

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

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-*