

DRACULA, NIGHTMARE OF THE DEAD (Excerpt)

(Boom of thunder, dog howls. We hear the SAINT-SAENS' "DANSE MACABRE" as THE CAST, playing GYPSIES, set up a cafe. JONATHAN HARKER sits at a table reading/writing a letter to MINA. He is a proper young Englishman, clearly out of his element. The GYPSIES carry garlic necklaces, crosses and carved wooden stakes. They are terribly serious.)

JONATHAN: My dearest Mina, I write from a cafe outside Bistritz. I have not slept well. All last night a dog howled outside my window and I had dreams. I've read that all the superstitions of the world are gathered together in this part of the Carpathians, as if it were some sort of imaginative whirlpool. But what care I for that? I, Jonathan Harker am the happiest man alive. I have you for my fiancee, and a career that has brought me on an international land transaction for a certain Count Dracula!

GYPSY: DRACULA!

(The peasants wail and draw back.)

JONATHAN: A curious lot.

(A gypsy comes up to him with a garlic necklace.)

GYPSY: Tu necessita a vivir! *("You need this to survive!")*

JONATHAN: *(speaking a bit too loudly, as if volume will make the gypsy understand)* Yes. Very nice. Very nice. *(GYPSY moves in. JONATHAN points at his plate.)* I had some in my paprikash. Tasty. In England we have salt and pepper. Salt and pepper? *(GYPSY offers to give him garlic)* No thank you. *(GYPSY shows how to wear garlic as a necklace)* And it makes a very fine necklace, too. I see that, yes. But no, thanks anyway.

GYPSY: TU NECESSITA A VIVIR!

JONATHAN: *(elaborate gestures)* No thank you. No? Non? Nyet? Nein? Nada? I'm just waiting for my carriage. Wait for carriage? Carriage? Castle Dracula?

(The GYPSY retreats with a cry.)

JONATHAN: I seem to have made myself understood. I must be getting the hang of this tourist business.

(GYPSY WOMAN approaches with crucifix.)

GYPSY WOMAN: *(offering it to him)* Agare esto! *("Take this!")*

JONATHAN: Local crafts, yes. A charming knick-knack, but --

GYPSY WOMAN: AGARE!

JONATHAN: I'm sorry, but I'm afraid the Church of England considers this idolatrous.

GYPSY WOMAN: AGARE!! AGARE!!

JONATHAN: Oh the devil with it. *(gives woman coin and takes cross, putting it in his coat pocket)* I suppose it will make a fine souvenir.

(OLD GYPSY approaches, as GYPSY WOMAN retreats bowing and crossing herself)

OLD GYPSY: Do you not know what night it is?

JONATHAN: Ah, you speak English! Thank God! My carriage appears to be a tad late and --

OLD GYPSY: Do you not know what night it is?!

JONATHAN: The fourth of May. It was supposed to pick me up by five but it's already sunset and --

OLD GYPSY: IT IS THE EVE OF SAINT GEORGE'S DAY!

JONATHAN: *(thinking him crazy)* Really.

OLD GYPSY: Do you not know that tonight when the clock strikes twelve, all evil things in the world will have full sway?

JONATHAN: Right. *(calling back to unseen waiter)* Bill please.

OLD GYPSY: *(leaning over him)* Do you not know where you are going and what you are going to?

JONATHAN: Yes. The the Castle of one Count Dracula.

OLD GYPSY: AHHHH!

(In horror the OLD GYPSY retreats. He has seen something behind JONATHAN.)

JONATHAN: Sorry. I didn't mean to offend you.

(Unseen by JONATHAN, DRACULA'S DRIVER -- actually DRACULA himself -- slowly advances behind him. The GYPSIES cower on one side of the stage, holding up crucifixes.)

JONATHAN: Thanks, but I've already got one.

(The GYPSIES stay frozen in terror, muttering "Ordog, Pokol, Stregoika Vrolok". Thinking he's being stared at, JONATHAN gives them an uncertain wave. Slowly, DRACULA extends his arm and touches JONATHAN'S shoulder. JONATHAN, surprised, leaps from his chair with a cry.)

JONATHAN: AHHHH!!!

DRACULA: Mr. Jonathan Harker?

JONATHAN: That would be I.

DRACULA: I come for you.

JONATHAN: So you're the Count's driver. And not a moment too soon. These gypsies have been giving me the willies. They keep rubbing garlic over everything and passing out crucifixes.

DRACULA: It amuse tourists.

JONATHAN: It's entertainment? They're acting? *(DRACULA nods)*

2ND GYPSY WOMAN: *(runs on)* Que lo que a hiecho con mi nino?!

JONATHAN: What's she saying?

DRACULA: *(translates flatly)* "Monster, what you do with my child?"

2ND GYPSY WOMAN: Me donas mi nino! *("Give me my child!")*

JONATHAN: She's very good.

(Suddenly, DRACULA raises his arm. There is a thunderclap.)

DRACULA: YO HA COMIDO TU NINO EN EL INFIERNO!!! *("I HAVE EATEN YOUR CHILD IN HELL!!!")*

(Anguish and terror from the GYPSIES.)

JONATHAN: What?

DRACULA: It does not translate.

OLD GYPSY: DRACULA! *(he spits)*

(DRACULA smiles. He snaps his fingers and we hear wolves. The GYPSIES run off in terror.)

JONATHAN: Either these chaps are very fine actors or they really don't like your Count Dracula.

DRACULA: *(a smile)* He Count. They peasant. They no count.

JONATHAN: Ah.

DRACULA: Come. Moon rise, night chill, and we have miles to go before we sleep.

(DRACULA wraps DRIVER's cape over JONATHAN's shoulders. They exit. THUNDERCLAP. The cafe dissolves.)