

As soon as the train left Budapest, Jonathan Harker felt that he was leaving the West and entering the East. Now it was even stranger: the food which made his mouth feel as if it was on fire; the unknown languages; the wide, open Danube country and the great river itself. The brightly dressed villagers at every station made him feel in another world. And when Jonathan tried to find out more about Castle Dracula the man seemed unwilling to talk; he would only say that it was a long way from Bistritz, and that he had never been there. But when Jonathan went down to the carriage the following afternoon the hotel keeper's wife behaved even more strangely. Here were mountains, thick forests and fast-flowing rivers. The hotel keeper led him up to a clean and pleasant room looking over a large courtyard where a few fruit trees grew. Castles stood on rocks so high that Jonathan could only look at them in wonder. It was nearly dark when he arrived at the pleasant hotel he had spent travelling since Budapest, and he was tired. So he was pleased that the Golden Crown, the hotel where Count Dracula had arranged for him to stay, had a comfortable, friendly appearance. There was a letter by his plate. Dear Mr Harker, So you have arrived in Transylvania. But when he asked the hotel keeper how the letter had arrived the man looked uncomfortable and pretended not to understand his German. She seemed so serious that he could not say no, although it was unusual for Englishmen to wear crosses, and it felt strange to him. There would be so much to tell Mina, the girl he was going to marry. Jonathan washed and went downstairs to eat. Sleep well tonight, and at three o'clock tomorrow afternoon take the carriage for Bukovina. Your friend, Dracula. How kind! said Jonathan. Jonathan looked at her in surprise. I have not come here from England on holiday, he replied. Jonathan tried to smile, but the smile would not come. I am only going to visit your Count Dracula. Others standing by joined in, and at last the woman took the cross from round her neck and put it round Jonathan's. The crowd all moved their right hands in the shape of the cross, and that was the last of Bistritz. Are we in so much danger that we need all these blessings? asked Jonathan with a smile. He had never been out of England before, and had found everything strange enough already. Later, as the train moved north, everything changed again. He hoped the castle he was going to would be like these. I am expecting you with pleasure. I have ordered a place to be kept for you. At the highest point of the road over the mountains my own carriage will wait and bring you to me. I hope your journey from London has been a happy one. I am sure you will enjoy your stay in my beautiful land. And how well he has planned my journey! This was strange. He was just going to take his place when she came up to him with a frightened look on her face. Must you go? she asked. I am here on business, and cannot please myself. Is there any reason why I should not go? Please, she said, laying her hand on his arm. There is danger. What danger can I be in? At this she became very excited and changed from German to a language he did not understand. He got into the carriage and the driver started off.