

## Dracula Excerpt

HARKER, cont.

*(aloud to the audience)* I have been here these three days and no sign of the Count. My only interesting discovery was what looked like a disused library. Different than the library I first encountered. Many dusty empty shelves among the equally dusty books. Two large windows that open onto the courtyard below. However, as I discovered earlier, all the outside doors I encountered were locked, and no servant could I find to unlock them. Though I called mightily for assistance. So I must conclude that the castle is a veritable prison. And I, the prisoner! But for what purpose? To teach the count proper English? Not likely. As to the negotiation of the purchase of his property, all the necessary papers were signed the second day of my visit.

*(He stares into space, then shakes his head as if he is trying not to fall asleep.)*

HARKER

*(aloud, to himself)* I'm suddenly sleepy ... These days without a good night's sleep have caught up with me. So ... *(He rubs his eyes.)* ... no more journal tonight. *(stands)* I'll just ... see if I can find my way back to the room ... and ...sleep ... *(He sits.)* ... and sleep ... *(His head slumps as he falls asleep.)*

*(A beat. Then the lights dim as the candle goes out. HARKER is sleeping deeply. We hear a clock striking the midnight hour. On the last chime, the three FEMALE VAMPIRE WOMEN enter. Cautiously at first with FEMALE VAMPIRE 2 in the lead. FEMALE VAMPIRE 1 catches up to her and pulls her back. Their voices are of old women even though they look young.)*

FEMALE VAMPIRE 1

*(hisses)* He's mine first. You promised.

FEMALE VAMPIRE 2

*(enters, hisses)* Stand aside. I am the princess here.

FEMALE VAMPIRE 1

*(hisses)* You are all the greedy ones here. He is young and strong. There are kisses for both of us. But go ahead, if you will.

*(FEMALE VAMPIRE 1 goes to HARKER. She bends over him. He stirs. Then moans pleasurably. We hear a licking sound, like a cat drinking milk. Suddenly there is an offstage roar followed by DRACULA entrance. The two FEMALE VAMPIRES cringe away from HARKER.)*

DRACULA

How dare you touch him. Any of you. How dare you cast your eyes on him when I have forbidden it. The man belongs to me. Beware how you meddle with him or you'll have me to deal with me.

FEMALE VAMPIRE 1

*(laughs a taunting laugh)* What do you know of love? You who have never loved.

*(The other FEMALE VAMPIRES join in the laughter.)*

FEMALE VAMPIRE 2

If a mirror could wink back your reflection, you would see what a pitiful face you have. Not a face of love.

FEMALE VAMPIRE 1

No. Of hate. We all pity you, for though you have searched throughout the ages, you have never found true comfort.

DRACULA

Enough! Play with him and you will be a witness to my hate. He is my gatekeeper to all that I want to do once I've reached England.

FEMALE VAMPIRE 2

When we reach England.

DRACULA

Yes. We will feast upon the English until our strength returns. Then it will be but a moment in time when we feast on all of Europe. So when I am done with him, you shall have all the kisses you want. But not now. He will stay here until I send for him.

FEMALE VAMPIRE 1

Are we to have nothing tonight?

DRACULA

Go to the village. There is a young bride and her mate. They should be a feast enough for both of you to love.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

HARKER's bedroom in the castle.

HARKER

*(Lights up slowly. It is just before dawn. He is sleeping in the bed. He sits up and takes out his journal from under the mattress and starts to write in the journal.)* 9-May. Near dawn. I awoke in my bed. The Count or a manservant must have carried me here. I have no recollection. But recall, I do, those fiendish women attacking me. At first, I thought I was dreaming. That first kiss brought me pleasure as if in a dream. But the sudden pain in my neck and the sound of those lips

sucking out my blood were too real to be a dream. So was the Count's angry arrival. Yet I could not move or even open my eyes. What manner of ghoulish beasts are these people? This Count Dracula, who surely must be a demon. *(to audience)* Heaven help me. I must get away from this castle.

*(DRACULA enters. HARKER secretly hides his journal under the bed's mattress.)*

DRACULA

Good morning, my friend. I trust you had a pleasant sleep.

HARKER

*(his voice)* Do I dare tell him what I know? Or play the innocent? Perhaps a little of both.

HARKER (cont.)

Pleasant enough. However, I've discovered that my travelling suit is missing from the closet. And the portmanteaux of my clothes, too.

DRACULA

Ah ... yes. A bit of thievery, I imagine, by one of the workmen who were here yesterday. I will be sure to have a word with them. These locals. They are hard workers but you must watch them. As before, breakfast awaits you in the other room. And feel free to explore my castle. But be respectful of my privacy and the doors that are locked.

HARKER

*(his voice)* Dare I challenge him to let me go outside. *(aloud)* And a door to the outside? Will you instruct your servants to leave it open? It looks like it is going to be another fine day.

DRACULA

Ah ... yes. There will be more workmen in the yard. For your safety, you should remain inside. Now, I see the sun is about to rise and I must again leave you. I have some pressing business to attend to.

HARKER

But what about—

DRACULA

Until this evening ... *(bows and exits)*