

# BRIDES OF DRACULA

## PROLOGUE

THE COACH RATTLES AND SHAKES THROUGH THE DARK TRANSYLVANIAN FOREST, TOSSING ITS LONE PASSENGER TO AND FRO... **MARIANNE DANIELLE**, TRAVELLING FROM PARIS TO BADSTEIN...

SLOW DOWN, DRIVER! YOU'RE GOING TOO FAST!

DRIVER!

WHY DOES HE HURRY SO?

THE FRIGHTENED DRIVER DESERTS HIS PASSENGER AT THE RUNNING BEAR INN, WHERE SHE MEETS...

BARONESS MEINSTER, IT IS SO KIND OF YOU TO LET ME STAY IN YOUR CHATEAU TONIGHT.

I HOPE YOU'LL BE COMFORTABLE...

DINNER WILL BE IN TEN MINUTES...

AT DINNER...

SO YOU SAW MY SON... HE'S AN INVALID... A GREAT EMBARRASSMENT. BUT WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A SON WHO KEEPS DISGRACING YOU...

YOU MEAN HE'S MENTALLY ILL...?

I'M AFRAID SO... I HAVE TO KEEP HIM LOCKED UP... MOST PEOPLE THINK HE'S DEAD...

BUT LATER THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS DISTURBS MARIANNE'S SLEEP...

NO! DON'T JUMP! PLEASE... WAIT!

THEN, WHEN MARIANNE IS LEFT ALONE...

IT'S FREEZING WITH AN OPEN WINDOW! I'LL...

WHO'S THAT? THE BARONESS SAID SHE WAS ALONE EXCEPT FOR THE TWO SERVANTS...

MARIANNE RUSHES DOWN THE STAIRS TO THE YOUNG MAN'S ROOM...

THIS CHAIN STOPS ME DOING EVEN THAT...

BUT THAT'S MONSTROUS! HORRIBLE! YOU DON'T SEEM MAD!

IS THAT WHAT SHE TOLD YOU? IT'S MY MOTHER WHO'S MAD... BUT IF I HAD THE KEY TO THIS...

IT TAKES THE HANDSOME BARON ONLY MOMENTS TO CONVINCE MARIANNE... AND SEND HER TO HIS MOTHER'S ROOM...

THIS MUST BE THE KEY... OH, THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE BARONESS COMING BACK...

THE WINDOW'S MY ONLY CHANCE...

BUT THEN...

GIVE ME THAT KEY!

YOU LITTLE FOOL! IF YOU'VE LET HIM FREE...

AND MARIANNE HAS INDEED LET HIM FREE...



GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM, MY DEAR! MY MOTHER AND I WANT TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK... COME, MOTHER! COME TO ME...

WHEN MARIANNE HEARS A DYING SCREAM FROM BARONESS MEINSTER, SHE FLEES THE CHATEAU INTO THE DARK FOREST, TRYING TO ESCAPE THE NIGHT'S HORRORS...



FINALLY, SHE CAN GO NO FURTHER... BUT WHEN THE NIGHT GIVES WAY TO MORNING...



SHE'S NOT DEAD, JAQUES... LOOKS LIKE A BAD CASE OF SHOCK! LET'S HAVE THE TRAVELLING RUG...



DON'T TRY TO TALK, MY DEAR... WE'LL LOOK AFTER YOU, JAQUES! HOW FAR ARE WE FROM BADSTEIN?

NOT FAR, DR. VAN HELSING...

AND ON THE BRIEF COACH RIDE INTO BADSTEIN...



I THINK THAT'S ALL, DOCTOR... EVERY DETAIL OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ME AT THE CASTLE MEINSTER...

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS AS VAN HELSING RETURNS TO THE RUNNING BEAR INN...



HMM! GARLIC FLOWERS... AND THOSE MARKS ON HER NECK...

WHY? YESTERDAY SHE WAS PERFECTLY HEALTHY...

RECOGNISING THE SYMPTOMS, VAN HELSING BEGINS HIS PREPARATIONS...



DUSK ALREADY! WE'LL HAVE TO HURRY! IS THAT THE GIRL'S GRAVE OUT THERE?



BEFORE HIS HORRIFIED EYES, THE DEAD GIRL RISES FROM HER GRAVE...



AND SUDDENLY...



WHA... THAT BAT! ATTACKING ME!

AS THE GIRL FLEES, THE BAT SWOOPS ONCE MORE, BUT...



THE CROSS... IT SAW THE CROSS AND TURNED AWAY!

KNOWING HIS ATTACKER TO BE MORE THAN A MERE BAT, VAN HELSING FOLLOWS THE GIRL, UNTIL...

CASTLE MEINSTER!  
JUST AS MARIANNE  
DESCRIBED IT! BUT THE  
GIRL COULD BE ANY-  
WHERE HERE...

# CONCLUSION

THERE IS NO SIGN OF  
THE GIRL, BUT WITH-  
IN THE CASTLE HE  
FINDS...

A COFFIN!  
SO BARON MEINSTER  
IS THE ARCH FIEND AT  
THE HEART OF ALL  
THIS...

BUT SUDDENLY...

WHO ARE YOU  
THAT COMES HERE  
WITHOUT FEAR?  
AND WHY?

TO FIND YOUR  
SON, BARONESS...  
YOUR EVIL SON,  
WHO BROKE EVEN  
THE LAWS OF THE  
UNDEAD WHEN  
HE TOOK YOUR  
BLOOD!

AND I  
SHALL TAKE  
YOURS TOO,  
MEDDLER!

AND AS VAN HELSING  
TILTS THE TABLE...

YOU RECOGNISE  
THE CROSS, BARON?  
HAVE A CLOSER  
LOOK...

THEN BARON MEINSTER IS  
GONE AND VAN HELSING  
HEARS HIS COACH RATTLE  
AWAY OUTSIDE...

YOU'LL NEVER  
CATCH HIM... HE'S  
MUCH TOO CLEVER!  
BUT YOU'RE RIGHT...  
HE SHOULDN'T HAVE  
DONE THIS TO ME...

WE'LL SEE  
ABOUT THAT,  
BARON...

THERE  
IS A WAY OF  
RELEASE...

AAAAGH!  
NOOO...!

BUT FIRST I  
MUST HOLD YOU  
HERE UNTIL DAWN...



BUT ELSEWHERE...

MARIANNE... I KNOW IT'S LATE, BUT YOU'VE GOT A VISITOR... A VERY FINE GENTLEMAN...

REALLY? WHERE IS HE... IN THE STUDY?



AND...

HERR BARON! WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE! AND YOU'VE BROUGHT BACK MY LUGGAGE!

I'M SORRY YOUR STAY WASN'T MORE PLEASANT... BUT LET US TALK OF HAPPIER THINGS...



AND ONE HAPPY THING LEADS TO ANOTHER, UNTIL...

WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU, SIR! MY LADIES AREN'T ALLOWED CALLERS...

I AM **BARON MEINSTER**... AND YOU WILL RECALL THAT I OWN THIS ESTATE. I THINK THAT GIVES ME THE RIGHT TO CALL ON MY **FIANCEE!**



YOUR FIANCEE?

PRECISELY. MADAM-OISELLE DANIELLE HAS JUST CONSENTED TO BE MY **WIFE**. AND NOW I MUST LEAVE YOU, MY DEAR... BUT I WILL RETURN...



AND SHORTLY AFTER A SMALL CELEBRATION...

I'M SO **HAPPY** FOR YOU, MARIANNE... OH, LOOK! NOW I'VE BURNED THE TOAST!

OPEN THE WINDOW, GINA... I'LL GO DOWN AND GET SOME MORE BREAD...



BUT AS GINA TURNS FROM THE OPEN WINDOW, SHE DOES NOT SEE AN INTRUDER...

THE BARON'S SO HANDSOME... I WISH HE'D PICKED **ME**...



UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE...

THEN YOUR WISH WILL COME **TRUE**...

HERR BARON!



BUT WHILE EVIL TRIUMPHS, GOOD FIGHTS BACK ELSEWHERE...

DAWN... AND SHE'S LAPSED INTO A COMA. NOW IS THE TIME I MUST STRIKE...

AND ONE BLOW IS ALL IT TAKES...

**DONE!** AT LEAST THAT'S ONE SOUL THAT CAN REST IN PEACE NOW...

**AAAUUUGH!**



AFTER THAT, THERE IS NOTHING ELSE FOR VAN HELSING TO DO BUT RETURN TO THE INN...

YOUR SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE **MEINSTERS** WERE TRUE... THE BARONESS WAS A VICTIM OF HER OWN SON... BUT SHE'S AT PEACE NOW...

THANK GOD YOU'RE **SAFE**... BUT I'M AFRAID THE OLD WOMAN GOT AWAY...



YOU SHOULDN'T DRINK SO MUCH, DOCTOR TOBLER...

MY PATIENTS DON'T MIND MUCH THESE DAYS... THEY ALL SEEM TO BE DEAD! THERE'S ANOTHER ONE OVER AT THE GIRLS' SCHOOL...

WHAT?



IF YOU'RE GOING THERE, DOCTOR, I WONDER IF I COULD ACCOMPANY YOU. I AM DR. VAN HELSING...

FROM LEYDEN UNIVERSITY? WELL, I'D BE PLEASED TO HEAR YOUR OPINION, SIR!



SHORTLY AFTERWARDS...

CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT... THE DOOR WAS LOCKED... WE HAD TO BREAK IT DOWN... BUT THE WINDOW WAS OPEN...

OPEN? I SEE... WILL YOU LEAVE LIS HERR LANG? PLEASE...?



LOOK, DOCTOR... THOSE MARKS... THE MARK OF THE VAMPIRE...

VAMPIRE? THAT'S RUBBISH... SHE'S OBVIOUSLY BEEN BITTEN BY A SMALL ANIMAL...

I DO NOT NORMALLY SPEAK RUBBISH, DOCTOR... AND A VAMPIRE IS NOT A SMALL ANIMAL...



IT IS VITAL THAT YOU LEAVE THIS CASE TO ME, DOCTOR. EVERYTHING MUST BE DONE EXACTLY AS I SAY...

I STILL THINK YOU'RE MAD... BUT SO LONG AS I COLLECT THE FEE, YOU MAY DO WHAT YOU WISH... IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO HER...

BUT MARIANNE FINDS LESS PLEASANT COMPANY FOR THE FOLLOWING NIGHT...



SHE DIED OF FEVER, HERR LANG. KEEP YOUR PUPILS INDOORS WITH THE WINDOWS AND DOORS LOCKED. WE'LL HAVE TO PUT HER IN THE STABLE... AND I WANT TWO PEOPLE WATCHING THE COFFIN CONTINUOUSLY...



YET AS VAN HELSING PREPARES TO LEAVE...

IT'S SO AWFUL... BUT I'VE SOME GOOD NEWS TOO... I'M ENGAGED, DOCTOR... TO BARON MEINSTER... HE PROPOSED LAST NIGHT!

BARON MEINSTER? HE WAS HERE LAST NIGHT?

THE HORSES SEEM VERY JUMPY TONIGHT, SEVERIN... LISTEN TO THEM NEXT DOOR...

IT'S HER, MISS... THEY DON'T LIKE BEING NEAR THE DEAD...



BUT PERHAPS THERE IS **MORE** TO THE HORSES' FEAR THIS NIGHT...

SEVERIN! ONE OF THE PADLOCKS JUST **FELL OFF**... AND IT ISN'T EVEN **UNLOCKED!**



AND NOW THE **OTHER ONE**, TOO! SEVERIN... WILL YOU **FETCH HERR LANG?**

IF YOU WISH, MISS... BUT HE WON'T **LIKE IT...**



BUT HERR LANG WILL NOT EVEN **HEAR** OF IT...

WHA- **AAGH!**



AND WHILE IN THE YARD THE **LIVING DIE**... IN THE STABLE, THE **DEAD LIVE**...!



AND...

MARIANNE! YOU HAVEN'T **FORGOTTEN** LITTLE GINA, HAVE YOU?... **HUG ME**, MARIANNE...



LET ME **KISS** YOU...



WE CAN **BOTH** LOVE HIM, MARIANNE... HE'S UP AT THE OLD MILL... **COME WITH ME**...



WE'LL GO **TOGETHER**...

G-GINA...? OH, **NOOO...**



BUT OUTSIDE, VAN HELSING IS ARRIVING TO TAKE HIS TURN WATCHING THE COFFIN...

HELLO... WHAT'S THIS...?



SEVERIN!  
TORN TO SHREDS!  
BUT... THE STABLE!



MARIANNE!  
GET AWAY FROM HER!

SNARRR!



MARIANNE IS VAN HELSING'S FIRST CONCERN... AND GINA TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO FLEE...

SHE'S FAINTED... I'D BETTER GET HER INTO THE HOUSE...



AND...

MARIANNE! YOU MUST TELL ME... DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE BARON IS?

LIP AT THE MILL... THAT'S WHAT GINA SAID... GINA! THE BARON'S NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, HAS HE?



I'M AFRAID HE HAS... GINA IS THE THIRD VICTIM SINCE HE ESCAPED! PUT THIS ON, MARIANNE... I MUST GO TO THE MILL...



AND SO, SHORTLY AFTERWARDS...



BUT WITHIN...

SOMEONE'S BEEN HERE... MUST BE THE OLD WOMAN. BUT WHERE'S THE BARON? THE GRAIN LOFT, PERHAPS...

YET UPSTAIRS...



HIM AGAIN! TAKE HIM, MY PRETTIES! YOU'LL PLEASE THE MASTER IF YOU TAKE HIM...



AND THAT MEANS VAN HELSING HAS NO PROTECTION TO FACE...



AND AS VAN HELSING SLUMPS INTO PAINED EXHAUSTION, ELSEWHERE...





YET AS SOON AS SHE RELEASES HER HOLD ON IT...

BARON MEINSTER!

YET BY THE TIME THE BARON RETURNS ON FOOT, VAN HELSING HAS RECOVERED HIS SENSES...

AND AS VAN HELSING HURLS THE WATER...

OOOORRGGH!

YOUR FIANCEE, MY DEAR, REMEMBER? NOW YOU MUST COME WITH ME... YOU MUST...

THE HOLY WATER FATHER STEPHACK GAVE ME... IT'S MY LAST HOPE...

GET AWAY FROM HIM, MARIANNE... DON'T EVEN LOOK AT HIM!

HALF-BLIND, THE BARON STUMBLES TOWARD THE DOOR...

THE BRAZIER! THE WHOLE PLACE'LL GO UP IN FLAMES!

LIP HERE... WE'LL GO OUT BY THE BALCONY...

AND...

THE STAIRS ARE THIS WAY... LOOK! THE BARON...

AND THOSE SHADOWS IN THE MOONLIGHT... THE SAILS!

VAN HELSING MAKES A DESPERATE LEAP... AND HIS WEIGHT BRINGS THE MILL'S SAIL DOWN, TO FORM...

... A CROSS!

AAAUUUGHH!

AND THEN...

IT'S OVER MARIANNE... ALL OVER...

BUT WHAT ABOUT GINA AND THE OTHER GIRL...

STILL IN THERE... THE FIRE'S SPREAD... INTO A PURIFYING HOLY FLAME...

IT IS OVER, MARIANNE. THANK GOD...

THE END.