Written by Samantha Fox
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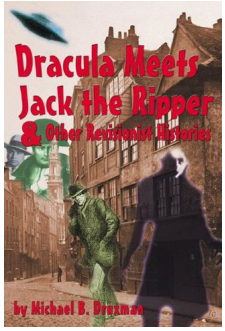
BearManor Fiction’s DRACULA MEETS JACK THE RIPPER & OTHER REVISIONIST HISTORIES, by Michael B. Druxman (pictured), is a dreary compilation of stories featuring history’s most written about (and written about, and written about…) characters.



Druxman has a laundry list of past achievements, as described in this book’s lengthy “About the Author” section, having been a screenwriter, playwright, Hollywood historian, publicist, teacher of dramatic writing and film-appreciation courses and author of the much-mentioned autobiography MY FORTY-FIVE YEARS IN HOLLYWOOD AND HOW I ESCAPED ALIVE. With one glance at the unprofessional-looking Photoshopped cover, it’s evident that this effort is meant for a younger audience. However, before Druxman even begins his first tale, he carries on about the woes of being a writer who has already written his memoirs. This is clearly misplaced, as chances are a teenager about to dive into a book with Dracula in the title probably does not know, or care, about its author’s colorful career in Hollywood.

The stories themselves—“The Old Coot,” “Dracula Meets Jack the Ripper,” “Big Al and Desperate Dan,” “Napoleon Brandy,” “The Space Ship” and “Bugsy’s Boys”—are unfortunately nothing memorable. In “The Old Coot,” an elderly man met by a young boy reading about Jesse James in a trainyard turns out to be the famous outlaw. “Dracula Meets Jack the Ripper” involves friends Van Helsing and Dracula (presented here as a cowardly faux vampire) in a scenario involving the Whitechapel slayer. “Big Al and Desperate Dan,” concerns—who else?—Al Capone, senile and retired in Florida, trying to persuade an individual he thinks is allegedly dead mobster John Dillinger to do one last heist for him. In “Napoleon Brandy,” a man invents a time machine and brings Napoleon Bonaparte to the present day (BILL AND TED, anyone?). Moby Dick is seen not by Ishmael on his boat, but from the title vessel of “The Space Ship,” while “Bugsy’s Boys” is about an assassin looking to write about his past.

Overall, this is quite the dismal collection. The stories lack development, as do the characters. The author tries to camouflage this by employing some of history and fiction’s most overworked

individuals as his protagonists, but still fails to create a worthwhile read for young adults—or anyone else.