



In *DRACULA IN LOVE*, the new novel by Karen Essex debuting next week from Doubleday (see review [here](#)), Mina Harker finally comes clean about what happened between her and a certain Count. Harker agreed to a short telephone interview under the condition that she not be asked about her present identity or her life today. Here is what the vampire's eternal muse had to say:

FANGORIA: Ms. Harker, journalists and vampire hunters have been trying to track you down for 113 years. Why did you choose now to come out with your own—and, may I say, startlingly different—version of the story?

MINA HARKER: As you can imagine, I needed to wait until some people died, and in my circle, death can take a very long time, if it comes at all. Also, for a long time, I thought my story too outlandish for the public to accept. I did not wish to be scorned as a fantasist or attention-seeker. But whereas humans once shuddered at the very notion of vampires, now, more and more “normal” humans are fantasizing about becoming one. The timing seemed perfect.

Besides, this is the age of the tell-all, so I am telling all; I'm just omitting the modern habit of going into rehab first. I find this need to repent for, be cured of and then confess one's “transgressions” to be a tedious aspect of today's culture. I prefer to keep a stiff Victorian upper lip. I am telling my story; I am not *confessing* it. Do you know the expression, “Never complain, never explain?” My version is “Never repent, never recant.”

FANG: Well, I *confess* that I found some of your revelations surprising and shocking. You didn't hold back on the sexual exploits, did you?

HARKER: When I was a young woman back in the 1890s, women's sexual pleasure was a taboo subject. We do not want to return to those days, do we?

Exclusive: Mina Harker speaks!

Written by FANGORIA Staff
Thursday, 05 August 2010 15:39

Today's world is drenched in sexual imagery. I admit that I, too, have surfed the 'net and seen its pervasive porn. In such an environment, how could anyone find the erotic scenes with the man I love shocking? Many of today's vampire stories are written for young girls, and it would not be appropriate to expose those gentle maidens to the spectacular eroticism that one can experience with an immortal. However, my story is for the more discriminating adult reader, who is bound to be curious about these delicious details. Besides, my ghostwriter, Ms. Essex—your readers might know her from her biography of the late pinup icon Bettie Page—tends to lean in that direction. "God is in the details, Mina," she always says. "Don't be shy. Tell me more."

FANG: Without revealing any spoilers, you take us on a journey that crosses centuries and introduces exotic mythological creatures into what used to be a traditional vampire tale. Are we really to believe this hidden history of blood-drinking?

HARKER: Modern readers have no idea of the real roots of the vampire. Bram Stoker gathered a lot of information, some of it true and some of it based on old wives' tales. He simplified a very complicated matter for easier public consumption, creating rules for the vampire's creation and destruction. Please! As I say in the book, crosses and garlic have no power in the supernatural world!

People love things served up in the form of good vs. evil, though we all know that reality is always more complex. There have always been sexy, scary blood-drinkers, and there have always been immortals—obviously. I'm not going to explain it to you again. You did read the book, didn't you?

FANG: Yes, and you do make a good case for the history of these immortal bloodsuckers. I just had no idea that it dated back to pre-biblical times.

HARKER: It predates time itself, my dear.

FANG: In DRACULA IN LOVE, you accuse your tormentors, who were the heroes of Stoker's classic, of some appalling behavior. How do we know that you are telling the truth, and moreover, how did he get your side of the story so wrong?

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HARKER: Bram needed what you now call a “blockbuster.” He had spent years and years as a theater manager living in the shadow of the actor Henry Irving. He had written a few books that didn’t sell very well, and he was determined to reverse that. Besides, he needed money! And to be fair, he was completely under the spell of the man he named Van Helsing, who, as you now know, had some very strange ideas about blood and about women! I don’t hold any grudges. Men of that era had absolutely no clue about the female psyche, nor did they want one. Today’s men are much more understanding.

As to my telling the truth—well, you did not live in the 19th century! I decided to reveal what life really was like back then. “Career” women were considered freaks. You have no idea of how “fallen” women were treated. Despite all of that, I miss those days—candlelit rooms, feather beds, soft velvet gowns, satin gloves, not to mention the beautiful lingerie. Don’t get me started! As you know, sometimes the forbidden enhances eroticism...or is that all lost now?

FANG: Why did you allow Essex to call the book DRACULA IN LOVE when it really is your story? Why not MINA IN LOVE?

HARKER: I’m a little miffed about that. I thought I was being clever, telling my story at a time when the world has a mania for vampires, and when women have made unprecedented gains. I gave the story to a writer known for retelling the stories of history’s misunderstood women, and I certainly have been one of those. But she sat me down and explained that, feminism be damned, the Count is still the bigger draw—at the box office, on bookshelves, everywhere! “Face it, Mina, in the eyes of the public, you’re nothing without him.” Indeed! I don’t want to imply that he and I are competitive with each other; we’re not. I was just hoping that in the 21st century, a woman could get equal billing. I guess I’ll have to wait another hundred years.

FANG: Whoa, are you saying that you and he are still together...that he is still...but at the end of the story...

HARKER: (*interrupts*) This interview is now over. (*Click.*)