Two accounts, one event

The storm at Whitby in Chapter 7 | Studying Dracula | Version 1 | October 2026

Chapter 7 tells the arrival of the Russian schooner *Demeter* at Whitby twice: first in a cutting from a London newspaper, *The Dailygraph*, sent by its Whitby correspondent; then in the ship's log, written by the captain on the voyage. The same event is seen from the outside and from the inside. Compare what each document can know, and how it sounds.



Whitby harbour at sunset. Courtesy of the Bram Stoker Estate.

Account 1: the newspaper

> "By the courtesy of the chief boatman, I was, as your correspondent, permitted to climb on deck, and was one of a small group who saw the dead seaman whilst actually lashed to the wheel. It was no wonder that the coastguard was surprised, or even awed, for not often can such a sight have been seen. The man was simply fastened by his hands, tied one over the other, to a spoke of the wheel. Between the inner hand and the wood was a crucifix, the set of beads on which it was fastened being around both wrists and wheel, and all kept fast by the binding cords." (*The Dailygraph*, Chapter 7)

Account 2: the log

> "4 August.—Still fog, which the sunrise cannot pierce. I know there is sunrise because I am a sailor, why else I know not. I dared not go below, I dared not leave the helm; so here all night I stayed, and in the dimness of the night I saw It—Him! God forgive me, but the mate was right to jump overboard. ... But I am captain, and I must not leave my ship. But I shall baffle this fiend or monster, for I shall tie my hands to the wheel when my strength begins to fail, and along with them I shall tie that which He—It!—dare not touch." (Log of the *Demeter*, Chapter 7)

Compare the evidence

Question	The newspaper	The log
Who writes, and for whom?		
What can the writer see or know?		

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Question	The newspaper	The log
What can the writer not know?		
How does the writer sound? Pick two words or phrases.		
What does the reader know that the writer does not?		

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Think about form

- The newspaper describes the crucifix; the log explains it. Which is more frightening, and why?
- The log breaks off and ends with a prayer. What does a document that stops do to a reader?
- After the log, the newspaper reports that "the verdict was an open one". Why might Bram leave the official record uncertain?
- The whole novel is a collection of documents like these. What does Chapter 7 teach you to look for in the rest of it?

Write a paragraph

Which account is more effective at creating fear? Use at least one short quotation from each.

Extension

Write the *Dailygraph* correspondent's third report from Whitby, a week after the storm, using only what a reporter could have discovered by then. In a note of 100 words, explain what your reporter could not know.

The newspaper cutting runs to about 2,800 words and the log to about 2,000; both are in Chapter 7 of any complete edition, or free at Project Gutenberg (ebook 345).

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