

Renfield

14

DRACULA

ACT I

~~ATTENDANT. (Blowing in, I locked the door on you, and I've got the key in my pocket now.~~

SEWARD. But this is the second time. Only last night you let him escape and he tried to break into Count Dracula's house across the grounds.

ATTENDANT. ~~(Crossing door.) I didn't get out the door this time, sir, and it's a drop of thirty feet out of the windows. (Points to window. Crosses to RENFIELD) He's just a bloomin' eel. Now you come with me. (As they start toward door c. holds RENFIELD by coat collar and right arm.)~~

SEWARD. Renfield, if this happens again you will get no more sugar to spread out for your flies.

RENFIELD. *(Drawing himself up)* What do I care for flies—now? *(ATTENDANT gives VAN HELSING a look.)* Flies. Flies are but poor things. *(As he speaks he follows with his eyes a fly. ATTENDANT sees fly too; releases RENFIELD indulgently. With a sweep of his hand he catches fly, holds closed hand to ear as if listening to buzz of fly as he crosses a few steps L., then carries it to his mouth. Then seeing them watching him, releases it quickly)* A low form of life. Beneath my notice. I don't care a pin about flies.

ATTENDANT. Oh, doncher? Any more o' yer tricks and I'll take yer new spider away.

RENFIELD. *(Babbles—on knees)* Oh, no, no! Please, dear Mr. Butterworth, please leave me my spider. He's getting so nice and fat. When he's had another dozen flies he'll be just right, just right. *(Gives little laugh. Rubs hands together, then catches fly and makes gesture of eating.)*

VAN HELSING. Come, Mr. Renfield, what makes you want to eat flies?

RENFIELD. *(Rises. ATTENDANT backs up a few steps)* The wings of a fly, my dear sir, typify the aerial powers of the psychic faculties.

SEWARD. (*To ATTENDANT, wearily*) Butterworth, take him away.

VAN HELSING. One moment, my friend. (*To RENFIELD*) And the spiders?

RENFIELD. (*Crosses to VAN HELSING. Impressively*) Professor Van Helsing, can you tell me why that one great spider lived for centuries in the tower of the old Spanish church—and grew and grew? He never ate, but he drank, and he *drank*. He would come down and drink the oil of all the church lamps.

SEWARD. (*To ATTENDANT*) Butterworth. (*ATTENDANT takes step down.*)

RENFIELD. (*Crosses to SEWARD*) One moment, Doctor Seward— (*VAN HELSING gets wolf's-bane from bag on table above sofa and moves back to r.c.*) I want you to send me away, now, tonight, in a straight waistcoat. Chain me so I can't escape. This is a sanatorium, not a lunatic asylum. This is no place for me. My cries will disturb Miss Lucy, who is ill. They will give your daughter *bad dreams*, Doctor Seward, *bad dreams*.

SEWARD. (*Soothingly*) We'll see about all this in the morning. (*Nods to ATTENDANT, who takes half step toward RENFIELD.*)

VAN HELSING. Why are you so anxious to go?

RENFIELD. (*Crosses to VAN HELSING; hesitates with gesture of decision*) I'll tell you. Not that fool Seward. He wouldn't understand. But you— (*A large BAT dashes against window. RENFIELD turns to the window, holds out his hands and gibbers. Crosses to window*) No, no, no, I wasn't going to say anything— (*ATTENDANT crosses up; watches RENFIELD.*)

SEWARD. (*Moves step up l.*) What was that?

RENFIELD. (*Looks out window, then turns; moves toward c.*) It was a bat, gentleman. Only a bat. Do you know that in some islands of the East-

ern seas there are bats which hang on trees all night? And when the heat is stifling and sailors sleep on the deck in those harbors, in the morning *they* are found dead men—white, even as Miss Mina was.

SEWARD. What do you know of Miss Mina? *(Pause.)* Take him to his room. *(ATTENDANT half step down.)*

VAN HELSING. *(To SEWARD)* Please! *(To RENFIELD)* Why are you so anxious to be moved from here?

RENFIELD. To save my soul.

VAN HELSING. Yes?

RENFIELD. Oh, you'll get nothing more out of me than that. And I'm not sure I hadn't rather stay—After all, what is my soul good for? Is not—*(Turns to window)*—*what I am to receive worth the loss of my soul?*

SEWARD. *(Lightly)* What's got him thinking about souls? Have you the souls of those flies and spiders on your conscience?

RENFIELD. *(During SEWARD'S speech puts fingers in his ears, shuts eyes, distorts face, crosses L.)* I forbid you to plague me about souls. I don't want their souls. All I want is their life. The blood is the life—

VAN HELSING. So?

RENFIELD. That's in the Bible. What use are souls to me? *(Crosses to VAN HELSING)* I couldn't eat them or dr— *(Breaks off suddenly.)*

VAN HELSING. Or drink— *(Holding wolf's-bane under his nose, RENFIELD'S face becomes convulsed with rage and loathing. He leaps back.)*

RENFIELD. You know too much to live, Van Hel-sing. *(Attacking VAN HELSING. ATTENDANT at R. of RENFIELD; shout from him and SEWARD at attack. As ATTENDANT and SEWARD drag RENFIELD, struggling, to door he stops struggling and says clearly)* I'll go quietly. *(SEWARD lets go of him)*