

Dracula

The Sixth Must Bleed

Ellis

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By Sam Ellis

Based on

The Works of Bram Stoker
Co-authored via ReTell™

ReTell™
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Chapter 1 | The Word in the Snow

Tomas Radu crouched over the half-exposed skull at the edge of the forest, brushing snow from the jagged fangs that jutted from its jaw. His fingers, red and cracked from cold, moved with careful reverence.

He wasn't supposed to be here. Not this deep into Borgo Pass. Not after sunset. But this skull—a malformed thing, human yet grotesquely elongated—was worth the risk. His field journal, tied to his belt with a loop of twine, was already full of similar findings: clawed footprints, black feathers that bled when broken, and now this... proof that *they* still hunted here.

He drew a quick sketch. “Too sharp for wolf,” he muttered, “too human for bear.”

Then he closed the journal, tucked it into his coat, and stood.

The wind howled from the east, and Tomas froze. Something was wrong with the sound—not just air, but

breath. Wet. Close. He turned slowly, his eyes adjusting to the dim blue light bleeding through the trees.

Then he saw it: a hunched figure watching from atop a stone cairn, no more than fifty yards away. The figure did not move. Did not blink. But Tomas felt something enter him, like cold water through a cracked window.

He blinked, and it was gone.

Just the cairn. Just the trees. Just the wind.

But in the dirt beneath his feet, someone—*something*—had carved a single word with claw or knife:

“ENGLAND”



Chapter 2 | The Hearth Prophet

Tomas set his back against a frost-brittle pine and waited.

The wind shifted. The figure hadn't vanished—it had *moved*. The forest didn't lie; disturbed snow, broken bark, and a faint, iron-sweet tang in the air pointed downslope toward a forgotten path, overgrown with moss and superstition. He tightened the straps on his boots and followed.

It was madness to track a creature through the Borgo Pass after dusk. Even the wolves stayed low. But Tomas had grown up hearing that name—*Dracula*—hissed like poison at the dinner table, murmured behind closed doors after cattle disappeared, or a cousin woke up pale and strange.

He had never believed the stories fully. Until now.

He followed the signs for hours. Once, he found a hair snagged in a bramble—white, coarse, and longer than his forearm. Another time, a tuft of scorched moss, still warm. But no footprints. The thing left no prints.

Finally, he came to the ruins of a hunting cabin his grandfather once used—a simple stone foundation, roof long since gone. Inside, old bones had been arranged in patterns. Not just scattered—*deliberate*. A circle of vertebrae around a wolf skull. A line of jawbones leading to a large, open crate.

And in the crate, something moved.

A hunched figure, skeletal and wrong. Breathing. Barely.

Its voice was a whisper of parchment tearing:

“You seek the vampire.”

Tomas didn’t speak. He kept his hand near his blade.

The figure nodded slowly, blind eyes milky and white.

“He has gone west. But not alone. The old blood stirs. The forgotten ones wake. Do you know what you are chasing, Tomas Radu?”

Tomas swallowed. “Dracula.”

The figure’s laugh was dry and toothless.

“You are chasing England. But it is no longer what it was.”

The wind howled again.

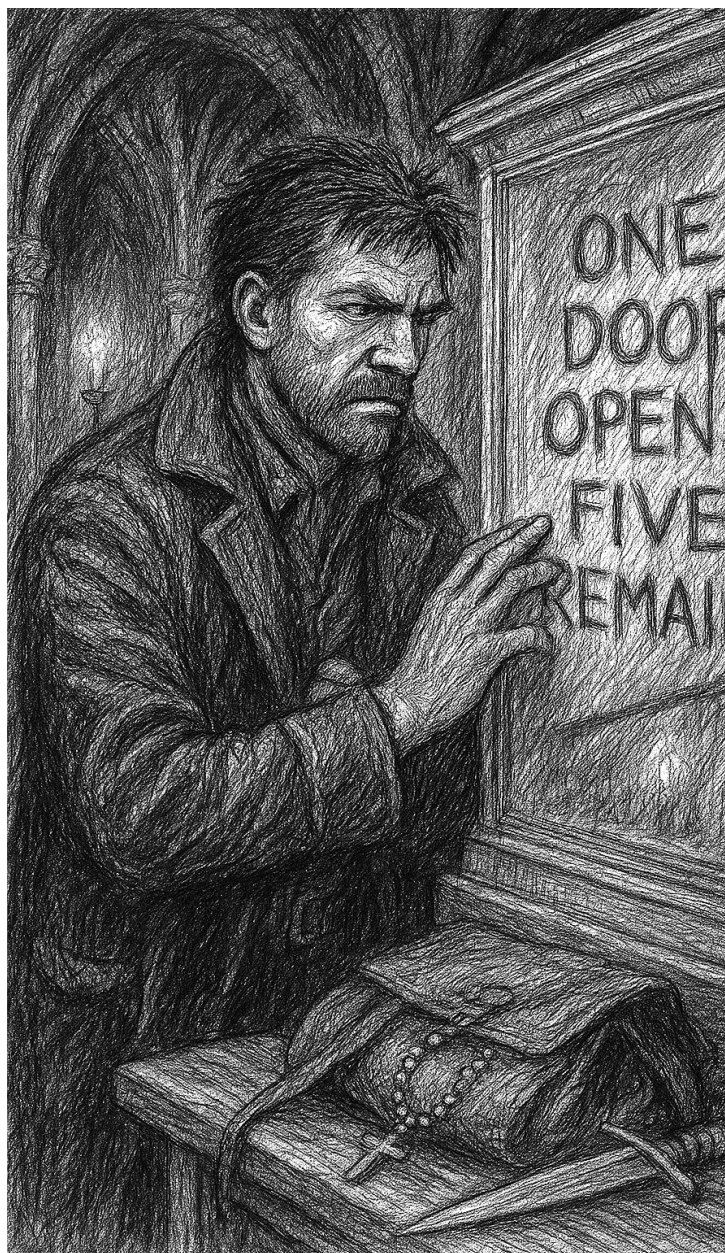
“He is not the only one on the move.”

Then the figure stopped breathing. Just... stopped. No pain. No collapse. Just stillness. Like an empty coat dropped to the floor.

Tomas stood alone.

In the crate beside the corpse was a bundle wrapped in sailcloth and tied with a lock of black hair. Inside:

- A map of England, hand-drawn, circled with six red ink marks.
- A rosary. The beads made of bone.
- A note in Romanian: **“One of the six will open the door. The rest must bleed.”**



Chapter 3 | Smoke and Sacrament

South of the Borgo Pass, hidden in the folds of the Făgăraș Mountains, lay the **Monastery of Saint Dacian**, where the last relic of Saint Gerontius was said to rest—a nail said to be taken from the stake that first pinned a revenant to the earth.

Tomas wrapped the map and note in his coat, gave the hunched figure a burial beneath the ruined hearth, and set the cabin ablaze. He did not say a prayer. There were no prayers for whatever that had been.

He traveled light, but fast, descending into cold valleys where even the crows would not land. On the second day, he reached the monastery—a fortress of stone, nestled in fog and humility, its walls worn smoother than bone.

Inside, the monks were not surprised to see him.

“The wolves have run again,” said Brother Vencel, a hollow-eyed man who once served as a

physician in Bucharest. “We have been preparing.”

He led Tomas to the relic chamber, down spiraling stairs slick with wax and time. At the center of a vault, under heavy glass, rested **the Nail**—a crooked iron spike, blackened at the tip.

Brother Vencel whispered:

“We call it *the Last Word*. A fragment of the original weapon. The oldest of them cannot be killed. But they can be *bound*.”

Tomas leaned closer. “You’ve seen them?”

Vencel shook his head. “No. But we’ve seen the signs. The same as your ancestors. Stars disappearing. Blood crying from the mouths of wells. Broken teeth found in bread. We keep watch.”

Then he showed Tomas the scrolls—hundreds of them, all warning of a second rising. Not of Dracula, but of **the Council of Six**, ancient ones buried in different parts of the world. Each red mark on Tomas’s map was not a destination.

It was a **seal**.

That night, Tomas awoke in the monk's quarters to find **the chapel bell ringing by itself**. When he reached the chapel, the altar candles had all been snuffed. At the foot of the Nail's reliquary lay a broken rosary—the one that had come in the crate.

A smear of red ink—fresh—marked the reliquary glass.

Someone had been there.



Chapter 4 | The Familiar's Smile

Tomas closed the reliquary chamber, bolted the stone door behind him, and whispered to Brother Vencel:

“We are no longer alone.”

Together, they spread salt across every threshold and scattered mustard seeds along the inner corridors. No vampire, according to old lore, could cross spilled seed without stopping to count it. They rubbed the walls with garlic oil, fastened silver scissors above the doorframes, and bound small bones from the reliquary vault into crosses—carried quietly by every monk.

Tomas took the midnight watch.

He waited.

The fog crept through the narrow windows like breath. The stone sweated. Candles burned low.

Then—

A whisper. Not sound. *Memory*. A voice Tomas had never heard but somehow recognized.

“You carry blood that belongs to me.”

He turned.

Standing beneath the old iron chandelier, half-wrapped in shadow, was a boy of about 14, eyes black as ash, head cocked like a bird’s. He wore a suit one century out of date, barefoot, his teeth slightly too sharp.

He smiled at Tomas.

“You were supposed to go west.”

Tomas stepped forward slowly, holding nothing—just words.

“You’re not one of the Six.”

The boy laughed. “No. I’m *their* scout. You might say... the appetite before the meal.”

He moved fast. Too fast. Inhumanly fast. But not unseen.

He crossed the threshold—

—and screamed.

Salt bit his feet like flame. The bone cross Tomas had thrown now sizzled against the boy's shoulder like acid. Smoke filled the room.

Brother Vencel appeared with the censer. He swung it hard, burning wormwood and myrrh, and shouted in Latin. The boy reeled, shrieking, his form flickering—first boy, then bat, then blank shadow—and vanished through the cracks in the stone.

Tomas dropped to one knee, panting.

“That wasn't a vampire,” he whispered.

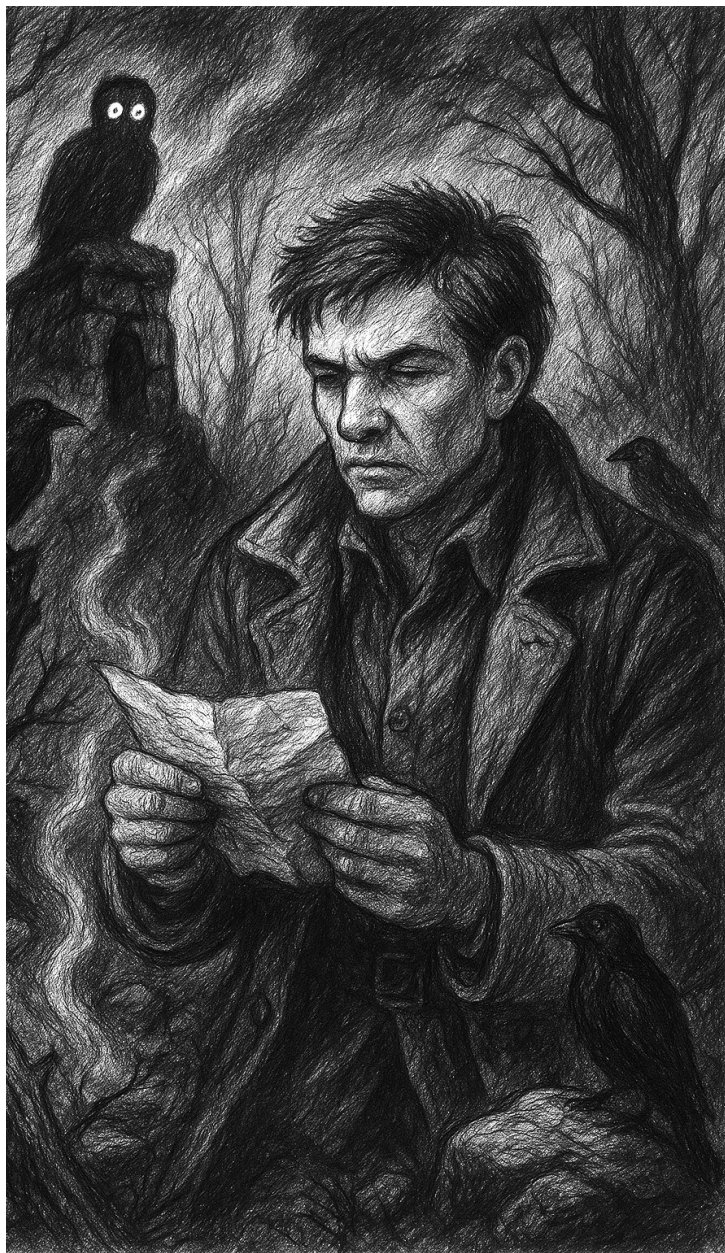
“No,” said Brother Vencel. “That was a *familiar*. Sent ahead to test the door.”

The next morning, the Nail was missing.

Not shattered. *Gone*.

But in its place was a mark, carved into the glass:

“ONE DOOR OPENS. FIVE REMAIN.”



Chapter 5 | The Black Tower Burns

Tomas Radu gave up the map.

He could no longer chase red dots on parchment while enemies moved faster, darker, and more cleverly than any myth he'd prepared for. The boy-shadow—the familiar—had taunted him, marked him, and now stolen the one relic that could bind the Council of Six.

He had to be found.

He had to be followed.

Tomas set out alone, with only a sack of relics and ash-covered boots. He traveled east, back into the spine of the Carpathians, stopping at villages where **children had begun sleep-speaking in dead languages** and wells had turned red after midnight.

The signs pointed north.

He finally found the first true trace at a burnt-out barn outside Vatra Dornei. A Romani woman, old as silence, led him to the ruins.

“It bled shadows,” she said. “And sang a song without a mouth.”

Tomas stepped inside. The air was thick with **cinders and incense**. And on the back wall, painted in blood:

“SECOND NAIL BENEATH THE BLACK TOWER.”

It took Tomas two more days to reach it—a ruined watchtower buried in the forest near the Suceava river, used once by knights, then by thieves, now by no one at all.

He entered at dusk.

Inside, on an altar of shattered stone and wax-sealed earth, lay **the Nail**.

Beside it stood **the boy**, watching him with no expression.

And behind the boy... six coffins, still sealed. Still waiting.

The boy smiled.

“Would you kill me for it?”

Tomas said nothing.

“I was like you once. Not hunter. *Hunted*. He made me drink from the bone cup. Now I serve. I am... halfway through the change.”

His voice trembled.

“If you take the Nail, I die. If you kill me... I rest. But the Six wake either way.”

Tomas stepped closer. “Why tell me this?”

The boy’s hands shook.

“Because part of me *remembers*. My mother braided my hair in this tower before the Turks came. I remember her voice.”

Tomas reached for the Nail.

The boy did not stop him.

Outside, as Tomas walked into the fog with the relic tucked under his coat, the tower caught flame behind him—lit from within.

A *gift*, perhaps.

He had the Nail.

But he had also watched a child—no matter what shadow lived inside him—*burn*.



Chapter 6 | Forged in Ash and Grief

The blacksmith of Braşov was not listed in any traveler's book. He had no sign above his door, no apprentices, and no name among the living. Locals called him *the Ember-Hand*, and only whispered it when the forge winds howled east.

Tomas found his way by following the scent of melted iron and dead myrrh.

The forge was built inside the crumbling foundation of a Roman amphitheater—*older* than Christianity, older even than the legend of Dracula. Here, Tomas laid the Nail of Saint Gerontius on the anvil beside a bowl of his own blood.

The Ember-Hand did not speak. Not once.

He was a giant of a man, blindfolded by a strip of cloth burned to ash at the edges. He touched the Nail with bare fingers. His skin sizzled.

Then he nodded.

The forging began.

Tomas waited three days.

He did not sleep.

The winds screamed, and the fires roared louder. Something was watching. On the second night, a voice came from the mouth of the forge:

“You would bind the unbindable.”

“No,” Tomas said. “Only stall them.”

“Then bring me more than blood.”

He understood.

Tomas returned the next day with a lock of hair.

His mother’s. Dug from her grave.

He returned with a vial.

His father’s tears. Collected years ago, the night his brother vanished.

He returned with one more thing:

The broken bone cross he'd made in the monastery.
The one that had saved him from the boy.

He laid it all at the Ember-Hand's feet.

The smith took them without question. And when the hammer fell one last time, the weapon was complete.

A dagger, short and curved like a talon, made of the Nail, the bone, and Tomas's own blood.

On its hilt were carved words in Latin:

"Claudiantur Ad Tempus."

"Let them be shut—for a time."

Tomas had his weapon.

But the price was high:

- He could never return home. The relic made him a beacon now.
- The dreams began immediately—visions of **coffins cracking and a voice from the sea that called him "brother."**

The blade pulsed.

The Six had *felt* it being made.



Chapter 7 | The Tree That Should Not Grow

The sea mist rolled in like a summoned thing.

Tomas stepped off the mail coach into **Whitby's salt-soaked streets**, wrapped in a wool cloak to hide the blade at his side. He carried nothing else. The map was committed to memory now. The marks, the names. The prophecy.

Whitby was not like the Carpathians. It was cheery, sun-touched—until night.

Then, the cliffs bled shadow. The abbey above the town wept salt through its stones. And always, always, the wind moaned like teeth grinding under the earth.

The locals spoke little of the **Demeter**, the Russian schooner that had crashed here weeks earlier. But Tomas found the old fisherman who had seen it land.

“All sails full. No hand at the wheel. A black dog leapt ashore and ran up the church steps. A week later, the graves started bleeding.”

Tomas felt the **dagger** twitch.

He climbed the **199 steps** to the churchyard at dusk.

There, he found **the second seal**.

Not buried. *Growing*.

A **white tree**, leafless and twisted, had erupted from a child's grave. Its bark pulsed like skin. And in its center, something breathed.

He stepped closer, dagger drawn. The wind whispered.

“Six must bleed. But you... you will do.”

From behind the tree stepped a familiar figure:

Lucy Westenra.

Dead weeks now. Pale as bone. Eyes black as crow feathers. But unmistakable. Smiling.

“I walked in my sleep,” she said. “But *he* woke me.”

Tomas froze. He knew her name. She had been one of the survivors. One of the ones Van Helsing wrote about.

Now she was... *not dead. Not alive.*

She lunged.

The blade burned in Tomas's hand. The first strike hit the bark. The second hit Lucy.

She screamed. But not in pain.

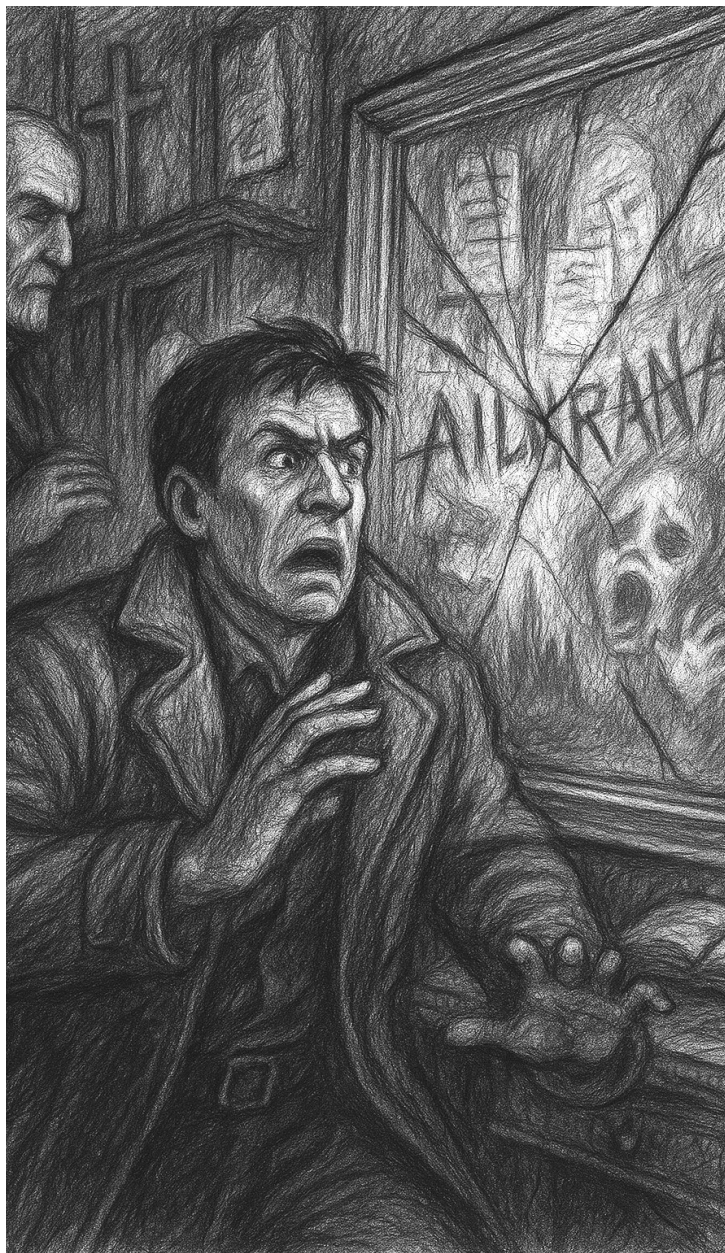
“You are early,” she hissed, *grinning*.
“Good.”

Then, she crumbled into ash, the tree howled like a whale, and the second seal cracked—**but did not break.**

Tomas fell to his knees.

The blade was working.
But it was not enough.
He could delay the Six. But not stop them.

Not alone.



Chapter 8 | The Name in the Mirror

Tomas boarded the **midnight train to London**, alone in a third-class compartment with only soot-streaked windows and the warmth of the dagger at his hip. He had seen the undead wear a woman's smile. He had nearly been one of the six to bleed.

He needed a mentor now. Not a priest. Not a scholar.

He needed **Abraham Van Helsing**.

London was choking with fog and carriages when he arrived. Even in daylight the streets were gray, as if mourning something they'd forgotten to bury.

He followed whispers to **Hillingham**, a crumbling estate near Hampstead Heath. There, in a study lined with crucifixes, shattered clocks, and locked cabinets, Tomas found him.

Old. Bent. But not broken.

Van Helsing did not rise when Tomas entered. He only tapped the arm of his chair and said:

“So. You have a relic. Show me what it cost.”

Tomas said nothing. He placed the dagger on the table.

Van Helsing’s eyes—still sharp—narrowed.

“Bone. Blood. Iron. And... grief. Good. Grief holds.”

He stood with a creak and shuffled to a map on the wall. Five pins remained.

“The seals open because the old ones feed. Not just on blood—but belief. Fear. Memory. Myth.”

“The Council of Six does not walk. *Not yet*. But their voices carry.”

“I heard one. In Carfax Asylum. In the mouth of a madman named Renfield.”

“It called itself... **Mother of Ash.**”

“She was not Dracula. She was older.”

Van Helsing turned to Tomas.

“If you want to bind one of the Six, you must know its name.”

“Not the name it wore in Rome. Or Egypt. Or Babel.”

“Its true name. The one it whispered to the first thing it ever fed on.”

He opened a locked drawer. Inside:

- A rosary made of **wolf teeth**
- A crumbling letter from **Mina Harker**
- And a **black mirror**, cloudy and cracked

“You will see her name in this.”

Tomas hesitated.

“It will hurt.”

He looked in.

Pain. Like smoke inside his veins.

Visions:

- A city of bloodstone.
- A woman with *four* mouths.
- A scream inside a child that never stops.
- A name written in bone on a wall of screaming.

And then—

AILURANA

Tomas stumbled back.

The mirror cracked fully.

Van Helsing nodded.

“Now you can fight her.”



Chapter 9 | The Third Seal Shuts

Ireland. West coast. County Clare. A famine village with no name left on the maps.

They call it **Gloam Hollow** now.

Locals won't go there. Sheep go missing. Fog doesn't leave. And the children... wake with **soil under their nails.**

Tomas Radu arrived on the third night of a red moon. He carried no torch. Only the dagger. And the name.

AILURANA.

He found the village overgrown, half-swallowed by bog and thistle. The chapel had collapsed into the graveyard, and moss coated every tombstone—*except one.*

A flat, black stone pulsed with heat.

The **third seal.**

It bore six indentations, like eye sockets, and around its edge—whispered words carved in the ancient script of the Tuatha Dé Danann. It was waking. He could feel it.

He waited until midnight.

The wind stilled. The animals fled.

Then she came.

Not from the grave. Not from the trees. But from his **shadow**.

AILURANA.

Pale. Tall. Slender-limbed. Her eyes were coins with pupils. Her mouth was too wide.

She carried no weapon. Just a voice:

“You looked in the mirror. You paid the price. Now you know me.”

“But do you know what you are, Tomas Radu?”

He raised the blade.

“A delay.”

She smiled.

“Not enough.”

She stepped forward. The seal glowed.

Tomas shouted her name, once, then again. Each time, she hissed. Cracked. Melted—like wax under flame.

“AILURANA!”

He lunged. The blade struck the black stone.

And the world shook.

The seal shattered.

But not open. **Closed.** Seared shut by her own name and blood.

The wind returned.

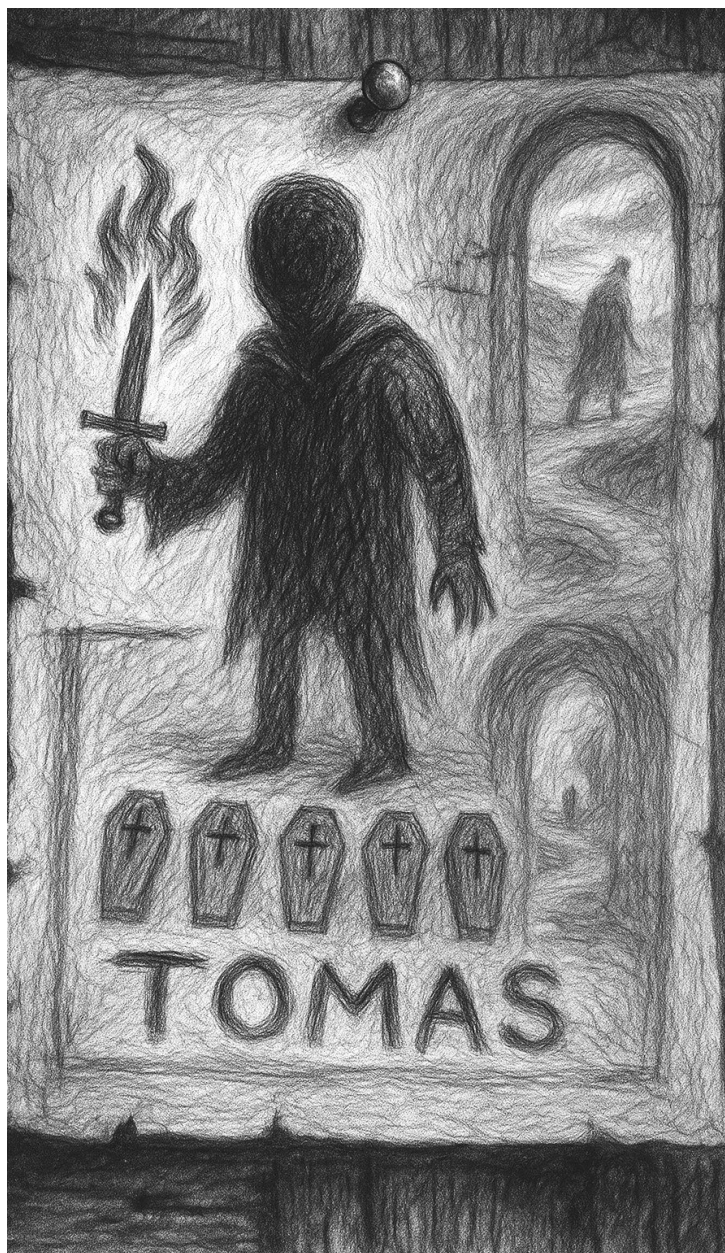
AILURANA screamed and burst into crow-black feathers.

Tomas collapsed.

When he woke, the blade was **burnt black**, but intact.

Three seals remained.

But now, they would fear him too.



Chapter 10 | The Shadow That Walks

They searched for Tomas Radu.

Van Helsing sent letters to the monasteries. The Ember-Hand kept his forge burning. Even Mina Harker—older now, but sharp—looked for signs in the whispering books.

But Tomas was gone.

No corpse. No final note. Just a rumor:

A man seen walking the high roads of Galicia.

A hunter glimpsed on rooftops in Marrakesh, watching shadows.

A **dagger**, burned black and humming like a buried hive, spotted in the coat of a traveler who never stayed long enough to name.

The seals still pulse. Three remain.

The Council of Six dreams.

But so long as he walks the edges of the map...

they wait.

And in a child's drawing, found in a hollow tree near Whitby, the black crayon scrawl shows:

- A figure with no face
- A knife of fire
- And six coffins nailed shut with names

Underneath, one word:

TOMAS

Thank You for Reading

We hope you enjoyed *Dracula: The Sixth Must Bleed*, a tale spun from the shadows of Bram Stoker's classic.

If this story stirred your imagination, there's more waiting beyond the grave.

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Dracula

The Sixth Must Bleed

"Six will rise. One must bleed. The rest must burn."

In the shadowed Carpathians, Tomas Radu uncovers a whisper older than Dracula himself—a prophecy that speaks of the **Council of Six**, ancient beings entombed in secret across Europe. When one of their seals breaks, Tomas, a cryptozoologist turned reluctant hunter, embarks on a descent into blood, ash, and silence.

Armed with a dagger forged from relic and grief, Tomas follows the trail across crumbling monasteries, haunted coastlines, and the fog-drenched streets of Whitby and London. But knowledge has its price, and every step toward the truth draws the attention of the old ones—and the familiars they send ahead.

Some seals are meant to bind.

Others are meant to open.

And one man, touched by both curse and clarity, walks the line between.

"A gothic thriller steeped in folklore and dread, The Sixth Must Bleed is a harrowing descent into the myths that echo behind Bram Stoker's Dracula. For fans of haunted landscapes, broken heroes, and stories where ancient evil never truly sleeps."