

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. Music begins under. DORINA enters, as if a trance. She crosses to center then...*

STEFAN (O.S.)

Dorina? Dorina!

(Music stops. STEFAN enters and sees her.)

STEFAN

Dorina, 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. You've been acting so strange lately...

(STEFAN looks around.)

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

DORINA

In the woods below Castle Dracula.

(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 be leaving.

DORINA

No. Not yet.

STEFAN

But Dorina...

(She kisses him.)

STEFAN

You're shivering. 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 appears from the shadows 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 around. He lets go of DORINA and melts into the shadows. DORINA stands still, eyes still closed. STEFAN enters out of breath, carrying a blanket.)

Dorina, who was that man?!

(DORINA collapses against him.)

Dorina!

(He starts to help her off.)

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

(They are gone. DRACULA enters from the shadows. He lifts his hand. The sound of many wolves howling at once...)

(DRACULA points in STEFAN's direction. The sound of wolves attacking.)

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. An owl hoots. DRACULA turns into a bat and flies off. A wolf howls. Music under as, the scene shifts to a local Tavern, two years later. GUSTAF and ZORA stand behind the bar. JONATHON HARKER enters. GUSTAF crosses to him and helps him off with his cloak.)

GUSTAF

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

HARKER

I would like that very much. Thank you.

(HARKER sits at a table. GUSTAF crosses back up to the bar. ZORA crosses down to HARKER.)

ZORA

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 woman...

ZORA

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

(GUSTAF returns with a bottle of wine and three glasses.)

GUSTAF

Here you are, my friend. We shall join you in a drink, eh? To celebrate your journey.

(He sets the glasses on the table and pours a bit of wine in HARKER's.)

GUSTAF (cont.)

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

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

Well...?

HARKER

Good! Very good!

GUSTAF

Aha! What did I tell you?

(He pours a glass for himself and ZORA.)

ZORA

What is your name, stranger?

HARKER

Harker. Jonathon Harker.

ZORA

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!

ZORA
(Raising her glass)
The Carpathians!

(They look at HARKER, waiting.)

HARKER
Yes. Of course. The Carpathians!

(He raises his glass. They drink.)

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

GUSTAF
(Raising his glass)
To London!

ZORA/HARKER
(Raising their glasses)
London!

(They drink.)

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

HARKER
Count Dracula.

GUSTAF
(Raising his glass)
To...

(He stops and looks at HARKER.)

GUSTAF (cont.)

What did you say?

HARKER

Dracula. My client is Count Dracula.

(They stare at him, horrified.)

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

ZORA

Ordog! Stregoica!

(She points at HARKER threateningly.)

Vrolok!

GUSTAF

Zora! Enough!

(GUSTAF 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!

(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

Dorina was not killed by a wolf!

HARKER

Then what?

ZORA

Ordog! Stregoica! Vrolok!

HARKER

Please! In English.

GUSTAF

Satan. Witch.

ZORA

Vampire.

(Beat. HARKER laughs suddenly.)

HARKER

What utter nonsense.

ZORA

You dare mock me! Have you any idea of the pain? I had to identify her body! I had to... She was my sister. My little Dorina.

(GUSTAF takes her in his arms.)

HARKER

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 his wrath 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? So much the worse for you.

(He turns to leave.)

ZORA (cont.)

Wait!

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

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

(She hands it to him. He 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.

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.)

ZORA (cont.)

God go with you, Jonathon Harker.

(HARKER exits.)

May He keep you safe at Castle Dracula.

(Lights out on the Tavern. Music under as the scene shifts to the Castle Dracula. DRACULA enters and gestures off.)

DRACULA

Welcome to my house. Enter freely and of your own will.

(HARKER enters, lugging his heavy suitcase. He places it on the floor with a thud.)

I am Dracula. I have been expecting you, Jonathon Harker.

(He shakes HARKER's hand. HARKER grimaces in pain, his knees almost buckling.)

HARKER

You have a strong grip, sir.

(DRACULA releases his hand.)

DRACULA

A thousand apologies. Come – let me show you to your room.

(He picks up HARKER's suitcase easily in one hand.)

HARKER

I can carry my own bag, sir.

DRACULA

Nonsense. You are my guest. Follow me.

(They walk through the castle.)

HARKER

Your home is quite vast. And very, very old...

DRACULA

Castle Dracula was built by my ancestors over a thousand years ago.