

THE SLEEP OF REASON

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"El sueño de la razón produce monstruos"

"The sleep of reason produces monsters"

---Francisco de Goya

FADE IN:

EXT. RIVERBOAT - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

RICHARD RENFIELD (tall, early 20's) travels aboard a riverboat in the deep south.

SUPER TITLE:

"Spring, 1862 - New Orleans"

The boat approaches the dock.

Ashore, the fall of New Orleans looms: CONFEDERATE TROOPS rush about, preparing defenses.

The elegant riverboat docks. As the PASSENGERS mass on deck, a CROWD assembles to greet them.

Aboard, Renfield, tall and vigorous, stands first in line.

Ramp in place, he steps down and off. A MAN steps up to meet him (FABIAN VALDEMAR, compact, 30's).

VALDEMAR

Mr. Renfield? I am Fabian
Valdemar. Your father's office
in London engaged me to be your
guide while you are in New
Orleans.

They shake hands and walk toward a baggage collection area along the dock.

RENFIELD

Very pleased to make your
acquaintance Mr. Valdemar. My
father has spoken highly of your
services to our firm in the
past. I look forward to a
fruitful stay here in your
charming city.

He picks out two bags. Monsieur Valdemar takes them from him and turns to a CAB-MAN who takes and loads them aboard his carriage.

RENFIELD

I'd prefer to walk if the hotel
is not far.

VALDEMAR

Of course, Monsieur. It is just a short distance. Shall I have the driver take your bags to the hotel?

RENFIELD

That would be appreciated.

Renfield reaches for his money clip but Valdemar waves him off and pays instead.

The cab moves off, and they proceed into the bustling city.

VALDEMAR

Your journey downriver since arriving at Montreal was uneventful, I trust?

RENFIELD

It was... quiet. The river country was beautiful, but... empty. I hope the war has not disrupted things too much.

VALDEMAR

It is not going well at present. There is fear that the Federal Navy will attack and seize the city.

RENFIELD

Do you think it will affect our plans?

VALDEMAR

If anything, Monsieur, it will improve things. "War is good for business!" I am sad to say.

Amidst all the activity, they stroll on. The IMAGE FREEZES and goes SEPIA, suggesting time past.

FREEZE IMAGE - SEPIA-TONE - AUDIO - 1895:

DR. MANFRED DEVORER (VO)

June 24th, 1895. Subject: R.M. Renfield, aged 57, Carfax Asylum resident these 26 years...

BACK TO LIVE ACTION - 1862

They walk through the city, avoiding people, wagons, horses, and the inevitable heaps of "debris."

FREEZE IMAGE - SEPIA-TONE - AUDIO - 1895:

DEVORER (CONT'D, VO)

Mr. Renfield's case has grown curious. He's begun to exhibit increased agitation, an air of anticipation, excitement. He claims he is 'preparing for the arrival of his master'...

BACK TO LIVE ACTION - 1862

They approach a hotel, the ST. CROIX.

INT. ST. CROIX HOTEL LOBBY

They move to the reception desk.

FREEZE IMAGE - SEPIA-TONE - AUDIO - 1895:

DEVORER (VO)

I cannot help but wonder as to what or to whom he is referring. Since Mr. Renfield has not had contact with friends or family, nor has he been visited by anyone for at least two decades, I can only surmise that this 'master' to whom he refers is either someone from before his arrival at Carfax, or some internal friend...

INT. ST. CROIX HOTEL - RENFIELD'S ROOM

BACK TO LIVE ACTION - 1862

They are shown his room by a BELL-MAN.

FREEZE IMAGE - SEPIA-TONE - AUDIO - 1895:

DEVORER (VO)

The few remaining records hint at a traumatic episode when he was a young solicitor...

BACK TO LIVE ACTION - 1862

Renfield opens a window and looks out as Valdemar pays the man at the door.

FREEZE IMAGE - SEPIA-TONE - AUDIO - 1895:

DEVORER (CONT'D, VO)
 ...on a business trip in America during the Southern Rebellion. Having spent a life of leisure filled with athletic contests and social puffery, upon his graduation from Cambridge and hiring by his father's firm, he was sent out on the thinnest of pretexts in order to pull him up from amongst the idlers his father saw him frequenting...

BACK TO LIVE ACTION - 1862

Renfield turns to face Valdemar.

VALDEMAR
 Where would you like to dine this evening, Monsieur?

Setting one bag on a stand, Renfield opens it.

RENFIELD
 I'm fascinated by some of the tastes I've sampled in America. Select a place you've liked in the past.

VALDEMAR
 Oui, Monsieur. Shall I come by at 8:00, then?

RENFIELD
 That would be fine.

INT. LAVISH RESTAURANT DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Renfield and Valdemar sit at a table in the crowded dining room.

Near them, a large man, GERARD DESSALINES (40's, large and commanding), dines at a table with THREE MEN. He appears wealthy and powerful.

At one point, Dessalines rises, and walks, limping, out of the room.

Renfield notices him and looks over to Valdemar.

VALDEMAR

Gerard Dessalines, one of the wealthiest men in New Orleans. His fortune was made through cotton exporting.

Renfield nods, returning to his meal.

VALDEMAR (CONT'D)

One year ago, when the war began, M. Dessalines became an officer for the Confederacy. Unfortunately, he was wounded at Manassas and had to retire from service. He has limped ever since.

RENFIELD

A gallant effort, nonetheless.

After a moment, Dessalines returns, a look of anger on his face.

Valdemar: there's more to the story. He leans closer to speak quietly.

VALDEMAR

Rumors say that he was shot running away in the face of a Federal charge.

A woman, ELSBETH, early 20's, enters, dressed neatly, if poorly. She is something to behold: soft and beautiful with a sunny demeanor.

She approaches Dessalines and whispers something in his ear. A huge frown crosses his face, and he turns.

DESSALINES

Get your niggers in line or I'll get someone who can!

She stands there, stricken.

Dessalines rises.

DESSALINES (CONT'D)

You're nothin' but a nigger-lovin' abolitionist, just like your daddy.

Dwarfing her, he amplifies the barrage.

DESSALINES (CONT'D)
If I wasn't at supper I'd
horsewhip you myself!

Renfield, watching, has had enough. He stands, moves between them.

RENFIELD
That's quite enough, sir. I
suggest you withdraw and let the
lady recover herself.

Dessalines pushes him aside, and Renfield, himself large but lanky, drops him to the floor with a single punch.

The room goes silent, the other businessmen standing in shock.

Dessalines slowly gets to his feet, rubbing his jaw.

DESSALINES
This is none of your affair.
It's between myself and my
employee.

Renfield begins to answer, and as he opens his mouth, he is slapped by the man's glove.

DESSALINES (CONT'D)
Yours to choose, sir.

Astonished, Renfield looks to his guide, then back at Dessalines.

RENFIELD
A duel? No one duels anymore--

DESSALINES
The Hell, you say, sir. Morning.
Dawn. My Second will fetch you.
Choose your manner.

Renfield laughs, looking about him. Then he sees a large Confederate flag and banner proclaiming Southern Honor across one wall of the restaurant.

He stares into Dessalines steely eyes. Then:

RENFIELD
Bow--

Dessalines' eyes narrow in surprise.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

--and arrow.

Hearing this, Valdemar closes his eyes, terrified.

Dessalines' companions break out in laughter.

But Renfield's gaze is unwavering.

DESSALINES

A duel with a bow... Done.

Dessalines smirks, then produces something from a leather wallet.

DESSALINES (CONT'D)

My card. Your accent betrays you as an Englishman. Pity you don't show the good sense your Government does in its support of our cause. What hotel are you in?

RENFIELD

The St. Croix. The name is Renfield.

DESSALINES

On the morrow, sir!

He stalks out.

Renfield looks over to the woman, still standing there, humiliated. At his stare she looks away in shame.

Before he can stop her, she slips past and out. He starts to follow, but Valdemar puts out his hand--

VALDEMAR

--Jobs are hard to get, Monsieur. Let her try to keep hers.

Both sit as the room recovers.

VALDEMAR (CONT'D)

My good sir! You know not what you have done. As a young man, Monsieur Dessalines lived among the Comanche. He's an expert with the bow.

RENFIELD

Well, I'm a novice with a gun. Never even held one, much less shot one.

Valdemar just stares at him soberly.

EXT. FOREST/MEADOW - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

Renfield, Valdemar, and Dessalines' Second arrive at the tree-line.

In the clearing, Dessalines and two of his companions from the previous evening prepare, setting up the WEAPONS. Dessalines removes his jacket.

Elsbeth, distraught, approaches through the trees.

Renfield acknowledges her as she comes up. After a moment, the Second moves off toward the meadow.

ELSBETH

Please, sir. I beg of you.
Please don't do this. Gerard will kill you for sure. I'll talk to him and make it right.

RENFIELD

Mademoiselle, don't be concerned. I've gotten myself into this, and I'll get myself out.

ELSBETH

PLEASE!!! He's the devil himself with a bow--

RENFIELD

Madem--

ELSBETH

--Elsbeth, Elsbeth Van Couer.

RENFIELD

Mademoiselle Van Couer. Elsbeth.
Richard Renfield, your servant.
I am sorry. Monsieur Dessalines
is responsible. No one else.
I'll not run from a man such as
he. He'd hunt me down if I did,
like as not. We English are not
unfamiliar with the bow, as our
King Henry once proved. Leave
this man's employ and find
something better, I implore you.

His eyes lock with hers: haunting, beautiful, despite
the tears.

He's swept away. If he doubted himself before, he
doesn't now. There is nothing he'd rather do.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

Now, I... I must bid you good
day.

Tipping his hat to her, with Valdemar, he forces his
way past.

She watches them. After a moment, her eyes well up
again, and she rushes away.

MEADOW

The two parties face one another across the warming
and sultry meadow.

Morning FOG rises as the DAWN LIGHT brightens a
VIOLET SKY.

Unsettled, Renfield struggles for control.

Removing his coat, he gives it to Valdemar, then
moves toward them in the open meadow.

Dessalines proffers two bows and two stocked quivers.

Renfield selects one each, and, after checking the
arrows, he slings the quiver over his shoulder, and
proceeds to examine the bow.

Dessalines does the same.

Satisfied, they stare at one another, then turn,
back-to-back.

Nocking arrows, they hold their bows at the ready.

THE SECOND

It will be twenty paces, then
you will turn and you are free
to take aim and shoot on sight.

Looking down at their wet boots, he says:

THE SECOND (CONT'D)

The footing is wet. Mind the dew
with your steps.

From the trees, unseen, Elsbeth watches.

THE SECOND (CONT'D)

Ready?

Each nods.

THE SECOND (CONT'D)

Begin. One, two, three, four...

They separate to the cadence call of the Second.

Valdemar darkens, watching his new friend's doom.

Elsbeth, too, suffers, almost unable to watch.

THE SECOND (CONT'D)

Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen,...

Renfield is pale. Sweat beads his brow.

THE SECOND (CONT'D)

Eighteen, nineteen, twenty!

They both turn fast.

Dessalines pulls back his string with a fluid mo---

---Cat-quick, an arrow hits him hard, sinking deep
into his left shoulder!

Across, Renfield stands down his bow.

Dessalines rallies, however. He raises his bow.
Readies his shot. Renfield's arrow clearly affects
him as he draws back the string...

From the tree-line, Elsbeth can stand it no longer:

ELSBETH

Alright, Gerard! You'll have
your wish! I'll see you. But
stop this madness, I beg you!
Don't shoot!!!

The arrow "CHUFS" (OS) as it is released.

But, aim interrupted, the shot goes low, hitting
Renfield solidly in mid-thigh.

Renfield's chin drops to his chest, eyes shut,
enduring the first flash of pain. Somehow he's still
able to sigh in relief.

Elsbeth and Valdemar release their tension, as well,
then look to Dessalines.

He nocks a second arrow and raises his bow.

His aiming gaze is met by Renfield's second arrow
hitting him squarely in the heart. He's dead before
he falls.

Elsbeth and Valdemar run to Renfield, listing to one
side from the arrow.

Dessalines' Second and his two friends attend their
fallen companion.

LATER

Dessalines' Second and Valdemar confer as Elsbeth
helps Renfield into a carriage in the distance.

THE SECOND

It was self-defense on your
friend's part, and I will state
so to the Marshal.

VALDEMAR

Here is my card, should a
witness become necessary.

Valdemar hands him a card, and they nod goodbye.

SERIES OF SHOTS - 1862 - W/AUDIO - 1895:

DEVORER (VO)

He had, himself, been a champion archer in England... In the ensuing days, she helped restore him to health--though he was plagued forever after with a modest limp. Still, he acquainted himself with the woman he had defended, and they fell in love. Unlike Mr. Renfield, Elsbeth was from a modest family, all of whom had been killed in the conflict...

- Elsbeth attends his recovery at the St. Croix.
- She brings him a meal, opens his curtains, the bright sunlight making her blond hair glow.
- More than mere beauty has him, now: his eyes follow her about the room.
- Another day: Renfield rises, but walks with a limp.

DEVORER (CONT'D, VO)

Mr. Dessalines had taken her under his wing, to save her from destitution. But he had expressed his interest, and because of their ages, he was gently spurned. From then on, he treated her badly, using her employment to hold her. Renfield proposed, and with nothing to keep her and a war to escape, she accepted...

- They attend a party. Elsbeth introduces him about.
- They walk hand-in-hand, romance taking hold. Stopping, he pulls her close, kissing her deeply.
- In front of the St. Croix, Elsbeth shows Monsieur Valdemar an engagement ring.
- He sees them off on a riverboat as PEOPLE mill about, the war now at New Orleans' doorstep.

DEVORER (CONT'D, VO)

They returned to England. At first it was a whirlwind of parties, new friends, and all the luxuries of living in one of the greatest cities in the world...

- They travel by ship to England, and she meets Renfield's surprised family.
- They attend an opera opposite the Royal Family's box.
- Elsbeth shops at a fashionable London shop as Renfield waits.

DEVORER (CONT'D, VO)

But for his father, Renfield's choice never measured up and after nearly a year of fruitless effort, they eloped--his family's backs turned to their son's happiness. Once bound, they whisked themselves off to the Continent. That is where the official record ends.

- They kiss in a corridor at a party. Renfield's pals catch them at it, and everyone laughs, but, in the background, his FATHER seethes.
- They marry at a friend's estate with only a FEW PEOPLE in attendance.

EXT. EUROPE - MOVING TRAIN - DAY

SUPER TITLE:

"Spring, 1863"

The train rolls through the countryside. In the distance the Alps stand against the sky.

INT. THE TRAIN - DINING CAR

They are in a daze, everything happening so fast.

ELSBETH

I can't believe how life has changed. I never would have imagined marriage to someone such as you: a man of prospects, a lawyer in a good firm, the son of a Peer.

This sours him.

RENFIELD

He's cut me off. I don't see how it would have changed without my marrying his new partner's son of a daughter. Elsbeth, I'm afraid we're on our own.

She waves this off.

ELSBETH

You leave him to me. I talked old Dessalines into a job, and I'll win over that father of yours even if it takes another year.

Renfield shakes his head.

RENFIELD

Let's not dwell on sad thoughts. This is the start of our life together. We don't need them.

ELSBETH

Well, we've future enough together to overcome a silly family spat. Now, you've held back about this trip long enough. You promised you'd tell all as soon as we departed Paris. Well, here we are. I'm waiting. Where in "tarnation" are you kidnapping me to?

RENFIELD

This is not the traditional tour. The capitals of Europe would bore you terribly... or to another husband. Ahead for us... only adventure.

She smiles.

ELSBETH

Sounds exotic. I can't wait.

RENFIELD

Try "rough." You'd better allow for some less-than-comfortable accommodations.

ELSBETH

I've lived through a war. I'm not a child when it comes to hardship.

RENFIELD

You've suffered far more than I, my love. I just didn't want you to be surprised by the region's backwardness.

She "pooh poohs" it with a wave, then looks out of the window at the passing scenery.

He prefers, instead, to look at her.

RENFIELD

I've arranged a road journey through the Carpathian Mountains. Our first stop once there is Bistritz.

Elsbeth continues to gaze out of the window, imagining.

EXT. BISTRITZ - DAY

Elsbeth and Renfield ride through the modest streets in a large wagon with other PASSENGERS from the train. PEASANTS crowd about, slowing their progress.

The wagon arrives at a small hotel.

They climb down and stand for their bags.

INT. THE TINY HOTEL DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Elsbeth and Renfield sit for dinner.

EXT. BISTRITZ STREET - NIGHT

They stroll the quaint streets.

They pass from stall to stall in a marketplace, taking it all in.

Renfield buys her gifts, showering her with his adoration. She glories in it, but it's clear that she she cares only for him.

He gives her a necklace, a ROSARY of pearls with her name engraved on it.

They sit at an open air cafe, laughing when a clumsy waiter spills tea into Renfield's lap. Nothing can take them out of their mood.

INT. A CAFE WITH A SMALL DANCE FLOOR

They dance at another cafe while a string quartet plays. He kisses her as they twirl about the floor.

INT. THEIR ROOM AT THE HOTEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Renfield carries Elsbeth across their room's threshold, his limp, this night, almost nonexistent.

LATER

They stand at their window looking out. He puts his arm around her affectionately. Unnoticed, a SPIDER descends to her shoulder alongside his arm.

He looks at her and the movement of the thing catches his eye. He pulls his arm off her and jumps away.

Elsbeth gives him a look, and then plucks it off with a handkerchief. She shakes it out the window.

RENFIELD

I-I'm sorry. I can't stand them.
I was bitten once, and suffered
with nightmares thereafter. I'll
probably have one tonight, now.

EXT. STREET BEFORE THE HOTEL - DAY

A driver loads their bags onto a wagon. Renfield helps Elsbeth inside.

After a moment, the DRIVER whips up his team, and they head off.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

The wagon takes them through spectacular country:

- Vast, dark forests...
- Below immense, snow-covered peaks...
- Alongside a tall waterfall...
- Past PEASANTS on the road, bundles tied to their backs...
- Through a HERD of GOATS.

EXT. WAGON - ON ROAD - DAY

They find themselves entering a primitive village (CJOZ). It consists of one street.

The PEOPLE here are decidedly morose, fearful almost.

Garlic hangs from every door.

The young lovers pass by unaware.

The carriage stops before a tiny, two-story INN.

INT. THE INN - THEIR ROOM

They're shown a room by THE PROPRIETOR'S WIFE. It is small, with double swing-out, lace-curtained windows looking over the front of the Inn.

The room has a monstrous CANOPIED FEATHERBED, CHAMBER-POT beneath, a combination WRITING TABLE and WASH STAND, TWO modest CHAIRS, and an ARMOIRE.

INT. THE INN - THE PUBLIC ROOM/TAVERN

They break bread with the PROPRIETOR and his wife, enjoying themselves. Their infectious mood even penetrates their hosts' demeanor.

INT. THE INN - THEIR ROOM

Renfield and Elsbeth relax together in their room.

ELSBETH

The countryside is wondrous,
like a fairy story. I love the
castles. As a girl I dreamed of
living in one.

Elsbeth goes to the windows, opens them, and stands,
looking at the view.

A winding, rushing stream on the opposite side of the
road stretches into the gathering darkness. The huge
Carpathian mountains, black silhouettes, loom beyond.

ELSBETH

(calling out)

Hello night... Hello Romania...
Hello Carpathians. I want to see
all of you. I invite the moon,
the wind, all of Transylvania,
all of your magic, to join us
tonight at this quaint little
inn. Come, be with us. We want
to see and know and
experience... everything.

Renfield watches her, amused at her innocent
enthusiasm.

Rising, he moves to the door.

RENFIELD

I'm going down to get some pipe
tobacco from the Inn-Keeper.
You're not to leave with either
the wind or Transylvania because
I've my own plans for you.

She laughs, as a sudden strong breeze blows the
curtains inward, sending her blond curls flying.

EXT. THE INN - (POV) FACING BUILDING FRONT

Renfield exits and the SOUND of the LOCK (OS) turns
in the door.

The dark Inn surrounding her, Elsbeth stands, looking
out. Below, Renfield comes down the stairs, steps to
the desk, and speaks (UNHEARD) to the Inn-Keeper.

Renfield is handed a pack of tobacco, and he pays
with a coin, waving off any change.

Renfield turns and heads back up the stairs.

Above, at their room's window, the curtains now hang outside the sill. Elsbeth is no longer at the window.

As Renfield re-enters, using his key, he sees that she is gone, the window open and empty.

He calls for her, looks about the room, then at the key, still in his hand.

He moves to the window, a small figure peering out. But she is gone.

He remains there, in the window, a tiny figure, alone and helpless, victim of forces beyond his ken.

As the village goes to sleep, the streets now empty, he moves about the room, then back to the window, again and again, peering out, into the very darkness which has begun to fill his soul.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- He searches for marks on the window-sill.
- He talks to the Inn-keeper and his wife.
- He searches the village, talking to VILLAGERS, the wagon-driver, anyone he can find.
- He examines the river bank, and walking both sides.
- He combs the forest, walking aimlessly.
- He pays SEVERAL PEASANTS to help him search.
- They all move through a field in a line.
- He argues with them later alongside a lake, grabbing one FELLOW by the shirt. They stalk off angrily.
- Later, he argues with the village "BURGERMEISTER."
- He speaks with a government OFFICIAL, who can only shake his head.

INT. ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICE - DAY

Renfield talks to another government OFFICIAL.

RENFIELD

As my letter indicated, I lost
my wife last month in Cjoz. She
vanished from our room at the
Inn there.

OFFICIAL

I am familiar with the case. I
regret to say that we have
turned up nothing, so far.

(beat)

You must consider the
possibility that you are,
perhaps, the victim of a cruel
joke.

Decimated, Renfield holds himself in check.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have
work to which I must attend.

Renfield leaves.

EXT. ROMANIAN COUNTRYSIDE - AUTUMN - CONTINUOUS

Renfield makes his way through a forest on a
mountainside.

Around him, THE SEASONS CHANGE as he continues his
fruitless search.

INT. ROOM AT INN - NIGHT

He works with his notes and papers.

INSERT - HANDWRITTEN NOTE PAGE:

"Peasant woman: 'Nosferatu! Castle in Mountains'"

BACK TO SCENE

He looks at a MAP, but can see nothing listed.
Despondent, he crumples the map and throws it aside.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Renfield questions TWO HUNTERS (UNHEARD).

One man shakes his head, looks at his companion who does the same. Renfield thanks them and walks away.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY

Finally, on a cold, dismal day in early winter, Renfield walks through the village, shattered.

INT. THE CARFAX SANITARIUM - BARREN CELL - DAY

SUPER TITLES:

"Carfax Asylum, Summer, 1895"

"Reconstructed from Dr. Manfred Devorer's unpublished study of the Renfield Case"

Devorer, a middle-aged, humorless, and very proper physician, stands in the stark cell, awaiting his patient.

An ORDERLY brings in a taciturn, but essentially sane, Renfield, aged 57, long after his commitment to Carfax.

Renfield's demeanor is that of someone shell-shocked from some long-ago war.

He sits in the only chair. After a moment, Devorer starts to pace the room.

DEVORER

Now, where were we? You had
searched for your missing wife
and could not find--

Already, Renfield cannot bear it:

RENFIELD

--I TRIED!!! She was not to be
found! I walked that miserable
country for months. It was as
though she had ceased existence.
If she had run away, I would
have found a witness. If she had
been abducted, I would have
uncovered it--

DEVORER

(stops, looks at him)

--Your family was not happy with your marriage. Your father was not without means--

RENFIELD

--He was a devout man. Hard and cruel, it's true, but pious. He would not break a Commandment, no matter the strength of his feelings. He did not abduct her!

DEVORER

(resumes pacing)

So you abandoned the search--

RENFIELD

--I intended to get help! To go back!

DEVORER

Instead, you lost your reason for liv--

RENFIELD

--My funds had run out! My plans were--I had to think things through.

INT. THE TRAIN - RETURNING TO ENGLAND - DAY

SUPER TITLE:

"Late Autumn, 1863"

He travels, numbed, through a rainy, miserable day.

INT. HIS OFFICE - LONDON - DAY

Back in London in his position as a solicitor, he can only stare out the window, his desk heaped with work.

A door opens and a SECRETARY brings in more documents. He frowns, putting them on top of the others.

THREE EMPLOYEES stare in from outside his door.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Renfield walks, limping, lost in thought.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Renfield sits by himself, drinking.

EXT. LONDON ALLEY - DAWN

Renfield wakes up lying amid trash, an empty bottle beside him.

INT. RENFIELD'S FLAT - DAY

He sits in a SMALL, POORLY FURNISHED ROOM, staring at nothing. After several moments, he gets up and goes out.

EXT. A SEMINARY - DAY

Renfield enters a building.

INT. SEMINARY - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

He meets with a PRIEST (40's, officious, soft).

PRIEST

I've assembled some materials describing our Seminary and the course of study one must complete to be accepted into training for the priesthood. Take it home, give it a look, and we can discuss it further when you're ready.

Renfield nods and stands.

RENFIELD

Thank you.

He moves toward the door.

DISSOLVE:

INT. SEMINARY ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

SUPER TITLE:

"Late Spring, 1869"

The assembled CLASS listens to a speaker, an ARCHBISHOP (60's, tall and thin) of the "fire and brimstone" school. He shouts from the podium, shaking his fist to emphasize his words.

The students listen, Renfield among them.

ARCHBISHOP

Your Ordination into the Lord's service is at hand. Tomorrow, you will become His servants, His soldiers. Charged with doing His work. There is no greater calling. Satan is alive, flourishing! Harden yourselves! We are locked in a war for the soul of humanity, the crown of God's creation. Your struggle awaits you.

After a moment, the audience stands to leave.

Renfield, still seated, is lost in thought, focused within.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Renfield stands before his DIRECTOR (60's, big), the head priest of the Seminary.

RENFIELD

...and so, with utmost respect, I regret that I must request that I be given a leave of one year, prior to my ordination, in order to search out and learn the fate of my lost wife.

The Director listens to him soberly.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

It's true that she has been ruled dead by the Romanian authorities. But in my heart, I consider myself still wed. Until her true fate is determined, I cannot, in good faith and with all my heart and soul, enter the Priesthood.

EXT. VICTORIA STATION - LONDON - DAY

Amid the London throng, Renfield turns, and boards the train.

EXT. CJOZ, ROMANIA - RAINY DAY

Renfield exits a coach, collects his bag, and heads toward the Inn from which he'd lost Elsbeth.

INT. HIS ROOM - DAY/NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He works at a desk with a HAND DRAWN MAP, plotting data he has gathered, marked within a circle.

LATER - NIGHT

Kneeling on the floor with an OLD OIL LAMP alongside, Renfield has a SECOND MAP, written in Romanian. He compares the first map with it.

INSERT - MAPS SIDE-BY-SIDE:

On the hand-drawn map, at center of the circle, is a star with "Turn off" written alongside.

BACK TO SCENE

He also notices a SYMBOL on the second map not many miles from the Pass Road near this central point. He sees in the table--

INSERT - SECOND MAP'S TABLE:

--along the map edge his hastily-written translation states that it is the symbol for a castle of the "Nobility."

BACK TO SCENE

The map is dated "1793," and he notes that the castle is designated as a "Ruin." The symbol includes the designation, "D" and a map identification number.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Renfield sits, asleep, his journal on his lap, open to the last page he had written.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST - DAY

Renfield enters the University grounds, heading for a large building.

INT. UNIVERSITY - DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES - LIBRARY

Renfield is shown into an area within a large, wood-panelled, bookshelf-lined room.

PROFESSOR ARMINIUS VÁMBÉRY, late 30's, thickset, sits bent over a massive tome alongside a heap of notes. Renfield strides up. The Professor looks at him.

RENFIELD

Pardon my interruption,
Professor Vámbéry, is it?

The man nods once.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

My name is Renfield. I'm told
that you might be able to shed
some light for me on the history
of Wallachia... in Romania--

VÁMBÉRY

--OF COURSE, ROMANIA! The
Province isn't yet Persian, my
good naive fellow. What is it
you are after?

Renfield opens the map.

RENFIELD

Well, I'm researching the history of the Nobility, thereabout. I've got this old map, and I'm wondering if you can identify this ruin marked... just here.

He shows Prof. Vámbéry the particular symbol. Vámbéry looks at it; then consults a book lying next to his papers; then looks back at the symbol; then back at the book. Finally, bored, he looks up at Renfield.

VÁMBÉRY

It is a castle of Vlad Tepes (pronounced "Tshepesh") or Dracula, "the Son of the Dragon," an infamous 15th century warlord.

RENFIELD

What can you tell me about him?

VÁMBÉRY

Very little. He was a notorious and cruel man. But he was also a staunchly patriotic member of the nobility. He was charged with defending the land against the Turks many times throughout his life. As such, he was known for a savage ferocity. He impaled thousands of his own countrymen on large sharpened timbers as examples to his enemies. In the end he was imprisoned by the King of Hungary despite saving them all from Mohammedanism.

RENFIELD

And his family? Descendants?

VÁMBÉRY

None who'll claim it. Of course, they multiplied like rabbits, back then. They had to keep the armies stocked. No doubt, by now, there are many thousands of them filling up the mountain passes.

A trace of a smile crosses Renfield's face.

VÁMBÉRY (CONT'D)

Though the records indicate otherwise, I would wager one of his spawn became, almost a century later, Elizabeth Bathory (pronounced, Ba-TOR-y), the equally infamous Blood Countess.

Renfield raises an inquisitive eyebrow.

VÁMBÉRY (CONT'D)

She bathed in the blood of virgin peasant-girls after she tortured them to death. Believed it would keep her young. The records from her trial list in excess of 600 victims during her life. Her King walled her up in a prison cell to die in darkness. A worthy descendant of Tepes, I assure you.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Renfield rides, staring blankly out the window.

INT. INN - DAY

Renfield speaks to the Inn-keeper.

RENFIELD

You may remember when my wife and I visited here that I had given her a Rosary. The chain was made of gold and strung with pearls. Your late wife commented on it, do you recall?

INN-KEEPER

Yes.

RENFIELD

I've heard that you may know of a similar Rosary being found.

INN-KEEPER

Yes. It sounded like the same one. I heard about it the next year. An old peasant woman was seen wearing it. I, myself, have never seen it. You will find the woman in a house near the stream, north of the village. Don't tell her who told you.

RENFIELD

Does she speak English?

INN-KEEPER

No. But you can hire a translator. My wine and spirits merchant, a gypsy, can do it. I have to mind my Inn.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Renfield and a GYPSY (late 30's, dark) stand at a door. Garlic hangs above the door and windows.

The OLD PEASANT WOMAN opens the door, sees the gypsy, and motions for them all to go out to her front yard-she won't let the gypsy in her house.

In the yard, Renfield looks at his companion.

RENFIELD

Tell her I know she found my wife's Rosary, that I can prove it to the authorities. I won't tell anyone if she tells me where she found it and hands it over.

The gypsy turns to her.

GYPSY

(in Romanian)

Acest om spune ca ai gasit Rozariului soției sale. El va spune primarul, dacă nu-l predea.

The woman stiffens, then nods. She re-enters the house, and after a moment, comes out and hands it to him.

He recognizes it.

WOMAN

Am gasit-o pe drumul de-a lungul
râului, cinci sau şase ani în
urmă. În zori. Am Neer sawwho
pierdut. Am fost o ține pentru
proprietar. De aceea n-am avut-o
gravate.

The woman sneers at the gypsy. He looks at Renfield.

GYPSY

Says found on road nearby; five,
six years; dawn one day. Not saw
who lost. Says was holding for
owner, otherwise would have it
engraved. She lies. Could never
afford engraver. Otherwise, I
believe.

RENFIELD

Thank her, and tell her she has
nothing to fear from me.

GYPSY

Dacă tăcea, nu vom fi înapoi. În
caz contrar, mergem la
autorități.

She nods and goes into her house.

They return to the gypsy's wagon, a gaily-decorated,
elaborate and heavy conveyance for the gypsy's stock
in trade: wine and liquor.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Renfield sits at a table working with his map.

INSERT - MAP:

On his map marked with the circle, alongside it, he
writes, "no disappearances."

EXT. CZOJ - STREET IN FRONT OF THE INN - DAY

He stands talking with the gypsy. After a moment, he
reaches into his pocket and hands the man several
notes of Romanian currency.

LATER

Renfield and the gypsy load Renfield's bags alongside some of the gypsy's own on his wagon. Once done, they take their seats, side-by-side, and the gypsy starts his team.

SERIES OF SHOTS - 1869 - AUDIO - 1895:

RENFIELD (VO)

Though my companion seemed to know of the place, he refused all my questions, saying that he was the only 'Szgany,' or, 'Romany,' as the gypsies called themselves, who would even take me there. His ways were passing strange, and he showed almost no fear of our destination, unlike the typical Romanian. His only interest was in the next installment of his very large fee.

- They move along a lonely mountain road.
- The gypsy purchases several live hens from a peasant farmer.
- He puts them into a small pen he has hanging below the bed of the wagon as Renfield watches.
- Afterward, the gypsy climbs up and starts his team.

RENFIELD (VO)

Our journey spanned two days. As we ascended, the terrain grew starker, stonier, less alive. Even the trees seemed smaller. When we finally sighted the castle, late on the second day, I was not prepared for its unearthly effect.

- The ascent into the mountains is difficult. A downed tree slows them.
- They continue on, ascending, the hens' incessant clucking (OS) wearing on Renfield.
- The region has an unearthly quality, wild yet still, devoid of people and game.
- They find themselves sighting the castle just before sundown.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS ROAD - CASTLE IN DISTANCE

It stabs the sky in silhouette, a black thing with spires, turrets, and battlements, crouched atop a small mountain peak amid a dozen larger ones.

The castle perches on a rocky promontory with sheer drops on three sides. Only where it connects to the mountain-proper via a walled courtyard, can it be approached.

At the foot of the promontory, far below, is a dense mountain forest, rock-cragged gorges, and a roaring river.

They make their way the remaining distance, and finally enter through the gates of the courtyard.

EXT. COURTYARD

The castle appears sound, though its battlements are broken and in ruin.

The gypsy looks about from the wagon: through some rounded arches, their pathways leading off darkly; up along aged stone walls rising to dizzying heights.

GYPSY

Vizitatori! Vizitatorii castel!

No response.

Renfield and the gypsy climb down and approach the front of the huge edifice, a projecting doorway of massive stone.

The great door set within is old, and studded with large iron bars and ancient nails.

Renfield tries the door and finds it locked. He pounds on the knocker-less face several times. No result.

Looking about, he investigates the several stone arches leading out of the courtyard-proper.

He finds stables through one archway, granaries through the other, both concealed by the lay-out of the walls.

The sky has darkened, night approaching.

His edgy guide begins pitching a colorful tent beside the wagon in the courtyard.

INT. WAGON

Renfield prepares his bed from the gypsy's modest bedding.

The gypsy pokes his head in and pushes something at him.

He looks.

--a PISTOL, in good condition, and loaded.

Renfield shakes his head, pushing it away.

RENFIELD

You keep it. I don't use them.

The gypsy produces ANOTHER identical to the first, smiles, and deftly pockets it again.

Renfield acquiesces, accepting the weapon. He places it alongside his bedroll.

The gypsy leaves.

EXT. WAGON

Renfield comes out. He looks at the darkening clouds. Distantly, THUNDER SOUNDS (OS). His nose up to the wind, he smells the storm's approach, nostrils flaring. Then, looking over, he notices the gypsy.

His companion hangs some objects at the tent's entrance: a full SNAKE-SKIN, a ROOSTER'S CLAW, and, tied to a stake immediately in front of the entrance, one of the hens.

Then, as Renfield watches, puzzled, he leaves the entrance open to the wind and rain, and withdraws inside.

Turning to go back in, Renfield starts to climb up to the door when, feeling a sharp sting, pulls back his hand, and then sees a LARGE BLACK SPIDER on the seat. He recoils.

Looking at his hand, he sees TWO MARKS swelling rapidly just above his thumb.

Seizing the closest thing to hand, the horse whip, he moves to smash the thing with the handle-end, but it scuttles away.

Suffering, now, he goes to the tent for help.

RENFIELD

I say, could you lend some
assistance here?

The gypsy comes out, looks at the wound, becomes alarmed, and goes into the tent.

Moments later, he comes out with a bottle of wine or brandy. Renfield leans toward it and smells the open bottle, his nose wrinkling as he gets a strong garlic odor.

RENFIELD

(sotto voce)

Garlic, again. It seems to be
the Official Flower of
Transylvania.

Holding his knife, the gypsy pours some of the liquid on the blade--Renfield reacts in discomfort--then cuts the wound open.

Finally, he pours more of the bottle on the wound, which smokes.

Renfield roars in pain, and the gypsy offers a bandana to tie up the hand. Then he gives Renfield the bottle, and indicates he should drink.

GYPSY

Stay in wagon. Drink. NO COME
OUT UNTIL SUNRISE!

Suffering, Renfield takes the bottle and goes into the wagon.

INT/EXT/INT. WAGON/CASTLE GROUNDS/CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

As the night descends and the storm comes on, Renfield sips from the bottle, suffering his bite. The wind and the rain begin.

LATER

As the storm rises, he drops into a trance.

Around him (his POV), things become weird, dream-like. The wagon distorts, grows larger, lengthens. SOUNDS TAKE ON AN ECHO (OS).

WOLVES HOWL (OS)

Rain beats upon the roof.

He fills a boot-flask from the bottle.

Then, the howls are much closer (OS).

Suddenly the wolves seem atop the wagon.

One of the HORSES NEIGHS frantically (OS), followed by the SOUNDS of GALLOPING fading away.

Groggy, he gets up and tries to look out one of the small windows.

The gypsy tent whips wildly against the wind and rain.

WOLVES run about. THREE fight over the remains of the hen.

The tent's entrance remains open, wide, and dark, the gypsy nowhere in sight.

He moves to go out, stumbles, and realizes he is in no shape to face the wolves. He collapses onto his small bed.

LATER

Upon a lull in the storm, the howling of the wolves has ended, and he drops into a feverish doze.

Writhing, tortured by his dreams, he awakens, groggy.

A SCRABBLING SOUND (OS), "claws" moving along the wall of the wagon.

He tries to rise, cannot, then listens and watches as the SOUNDS move along the wall (OS), to the roof, along it, and to the front door.

He stares at the wagon door, now oddly warped (his POV). The handle turns, but the door does not open.

He stares, paralyzed, listening to the TAP and SCRAPE of the BRITTLE, CLAW-LIKE SOUNDS (OS) moving around the door, walls, and roof of the wagon.

A dark, wet, and glistening shape moves past a window, but FOG has moved in, obscuring things.

Renfield endures it as long as he can.

RENFIELD

Why don't you come in? There's
no lock on the door!

He steels himself with another drink, then puts the bottle down.

Then he sees the dangling DOOR HOOK. Lunging, he flips it through the "eye."

Then, he raises the pistol. In his other hand, he grips his CRUCIFIX.

The door handle moves again, and the door is pushed against the hook. He watches as it bends, then popping out of the eye. The distorted door swings inward with a SQUEAL (OS).

His tension at its height he readies to shoot.

Nothing is there but the fog. Deep from within it, faint but penetrating red points seem to stare through him.

He's overcome and faints.

The Crucifix drops from his hand to the floor.

MOMENTS LATER

As he comes around in his feverish state...

...he is first aware of closeness--he seems pinned down, unable to rise...

...a foul, decaying smell: he turns his head, nose wrinkling, nostrils flaring, to the side...

...and a piercing pain at his neck--he tries to twist away, his hand grasping at his throat.

There's a GROWL OF REVULSION (OS), and he's knocked back as something strong moves off him, and exits the wagon fast.

He falls into a fitful sleep and dreams.

SERIES OF SHOTS W/DISTORTED SOUNDS OF THE STORM (OS):

- He staggers through the open door of the wagon, totters on the top step, then falls--the night spinning before him--crashing to the ground.
- Blackness.
- His eyes open to wild rain. The castle looms over him, stabbing at the storm, seeming to writhe and twist.
- Blackness.
- He's climbing in wind and darkness, hands gripping for purchase in the cracks between massive stones on... the castle wall!!!
- Rain streams over him. His fingers strain to avoid losing their hold. Yet, he seems "drawn" up as on a spider's line, his abilities not his own.
- LIGHTNING FLASHES show he's scaled the wall nearly to the top of the highest turret. He looks down as the following THUNDER finally arrives (OS)--
- The ground stretches below, causing him to swoon. He nearly loses his grip, then digs into the wet rock with bloodied fingertips.
- Blackness.
- Opening his eyes, he sees the valley below dropping to darkness between jagged peaks.
- A window, open to the rain. With his last reserves, he pulls himself up and in.
- Blackness.
- He's lying in darkness, rain falling over his face. After a moment, he gets to his feet, and staggers toward a DOORWAY.
- A long corridor with shut doors on either side stretches into darkness. The walls and floor seem to lengthen, bend, and twist as he stumbles along.
- SOUNDS of DESPAIR AND SUFFERING (OS) beckon as the doors pass him by.
- He descends a stairway in darkness, then falls and collapses on a dusty, carpeted floor.

- He opens his eyes, tries to focus: red "eyes" in shadows stare back.
- Suddenly, SPIDERS run over him, across his arms and face, and under his clothing. He beats at them, screaming.
- He stands in a large, cavernous place: a broken Cross and a smashed altar in a debris-strewn room (THE CHAPEL). He takes a drink from his boot-flask.
- Along the shadowed walls, vague, distorted, human-like shapes stand...watching?
- Suddenly something leaps on his back with a SHRIEK. He whirls around, throws it off: a beautiful WOMAN, dark-haired and shapely. He grabs for his flask. She leaps at him, and the flask's contents spatter her. She shrieks again, turns, and is gone.
- He stands there, recovering, then sinks down to the floor.
- Darkness fades to oblivion.

INT. CASTLE - DAWN

He comes awake. He rubs the night from his eyes, rises weakly, looks about him.

He's inside the castle, in a foyer.

He stands facing a massive door. He turns.

Around him is a once-grand foyer, centuries past active use. Behind is a great staircase laden with dust beneath a huge, dusty web.

He moves for the door, releases the chain, throws back the massive bolt, turns the lock, and opens it to the morning LIGHT.

EXT. CASTLE ENTRANCE

Renfield staggers out into the sun.

The tent stands limply from the night's storm, barren and lifeless.

He goes to the wagon, opens the door, and climbs in.

INT. WAGON

Renfield enters, stepping over all manner of objects strewn about.

He almost knocks over the bottle the gypsy had given him--catching it before it falls.

He notices his hand.

The wound is almost healed, the bite nearly gone, and the knife-cut closed and healing shut. He touches it, then rubs it. The pain is gone.

EXT. THE WAGON

Renfield comes out, looks around at the brightening dawn, and then at the tent.

He wanders toward it.

INT. THE GYPSY TENT

Inside is a rack with twenty more bottles of the garlic brandy.

He's puzzled.

RENFIELD

Twenty. Why so much?

He ponders for a moment.

Then he steps out.

EXT. THE WAGON

He examines the wagon's stores: two dozen bottles, all in a false bottom of the wagon.

Gazing up at the castle walls he somehow climbed. He shakes his head in wonderment. He looks at his hands, the fingers torn and bloody.

Looking at the castle-front, the doorway seems to beckon.

He sets about the wagon, gathering some possessions in order to re-enter the castle ruin and take up residence.

Gazing at the battered façade for a moment, his bags in hand, he enters.

INT. CASTLE - GROUND LEVEL

Renfield moves through the short projecting doorway and into the huge foyer, what must have been a grand hall at one time.

He looks at the massive staircase, laden with the dust of centuries, curving up and away, into the cavernous reaches of the vaulted chamber.

OLD PAINTINGS hang, dust-clad, upon the walls.

He looks down at the dust of the stair-steps: someone else climbed them recently.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- He finds a vast, dusty, elegantly furnished room and a huge hanging CANDLE CHANDELIER.
- In one room, he spies an AIR-SHAFT of some kind with a large ANIMAL HORN hanging alongside. He examines it, then moves on. Outside, some CROWS CAW (OS).
- He enters a kitchen, long out of use. Utensils of every kind hang along the pantry walls.
- He notices another air-shaft with a horn hanging alongside. He looks up the shaft, and, very distantly, the SOUND OF CROWS heard issues from above (OS): a communication system. He listens, the horn at his ear.
- He climbs to an upper floor, deserted and silent.
- A bed-chamber, itself, an entire suite of rooms. It, too, has an AIR-SHAFT with HORN alongside.

INT. CASTLE - THIRD FLOOR RECITAL ROOM

Overlooking one end of the courtyard, he finds a spectacular peak-ceilinged, circular recital room forming a rounded corner.

The windows offer grand views.

At a back wall is the ever-present AIR-SHAFT and, alongside it, a HORN.

Looking about he sees the room is designed for intimate performances: a 19th century GRAND PIANO stands on an elevated platform.

Before the piano is a gallery of seats arrayed in a tiered semi-circle. FIVE of the seat-cushions at the front are sunken and heavily worn.

The other seats all look untouched, laden, like everything else in the castle, with the ever-present dust.

The room has two doors, one into the castle-proper, and the other to a small, combination DRAW-BRIDGE and CAT-WALK.

It crosses over the courtyard to the southwest castle wall and GUARD TOWER.

The bridge is down, allowing access to the tower.

INT. CASTLE - GROUND LEVEL - FOYER

Later, in the foyer, Renfield finds a door.

INT. CASTLE - ROOM/ALCOVE - CONTINUOUS

Entering a small reading room, he moves to a door at the opposite wall, opens it revealing a small alcove with a SPIRAL STAIRWAY leading downward.

He looks around, spots a candle-holder, picks it up, and using a MATCH, lights the ancient candles.

Sconce in hand, he heads down into the bowels of the castle.

INT. CASTLE - CHAPEL LEVEL

He enters the chapel, recognizing it from the night before. It has been ransacked.

The room has three exits along the walls, one leading further downward. He descends.

At bottom, he finds a long passageway with rooms on either side.

INT. CASTLE - DUNGEON LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

These are wine cellars, an armory, and other rooms designed for war.

Continuing, he enters a vast chamber, the DUNGEON.

And in a chamber beyond, he finds the castle's CATACOMBS: a huge, low-ceilinged, vaulted chamber meant to house the castle's dead. Recessed crypts along the walls run throughout.

In one far shadowy corner is a larger than normal crypt, and in it are SEVERAL SARCOPHAGI on solid WOODEN-LEGGED TABLES. These are arrayed about a LARGE AND ELABORATELY CARVED SARCOPHAGUS in the center.

Further doors in the far wall open on other passages. Renfield approaches, opens one and looks in.

A tunnel, hand-dug and rounded, with dusty-gray walls covered in spider silk covers the surface. The tunnel leads into darkness.

He's seen enough, however, and heads back.

EXT. COURTYARD

He returns to the wagon, and begins unloading the provisions.

INT. CASTLE - GROUND LEVEL KITCHEN

He stocks the kitchen's cabinets, containers, and cold-storage chamber in the floor.

INT. CASTLE - THIRD FLOOR BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renfield moves his belongings into an upper bedroom.

AUDIO - 1869 - FROM RENFIELD'S JOURNAL:

RENFIELD (VO)

Seventh, June. I've moved into Castle Dracula. It is not the ruin described on my map, but I have found no resident thus far. There are signs of recent habitation, however, so I'll await their return. My gypsy guide has fled. I'll mount a search tomorrow, though I can only fear the worst.

He redresses the BED with some aged but sound SHEETS he finds in a CHEST, open along a wall.

RENFIELD (CONT'D, VO)

I've set up my residence in a room in the west wing of the castle overlooking a deep gorge.

He writes at the small writing desk as the sunset floods the room with spectacular CRIMSON LIGHT.

RENFIELD (CONT'D, VO)

From here, the view of the Carpathians at sunset is magnificent. After my humble repast, I shall retire early with a good book, and continue my explorations in the morning.

LATER

In bed Renfield reads to CANDLE LIGHT. He sips at a GLASS of brandy from a bottle on the NIGHT TABLE next to the bed.

His door is closed.

His GOLD POCKET WATCH lies open beside the bottle.

INSERT - WATCH:

"11:10"

BACK TO SCENE

As the HOWL of WOLVES wails (OS) below, he pours more brandy, and then returns to the book.

LATER

He puts the book aside, drains his glass, and, tired, blows out the candle.

LATER

He sleeps fitfully.

In the darkness, the SOUND of SOFT BRUSHING (OS) suggests someone's presence.

A HAND, feminine, moves snake-like over the bed-clothes and begins to stroke his face and head.

Beside him is the DIM FORM of a woman (Elsbeth), in a diaphanous gown through which soft, pearlescent skin glows in the moonlight: smooth, long, full, round... overwhelming.

ELSBETH

I've missed you so...

He stirs, quite drunk, trying to regain himself.

He is kissed, enclosed, stroked, caressed. He responds.

RENFIELD

Elsbeth...

ELSBETH

Say nothing. You've come back to me at last.

He's assaulted, devoured. He frees himself for air.

RENFIELD

You must return with me...

ELSBETH

Shhh... Love me. Love... us.

Around him are OTHERS: vaporous forms, softness, skin, caressing him, loving him. He's overpowered.

LATER

He awakens, alone in the darkness. Was it a dream?

His door is slightly ajar, but he doesn't see it.

INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE HIS ROOM

FOUR WOMEN, three dark-haired, and one blond, walk away through the darkness. One of them, the blond, is Elsbeth.

Their expressions indicate satiety, contentment. As they walk, they begin to "MORPH" into one another, over and over, so that we never really know who is whom.

They begin to smile, all the while transforming from one to the next.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Renfield sleeps soundly.

From somewhere, the SOUND of a PIANO (OS): wild, rhapsodic, a style native to the region, A ROMANIAN VARIANT OF HUNGARIAN CSARDAS (pronounced Chardash).

He awakens, listens intently. After a moment, he swings out of bed when a voice pierces the darkness:

ELIZABETH

Do not try to interrupt Vlad's playing. He will not abide it.

Renfield looks into the depths of the darkened room.

From a corner, into the weak STARLIGHT, steps a FIGURE (ELIZABETH BATHORY), dressed in an elaborate but archaic manner. She's spectacular: voluptuous, sanguine, full (perhaps 36), and yet irresistible.

ELIZABETH

I am Elizabeth. Vlad is my... husband. You are in our castle, an uninvited, but welcome guest.

He's at a loss.

RENFIELD

You speak English.

ELIZABETH

I was tutored as a child.

RENFIELD

My name is Renfield. I come from London. The castle seemed abandoned. I am searching for my wife, lost in these parts six years ago.

ELIZABETH

I may have seen her...

(beat)

What does she look like?

RENFIELD

She was... is... beautiful: lovely, long blond hair, an endearing smile, a delicate manner with children. Her name is a variation on your own: Elsbeth.

She shows a flicker of awareness.

He notices.

ELIZABETH

Yesss. I may know of her. Perhaps I can... return her to you.

Stunned, he stares, nearly beside himself.

RENFIELD

Is she here? I've looked for so long. I thought she might be...

She watches him in the silence. Then,

ELIZABETH

I have some small needs. Perhaps you could be of assistance.

RENFIELD

Anything to find Elsbeth.

She just smiles back at him, a Mona Lisa smile.

INT. RECITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Renfield and Elizabeth stand in the darkness at the back of the recital room.

VLAD is at the piano, playing wildly. Alone, he's focused entirely on his playing: loud, frenzied, performed expertly.

He's tall, middle-aged, big-boned and lanky: with sharp, Asian eyes, high cheek-bones, prominent forehead, nose, and chin. His hair: thick and silver-white. A strong moustache straddles a cruel mouth.

They listen for several moments, then move to leave--the playing stops in mid-phrase.

VLAD

Do not leave!

He rises, and, picking up a candelabrum, strides up to them. He examines Renfield, then gives Elizabeth a look laden with menace.

VLAD

(to Renfield)

I am... Dracula, master of this castle, host to its... visitors. You are Mr... Renfield.

Taken by his power, Renfield is captivated.

RENFIELD

Yes.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Renfield is from England, London, the largest city in the world. He has lost his wife in these mountains. He hopes to be reunited with her.

VLAD

(smiles)

London... a city I might visit. I'm told millions... live there. What is your profession?

RENFIELD

I am a... solicitor. Our firm handles business ventures, estates--

Vlad reacts, interested.

Renfield notices: Vlad wants something.

VLAD

Perhaps we can help one another.
Mr. Renfield is welcome in our
home as long as he has need of
it.

Unable to take his eyes away, Renfield finally
mutters:

RENFIELD

Thank you.

VLAD

You'll excuse me, for I have
pressing duties to which I must
attend before the night is out.

With that, he stalks out. Renfield and Elizabeth
stand there, alone.

ELIZABETH

He can be... abrupt. But he
cares for us all in the castle.
And his duties have become...
great.

Renfield looks at her.

RENFIELD

I found no one.

She just smiles. Then:

ELIZABETH

You are a fortunate young man,
Mr. Renfield. Exceedingly so.
(licks lips)
You come at a time when we have
need of such a person. Perhaps I
can explain better if you
accompany me... to the
catacombs.

INT. CASTLE - DUNGEON LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Renfield and Elizabeth descend into the bowels of the
castle...

...through the dungeon...

and into the "charnel house" or burial crypt.

She leads him to one of the sarcophagi, and before he can stop her, she lifts the lid. He looks in, and sees that it contains a layer of earth, but is otherwise empty.

INT. CARFAX - INTERROGATION CELL - 1895

Renfield, visibly aged, is tired, the sessions having taken their toll. Devorer, PAD in hand, paces, stalking him.

Outside: WINTER.

Renfield struggles with his memories.

Devorer stops, eyes him. His doubts are evident.

DEVORER
Coffins with a layer of soil.
Prepared for...

Renfield strains with the admission. Finally, he manages:

RENFIELD
Y-y-yes.

Devorer's EYES belie his great skepticism. But he just stands there, waiting.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)
Elizabeth confessed that they
all, every one, slept in them;
that they went about at night,
in fact shunned the day.

Renfield pauses, having difficulty with these revelations. Devorer circles him, listening.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)
Without her once uttering the
word, I knew what she meant: I
had entered a vast nest of
undead, nosferatu... vampires.

Again, he stops, collecting himself.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)
I couldn't understand why she
told me this while I was left
untouched, why she cared not to
take me into their... society.

Standing, looking out through the bars, Devorer just listens, unwilling to ease his discomfort.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)
She explained that the gypsy
brandy filled my veins with
garlic, and that garlic was
repellent, even lethal to them.

Devorer jots this down as Renfield goes on:

RENFIELD (CONT'D)
Elizabeth took me about and
showed me the other caskets: it
seemed there were hers, Vlad's,
and at least four others, and at
this time, in the middle of the
night, they were, all of them,
empty.

Devorer just listens, emotionlessly.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)
She seemed to be saying that I
could help her in some unstated
effort in exchange for being re-
united with Elsbeth.

Devorer makes some notes.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)
She asked that I meet her at
dusk just outside the castle
walls. She wouldn't explain, but
instructed me to hitch the horse
to a light carriage in the
livery and have it ready when
she arrived.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE WALLS - SUNSET - CONTINUOUS

Renfield awaits her with the CARRIAGE, a small,
French-styled calèche, outside the courtyard gate.

The sun has dropped behind the western peaks.

Without warning, Elizabeth appears before him dressed
in traveling garb.

They mount the carriage, Renfield driving. He starts
them down the castle's approach road.

She indicates a point ahead, out of castle view, a cover of boulders lining the narrow road.

Once stopped, she settles herself.

They sit in the gathering darkness, for what she will not say.

LATER

Distantly, the HOWLING of a WOLF-PACK (OS) fills the valleys. She signals that he resume driving. As he does so, he looks at her.

She barely contains her desire to leap from the carriage and join them.

Finding it unbearable, he breaks the tension:

RENFIELD

Tell me of your past... your...
life.

She pauses, perhaps savoring his discomfort.

ELIZABETH

I am Countess Elizabeth Bathory.

Renfield fights to conceal his reaction.

AUDIO - 1895:

RENFIELD (VO)

--I reeled, shocked, though I
had suspected it from the start.
Still, it was terrifying to
realize that I was somehow in
the living--undead--presence of
the greatest murderess to have
lived. She offered up her past
as we rode toward... What? I
knew not.

BACK TO LIVE SOUND - 1869:

ELIZABETH

Vlad Tepes lived almost a century before me. Even as a living man, he was incomparably evil, perhaps the vilest killer of all time. As a warlord for his land and people, he was the greatest patriot. He became a vampire when he lost his first love and turned his face from...

She can't bring herself to invoke the name of God.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

As a vampire, his power, even then, was..... unparalleled. Once, after he had become undead, Vlad was presented with a woman great with child who had committed a serious offense. Of the nobility, she had spared a Turk thought to be a spy. As they were at war, her execution was expected. Instead, he spared her, but unknown to those present, with a single monstrous gaze, he corrupted the life within her, creating a vampire in its place.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD

The carriage winds through the mountains and trees. The SOUNDS of the WOLVES (OS) grows more frenzied.

The risen MOON shines, now, in the deepening darkness, giving everything a ghostly pallor.

EXT. CARRIAGE - WITH THEM - CONTINUOUS

The wolf-pack runs past beyond the nearest trees, traced by the SOUNDS of their HOWLS (OS).

At Elizabeth's signal, Renfield halts the carriage.

She sits, gazing into the forest.

ELIZABETH

That woman was my mother, and the child he transformed sits beside you.

She gives him a look filled with menace.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I was dead before ever I
lived...

Her icy stare slices through him.

After a moment, she indicates that he let her drive
the carriage. He gives her the reins.

They begin to move through the darkness.

Able somehow to see clearly in the DIM LIGHT, she
drives along the narrow winding road.

From the SOUNDS (OS), they follow the wolves.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D VO)

In the beginning, I was
undeveloped as a vampire: I aged
normally, I never craved the
blood-hunt. My days were filled
with nursemaids and tutors. I
rarely saw other children. The
nursery, my bedchambers, and my
governess were my entire world.

The mountains and forest pass by in the darkness.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Later, when I had reached my
fullness as a woman, Vlad came
in the night. Afterward, my
innate vampirism began to take
hold. I found that I needed to
avoid the sun, that I needed to
sleep touching Romanian soil,
that I thirsted only for living
blood.

Renfield stares into the night, listening to her
abominations.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Vlad claimed me as his protégé.
Much later I became his
concubine. The years... the
centuries... flew by, as,
together, we ruled the night.

Abruptly, the HOWLING STOPS. Elizabeth seems not to
notice.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

In recent times, when Vlad brought others to be amongst us in the castle, I began to find my own way at last. He was still my dearest love, but I needed fulfillment. He somehow no longer commanded my full desire.

Renfield watches her expressionlessly, yet his eyes suggest that he sees through her denial of the truth: Vlad had moved on.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The calèche stops at an overlook, pale white in the MOONLIGHT.

Below them, a CAMPFIRE glows, SEVERAL FIGURES gathered around. Several tents have been pitched at the edge of the firelight.

ELIZABETH

A Tyrolean hiking party. They occasionally come through these parts in the summers. They want to experience the wildness of our Carpathians.

Elizabeth smiles at him.

Renfield looks back as the "WOLVES" descend on the group from all sides. The hikers are torn limb from limb.

Renfield can watch it only for a moment before turning away. Elizabeth, however, observes it with motherly approval, almost delight.

Renfield struggles, keeping his gorge from rising.

LATER

They return, Elizabeth at the reins. Renfield sits, numbed, gazing into the darkness, avoiding her eyes. She ignores this, and after a time, begins to speak:

ELIZABETH

Elsbeth sleeps among us.

Riveted, yet with immense control, betraying every seething emotion, he turns to her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

She is one of Vlad's late
conquests, though I don't know
what he sees in her--

Then she realizes what she has said, and adds:

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

She is beautiful, it is true.
But she can't deny her own
station as a peasant. No
conqueror's blood runs in her
veins. She is a mere plaything
to him.

Again, his EYES reveal that he sees through the lie:
Elsbeth has replaced Elizabeth in the competition for
Vlad's affection.

Slowly, unseen by her, a smile crosses his face. He
senses an advantage forming before him: two goals at
odds, and he between, for each, perhaps, the
solution.

They arrive at the castle, and, stepping down, she
slips away and into the darkness.

INT. CASTLE - RENFIELD'S ROOM

Later, Renfield sits in his room, the long night at
its end.

AUDIO - 1895:

DEVORER (VO)

How did she regard you, then?

RENFIELD (VO)

Elizabeth saw in me a way to
return to being Vlad's
concubine; that if I could
confront Elsbeth, she would
return with me to England where
we could, ourselves, rule our
own destiny. Of course, this
would require my becoming one of
them. But it would give me
Elsbeth, and Elizabeth seemed to
think that would convince me to
join them, a vampire myself.

He goes to the window as the dawn approaches.

RENFIELD (CONT'D, VO)

But she never had an appreciation for God, and so never saw the possibility that I served only Him. As for Vlad, he desired those teeming masses in England and a new start with help from me. I let them believe as they would, and I began to form my own plan for saving my lost love.

Renfield watches the sun ascend from beneath the horizon and drinks a last draught from his garlic brandy, the only other thing standing between him and a full descent into Hell.

LATER

He awakens with a moan from a troubled sleep. After a moment, he rises with a look of determination.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- He examines details among the walls, turrets, and gun ports of the castle.
- He stands in the courtyard below the recital room, examining the ground. Then he looks up to the catwalk leading to the guard-tower overhead.
- He ascends a tower to the highest parts of the structure.
- He hides the bottles of the garlic brandy wrapped in torn bed linen around the castle. They are marked with crosses in his stationery ink.
- He conceals a bottle even in a small alcove in the Chapel, near the entrance to the dungeon level.

LATER

He works restoring the Chapel as a place of worship: clearing it, cleaning it, and finally erecting a Cross he has fashioned out of some scrap timbers.

With that done, he kneels to pray.

INT. ROOM

Renfield eats a cold supper staring out toward the setting sun.

INT. RECITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Renfield sits in the recital room at the back, waiting.

The brandy has him slightly drunk, and the sitting has lulled him into a half-sleep.

His POV: The room seems to go in and out of FOCUS.

He shakes his head to stay awake.

As he watches the piano, something dark seems to grow from the seat, and then, somber MUSIC begins (OS).

Renfield listens as Vlad attacks the keys, playing faster.

The room has gone cold--Renfield pulls his jacket closed--and that sobers him, driving off any sleep.

Then he notices that FOUR WOMEN now sit in the sunken and thread-bare forward seats.

Three are dark, eastern European or Mediterranean, exquisitely beautiful, enrapt by the music, aware of nothing else.

The fourth: blond Elsbeth, fairest of all, also taken by Vlad's playing.

Renfield sits, galvanized, seeing her clearly at last. He cannot contain himself. Fearing loss of control, he rises silently and leaves.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE RECITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The music concluded, Vlad exits the recital room and strides off down the dark corridor.

A moment later, a door along the wall opens and Renfield emerges. He stands for a moment, watching the recital room door.

It opens after a few seconds and the women glide through, following in the same.

Renfield calls to Elsbeth. She turns and gazes at him. The others seem not to notice and vanish down the corridor. Elsbeth seems to float there, awaiting him.

Wary, Renfield approaches her.

For an instant her EYES betray a flicker of recognition, perhaps regret. Then, she seems to force it away and just stares at him, her silver eyes shining.

RENFIELD

Elsbeth... I've found you. At last.

ELSBETH

Found? Why?

His anticipation freezes. For a long moment he cannot speak. Then:

RENFIELD

To rejoin your husband, of course.

ELSBETH

I am in my husband's home. He commands I should remain.

Renfield shakes his head, unwilling to listen.

RENFIELD

I am your husband, your only husband. You'll return to England with me at once!

Her eyes, impossibly distant, imply some vestige of understanding, some barest recognition, and sadness, immense sadness.

After a moment she shakes her head and moves off down the corridor.

Numb, he can only watch her slip away from him.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Renfield enters to find it has been ransacked as before:

The candlesticks and sconces lay smashed and broken across the floor.

The communion table and the sacraments he'd brought with him are broken or missing.

The tapestry he had hung still hangs, but it is shredded from end to end.

The Cross has been covered with a black shroud.

He sets about picking things up.

INT. CASTLE - ROOM ADJOINING HIS

Renfield sets up a humble ALTAR in one corner of the room.

INT. RECITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Renfield watches the Count play, as before. He is resolute, determined to somehow reach Elsbeth.

All of them listen to Vlad's frenzied music.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- He searches the castle, finding rooms filled with gold and devoid of furnishings.
- His limp nearly indiscernible, he explores the forest, discovering a roaring river emerging from a cavern at the base of the mountain.
- He watches Elsbeth attending Vlad's performance.
- From a ROOM at the top of the highest turret, in the STARLIGHT, he watches his host emerge from a window and climb down the stone face, head-first, vanishing into another window below.
- He reads in his room as the sun sets through the window. Then, a LARGE NUMBER OF BATS stream up and out of a cavity below the castle's battlements. He ignores them.
- He watches a WOLF-PACK run through the courtyard in the MOONLIGHT, led by a massive BLACK MALE. HOWLING (OS), they disappear into the FOGGY MIST clinging to the forest.

-- Again, he watches Elsbeth listening to the Count play.

BACK TO SCENE

The music stops and Vlad stands. He turns his gaze toward Renfield.

The four women do nothing, their eyes stay on the piano, as though in a trance.

Vlad steps away and crosses the room in several strong strides.

Looking at his guest, he considers his words.

VLAD
Elizabeth informed me that she
acquainted you with our
household.

Renfield nods.

VLAD
She tells me Elsbeth was once
your wife--

RENFIELD
--IS... my wife.

Vlad smiles.

VLAD
Yes. Perhaps I can further
acquaint you with things
hereabout. Come.

He turns to lead the way.

Renfield removes a small flask from his inner jacket pocket and takes a drink. Even so, he hesitates.

Vlad turns.

VLAD
Do not fear. Your wretched fluid
keeps me away.

Renfield considers, then relents, and follows.

INT. CASTLE - CORRIDOR

Vlad and Renfield walk through the castle halls silently. Then:

VLAD
We Romanians have repelled
invaders throughout our
history...

Renfield hesitates again. Finally:

RENFIELD
Since the time when your
ancestors invaded, you mean?

Vlad locks eyes with him as they walk along.

Renfield takes another drink, then puts the flask away. His eyes betray the merest hint of intoxication.

Vlad glances away. Has he recognized this?

VLAD
You think you know something of
our history?

RENFIELD
I know that you murdered
thousands of your own countrymen
by impaling them outside your
city walls in order to frighten
the advancing Turks.

VLAD
They were peasants, like
yourself--of no consequence.

RENFIELD
Whom were you protecting, if not
them?

VLAD
Killing thousands saved
millions. It was an act of
patriotism.

RENFIELD
It was an act of barbarism.

VLAD

You speak of barbarism as though you were not, yourself, barbaric. Your "civilization" is merely a veneer. When invaders threaten England again, you and your countrymen will be capable of anything. Should it be necessary, as before, you will sacrifice your children to fill the armies and preserve your comfort.

INT. LIBRARY

They enter, and Vlad ushers him to some chairs. Renfield sits. Vlad takes one opposite him.

Renfield takes another drink.

VLAD

What you call civilization has risen only to fall back on itself seven times in the history of the world. There truly is "nothing new under the sun." But under the cover of darkness, the same cannot be said. Mine are people of destiny.

RENFIELD

Your people are dead but do not know it. Mathematics is your undoing as you shall see once your numbers are sufficient to overcome the living birth rate. What will you do when there is no more living human blood? Will you feed on animals? And what after that? You consider yourself immortal, but you are the embodiment of the doomed.

Vlad gazes at him for several long moments.

Renfield steels himself once more with the flask. His movements are more sweeping, his eyes less sharp.

VLAD

Doom awaits us all... yours,
perhaps sooner. Never forget who
is my sponsor. Mathematics may
be his greatest weapon. I and my
kind... we are a means to an...
end.

He lets the word hang in the air.

VLAD (CONT'D)

I don't concern myself with such
things. The one constant for all
life, even for the undead, is
the struggle to survive. And
that is something my people well
do.

He rises, walks to the opposite wall and turns to
look at his guest.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Your mind is impressive. Perhaps
there is conqueror's blood in
you. Worthy prey. I wonder how
you would respond to joining us
if you had a small taste of it
to whet your desire. I believe
you could not resist.

RENFIELD

"Never forget who is my
sponsor."

He eyes him.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

I, too, am a "means"...

Vlad smiles.

VLAD

Over the centuries I have
acquired many talents. I am able
to enter the mind of the
willing. Or to let theirs enter
mine, see what I see... feel
what I am feeling... taste what
I taste. Tonight, I will show
you how I brought Elsbeth here
to live. You will see it as I
see it... if you and your
"sponsor" are not... afraid.

RENFIELD

It would give us great...
pleasure to begin your
destruction from... within.
Nothing you could show me, no
earthly thing, has the power to
lead me astray.

VLAD

No... "earthly thing" will. Go
to your room. Lie down. Do not
allow yourself to sleep. I'll
come to you when I am ready.

Renfield stands.

They stare across the gulf between them, trying to
read the other.

Renfield strides to the door.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Mr. Renfield. Your drink will
interfere, but it will not keep
me out. I am not sure to what
extent I will succeed, or how
long I will manage to hold your
mind in mine. Prepare yourself
for an abrupt return.

Renfield turns and leaves.

INT. UPPER ROOM WITH HEARTH - CONTINUOUS

Renfield has built a fire. From the hearth tools, he
has assembled a crude structure over the flames.

On a table before it, he has set a metal plate. He
removes his Crucifix and places it on the plate. Then
he puts the plate on the iron structure.

That done, he takes another drink, and lies down on a
couch alongside. He extends his hand so that he can
reach the plate with no difficulty. Then he settles
back, eyes closed.

LATER

The fire has reduced. Renfield seems to doze.
Suddenly, he rises and takes another drink, then sets
the flask on the table, and settles back again.

After a moment his head snaps to attention, his eyes opening wide. He seems not to see his surroundings.

His face locks, rigidly, eyes set, grimly.

INT. CASTLE - UPPER CORRIDORS

He finds himself (POV) racing through the castle, impossibly fast. Careening along, he turns a corner, and shoots up a staircase.

At the top, he rushes forward, closing on an open window at the far end of the corridor. It is as if he will jump.

His speed increases, as he reaches the window, and then he is through it, and out. He seems to shoot forward, ever forward, over yawning emptiness.

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE VALLEY/COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Around him, the Carpathians loom. He's literally flying, a thousand feet over the valley.

WITH RENFIELD

He sleeps before the fire, arm lolling, muttering something:

RENFIELD

--a bat--

(He realizes what has happened: he sees through the eyes of a bat.)

WITH VLAD

He flies, crossing countryside it would take days to cover on land.

Above, a HALF-MOON LIGHTS a spectacular view. This is a power beyond any he had imagined.

Ahead, he sees the lights of a village.

He swoops down in a great arc, and alights in a tree near a small farmhouse.

Nothing stirs.

Then, below him, he sees a young BOY and GIRL, asleep along a river bank.

They are half-dressed, having swum, now resting in the warm night. The boy's arm lies over her.

WITH RENFIELD

Lying on the couch, eyes closed, he writhes in revulsion at what he knows will occur.

RENFIELD

No... You cannot!

His head snaps again, as though by a renewal of control.

WITH VLAD

He descends, then stands on two legs.

The two remain asleep. The girl is beautiful, her skin pale in the MOONLIGHT.

He approaches, bending toward her. His hand closes around the boy's throat as he leans toward hers.

The boy is dead in moments.

The girl stirs, comes awake, trying to rise. Vlad covers her neck with his mouth. She struggles for only a moment, then submits, arching her back in a swoon.

WITH RENFIELD

He thrusts his hand to the plate and grips the Crucifix. It SIZZLES (OS). SMOKE rises from his closed, unyielding fist. He suffers it, calling upon his reserves of will.

WITH VLAD

Wrenching away with a ROAR, he staggers back, his own hand SMOKING, marked with a BLACK CROSS.

WITH RENFIELD

His POV goes BLOOD RED as a tremendous SCREAM thunders out (OS), then BLACKNESS.

LATER

He continues to hold the Crucifix as it cools in his locked fist.

AUDIO - 1895:

RENFIELD (VO)
I had to meet his every
challenge or lose before I had
even begun.

INT. RENFIELD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Renfield writes in his journal at his table.

Outside his window, the dawn approaches.

Then he notices that he's not alone. Vlad stands in the doorway. He displays no anger.

Renfield ignores him.

VLAD
I trust your hand does not
hinder your writing.

RENFIELD
Not in the least. Yours?

VLAD
I rarely write. We can... resume
our discussion tonight in the
library?

RENFIELD
Certainly.

VLAD
Good.

After a moment, when he hears nothing more, Renfield looks toward the doorway.

He is gone.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Renfield and Vlad stand together at a shelf of aged, leather-bound volumes.

VLAD

These are translations of
scrolls destroyed 1200 years ago
in the fire at Alexandria. I
saved them from the
Mohammeddans. No others exist.
They contain record of a great
civilization pre-dating India,
Egypt, even Sumer. A
civilization in which my people
were created.

RENFIELD

Romanians?

VLAD

No, my true people. Those whom
Elsbeth has joined.

Vlad watches Renfield's eyes.

RENFIELD

A people she may still leave.

VLAD

Perhaps.

Renfield eyes him, wondering.

INT. CARFAX - INTERROGATION CELL - EARLY 1896 - DAY

Renfield suffers, unable to continue, as Devorer
circles.

DEVORER

What? What is it?

RENFIELD

He... He said--

He breaks down, losing his grip, unwilling to accept
what Devorer has forced him to confront.

He collapses in his chair. Devorer comes around,
grips him at the shoulders, shakes him.

DEVORER

What is it, man? What did he
say? SPEAK!

Renfield is knotted up, stricken by the memory. He sinks into his chair. Then, though diminished, regains some part of himself.

RENFIELD

He said... "Elsbeth cries for you still."

He sobs, accepting that he'd failed her those many years ago.

Devorer remains unaffected, moves to the bars, and completes his notes.

DEVORER

Now, you had mentioned you'd found gold in the castle. How much? Where?

RENFIELD

A million pounds worth... two. In an upper room. It would take two dozen men just to move it.

Devorer writes. After a moment, he RINGS for an orderly, then feverishly resumes writing.

INT. RENFIELD'S ROOM - 1869 - SUNSET

Renfield lies on his bed, drinking from a flask. His book lies open on the bed.

LATER

In near total DARKNESS, as he continues his silent reflection, his door slowly opens with a slight SQUEAL (OS).

Elizabeth, stands there, a SILHOUETTE, framed by the LIGHT of the corridor.

Her HAIR is different, yet familiar--done in Elsbeth's manner. She's beautiful: her nightgown of the lightest silk, her smooth curves, shadows in the LIGHT.

She enters, closing the door behind her.

Renfield, who has, so far, not bothered, suddenly looks up at the SQUEAL (OS). He watches, enrapt.

She stands before him for a moment, then lets the gown fall to the floor.

Naked, she joins him on the bed.

He's overwhelmed. She pulls him downward, to her chest, and he loses himself in her, kissing her breasts, loving his "wife," at last.

She moans with the pleasure of it.

Through the window, one of the linen wraps he had used to protect the brandy bottles flutters past, falling in the wind, un-noticed. Another follows it.

He starts to take her fully, moving across her, kissing and stroking:

RENFIELD

Elsbeth... I've loved you so...

She is silent, then...

ELIZABETH

I've wondered about your love for Elsbeth since you arrived. I hoped you might like my changed hairstyle. I never imagined you could reach such heights of passion...

Renfield looks up, seeing Elizabeth's face. He screams and throws her off the bed.

RENFIELD

GET OUT!!!

She rises, smiling, picks up her gown, steps to the door and exits.

Livid, he glares at the empty doorway. HER RISING LAUGHTER (OS) mocks him, ECHOING into the night.

INT. CARFAX - INTERROGATION CELL - 1896

SUPER TITLE:

"Spring, 1896"

Beyond the single window, an early SPRING blooms.

Renfield is brought in. He's aged, a shadow of the man he was. Yet, somehow, some part of him remains.

Devorer, peering out the window, ignores him. Then, eyes on his notes:

DEVORER

You had, then, fully established
yourself among them, in the
"life" within the castle...

Renfield closes his eyes, too weary or too weak to protest.

INT. RENFIELD'S ROOM - WINDOW - 1869 - DAY

Renfield stares absently out the window when he sees something below.

The huge, coal-black "wolf" enters the courtyard. Two cloth sacks drop from its jaws. Something moves within them. A DIM "BRAYYYING" SOUND (OS) issues out.

Renfield stares, unprepared for what is happening.

The wolf TRANSFORMS... Vlad bends to pick up the sacks. He disappears into the castle.

Sitting down, Renfield reaches for his glass. He takes a long drink, then puts it back.

INT. DUNGEON LEVEL - CATACOMBS

Vlad enters silently, carrying the two sacks.

Something within one struggles. A feeble SOUND (OS) emanates from one of the sacks: a newborn child.

The three women approach and he passes a bag to the closest. They glide away.

After a moment, from out of the shadows, Elizabeth appears.

ELIZABETH

We must speak.

He tries to ignore her, but she stands before him, cutting off escape.

He glares at her, his eyes demanding she speak.

ELIZABETH
Our visitor's presence is
troubling.

In the darkness, some distance away, Elsbeth listens.

Without warning, she becomes a BAT, and flies toward one of the air-shafts, then into it, and up.

INT. AIR-SHAFT

Flying (Elsbeth's POV) through the ancient stone passageway, she shoots through a labyrinthine network of stone-lined shafts.

AUDIO - VLAD'S AND ELIZABETH'S VOICES RECEDE (OS)

INT. RENFIELD'S ROOM/CATACOMBS - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Elsbeth, in bat's form, flies out of the tunnel, and into Renfield's room.

Startled, he watches it fly about the room and then shoot out the window.

After another moment, Renfield goes to the air-shaft and looks in. Hearing the distant conversation, he grabs the ear-horn and listens intently.

CATACOMBS

ELIZABETH
He is a man of faith.
Unswerving, committed. He'll
stop at nothing less than his
own destruction.

VLAD
What do you propose?

ELIZABETH
Give him Elsbeth. She is
expendable. If he becomes
undead, he will take her and
leave.

VLAD
To return to London, a prize he
will not have earned. Never!

The bat flies into the catacombs and vanishes into the shadows.

After a moment Elsbeth again watches Vlad and Elizabeth.

Elizabeth remains unswayed.

ELIZABETH

Consider your triumph in
destroying a man of his
standing: a priest almost
ordained, the son of an English
Peer... bringing such a man into
our "society."

He dismisses it with a wave.

VLAD

He is no threat to what I have
built here over four centuries.
It will stand against any mortal
threat. Besides, I may have uses
for him, myself.

This gives her pause.

ELIZABETH

You would be wise to be wary. He
may have his own allies. The
threat may be greater than
merely a mortal one. It may
be... Divine. And, of course
there are... our children.

He gazes at her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

What might you do if he succeeds
in getting Elsbeth out of the
castle, out of Transylvania...
Or worse, if he is forced to
destroy her?

VLAD

I have a course of action
already underway, in fact. Now
leave me, your meal grows cold.

And he thrusts the other sack, limp now, toward her.

She ignores it and walks off.

WITH RENFIELD

He remains at the air-shaft, deep in thought.

LATER

Renfield finishes one of his bottles, and opens the footlocker--displaying a Cross--in which he had been keeping those he had in his room.

Only one bottle left.

He gets up and goes out.

INT. ANOTHER ROOM

Renfield enters another room in the castle where he had hidden one of the original twenty bottles: it's gone. He goes out.

INT. CASTLE - A DIFFERENT ROOM

Renfield enters another room, and the bottle secreted there, too, is missing.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

RENFIELD checks several more locations:

-- Each...

-- ...one...

-- ...of them...

-- ...has vanished.

EXT. CASTLE WALL - ADJACENT TO A WINDOW

Absently scanning, Renfield notices one of his linen bottle-wrappings fluttering in the breeze, caught on a small tree growing out of the rock face below the battlements.

Sobered, he realizes his defenses are now compromised, his destruction looming.

INT. CASTLE - CORRIDOR WINDOW

At a window of the castle, he looks out as the DAWN begins to LIGHTEN the eastern sky.

INT. CARFAX - INTERROGATION CELL - 1896 - DAY

From his chair, Renfield fixes the standing Devorer with a gaze, his blood up, as he recalls the advent of his life's greatest challenge.

DEVORER

You reached a moment of
decision. When next you met your
"host" you told him--

INT. RECITAL ROOM - 1869 - NIGHT

Renfield and Vlad face one another.

RENFIELD

I'll not join you, ever, you
know.

VLAD

It may not be necessary. I have
need of you in other ways.

RENFIELD

Oh? What are they?

VLAD

We'll discuss them. Soon. First,
tell me of London, its
greatness... its teeming
masses... its... life.

INT. LIBRARY

Together, Renfield and his host sit in the chairs.

VLAD

So the city has stood since
Roman times?

RENFIELD

Since before. The Romans had
merely made it the center for
their Province.

VLAD

A great people. Much like my own. Conquerors. Their legions were unparalleled in battle. That is how they brought your country into the modern world. Your ancestors relied on numbers. Germanic tribes. No discipline.

RENFIELD

More discipline than Asiatic wanderers who fled their homelands in fear, hid among these mountains, and stole their name from your vaunted Romans.

Vlad, his own blood warming, smiles and licks his lips.

VLAD

What can you tell me of your English political system? I'm surprised at the power of that woman who sits on your throne.

RENFIELD

Political power is left to her Government--professionals all, trained in policy, and put in office by a vote of the people.

VLAD

I believe Governance is too important to be left to the peasants. That is why only boyars, the nobility, can effect policy in my country.

RENFIELD

Well, you'll need to appreciate English ways if you intend to stay any length of time.

Vlad looks at him, surprised.

RENFIELD

You are considering summoning my firm's services to find you land and help you plan a lengthy, secure... stay. Your reasons are obvious.

He looks toward a window.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

This country is hunted out. No doubt those "Germanic tribal hordes" attract you. You may find the English less easy to conquer than your Turkish eunuchs.

Elsbeth and the other women appear at Vlad's side. She whispers something to him as Renfield watches.

Vlad says something in reply. She nods, and the women leave.

Returning his attention to Renfield, Vlad smiles.

VLAD

It is true, I will visit your homeland, perhaps soon, perhaps in the century beyond. You see, "a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday" to me.

RENFIELD

Quote your psalms while I "prepareth the way."

The vampire eyes him.

VLAD

Perhaps you would enjoy accompanying myself and... your "wife"... on an errand.

Renfield just stares, unsure how to respond.

EXT. CASTLE - COURTYARD GATE

Vlad drives the castle's main coach, drawn by four dead-black horses.

He whips them and they set off down the castle road. The horses run through the darkness without fear, driven, perhaps solely, by force of Vlad's will.

INT. COACH

Renfield sits with Elsbeth and the other women as they stare blankly forward.

Riding along, the other women ignore him. He takes the opportunity to look at them, each in turn:

One is clearly Central Asian, possibly Mongolian.

Another appears Arabian.

The last has Slavic features.

LATER

Ahead, they HEAR SHOUTING (OS) on the road.

EXT. COACH

Renfield looks out the window, and sees another coach at the roadside, tipped, due to a broken wheel.

The DRIVER and A FEW PASSENGERS stand alongside, discussing their situation.

The coach rolls up alongside them, the black horses snorting in the chill night air.

No one says anything, the strangers somehow sensing something isn't right.

Renfield, strains, wanting to shout, to warn them, but he's unable.

INT. COACH

At a sudden fluttering beside him, he turns back inside, only to find himself alone, the cabin door open, still swinging.

He whips around to the window.

RENFIELD

RUN! GET AWAY! THEY MEAN TO KILL
YOU!!!

Next, he hears the vampires' attack. He can't look, but still must listen to the ALARMED VOICES, followed by SCREAMS (OS). It goes on, an evil litany.

Bathed in sweat, yet shivering, he's broken by the tortured sounds.

Then, silence. After a moment, he finds three of the women surrounding him once again. As before, they stare blankly, their mouths smeared with blood.

EXT. COACH

Vlad returns to his seat atop the coach. Elsbeth passes and re-enters the cabin.

A smile crosses his jagged features as he savors the effect this must have on his "guest."

The coach begins to move.

INT. COACH

They sit, unmoving. Only Elsbeth shows any sign of life: a sated, blood-gorged smile beneath drowsy eyes, exhausted in her repletion.

Renfield cranes out the window, retching.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - TWILIGHT

He stands on a crag some distance from the castle, the sun just below a mountain peak.

He waits, absently examining the terrain.

After a moment, he senses something, and looks behind, toward the encroaching forest.

Elsbeth stands there, watching him.

RENFIELD

You've come. I prayed you would,
but I didn't expect it.

She moves closer.

ELSBETH

I'm no longer the woman you
married.

He just looks at her for several moments.

RENFIELD

I... I love you! Last night...
on the road... those people...
innocent travelers.

He shakes his head.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

I can't leave you to this--

After several moments, a smile--melancholy--appears.
She nods.

ELSBETH

You're right, you can't.

(beat)

You understand my meaning?

He looks at her, hope running out of him.

ELSBETH (CONT'D)

Richard. Imagine our return to
England. You'll go back to your
firm. We'll get a house. You'll
work through the day, come home
late, but it will be alright
because I'll just be rising.
Perhaps I'll grow moonflowers
because they bloom at night.
You'll need to keep your
drinking habit, perhaps find
another gypsy to supply--

RENFIELD

--STOP!!!

He turns away, unable to look at her, eyes clamped
shut. He refuses to hear, hands covering his ears.

He stands there long moments.

She watches him, waiting.

Finally, he opens his eyes and drops his hands from
his ears. He stands there looking at the distant
mountain shadows and the darkening valleys.

He turns, tears flowing freely.

She shakes her head, eyes shimmering with her own
last remaining tears. Finally, from her soul:

ELSBETH

You see, my... lost... love?

You're right... You can't leave
me to this.

He looks at her, accepting it: he must destroy them all.

She moves to him, encircles him, begins to kiss him. Then her eyes change. Her thirst is too great. Her teeth brush his neck--

He pulls away, reviled. She looks at him, a last imploring smile upon her face.

ELSBETH

Join us, join me. Eternity
awaits.

He looks away, into the deepest chasm between the nearest peaks.

Finally, he shakes his head.

When he turns back, she is gone.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Renfield argues with his host. By the height of the candles, they've been long at it.

Vlad stands and bids him to follow.

VLAD

I have one more... thing to show
you.

Picking up a candelabrum, he leads them out.

INT. DUNGEON LEVEL - CATACOMBS

Vlad and Renfield enter the catacombs.

They move through the vast chamber. Vlad lights several wall torches with the candles as they move through the emptiness.

At the opposite side, they arrive at the dark, web-lined passage he had seen when he first explored.

INT. CASTLE - DUNGEON LEVEL - TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Vlad and Renfield stand before the narrow tunnel.

VLAD

This is the castle's escape passage used when the Turks laid siege. It leads to an underground stream which forms a cave and opens out at the base of the mountain. The digging just to reach the cave through the bedrock took thirty years. But we never had to leave. The Turks broke off their siege after a year, and we chased them back to Asia.

They move into the tunnel.

Eventually, it widens, and, as he lights a few torches on the walls, they find themselves in a vast chamber, an enormous cavern.

In the DIMNESS, stalactites and stalagmites stand by the scores throughout.

Below: the SOUND of RUSHING WATER (OS).

In the dimness, a waterfall courses down the rock face.

They move along a ledge, toward a larger part of the chamber where the path turns. Beside the ledge is a vast yawning emptiness, a black pit, and far below, the unseen river.

VLAD

I thought you would find this of interest. This is Elizabeth's residence. She prefers another form in which to spend her time.

The LIGHT flickers across his features.

Renfield is uncertain, wary. They reach the bend and stop.

VLAD

She prefers to take the form...

And he leads him around the corner.

VLAD

...of the spider.

And Renfield sees the barest suggestion of a great web stretching across the yawning open chamber, high above the fast rushing river.

In the nearly black center of the dusty dark web, crouched and waiting, is the dim form of an enormous BLACK SPIDER, perhaps a dozen feet across.

As his eyes adjust to the darkness, he sees its massive, swollen abdomen ending in a thorn-like point.

Hanging above the web is a SAC filled with eggs.

VLAD

The "wampyr" prefers to take the shape of its most kindred spirit. For me, it is the wolf. For Elizabeth... and her children... the spider.

Renfield can stand it no longer. He turns and runs back along the ledge, toward the tunnel, toward the catacombs, away from this nightmare.

Behind, Vlad's thunderous LAUGHTER ECHOES (OS).

Stopping at the mouth of the tunnel, he struggles to regain his wind, then coughs and staggers on.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

WITH RENFIELD as he returns to his room:

-- He makes his way through the dungeon, to the stairs and up toward the Chapel.

AUDIO - 1896:

DEVORER (VO)

Are you saying he regarded her as a threat?

RENFIELD (VO)

Elizabeth told me later of Vlad's fear of her young, nearing their birth in the sac above the web.

-- He passes through the foyer and heads up the main staircase.

RENFIELD (CONT'D, VO)

She hinted that they were his own offspring. Vlad believed they would do their mother's bidding. He felt she wanted him destroyed for betraying her by bringing his women to the castle.

-- He climbs an upper staircase, toward the highest level, the tallest tower.

RENFIELD (CONT'D, VO)

Vlad, once master of his castle, now lived in fear, awaiting the day when his own children would come for him.

EXT. CASTLE - A HIGH TOWER - PRE-DAWN

Renfield climbs out a window, and climbs to a place on the roof.

The view is spectacular. Looking around him, he can see the rest of the castle, its battlements, its walled defenses, the spired roof of the recital room.

The drop-offs stretch to the valleys far below.

He watches the dawn break the eastern horizon.

RENFIELD (CONT'D, VO)

Elizabeth said Vlad would ask me to help him to destroy their "young" in the egg sac.

He sits on the tower's roof as the SUNLIGHT spills over him, washing him clean.

RENFIELD (CONT'D, VO)

So, they each had goals: she to get rid of Elsbeth and return herself to her former position; He to destroy Elizabeth's gestating brood and to move to a vast new city of blood. And, somehow, in all of it, I had become the key.

DEVORER (VO)

Let's return to the room with the gold for a moment...

INT. RENFIELD'S ROOM/CATACOMBS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Renfield prepares his bed, wearing several Crucifixes, one around his neck, and two others wound around each wrist and gripped in his hands.

He sleeps.

Distantly, a POUNDING ECHOES (OS). It persists, growing LOUDER. Renfield awakens.

The pounding seems to CHANGE, to become KNOCKING, an urgent HAMMERING at a door (OS).

He rises, still dressed in his CLOTHES FROM THE DAY BEFORE.

Only then does he notice that he is in the catacombs, at the crypts. He's at a loss: how did he get here?

The knocking goes on and on (OS).

He moves for the staircase.

INT. CASTLE - FOYER

Renfield comes up from below and approaches the door.

He reaches it...

...unlocks it...

...and opens it.

Before him stands the gypsy.

Renfield steps aside, and motions for him to enter. He refuses, just stands there, unmoving. The man has become mute.

He motions to a wagon and horses he has brought. He wants Renfield to go with him, to leave.

Renfield looks at him, and shakes his head.

The gypsy gapes, then points again at the wagon.

Renfield turns, and heads up the stairs for his room.

After watching him for some moments, the gypsy follows.

INT. RENFIELD'S ROOM

Renfield enters, followed by the gypsy.

He drinks from his brandy bottle, then offers it to the gypsy.

The gypsy takes the bottle, and drinks a long draught. Then, he produces a knife.

Brandishing it, he motions for Renfield to come with him.

Renfield refuses.

The gypsy stares at him for several seconds. He can't understand him. After a moment, he walks out.

LATER

SHOUTING (OS) from somewhere, far-off.

Renfield, dozing at his writing table, comes awake, listens: the air-shaft.

He gets to his feet and rushes out, following the screams.

INT. DUNGEON LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

The SCREAMING is much LOUDER (OS). It comes from the passage leading to Elizabeth's lair. Grabbing a torch, Renfield races into the dark tunnel.

He moves along. The tunnel is somehow smaller, closer, more covered in web, yet much longer, with no end in sight. He runs and runs.

He emerges, finally, into the cavern.

INT. CAVERN

At the ledge in the shadows, Renfield comes to the turn, rounds it. The gypsy, screaming, writhes, trapped in the web. The spider--Elizabeth--crouches over him.

Above is the deflated egg sac, the young having begun to hatch.

Covering him in thick clumps, hundreds of Elizabeth's brood, relentlessly sting him as he screams.

Renfield can only watch.

The gypsy begins to TRANSFORM: First HIS TORSO SWELLS going SHINY BLACK, HIS ARMS and LEGS each SPLIT, LENGTHEN, and NARROW. Then HIS HEAD begins to DARKEN.

He fixes Renfield with a stare, an evil look filled with malevolence. EACH EYE DIVIDES and the four DIVIDE again. EIGHT glistening EYES stare out of an inhuman, hungering FACE. And then---

INT. CASTLE - RENFIELD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Renfield comes awake in a rush.

He's in his bedclothes, the Crucifixes still around his neck and arms.

He sits on the bed trying to get himself under control. As his breathing begins to slow, he takes a drink, and closes his eyes, trying to erase the dream from his memory.

INT. ROOM - DAY

That day, Renfield can only lie there, long into the afternoon, the night's horrors having exhausted him.

On arising, he reads and eats.

INT. CARFAX - INTERROGATION CELL - 1896 - DAY

Wheel-chair bound, now, and shattered by his awful memories, Renfield offers up his last day and night:

RENFIELD

Elsbeth... I'd lost her. My
faith compelled me to strike
down the abomination which held
her.

Devorer stands at the bars making notes as Renfield sits staring up at the window at the grayness.

Then, he turns and looks at Devorer.

RENFIELD (CONT'D)

It had to be stopped, somehow. I
set myself to my plan.

INT. CATACOMBS - 1869 - DAY

Descending, Renfield finds all but one of the coffins
missing. Opening the one remaining, he finds
Elizabeth.

He searches throughout, but finds nothing.

INT. RECITAL ROOM - NIGHT

That night, Renfield goes to the recital room and
waits for Vlad.

Hearing a door open, he sees Elsbeth enter and walk
toward the front of the gallery.

She's alone. He moves for her.

RENFIELD

Elsbeth! I must talk to you. If
you meant what you said to me on
the cliff, you've got to help
me. We must talk... privately.
That's why I've come for you. We
can---

She whips around and looks at him with wild eyes.

ELSBETH

Perhaps I've come for you!

She's on him, teeth locked on his throat. He fights,
but her strength is too great.

Then, she rips away with a SCREAM of revulsion. Her
ragged face SMOKEs from his garlic-laden BLOOD. Then
she grins, despite the pain.

At that moment, Vlad enters, followed by the three
women. Seeing them, he smiles, but moves for the
piano.

Renfield runs, limping, his handkerchief staunching
the pulsing BLOOD flowing from the HOLES in his
throat.

INT. ROOM

Renfield sits, having bandaged his neck with rags torn from his bedsheets. The frenzied MUSIC resounds (OS) through the castle from below.

He hears a KNOCK (OS).

RENFIELD

Come in.

Elizabeth stands in the doorway. Her nostrils flare at the scent of his blood.

ELIZABETH

He's leaving!

RENFIELD

To London? When?

He stands, concealing his shock, then goes to the wash-stand to cover the bloody mess he's made.

ELIZABETH

Soon. Perhaps in days. If he goes he'll take Elsbeth and the others. He may never return. He knows I cannot leave without my... possessions. He refuses to believe me when I tell him I love him. I need you to "free" Elsbeth and the others.

He stares at her, grasping her meaning.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You never intended to join us. And even if you had, Elsbeth is his. He would kill you before your first night had passed. You must remove her and the others. I'll do the rest.

RENFIELD

What do you mean?

ELIZABETH

Your goal has been from the start to free Elsbeth's soul. Mine is to eliminate the competition. He knows you will come for her. That's why he's hidden their beds.

He begins to grasp the true measure of his task, and it fills him with doubt. His eyes betray his fear.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

If you come for her, he will kill you. I can distract him long enough for you to get to her. In exchange for this, you will leave us. If you do not, I will come for you.

He looks at her trying to read her face. She moves closer.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It's true, your drink is a defense against us. But, given the will, either of us might overcome it. Vlad is supremely powerful: he can command animals, the elements, he can marshal hordes of rats, crows, flies, even that within, which causes disease.

As she speaks, she moves between him and the night table.

INSERT - HER HAND:

One of her hands reaches behind her, and grasps his Crucifix. Her hand sizzles at touching the silver, but she gathers it into her fist, nonetheless.

BACK TO SCENE

She begins to move away.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Without my help, you will fail. With my help, you will free Elsbeth and escape with your life. Forget your childish goal. I assure you, I'll see to Vlad. He'll never come to your London.

RENFIELD

Where has he hidden her?

ELIZABETH

In the catacombs along the east wall, there is a hidden door opened by one of the iron rings awaiting manacled Turks.

He listens without expression.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It is the sixth ring from the south-east corner. Turning it will allow the door to be swung open, and you will find a chamber within.

She stands at the door and looks at him one final time as Vlad's wild music plays below. Suddenly, it stops.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Stay alive until the dawn.

When she is gone, he takes another drink and looks out to the Carpathian night, gathering his resolve.

INT. CARFAX - INTERROGATION CELL - 1896 - DAY

RENFIELD

It wasn't Elsbeth...

DEVORER

Who? When? What do you mean?

RENFIELD

It wasn't Elsbeth who attacked me in the recital room. It was Elizabeth. Even in that state, Elsbeth could not have done such a thing. She still loved me. I saw it in her eyes every time we spoke. They're shape-shifters, you know...

But, the truth is something else. And Renfield shows it in his desperate, pleading eyes. He simply cannot confront it for Devorer, her betrayal too wrenching:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HIS ROOM - 1869 - NIGHT

Elizabeth stands at his door as the MUSIC stops (OS) (as earlier).

ELIZABETH

Stay alive until the dawn.

She steps out and starts down the corridor. As she goes, she TRANSFORMS into Elsbeth, displaying first a triumphant smile at her deception, then a look of utter loss. She drifts past.

At the far end, she comes up to someone...

Vlad.

He smiles.

She holds out her hand as he brings up a small, satin-lined, wooden jewelry box. He opens it, and she drops the Crucifix in, her hand SMOKING and SCARRED BLACK.

Her calming face betrays the pain she endured.

INT. RENFIELD'S ROOM - DAWN

Renfield awakens, reaches for his Crucifix on the night table, and finds it gone. After a pause, he rises to dress.

INT. CASTLE - DUNGEON LEVEL - ARMORY - DAY

In the armory, Renfield examines several of the weapons, ropes, and cords.

INT. THE LIVERY - OFF THE COURTYARD - DAY

A crucible rests on a workbench.

Renfield carries in a large and elegant case and sets it on a work-bench. He opens it: an exquisite silver service.

Nearby, an ancient blacksmith's forge roars, hot and ready.

He begins to pile some of the silverware into the crucible. When it is filled, he dons a pair of smithy's gauntlets lying on the bench.

He turns and opens the forge's massive door.

Then, returning to the bench, he picks up the heavy handles, inserts them, and lifts the crucible.

He carries the vessel to the forge, opens the heavy door, and sets it in its place within. Working the handles loose, he removes them and closes the door.

INT. CASTLE - DUNGEON LEVEL - ARMORY

Back in the armory, Renfield selects a string-less bow from scores along a wall. He checks it for suppleness--the subterranean air has served it well.

Finding a bowstring of suitable length and condition, he winds it up and pockets it.

Then he picks up one of the dozens of quivers, standing along the wall beneath the bows. Checking a few of the arrows, he replaces them, gathers everything up, and exits.

INT. LIVERY STABLE

Renfield enters, sets the weapons alongside the bench, and moves to the forge.

Opening it, he looks inside.

INSERT - FORGE INTERIOR THROUGH DOOR:

The silver has melted and fills the crucible, bubbling hotly.

BACK TO SCENE

He inserts the handles, and lifts the vessel out and over to a stand made for it. Then he closes the forge's door.

He picks up the quiver, pours the arrows out on the bench, and gathers several up.

Bringing them to the crucible, he dips each arrow head in turn in the silver, coating them, and then standing them to cool against an anvil standing nearby.

EXT. CASTLE - COURTYARD BELOW CAT-WALK

Later, Renfield carries an armful of spears to the open courtyard, and moves to the area immediately under the cat-walk, piling them with others he'd brought earlier.

Every spear-point is coated in silver and roughly sharpened as from a file.

Using his foot in the dirt, he marks off the area from the wall below the recital room to the wall below the guard tower.

With the small shovel he used earlier, he sinks each spear about two feet into the ground in a wide pattern covering the entire area below the cat-walk.

LATER

Finishing, he now has a section of ground bristling with the silver-tipped spears, all pointing stiffly skyward. Except for directly beneath the cat-walk, they are each no more than a half-meter apart.

INT. CASTLE - DUNGEON LEVEL

Moving to the dungeon with several blankets from the bedrooms, Renfield moves to assemble his materials.

It is too dark, so he puts down his armload.

After lighting a few of the wall-mounted torches throughout the room, he gets several coils of rope, and some chains, locks, and manacles, and, in two trips, assembles everything in the catacombs.

Again, he lights some of the torches along the walls.

Opening the HIDDEN DOOR at the wall with the IRON RING, he goes into the room, and, finding the caskets, he drapes them with the blankets to muffle any sound, and quietly ties them tight with the rope.

Then, he chains each shut, starting with Vlad's. Pulling them as tight as he can, he locks all starting with his host's.

Going out, he moves to Elizabeth's coffin and does the same.

EXT. RECITAL ROOM - CAT-WALK

The DAY is beginning to WANE.

Renfield exits the recital room, emerging onto the cat-walk, and, with a ROPE hung over his shoulder and around his neck, he carefully climbs from the cat-walk up onto the roof of the recital room.

Preparing a loop and a slip knot, he tosses it up and over the thick iron spire atop the central peak of the roof.

Then, he climbs down, and, after testing it with a few strong pulls, he coils the remaining rope at the base of a window beside the cat-walk door.

Stringing the FISHING LINE he got in the stable, he stretches the line from the window at one side of the door along the cat-walk, and across, to the guard tower.

There, he feeds the line in through an OPEN ARROW HOLE alongside the cat-walk.

INT. CASTLE - GUARD TOWER

Within the guard tower, Renfield sets up a small table and sets on it a LARGE, CERAMIC VASE from the recital room. Then he ties the line around the neck of the vase.

It is now TWILIGHT, the sun just below the jagged peaks on the horizon.

INT. CASTLE - RECITAL ROOM - TWILIGHT

Returning to the recital room, Renfield carries the bow and arrows to a place along one side near the door to the cat-walk, and sets them down beside a seat.

He begins to sharpen each arrow with the file he'd used on the spears.

INT. CASTLE - DUNGEON LEVEL - CATACOMBS - NIGHT

The silent chamber enters its version of DAWN.

In the stillness, the undead begin to move.

A MUFFLED SOUND, far off (OS).

Another SOUND (OS).

In the chamber, the large coffin shakes, the lid trying to lift, once, twice, stopped by the chains.

After a moment, a powerful hand drives through the side, splintering the wood. The hand draws back inside.

A moment later, a RAT pokes through the hole, jumps to the floor, and scurries off.

INT. CASTLE - RECITAL ROOM

Renfield works fast, filing for balance, rather than sharpness. He checks each arrow as he finishes it.

As he works, he glances at the bow beside him...

EXT. THE LOUISIANA MEADOW - 1862 - DAWN

The duelists each turn and begin their walk to the Second's cadence count.

THE SECOND

One, two, three, four...

Renfield's POV: Elsbeth watching, terrified, from her place in the trees.

INT. CASTLE - RECITAL ROOM - 1869 - LATE DAY

The memory steels him for the coming battle.

INT. CASTLE - UPPER CORRIDOR - NEAR RENFIELD'S ROOM

Vlad moves for his opponent, the door just ahead.

INT. CASTLE - RECITAL ROOM

Finishing in near-darkness, Renfield replaces the arrows in the quiver, uncoils the bowstring and picks up the bow. Careful not to snap it, he strings the bow, picks up the quiver and conceals them behind the upper row of seats.

Standing, he takes one of his last remaining bottles and sprinkles the liquid liberally over the seats and floor near the cat-walk door. The smell is evident by his flaring nostrils.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR

As the castle enters the Carpathian night, a Hungarian CSARDAS SOUNDS (OS), poorly played,

ECHOING through...

...Castle Dracula...

...and its lifeless corridors.

INT. CASTLE - STAIRCASE LEADING TO FOYER

Vlad stops, almost to the bottom. Enraged, he whips around and races back up.

INT. CASTLE - RECITAL ROOM

Renfield sits at the piano playing wildly, making mistakes, mocking his host with his ragged musicianship.

INT. CASTLE - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE RECITAL ROOM

Vlad ascends to the corridor and comes on fast.

INT. RECITAL ROOM

After several long moments full of MANGLED MUSICAL PHRASING, Renfield rises and hides behind the curtain alongside the cat-walk.

He's invisible, but the rope is dimly visible leading underneath, to the point where his feet should be.

Silent, the vampire enters.

He assesses it, and then, strides down to the area immediately in front of the piano.

His nose turns away at the smell of the garlic brandy spreading through the room, and he's filled with revulsion.

Just then, Renfield's hand tugs the fishing line, and the vase smashes to the floor of the guard tower.

Hearing it, the vampire moves for the open door and the cat-walk.

Still hidden, Renfield puts the bottle to his lips and fills his mouth.

Vlad reaches the door and going through, starts to cross.

Behind, Renfield comes at him in a rush, the bottle swinging in an arc for his head.

Somehow, Vlad has heard. He's in mid-turn as Renfield hits him full force and they both plunge off the cat-walk.

Impossibly, the vampire has gotten hold of him as they drop, and even the snapping of the rope breaking their fall doesn't loosen his grip. Vlad, snarling and grasping at him, manages to keep from falling.

It is at this point that Renfield SPITS his MOUTHFUL of the GARLIC BRANDY at him, full in the face.

Vlad bellows out a ROAR, and lets go.

Howling, he drops, back-first, to the spears below.

Two impale him solidly through the back and out through his chest and abdomen, the silver tips clear through and above him, failing to kill him.

Hanging there writhing, he clutches at them, screaming and hissing.

Above him, Renfield hangs from the rope tied about his waist and shoulders. Reaching upward, he grasps the line and pulls himself up to a point at which he can climb onto the cat-walk.

With difficulty, he staggers into the castle, unaware that his enemy still lives, the silver out of contact with flesh.

INT. RECITAL ROOM

After untying himself, Renfield slings his quiver, picks up the bow, and heads for the catacombs.

INT. DUNGEON LEVEL - CATACOMBS

Renfield enters and moves for the hidden door, now open.

Arriving, he sees that the ropes and chains have been torn off each of the coffins but Elizabeth's.

Vlad's casket appears unharmed, still trussed, in fact. Then he sees the small hole in the side.

Looking around in the dimness, he sees four women approaching him across the chamber from various corners of the room. Each of them is Elsbeth!

He raises his bow, an arrow nocked and waiting.

Elizabeth struggles against the rope and chains enclosing her coffin. She smashes at the closed lid, rocking the casket on its platform.

After several strong blows, her fist smashes through the lid, and she clutches at the chain, her fingers scrambling, feeling for the lock.

He moves to her coffin.

A FIST-SIZED BLACK SPIDER climbs to the hole in the lid from inside the box.

He swipes at it with the bow, once, twice, three times, forcing it back inside.

Each of the "Elsbeths" closes in toward him from the shadowy depths.

He aims at the nearest of them, shoots,

She goes down, HOWLING, shot through, impaled by the silver-tipped arrow.

The others come on faster.

In the dimness, he sees that, as she dies, the woman TRANSFORMS into a female VAMPIRE heretofore not seen.

In an alcove, in the shadows, rests an open COFFIN.

Elizabeth's hand reappears, searching for the chains and the lock holding them.

He loads another arrow.

Elizabeth gets hold of the lock on the chains about her casket.

He aims and shoots again.

Another of the "Elsbeths" goes down with a hissing snarl.

As before, she, too, TRANSFORMS into a previously unseen female VAMPIRE.

Another alcove. ANOTHER open COFFIN.

He loads again, and, shoots

He hits the third figure, nearly upon him.

The third "Elsbeth" TRANSFORMS into a previously unseen female VAMPIRE.

A THIRD open COFFIN.

A last Elsbeth remains. Her BLACK-SCARRED HAND from when she had shifted into Elizabeth shows us it is really she.

Then, the three concubines peer, unseen, from the darkness at a far wall.

From within her coffin, Elizabeth rips at the lock.

Renfield looks from her to Elsbeth, struggling to decide.

Suddenly, THE SOUND OF WOLVES, HOWLING is heard (OS), approaching through the castle. This is followed immediately by AN ENORMOUS HOWLING BELLOW (OS):

Vlad!

Elsbeth, hearing this, stops, and, after a moment, rushes, hissing and snarling, from the room.

Renfield looks over at Elizabeth.

Her hands bleeding, she has nearly twisted the lock off the chains. She'll snap it at any moment.

Nocking another arrow in the bow, he turns and runs for the door to the passage leading toward her lair.

She can see him, now, and screaming in rage, she tears the lock off the chain and pushes the lid away. Free, she comes up, out of her coffin, and moves after him.

INT. CASTLE - ESCAPE PASSAGE/CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

At the door, Renfield slams it shut behind him and pulls down a latch.

Running down the black passageway, an arrow nocked and ready in the bow, he moves for the web and her young.

Behind him, however, Elizabeth Bathory tears at the door with the strength of an undead mother. After a moment the door rips away from its ancient iron hinges, and she comes on.

As she moves, she begins to TRANSFORM, and in seconds, she has become the SPIDER, clambering after him on eight spindly legs, ferociously quick, now.

In the near darkness of the few flickering torches, he reaches the ledge in the cave, and moves for the web and the egg sac beyond.

Behind him the Elizabeth-spider scrabbles forward, her fangs twitching beneath eight fiercely gleaming eyes.

Arriving at the egg sac, he swings the bow with the arrow tip, rending the sac's side, spilling the gestating eggs down and through the dusty web, into the blackness of the pit and the raging river below.

A SHRIEK issues from what had once been Elizabeth, and she leaps at him with her powerful, spiny legs.

His swing of the arrow has brought him around facing toward the dark descending form of the spider.

The Elizabeth-spider arrives just as the nocked arrow comes around, impaling head-first on the silver point, her fangs pinching at him amid an animal SQUEAL.

As the eight legs squeeze round him in a clutching grip, her eight black eyes mindlessly glistening, the spider REVERTS to Elizabeth, her neck torn wide by the arrow point.

Looking up from the enclosing, dying arms of Elizabeth Bathory, Renfield sees Vlad, two broken-off spears still in him.

And, behind, Elsbeth...

...the wolves...

...and the three remaining women.

All of them: coming for him out of the darkness, and crossing the ledge.

Renfield rips the bow out of Elizabeth's gaping neck, leaving the arrow in place.

He draws back the last arrow and points it at Vlad. He hesitates only a moment, then shifts the bow's aim to Elsbeth. He shoots.

The arrow finds its mark...

The point rips into her throat, lodging in the muscle and sinews. Thick, dark BLOOD gouts from the rent flesh about the silver.

She goes down, her life running out with her blood.

Renfield is stunned, his love lost to him forever, though freed, now, from her vampiric curse.

Vlad's eyes register his, and with a single, malevolent glare, Renfield is conquered, defeated, his mind seized by a force of will beyond anything he can resist.

Perhaps from his own exhaustion, or perhaps from within his deepest reserves of faith, he is able to break the connection, if only for a moment.

His eyes fall to his chest. He looks down and away.

Vlad and the wolves move, closing on him.

He has one chance, and he takes it, leaping out, swinging the bow at the web... His momentum and the force of his swing slice through. He falls into the darkness.

INT/EXT. CAVERN/THE RIVER - CONTINUOUS

In the water, Renfield is swept downstream, through the narrow passage, and out to the LIGHT of a FULL MOON.

He gets up, staggers, falls twice. Then, stumbles off, following the river bank.

AUDIO - DEVORER FROM HIS CASE STUDY - 1896:

DEVORER (VO)

It isn't clear what truths his remarkable story contained, among all the obvious delusions. He believed he had gotten away, but he was no longer his own man. He was convinced that he had lost the love of his life, killed her, in fact, with his own hand. And he had felt his soul taken from him by his vile host, perhaps it, too, was lost to him forever...

Later, his clothes torn and soiled, Renfield clambers up from a riverbank toward a small peasant cabin.

DEVORER (CONT'D, VO)

He believed that he had been allowed to escape, for he was not pursued that night, nor in the months thereafter as he made his way back to England. This, of course, is the most telling evidence of his mental state...

He stands alone on the deck of a ship, staring out, his coat pulled close, somewhere en route home, forever lost to his memories.

DEVORER (CONT'D, VO)

And so, it is with utmost sadness that I must conclude that his case has fallen beyond the reach of modern "psychoanalysis" as it is just now becoming known.

INT. CARFAX - INTERROGATION CELL - 1896 - DAY

Their last session together, just concluding.

Devorer, standing at the door, seems agitated, impatient. He's dressed formally, as though for travel.

In Devorer's jacket pocket is an envelope with a ticket stuffed part-way in.

INSERT TICKET:

It is passage on a ship, the Demeter, destination, Istanbul, Turkey, nearest port city to Romania.

BACK TO SCENE

Renfield sits, bent over, contorted in his chair, drooling from his twisted mouth. He's fouled himself. He's had a seizure.

Angered, Devorer rings for help.

RENFIELD
The blood... the life...

AN ORDERLY arrives outside the cell. His nose wrinkles at the stench.

DEVORER
LET ME OUT OF HERE!

EXT. CARFAX - OUTSIDE THE GATE - 1869 - LATE DAY

SUPER TITLE:

"Autumn, 1869 - Renfield's commitment to Carfax"

Renfield, shattered, and yet, not quite insane, arrives by hansom, his father beside him, to be admitted into the care of the good doctors of Carfax Asylum:

It stabs the sky in silhouette, a black thing with spires, turrets, and walls like battlements, crouched on a hilltop, surrounded... by the quiet, suburban, English countryside.

The cab drives through the entrance as WE...

FADE OUT

THE END