

ACT I

SETTING: *The woods below Castle Dracula.*

AT RISE: *The stage is black. We see the glow from the light of the moon. We hear the sounds of night – crickets, a hoot owl. A wolf howls in the distance. The sound of bat wings then, upstage, we see two red eyes glowing. Music begins under. DORINA enters, as if a trance. She crosses to center then...*

STEFAN (O.S.)

Dorina? Dorina!

(Music stops. Red eyes disappear. STEFAN enters and sees her.)

STEFAN

There you are. Why did you wander away?

DORINA

I'm sorry, Stefan...

STEFAN

I tied up the horses, looked up and you were gone! I was worried something had happened to you, darling. You've been acting so strange lately...

*(He crosses and tries to take her in his arms. She moves away.
Beat. STEFAN looks around.)*

I don't recognize this place. Where are we?

DORINA

In the woods below Castle Dracula. See?

(She points off.)

STEFAN

Ah, yes – up there, on that cliff. What a dreary old ruin.

(A wolf howls, closer. STEFAN looks around, unnerved.)

We should get going. This night air can't be good for you...

DORINA

No. Not yet.

STEFAN

But Dorina...

(She kisses him.)

DORINA

Stay with me.

(They kiss deeply, passionately.)

STEFAN

I have a blanket back in the carriage. Shall I fetch it?

DORINA

Yes, please.

(She kisses him.)

Hurry.

(STEFAN exits. The wolf howls again. DORINA crosses down left, looking up at the moon. Music begins. DRACULA steps out from behind the tree and crosses down right, his eyes never leaving DORINA. As if compelled by an unseen force, DORINA slowly turns her head and sees him. He holds out his hand. DORINA crosses to him slowly, as if hypnotized. She takes his hand. A wolf howls once more. DORINA tilts her head back, exposing her neck. DRACULA slowly bends closer then bites her neck. She clutches his shoulders convulsively as he drinks his fill of her blood.)

STEFAN (O.S.)

Dorina!

(DRACULA straightens and looks over his shoulder, blood dripping from his mouth. He lets go of DORINA and runs off opposite. DORINA stands stock still, eyes still closed. STEFAN enters out of breath, carrying a blanket.)

Dorina, who was that man?!

(DORINA collapses to the ground.)

STEFAN (cont.)

Dorina!

(He rushes to her.)

Dorina...? Oh my god... *Help! Somebody help me!*

(A wolf howls closer than ever. STEFAN picks DORIAN up in his arms and carries her off. DRACULA enters and watches a moment. The sound of many wolves howling at once. DRACULA raises his hand and their howls turn into whines. He suddenly points to the unseen carriage offstage. The sound of wolves snarling and running in that direction.)

STEFAN (O.S.)

Oh my god... no! No!

(The music crescendos as DRACULA watches the slaughter.)

NOOOOOOO!

(A crashing silence. We hear the crickets again. DRACULA turns and walks off opposite. An owl hoots. We hear the sound of a bat flapping through the night. A wolf whines, then howls. With appropriate music underscoring, the scene shifts to a local Tavern, two years later. GUSTAF and ZORA sit at a table, drinking and laughing. GUSTAF lifts his glass.)

GUSTAF

Boris! Refill!

(BORIS enters with a pitcher and refills Gustaf's glass. JONATHON HARKER enters. BORIS hastens over to him and helps him off with his cloak.)

BORIS

Good evening, sir. It is a cold night, no? I have a lovely wine, sure to warm the bones.

HARKER

That would be fine. Thank you.

(BORIS hurries off. GUSTAF and ZORA turn to HARKER.)

GUSTAF

You are not from these parts, sir. Your manner of speaking – you are an Englishman, no?

HARKER

I've just arrived from London.

GUSTAF

London – ho! We do not have many visitors from London. I can only remember one, in fact, and the poor man...

ZORA

Hush, Gustaf! That was long ago and best forgotten.

(BORIS enters with a bottle of wine and a glass.)

BORIS

Here you are, my friend.

(He sets the glass on the table and pours a bit of wine in it.)

This is called Golden Mediasch. Here, sip it slowly...

(He hands the glass to HARKER, who sips it.)

Well...?

HARKER

Good! Very good!

BORIS

Aha! What did I tell you? And just the thing to warm you up on a cold night, no? Have another glass.

(He pours more.)

GUSTAF

What is your name, stranger?

HARKER

Harker. Jonathon Harker.

ZORA

Is this your first visit to Transylvania, Herr Harker?

HARKER
Yes.

GUSTAF
And how do you find our country?

HARKER
Breathtaking. I have never seen such mountains.

GUSTAF
The Carpathians. They are the most beautiful mountains in the world, no? But of course, we think so – for we are of them.

ZORA
Are you here on business, sir?

HARKER
Yes. I have come to arrange a real estate transaction for a client.

ZORA
Your client is hoping to buy land here in our beautiful mountains, then?

GUSTAF
And why shouldn't he, eh? The Carpathians are the most beautiful mountains...

ZORA
You said that already, Gustaf.

GUSTAF
So I did.

(He raises his glass in a toast.)

To the Carpathians!

(BORIS and ZORA each raise their glass.)

BORIS/ZORA
The Carpathians!

(They look at HARKER, waiting.)

HARKER
Yes. Of course. The Carpathians!

(He raises his glass. They drink.)

HARKER

Actually, my client lives *here* and wants to buy property in London.

GUSTAF

(Raising his glass)

To London!

(BORIS, ZORA and HARKER each raise their glass.)

BORIS/ZORA/HARKER

London!

(They all drink.)

ZORA

And who is this lucky client, sir, so fortunate as to engage your services?

HARKER

Count Dracula.

(ZORA stares. BORIS takes a step back. GUSTAF raises his glass.)

GUSTAF

To...

(He stops and looks at HARKER.)

What did you say?

HARKER

Dracula. My client is Count Dracula.

(BORIS takes another step back and crosses himself.)

What is it? Why do you look at me so? What is the matter?

ZORA

Ordog! Stregoica!

(She stands up and points at HARKER threateningly.)

Vrolok!

GUSTAF

Zora! Enough!

(GUSTAF stands up and pulls her away then turns to HARKER.)

Herr Harker, you must leave our country at once.

HARKER

Don't be ridiculous, man. I've only just arrived. I've yet to meet my client.

GUSTAF

Then you might still escape.

HARKER

Escape...?

GUSTAF

I can say no more.

HARKER

You've said nothing! Will someone tell me what's going on?

ZORA

Dracula.

GUSTAF

Zora, for God's sake...

ZORA

I will speak, Gustaf!

(To HARKER)

The path you follow is a dangerous one, friend. Those who travel it never return unscathed. Some never return at all.

GUSTAF

(To HARKER)

These mountains are known for their superstitions...

ZORA

I speak not of superstitions!

ZORA (cont.)

(To HARKER)

Two years ago, my sister and her lover were found murdered in the woods below Castle Dracula.

HARKER

Murdered?

ZORA

Dorina's throat was punctured. Stefan's body mutilated.

GUSTAF

The work of *wolves*...

ZORA

Why would wolves eat one and not the other? Dorina was not killed by a wolf!

HARKER

Then what?

ZORA

Ordog! Stregoica! Vrolok!

HARKER

Please! In English.

GUSTAF

Satan. Witch. Vampire.

(BORIS crosses himself. Beat. HARKER laughs suddenly.)

HARKER

Ridiculous!

ZORA

You dare mock me!

(She rushes at him. GUSTAF stops her.)

Have you any idea of the pain? I had to identify her body! I had to...

(She starts to cry.)

She was my sister. My little Dorina.

(GUSTAF takes her in his arms. BORIS tosses back a drink.)

HARKER

I did not mean to mock, madam. Please accept my condolences. The death of a loved one...

ZORA

Death? If only she knew the peace of death.

HARKER

You said she was murdered.

ZORA

And yet she walks the earth!

GUSTAF

Zora!

ZORA

I have seen her! I have witnessed the...

GUSTAF

Would you bring the Evil Eye upon us?! Speak of this no further!

(Beat. HARKER gathers up his cloak.)

HARKER

I must be going. Count Dracula is expecting me.

ZORA

You refuse to listen, then – to be warned?

HARKER

I am not a superstitious man.

ZORA

So much the worse for you.

(He turns to leave.)

Wait!

(He turns back. ZORA pulls a crucifix from around her neck and holds it up.)

ZORA (cont.)

This crucifix was given to me by my mother. It has been in my family for five generations.

(She hands it to him. He holds it up and examines it.)

HARKER

Exquisite. I've never seen anything like it.

ZORA

It is one of a kind. I want you to have it.

HARKER

Oh no – I couldn't. An heirloom like this should stay in your family.

(He tries to give it back. She refuses.)

ZORA

It will keep you safe. Promise me you will wear it at all times.

HARKER

I can't.

ZORA

You must!

HARKER

You don't understand. I am an atheist. An Unbeliever.

ZORA

God does not need you to believe in order to exist, my friend. Promise me. For your mother's sake.

(HARKER slips it over his neck.)

HARKER

I promise. Thank you.

ZORA

My name is Zora Barbu. Remember that.

(HARKER nods.)

God go with you, Jonathon Harker.