

(At about the time the above duet begins, we begin to hear a WOMAN breathing heavily, as though running for her life; this is faint at first but soon gets louder as though she is approaching. Simultaneously, the sound of a rapidly beating heart, also growing louder. At some point RENFIELD is heard screaming in the distance, "THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE! THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE!" As the duet culminates with the phrase, "I CAN FEEL IT IN MY BLOOD!", a wolf begins to howl.)

(This cacophony of VOICES, breathing, howling, and heartbeats crescendos to a frantic peak and culminates in one blood-curdling scream and a gigantic clap of thunder.)

(By this point the asylum has morphed into the graveyard and we begin.) * *Immature will facilitate the*

Vignette 1

(A furious storm is in progress. MINA runs in screaming. She is soaking wet from the storm. She lunges for the gate to secure the bolt and backs away. There is a lightning strike and a crash of thunder. The gate flies open and the MONSTER plunges into the space. He is a combination of man, beast, and rotting corpse, repulsive, terrifying, evil. As he approaches she dodges one way and then the next. There is a furious chase around the graveyard. She falls onto a stone bench; he leaps at her; she dives to the ground; he leaps at her again as she clambers to a sepulcher. He pursues her, gains control of her, and comes to a standing position above her. He then lifts her by the hair and tosses back to the ground. He howls with delight; it's a cat-and-mouse game that he relishes. He leaps at her again, again she dodges and again. In one last effort to escape she makes a mad dash for the gate. He raises his hand in a magical gesture, we hear:)

DRACULA'S VOICE. Be still!

(She freezes, clearly paralyzed, but desperately trying to move. He makes a slow shuffling approach to her, his hand still raised, mumbling some strange incantation. When he reaches her, he moves swiftly behind her. He grabs her by the hair and forces her head back to expose her neck. This excites him to a series of venomous growls as he shakes his head violently like an ape about to attack. Finally he rears back his head and plunges his fangs into her throat. She screams in pain and terror as blood gushes from her throat. He begins to draw the blood from her in what sound like a series of violent inhalations. With

each draught he nearly lifts her off her feet as she screams and more blood streams down the front her white nightgown. There are about three of these moments. Finally, as she nears oblivion she emits one last extended scream, there is a clap of thunder and a flash of lightning, and we are plunged into a brief moment of darkness.)

(In the Darkness, music is heard. It is an eerie dissonant waltz which sounds as though it's played on exposed nerves. Another clap of thunder and flash of lightning and lights snap up. The count is now behind her, his mouth to her throat in exactly the same position as we saw the monster a second ago. They are one and the same! He pulls his mouth away from her throat and, with a disturbing hissing sound, arches back his head to reveal his sizable fangs. He turns her to him and her astonished eyes fix on him. He escorts her to center stage and begins to waltz with her. As they dance the graveyard disappears and the study materializes around them as though he has magically transported her from one space to the next. At first they move gently and dreamily but soon they increase to dizzying speed and intensity. As they whirl about he begins to laugh wildly, and she, totally in his thrall, does the same. At last he releases her, spinning her gracefully toward the French doors. He stands grandly before, takes her hand and kisses it.)

DRACULA. Until tomorrow evening, my Mina.

(He exits. MINA staggers, placing a hand to her head and faints back into the room, and we are left with that image of her, bathed in moonlight as we fade to black.)

Scene 1

(VAN HELSING enters accompanied by SULLIVAN.)

SULLIVAN. Right this way, Sir. Dr. Seward should be back directly. I know he's anxious to see you. Make yourself at home.

VAN HELSING. Thank you.

SULLIVAN. It's a great honor to meet you, sir. Doctor Seward speaks so highly of you. I'm the doctor's assistant, Margaret Sullivan.

VAN HELSING. My pleasure, Miss Sullivan.

SULLIVAN. (Gesturing to a large portfolio VAN HELSING is carrying.) Can I take that for you?

VAN HELSING. No thank you. I'll keep it with me.

SULLIVAN. Just your coat then?

VAN HELSING. Yes. Very kind.

SULLIVAN. I'll tell the doctor you're here as soon as he arrives.

VAN HELSING. Much obliged.

(She hesitates.)

VAN HELSING. Is there something...?

SULLIVAN. I just... There's been a great sadness in this house lately as I'm sure you know.

VAN HELSING. I appreciate your concern. I hope we'll be shedding light on the matter very soon.

SULLIVAN. That would be grand. Well, I'd best be back to my duties. God be with you, Professor.

VAN HELSING. God be with us all.

SULLIVAN. Amen.

(She exits.)

VAN HELSING. Amen.

(VAN HELSING is momentarily alone. RENFIELD creeps in from behind drapes. He is clearly in haste. He is momentarily startled by VAN HELSING's presence, but then regains his composure.)

RENFIELD. Ah! How do you do?

VAN HELSING. How do you do.

RENFIELD. May I be of some assistance?

VAN HELSING. I'm waiting on Dr. Seward.

RENFIELD. Indeed? Well, I am his associate. How may I help you?

VAN HELSING. Forgive me, but I must consult only with Dr. Seward.

RENFIELD. Oh, come, come, my good man. No need for embarrassment. Whatever your symptoms may be, I assure you I am more than qualified to assess them. You're looking at a man intimately acquainted with mental disease.

VAN HELSING. Please, sir....

RENFIELD. If I may venture a guess. Stab in the dark, as we say? Fellow of your years? Getting a bit fuddled, are we? A few cobwebs gathering in the old belfry?

VAN HELSING. Sir, I am seeking no services. I am here at Dr. Seward's invitation.

RENFIELD. Oh, really? Strange that I was not informed of any such invitation. Name, please?

VAN HELSING. It is Van Helsing. Abram Van Helsing.

RENFIELD. It is not!

VAN HELSING. It is.

RENFIELD. Professor Abram Van Helsing. The Professor Abram Van Helsing?

VAN HELSING. Quite so.

RENFIELD. Hell's Bell's! This is indeed a momentous occasion. How wondrous strange that the Fates should cast together two such geniuses as we! Your work, Abram, in the realm of the supernatural? Uncanny.

VAN HELSING. You flatter me, Dr....?

RENFIELD. Renfield. Robert Renfield.

VAN HELSING. You have some interest in the Occult?

RENFIELD. I dabble, sir. I dabble. Oh, I could kill that Seward for not mentioning this. The little sneak. Well, he'll get his, let me tell you. But, no matter, have a seat, Abram. Tell me what brings you all the way from Holland to our little Bedlam-by-the-sea?

VAN HELSING. Again, that is a matter for myself and Dr. Seward.

RENFIELD. Understood. Understood. (Pause.) Of course, it might be in your best interests to confide in someone like me. The good doctor hasn't been himself lately.

VAN HELSING. What are you saying?

RENFIELD. Well, it is my professional opinion, that is, my scientific, clinical, diagnostic analysis that the man's about to pop his cork. His moods have become increasingly morbid. It's the grief, you see. Grief at the loss of his beloved.

VAN HELSING. Miss Grant?

RENFIELD. Ah, I see you know something of the case. Yes, the enchanting Miss Mina Grant. A voluptuous specimen she was, I'll be sworn. Might have had a go at her myself except for my loyalty to dear old Dr. Thom. And are you also informed that we have in our midst a certain houseguest, a Miss Lucy Westphal? Another looker,

SEWARD. Sleepwalking! Lucy, why didn't you tell me?

LUCY. She begged me not to. She said you had enough to worry about. Oh, I'm sorry, I know I should have said something, but everything happened so fast, and once she was gone, there didn't seem any point in mentioning it.

VAN HELSING. So you'd awake in the middle of the night, and she'd be gone?

LUCY. Yes.

VAN HELSING. And then?

LUCY. Well, naturally I went looking for her. I usually found her out on the grounds somewhere. Each time I'd wake her gently and take her to bed. But once... Once I caught sight of her heading up the path to the cemetery. When I got there she was sitting on the old stone bench outside her family crypt (*Her eyes widen as she struggles to maintain her composure.*); and, well, I was at some distance and there was a good deal of fog, but there appeared to be a figure hunched over her.

SEWARD. Some piece of statuary, you mean.

LUCY. No. No, it was *animated*. Dressed in black, tall and thin. But the face. It was the face of some wild beast. And the eyes!

VAN HELSING. What about the eyes, Miss?

LUCY. They were red. Red like coals glowing in the dark. I called out to her and that thing, whatever it was, just vanished in the fog. I ran to her and brought her back to the house again, and the next morning she was worse than ever. Two days later she was gone.

VAN HELSING. And you have not seen that face, those eyes again?

LUCY. I've not been sleepwalking, if that's what you mean.

VAN HELSING. That is not what I asked.

LUCY. Very well, yes, I've seen that face again in a manner of speaking. I've had, well who wouldn't, I've had a few nightmares since Mina passed.

VAN HELSING. That's when you see again this "thing" as you put it?

LUCY. Yes, that's when. Oh, dear. You must think me quite insane.

VAN HELSING. Not a bit. Although, I have just met a lunatic who has a similar difficulty telling the truth.

LUCY. But I've told you no lies.

VAN HELSING. None. But you have also not told me all the truth. LUCY. What more can I tell...

VAN HELSING. Would you mind removing your scarf?

LUCY. But why?

VAN HELSING. I'm a physician. I wish to examine your throat.

(*She stares at him.*)

VAN HELSING. Please. It's for the best. I promise.

(*She removes the scarf, revealing two puncture wounds on her throat.*)

VAN HELSING. It is as I thought. Thomas, come and see. (SEWARD *approaches.*) Look familiar?

SEWARD. Yes, Mina had the same two wounds. Lucy, why have you kept this from me as well.

LUCY. I don't know. I don't know! Bugs! I thought they were insect bites. Living out here in the country. Lord knows, they could be anything.

SEWARD. Abram, what does it all mean?

VAN HELSING. Trouble, my boy. It means trouble.

(*There is a tapping on the glass of the French doors.*)

SEWARD. If that's Renfield again, I'll throttle him myself this time.

(*He pulls back the drapes and throws open the doors to reveal a dark figure, caped and hooded. It is DRACULA.*)

DRACULA. I am welcome?

SEWARD. Uh, yes, of course as always. Do come in, Count.

(*DRACULA enters, removes hood.*)

DRACULA. Good evening. Miss Lucy, you are looking ravishing as ever.

LUCY. Thank you, Count.

DRACULA. Ah, but I see you have already a guest. I intrude?

SEWARD. No, it's quite alright. Count Dracula. Professor Abram Van Helsing.

VAN HELSING. My pleasure, Count.

DRACULA. Van Helsing! The writer! Science and the Supernatural. *Secrets of the Warlocks.*

* Von Helsing + Dracula

VAN HELSING. You've read them?

DRACULA. Among many others. Including those dealing with my own homeland. Most entertaining.

VAN HELSING. Thank you.

DRACULA. I have a few tales of my own that I could share with you.

VAN HELSING. Perhaps we'll get together for a glass of sherry.

DRACULA. I never drink... wine. Nonetheless, we will have our time together, I assure you.

VAN HELSING. That's an impressive steed you're riding. We saw you from the window.

DRACULA. That is Lilith. She runs like a demon from Hell, does she not?

VAN HELSING. Indeed. Clearly an extraordinary bloodline.

DRACULA. Yes. She has a lineage that goes back as far as my own.

VAN HELSING. Was not one of your ancestors the legendary Vlad?

DRACULA. Vlad the Impaler. Quite the hero in his day.

VAN HELSING. Quite the monster to the Turks.

DRACULA. True. Sometimes good and evil are just a matter of perception.

VAN HELSING. Sometimes a matter of which end of the stake you're on.

DRACULA. Well said, my friend. Well said. But we must discuss these dark subjects when not in the company of so lovely a young woman as this. It is good to see you up and about, Miss Lucy. Has there been improvement?

LUCY. I'm sure there will be now that the Professor has joined the fray.

DRACULA. Ah, I see. This is no mere social visit. You come as a man of medicine, a man of science. A formidable adversary to any malady. What an exhilarating turn of events.

LUCY. Yes, but the best remedy would be Jonathan's safe return. Any news, Count?

DRACULA. Alas, still no word. I have a legion of gypsies searching, but the forests are dense and the cliffs are perilous, so it is slow

going. If this continues much longer I shall return to Castle Dracula and lead the hunt myself.

LUCY. You are so kind, Count.

DRACULA. I think you know, sweet lady, that from the moment we met I have been your devotee. I see in you a kindred spirit.

LUCY. Your visits have meant so much to me.

DRACULA. He does not bore you? This wearisome old remnant of a dark bygone age.

LUCY. Listen to you! Talking like an antique again. No, I quite love your old folk tales. They're really rather enchanting. And those peculiar songs you sing.

VAN HELSING. So many eerily beautiful folk songs sung in your land.

DRACULA. In this land as well. *Ghost Lover*, do you know it? They sing it in those inns down by the wharves. A young woman stands on the beach, mourning her lover who was lost at sea. So strong is her love that his ghost rises up from the waves and they embrace in the moonlight. When he tells her he must go, she will not be left behind. She takes him by the hand, and, together they descend into the cold dark water.

(A pause.)

SEWARD. (*Breaking the spell.*) Yes, even we English enjoy the occasional melancholic tale of the supernatural.

DRACULA. Again, perception makes all the difference. To the ghost the supernatural is the natural.

(MISS SULLIVAN enters.)

SULLIVAN. Excuse me, Dr. Seward.

SEWARD. Yes, Miss Sullivan?

SULLIVAN. It's time for Miss Westphal's medication.

LUCY. Oh, but Thomas, how can I leave such enchanting company? Two exotic continentals in one evening.

DRACULA. Please do not neglect your health on my account. I'll be visiting again before long.

VAN HELSING. And you'll be seeing plenty of me.

LUCY. Well, then, I'll be a good girl and run along. Au revoir, Count.

*Seward + Van Helsing

VAN HELSING. Thomas, you saw the marks on the throat. You heard her describe the "thing" with the face of a beast. The red eyes...

SEWARD. That had to have been some kind of hallucination.

VAN HELSING. You think so?

SEWARD. Yes, of course. And that prompted her nightmares later on.

VAN HELSING. All in her mind then?

SEWARD. Couldn't be anything else.

(VAN HELSING goes to his portfolio and removes a parchment. It is a rendering of a creature much like the Monster. Shows it to SEWARD.)

VAN HELSING. Have a look.

(A pause as SEWARD stares in disbelief.)

SEWARD. This can't be.

VAN HELSING. That is a sixteenth century rendering that I found in a monastery in Montenegro.

SEWARD. But what the blazes is it?

VAN HELSING. In the Count's part of the world it is called *nosferatu*, the undead. Here we say vampire.

SEWARD. A vampire?

VAN HELSING. That is correct.

SEWARD. So, you think those puncture wounds...?

VAN HELSING. From fangs, yes, from sharp fangs.

SEWARD. But if these women were attacked by such a demon, why wouldn't they have said anything.

VAN HELSING. These creatures can be very powerful. My guess is they can induce at least partial amnesia in their victims. Useful particularly with those they intend to revisit.

SEWARD. You're saying they can control people's minds.

VAN HELSING. In some cases control; in some cases enslave. Your star patient seems well on his way to slavery.

SEWARD. Renfield?

VAN HELSING. We'll need to keep an eye on him. He's a spy, but a reluctant one and may prove useful.

SEWARD. My dear friend, assuming that I believe all this, what chance do we have against such a creature?

VAN HELSING. Ja, the strengths are formidable, but there are, thank God some vulnerabilities. The vampire can only function by night; the sunlight is unbearable to them. Before dawn they must return to the soil in which they were buried where they lie immobilized throughout the day. If that grave or tomb can be purified with holy water the vampire cannot enter. The Cross is also a powerful weapon. But the surest way to destroy him is the stake through the heart.

SEWARD. Abram, I feel as if I've passed through the looking glass.

VAN HELSING. I know, my friend, I know. But humor me yet awhile and you'll have proof aplenty.

SEWARD. Well, all my remedies have failed. I seem to have no choice but to follow your lead. How shall we begin?

VAN HELSING. I want to examine Miss Lucy's quarters to see if this monster left any trace behind.

SEWARD. Miss Sullivan just gave her a sedative. She'll be needing a lie-down.

VAN HELSING. Let her rest here on the chaise for the time being. It might be best if she did not use her room until we've checked it over.

SEWARD. Very well, I'll go fetch her.

VAN HELSING. Good. And, Thomas, please tell her nothing of what I've said.

SEWARD. Be right back.

(SEWARD exits. Now that he is alone VAN HELSING drops his guard a bit and we see how deeply troubled he is. He paces about the room stopping to stare up at Carfax. He replaces his "visual aids" in the portfolio. He spies the sherry bottle on the side table, goes to it, pours himself a small glass and downs it. He decides to pour another, but before he can bring it to his lips the drapes snap open loudly and BRIGGS runs in. Both men gasp with momentary fright.)

VAN HELSING. Mein Gott!

BRIGGS. Sorry, sir. It's that bloody Renfield. 'E's makin' a fearful ruckus. Screamin' 'is brains out 'e 'is. Says somethin's comin' after 'im. 'E got the 'ole ward in an uproar. We need Dr. Seward over there before things get out of hand.

(Relents; puts the rat away; scans room again and fixes on table with cloth extending to floor. He gets to his knees and carefully lifts the cloth and ducks under. As he does so SULLIVAN enters and sees him.)

SULLIVAN. Norbert!

(BRIGGS is startled and bumps his head on the underside of the table with a loud thud.)

BRIGGS. Owl Bloody 'ell. *(Coming out from under:)* You gave me a fright.

SULLIVAN. I'll give you more than that if I catch you nosin' around in here again.

BRIGGS. I'm just doin' my job. It's that bleedin' bug-biter. 'E's on the loose again.

SULLIVAN. Dear Lord. I thought you had him in restraints.

BRIGGS. Course I did. But that makes no difference to 'im. 'E's the bloody 'Oudini of the loony-bin.

SULLIVAN. Well, you best find him before he stirs up more trouble around here.

BRIGGS. Wha'? Trouble 'round our quiet little cottage by the sea? Oh, we can't 'ave that, now, can we? Not when things is going so lovely. What with one dead and one dyin' of God knows what, shots bein' fired in the night and young Mr. 'Arker turnin' up lookin' like Robinson Crusoe. What could be more restful?

SULLIVAN. Thank God Mr. Harker's returned. It might lift that dear girl's spirits.

BRIGGS. Well, last I saw of 'im when I came over to investigate them shots, 'e dint look none too good 'imself.

SULLIVAN. He's been through a great deal.

BRIGGS. Like wha'?

SULLIVAN. Well, I don't know all of it. For that matter, neither does he. He's lost part of his memory.

BRIGGS. That so? Which part?

SULLIVAN. Most of the time he spent with the Count.

BRIGGS. Can't blame 'im. I'd like to forget that geezer meself. It's just since 'e moved into that creepy ol' ruin up there on the 'ill that things have gone queer around 'ere.

SULLIVAN. Don't be superstitious.

BRIGGS. Superstitious am I? Look out that window. Look at them dark clouds gatherin'. Pitch black clouds against a sky the color of tombstone.

SULLIVAN. There's a storm brewin', is all.

BRIGGS. An' look at that fog bank rollin' in off the water. Pretty soon we'll all be wrapped up in it like a damned windin' sheet.

SULLIVAN. We live by the sea. We have weather.

BRIGGS. Same weather we had last night and the night before. And almost every night since the Demeter came aground. Member that? The "ghost ship"? No one on board, but the Captain. 'An' 'im at least three days dead and lashed to the wheel. 'Im and some great black 'ound that leaps off the deck and 'eads for the 'ills. An' what's in the 'old o' that ship but some packing cases an' 'oo was those cases delivered to? Why, your friend and mine, jolly ol' Count Dracula.

SULLIVAN. I read the papers, Norbert.

BRIGGS. Do ya now? She keeps up with current events, does she? Then maybe you've seen this 'ere in the Evenin' Chronicle. *(Producing a paper from his jacket pocket, and tossing on the table.)* The little item titled, "'Ampstead 'Orror'?"

SULLIVAN. I noticed it.

BRIGGS. Some lady in a nightgown luring kids off into the woods for a bit of frolic, an' them turnin' up later on with little red marks on their little white throats. Ever seen anything like that before?

SULLIVAN. I get your point.

BRIGGS. My point is, in my opinion, this neighbor'ood's going rapidly downhill. I think it's time for sophisticates like you an' me to seek employment elsewhere.

SULLIVAN. I can't go now. I'm needed. Dr. Seward needs me.

BRIGGS. Maggie, listen to me...

SULLIVAN. Don't call me that.

BRIGGS. Margaret, then.

SULLIVAN. I'm Miss Sullivan in this house.

BRIGGS. Right then, Miss Bleedin' Sullivan, I needs ya. Let's you an' me take off together and put all this strangeness behind us an'

* Van Helsing & Harker

Dracula

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SULLIVAN. That's what all you bast... all you men say. Would you excuse me?

VAN HELSING. Yes, of course. Would you ask Dr. Seward to join us?

SULLIVAN. *(With attitude.)* Yes, sir.

(She begins to laugh as she turns away.)

VAN HELSING. Something funny?

SULLIVAN. Oh, just something I read in the paper. I'll send Dr. Seward. *(Exits.)*

VAN HELSING. Thank you.

HARKER. She seems in an odd mood.

VAN HELSING. Yes. Understandable, I suppose, in such circumstances. Have you had any further recollections?

HARKER. Nothing of my stay at Castle Dracula. Though at first I couldn't remember anything at all. I woke up on a river bank without money or identification, begged my way to the coast and got work on a London-bound steamer. Ten days out of port I suddenly knew who I was and who I loved.

VAN HELSING. And you came immediately here?

HARKER. Yes. As fast as I could, but something about the place felt wrong. I waited and watched for a bit from the woods. When I heard the screams, I crashed in.

VAN HELSING. And you saw...?

HARKER. I saw what you saw. A monster. Thomas says it's a vampire. I don't know if I believe that, but it did seem to vanish into thin air as I fired at it.

VAN HELSING. Fascinating.

(SEWARD enters.)

SEWARD. Evening, gentlemen. How are we getting on?

HARKER. Hello, Tom.

VAN HELSING. Thomas, did you bring the tincture?

SEWARD. Right here.

VAN HELSING. Jon, it is crucial that we know more of this Dracula. We have made up this ancient Chinese formula. It can bring back even the most unwanted memories. But, I must warn you, you will re-experience them fully. Are you willing?

HARKER. The prospect terrifies me, but if it will help save Lucy...
VAN HELSING. It may. That is all I can tell you.

HARKER. *(Sitting on chaise.)* Hand it over. *(VAN HELSING does so.)*

HARKER *downs the contents of the vial in one gulp. Immediately he gags and wrenches.)* Oh, my God, that's foul. What is that stuff?

VAN HELSING. You don't want to know.

HARKER. That's worst thing I've ever... ever *(He's already very relaxed, lying back.)* tasted.

VAN HELSING. Now, Jon, listen to me. We haven't much time before this wears off, and it only works once, so listen very carefully. You must remember how you left Castle Dracula.

HARKER. No, please!

VAN HELSING. For Lucy, Jon. For all of us.

HARKER. I can't... I can't... I'm, oh God, I'm his prisoner.

VAN HELSING. His prisoner?

HARKER. He's kept me locked in this room for weeks. I don't know what he plans to do, but I know it's not good. I've decided I have to escape. He has gypsies guarding the place by day, and a vicious wolf pack surrounds the place at night, but just before dawn there seem to be neither wolves nor gypsies about... and that's when I make my move.

(During the following he rises up and moves out of one reality into another. The two men and the study fade into silhouette, and some semblance of Castle Dracula emerges.)

I knot some sheets together and lash them to the bed and lower myself out the window. But the sheets aren't long enough, and so, about fifteen feet from the courtyard below I let go and fall to the ground. *(In the style of Story Theatre, he "relives" these experiences as he describes them.)* I hit pretty hard and it takes awhile to regain my senses when suddenly I'm surrounded by these swirling golden particles, glittering in the moonlight. Then, out of nowhere...

(Here a Woman's arm appears from out of the wall behind him, another from beneath him on his left, and another from his right. Gradually the BRIDES fully emerge and begin caressing him and cooing to him. He struggles at first but soon succumbs to the overwhelming eroticism of it. They open his shirt; they greedily inhale his scent. Two of them have his arms spread wide and begin to lick his wrists. The third is licking his throat. They build to a frenzy, but before they can

makes her drink. He howls three times, then pulls back her head, exposing her throat. He throws his head back, opens his mouth widely and slowly lowers his fangs to her throat as lights fade and a huge clap of thunder resonates through the house.)

End of Act I

*Mina + Child

ACT II

Prologue

Vignette 2

(As Act II begins we hear the strains of "London Bridge is Falling Down" played very slowly and quite distorted. When lights are at half, the vignette begins. From some part of the auditorium we hear a CHILD screaming. Her scream is followed by delighted laughter as she appears from the darkness. Soon after MINA appears, also laughing, but with something more like fenshish glee. They are engaged in a kind of game of tag with each of them at turns pretending to be a vicious beast or the terrified prey. At one moment MINA is in pursuit, growling and snarling as the CHILD flees, laughing and screaming; then the CHILD turns to snarl and claw at MINA who recoils in mock terror. At some point they begin to circle one another, both now snarling and clawing. The CHILD makes a sudden break to get away, MINA grabs her and lifts her high in the air eliciting more screams and laughter. Slowly MINA lowers the CHILD to her breast, and cradles her in her arms. She rears back her head and opens her mouth to reveal her fangs. As she lowers her mouth to the CHILD's throat, the CHILD screams one last time and we blackout.)

Scene 1

(At rise, HARKER is slumped over the chaise. VAN HELSING enters.)

HARKER. How is she?

VAN HELSING. Alright, I think. What about you.

HARKER. I'm a failure. I failed her. I failed all of you.

VAN HELSING. You were weak from the drug and caught off guard.

HARKER. I want him dead. I want to be the one to do it.

VAN HELSING. We must wait 'til dawn. *(SEWARD enters.)* Has she said anything more?

SEWARD. Nothing. Only that he was here again. But she was still highly agitated. I gave her a sedative. She's sound asleep. Abram, I don't know how many more of these attacks she can withstand.

HARKER. Do you hear? Let's get him. Let's hunt him down now!

VAN HELSING. Patience, my friends, patience. The sun is on the way.

HARKER. Meanwhile, God knows what he could be up to...

(From the doorway a white flag appears dangling from the end of a stick. We hear RENFIELD singing.)

RENFIELD.

The bells of Hell go dingalingaling
For you but not for me.

(He enters the room. He looks a bit banged up, and he is quite nervous.)

RENFIELD. Greetings. I come in peace, brethren. Pax. Under the white flag. Don't shoot the messenger.

SEWARD. I suppose there's no point in asking how you got out this time.

RENFIELD. If I told you I'd have to kill you. Joke! Only a joke. No intention whatever of doing anyone any harm. Sorry about all that nasty business earlier, mien gute Professor. Don't know what got into me. Must have been out of my... Yes, well that goes without saying, doesn't it. Mr. Harker! It can't be you. You're dead.

HARKER. You don't know me.

RENFIELD. We've not met formally. But I've admired you from afar. Peering out my little cell window. Watching you and Miss Lucy cavorting about the grounds sallying off into the woods to do God knows what. Lovely, young carefree couple. Those were the days, eh? Crying shame. (He starts to cry.) But you're alive again. Congratulations on that. Seems like people are rising from the dead all over the place. Times we live in, eh? But you're looking very maritime, matey. Very "Yo ho ho" and so forth. Been out on the briny?

SEWARD. Mr. Renfield what do you want.

RENFIELD. Thing is, you see, there's certain types, certain... personality types, that, when they get a bit angry, when they fly into a blind rage, they can do a good deal of harm, physical, mental, emotional, but mostly physical harm to certain parties of their acquaintance, and there can come a time when these certain abused parties can begin to think, well, perhaps, this is not a healthy relationship after all; time to move on, start afresh, find a whole new social milieu, but, of course that can be a complicated matter, especially when certain threats, certain bone-chilling, mind-numbing threats have been made toward them by the aforementioned personality types, who can be, well, let's say rather possessive, and what you might call VINDICTIVE if they feel they've been disrespected in any way,

shape or form, which, as I'm sure you can appreciate, begs the question, both metaphysical and logistical, "What's a body to do?"

VAN HELSING. What do you want from us?

RENFIELD. Well, if a person were in the sort of pickle I'm talking about, a person like me, for instance, not *actually* me, you understand, but *like* me, a *metaphorical* me, if the metaphorical me were in the hypothetical pickle, then what he'd propose as the best solution for all parties involved, including, incidentally, yourselves, would be for you gents to pack a few personal belongings, throw on your traveling clothes and RUN LIKE HELL as far and as fast as you can! Because the kettle's on the fire and it's coming to a boil, you see! The wrath of the Great One will soon be visited upon this house!

VAN HELSING. The great one? Whom do you mean?

RENFIELD. Never mind *whom*. You are *whom* it may concern. Get yourselves gone! And take me along for the ride. Least you can do after all the sound advice I've given. You'll have to blind me and drag me off kicking and screaming, of course, but a few sharp blows to the head should quiet me down. Only thing is, and I'm terribly sorry about this, truly, truly sorry. It's about the girl.

HARKER. Lucy?

RENFIELD. That's the one. Afraid we'll have to leave her behind. Spoils of war, you see. Only conditions the Other Side might accept. He won't let her go. Harker. Who are you talking about? Are you talking about Dracula?

RENFIELD. I didn't say anything like that. Did I? I most certainly did not say anything remotely like that.

HARKER. (Taking hold of RENFIELD.) What has he done to her? What has he done? Tell me or I'll kill you.

RENFIELD. (Gasping?) Claimed her! Marked her for his own.

HARKER. (Releasing him roughly.) What are you talking about?

RENFIELD. (Seeing the newspaper?) Try reading the paper once in a while. You might just learn something. Don't you know what you're dealing with? You are dealing... (Out of nowhere: a loud clap of thunder. RENFIELD is profoundly affected.) Ohhh! Oh no! Here he comes! Oh nooo! (Runs out the French doors screaming.)

VAN HELSING. We can't let him get away.

SEWARD. We'll get him. Come on Jon.

LUCY. And do you think I don't love you?

HARKER. I think you're under the influence of...

LUCY. Under of the influence of the night. The moon. Can you feel the moonlight on your skin, Jon? *(She climbs up on the lab table and basks in the light from the window.)* I can. It thrills me; intoxicates me. Can you hear the night calling to us, Jon? It sings to us. "Come away," it sings,

Come away ye young and eager,

Come swiftly in your darling reverie,

Quench your thirst and cool your fever,

Hear my call, come, come to me!

Of course I love you, my darling. I'm positively wild about you. *(Still on the table she clasps him to her, nuzzling his throat with her nose and lips.)* Umm, such lovely muscles. You know what I think? I think there's a little animal lurking underneath that proper British solicitor exterior.

HARKER. *(Breaking away angrily.)* Enough, Lucy. That's enough! You're not yourself. Don't you feel it? Something's taken over your mind. Oh, God help us!

LUCY. No, Jon, that's not it at all. I'm frightened, don't you see? We're in grave danger.

HARKER. We're going to hunt him down. We'll stop him somehow.

LUCY. Who are you talking about?

HARKER. Dracula, of course.

LUCY. Dracula! You poor fool. Dracula? That stodgy old Transylvanian relic who's been nothing but kind and considerate to me throughout my illness?

HARKER. Lucy, he is your illness.

LUCY. No, Jon. Now, listen to me, we haven't much time. There's a conspiracy going on here. You don't see it, but I do. I haven't said anything up 'til now because I didn't believe it myself, but they are definitely out to get us.

HARKER. Who are you talking about?

LUCY. Those two! *(She points to the corridor.)*

HARKER. Thomas and the Professor? Why would they...

LUCY. They hate us. They hate us for this great love, this great passion we have for each other. They're trying to kill us, Jon.

HARKER. This is insane.

LUCY. You see? That's what they want you to think. They want to put me away in a cage like that horrible wretch they just dragged out of here. They want to keep us apart forever.

HARKER. You just said they wanted to kill us.

LUCY. Listen to me! *(She charges at him pounding on his chest.)* Why won't you listen to me, you fool. You damn fool. Damn you. Damn you. Damn you. *(She appears to exhaust herself and swoons.)* Oh, Jon.

(She starts to collapse. He catches her in his arms and brings her to the table.)

HARKER. Lucy, are you alright? Speak to me.

LUCY. *(Groggily, her head buried in his shoulder.)* Oh, Jonny, my Jonny. Jonny there's something I have to show you.

HARKER. Shhh. Not now, darling. Not now.

LUCY. *(Wrenching herself away from him.)* Yes, now. *(She gestures toward his forehead, and he goes into a trance state, still conscious, but utterly helpless. She smiles and opens her mouth to display the fangs she has now, magically, acquired.)*

LUCY. How do you like your lover now?

(She begins to force him to his back.)

HARKER. Lucy, no, please, no.

LUCY. She wants you. She yearns for you.

HARKER. No.

LUCY. Now feel her dark kiss.

(She rears back her head. Her fangs gleam in the light. She slowly descends to his throat.)

VAN HELSING. *(Rushing in with SEWARD, holding a cross before him.)* In the name of God release him!

(HARKER leaps from the table. LUCY turns to confront VAN HELSING and the cross.)

VAN HELSING. The power of God compels you!

(He approaches her confronting her with the cross. She snarls, claws and kicks at it.)

LUCY. Get that filthy thing away from me!

HARKER. We will stop her.

DRACULA. Nothing will stop her. But you to whom she is so dear, you shall be witness to her transformation. That is my revenge. That is why I grant you life. Every day you'll watch her worsen, you'll see the hunger grow in her, you'll see the alteration in her mind. You'll want to kill her, but your God forbids it. Then one night before she comes to me she'll visit each of you and pass to you my dark gift and you too shall be mine—my creatures to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed.

VAN HELSING. God will stop you.

DRACULA. God? Your God is doddering old fool, he sits on his throne, drooling and babbling while his loyal subjects lead lives of despair and die in agony and horror. He is a pathetic weakling as are you and all who worship him. But soon you will know what it means to serve a strong master. Ah, but my dear friends, the lighting sky tells me I must take my leave of you. Until we meet again, I leave you with my laughter as remembrance. Adieu, mes amis!

(He bows grandly. Whirling about and laughing wildly, his cape flailing in the air, he charges at HARKER who gives way. BRIGGS is now finally coming to and trying to make sense of what he's seeing. VAN HELSING stands between DRACULA and his apparent exit.)

VAN HELSING. The stake! Jon, the stake! Briggs, hold him!

(HARKER delivers the hammer and stake to VAN HELSING. HARKER and BRIGGS hold DRACULA by the shoulders as he arrives in front of VAN HELSING. VAN HELSING raises the hammer and stake to strike. The lab lamp, which has been throbbing wildly now explodes, and lights dim momentarily. When lights re-store, DRACULA has disappeared. HARKER and BRIGGS are left holding only his cape.)

HARKER. We've lost him.

BRIGGS. What the bloody 'ell just 'appened?

HARKER. What can we do?

VAN HELSING. I don't know, Jon. I'm afraid our friend has died in vain.

LUCY. He has not.

HARKER. Lucy! Darling I don't think you should see this.

LUCY. I have seen it. Thom's idea worked. The drug worked. Just as you two left it took effect. I fell into a deep trance and suddenly I was seeing through his eyes, even sensing his emotions.

HARKER. You mean the Count?

LUCY. Yes. It's terrible, the elation he feels at the pain of others. I saw it all, everything that just happened.

VAN HELSING. And when he disappeared?

LUCY. Exactly! I saw where he goes. I know where he rests.

HARKER. Thank God! Is it near?

LUCY. Just next door. There are secret catacombs beneath the Abbey. There's a hidden entrance in the side of the hill. I think I can find it, but the vision is already fading; we must act fast.

VAN HELSING. By all means, dear lady. Lead on. *(As they exit.)* Mr. Briggs, keep an eye on Renfield.

BRIGGS. Right, sir. *(They are gone. To RENFIELD, who lies in a heap where Dracula dropped him.)* Alright, let's go, you. I'm for getting out of 'ere. The Doctor was a good man; I can't stand lookin' at 'im like this. Come on then. *(Nudging him with his foot.)* I know your alive, I can see you breathin'.

(RENFIELD rises to his knees. He affects a squeaky voice and a phony Irish accent.)

RENFIELD. Beggin' yer pardon, Mister, but might you be needin' the services of a guide for a wee excursion into a certain precinct of the underworld?

BRIGGS. What are you on about?

RENFIELD. I'm on about the whereabouts of a certain Gaelic lass, that you've been keepin' company with of late.

BRIGGS. How do you know anything about that?

RENFIELD. Oh, we little people have a vast knowledge of things.

BRIGGS. Tell me where she is.

RENFIELD. I'll take ye there, but first ye must grant me three wishes.

BRIGGS. Tell me, or you'll wish you never lived.

RENFIELD. Too late for that threat, sir. *(Looking behind BRIGGS.)* Oh, Sweet Jaysus looka that bat!

BRIGGS. Wha...?

VAN HELSING. Renfield!

RENFIELD. *(Having climbed up to a ledge somewhere, covering in the flashlight beams.)* Go way! Go way! You don't belong here.

VAN HELSING. Where is he? Speak, man, speak!

RENFIELD. *(Loudly.)* No! No! I'm not talking. You'll get nothing out of me. *(Quietly, pointing.)* Look over there.

(He is pointing to a large coffin in the center of the room. They have found DRACULA.)

VAN HELSING. That's it!

(Their beams fall upon the bodies of BRIGGS and SULLIVAN.)

HARKER. Briggs? Miss Sullivan?

VAN HELSING. Too late, Jon. They are beyond our help. *(Noticing chain hanging from ceiling.)* Look, that chain. It must lead to a door high above where he comes and goes. And outside is the sun.

HARKER. Then let's open it.

VAN HELSING. No, he might sense the light and burrow deep into the earth below where we cannot get to him. First the stake.

(HARKER, hammer and stake in hand sets down his light and readies himself. VAN HELSING slides back the lid to reveal DRACULA.)

VAN HELSING. Thank God, we've got him. Quickly, Jon, set it just above the heart. *(HARKER does so.)* Now, Jon! NOW!

(Now all hell breaks loose. HARKER raises the hammer to strike, but DRACULA's hand comes up to his throat. DRACULA throws HARKER aside; HARKER falls, dropping the hammer and stake, which LUCY falls upon and retrieves. DRACULA comes out of the coffin and begins to pursue LUCY who is swinging wildly at him with the hammer. Meantime, BRIGGS and SULLIVAN have reanimated. SULLIVAN has charged at VAN HELSING, who is now dousing her with holy water in one of the aisles; she screams and convulses with pain. HARKER and BRIGGS are engaged in fist-cuffs; HARKER gets in a clean shot and sends BRIGGS over a wall. DRACULA is now perilously close to LUCY.)

VAN HELSING. The light, Jon, the light!

(HARKER now leaps for the chain and swings out on it. As he does so DRACULA charges at him. HARKER swings back and gets him with a foot to the face. DRACULA charges again, but, as he does, HARKER yanks mightily at the chain, and we hear a thunk from

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the ceiling and a majestic beam of white light catches DRACULA full on. He raises his arms and howls in pain. He retreats toward his coffin, but is met by LUCY, who drives the stake into his heart. In shock and agony he backs away, struggling with the stake, but unable to remove it. He manages to stagger into the coffin, and amidst smoke and flame, screaming all the way he descends into "Hell." All three move cautiously to the coffin and look inside. Just as they do the MONSTER lunges at them from within. They recoil in terror, but he sinks back down. VAN HELSING hastily closes the lid and douses it with holy water. They all stand back. The coffin blows up! When the smoke clears we see the charred remains of DRACULA's skeleton lying atop what's left of the box. The stake, also charred, is still embedded in the chest cavity. All three approach to view the body.)

VAN HELSING. Per omnia saecula, saeculorum. After five hundred years the reign of the Vampire King is ended. Come, friends. This is no place for the living. *(They exit.)*

(From the shadows RENFIELD appears. He approaches the skeleton cautiously, fearing it might still attack him. He touches the stake, recoils. Nothing happens. He becomes emboldened. He steps in again and this time spits at the skeleton. Again he recoils. Again nothing happens. He becomes deliriously happy.)

RENFIELD. I'm free! I'm free! Oh, my merciful God! I'm free!

(The UNDEAD CHILD has appeared on the other side of the stage.)

CHILD. Shhh. Shhh.

(RENFIELD turns and gasps in horror and disbelief. The undead CHILD begins to approach the coffin. RENFIELD makes a move to stop her, but she hisses at him and he recoils. She stands over the skeleton and with a sharp move yanks the stake from its chest. She stands before RENFIELD holding the stake high above her head.)

CHILD. *(Breaking the stake in two.)* Hah!

(With the point of the stake in hand she approaches RENFIELD laughing fiendishly. As she walks the light closes in behind her. When she reaches him she raises the point high, preparing to plunge it into his chest.)

RENFIELD. NO! NO! NOOOOO!

End of Play