

Acting Edition

Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors

by Gordon Greenberg
and Steve Rosen

very loosely based on the novel
Dracula by Bram Stoker

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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ISBN 978-0-573-71012-4

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DRACULA: A COMEDY OF TERRORS was commissioned and originally produced by The Maltz Jupiter Theatre (Andrew Kato, Producing Artistic Director/Chief Executive) in Jupiter, Florida, and had its world premiere there on October 31st, 2019. The production was directed by Gordon Greenberg, with scenic design by Caite Hevner, costume design by Tristan Raines, lighting design by Rob Denton, sound design by Victoria Deiorio, and wig and hair design by Ashley Rae Callahan. The Production Stage Manager was Ashley Horowitz. The cast was as follows:

ACTOR ONE (JONATHAN HARKER) Peter Simon Hilton
ACTOR TWO (DR. WESTFELDT) Wayne LeGette
ACTOR THREE (LUCY WESTFELDT) Mallory Newbrough
ACTOR FOUR (MINA WESTFELDT/DR. VAN HELSING) . . . Paul Carlin
ACTOR FIVE (DRACULA) Jared Zirilli

DRACULA: A COMEDY OF TERRORS made its Canadian premiere at the Segal Centre for the Performing Arts (Lisa Rubin, Artistic and Executive Director) in Montréal, Québec, on October 29th, 2021. The production was directed by Gordon Greenberg, with scenic design by Michael Gianfrancesco, costume design by Louise Bourret, lighting design by Amber Hood, sound and original music by Victoria Deiorio. The Production Stage Manager was Elaine Normandeau. The cast was as follows:

ACTOR ONE (JONATHAN HARKER) Colin Simmons
ACTOR TWO (DR. WESTFELDT) Ellen David
ACTOR THREE (LUCY WESTFELDT) Naomi Ngebulana
ACTOR FOUR (MINA WESTFELDT/DR. VAN HELSING) . . . David Noël
ACTOR FIVE (DRACULA) James Daly

DRACULA: A COMEDY OF TERRORS was originally produced in New York City by Drew Desky and Dane Levens (Drew & Dane Productions), and opened at New World Stages on September 18th, 2023. The production was directed by Gordon Greenberg, with scenic design by Tijana Bjelajac, costume design by Tristan Raines, lighting design by Rob Denton, sound design by Victoria Deiorio, and wig and hair design by Ashley Rae Callahan. The Production Stage Manager was Morgan Holbrook. The cast was as follows:

ACTOR ONE (JONATHAN HARKER) Andrew Keenan-Bolger
ACTOR TWO (DR. WESTFELDT) Ellen Harvey
ACTOR THREE (LUCY WESTFELDT) Jordan Boatman
ACTOR FOUR (MINA WESTFELDT/DR. VAN HELSING) . . Arnie Burton
ACTOR FIVE (DRACULA) James Daly

CHARACTERS

COUNT DRACULA – Commanding European dialect. Hugely sexy, magnetically handsome, rock star presence with a killer body, he is a narcissist whose greatest love is himself – and his leather pants. Bored with women falling all over him, he becomes obsessed with Lucy when he hears of her strength and adventurousness. The less she needs him, the more interested he is. He travels to Whitby to find her and make her his bride for eternity.

JONATHAN HARKER – RP British dialect. Prim and proper and obsessive-compulsive real estate agent, frightened of his own shadow. Engaged to his childhood crush Lucy Westfeldt and enamored of her fearlessness. Once bitten he loosens up...a lot... and becomes a Tom Jones-style rock star in leather pants.

LUCY WESTFELDT – RP British dialect. Brilliant, plucky earth scientist daughter of Dr. Westfeldt, she is full of energy and the spirit of adventure and often underestimated because of her beauty. Engaged to Jonathan, but when Dracula moves to Whitby, she is curious about his strange ways and impressed by their similar interests.

MINA WESTFELDT – RP British dialect. The less attractive, less intelligent Westfeldt daughter, she lives in her sister Lucy's shadow and is desperate for attention. She is immediately (pathetically) receptive to Dracula's charms.

DR. WALLACE WESTFELDT – RP British dialect. Lucy and Mina's father, a blowhard; self-important misogynist given to proclamations and posturing with his pipe. A doctor caring for the criminally insane, he has recently lost his wife to consumption.

DR. VAN HELSING – German dialect a la Mel Brooks. Brilliant and sturdy German vampire-hunting doctor from the University of Schmutz. Deadly serious in the way Germans can be, she is accustomed to people not believing she is a real doctor. Strong, smart, and bold, she is a woman of action.

RENFIELD – Cockney dialect and salivary issues. Insane patient of Dr. Westfeldt who lives to serve and loves to eat bugs. In a word, the dude is nuts.

KITTY RUTHERFORD – Cockney dialect. A dotty kleptomaniac patient of Dr. Westfeldt, she serves as a maid in his house. Think Mrs. Lovett but servile and easily distracted.

LORD CAVENDISH – Scottish dialect. Lucy's suitor; a Scottish dolt.

LORD WORTHINGTON – RP British dialect. Lucy's suitor; posh, British and petulant.

LORD HAVEMERCY – Texas Accent. Lucy's arrogant suitor from Memphis, a la Yosemite Sam.

DRIVER – Eastern European or Russian dialect. The male, Transylvanian driver of the carriage carrying Jonathan to Dracula's castle who tries to warn him. Borat meets Boris and Natasha.

CAPTAIN – Sea Captain dialect. The salty captain of a doomed ship caught in a raging storm.

BOSUN – Irish dialect. A scurvy seaman who goes down with the ship in a storm.

GRAVEDIGGER – Cockney dialect. A drunk gravedigger with a secret.

AUTHORS' NOTES

About Casting and Gender

Please note that the play lovingly sends up gender “norms” in the style of some of our comedic heroes like Charles Ludlam and Monty Python, in that all characters can be played by actors of any gender, ethnicity, age or type.

The breakdown of roles for the New York premiere at New World Stages was as indicated below.

ACTOR ONE – Harker/Cavendish/Worthington/Havemercy/Bosun/Gravedigger

ACTOR TWO – Dr. Westfeldt/Renfield/Captain/Man-Eating Wolf

ACTOR THREE – Lucy/Kitty/Driver/Man-Eating Wolf

ACTOR FOUR – Mina/Van Helsing/Man-Eating Wolf

ACTOR FIVE – Dracula

Prologue

(Music.)*

(ACTORS ONE, TWO, THREE and FOUR enter, each holding a book. In the style of the opening of James Whale's 1931 film Frankenstein...)

ACTOR TWO. Good evening.

ACTOR FOUR. On behalf of theater management we have been asked to issue a friendly warning.

ACTOR THREE. We're about to unfold the story of Dracula.

ACTOR ONE. A bloodthirsty monster who plays God with helpless victims.

ACTOR TWO. Draining them of life to extend his own.

ACTOR FOUR. It is one of the strangest tales ever told.

ACTOR THREE. It deals with the most significant aspects of the human condition.

ACTOR FOUR. Life –

ACTOR TWO. Death –

ACTOR ONE. And a hot guy who takes off his shirt. Heyyy!

ACTOR TWO. Although the novel is 418 pages, this evening's presentation will be significantly shorter.

(Woosh. They toss the books.)

ACTOR FOUR. You're welcome.

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ACTOR THREE. But rest assured you will be horrified.

ACTOR ONE. One way or another.

ACTOR FOUR. So if anyone here does not care to subject their nerves to such a strain, now is your chance to –

(Sound effects: Outer doors lock.)

Oh well, we warned you.

(Sound effects: Thunder clap, horses clopping, carriage wheels on the ground, wolves howling, loud wind –)

Scene One

(ACTOR ONE dons a blazer and eyeglasses to become...JONATHAN HARKER, and addresses the audience, speaking aloud his letter home to his fiancée. Meanwhile, two benches are adjusted to become a carriage, and ACTOR THREE dons a hat and cape to become the DRIVER.)

HARKER. October the 5th, 1897. Dearest Lucy, apologies for my unsteady penmanship. I write to you from the inside of a carriage en route to my client's home in the mountains of Transylvania.

(He sits in the "rear seat" of the carriage, and thrashes about [to indicate a very bumpy road], holds onto a briefcase, and shouts to the DRIVER over the wind.)

Excuse me, driver? Any chance you could slow it down a smidge? This road is awfully bumpy, and with my chronic vertigo and digestive issues, I'm afraid I'm rather the worse for wear.

DRIVER. *(Transylvanian accent.)* This area is extremely treacherous.

HARKER. Oh yes, I've done my research, but I couldn't find any of these roads on the map!

DRIVER. Of course not. No one who travels here ever comes back.

(Sound effects: Horses neigh loudly.)

HARKER. Sorry?

DRIVER. There is nothing here but centuries of death, destruction and evil!

(Sound effects: Horses neigh loudly.)

HARKER. Are they alright, the horses?

DRIVER. Oh yes. I've trained them to punctuate my lines for dramatic effect.

(Sound effects: Horses neigh again.)

Sometimes, they overdo it.

HARKER. Well I hope they've enough strength for the remainder of the journey because I have to get to the castle. I have urgent business with Count Dracula.

(Sound effects: Horses neigh loudly.)

DRIVER. Count Dracula? I beg of you sir, heed my warning, do not enter that wretched castle!

HARKER. Well I can find something nice to say about any home. It's my job. I'm a real estate broker.

*(Sound effects: Horses exhale. Clipping stops.
Wind through trees.)*

Why have the horses stopped?

DRIVER. They sense danger. Must be the man-eating wolves. You'll have to walk the rest of the way.

HARKER. Walk?

DRIVER. It's not far, you'll probably make it.

(HARKER slowly exits the carriage.)

HARKER. But what about the wolves?

DRIVER. Try this.

(DRIVER pulls a small braid of garlic from a hidden pocket and tosses it to HARKER.)

HARKER. Garlic?

DRIVER. From the farmers market in Bucharest. God be with you, sir.

(Beat.)

And please...remember to give me five stars.

(Sound effects: Thunder. Lightning.)

ACTOR TWO. Jonathan Harker made his way through the Carpathian woods.

ACTOR FOUR. Where he could see the glow of yellow eyes through the trees.

(ACTORS TWO, THREE and FOUR hold light-up wolf eyes.)

ACTOR THREE. Staring at him hungrily.

ACTOR FOUR. Growling with menace.

(ACTORS TWO, THREE and FOUR growl.)

ACTOR THREE. He was terrified.

ACTOR FOUR. Like Margaret Thatcher at a dental convention.

ACTOR TWO. Just as the wolves were poised to attack.

(More growling.)

HARKER. *(Terrified.)* Good doggy. Good doggy. Who's a good doggy? How about some fresh garlic, then?

(Sound effects: Whimpering wolves leaving.)

(Calling after them.) Don't you want any? It's from the farmers market! Huh. How queer.

ACTOR TWO. With the path cleared, he made his way to the front door of the castle.

ACTOR THREE. He saw it through the fog...

(ACTORS TWO and THREE spray HARKER with fog in a can.)

ACTOR THREE. ...a vast gothic structure with no windows.

ACTOR FOUR. So not a glimmer of light could be seen inside.

ACTOR TWO. And whose broken battlements showed a jagged line against the sky.

HARKER. I say, the driver was right, it *is* awfully creepy. I can see why he wants to move. Oh well, here goes...

(He extends his finger and rings the...)

(Sound effects: Doorbell.)

ACTOR TWO. And right there –

ACTOR THREE. Dressed entirely in black –

ACTOR TWO. Stood none other than –

*(Sound effects: A door opens to reveal **COUNT DRACULA**, a sexually-charged rock star of a vampire clad in tight pants and vest.)*

DRACULA. Count Dracula. Nice to meet you.

(Music: “Funky Vampire Theme.”)*

(He walks downstage, almost in semi-slow motion, as if walking a runway at Paris fashion week.)

*(**ACTORS THREE** and **FOUR** spray fog in a can toward him.)*

Alexa, turn down the music!

(Music lowers.)

HARKER. So good to finally be here.

*(**DRACULA** shakes his hand, and **HARKER** shrinks in pain.)*

It was...quite a journey.

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DRACULA. Welcome to my house. Please note that you have entered under no duress and of your own free will.

(Sound effects: Door close – bank vault finality.)

HARKER. Isn't that a unique greeting?

DRACULA. Liability issues.

HARKER. Speaking of, is your solicitor here? For the signing, I mean.

DRACULA. I couldn't find one who keeps my hours.

HARKER. Yes, I *was* wondering why we had to meet so late. It's a bit...unorthodox, isn't it?

DRACULA. I'm a unicorn. You actually caught me in the middle of my morning workout.

HARKER. Morning? It's nearly midnight.

DRACULA. I slept late. *(Pivoting.)* Where are my manners? Can I get you something to drink? To eat?

(DRACULA sexily removes HARKER's jacket.)

HARKER. You wouldn't happen to have anything gluten free, cruelty free, vegan, non-GMO, and certified organic, would you?

DRACULA. *(To himself.)* I love houseguests.

(To HARKER.) You're in luck. I get all my overpriced produce from the farmers market in town.

HARKER. Perfect. In fact, that's where my carriage driver got this fresh garlic! Look!

(He pulls out the braid of garlic. DRACULA recoils, hisses.)

You alright there, Dracula?

DRACULA. Oh, yes. Just...allergic.

HARKER. Bad luck! Makes cooking a challenge, eh?

DRACULA. Not at all! I'm a baker. More sweet than savory.

HARKER. Oh, lovely. I'm sure Mrs. Dracula appreciates that.

DRACULA. (*Weighted.*) There is no Mrs. Dracula.

(*Sound effects: Lonely wolf howl.*)

HARKER. Oh. Forgive my presumption.

DRACULA. No, naturally you assumed as much.

(*Music in.**)

I'm highly desirable.

(*Snap – DRACULA rips off his vest and, bare chested, begins to work out with resistance bands.*)

But I've been through every single person in Romania, and I have yet to find the right one.

HARKER. It is a small country, I suppose.

DRACULA. Full of small-minded people. How many more conversations can a man have about chicken coops and borscht? I long for someone who will *challenge* me; a match; an equal! Someone whose strength of character makes me want to be better.

(*Beat.*)

Also, they have to be hot. That is what I truly crave, Mr. Harker; the love, the companionship, the *taste* of that one special person.

HARKER. The taste?

DRACULA. I'm sorry, the *trust* of that one special person.

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HARKER. Well, no shortage of singletons in London! Let's get you there straight away. I have all the legal documents for you to take ownership of your five new properties.

DRACULA. Wonderful.

(They sit next to one another. HARKER offers him a thick stack of legal papers to sign.)

HARKER. So I'll just need your autograph here.

(He offers a pen and points where to sign.)

Here. Here. Here. Here.

DRACULA. I'm not even reading this.

(HARKER flips a page.)

HARKER. Here. Here. Here. And initial...

(Another page.)

Here. Lovely. And then there's the little matter...of the cheque.

DRACULA. Ah yes, I have that prepared.

(Sound effects: Chimes. DRACULA pulls a cheque out of thin air [sleight of hand].)

HARKER. *(Salivating.)* Cheers very much. Lots of zeros on this one, eh?

DRACULA. Remarkable. Real estate has gone through the roof since the Punic Wars.

HARKER. *(Laughing too eagerly.)* Punic wars! You're funny! Yes, it's bloody expensive isn't it?

DRACULA. Yes, bloody expensive.

(Sound effects: Rumble.)

HARKER. Count. Not to pry, but I'm curious. What does one do with five separate homes in London?

DRACULA. Investments. I want to have a foothold in all the best neighborhoods.

HARKER. I admire your business acumen. Might I ask what you do for work?

DRACULA. *(Deflecting.)* You Englishmen are all business.

(DRACULA crosses back to him seductively, admiring his neck.)

Might I ask what *you* do for *pleasure*?

(HARKER tries to remain upbeat, even as he feels DRACULA's fiery gaze.)

HARKER. I don't know. Usual things. A tidy desk generally makes me happy. Cup of tea, not too hot. Hand sanitizer, any brand.

DRACULA. You sound like a lot of fun.

HARKER. *(Laughing along.)* Hahahaha...

(Then.)

I'm not. My fiancée tells me all the time. She's much more adventurous than I am.

DRACULA. Is that so?

(Woosh! DRACULA waves his arm over HARKER, who leans forward as DRACULA's leg flies over him. HARKER pops back up, unaware.)

HARKER. Yes, she's always off exploring dark and abandoned places, picking up exotic plants and artifacts and getting herself into all sorts of mischief.

DRACULA. She sounds fearless.

HARKER. She is! I've no idea what she's doing with me.

(Taking out a small framed photograph of her. DRACULA is smitten.)

Here. This is her. Isn't she a vision?

*(Music.)**

DRACULA. She is exquisite.

(DRACULA takes the photo and crosses away with it, transfixed.)

HARKER. Yes, and brave beyond reason. We met as children when I fell through the ice in the pond behind our school, and she rescued me. I would've died of hypothermia had she not heard my screams and come running.

DRACULA. Unbelievable.

HARKER. It's as though she's attracted to danger.

(HARKER checks legal papers, stamps them.)

DRACULA. That neck. The likes of which I have not seen in at least a thousand years.

HARKER. Sorry?

DRACULA. And that skin. Such a flawless neck. She looks like a B Positive, no?

(HARKER remains upbeat and engaged but is slightly distracted finishing up his paperwork.)

HARKER. Oh yes, she's quite the optimist. It's that very spirit which draws people to her.

DRACULA. And her neck.

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(**HARKER** crosses to **DRACULA**.)

HARKER. Yes you keep saying that.

DRACULA. Where does she sleep?

HARKER. I'm sorry?

DRACULA. I mean *live*. Where does she live?

HARKER. At her father's house in Whitby, atop a cliff overlooking the North Sea. It's breathtaking.

DRACULA. I like the sound of that.

HARKER. If only her father would give up his silly rehabilitation project with the criminally insane.

DRACULA. Insane?

(**HARKER** retrieves the framed photo, kisses it and packs up to leave.)

HARKER. Mental patients who live with him and his daughters.

He specializes in those with weak minds, susceptible to suggestion and vulnerable to dark forces.

DRACULA. Interesting.

HARKER. There's not much else in town, other than the cemetery and Withering Manor.

DRACULA. Withering Manor?

HARKER. A haunted house that no one wants to buy. I've had that listing for ages.

DRACULA. Really? What's the ask?

HARKER. You could pick it up for next to nothing. No one wants to deal with the renovations. Or the screams at night.

DRACULA. I'll take it.

(*Sound effects: Thunder crack.*)

Scene Two

(Sound effects: Fog horn, waves crashing, loud wind.)

*(**ACTOR TWO** stands on a bench, holding a ship's wheel, **ACTOR ONE** throws on a seaweed-covered poncho. **ACTORS THREE** and **FOUR** hold spray bottles and spritz water into the air toward the scene.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Yelling over the storm.)* Bosun! We're nearing the eye of the storm. Hoist the mizzen and raise the topsail!

BOSUN. *(Irish, yelling over the storm.)* What's that, Captain?

CAPTAIN. I said we're nearing the eye of the storm!

BOSUN. What, I can't hear you!

CAPTAIN. The blasted rain is coming down so hard!

*(**ACTORS THREE** and **FOUR** spray directly at the **CAPTAIN.**)*

*(To **ACTORS.**)* NOT THAT HARD!

*(**ACTORS THREE** and **FOUR** sheepishly exit.)*

BOSUN. What was that, sir?

CAPTAIN. Never mind! What is the report today?

BOSUN. Due to high winds volleyball has been cancelled.

CAPTAIN. What else?

BOSUN. And...the buffet is down.

CAPTAIN. Damn it.

BOSUN. And you're gonna have to change your own linens, if'n you don't mind, sir.

(The wind picks up and storm rages.)

CAPTAIN. What is this nonsense? We need all hands on deck!

BOSUN. Sir, the men are not well!

(The wind howls.)

CAPTAIN. How's that?

BOSUN. They've all taken ill!

CAPTAIN. How ill?

BOSUN. Dead, sir. Every last one!

CAPTAIN. Every single one?

BOSUN. All but you, me and the passenger. He's been asleep all day. In fact, he's slept every day since we've been on the ship.

(Again, the wind picks up and storm rages.)

CAPTAIN. Then, by God, bring him above. The wind is picking up and we're taking on water. I don't know how much longer she'll hold in this squall.

BOSUN. Aye aye, sir!

(Sound stops. Lights shift.)

CAPTAIN. Captain's log. October 11, 1897. With a trembling hand and a screaming stomach, I attempt to chronicle the terrifying events of the past few days aboard the SS *Stoker*. When the ship left port in the Baltic Sea, she carried thirty-six souls. Since then, however, they've all succumbed to a mysterious illness of the blood, leaving no clue, apart from what appear to be tiny bite marks on their necks. I assume it is somehow related to an aviary disease, as there have been reported sightings of a bat flying from cabin to cabin. The lone passenger below decks has not surfaced in days. I sent our Bosun down to retrieve him, but neither has returned. I can

only imagine they have succumbed to the same fate as the rest. I am now left alone at the helm of what is essentially a ghost ship. If I should meet my watery end, please tell my wife and my mistress that she was the only woman I ever loved.

(Sound effects: A giant wave grows in front of him.)

Oh, no. Can that be a wall of water? Here it comes... the big one... I go down honorably with my shiiiiih-

(Sound effects: Vacuum sound. Lights shift immediately to:)

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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