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Dramatic Publishing

A Full-Length Play

Dracula

By
JOHN MATTERA

Based on the novel
By Bram Stoker



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(DRACULA)

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HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The name of COUNT DRACULA and of his accompanying bevy of VAMPIRES are familiar words to all Euro-Americans. They appear with companion terms such as ghouls, castles, dungeons, crypts, midnight screams, etc., in encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc. Aged women in remote villages whisper of rites performed at midnight in crumbling churches or in dark corners of churchyards. Like the Easter Bunny, Saint Nicholas and his reindeer and the malevolent Erklings of Scandinavian lore, they form a part of our folk heritage and are definitely here to stay. It will be a sad day (if it ever finds its gloomy way to us) if ever there comes a time when the names cease to evoke a faintly humorous but definitely agreeable shiver in our United States.

So, good luck with this new version of the classic and, rest assured, the special effects are easily produced. So turn with confidence to the Production Notes at the back.

SOME FACTS ABOUT VAMPIRES

Male vampires are extremely strong.

They may assume many forms, usually as bats or wolves or they may appear as mist or vapor.

They must drink blood in order to survive. They are choosy, however, and will not suck the blood of their own sex except in desperation.

They must return to coffins containing soil from their native land during the daytime. Harsh sunlight will cause them to crumble to death.

They are repelled by the cross or any blessed object, by garlic or by mirrors. (They do not reflect in a mirror.)

To kill them, a stake must be driven through their hearts, their heads must be severed and their mouths stuffed with garlic.

DRACULA
A Full-Length Play
For Nine Men and Six Women

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JONATHAN HARKERengaged to Lucy
COUNT DRACULA. evil vampire out of the past
WOMAN VAMPIRE 1 }
WOMAN VAMPIRE 2 } his servant vampires
WOMAN VAMPIRE 3 }
MRS. MARTHA WESTENRALucy's concerned mother
MR. HENRY WESTENRALucy's father
CHARLES (the butler). an old servant
MISS LUCY WESTENRA a beautiful young woman
MISS MINA MURRAY. her friend
ARTHUR HOLMWOOD.engaged to Mina
DR. PETER SEWARDthe family doctor
PROFESSOR ABRAHAM VAN HELSING a specialist
.from the city
SERVANT. another servant
MR. RENFIELD. a mental patient

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE-A

SCENE: Dracula's crypt. A coffin and candlestand are the only furnishings. Wind is heard blowing and the candle flame flickers. Dogs are baying in the night. Fog is rolling across the stage. Then the coffin lid is pushed open, and a hand appears from within. After a long moment, the hand withdraws back inside the coffin. A bat flies from the coffin and flutters through the audience. (See Production Notes.)

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

SCENE: Varna, Transylvania. Castle Dracula.

LIGHTS UP to dim on Area A. The room is an antique bedroom.
JONATHAN HARKER is standing shaving, using a small hand

mirror. COUNT DRACULA steps behind HARKER and puts his hand on Harker's shoulder. Offstage effect of wolves baying in the night.)

DRACULA. Mr. Harker . . .

HARKER (startled, he cuts himself and spins around). You scared me half to death!

DRACULA. Forgive me. I did not mean to startle you.

HARKER. I, I, you . . . I didn't see you in the mirror. (Pause.) It's all right. (Touches neck where he cut himself.)

DRACULA (staring at Harker's neck as he speaks). This castle is very . . . very old, Mr. Harker, and the lighting is poor. (He cannot restrain himself from reaching out to touch Harker's neck. HARKER turns away, holding his neck. As he does so, Dracula's hand brushes his collar and a string of Rosary beads is exposed. Dracula's lustful gaze rapidly fades, and he turns away. HARKER holds his neck and sits down.) Your neck; you need a bandage. (Composes himself.)

HARKER. I'm quite all right. It will stop bleeding in a moment.

DRACULA. You have . . . a crucifix around your neck . . . you are a religious man?

HARKER. Oh, these? (Takes off the beads; holds them.) An old woman gave them to me at the hotel in Bistritz. When she heard of my plans to come here, she grew pale and mumbled something. Then she put these Rosary beads around my neck and said a prayer. I thought the incident was quite peculiar, and I made a note to myself to mention it to you.

DRACULA (looking out the window). Superstitious fools. Ignorance and superstition are traits of the peasants who inhabit the countryside. (Pause.) Forgive me, Mr. Harker; you must think me a dreadful host. We haven't even formally

met and here we are discussing old wives' tales. My apologies for not being able to greet you personally when you arrived this morning, but I'm usually occupied . . . with my work in the daytime.

HARKER. That's quite all right . . . your man servant met my coach and showed me to this room.

DRACULA. I trust that, with the exception of the ghost stories the villagers told you, your journey here was comfortable and without event.

HARKER. Yes, yes it was . . . although your coachman gave me a scare or two. He does drive those horses!

DRACULA. And your room is comfortable?

HARKER. Quite.

DRACULA. You are a guest in my house, Mr. Harker. You have entered it freely and of your own will, and you will be afforded all the comforts we may provide during your stay. If there is anything you desire, you have but to ask.

HARKER. Thank you. Your hospitality is reassuring.

DRACULA. You have some papers for me?

HARKER. Yes, I do. Mr. Hawkins sends his regrets that he was not able to handle this business personally. He's been quite ill lately. He gave me this letter of introduction. (Picks up letter from dresser.) I hope it will suffice.

DRACULA (takes letter and begins reading). Mr. Hawkins speaks highly of you. (Continues reading.) Your qualifications seem impeccable, and your character appears unmarred. Yes . . . yes, I'm sure we'll be able to do business, Mr. Harker. Yes, I'm sure of that.

HARKER. Good. I'm glad everything is in order.

DRACULA. May I see the properties you have to show me?

HARKER. I thought I would bathe and shave first. Then, we

would be able to discuss business over dinner. If that was convenient with you, of course.

DRACULA. I'm afraid that is not convenient with me. You see, I've already dined this evening.

HARKER. I see.

DRACULA. I'll see the papers now. Dinner is presently being prepared for you. It will take some time though; so you see, Mr. Harker, this is an excellent opportunity for us to get started.

HARKER (pause). Of course. (Walks to get briefcase, removes a folder. He has had the beads in his hand until now. He leaves them next to the briefcase and hands the folder to DRACULA. DRACULA sits at a desk. While DRACULA is studying the folder, HARKER removes his robe. He is wearing pants and an undershirt. He finishes dressing as he talks.) Has this castle been in your family a very long time?

DRACULA (doesn't look up). Yes . . . a very long time.

HARKER. Castles fascinate me. Ever since I was a child, I . . .

DRACULA (impatient). You're free to roam Castle Dracula as you please, Mr. Harker. You may go any place you like, except, of course, into the locked rooms. You would not want to go into those rooms anyway. This is a large castle, Mr. Harker, much too large for my few servants to keep up. It made much more sense for us to close off the rooms that were not needed.

HARKER. I see. By the way, Count, would you have a larger mirror I could use? I haven't been able to find one since I arrived, and mine is terribly small. It's hardly large enough to shave comfortably with.

DRACULA (looks at the mirror which is now face down on the dresser). That mirror. It is the reason you cut yourself in

the first place. (Walks over to the mirror, picks it up and drops it on the floor. He crushes it with his foot.) Man's vanity will be his own demise.

HARKER. I say, Count!

DRACULA. We have no mirrors here, Mr. Harker, none at all.

HARKER (indignant). Why did you . . .

DRACULA (changes subject). You asked about this castle, Mr. Harker. It has been in my family for centuries. There were some fierce battles on this land, and it was always Dracula who prevailed, Dracula who stood among the relentless soldiers of my country . . . (Getting carried away.) . . . and drew the blood of the Turk . . . forcing him to retreat back over the border into Turkey. The Turks entered with an air of cockiness. They left scurrying like scared rodents. But they were not easily daunted. They came back again and again until the fields were soaked with Turkish blood, and Dracula emerged the victor . . . (Now, almost maniacal.) . . . Dracula emerged, conqueror of the Turks! (Long pause, calming down.) Things are different today though. Now, words are shed in battle, and blood is spared. Men have lost their honor and their pride. Gone are the days when disputes were settled with the sword . . . (Long pause.)

HARKER (hesitantly). Count . . . Dracula? (DRACULA is silent – looks away.) Did any particular piece of property strike you as something you might be interested in?

DRACULA (pause – turns to HARKER). I'll review them this evening. We'll discuss business tomorrow. (Begins to exit, he sees two framed pictures displayed on the desk. He picks one up.) Your wife?

HARKER. My fiancee, Miss Lucy Westenra.

DRACULA. She is very beautiful. You are indeed a very lucky

man, Mr. Harker.

HARKER. Count, I really must insist . . .

DRACULA. What part of England is your fiancee from?

HARKER. A suburb of London, but I really don't see what . . .

DRACULA. Near Carfax?

HARKER. Excuse me, sir?

DRACULA. I asked whether your fiancee lives anywhere near Carfax?

HARKER. Yes, yes, as a matter of fact, she does but . . .

DRACULA. Then you are familiar with the Carfax estate?

HARKER. Why, yes, yes I am. It's an awfully gloomy place.

About twenty acres I believe, and completely surrounded by a stone wall. There's also an insane asylum uncomfortably close by. It's of constant concern for me. When we're married, I intend to take Lucy far away from that dreary place.

DRACULA (still staring at the picture). Lovely, quite lovely.

HARKER. Count Dracula, could you please, at least, glance at the documents between now and dinner; I really wish to expedite . . .

DRACULA (ignoring HARKER, picks up other picture). Then this must be a friend of your fiancee's.

HARKER. Yes, yes, Miss Mina Murray. She's to be our maid of honor. Count, could we possibly . . .

DRACULA. Mr. Harker, I am one who does not like to be pushed in any way. The property documents you have delivered for my examination deserve careful consideration. I will speak with you again on the matter tomorrow evening. That should give me sufficient time to decide.

HARKER. Tomorrow evening! But I had hoped we would be able to have this business settled by tomorrow day. Then I

could catch the evening train and be on my way back to . . .
DRACULA (getting impatient). Mr. Harker, I can plainly see that patience is not one of your greatest virtues as it is not one of mine! I will need until tomorrow evening to make a decision. I will be occupied all day and will not be able to meet with you again until after sunset. By that time, I'm afraid you will have missed your train. Now, I'll bid you good night, Mr. Harker, until tomorrow.

HARKER. But, Count, I thought over dinner we . . .

DRACULA. Dinner will be served in the main dining room when you are ready; and since I will not be able to join you, I'll say good night now. I hope your sleep is . . . undisturbed. (He exits. HARKER stares at door as lights dim.)

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

SCENE: Harker's bedroom, the same night. HARKER has fallen asleep on the bed. He is fully clothed. Three very pale, dark-haired women wearing identical long flowing dark gowns are standing over him. Their demonic giggling awakens him. He starts and sits up.

HARKER. Who, who's there? (He sees the women.) Who are

you? (They do not speak but continue to stare at him, quietly laughing.) I said, "Who are you? What do you want?" (They simultaneously begin to converge on him until he is surrounded. One standing behind him curls her fingers around his neck. She has sharp finger nails and scratches him. In the dim light, her face is visible over Harker's shoulder. She has bared her teeth; they are long and sharp. As she is about to sink them into his neck, HARKER screams and grabs her hands. He throws her to the floor. One speaks.)

WOMAN 1. The master will have your bride-to-be, Jonathan Harker. Dear, sweet Lucy Westenra will no longer have any use for you. (Her voice is low and without feeling.) Your visit here was planned long before you knew anything about it.

WOMAN 2. It is not property that the master is after, it is your innocent, unsuspecting fiancée . . . (She taunts him.) . . . dear Miss Lucy. The master wants her because she is the image incarnate of a mistress that was stolen from him long, long ago. She will be his, Jonathan Harker, and there is nothing you can do about it. Your fiancée will be the master's bride and you, you will be ours, ours to do with as we please. (They are on him instantly, then the door flies open.)

(DRACULA enters. He is carrying a sack over his shoulder. Something is struggling inside it. The three women freeze.)

DRACULA. You dare disobey me! (He walks over to two women who are crouched over HARKER and pulls them away. They fall to the floor cowering and do not move. HARKER is breathing heavily.) I told you he would be yours when I am through with him, but no, you could not

wait. You dared defy me! Now you may never have him. Get out! Get out and don't go near him again without my permission. (They still do not move.) I said, get out. And take this with you. (He throws the sack at their feet. A small hand protrudes from the laced top. They lunge for it greedily.) That should, at least, temporarily quench your insatiable appetites. (They exit.)

HARKER. What in hell is going on here?

DRACULA. This is a most unfortunate occurrence, Mr. Harker. Try not to trouble yourself with what you have seen. Forget it if you can.

HARKER. Forget it? You must be mad, Count, if you think I could forget something as nightmarish as this.

DRACULA. The human mind is capable of accepting or rejecting many things. Yours will reject what you have seen. It will be as if this night never happened.

HARKER. In the name of God, Count Dracula, what are you? What are they?

DRACULA. God? You speak of God? But God will not help you here, Mr. Harker. (He crosses to HARKER and stands face-to-face with him.) Tomorrow morning when you awaken, this night will never have happened. (He looks into Harker's eyes.) It is already beginning to fade from your thoughts . . . in the morning, it will be gone. Now go to your bed, my dear Mr. Harker, go to your bed and sleep. (HARKER obeys.) You need your rest. We have much business to transact tomorrow. Tomorrow you will sign the papers which will seal your life. (DRACULA turns and exits. The bolt can be heard turning in the door as the lights dim.)