



Kamron Klitgaard

Inspired by the 1922 silent film *Nosferatu: a Symphony of Horror*
Cover photo of Max Schreck in his film 1922 role as Count Orlok

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To
my daughter Kati,
who wouldn't mind
being a vampire.

Nosferatu:
A Vampire Symphony of Horror

CLASSIC/HORROR. Inspired by the 1922 silent film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*. Thomas Hutter travels to Transylvania to deliver papers to the mysterious Count Orlok, who wishes to purchase a home in Wisborg, Germany. Hutter reaches Orlok's castle, where he meets the strange Count and stays the night. The next morning, Hutter finds fresh puncture marks on his neck and discovers that Count Orlok has left and is already on his way to Wisborg. After the ship carrying Count Orlok and his dirt-filled coffins arrives in Wisborg, many townspeople mysteriously die and their deaths are attributed to a plague. But when Thomas' wife, Ellen, reads *The Book of the Vampires*, she realizes that the only way to save the town is to willingly sacrifice herself to Count Orlok. As Count Orlok greedily feeds on Ellen's blood, he suddenly hears a rooster crow and realizes that dawn has arrived. As he rushes to leave, beams of sunlight hit him, causing him to vanish in a puff of smoke. Easy to stage with minimal set pieces, this fast-paced play will thrill audiences.

Performance Time: Approximately 75 minutes.

About the Story

The 1922 silent German film *Nosfertue, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (*Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*) is a vampire horror film based on Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula*. In this film adaptation, there is no Van Helsing vampire hunter and the film is set in Germany 1838 rather than England in the 1890s. The central character is the vampire Count Orlok, who greatly differs from Stoker's Dracula character. Rather than handsome and charming, Count Orlok is physically repugnant, and his blood lust results in the death of his victims rather than the creation of new vampires. Unlike Dracula, Count Orlok must sleep during the daytime as sunlight will kill him. This notion that sunlight can kill or physically harm vampires has been incorporated into many modern vampire legends. Today, the film is considered to be one of the best film adaptations of *Dracula* and has become a cult classic.

Characters

(17 M, 9 F, 18 flexible, opt. extras)

(With doubling: 12 M, 8 F, 11 flexible)

COUNT ORLOK: A count who lives in a castle in Transylvania; has an ugly, rat-like appearance and resembles a living corpse; has long fingernails, vampire teeth, and wears a dark hat and cloak; male.

GHOUL 1-3: Vampiresses; have vampire teeth and wear white flowing dresses.

THOMAS HUTTER: Travels to Transylvania to arrange for Count Orlok to purchase a house in Wisborg, Germany; wears a coat and boots.

ELLEN HUTTER: Thomas' wife who agrees to stay with the Hardings while Thomas is in Transylvania.

JONATHAN HARDING: Thomas Hutter's best friend.

RUTH HARDING: Jonathan's sister.

MR. KNOCK: Thomas Hutter's employer who becomes Count Orlok's henchman; male.

PROFESSOR BULWER: Wisborg's scientific authority; flexible.

MOURNER 1-4: Residents of Wisborg; flexible.

PALLBEARER 1-4: Residents of Wisborg; flexible.

BOY/GIRL: Runs errands for Knock; flexible.

TAVERN OWNER: Owner of a tavern in the Carpathian Mountains; flexible.

BIORN: Tavern patron; male.

EVA: Tavern wench.

TAVERN MAN 1: Tavern patron.

TAVERN GIRL 1, 2: Tavern wenches.

VILLAGER 1: Resident of Transylvania; male.

CAPTAIN: Ship's captain; male.

FIRST MATE: Ship's first mate; male.

SAILOR 1-6: Crewmates; male but can be played by females dressed as males.

STUDENT 1-4: Professor Bulwer's students; flexible.

GUARD: Guard at the Wisborg asylum; male.

NURSE: Nurse at the Wisborg asylum; female.

PREACHER: Preacher in Wisborg; male.

CORPSE: Dead body at a funeral; flexible.

TOWN CRIER: Wisborg's voice of the magistrate; flexible.

FIGURE: A phantom who works for Orlok; wears a black hooded cloak that conceals his face; flexible; non-speaking.

EXTRAS (Opt.): As Tavern Patrons, Funeral-Goers, Wisborg Townspeople, Sailors, and Students.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change script accordingly.

Suggestions for Doubling

Female Roles:

Eva/Corpse

Tavern Girl 1/Nurse

Tavern Girl 2/Student 4

Male Roles:

Biorn/Preacher

Tavern Man 1/Sailor 1

Villager 1/Captain

First Mate/Student 3

Sailor 3/Town Crier

Sailor 4/Guard

Sailor 5/Student 2

Sailor 6/Sailor 2

Flexible Roles:

Boy/Cloaked Figure

Tavern Owner/Student 1

Setting

1843, Wisborg, Germany and Transylvania.

Set

This play is written to have short, fast scenes. Due to the many scene changes, only a minimal set is used and small set pieces are brought on to indicate new locations. The only set pieces needed include a bed or cot, a table and chairs, large crates, a rocking chair, an end table, a coffin, and a captain's wheel to represent a ship. For Knock's office, there is a tall desk (or worktable) and a stool. Knock stands rather than sits on his stool when he works at his desk. Therefore, Knock's desk or worktable should be extremely tall and look somewhat rickety and not well built. His stool can be the height of a chair.

Synopsis of Scenes

- Scene 1:** Wisborg, a funeral.
Scene 2: Hutter's home.
Scene 3: Knock's office, a short time later.
Scene 4: Hutter's home, a short time later.
Scene 5: Streets of Wisborg, a short time later.
Scene 6: A tavern in the Carpathian Mountains, three weeks later.
Scene 7: Carpathian tavern, continuous action.
Scene 8: Crossroad to Count Orlok's castle, the next day.
Scene 9: Inside Count Orlok's castle, that evening.
Scene 10: Inside Count Orlok's castle, the next morning.
Scene 11: Transylvania, a shipping port, the next morning.
Scene 12: Inside Orlok's castle, the next morning.
Scene 13: At sea, ship's deck.
Scene 14: A tavern in the Carpathian Mountains.
Scene 15: Wisborg, weeks later.
Scene 16: Wisborg asylum, the next day.
Scene 17: Hardings' home, evening.
Scene 18: Wisborg asylum.
Scene 19: Streets of Wisborg, evening.
Scene 20: Hardings' home, late evening.
Scene 21: Streets of Wisborg, evening.
Scene 22: Wisborg port, the next day.
Scene 23: Streets of Wisborg, a short time later.
Scene 24: Wisborg, a funeral.
Scene 25: Hutter's home.
Scene 26: Streets of Wisborg, evening.
Scene 27: Hardings' home, evening.
Scene 28: Streets of Wisborg, evening.
Scene 29: Hutter's bedroom, evening.
Scene 30: Streets of Wisborg, evening.
Scene 31: Hutter's bedroom, just before dawn.

Props

Coffin	Crates the size of coffins with
Large bell	lids
Freshly picked flowers	Legal papers
Coin	Dirt
Large letter with vampire script	Pry bar
Map	Captain's wheel
Folder of papers	Flask
Luggage	Sheet
Small photograph of Ellen	Rope
Tavern glassware	Ax
Broom	Gloves, for Tavern Owner
Small book	Box or crate filled with
Travel pack	wolfsbane (plant)
Small bag for documents	Dishcloth
Stuffed or plastic rats	Plant
Wine bottle filled with water	Nightgown, for Ellen
2 Clear wineglasses	Scroll
Knife	Captain's log
Loaf of bread	Fine china
Letter	Delicious food
Envelope	Stone
Breakfast table setting for one	Vampire teeth, for Ruth
Hand mirror	Wreath of wolfsbane

Special Effects

Fake blood

Shadows

Flickering candlelight or light
from a lantern

Red food coloring to turn water
red

Wolf howling

Clock chiming twelve

Lightning

Thunder

Wind

Splash

Shadows of rats

Fly buzzing

Cock's crow

Puff of smoke

*“Nosferatu,
a name that ringeth
like the cry
of a bird of prey.
Speak it not aloud.”*

—The Book of the Vampires

Scene 1

(AT RISE: 1843, Wisborg, Germany. A funeral. Pallbearers 1-4 carrying out a coffin and sit it on a table. Female Mourners 1-4 begin to congregate around the coffin and then stand back with the Pallbearers. Slowly, Thomas, Jonathan, Ellen, and Ruth enter to pay their respects. They stand with the crowd. The Preacher is the last to arrive. He holds a large bell.)

PREACHER: Lord, we now commit the body of Max Schreck to the ground...until that day of reckoning. To light and the resurrection. Amen. Let us pray in silence.

(They all bow their heads.)

THOMAS: (To Jonathan, quietly.) He had been sick for so long. Perhaps it's better this way.

JONATHAN: The Professor is worried about signs of the Black Death.

ELLEN: The plague? Don't be ridiculous. We haven't seen signs of the plague in decades, almost a century.

(They all bow their heads again. Awkward pause. Suddenly and slowly, the coffin lid opens revealing the Corpse. No one sees it except for Thomas. He steps back in shock. Then he notices that no one sees what he sees. The Corpse sits up and looks right at Thomas. Thomas takes an involuntary step toward the coffin, terrified of what he sees.)

CORPSE: Thomas! You shall be the death of Wisborg! The plague indeed shall be brought by your hand. Beware the Carpathian Mountains!

(Corpse lies back down and the lid closes abruptly. Thomas is jarred from his trance-like state. He looks around. No one has seen what he has seen. The Preacher rings the bell. Pallbearers 1-4 gather around

Nosferatu

14

the coffin. They carry the coffin off. Mourners 1-4 follow. The Preacher goes CS. A rocking chair is brought onstage.)

PREACHER: *(To audience.)* A chronicle of the Black Death of Wisborg in the year 1843 A.D. Nosferatu! Doesn't this name sound like the midnight call of death? Speak it not aloud, or life's pictures will turn to pale shadows and nightmares will rise up to feed on your blood. I have long meditated on the rise and fall of the Black Death in my hometown of Wisborg. Here is the story: In Wisborg, there lived a man named Thomas Hutter and his wife Ellen... *(Exits. Blackout.)*

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The Hutters' home. Ellen is sitting in a rocking chair. Thomas enters SL, carrying freshly picked flowers and offers them to Ellen.)

ELLEN: The beautiful flowers...why have you destroyed them?

THOMAS: That is what I love about you, Ellen...your love of all life. Don't worry, I left the roots in the ground. They'll live again.

ELLEN: Yes. Thomas, darling, Ruth and Jonathan are sailing today and have invited us to join them.

THOMAS: His new ship! What a craftsman, that Jonathan. Finished already? Has he a buyer?

ELLEN: I don't know. They want us to come along for the test.

THOMAS: I must go to Knock's this morning. Hopefully, he will have work for me.

ELLEN: Knock is a strange man. He inspires much gossip for a house agent. Besides, he hasn't had anything for you since last month. It's difficult.

THOMAS: Not to worry, darling. He'll have something. He must.

ELLEN: I hope so. Even so, I love you.

(Thomas kisses her goodbye and is off, disappearing SL. Blackout.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: Knock's office, a short time later. There is a tall desk or worktable and a stool. A Boy enters SR, carrying a letter.)

BOY: Mr. Knock! Mr. Knock! The post sent me over with this! They said it looked important. It's marked urgent! They said it came all the way from Transylvania.

KNOCK: Well, so it is. Thank you, young one. Thank you.

(Knock gives the Boy a coin.)

BOY: Thank you, sir! Glad to do it. (Exits.)

KNOCK: Pleasant young man. I've always admired him. (Looks at letter.) Hmmm. Transylvania? So it is.

(Knock opens the letter and reveals it to be very large. The document has strange markings on it—vampire script—which Knock studies closely. As he reads the document, a strange transformation takes place. He goes mad in front of our eyes as he is now under the power of *Nosferatu*. Thomas enters.)

THOMAS: Sir, I pray, have you anything for me today?

(Knock is startled. He studies Thomas, then the letter, then Thomas.)

KNOCK: Yes...yes. Count Orlok, his grace from Transylvania, wants to buy a beautiful house in our little town.

THOMAS: (Worried.) Transylvania?

KNOCK: Yes. What is it?

THOMAS: Nothing...I've heard...only stories.

KNOCK: Transylvania, the land of phantoms! Ha! You aren't superstitious, are you, boy?

THOMAS: No. Just that...it's quite a trip.

KNOCK: You could make a nice bit of money.

THOMAS: A map?

(Thomas pulls a map from the desk and consults it. Knock consults his letter and a wild look flares up in his eyes. Knock returns his attention to Thomas and slowly lowers the map from Thomas's grip.)

KNOCK: A great deal of money.

THOMAS: Yes. Yes!

(Knock folds the map.)

KNOCK: You will have a marvelous journey! What matter if it cost you a bit of pain...or even a little blood?

THOMAS: When do I leave?

(Knock sticks the map into Thomas' pocket.)

KNOCK: Count Orlok wants a handsome, deserted house. The house opposite yours will do nicely. Offer him that.

THOMAS: Oh, it will be good to have that house occupied at last. Is there another if he does not accept?

KNOCK: He will accept, I assure you. And when you return, you will be a great deal richer.

THOMAS: Thank you. Thank you, sir.

KNOCK: Leave at once, my young friend. Have a quick journey into the land of phantoms! Ha-ha!

(Knock continues to laugh, which becomes disturbing. He hands Thomas a folder of papers. Thomas is a bit uneasy but takes the papers. Thomas gives Knock a courtesy laugh and exits. Fade to black.)

Scene 4

(AT RISE: The Hutters' home, a short time later. Lights up on Ellen. Thomas enters.)

ELLEN: *(To Thomas.)* Did Knock have any work for you?

THOMAS: That would be an understatement! Yes! We stand to gain a lot from this one.

ELLEN: Oh, Thomas! I knew he would!

THOMAS: Yes. Count Orlok of Transylvania wants to buy the house right across the street! Isn't that marvelous?

ELLEN: Transylvania? You're going to Transylvania?

THOMAS: I may be away for several months, dear Ellen, away in a country of ghosts and robbers. *(Ellen is taken aback.)* You're not worried about ghost stories, are you?

ELLEN: No...Transylvania is so far. You'll be gone so long.

THOMAS: Not to worry, my dear. I have taken care of you. You will not be lonely in my absence. You'll stay with Ruth and Jonathan. They have agreed to take you in while I'm away. And when I get back, we'll have enough money to buy one of Jonathan's ships!

(Ellen looks uneasy. Lights fade to black.)

Scene 5

(AT RISE: *Streets of Wisborg, a short time later. Wisborg is bustling with business. Carrying luggage, Ellen and Thomas walk through the town to the house of Jonathan and his sister Ruth.*)

THOMAS: *(To Ellen.)* There they are! Come on! *(Calls.)*
Jonathan! Jonathan!

JONATHAN: Thomas! Thomas! Dear friend, I've purchased a horse! Ellen, we're happy to have you stay with us.

RUTH: Yes, Ellen. It will be a relief to have someone to talk to.

ELLEN: Well, I...

(Jonathan takes Ellen's luggage.)

JONATHAN: Not to worry, Ellen. Your main worry is my sister Ruth here. She'll talk you dead into the night. Never shuts her mouth, this one.

RUTH: I'll shut my mouth if you'll shut yours.

ELLEN: Ruth, tell me...is Jonathan's new ship finished?

RUTH: Yes, it is lovely. In fact, we'll take you out today.

THOMAS: *(To Jonathan.)* Well, what about this horse?

JONATHAN: It's in the stables. You'll be able to ride from station to station until you reach the Carpathian Mountains. But beyond that, there are no maps. You will need a guide.

(Ellen turns fearful.)

THOMAS: *(To Ellen.)* Do not fear, wife. It will be a short few months, and I will return to you a wealthy man.

(Jonathan and Ruth give them some room. Thomas gives Ellen a kiss on the forehead and they say their silent goodbyes. Thomas and Jonathan shake hands and Thomas is off. Ellen runs after him.)

ELLEN: Thomas! Take this... *(Pulls out a small photograph of herself and hands it to him. He looks at it.)* ...to remember me. *(He puts it in his coat pocket.)* Be careful.

(Ellen and Thomas kiss. Thomas is off. Blackout.)

Scene 6

(AT RISE: A tavern in the Carpathian Mountains, three weeks later. There are several Townspeople present. They are drinking and merry. One of the tavern wenches, Eva, serves drinks to several men including Biorn. Biorn stands, grabs Eva's hand, and makes a toast.)

BIORN: Here's to Eva! The deliverer of my ailment cure!

(Townspeople cheer. Eva pulls her hand away.)

EVA: Your ailment is about to become much larger.

BIORN: Nothing that a kiss wouldn't remedy.

(Eva stomps on his foot. He winces in pain as everyone laughs. Tavern Man 1 takes the broom from Tavern Girl 1, who had been sweeping.)

TAVERN MAN 1: Biorn! A challenge! (Holds up the broom.)

BIORN: And the prize?

TAVERN MAN 1: That kiss from Eva you've been coveting!

What do you say, Eva?

TAVERN GIRL 1: Come on, Eva! I'll double that prize!

(Townspeople cheer. They start chanting Eva's name.)

EVA: All right.

(Townspeople cheer, erupt out of their seats, and form a semi-circle around Biorn and Tavern Man 1. Thomas enters and curiously joins the circle. Tavern Girl 1 takes the broom. Biorn and Tavern Man 1 sit down on the floor facing each other with the bottoms of their feet pressed firmly together. Tavern Girl 1 holds the broom high in the air and then brings it down between Biorn and Tavern Man 1. They grab the broom with both hands. Note: The broom is horizontal.)

The Crowd grows quiet as Biorn and Tavern Man 1 find their grip. When they are ready, Tavern Girl 1 releases the broom.)

TAVERN GIRL 1: Jah!

(Biorn and Tavern Man 1 pull furiously at the broom, attempting to pull the other man to his feet. Crowd erupts. After a struggle, Biorn pulls Tavern Man 1 into a standing position and the crowd cheers. Biorn receives his prize. Townspeople go back to their seats merrily. Thomas, glad to be there, strolls up to the bar or counter.)

THOMAS: *(To Tavern Owner.)* Kind sir, can you tell me...have I reached the Carpathian Mountains?

TAVERN OWNER: That you have, young one.

THOMAS: At last! I have traveled so long and hard.

TAVERN OWNER: Would you like a room for the night?

THOMAS: The offer is very tempting, but I'm afraid not. A quick bite to eat and then I must speed to Count Orlok's castle!

(Immediately, the Townspeople go quiet. With horror and amazement, the Townspeople turn to stare at Thomas. Thomas senses their discomfort.)

TAVERN OWNER: *(Abruptly.)* What business do you have there?

THOMAS: I travel on behalf of a house agent from the town of Wisborg. Count Orlok has interest in the purchase of a home in our town.

EVA: The devil!

THOMAS: I was sent to offer him a property. Is there something wrong?

(Pause. Silence.)

TAVERN OWNER: It is a full day's walk to the castle. You had better rest here for the night. The spirits become most powerful after dark.

THOMAS: I did not intend to walk. Is there a coach or perhaps a horse to rent?

TAVERN MAN 1: Men do not always recognize the danger that beasts can sense at certain times.

BIORN: *(To Thomas.)* Our horses will not go east of the bridge outside of town.

VILLAGER 1: *(To Thomas.)* Nor will I.

TAVERN GIRL 2: *(To Thomas.)* Nor I.

(Townspeople mumble in agreement.)

THOMAS: I'm afraid I don't understand.

(Pause.)

TAVERN OWNER: You say the Count wishes to purchase land in your town?

THOMAS: Yes.

TAVERN OWNER: He wants to live in your town?

THOMAS: I believe that is his intention, yes.

BIORN: Where is your town, uh... *(Thinks.)* ...Wish—

THOMAS: Wisborg, a three-week journey to the west. I have ridden by coach and horseback until this day, and so you can see why I am anxious to reach my destination, being so close to the end.

BIORN: Yes. Yes. Sleep here tonight. In the morning, I will guide you to the crossroads.

(Eva grabs Biorn's arm.)

THOMAS: Very well! I thank you, kind sir!

TAVERN GIRL 2: *(To Biorn.)* I don't trust him.

(Biorn steps forward and grabs Thomas' face in both hands. Thomas grabs his wrists.)

BIORN: *(To Thomas.)* If you enter the land of phantoms by choice, you must be extraordinarily brave or extraordinarily stupid...or... *(Pulls Thomas' top lip up, exposing his upper teeth. After a brief inspection, he releases Thomas.)* We leave at dawn.

(Biorn exits. The rest of the Townspeople slowly exit. The last remaining is Tavern Girl 1. Lights change.)

Scene 7

(AT RISE: *Carpathian tavern, continuous action. There is a bed or cot and a table.*)

TAVERN GIRL 1: *(To Thomas.)* This way, sir. *(Takes Thomas to a room. She turns down the bed.)* Sleep well, sir. *(Goes to leave but turns back.)* May I ask your name?

THOMAS: Thomas. *(She exits. After a moment, she enters.)* Yes? *(She carries a small book across the room and sets it on the end table, and without a word, she is gone. Thomas takes off his coat and boots. He goes to the book, picks it up, and reads.)* "The Book of the Vampires." *(Laughs and puts the book down. Readies himself for bed and then lies down for the night. Closes his eyes. After a few seconds, his eyes pop open. He looks at the book and is drawn to it. Still in bed, he opens the book. Reads.)* "From the seed of Relial came the vampire Nosferatu, which liveth and feedeth on the blood of mankind and abideth unredeemed, in horrible darkness, on the cursed earth, from the graveyards of the Black Death." *(Pause. Reads.)* "Nosferatu, a name that ringeth like the cry of a bird of prey. Speak it not aloud." *(Puts the book down and reflects.)* Nonsense. *(Closes his eyes and falls asleep. Silence. Lights change. Darkness. Light only on Thomas. Slowly, from out of the shadows appear Ghouls 1-3, dressed in white flowing dresses. They stalk the bed and prow around it in an animal-like dance. Thomas stirs and opens his eyes.)* Who's there?

(Ghouls 1-3 gather together at one side of the bed. They beckon him and tempt him. Thomas is thrown into a trance-like state. Ghoul 1 is in the middle of Ghoul 2 and 3 and reaches out to Thomas, enticing him. Ghouls 2 and 3 also gesture to Thomas to come with them. He stands. Ghoul 1 pulls him to her and tempts him with her lips. They kiss. As they break away, Ghoul 2 holds a dead rat between them. Ghouls 1-3 bare their vampire teeth. Thomas falls back onto the bed and is shaken from his trance. Ghouls 1-3 bite into

the rat and blood smears their faces and chins. Ghoul 1 holds the rat out to Thomas.)

GHOUL 1: *(To Thomas.) Drink.*

(Thomas jumps under the covers.)

THOMAS: *(Shouts.) Ellen! Ellen! (Ghouls 1-3 disappear into the shadows.) Ellen!*

(Thomas stirs under the covers and suddenly wakes from his dream. He looks around. No Ghouls. The lights change. It is morning. Thomas picks up "The Book of the Vampires" and looks at it. Blackout.)

Scene 8

(AT RISE: Crossroad to Count Orlok's castle, the next day. Thomas and Biorn appear. They trek to the bridge CS (optional). Biorn halts.)

BIORN: I will go no further.

THOMAS: (*Studies the path.*) I can pay you more.

BIORN: No further! Not for a fortune. Here begins the Land of Phantoms.

THOMAS: Phantoms. Ha!

BIORN: If you follow the road, you will eventually see the castle. I must return before the sun is gone. Be careful.

(*Biorn turns to leave and then pauses as if to say more but doesn't. He exits. Thomas stands on the bridge reflecting. He turns to cross the bridge but is met by a Figure who stands on the other side of the bridge motionless. The Figure is dressed in a black hooded cloak that conceals his face. Thomas is taken aback but studies him. The Figure beckons him.*)

THOMAS: Have you been sent by Count Orlok? (*Figure beckons him.*) Can you take me to the castle?

(*Figure beckons Thomas, points toward the castle, turns, and leaves. Thomas follows. Blackout.*)

Scene 9

(AT RISE: Inside Count Orlok's castle, that evening. There is a table DSC and two chairs. All is still and quiet. There are many shadows and flickering light. The Figure, still cloaked, enters with Thomas. The Figure turns to Thomas and stops. He points CS and exits. Nervous, Thomas looks around. Count Orlok silently emerges from the shadows and appears behind Thomas. Count Orlok is half hidden by shadows and has his hands curled together and held up to his chest.)

ORLOK: (To Thomas.) You are late, young man. (Startled, Thomas spins around. Orlok takes a few steps toward him.) It is almost midnight. My servants have all retired.

THOMAS: Forgive me, sir. The villagers would not guide me. They seem to be very superstitious.

ORLOK: It is of no consequence. But you must be hungry... (Indicates the table DSC.)

THOMAS: Yes, that's very kind. (Sets his pack down and sits at the table. Awkward silence. Reaches down to retrieve his pack and pulls out a smaller bag with the documents.) I have all the documents for the sale of the house. It is a large, old home. I've brought a rendering.

ORLOK: Excellent. This is very old wine. I hope you will like it.

(Orlok pours the wine into a clear wine glass. It is a white wine, clear as water. Thomas lifts his glass.)

THOMAS: Aren't you drinking?

ORLOK: I never drink...wine. (Pause.) But for you and your arrival, I will make an exception. (Picks up another clear glass and pours the wine. It comes out of the bottle clear, but as it fills the glass, it turns blood red. [Note: Place some red food coloring in the bottom of the glass so that the water will turn red when it is poured into the glass.] Thomas does not notice. They drink.)

And now, if you are not fatigued, I would like to discuss the lease on the house.

THOMAS: Oh, yes. *(Pulls out the papers.)* Everything is in order and awaiting your signature.

ORLOK: Excellent, Mr. Thomas.

(Orlok studies the papers while Thomas begins to eat. Thomas picks up a knife and a loaf of bread and begins to cut a slice. He is distracted by his surroundings and cuts his finger.)

THOMAS: Oh, how clumsy of me.

ORLOK: Blood...your precious blood.

(Orlok is transfixed at the sight of Thomas' blood. He moves slowly toward it and reaches out for Thomas' hand. Thomas pulls his hand away from Orlok.)

THOMAS: It's nothing. Just a small cut. Mr. Knock joked that I may lose a little blood on this trip. I guess he was right.

(Orlok backs off and moves to the chair SR.)

ORLOK: Shall we stay up together for a while? It is a long time until sunrise, and during the day, my friend, I truly sleep the deepest sleep.

THOMAS: As you wish.

(Thomas pulls out more papers and a small framed picture. Orlok takes immediate notice of it.)

ORLOK: *(Indicating picture.)* Your wife?

THOMAS: Yes.

ORLOK: She has a beautiful neck.

THOMAS: The rest of her is not bad, either.

ORLOK: Of course. (*Studies the picture and is fascinated with Ellen. Thomas finally puts the picture away.*) I will take the house—the handsome, deserted house across from yours.

THOMAS: Very well. You just need to sign these. (*Indicating papers.*)

ORLOK: Yes. I will sign. But now I sense that you are tired and must rest from your travels.

THOMAS: I should like to write a letter to my wife letting her know I have arrived safely.

ORLOK: Leave it on the table, and it will be sent tomorrow. (*Rises.*) I hope you will be comfortable here. A bed has been prepared for you.

THOMAS: Oh, yes. I'm sure it will be fine.

ORLOK: Goodnight, Mr. Thomas.

THOMAS: Goodnight. Thank you.

(Orlok exits. Thomas remains seated and begins to write a letter. He falls asleep in the chair. From the shadows, creep Ghouls 1-3. Slowly, they stalk the sleeping Thomas. They surround him, touch him, sniff him. They are thrilled at his presence. Suddenly, Orlok appears behind them. Ghouls feel his presence, which makes them back away from Thomas. They fight against this force and push back to Thomas.)

ORLOK: (*To Ghouls 1-3.*) He is not yours.

(With this, the Ghouls 1-3 step away from Thomas. They fight it. Orlok steps toward Thomas, pushing the Ghouls back with some invisible force. They still fight. Ghoul 2 fights her way to Orlok, obviously angry.)

GHOUL 2: What of us? Are we to have nothing?

(Orlok grabs Ghoul 2's throat. Then, with his other hand, he gently strokes her cheek.)

ORLOK: Patience. You shall have your turn...in time.

(Orlok releases Ghoul 2 and she steps back. Ghouls 1-3 disappear into the shadows. Orlok approaches Thomas and stands over him. Blackout.)

Scene 10

(AT RISE: Inside Count Orlok's castle, the next morning. Thomas is in his bed. Breakfast is on the table. Thomas wakes but is groggy. He sits on the side of the bed. He stretches and feels his neck. He touches his neck, reaches into his bag at the side of his bed, and pulls out a hand mirror. He examines his neck. He goes to the table, sits, and eats. He begins to write a letter to Ellen.)

THOMAS: *(Reads aloud as he writes.)* "Dear Ellen, do not grieve because your beloved is so far away. *(Swipes at a mosquito.)* The mosquitoes are real pests. I have been stung at the neck by two at once, very close together, one on each side. *(Feels neck.)* One's dreams are heavy in this deserted castle, but do not fear. We will be returning in a few days." *(Continues to write. Thomas finishes the letter and seals it up. He eats some more and feels his neck again. This prompts him to pull "The Book of the Vampires" out of his bag. He opens it and reads.)* "From the seed of Relial came the vampire Nosferatu, which liveth and feedeth on the blood of mankind and abideth unredeemed, in horrible darkness, on the cursed earth, from the graveyards of the Black Death."

(Thomas closes the book, stands, and reflects. Lights change to indicate nightfall. Orlok enters.)

ORLOK: I trust you are comfortable?

THOMAS: Yes. Perfectly.

(The sound of a wolf howling is heard.)

ORLOK: The night has risen. It truly creates the most beautiful music.

THOMAS: I suppose.

ORLOK: I will sign the documents now.

THOMAS: Very well. I have all the papers prepared.

(Orlok sits and looks through the papers.)

ORLOK: I will be taking several...large crates.

THOMAS: That is why you wish to travel by ship?

ORLOK: Yes.

THOMAS: May I suggest that you send your crates by ship and that we travel by coach? We will arrive in Wisborg several days before your belongings.

ORLOK: The coach travels by night and day?

THOMAS: The horses need rest and so does the driver. Most is day travel but it is still faster.

ORLOK: Thank you. But I prefer to travel with my belongings. They make me feel more...at home.

THOMAS: As you wish. *(Orlok finishes signing the papers. Thomas gathers them.)* You are now in possession of a piece of Wisborg.

ORLOK: Yes. I feel a new...life before me. And now I must make my final preparations to leave. I bid you a good night.

THOMAS: Goodnight. *(Orlok exits. Thomas sits, relieved. He opens "The Book of the Vampires." Reads.)* "At night it is said Nosferatu sinketh his fangs into his victim and feeds on the blood that constitutes his hellish elixir of life."

(Clock chimes twelve. At the end of the 12th chime, the lights change to reveal Orlok at the stairs. He has no hat, and for the first time, his bald head is revealed as well as his two large fangs in the front of his mouth. Thomas backs away. Orlok advances slowly. Thomas backs to the bed until he falls onto it. Orlok continues his advance until he reaches the bed. Thomas blacks out. Ghouls 1-3 appear from the shadows. They seem timid at first.)

ORLOK: *(To Ghouls.)* Tonight you may taste...just enough to satisfy your thirst.

(Ghouls attack the bed. Ghoul 1 bites into Thomas' neck and Ghoul 2, 3 bite into his wrists. Orlok laughs. Blackout.)

Scene 11

(AT RISE: *Transylvania, shipping port, the next morning. Sailors 1-6 enter SL, carrying crates the size of coffins.*)

CAPTAIN: *(To Sailors.)* Let's get those crates onboard. Hurry up, let's go!

FIRST MATE: Captain, this isn't our usual cargo.

CAPTAIN: No. In addition to our normal load, I've contracted with a... *(Pulls out the paperwork.)* ...Count Orlok to take only these several crates. A small cargo for a huge price.

FIRST MATE: What is the cargo, Captain?

CAPTAIN: *(Consulting the paper.)* It says here that they are agricultural.

SAILOR 1: Captain, these are heavy.

FIRST MATE: *(To Captain.)* Sir, I would feel more comfortable knowing what we are taking onto the ship.

CAPTAIN: Yes, let's open one up. *(Captain and First Mate stop one of the boxes and set it down. To Sailor.)* Open this up and see what we're loading.

SAILOR 1: Sure, Captain.

(Sailor pries the crate open with a pry bar. Captain kneels down and reaches into the crate. The Captain pulls out a handful of dirt. They all look confused.)

FIRST MATE: Dirt?

SAILOR 1: Now why would anyone want to transport dirt from Transylvania to Wisborg?

FIRST MATE: It doesn't make sense.

CAPTAIN: Well, it said "agricultural," didn't it? It's probably a farming experiment. Well, it doesn't matter. If this Count Orlok wants to pay triple our usual price for transporting dirt, I'm up to the task. Take it onboard.

(Sailors place the crates CS. Blackout.)

Scene 12

(AT RISE: Inside Orlok's castle, the next morning. Thomas wakes up, drained and weak. He climbs out of his bed and is barely able to stand. He finds "The Book of the Vampires." He checks his wounds.)

THOMAS: They're gone. (Finds the picture of Ellen.) Ellen!
(Collapses. Blackout.)

Scene 13

(AT RISE: At sea, ship's deck. Lights up SL on the Captain, who is at the wheel steering the ship. Lightning, thunder, and wind. First Mate approaches the Captain.)

FIRST MATE: A sailor has fallen ill below deck. He is taking in a fever.

(Sailor 2 lays CS in front of the crates. He is sick. The Captain and First Mate make their way over to him.)

SAILOR 2: (Delirious.) Keep him away. Keep him away. No, please, no. Not again. Help me.

CAPTAIN: (To First Mate.) He's delirious.

(First Mate gives Sailor 2 water from his flask. Sailor 2 takes the flask and drinks eagerly.)

SAILOR 2: So thirsty. More. (Drinks again.) My blood! Blood!

CAPTAIN: (To First Mate.) Keep him down here alone. We don't want this spreading through the ship.

SAILOR 2: No. Not alone, sir. He'll come for me! He will.

(First Mate comforts Sailor 2. Captain goes back to his post. Sailor 2 dies, First Mate leaves the body, and stands behind the Captain. Sailors 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 move slowly and wrap Sailor 2 in a sheet and then tie him with rope. They carry Sailor 2 on their shoulders off SR. A splash is heard. The Captain and First Mate look at each other. All is dark. The Sailors lie in different spots on the stage. Lights up. They are all sick. A shadow looms over them. Orlok appears and walks slowly toward them. They are weak and huddle together. Orlok stands over them. They all look up at him. Ghouls 1-3 appear behind Orlok. Lights down. Lights change to the Captain and First Mate behind the wheel.)

FIRST MATE: *(To Captain.)* They are all dead. We are the only ones remaining. There is no sickness. It's something down there. It's those crates you brought onboard. *(Grabs an ax.)* I shall go down! If I haven't come up again within ten minutes...

(First Mate exits. The Captain remains firm at the wheel. The first Mate moves to the crates. The shadows on the wall are of rats. He moves to the crates and raises the ax high over his head. Suddenly the crate lid opens. Orlok rises in the coffin. Orlok reaches a hand out. First Mate stumbles back in horror. He runs offstage and jumps overboard. A splash is heard.)

CAPTAIN: No! *(Grabs some rope and ties himself to the wheel. During the Captain's log, Orlok slowly advances toward him. As he steers the wheel, Captain speaks his log.)* July 12th. The crew, apart from myself, the Captain, one helmsman, one mate, and five sailors. Depart for the Dardanelles. July 13th. One sailor has contracted a fever, course south, southwest. July 14th. The First Mate has begun to hallucinate, says a strange passenger is below deck, course southeast. July 22nd. Passed Gibraltar. Panic onboard. Three men dead already. First Mate out of his mind. Rats in the hold. I fear the plague. July 24th. This death ship has a new captain.

(Orlok is on him. Blackout.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]