a constant reminder of the evil power Dracula has over her. Another major theme was the role religion had in this novel. The book suggests that " good" is strictly Christanity, and Dracula is of course the " evil," probably representing the devil, and not just in physical appearance.

When Van Helsing asks them to assist him in eradicating Count Dracula, he refers to them as being on a religious crusade.

Van Helsing tells them all "'…. we must so work, that other poor souls perish not, whilst we can save…. how then are we to begin our strike to destroy him….. it is a terrible task that we undertake, and there may be consequences…. but to fail here, is not mere life or death. It is that we become as him, that we henceforward become foul things of the night like him….'" (Stoker 203).

Van Helsing emphasizes the importance of killing Dracula by telling them that they must destroy him, as it is a religious duty, and if they fail, then what's the difference between them and Dracula? It would be almost as if they have become devils like Dracula as well.

In chapter 24, as they pursue the Count across Europe, Van Helsing tells Mina the nature of their pursuit, by saying "' Thus are we ministers of God's own wish. That the world, and men for whom His Son die, will not be given over to monsters, whose very existence would defame Him.

He have allowed us to redeem one soul already, and we go out as the old knights of the Cross to redeem more. Like them we shall travel towards the sunrise. And like them, if we fall, we fall in good cause'" (Stoker 274). Van Helsing draws a very clear line between good and evil here, but it is more than just that.