

Seward/Harker

8

DRACULA

ACT I

SEWARD. (*Enters L. He is an alienist of about fifty-five, intelligent, but a typical specialist who lives in a world of text books and patients, not a man of action or force of character. Crosses to c.*) Oh! John. (*Exit MAID c., closing doors.*)

HARKER. (*As SEWARD extends hand, crossing to L.C.*) Doctor Seward. What is it? Why have you sent for me?

SEWARD. My dear John. I told you in my wire there was nothing new.

HARKER. You said "no change, don't worry," but to "come at once."

SEWARD. (*Approvingly*) And you lost no time.

HARKER. I jumped in the car and burned up the road from London. Oh, Doctor, surely there must be something *more* we can do for Lucy. I'd give my life gladly if it would save her.

SEWARD. I'm sure you would, my boy. You love her with the warm blood of youth, but don't forget I love my daughter, too. She's all I have. (*HARKER turns from him.*) You must see that nothing medical science can suggest has been left undone.

HARKER. (*Crosses R. Bitterly*) Medical science couldn't do much for Mina. Poor Mina.

SEWARD. Yes, poor Mina. She died after these same incredible symptoms that my Lucy has developed.

HARKER. My Lucy too.

SEWARD. Our Lucy, then. (*Crosses to L, end of desk. Wild, maniacal LAUGH is heard off L.U.*)

HARKER. (*Moves up to L. of sofa*) Good God, what was that?

SEWARD. (*Sits L. of desk*) Only Renfield. A patient of mine.

HARKER. (*Crosses to L.C.*) But you never keep violent patients here in your sanatorium. Lucy mustn't be compelled to listen to raving madmen.

SEWARD. I quite agree, and I'm going to have him

sent away. Until just lately he was always quiet. I'll be sorry to lose him.

HARKER. What!

SEWARD. An unusual case. Zoophagous.

HARKER. What's that?

SEWARD. A life-eating maniac.

HARKER. What?

SEWARD. Yes, he thinks that by absorbing lives he can prolong his own life.

HARKER. Good Lord!

SEWARD. Catches flies and eats them. And by way of change, he feeds flies to spiders. Fattens them up. Then he eats the spiders.

HARKER. Good God, how disgusting. (*Crosses to chair r. of desk and sits*) But tell me about Lucy. (*Leans over desk*) Why did you send for me?

SEWARD. Yesterday I wired to Holland for my old friend Van Helsing. He'll be here soon. The car has gone down to the station for him now. I'm going to turn Lucy's case over to him.

HARKER. Another specialist on anaemia?

SEWARD. No, my boy, whatever this may be, it's not anaemia, and this man, who speaks a dozen languages as well as his own, knows more about mysterious diseases than anyone alive.

HARKER. (*Rises; step down r.*) Heaven knows it's mysterious enough, but surely the symptoms are clear.

SEWARD. So were poor Mina's. Perfectly clear. (*A DOG HOWLS at a distance. Other dogs take up the lugubrious chorus far and near. SEWARD rises; crosses to fireplace*) There they are, at it again, every dog for a mile around.

HARKER. (*Crosses to window*) They seem howls of terror.

SEWARD. We've heard that chorus every night since Mina fell ill.

HARKER. (*Crosses to above desk*) When I was

travelling in Russia, and the dogs in the village barked like that, the natives always said wolves were prowling about.

SEWARD. (*Gets cigarette on mantel; lights it*) I hardly think you'll find wolves prowling around Purley, twenty miles from London.

HARKER. (*Crosses to window*) Yet your old house might be in a wilderness. (*Looks out of window*) Nothing in sight except that place Carfax that Count Dracula has taken.

SEWARD. (*Turning from fireplace*) Your friend, the Count, came in again last evening.

HARKER. He's no friend of mine. (*Crosses to L. end of divan.*)

SEWARD. Don't say that. He knows that you and I gave our blood for Lucy as well as for Mina, and he's offered to undergo transfusion himself if we need another volunteer. (*Sits on divan.*)

HARKER. By Jove, that's sporting of him. I see I've misjudged him.

SEWARD. He seems genuinely interested in Lucy. If he were a young man I'd think——

HARKER. What!

SEWARD. But his whole attitude shows that it isn't that. We need sympathy in this house, John, and I'm grateful for it.

HARKER. So am I. Anyone who offers to help Lucy can have anything I've got.

SEWARD. Well, I think he does help Lucy. She always seems cheered up when he comes.

HARKER. That's fine. May I go to Lucy now?

SEWARD. (*Rises*) We'll go together. (*Crosses L. BELL rings off. HARKER crosses to door L. SEWARD crosses down L.; puts out cigarette in ashtray*) That must be Van Helsing. You go ahead and I'll come presently. (*HARKER exits L.*)

~~(MAID SHOWS IN FROM THE HALL WITH VAN HELSING, WHO EN-~~