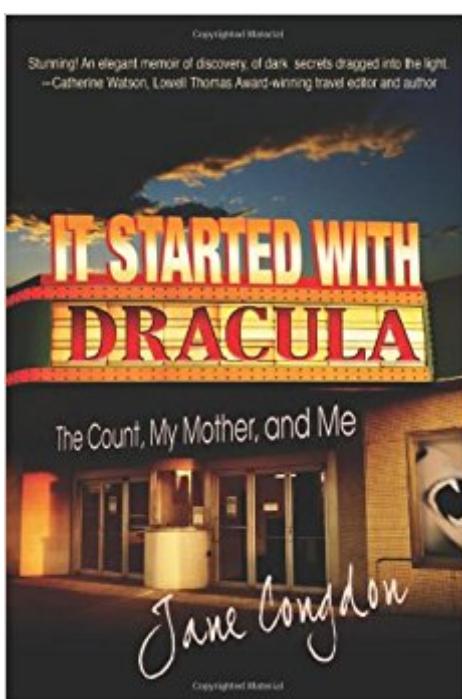


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# It Started With Dracula: The Count, My Mother, And Me



## **Synopsis**

The terrifying legend of Count Dracula silently skulking through the Transylvania night may have terrified generations of filmgoers, but the tall, elegant vampire captivated and electrified a young Jane Congdon igniting a dream to one day see his mysterious land of ancient castles and misty hollows. Four decades later she finally takes her long-awaited trip--never dreaming that it would unearth decades-buried memories of life with an alcoholic mother. Set in Dracula's back yard, the story unfolds in a mere eighteen days as the author follows the footsteps of Dracula from Bucharest, to the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea. Dracula's legend becomes the prism through which she would lay claim to a happiness she had never known. A memoir full of surprises, Jane's story is one of hope, love--and second chances.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"... an astonishing, unexpected detour in healing a wounded heart." --Charles Whitfield, MD, Healing the Child Within

Jane Congdon, a book editor for thirty years at Cengage Learning, is a member of West Virginia Writers and a veteran of writing workshops, including the October Writing Festival at Ghost Ranch. Jane is a member of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula. She likes bats--and all things Dracula. Jane resides in Cincinnati, Ohio.

This book is for those who love the Dracula legend, right? Wrong! It is for a much larger audience

than just those who are fascinated with the vampire. For readers who loved the Dracula movies and stories, the book will remind them of scenes and passages they loved and then teach them about the countryside presumed to have given rise to the legends. I felt as if I were right there with Jane climbing the steps to the castle, shopping in the small towns, or racing in the car to catch a photo of a Romanian train. But this book is for many more than besides those who are fascinated by Dracula. Any reader who grew up with a parent who failed to nurture...or who had to deal with an alcoholic...or who needed to heal childhood wounds as an adult...will find this book fascinating. Jane writes with refreshing honesty about her experiences, thoughts, and feelings. The story moves frequently but seamlessly between Jane's trip to Romania and memories of her childhood in West Virginia. I kept turning the pages to see what sort of resolution visiting Dracula's haunts could possibly bring to the scars left over from a childhood of disappointment and belittlement. Read the book to find out!

If you like to travel, and I do, you'll appreciate Jane Congdon's approach to touring Romania. She had thought about and wanted to visit that country for decades so that she could chase the Dracula she came to know via movies from the 50s and 60s. If you knew the author, and I do, you could hear her voice and see her facial and body expressions throughout this book. If you don't know the author, you'll have someone you know in mind as you read, and you'll hear that person's voice because this is writing that speaks to us. What a magnificent book Jane has written. I've always known she was talented and she's certainly made me laugh over the years. Now she has made me think, laugh, and cry. If you're thinking aw, this reviewer is just prejudiced on behalf of her friend, you'd be half right. I certainly was pre-disposed to like *It Started With Dracula*. Fortunately I found myself pleased because I loved it on many levels based on the author's skill, not her friendship. I wouldn't have dared write this review if I didn't find the book to be such a treasure. I'd have simply mumbled "liked the book" to Jane, and moved on. It can't have been easy, but once Jane started she put much of herself and of her mother out there for all of us to read. What a gift. It serves to remind that we seldom know all that is going on within the lives of the people closest to us. READ THIS BOOK and learn about Christopher Lee and his Dracula. READ IT and learn about Vlad the Impaler. READ IT and learn about Romania. READ IT and learn what a woman traveling in a foreign country learned about her own life and family. READ IT, learn, enjoy, and rejoice at the end. And if there is a similar story within you, don't be afraid to write that story. This book may inspire you to do just that.

My review title is "It's Unexpected..." because it was. I love the unexpected. Throughout the reading of the book, I was surprised...by the wonderful account of the travels through Romania, by the author's openness of a very difficult (to say the least) childhood, and the amazing sense of humor while connecting all the dots of her life. So many of us have stories to tell, but Jane Congdon told it with great writing, humor, and real insight into the meaning of life. I'd write more, but I'd rather spend my time reading it again!

To begin, the comments and readers' reviews on this page for It Started with Dracula were right on target. The observations are so eloquent and precise that I cannot top any of the comments re the book or the praise for Jane Congdon, the author. I can tell you this, as an avid reader of many diverse topics, this book was compelling, riveting and revealing. As I read, I felt my best friend had confided in me, exposing her innermost secrets she'd hidden (even from herself) for many years. I couldn't put the book down, and I would not hesitate to say, "read this book."

I found this book to be very interesting. It made me feel as if I was right there with Jane seeing the mountains and feeling what she was feeling. You take so much with you from your childhood that it carries with you through life. I am going to read this book again as I want to make sure that I didn't miss anything. I was a child in the same time frame and can relate to things that were happening at the same time. It brought back lots of memories for me.

This was a great book! I loved the memoir and how it was interspersed with memories about Dracula. I've been saying I needed to read Dracula for years, and this book made me want to do it. The author approached her memoir with good humor and honesty. Definitely worth reading.

Ms Congdon's first book about self discovery and acceptance is extremely well written. She has a wonderful way with words. Her parallels between Dracula's movies and her younger years growing up are definitely page turners. You will not be disappointed if you give It Started With Dracula a chance.

While I loved the book, I don't think I should write a review for it. Jane Congdon is my sister.

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