

Mina Harker character profile

Who?

- Wilhelmina "Mina" Harker (née Murray) is a young schoolmistress who aspires to become one of the *"lady journalists"* which are emerging during the Victorian era. Therefore, she keeps a journal which forms part of the epistolic narrative.
- Mina is intelligent and strong-minded, so much so that her male peers congratulate her on her *"man's brain"*. She is a problem solver and works hard to satisfy her husband and his friends.
- As the central female character in the novel, Mina plays an important role within the crew of light. Ultimately, it is her ability to determine where Dracula is located under hypnosis which leads to his destruction.

Analysis

- Mina, following in the footsteps of Queen Victoria herself, places family and relationships at the core of her being. She nurses her sick husband, Jonathan Harker, back to health during what was technically their honeymoon. Indeed, she is willing to drop everything to be with him and does not demand to know the details of his encounter with Count Dracula. Her maternal selflessness is also shown through her care for Lucy - despite their moral difference, Mina writes to her best friend frequently and saves her from Dracula during her sleepwalking adventures in Whitby.
- This virtue makes Mina the ideal Victorian woman, with a clear reputation. Unlike Lucy, she is not promiscuous or flirtatious and submits to the men around her. Her sole purpose it seems is to please men, despite her ability to adopt new skills easily and academic achievements. For example, whilst Mina quickly learns how to use a typewriter, she uses it only to help her husband.
- Due to her status as an icon of goodness and respectability, it is particularly shocking for the reader when we learn that Dracula has tainted Mina. This reinforces xenophobic ideology surrounding foreign predators (particularly from old-fashioned Eastern Europe) who delight in attacking young women. Therefore, despite her intelligence and relatively high status, Mina remains a vulnerable target for Dracula - she has everything to lose.
- The men's respect for Mina centres around her chastity, as Victorian women were expected to remain pure until marriage. Whilst her beautiful counterpart Lucy receives three marriage proposals - and enjoys playing hard to get - Mina is entirely devoted to Jonathan and would never risk being called a whore. However, the double standards regarding men's chastity are also hinted at early in the novel, as Jonathan is tempted by the voluptuous vampire women and their (supposedly) sexual advances. Despite his guilt, he does not reveal this to Mina, creating a rift in their relationship. Victorian men were also known to sleep with prostitutes or have a mistress. If a woman had an affair however, divorced or slept outside of marriage she was considered ruined or