Scene Five

DR. WESTFELDT. 15 October, 1897. To Doctor Jean *(Pronounced Jhhhon.)* Van Helsing, University of *Schmutz*, Brandenburg Campus, Department of Rare Infectious Diseases. Dear Doctor Van Helsing. I write to you now in dire need of your expertise. Three days ago, my eldest daughter Mina was at her sister's engagement party, with a ruddy complexion and full of life. The following morning, we found her bedridden and pale, her veins swollen with an odd colour, and unable to look at direct sunlight without wincing in pain. At first I assumed it was a female issue, but it's even more frightening than that. I cannot pinpoint the source of her distress. I beg of you to come see us straight away. Speaking man to man, I fear for her life.

(Music in.)*

(Mina's sickbed faces upstage, so we only see the back of the headboard with her ginger hair cascading over the top of it. **LUCY** *ministers to her, while* **HARKER** *keeps his distance, a handkerchief close to his mouth.)*

LUCY. Oh, my dear sweet Mina. How it pains me to see her like this. Look at her face, Jonathan. She looks haggard and sickly.

(He observes from a distance.)

HARKER. Looks the same to me.

LUCY. Because you're standing on the other side of the room. Come closer, look at her veins. It's as if her blood is boiling.

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HARKER. Oh yes, very troubling. Why don't I pop downstairs? Give you your privacy, yes? Might be a good time for me to work on the menu for the wedding?

LUCY. Jonathan! If my sister does not improve, there will be no wedding.

HARKER. Of course.

LUCY. I pray Dr. Van Helsing is able to help. Renfield is picking him up at the station now.

*(***MINA** *lets out a moan of pain.*)*

Mina! Sweet sister! Are you in pain?

*(***MINA** *lets out another moan.)*

HARKER. Sounds like a no to me!

*(***MINA** *moans louder.)*

Or a yes. I'll go see if Renfield is back with the doctor.

(He runs out. **MINA** *moans.)*

LUCY. There, there, sister. Do not be afraid. Whatever this terrible illness is that has befallen you, you will beat it. You will! You hear me? But you must be strong!

Remember what mother told us when we were children?

That night when the tempest from the sea made that horrible howling against our bedroom window, and you were convinced there was someone coming for us? She would not let us hide under the covers. She walked us to the window, opened it wide, and let the air in to prove there was nothing outside that could hurt us... apart from the serial killer that murdered the family next door. But mother's advice still holds! Whatever this is *will pass*, but you must fight! For the sake of

* **MINA**'s moans should be either pre-recorded or performed by **ACTOR FOUR** from offstage.

your family; for the sake of your future; for the sake of the medical students who study you every spring.

*(**HARKER** re-enters.)*

HARKER. No sign of the doctor. I must say, it's highly unnerving to see a person so lively and gay one moment and then down for the count the next.

LUCY. *(Light bulb.)* The Count! Count Dracula!

HARKER. What about him?

LUCY. My God, why didn't I think of that?

HARKER. Think of what?

LUCY. His cake! He must've used spoiled ingredients from Transylvania. It's just food poisoning!

HARKER. But everyone at the party ate it, including you. No one else fell ill.

LUCY. Damnit! You're right. It's clearly more acute than that.

(Sound effects: Rumble.)

*(**DR. WESTFELDT** enters, reading charts.)*

DR. WESTFELDT. Just finished testing her blood, she's severely anemic. We're going to need to start transfusions.

LUCY. I'm happy to donate as much as she needs.

DR. WESTFELDT. Van Helsing will guide us. He's the most accomplished doctor in all of Germany. There's nothing he hasn't seen.

(Sound effects: Doorbell chimes.)

Ah, speak of the devil. That'll be him now!

LUCY. Thank goodness. You hear that Mina? You're on your way to recovery, now that Dr. Van Helsing is here. And he came all the way from the Continent! Isn't that something?

*(**DR. VAN HELSING,** a woman in her forties with handsome face, sturdy comportment, and double-braided Bavarian buns on her head, enters. It's the same performer who plays **MINA.**)*

VAN HELSING. Excuse me, Doctor Westfeldt?

DR. WESTFELDT. Hello there! So nice to meet you. You must be...*Mrs.* Van Helsing?

VAN HELSING. *Doctor* Van Helsing.

DR. WESTFELDT. Yes, Doctor Van Helsing's *wife.* Is your husband lifting the heavy bags from the carriage?

VAN HELSING. I have no husband.

(Beat. He starts laughing again.)

LUCY. Father!

DR. WESTFELDT. Ah, that famous German sense of humor! I'll go help him with the bags.

(He leaves.)

LUCY. Apologies, Doctor. My father is under a great deal of stress with my sister's illness. Could you please take a look at her right now? Time is of the essence.

*(**VAN HELSING** approaches the bed, looking under the covers.)*

VAN HELSING. She looks depleted. Any other symptoms?

LUCY. *(Taking stock.)* She complains of terrible dreams, some...~~worse~~ than others, and a weakness, a bloodlessness, that confounds her doctors.

VAN HELSING. How long have these bite marks been visible?

HARKER. Bite marks?