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**Dracula:**  
**A Comic Thriller Starring**  
**Shirley Holmes and Jennie Watson**

By  
KENT R. BROWN

Inspired by Bram Stoker's *Dracula*



**Dramatic Publishing Company**  
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KENT R. BROWN

Printed in the United States of America  
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(DRACULA: A COMIC THRILLER STARRING SHIRLEY HOLMES AND  
JENNIE WATSON)

ISBN: 978-1-61959-134-9

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# **Dracula: A Comic Thriller Starring Shirley Holmes and Jennie Watson**

## **CHARACTERS**

**COUNT DRACULA:** A shape-shifting vampire possessing legendary powers.

**JENNIE WATSON:** The niece of Dr. John Watson.

**SHIRLEY HOLMES:** The niece of Sherlock Holmes.

**DR. ABRAHAM VAN HELSING:** The world-famous vampire hunter.

**SABRINA VAN HELSING:** Dr. Van Helsing's daughter.

**WILHEMMA (MINA) MURRAY:** Soon to be married to Jonathan Harker.

**LUCY WESTERNA:** Mina's best friend.

**JONATHAN HARKER:** Young lawyer and Mina's fiancé.

**MRS. LUCRETIA DOBRINSKI:** Sherlock Holmes' housekeeper.

**DR. JOHN SEWARD:** Director of a London insane asylum.

**RENFIELD:** An inmate in Dr. Seward's asylum.

**ALL-PURPOSE (AP) DRACULAS:** Draculas in various heights, sizes and genders to help create the illusion of speed and spatial simultaneity.

**THE DRACULETTES:** At least three female vampires who assist Dracula.

**ASSORTED CREW MEMBERS, WORKMEN, LONDONERS, PEASANTS, SAILORS, FRIARS and STREET URCHINS.**

TIME: 1897. May to November.

PLACE: The residence of Sherlock Holmes, the foreboding landscape of Transylvania, the seaport town of Whitby, England, and the teeming streets of London.

SETTING: The action of the play moves briskly from Sherlock Holmes' study at 221B Baker Street to a horse-drawn coach, to the banquet hall at Castle Dracula, to a seagoing journey to England ... you get the idea. Cumbersome set pieces should be avoided. An imaginative blending of flats, window units, a platform or two and the occasional bed, table and a chair or two will serve nicely. Choreograph your set changes—in concert with musical underscoring and/or sound effects—so they become part of the enjoyment of viewing the production.

Consider suspending treetop branches above the audience, draping moss and vines everywhere. Project photos of craggy cliffs against auditorium walls. Have crew members, dressed in black, blink small penlight flashlights in the darkness to represent scurrying alley rats or wolves in the deep forests. Be as theatrical as possible.

See the production notes at the end of the script for additional staging options.

**BANNERS, SLIDES, SIGNS, MAPS AND POSTERS:** A series of banners, slides, signs, maps and posters should be used to announce an upcoming scene, reinforce the identity of a particular location or comment upon the current action

of the scene. These can be flown into view, wheeled on like a classroom blackboard, carried on by a crew member or displayed on a tripod. The more you can “flourish” these visual items the better!

**COSTUMES, LIGHTS, PROPS, SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC:** The costumes should suggest the look of Victorian England in the late 1890s and the peasant world of Transylvania/Rumania. Production personnel viewed by the audience as well as ushers and ticket takers should be costumed.

If full costuming is not possible, dress all performers in a generic costume and use accessory items to give each character a sense of flair: hats in all shapes and sizes; assorted scarves, bandanas and shawls; high boots; shirts with billowy sleeves, peasant jewelry and colorful vests.

Dracula’s “look” is crucial. While a full-length, blood-red silk-lined cloak is the most iconic piece of clothing associated with Dracula, consider incorporating additional color accents: a vest with red buttons, a red silk scarf, a red-handled walking stick, red spats, even a red flower in his coat lapel. Refer to “Descriptions from Dracula” (at the end of the script) to discover how Dracula is depicted in the novel. Regardless of Bram Stoker’s rendering of Dracula, however, feel free to capitalize on your costuming talents. For a female Dracula, red hair and bright red lipstick would make a stunning impression.

Lighting is an important atmospheric element. Create as many shadows as possible where frightened peasants can hide and Dracula’s Draculettes can carry out their devious deeds. When lighting support is scarce, consider using crew members—dressed in black—who could move in and around the action

with handheld flashlights to help focus the audience's attention as well as underscore the fantastical quality of the play.

Prop requirements are few in number. Special emphasis should be placed on the varied items used to repel or destroy vampires—rings of garlic bulbs, crucifixes of varying sizes and material, wooden stakes and large hammers, mirrors of varying sizes and designs, medical paraphernalia and so on.

Sound effects should be intriguing, atonal, spooky and menacing. To this end, three or four Foley artists should be visible to the audience throughout the show. Utilizing a variety of items, the Foley artists can create an impressive array of sound effects: the pounding of horse hooves, the rattling of wagon wheels, the howling of wolves, the hooting of owls, the squeaking of rats, the beating-flapping-whooshing of bat wings, the clanging of bells, the clapping of thunder, the thrashing of wind through the trees, the shouts and screams of frightened peasants, the lapping of water against the side of a ship, the roar of crashing waves ... and so much more!

Music should underscore the dark, quirky, menacing mood of the play. Consider placing musicians onstage. These musicians can collaborate with the Foley artists to create a distinctive tonal experience for the audience. In addition to using public domain sources, contact music students, teachers and artists in your community and offer them the opportunity to compose original music for the show. Compose a signature tune, perhaps, or a trumpet flourish to announce the arrival of a banner, map or poster, as well as Dracula's arrivals and departures. Integrate sound amplification and reverberation whenever possible.



**AD-LIBS:** While scripted ad-libs are provided throughout the play to help cover a change of scenery, underscore a sense of confusion or comment on the action, the director should assign the ad-libs as best suits the personnel and pacing of the production. Also, consider assigning ad-libs to the Foley artists and the musicians to help cover extended scene changes.

**THE DRACULETTES:** While the scripted lines for the Draculettes should be assigned as best suits the director's needs, consider dividing the lines up into smaller units and having the Draculettes function as a chorus. Create a special language consisting of grunts, hisses, whispers, clicks, chirps, yelps and so on, that will be shared between Dracula and his Draculettes only. This will allow them to comment on the action. Create distinctive hairstyles and give them unusual jewelry—long strands of toes or fingers perhaps. Also, consider using the Draculettes to orchestrate set changes.

**STYLE AND PACING NOTES:** Traditional chronological time boundaries are often violated in the script. All scenes should be approached as “movies” that are being watched not only by the audience but often by other characters who might be in other locales. Some scenes in the present may include “flash-back” or “flash-forward” inserts. On such occasions, characters might step into the “movie” reality they are observing and interact with the “movie” characters.

Much of the comedy is derived from an up-tempo pacing of the action. At no time, however, should any action or set of lines be “played for laughs.” All characters must remain seriously engaged in vanquishing Dracula before he bites again!

**CAST SIZE:** While this play has been written with a large cast in mind, adjustments may be made to accommodate a smaller cast. See the production notes at the end of the script for ways to reduce the size of your cast without reducing the enjoyment of staging the play.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

**ABOUT THE ALL-PURPOSE (AP) DRACULAS:** The (AP) Draculas should help create a sense that Dracula can be anywhere he wishes in the blink of the eye. For example: one line of dialogue could be delivered by an (AP) Dracula in the light booth, the next line by a short (AP) Dracula positioned far upstage, and the closing line by a third (AP) Dracula running down the aisles. Also, since Dracula can be a shape-shifter, as well as a gender-bender, consider casting women as (AP) Draculas.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO CAST SIZE:** While the play specifies 11 named characters, careful double and triple casting will go a long way to reducing the number of actors actually needed to produce the show. Draculettes can double as workmen and Londoners as well as the people on the cliff at Whitby awaiting Dracula's arrival. Lucy and Renfield can double successfully in the first act. Utilize backstage personnel fully in the project. An eager and capable team of six to nine people can comfortably portray sailors, workmen, (AP) Draculas and Londoners and still be available to assist with set changes.

## SUGGESTIONS BY SCENE

### ACT I

#### SCENE 1: WHERE'S SHERLOCK?

—Van Helsing initially might be revealed sitting in a chair wrapped in a quilt and wearing nightclothes, even a peaked woolen hat with a tassel. He is sick, coughing. Perhaps he has some medications on a small table next to his chair. Although Van Helsing is in Amsterdam and will not join the action

directly, he will be an influence throughout the play. He should follow the action wherever possible—from the balcony, in the audience, high up on a scaffolding, even next to a coffin bed and so on, all in order to invigorate a scene and give the audience a different perspective.

—The following monologue might be a useful alternative to the dialogue interchange on page 17 concerning Sabrina’s involvement in the hunt for Dracula.

SABRINA (*all in one desperate breath*). My father is the most famous vampire hunter in the world, but he has this really rotten cold right now, so I said, “Send me in your place, Father, please,” and he said, “No,” and I said, “Yes,” and he said, “You’re just a girl,” and I said, “I thought you knew that, Father,” and he said, “Don’t be snippy with me, young lady,” and I said, “Please, Daddy,” and he said, “Well, only if Sherlock Holmes will agree to help you,” so we sailed to London and hurried down its teeming streets

*(Quite suddenly, as many LONDONERS as possible come into view! Some are waving their arms, others are yelling, and still others are scurrying here and there. The whole effect should not take more than six to seven seconds.*

*Then the LONDONERS disappear!)*

—Toward the end of Mrs. Dobrinski’s tale of escape as Little Lucretia, a crew member might hold a shiny platter and “reflect” the sun’s rays into the (AP) Dracula’s face.

## SCENE 2: WELCOME TO CASTLE DRACULA

—For the coachman (who is actually Dracula), consider casting an actor very different in size from your main Dracula.

Remember that Dracula is a shape-shifter, able to assume any size and shape that suits him. A misshapen Halloween mask might also be fun.

—In depicting the journey to Castle Dracula, consider crew members as peasants to create the Carpathian Mountains, the foreboding forests, the craggy cliffs and so on. They could hold cutouts and move behind the “carriage” much like an 18th-century diorama would scroll in front of an audience to convey the passage of time and the change of a locale. They might spread painted muslin over several jutting timber pieces to create the mountains. They could then hide in the shadows or move like wolves in the half darkness. Have fun with the journey.

—Refer to “Descriptions from Dracula” for a precise description of how Dracula is depicted in the novel. Regardless of Stoker’s rendering of Dracula, feel free to capitalize on your costuming talents.

—Regarding Dracula’s communication skills, consider a variety of methods Dracula can use to communicate with his Draculettes and with nature’s creatures—high-pitched utterances, a flick/tilt of his head, the raising of his right hand as a conductor might “talk” with his orchestra, a quick flourishing of both hands and arms and so on. The more methods the better. In a similar vein, the Draculettes might create key poses and gestures to be used in response to Dracula’s commands.

—Regarding the banquet, fluidity of motion is a key ingredient in this segment. The Draculettes could bring on plates and platters of food as if they were skating on ice. Or food cutouts could be dropped on the table like table tents, or the Draculettes could carry on the table already pre-set with

food options—roast turkey, loaves of bread, wedges of cheese and so on. The task for Jonathan is to bite and chew in rhythm with the arrival and departure of the food items.

—In the London tableau, the Draculettes can have great fun playing tricks on the Londoners—switching hats, taking hats off Londoners’ heads, wearing them for a moment then putting them on the heads of different Londoners, taking an umbrella away from one Londoner and placing it in the hands of another Londoner, and so on.

—Regarding the London and Whitby residences, projections of old mansions and manor homes, underscored by “murky music,” might reinforce the “movie” nature of the production style. Period photos and old paintings may be found in art books and cultural histories of the time. Also, actors dressed in city garb could enter holding iconic cutouts of London such as the London Bridge and Big Ben. If projections are not possible, for the Whitby properties, consider bringing on actors, dressed in country attire, holding drawings and sketches evoking the small town/county nature of Whitby.

—Regarding Lucy standing on the Whitby cliffs, an electric fan held by a crew member might create a windblown look.

—When Renfield is revealed, perhaps he can be viewed behind bars, as if he is in an asylum cell.

—For Mina’s photograph, consider rigging the photograph so it can “rise” into the air. Dracula can take the classic conjurer’s stance—arm outstretched and fingers pointed at the object to be “raised” up. Also, include some special effects when he picks up the picture frame—weird sounds, an intense spotlight that keys on his face, and so on.

#### SCENE 4: PREPARING FOR THE DARK JOURNEY

—If a more detailed map is desired, crew members could highlight key cities and rivers with laser pointers similar to those used during lectures. Or smaller pieces of the bigger map could be brought in and placed on a large artist’s tripod, much like an announcement poster often placed outside a school auditorium or inside a bank lobby. Individual pieces might be placed on a Velcro curtain. Or crew members could hold a distinct country or city cutout, all arranged so as to create a finished map.

—Regarding the “coffin beds,” constructing lightweight cardboard boxes painted black and perhaps trimmed in bright red or decorated with unusual, quirky designs might be impressive. Only a few need to be made for this scene. Later, when they are stacked on the ship to England, they could be smaller so they can be stacked one upon the other. Or they might be of various sizes so they could stack up into the air, one upon the other.

—As an alternative to a one-quarter scale carriage model, fashion a bigger cutout of only the carriage door large enough for Jonathan to “sit” in the carriage and be framed by the door window. Or both the carriage and the schooner could be created as silhouette cutouts similar to the cutouts used in Asian shadow plays. The cutouts could be at the end of a long pole and maneuvered by each crew member.

#### SCENE 5: THE RACE TO ENGLAND!

—Regarding Dracula’s “coffin bed,” suspend the coffin lid from the grid above the stage and then lower it slowly as Dracula “commands” it into place. Or a few crew members (or the

Draculettes) could enter holding the frame of a coffin bed and place it around Dracula. A third crew member (or Draculette) could then enter with the lid and place it on the frame, thereby encasing Dracula in the coffin bed. The more “magic” and/or “weird” stuff you can create, the more fun it will be.

—Regarding the “bubble-up” sequence, cover the bubble-up vampire in bubble wrap or a similar product. Or perhaps small balloons in a variety of colors can be taped down on the vampire’s arms and back. To make the bubbles “pop,” the bubble-up vampire can pop the bubble wrap by holding a small pin, all under the assumption that the victim is trying to pat out the flames. To create the pus that oozes, consider pre-squeezing cream filling into some of the balloons.

#### SCENE 6: THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS ARRIVES

—Regarding the approaching storm, suspend long, wide tin sheets from battens or an A-frame. Then have the Foley artists shake, wiggle and whack the sheets in a variety of ways to create a wide range of thunder sounds.

—Regarding a “wind” effect, several crew members could appear, each pointing a blow dryer in the face of the waiting townspeople. Or small wind machines can be rented at a reasonable rate from props companies. Also, it shouldn’t be too difficult to check paint and/or construction companies to see if they might loan fans often used to air out workshop areas.

—For the “white, billowing sea mist” effect, check out a Halloween store to find cloth-like cobwebs and have crew members “roll” the cobwebs up and over the frightened townspeople. White sheets could also be held and “rippled” by crew members as they move through the performance space.



—Regarding the searchlight, an industrial-strength hand-held flashlight that casts a spectacular beam of light might be dramatic. The searchlight can track back and forth across the audience in addition to keying on the approaching “schooner,” thus creating eerie lighting effects.

## ACT II

### SCENE 2: PEE-YEW: GARLIC TO THE RESCUE!

—One of the Foley artists might suspect Dracula’s presence, but a crippling look from Dracula quickly quells the Foley artist’s curiosity.

### SCENE 3: BAD THINGS HAPPEN AT MIDNIGHT— GOODY! GOODY!

—Consider a flash of light or a “poof” of flash powder to herald Dracula’s arrival.

—The Draculettes might be placed in the auditorium and approach the set by coming down the aisles or, facilities permitting, by “climbing down,” “floating” or “swooping in” from the grid or from battens.

—To help cover the time it might take Renfield to prepare Lucy’s bed chamber for Dracula’s arrival, consider devising appropriate covering dialogue for the Foley artists or musicians: “You forgot the garlic over there.” “Where?” “Behind you.” And, of course, Renfield fails to find the errant garlic bulb and Dracula becomes impatient. “Not there ... over there ... in the corner ... the other corner. Hurry, hurry, I am so thirsty!” Renfield’s replies can be a series of variations on the theme of “I’m sorry, oh great master!” And so on.

—The decapitation effect simply requires the Draculette to scream and turn her back to the audience as Mrs. Dobrinski swings the sword. A second cast member should be preset with a papier-mâché head. Then, in concert with much screaming and perhaps a blood spurt or two, the head is tossed onto the stage floor. A Styrofoam head might also be used. Also, another cast member could have two or three plastic containers, much like the ketchup and mustard squeeze bottles commonly used at ballpark concession stands, and squirt out a variety of colored liquids. But keep in mind that those characters in the vicinity of the “blood” might get splattered as well, and they may have to continue in the scene long after the vampire has been vanquished.

—Making Dracula disappear can be as spectacular as time, money and personnel allow. The entire set might tremble as the Foley artists and the onstage musicians create a wracking-clashing-thundering-booming cluster of “other worldly” sounds. Or more fog can be used to mask Dracula’s escape. Several crew members might bring on smoke devices and wave them throughout the bed chamber. The stage lights can flash and blink and sputter. Strobe lights might be employed, and so on.

#### SCENE 4: FANG MARKS HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE!

—If the wagon master comes down an aisle, consider involving one or two members of the audience. Load the wagon master up with several reams of papers, several ledgers and the like. Then ask an audience member to hold them so the wagon master can riffle through the pages searching for the correct bill of lading as well as the sheets of papers indicating where the coffin beds

were delivered. Consider ad-libs such as: “Here, hold this, will you?” “Don’t drop those!” “Oh, dear, oh, dear, where did I put that list?” and so on. Involving audience members can often be tricky. Be sure your wagon master can control the interaction or the tempo of the production might suffer.

**CROWD REACTIONS TO DRACULA:** A variety of gestures and chants may be employed to ward off Dracula’s evil powers. While the classic defense is to hold a crucifix upright and thrust it toward Dracula, thus forcing him to retreat or at least halt his advance, other options might be equally effective.

Consider making the “sign of the cross” by either extending the arms at full length and crossing the index fingers, or by crossing any two available items—silverware, branches, axe handles and so on.

Try squeezing both eyes shut, thrusting both fists into the air and wiggling the fingers vigorously, much like doing “the wave” at sporting events. Add a curdling high-pitched scream or hissing sound for good measure.

A character might drop to one knee, cover the face with one hand and wave the other hand in the air from side to side, much like a windshield wiper. Again, supplementing any of these or any other imaginative evil “antidotes” with atonal—if not ear-splitting—sounds, screams and chants will go a long way toward creating surprising and enjoyable moments for both cast and audience.

## DESCRIPTIONS FROM *DRACULA* BY BRAM STOKER

Jonathan Harker meets Dracula:

“I heard a heavy step approaching behind the great door, and saw through the chinks the gleam of a coming light. Then there was the sound of rattling chains and clanking of massive bolts drawn back. A key was turned with the loud grating noise of long disuse, and the great door swung back. Within, stood a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere.”

Description of Dracula:

“His face was a strong—a very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.”

“Hitherto I had noticed the backs of his hands as they lay on his knees in the firelight, and they had seemed rather white and fine; but seeing them now close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse—broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count

leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal.”

Dracula’s arrival in Whitby harbor:

“Then without warning the tempest broke ... The waves rose in growing fury, each overtopping its fellow, till in a very few minutes the lately glassy sea was like a roaring and devouring monster. White-crested waves beat madly on the level sands. ... The wind roared like thunder, and blew with such force that it was with difficulty that even strong men kept their feet, or clung with grim clasp to the iron stanchions. ... Masses of sea-fog came drifting inland—white, wet clouds, which swept by in ghostly fashion, so dank and damp and cold that it needed but little effort of imagination to think that the spirits of those lost at sea were touching their living brethren with the clammy hands of death. ... At times the mist cleared, and the sea for some distance could be seen in the glare of the lightning, which now came thick and fast, followed by such sudden peals of thunder that the whole sky overhead seemed trembling under the shock of the footsteps of the storm.”

Vampiric properties and powers as mentioned by Dr. Benjamin Van Helsing:

“This vampire which is amongst us is of himself so strong in person as twenty men; he is of cunning more than mortal, for his cunning be the growth of ages ... he can, within limitations, appear at will when, and where, and in any of the forms that are to him; he can, within his range, direct the elements; the storm, the fog, the thunder; he can command all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat—the moth, and the fox, and the wolf; he can grow and become small; and he can at times vanish and come unknown.”

# **Dracula: A Comic Thriller Starring Shirley Holmes and Jennie Watson**

## **PRIOR TO CURTAIN**

*(While the audience is settling into their seats, the MUSICIANS and FOLEY ARTISTS should take their places and tune up their instruments and sound effects devices.)*

## **ACT I**

### **PROLOGUE**

*(Eerie, supernatural music starts to build as the stage and house lights begin to fade down.*

*Actors and crew members busy themselves by putting the last few props in place, calling for a final light check or hanging a curtain swag.*

*The howling of wolves and the sound of bat wings fill the auditorium. The remaining crew members exit quickly as the lights fade out on the auditorium and up on JENNIE WATSON.)*

JENNIE. Hey, hi there. So good to see you. Thanks for coming. My name is Jennie Watson and I want you to sit back in your seat and hang on tight. 'Cause this is the story of how a few cool kids just like you set out to save the world from being one big Happy Meal for Count Dracula, the most famous vampire in the entire universe. I'll be your guide through the darkest forests of Transylvania and the busy streets

of Victorian London. We've got it all. Bats ... (*SFX: The beating of bats' wings.*) Hungry wolves in the darkness ... (*SFX: The howling of wolves.*) And Dracula himself!

*(SFX: DRACULA's amplified laughter as several (AP) DRACULAS dart in and out of an alcove or a light booth or down a theatre aisle. Screams are heard from backstage.*

*SFX: Lots of whizzing and zooming and swooping.*

*Then, after a resounding musical flourish, all SFX fade out.)*

JENNIE (*cont'd*). Whoa! Remember to keep your eyes open. He can appear anywhere, anytime. OK, everybody ready? 'Cause there's so much to see and not a moment to lose! We're off!

## SCENE 1: WHERE'S SHERLOCK?

*(Music: A flourish as the lights fade out on JENNIE and come up in Sherlock Holmes' study.*

*A sign/banner appears: "221B Baker Street."*

*SHIRLEY HOLMES is surrounded by a huge pile of books, papers and maps.*

*JENNIE enters the study.)*

JENNIE (*to the audience*). We are in London, England. The time is 1896. My best friend, Shirley Holmes, and I are busy at work studying for our final exams when Mrs. Dobrinski, the housekeeper, scurries into the room waving a letter in her hand.

*(MRS. LUCRETIA DOBRINSKI enters, waving a letter in her hand.)*

MRS. DOBRINSKI (*with an indeterminate middle-European accent*). A letter for Mr. Holmes has just arrived. It's marked urgent.

SHIRLEY. Urgent? Did you say urgent? Oh, that sounds exciting, doesn't it, Jennie?

JENNIE (*to the audience*). Sure beats studying for exams.

SHIRLEY (*snatching the letter out of MRS. DOBRINSKI's hand*). Then we must open it at once.

MRS. DOBRINSKI (*snatching the letter back*). But it's not addressed to you, Miss Shirley.

SHIRLEY (*snatching the letter and holding it behind her back*). But it could be a matter of life or death, Mrs. D. We have an obligation to open it.

(*MRS. DOBRINSKI tries to get the letter from SHIRLEY.*)

SHIRLEY (*cont'd*). Here, Jennie!

(*SHIRLEY and JENNIE play "keep away" from MRS. DOBRINSKI.*)

*Lights key on DR. ABRAHAM VAN HELSING. He is ... somewhere else. He has a terrible cold. He gives forth with an explosive sneeze.*)

VAN HELSING. Stop playing games and open the letter! It is a matter of life or death. I assure you.

(*All look at VAN HELSING.*)

MRS. DOBRINSKI. Who are you, sir?

VAN HELSING. Dr. Abraham Van Helsing.

MRS. DOBRINSKI. I didn't hear any bell. Did you ring the bell?

VAN HELSING. No, I did not ring the bell, my dear woman. I'm not even there ... I'm inside the letter. Open it!



JENNIE (*to the audience*). Inside the letter? How cool is that?

VAN HELSING. Quick, quick, quick. There's no time ... to ... waste!

*(Another violent sneeze.)*

MRS. DOBRINSKI. Perhaps a cup of tea will help, sir, wherever you are. I'll just be a moment.

VAN HELSING. You're too kind, madam. (*To SHIRLEY*.) The letter! Hurry!

*(MRS. DOBRINSKI exits for the tea as SHIRLEY opens the letter. JENNIE peeks over her shoulder.*

*VAN HELSING, SHIRLEY and JENNIE share phrases of the letter.)*

SHIRLEY. "My Dear Sherlock ..."

VAN HELSING. "Please forgive this intrusion, but I am incapa-capa-capa-ci-tated! ..."

*(Another violent sneeze.)*

JENNIE. "And am in desperate need of your considerable talents."

VAN HELSING (*to JENNIE*). Thank you. (*Continuing.*) "At this very moment, my daughter Sa-Sa-Sabrina ..."

*(Another sneeze as SABRINA VAN HELSING, WILHEMMA MURRAY and JONATHAN HARKER approach 221B Baker Street.)*

SHIRLEY. "Should be arriving at your door at any moment ..."

JENNIE. "With the most disturbing news I have ever heard." (*To the audience.*) I can't wait!

*(SFX: A chime, ring, buzz. Something!)*

*MRS. DOBRINSKI enters with a cup of tea, hands it to VAN HELSING and answers the door.)*

MRS.DOBRINSKI. Coming! Here you are, sir. *(At the door.)*  
May I help you?

*(SABRINA, MINA and JONATHAN rush into the study.)*

SABRINA. Yes, madam. We need the brilliant mind of Mr. Sherlock Holmes at once. Please tell him Sabrina Van Helsing is here.

MINA. And Wilhelmina Murray. Call me Mina.

JONATHAN. And Jonathan Harker. Call me Jonathan. 'Cause that's my name.

SABRINA. There's not a moment to lose. We are afraid our dear Lucy is in very grave danger.

MRS. DOBRINSKI. Lucy? Lucy who? I don't see any Lucy.

*(SFX: Sounds of grave danger!)*

*Lights key on LUCY WESTERNA. She is in a long flowing gown. She looks pale, ghostly.)*

LUCY. Over here! Here I am. Hurry! I can't control myself much longer. I feel the ... hunger coming upon me! Please! You must save me from myself!

*(Lights out on LUCY.)*

*SFX out.)*

SABRINA. That was Lucy.

JENNIE. Is she inside that letter, too? How does that work?

VAN HELSING. Previews of coming attractions, young lady.  
Dear, sweet Lucy may soon become one of the undead.

*(MRS. DOBRINSKI recoils when she hears the word undead. She makes the sign of the cross.)*

JENNIE *(to the audience)*. The undead? That doesn't sound very healthy to me.

SHIRLEY. What's an undead?

VAN HELSING. A vampire, my dear girl!

JENNIE. Vampire? Really?

JONATHAN. Yes. Dead but still alive.

SHIRLEY. Oh, please. Vampires only exist in spooky stories for scaredy-cats.

MRS. DOBRINSKI. You are so very wrong, Miss Shirley Know-It-All. Vampires have roamed the earth for thousands of years.

JENNIE. They must be very tired by now.

MRS. DOBRINSKI. They come out at night and drink until dawn.

SHIRLEY. Drink? Drink what?

MRS. DOBRINSKI. The blood of the innocent.

JENNIE. Yuck!

SABRINA. That is the hunger. The hunger for blood.

MINA. Our poor, dear Lucy has been bitten by the most famous vampire of them all.

VAN HELSING. The Prince of Darkness himself!

SABRINA, MINA & JONATHAN. Dracula!

*(SFX: DRACULA's blood curdling amplified laughter fills the theatre.)*

*Everyone does a double take as in "did you hear something?" and looks for the source of the laughter. Then MRS. DOBRINSKI falls to her knees. JONATHAN hides behind MINA.)*

JENNIE (*to the audience*). That sounds so juicy!

VAN HELSING. Dracula must be vanquished. Now. Before it is too late! Or Lucy will be lost forever!

SABRINA. Father is the most famous vampire hunter in the world. But he has pneumonia.

VAN HELSING. I ache all over!

MRS. DOBRINSKI. You poor man.

SABRINA. So I said, “Send me in your place, Father, please. I can slay Dracula and save dear Lucy!”

JONATHAN. But he said ...

VAN HELSING. “No, you can’t, my dear Sabrina, you’re just a girl.”

MINA. To which she replied ...

SABRINA. “I thought you knew that by now, Father.”

JONATHAN. Then he shook his finger and said ...

VAN HELSING. “Don’t you be cutesy with me, young lady.”

MINA. Then she did the—

SABRINA (*on her knees*). “Please, Daddy. Daddy, please, please, please, pretty please!”

JONATHAN. And after a long pause, Daddy said—

VAN HELSING. “Oh, all right, but only if Sherlock Holmes will agree to help you.”

SABRINA (*rising to her feet*). So, we all sailed to London ...

MINA. Hurried through its teeming streets ...

*(Quite suddenly, as many LONDONERS as possible come into view! Some are deep in conversation, others are yelling, and still others are hawking their wares. The whole effect should not take more than six to seven seconds.*

*Then the LONDONERS disappear!)*

JONATHAN (*out of breath*). And here we are ... whew ... to seek the help of the famous ... Sherlock Holmes.

*(See the production notes at the end of the script for alternative dialogue option.)*

MRS. DOBRINSKI. But Mr. Holmes is not at home.

SABRINA, MINA & JONATHAN. Mr. Holmes not at home?

SHIRLEY. No. My uncle Sherlock is on holiday in the Belgian Congo.

JENNIE. He's letting us use his flat while we're studying for our exams.

SHIRLEY. I'm his niece, Shirley Holmes. A pleasure to meet you. And this is—

JENNIE. Jennie Watson. Hi. My uncle, Dr. John Watson, goes with her uncle Sherlock everywhere.

SHIRLEY. They are inseparable.

MRS. DOBRINSKI. But they won't be returning, I'm afraid, for another two months.

SABRINA, MINA & JONATHAN. Two months!

VAN HELSING. Then London is doomed, my dear lady. And civilization as we know it will be lost forever.

*(Music: London is doomed!)*

JENNIE (*to the audience*). Lost forever? That sounds so permanent.

SABRINA. Then we must save civilization ourselves, Father.

JONATHAN. But there are only three of us now.

VAN HELSING (*sneezing*). I'll do whatever ... I can, but I can hardly ... move ... my—

SHIRLEY. Wait!

EVERYONE. What?

SHIRLEY. Is that the sound of doom, I hear, my dear Jennie, or is that the sound of adventure?

*(Music: Adventure it is!)*

JENNIE. I'll vote for adventure, my dear Shirley.

SHIRLEY. I thought you might.

*(Music: Fanfare.)*

SHIRLEY *(cont'd)*. Ladies and gentlemen, you are not alone.

For I and the clever and resourceful Jennie Watson—

JENNIE. Who is strong as a bear, I might add—

SHIRLEY. Will join forces with you to win the day for London and save civilization everywhere.

JENNIE. Hear, hear!

MRS. DOBRINSKI. And what about studying for your upcoming exams, young ladies?

SHIRLEY & JENNIE *(pulling their version of "Daddy, Daddy, please")*. We will, we promise. But we have to save civilization first. We'll pull an all-nighter! Pleeeaaasseeeee!

*(MRS. DOBRINSKI tosses her hands in the air.)*

SHIRLEY. There you have it, Dr. Van Helsing. Jennie and I, it seems, are all you've got. So, when do we leave?

JONATHAN. But if you don't mind me saying, you don't look strong as a bear to me.

JENNIE. Is that a fact? Here, feel.

*(JENNIE makes a bicep muscle.)*

MRS. DOBRINSKI. My dear boy, you shouldn't have said that.

*(As JONATHAN reaches out to feel her bicep, JENNIE displays an array of karate kicks and hand chops. And after a few "Ka-Bangs" and "Ka-Booms" from the FOLEY ARTISTS, JONATHAN suddenly finds himself flat on the floor.)*

JONATHAN *(struggling to his feet)*. My apology. I might have made a mistake.

JENNIE. Not a prob.

MRS. DOBRINSKI. And am I to be left behind to twiddle my thumbs while you do battle with the Prince of Darkness?

SHIRLEY. So sorry. Everyone, may I present Madame Lucretia Dobrinski, my uncle's loyal housekeeper. We call her Mrs. D.

MRS. DOBRINSKI. You will need my help. I know this Count Dracula.

SHIRLEY & JENNIE. No way!

MRS. DOBRINSKI. Yes, way! I had a life, you know, before Mr. Holmes was so generous to me.

*(Lights key on a small, miniature village.*

*CREW MEMBERS might appear holding several toy buildings.*

*As many LONDONERS as possible should "peek into" the following scene.*

*Everyone watches as if viewing a "movie."*

*SFX and music: Spooky stuff!*)

MRS. DOBRINSKI *(cont'd)*. My family lived for generations in a small village in the Carpathian Mountains. Over the

many years, a boy might disappear here or an old woman who forgot to lock her door might disappear there. Then, one night ... the wolves never stopped howling. And we could hear the cries of the villagers. My mother and I hid under our bed.

*(SFX: The howling of wolves. The cries of villagers.)*

*An (AP) DRACULA appears.)*

DRACULA *(amplified voice)*. Lucretia? Is that you under the bed? I see you.

JENNIE. Can he see us now?

SHIRLEY. Does he know we're here?

VAN HELSING. Dracula sees everything! Now and forever.

JENNIE *(to the audience)*. This is sooo creepy!

MRS. DOBRINSKI. My mother took my hand and we ran!

*(Lights key on LITTLE LUCRETIA and her MOTHER as they "run" through the forests with an (AP) DRACULA in pursuit.)*

*The use of marionettes might be fun here.)*

HOLMES ENSEMBLE. Hurry! Faster! Oh, no! Run little girl! Look out. Behind you! Hurry!

*(The (AP) DRACULA bites LUCRETIA's MOTHER. She slumps to the ground.)*

*Everyone gasps!*

*As the (AP) DRACULA is about to bite LITTLE LUCRETIA, the rays of the rising sun come into view. They fall across the (AP) DRACULA's face. He hisses and retreats into the receding darkness.*

*LITTLE LUCRETIA escapes.)*