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Journey to Transylvania

Passages from Jonathan Harker's journal:

May 3. So far, my business trip to Eastern Europe has taken me through London, Munich, Vienna, and Budapest. While in London, I visited the library at the British Museum. I found out that Count Dracula lives in the Carpathian Mountains. This is one of the wildest and least known areas of Europe. I read that every known superstition in the world comes from Transylvania—my final destination. If so, my stay there should be very interesting.

It was evening when we got to Bistritz. Count Dracula had directed me to go to the Golden Krone Hotel. I was greeted by a cheerful, elderly woman who gave me a

letter from the Count. In it, he said that his carriage would meet me at the Borgo Pass tomorrow and bring me the rest of the way.

I asked the hotel manager if he knew anything about Count Dracula or his castle. At the mention of Dracula's name, both he and his wife crossed themselves. They insisted that they knew nothing at all of the man and refused to speak further.

May 4. Just before I left the hotel, the old lady came to my room. "Must you go?" she asked worriedly. "Do you know what day it is? It is the eve of St. George's Day. Tonight, when the clock strikes 12, all the evil things in the world will come out."

Then she got down on her knees and begged me not to go. "At least," she said, "wait one or two days." It all seemed very ridiculous, and I did not feel comfortable.

There was business to be done, however. I could let nothing get in the way of it. My employer, Mr. Hawkins, had sent me to deliver some papers to Count Dracula. They were the ownership documents for the London estate he had bought.

I told the old lady I must go. Worriedly, she then took a crucifix from around her neck and put it around mine. “For your mother’s sake,” she said, and left the room.

May 5. The Castle. Yesterday, the trip from the hotel to the castle was quite frightening. When the other coach travelers heard where I was going, they looked at me with pity. Of course they did not speak English. Looking up some of their strange words in my dictionary, I found that they meant “werewolf” or “vampire.”

It was after dark when we got near the Borgo Pass. Then suddenly, a horsedrawn carriage drew up beside the coach. The horses were splendid, coal-black animals. They were driven by a tall man wearing a great black hat. His face was hidden. I could only see the gleam of his eyes, which seemed strangely red in the lamplight.

I got out of the coach and into the carriage. Without a word, the driver shook the reins, the horses turned, and we swept into the darkness of the Pass. As I looked back, I saw the passengers in the coach crossing themselves. I felt a strange chill, and a lonely

feeling came over me.

It seemed that we rode for hours. At a few minutes before midnight, I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was then that I heard a wild howling. It seemed to come from all over the countryside. The horses began to strain, but when the driver spoke to them quietly they calmed down. Then the driver jumped to the ground and disappeared into the darkness. A while later, the moon broke through the clouds. I saw around us a ring of wolves, with white teeth and lolling red tongues.

Then I saw the driver standing in the roadway. He swept his long arms about, as though brushing something away. As if at his signal, the wolves fell back! Just then a heavy cloud passed over the moon again, and we were in darkness.

A feeling of dread came over me. I was afraid to speak or move. The driver got back into the carriage, and we went on. It seemed like a very long time before we pulled into the courtyard of an old castle.

The driver jumped down and helped me out of the carriage. He placed my bags on the