

strange, high-pitched sound is heard. Renfield begins to forcefully press his lower abdomen — ritually, rhythmically — with his hands, saying:)

RENFIELD. Bird-blood ... feather-blood ... spider-blood ... fly-blood — (He coughs, then still rhythmically, his hands move to below his ribs — continuing to press, forcefully.) Bird-blood ... feather-blood ... spider-blood ... fly-blood — (He coughs again — and now, his hands move to his throat, still pressing — his voice growing more hoarse, more choked.) Bird — (Cough.) — feather — (Cough.) — (He bends at the waist, doubling over, his hands still on his throat.) Bird — (Cough.) — BIRD — (And now, a huge cough — his face unseen to us — strange, high-pitched sound builds, and — Renfield stands up straight, holding something in the air, triumphantly. It is — a large wishbone [bigger than we think he could have possibly swallowed], glistening with saliva. He holds it up, focused on it feverishly.) The mad are mad so long as they are chained. But, loosed and afoot, are they the rampant, wretched SANE. (He grabs either side of the wishbone, eerily saying:) Make a wish! (He snaps the wishbone, which is accompanied by — the sound of a huge tree snapping in two and — another loud crack of thunder. Renfield mutters his familiar "yes yes good very good [etc.]" under the following actions: he quickly puts half the wishbone in his mouth, and — with the other half, he picks the locks of his chains. He rushes to the door of the cell. He tosses the first half of the wishbone away — takes the other half from his mouth and — uses it to unlock the door of the cell. He flings the door open, shouting:) MASTER! (He rushes from the cell, disappearing into the night, as lights shift to — the guest room. Day. The drapes are open. Mina sits, fully clothed, on the bed — reading a newspaper. Her face is more pale than before. Her hair ever-so slightly mussed. She wears a small, dark scarf around her neck. Harker rushes in, overlapping Renfield's exit line.)

HARKER. Mina!

MINA. Jonathan, what is it?

HARKER. You're safe?

MINA. (With a laugh.) You assured me I would be. (He is staring at her, breathing hard.) Why? (He kneels by the bed, taking her hand. Mina looks at him, curious.) Jonathan —

HARKER. I want us to be married.

MINA. And we shall be. In two months. The plans are made.

HARKER. (With a sudden urgency.) Now. I want us to be married now. I want us to partake of the holy bread and join our souls as man and wife.

MINA. (With a curious smile.) But, my love, why now?

HARKER. Should any harm befall us — either of us —

MINA. Jonathan, I'm here. We're safe. (He sees something on the floor in the room.) What is it?

HARKER. The rosary. (She reaches for her neck, [truly] expecting it to be there. Harker lifts it from the floor and brings it to her.)

MINA. It must have fallen this morning, as I dressed. (He puts it around her neck, once more.) There. You see. All is well. (Harker looks in her eyes as lights shift quickly to — a silhouette on Mina, as well as a shaft of light on — Van Helsing, speaking to the audience. He holds in his hand a wild, red rose. Next to him is his valise.)

VAN HELSING. As the days passed, I alone began to suspect the change in her. The skin growing more pale. The distant, listless gaze. In our efforts to protect Miss Mina, we had — too literally, I'm afraid — kept her in the dark. The deeper part of this secret is that she, herself, seemed unaware. A stranger to her own transformation. (Lights expand now to reveal — the guest room. Night. The drapes are open — the moon looms, huge. Mina stands, looking over some papers. She is clearly pale. Van Helsing steps into the scene. Also present are Harker and Seward.)

MINA. Thank you for coming. I shall waste no time in making my point. And, if you feel I talk above my station, let the magnitude of circumstance be my apology. This darkness, this silence between us must come to an end. We must work together with absolute trust, and, in that way, be stronger as a group than we are alone. I have, these three nights, slept fitfully. I've heard noises in the dark, been plagued by disturbing dreams. You have been in search of the Count. So, too, I fear, have I. (The men look at one another. She removes her scarf from her neck.)

HARKER. (Softly.) My god ...

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MINA. I have no memory of it. But the marks are clear. Now, you must tell me: is this how Lucy died? Through some maladventure involving the Count? *Keep this from me no longer. (Harker and Seward look at Van Helsing.)* Professor? *(Music, under. Van Helsing looks at them all. He walks to the window and closes the drapes. Then, he stands before them in the room — still holding the wild rose in his hand.)*

VAN HELSING. There are such things as vampires. They are known everywhere that men have ever been. The *Nosferatu* have the strength of twenty men, and the ancient ones — like our Count Dracula — come armed with the cunning of the ages. He can transform himself into wolf or bat, mist or fog — any form of nature which suits him. He throws no shadow, can be seen in no mirror, and for sustenance, one thing only: the blood of the living. And when his special pabulum is plenty — he grows younger, his faculties stronger, his ghastly powers more vital by the hour —

MINA. *(Holding her neck.)* And to those bitten, his hunger brings death.

VAN HELSING. Death of goodness, yes. But, life eternal amid the damned. Those bitten — *repeatedly*, as I pray to our Lord you have not been — become the very thing which afflicted them: the disciples of the night. *(Mina grabs at Harker, who holds her tightly.)*

HARKER. But how could this change befall Mina? She is pure of heart, she is —

VAN HELSING. So, too, I'm afraid, was the Count. I have studied him for many years. In life, he was a man of the utmost virtue. *(Looking at Mina.)* The terror of it is, my friend, that this evil grows richest in a soul most pure. *(Music is gone. Harker speaks, forcefully, bitterly.)*

HARKER. You assured me she was safe here, Professor. You gave me your word.

VAN HELSING. His power, to this point, has bested our knowledge, but we shall —

HARKER. Waste no more of our time! I beg you, tell us directly: is there no way to defeat this monster?

VAN HELSING. Oh, there is a way, Mr. Harker. Dracula can

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do all these many things ... but he is not free. He is shackled to the laws of the night: His power ceases — as does that of all evil things — at the coming of the day. *(He opens his valise.)* Certain objects hold a telling power over him: the garlic you know of, the bread of holy communion — *(He removes the flat case containing "the host" from his valise. Then, puts the case in his breast pocket.)* The holy cross of our Lord — *(Removes his large crucifix from the valise. He puts this, too, in the pocket of his coat.)* And, the branch of the wild rose, which, when placed on his coffin, serves to lock him fast within. *(Van Helsing hands the wild rose to Mina.)* He cannot — at first — enter any place unless someone who dwells there bid him enter —

SEWARD. *(To Harker, an accusation.)* Meaning someone let him at Lucy —

HARKER. *(Similarly.)* And at Mina —

VAN HELSING. And, most to the moment, he must each day sleep in his native soil or he will die.

HARKER. The digging —

VAN HELSING. Exactly. That is what you heard at his castle. Boxes of *Transylvanian soil* being filled — boxes that are here now, in London.

SEWARD. The ship's log notes the Count's cargo as fifty boxes — and just today, at Carfax, the Professor and I discovered forty-eight of them.

VAN HELSING. I sanctified the soil of each — making them of no use to the Count. When we find the remaining two boxes, we shall find the man himself! Finally, these words above all others: If we in this room fail, our fate is not one of mere life or death. It is that *we become as him*, foul things of the night — without heart, without conscience, preying on the quivering bodies of those we love best. If we fail: to us, forever, are the gates of heaven shut. Look now to your own hearts, and answer: Are we to cower in the face of such adversity? Or are we, as Miss Mina has so bravely said, to rise up and hunt this wretch to his true death?! *(Van Helsing's eyes scan the faces of the others. Then, he goes to the center of the room and kneels on one knee, bows his head — and extends the crucifix in front of him. One by one, Harker ... then Seward ... then, fi-*