

# Dracula-The Curse of the Undead

By Valerie Goodwin

Based on Bram Stoker's classic chiller

## CHARACTERS:

1. **Van HELSING**: Dutch, eccentric, charismatic, Anthony Hopkins type
2. **MINA** :beautiful, prim, rather humourless type
3. **LUCY** :beautiful, wanton, young, flirty; later a vampire
4. **JANE** :plain, nondescript, a 'friend' and confidante
5. **HARKER** :vacuous Keanu Reeves type
6. **Franz** : old innkeeper
7. **MAGDA** :his wife
8. **QUINCY** :dashing Westerner, heroic, witty
9. **Arthur Godalming** : thoroughly British Lord
10. **Jack Seward**:asylum doctor, studious earnest
11. **Renfield**:crazy fly eater
- 12.**Dracula**: foreign Nobleman, pale, thin, of incredible powers
- 13.Vampire Girls: strangely attractive
- 14.Gypsies: swarthy hot blooded types

SET: 4 HUGE ARCHES, ONE STAGE RIGHT, ONE STAGE LEFT, AND TWO FACING THE AUDIENCE.

All joined at the top by battlements and pinnacles, crumbling gargoyles.

Huge stones painted to look like granite, grey and mouldy, and ancient dragon and wolves and bats, swords and daggers, carvings ( painted) on the arches.

Also a chaise longue and aspidistra on a jardiniere stand (that wheels on and off- or set up extreme stage left.), and the big old scarred table for van Helsing. A throne like chair. A chair with straps for the lunatics, and strait jackets.

Props: Crucifixes, gingham cloth for the inn. Rats as needed. A big wind up gramophone with His Masters Voice speaker. A doctor's Gladstone Bag. Carpet Bags for Jonathan.

Anti-Vampire paraphernalia.

Sound :Wolves. Carriages on rough roads. Wind, storm, lightning etc.

Violins.

Prologue: **VAN HELSING** prepares his leather doctor's bag, with equipment.

*As he speaks he takes from his bag and ticks off on his list until they are all on the table before him.*

*Hammer, soldering iron, wafers, holy water, garlic, stakes. Scalpels, lancets, chisel, screwdriver.*

'My friends all, I know that still, even now, there are some amongst you who do not yet believe. But so it was with .....Edison, and Newton, and Galileo. There were always unbelievers. Sceptics. Electricity. The power of the steam engine. Gravity.

*He picks up the crucifix and examines it thoughtfully.*

There are always Mysteries. The Unexplained. How is it that some live , over a hundred years? Why is it that one brother is a psychopath, and this one- a priest?

*He stares directly into the audience.*

Genetics. Nature, red in tooth and claw. Parasites..In the Pampas lands of South America are bats that come at night and suck from the veins of cattle in the fields. And giant bats in the Pacific, that when a ship is anchored off shore from their islands, will gorge themselves on the bodies of the sleeping.

When a stone is dropped in a pool, the ripples spread outwards.

*Violin plays.*

*He exits. The objects are left downstage extreme right.*

*Act one scene one*

*3 girls, reading letters and SEWING on a day bed in England in later years of 19<sup>th</sup> century*

**MINA** :Listen to this: 'crossing the bridge in Buda Pest I felt I was crossing from West to East'.

**LUCY** :Oh Mina- I'm sick of hearing those letters from Jonathan. You've done nothing but read them over and over since you got them. Come and help me choose what to wear tonight!

**MINA** :Not now, Lucy. I can't get the pictures out of my mind- Jonathan in that terrible, lonely land- a whirlpool of all the darkest superstitions, the war torn country fought over by Attila the Hun, Turks, Vandals-

**LUCY** :

For goodness sake, let's talk of something else! Now how about my hair? In ringlets, or ribbons?

**MINA** :Lucy how can you rattle on about your dresses and hairstyles when I am worried for Jonathan's well being? I have n't heard from him in weeks- in his last letter, when he stayed at that old inn, and the old peasant tried to warn him-

**LUCY** :Oh , please, Mina. In this day and age, to believe in ghouls and demons is simply....ridiculous. Old fashioned! Out of date!

Oh, but if you're going to stay in here and mope, I'll ask Jane here to help me get ready for dinner. I must look my best for my three suitors!

**JANE** :You are lucky, Lucy, having three such handsome young men in love with you. Do tell us- which one is going to win your heart?

**LUCY** :Oh, my heart belongs to Jonathan of course.( she is saying this to get Mina's attention) But unfortunately he was engaged to my boring older sister **MINA** before I was out of the school room, and then it was too late for me.

**MINA** :(reading)'The Carpathian mountains- vast, uninhabited, remote, covered in pine forests and swarming with packs of wolves.....'

**JANE** :Don't you pay any attention to Lucy, Mina, she's only teasing you.

**MINA** :Hmm? Oh- Lucy and Jonathan?

**JANE** :It's all nonsense. She doesn't even like him. She finds him more boring than-

**MINA** :-More boring than me, eh, Jane?.

**JANE** :Goodness knows she has enough lovers to fend off without adding your fiancee to the list of bleeding hearts.

**MINA** : ( reading) : 'She begged me to wear her Crucifix- 'for your Mother's sake, young Herr Harker' she sobbed.' What on earth is it that they all fear so much?

**LUCY** :All those primitive rustic types are the same. ( yokel voice) 'When the moon is full and midnight strikes, close your eyes and knock three times, and you will see your true love's name in the mirror.'

**JANE** :Really?

**MINA** :Don't be silly Lucy. This is serious.

**LUCY** :Mina, you are going to have to get used to Jonathan being away on business.

You can't go on like this every time he makes a trip abroad.( she gets on with her sewing of her hem)

**MINA** :I know that , Lucy. But he promised he would write every day, and at first he did, but I haven't heard anything since he set out on the last leg of the journey, to the actual castle of the Count. Suppose he was set upon by brigands? Or got lost in a storm, and the coach fell down a ravine, or down a cliff edge, or they were attacked by wolves-

**LUCY** :Or he fell victim to a dark eyed raven haired beauty, with scarlet lips and gypsy blood.

**JANE** :What was the name of the Count?

**MINA** :Dracula.

**LUCY** :Oh!

**JANE** :What is it?

**LUCY** :Oh. It's nothing. I pricked my finger with the needle, is all.

*Music.*

*Gypsy violin.*

*Scene change.Act One scene 2*

*Jonathan in Transylvania. In an old inn.*

*Innkeeper( Franz) and his wife ( Magda).*

**HARKER** :Well, that was delicious. What was it?

Inn keeper: Paprika Hendl. You have eaten well. You are not too worried ,mein Herr.You pay no heed to their tales, their warnings.

**HARKER** :Good God, no. I am an Englishman, after all.

**INNKEEPER** :Jack the Ripper, heh?

**HARKER** : I beg your pardon?

**INNKEEPER** :Are you not thirsty, mein Herr?

**HARKER** :As a matter of fact, I am. Is there any more water , please?

**INNKEEPER** :No water, mein Herr. Try this- it will help you sleep.

*(He pours, bows and leaves).*

**HARKER** : Curious . Queer stinging on the tongue. A metallic taste.

**MAGDA** :( *appears from the shadows and makes Jonathan jump*)Please.....

**HARKER** :My God! You startled me.

**MAGDA** :You are right to be afraid.

**HARKER** :No more of this, if you please.

**MAGDA** :As you wish. I would have said no more, as you seem resolved, only.....

**HARKER** :What now? Some omen? The owl hooted three times?

**MAGDA** :Tomorrow is the 31<sup>st</sup> of October.

**HARKER** :Your birthday perhaps?

**MAGDA** :All Hallows Eve. On that date, even in your country, graves let slip their sleepers. It is not good to be alone in the mountains on such a night. And you have been sent for.

Do you know who wrote that note?

**HARKER** :Of course. The Count.

**MAGDA** :Yes, he. Descended from Vlad himself.

**HARKER** :Vlad? Wasn't he a Slovak? Or a Magyar?

**MAGDA** :Shh.....not so loud. In any case,Vrolok.( *she crosses herself*)

**HARKER** :I have heard that word many times today, when you people whisper and point at me and make signs, to ward off the Evil eye, I discovered later.What does it mean, Vrolok?

*Innkeeper returning.*

Inn keeper: Magda!Let us escort our guest to his rest. The Count knows he is here, and awaits his arrival at his castle tomorrow night.

**MAGDA** :Franz- does n't Herr Harker remind you of my poor brother?

**INNKEEPER** :That was forgotten many years ago Magda. Come now, mein Herr. It grows late.

**MAGDA** :I want to give him Stefan's crucifix. That he left behind. That he should have worn. May I at least do that?

**INNKEEPER** :Do you think he will take it? You can see he does not believe.

**HARKER** :What are you saying? You speak too quickly, my German is not so good.

**MAGDA** :Not German; Serbian.

**HARKER** :Many pardons. We English are deplorably bad on our foreign languages.

**INNKEEPER** :You are the foreigner here, not us.

**MAGDA** :Therefore have pity, Franz. He does not understand our land and its-peculiarities.

**INNKEEPER** :He is stubborn. He will not listen. Let him try his luck in our foreign country.

**MAGDA** :Please Franz? Remember Stefan. He too would not take advice. His eyes are the same.

**HARKER** :I think I will go to bed now, if I may.

**MAGDA** :Mein Herr Harker, I want you to wear this, in memory of my brother.

**HARKER** :Eh? Oh- papist idolatry. Nonsense. Certainly not. Dear me, rude to refuse- but – oh dear me, no.

**INNKEEPER** :English. 'The Sun never sets'.

**MAGDA** : (*suddenly throws herself on her knees and grabs his legs*)Herr Harker, I beg you, by all you hold dear, by your dear mother-

**HARKER** :Dear me, how embarrassing! Humour her, I suppose. Dreadful scene! No restraint. No decorum.

Madam- please! Get up. I will wear it- see ? I am putting it on. There.

**INNKEEPER** :Come along Magda. Prepare the sleep for the Englishman. It is late.

**MAGDA** :Wear it. Wear it always. May God bless you and keep you safe.

( muttering as she goes out) Poor man. So young. You cannot tell the young- they will not listen to older heads.

( *sound of wolves howling*)

**HARKER** :Great God- what was that?

**INNKEEPER** : Only wolves, mein Herr. You must get used to them. There are more where you will be going- and more besides. Now- follow.

*Jonathan looks at him, afraid at last.They exit , stage right.*

*Act One scene 3.*

**MINA** reads from her letter.

I am sending this back with the coachman. I await the carriage of the Count and I write this by a guttering candle, fixed in the side of the coach. On either side the mountains fill the sky and shut out the rays of the dying sun. The roads are rutted and little used, they will not repair them, for fear of invaders. This country has been fought over for centuries. Bulgars, Turks, Magyars, Czechs, Wallachs, Slovaks, and Szekelys. They say the blood runs underground, a death on every square inch. In Bistritz, where I slept last night at the Golden Krone, 13,000 people died in a siege of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Peasants dug holes and buried their gold or valuables . Tonight it is said the blue flames will rise from the ground and the Bold may go out seeking for riches.

The wolves are howling again. There must be hundreds- thousands. The dreadful sound seems to be nearer every second. It seems to be getting closer.

The sun has set at last.

Mina, my love, I wonder if you know how very much I long for you, and wish I had never left safe and loving old England for this Heathen place? I don't want to worry you , but I must say-

But I hear the rumble of an approaching carriage- the speed of it! Goodbye my darling. I send this with the Bistritz coach. I love you my dear girl.

Yours, always, Jonathan.

**LUCY** :(*entering*) Put that away Mina, for the Lords sake! It always makes you cry, and then you will look dreadful when Quincy and Arthur are here.

**MINA** :Lucy, try to imagine how you would feel in my place.He was expected back over a month ago. And this was his last letter.

**LUCY** :I was imagining how I would feel in your place Mina. ENGAGED. (*SHE WAVES HER RINGED LEFT HAND AT MINA*)

**MINA** :What????? To-which one?

**LUCY** :Isn't it obvious?

**MINA** :Jack?

**LUCY** :What? And live in an asylum? No fear of that, dear sister. Although he is very ardent. And I do believe of the three he loves me the most. The most seriously.

And Quincy of course is the most fun, with that way he has of talking.

(*mimics*) Now little girl, I sure do wish you and me could hitch up together, whattya say?

I wish I could marry all three.

**MINA** :So it's Lord Godalming? Now why would that be? You fancied being Lady Godalming.

**LUCY** :Now really Mina, you think me very shallow and vain I know, but I do love him best, truly.

**MINA** :Truly? Now swear it, Lucy. Swear on Papa's grave. Swear on Mamma's life.

**LUCY** :Morbid. But really Lucy, I do swear it. Faithfully. And I have set the date.

**MINA** :When? Oh- I think I can guess. August 14<sup>th</sup>.

**LUCY** :You don't mind? I thought it would be sweet- both of us, dressed alike, coming down the aisle all in white. And it saves on invitations. Mamma is thrilled. A double wedding- perfect.

**MINA** :I just hope Jonathan is back in time. If he ever comes back . If he's still.....

**LUCY** :Don't say it. I was half hoping, half- dreaming there would be a mix up at the altar, and I would get married to yours! Jonathan is by far the handsomest!

*( They both laugh and hug)*

ENTER QUINCY, ARTHUR AND JACK SEWARD

**Q**; Here they are, the two cutest little gals this side of the wide Atlantic Ocean. Do I get a hug too?

**LUCY** :Shameless man! We are both spoken for, as you well know.

**Jack**: Don't make light of it, dear lady. But it is a pleasure to see the two of you- smiling and happy. Dear Miss Westenra, have you had a letter then?

**MINA** :Sadly no, dear Dr Seward. But thank you for your kind question.

**Jack**: I am hopeful my contacts abroad will bring news. I have a colleague in Amsterdam, recently returned from Transylvania. Doctor Van Helsing, Arthur. You have heard of him, of course.

**ARTHUR** :Van Helsing? I don't recall.....

**QUINCY** :Oh, sure, the paranormal guy. Mad on all those crazy yarns- afterlife, ghosts, and all that kind of cockamamie kinda story we used to tell round the campfire on the range. Some of those Indians I knew used to tell some good ones, and the Mexicans too. Spirits of the Undead.

**LUCY** :Oh , gentlemen! Not today, of all the most blessed days, my engagement day!

**ARTHUR** :That's right, dear Lucy. Why, Miss Westenra, you have not yet congratulated us!

**MINA** :Oh, your pardon, dear Lord Godalming.

**ARTHUR** :Call me Arthur, please. And may I call you.....Wilhelmina?

**MINA** :Certainly not!

**ARTHUR** :Oh, excuse me.

**MINA** :You will call me Mina, or I shall never call you brother!

*All laugh, and exit to the garden.*

*Act One Scene 4*

**VAN HELSING** enters and brings more things to the table; a skull, a huge key, a vial of black liquid, etc.

Before we proceed further on this road, I must tell you this.

The lore of the Ancients tells us of the Immortals. More properly called **DRACULA** :The Un -Dead.

What is this.....UN DEAD? How can this be? They are victims of the first Nosferatu, and they have their victims, and so it spreads. Ever outwards, like ripples, nein?

They are cursed with Immortality. They must go on, age after age, multiplying the Evils of the world. For if you are prey of the UnDead you become such yourself. And so the circle goes on, ever widening.

How can you tell them? There are signs. How stop them, defeat them?

They may be returned to the true dead, and their soul will then know Peace.

It will be a blessed hand indeed that will grant that Peace.

Tell me if there be such a one amongst us?