

- Unlike the female characters, Van Helsing undergoes no great transformation in the novel and he remains a reliable, moral and religious man even when confronted with great evil.
- Dracula embraces the narrative of unyielding religious beliefs and uses Van Helsing as a Christian god-like figure to drive this narrative. It is interesting to note that while Helsing's voice is prominent throughout the book, only one entry titled, "Dr. Seward's Phonograph Diary Spoken by Van Helsing," is actually told by his voice.
- Van Helsing's quirks are what make him so interesting - we are vaguely aware that Dr Seward once saved his life and that his wife is living in an insane asylum (following the death of their son). He also has a propensity to laugh at particularly grim moments.
- Many people remember Van Helsing as the vampire hunter, but he also represents the triumph of wisdom over ignorance.
- However, Van Helsing is also prone to the odd emotional breakdown making him a tonic to the "stiff upper-lip" mentality of the Englishmen.
- **Keywords to describe Van Helsing:** moral, driven, focused, accomplished, intelligent, faithful, loyal, religious, brave, strong-minded, kind, dominant, emotional, empathetic, old, eccentric, foreign, mad.

Appearances in the novel

- Mina fully describes Van Helsing in Chapter 14: *"a man of medium height, strongly built, with his shoulders set back over a broad, deep chest and a neck well balanced on the trunk as the head is on the neck. The poise of the head strikes me at once as indicative of thought and power. The head is noble, well-sized, broad, and large behind the ears. The face, clean-shaven, shows a hard, square chin, a large resolute, mobile mouth, a good-sized nose, rather straight, but with quick, sensitive nostrils, that seem to broaden as the big bushy brows come down and the mouth tightens. The forehead is broad and fine, rising at first almost straight and then sloping back above two bumps or ridges wide apart, such a forehead that the reddish hair cannot possibly tumble over it, but falls naturally back and to the sides. Big, dark blue eyes are set widely apart and are quick and tender or stern with the man's moods."*
- He is also described by Dr Seward, his former student, in Chapter 9: *"he is a seemingly arbitrary man, this is because he knows what he is talking about better than anyone else. He is a philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day, and he has, I believe, an absolutely open mind. This, with an iron nerve, a temper of the ice-brook, and indomitable resolution, self-command, and toleration exalted from virtues to blessings, and the kindest and truest heart that beats, these form his equipment for the noble work that he is doing for mankind, work both in theory and practice, for his views are as wide as his all-embracing sympathy."*