

CASTLEVANIA: A TESTAMENT OF BLOODSHED

L. Travis Hoffman

1. FADE IN:

2. INT. FARMLAND - DUSK

A pair of young hands gather vegetables into a weathered basket. Potatoes and cabbages are plucked and placed in rapid succession.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Transylvania, 1691"

The girl of 16 years, DORINA, finishes and jumps to her feet. She brings the basket to her father IVAN, who is loading the family horses.

DORINA
I've finished, Papa.

IVAN
(stern)
We're an hour behind. We'll have to
rise early tomorrow morning if
we're to finish gathering.

The girl nods, expressing guilt.

IVAN
Bring the other baskets back and
then we'll go.

Dorina quickly runs to the remaining two baskets. With years of experience, she easily grabs the two overflowing containers and balances each on a hip.

But before she can turn to go back, her eyes stop on a peculiar sight.

Far in the distance, beyond the Borgo Pass, a shadowed castle stands among the Carpathian Mountains. The light of a great flame can be seen in its tower, its hypnotic brilliance capturing the girl's gaze.

IVAN
Dorina! We need to go. It'll be
night soon.

The girl's trance breaks.

DORINA
Yes, Papa.

Dorina rejoins Ivan, giving a final passing look at the castle.

3. INT. HOMESTEAD - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dorina climbs into her bed. Her father stands in the doorway, checking to see that all is safe.

IVAN
Sleep well, child. Remember, we'll
be rising early.

DORINA
Goodnight, Papa.

Ivan shuts the door, closing Dorina's room off from any remaining light in the house.

In a few moments, all light in the home is extinguished and the rest of the family is asleep. All is quiet save for the sound of chirping insects outside.

Dorina remains awake, staring at the ceiling. Alert. Focused. It's almost like she's staring through the ceiling. Then, as if responding to a voice, she turns her head towards the bedroom window.

4. EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Dorina walks through the tall grass in nothing but her nightdress. She's unfazed by the rough terrain, even as it leaves horrible cuts across her bare feet.

She abruptly stops in the middle of the field, standing still and silent. She waits, her gaze fixed ahead.

Emerging from the night is a DARK FIGURE, tall but barely visible except for his silvery hair, white face and eyes that glow like rubies.

Dorina swallows hard upon seeing the figure. It's the first sign of lucidity she's shown.

She walks toward the figure. He stretches forth his arms and welcomes her. He envelopes his cloak over her and brings his white face close to her neck.

The encounter is unsettlingly quiet. All that can be heard is Dorina's increasingly shallow and rapid breathing.

5. EXT. FOREST - DAY

A band of villagers comb through the woods, calling out for Dorina. Ivan and his eldest son, PAUL, are among the search party.

Ivan's face has desperation and guilt written all over it as he continues calling out for his daughter. His voice grows more and more hoarse with each cry.

PAUL
Father, rest a moment.

IVAN
No. There's no time. She's still
out there--

PAUL
And we'll find her. But you need
your strength. Rest.

The father finally concedes and sits down against a tree.

Paul continues on, meeting up with one of the village elders,
GAVRIL.

PAUL
We'll be at the river soon. Do you
think we'll find her?

GAVRIL
I... don't know, Paul. We've been
searching since dawn. The farm, the
fields, everywhere. If we do find
Dorina, I'm afraid of what that
might mean.

PAUL
I don't understand.

A VILLAGER SHOUTS.

Ivan shoots up from the ground and races over to the
villager. Paul follows.

They find the villager pulling Dorina from out of the river.
She's deathly pale, with unblinking eyes staring off into
nothing. Her breathing is a near-silent rasp.

Ivan and Paul wrap her up in blankets and embrace her,
weeping.

6. INT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Dorina is lying next to the fireside, bundled up in blankets
to aid in her recovery.

Just out of hearing range, Ivan speaks with Gavril.

IVAN
Can I ask you to stay with Dorina
while I find Father Mueller?

GAVRIL
For her last rites?

IVAN

For answers, hopefully. I want to know what happened to her.

GAVRIL

She was attacked by an animal while sleep walking.

Ivan bangs the dinner table in disgust.

IVAN

Come on, Gavril! What kind of animal creates so much blood loss with so little wounds?

Gavril can no longer feign ignorance.

GAVRIL

You know the church's laws, Ivan. If you even speak of such superstition openly you could risk being excommunicated--

IVAN

I'll take that chance for my daughter's sake. For the sake of her soul. I'll be back before dark.

7. EXT. ROAD - DAY

Ivan races on his horse across the beaten dirt path, tall trees on both sides blurring past him.

The sun gleams over the mountains far beyond, drawing attention to the castle.

The sight of the horrid structure causes Ivan to tighten his grip on the reigns, strengthening his resolve.

8. INT. CHURCH - DAY

FATHER MUELLER, a robust man in his 50s, lights a votive candle and places it before an icon of Christ. He bows his head and begins prayer.

Ivan recklessly enters the church, the massive door closing loudly behind him.

Father Mueller does not budge from his position.

Ivan fidgets as he waits, trying to keep his composure.

FATHER MUELLER

Welcome to the House of our Lord.
Judging from your hasty entry, you
must be in some sort of distress.
How might I help you?

Father Mueller turns from the icon to face Ivan.

IVAN

Forgive me for barging in here,
Father. It's a matter of urgency.
My daughter wandered out last
night. When we found her this
afternoon, she...

Ivan breaks down into tears.

Mueller comforts Ivan, leading him over to a pew.

FATHER MUELLER

Tell me what happened.

IVAN

I don't know. She's such a lively
child. Yesterday she was running
around with her friends, making
mischief. And now, today, death is
waiting at our door. And the cause
is something so terrible I fear to
utter it out loud. I'm looking for
answers, Father.

FATHER MUELLER

Take me to her.

9. INT. HOMESTEAD - DUSK

Father Mueller kneels down beside Dorina. He gently examines her while Ivan stands aside and observes.

Dorina's face is waxy and pale. Mueller turns her head and sees two prominent wounds on her neck, swollen and red. He bows his head and says a short prayer over the girl before rising to his feet.

FATHER MUELLER

I understand your hesitation, Ivan.
If I'd not seen her myself, I
might've dismissed the whole thing.
However, I'm still uncertain. If I
oversee any... rituals without
approval from the bishop, it could
lead to excommunication for
everyone involved.

IVAN

Is there nothing you can do?

FATHER MUELLER

There might be one possibility.

Mueller unfolds a map and places it on the dinner table.

FATHER MUELLER

There is a mountain range to the east of Kleinenberg.

(traces the path across the map)

I know a man who lives there. He's an expert in such matters.

IVAN

How do we contact him?

FATHER MUELLER

We can't, I'm afraid. My only interactions are when he comes into town every three or so months. He delivers supplies to the parish and receives a blessing. You'll have to go to him.

IVAN

I don't even know where to start.

FATHER MUELLER

Of course you do. You start by packing your things.

10. EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAWN

Ivan loads up his horse. Paul and Father Mueller bring out the last few items for traveling.

PAUL

I really think I should go with you. You may need help navigating.

IVAN

No, my boy. Not this time. Remember when we got lost trying to find Karlsbad? It was a straight path. What should've been a six hour journey took us nearly half a day.

Ivan and Mueller share a laugh. Paul tries to brush off the remark.

PAUL

Alright, fine. But what about hunting? You could use a sharp pair of eyes to help you find a rabbit or deer.

IVAN

This will not be an agreeable journey, Paul. Time is against us and I can't risk anyone or anything that could potentially delay me.

FATHER MUELLER

Your father is right. Your family needs you here. (to Ivan) I'll remain with your daughter. If the situation becomes what we've feared--

IVAN

I will return with this man called Belmont. I swear it.

Paul is confused upon hearing the last exchange between the two men.

Ivan mounts his horse, shifting his gaze between son and cleric, silently communicating his individual wishes to each. With a nod of farewell, he races off toward the east.

FATHER MUELLER

Come. Let's see to your sister.

Mueller starts toward the house, Paul eyeing him with suspicion.

11. EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - SUNSET

The last rays of the sun are disappearing behind the horizon. The dreaded shadow of the castle stretches ever farther over the countryside before blending into complete darkness of night.

12. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

The master's chamber looks all but unused. Dust covers every surface while the curtains are rotted and eaten away by rats and insects.

Strangest of all, in the darkest corner of the room lies a stone tomb. It rests seemingly undisturbed.

Moonlight peeks through one of the aged windows. A silvery beam illuminates the base of the tomb where an ornately carved "D" declares the owner of the final resting place.

The heavy lid of the tomb stirs slightly. Then, slowly, it begins to move aside to reveal its occupant. It's the same white face and ruby eyes from the night before. It's the Lord of Vampires, COUNT DRACULA.

The Count's gaunt visage forms a twisted smile, revealing brilliant white fangs behind red lips.

13. INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

It's late. Paul sits beside the fire, watching outside. A swarm of bats scatter across the night sky, screeching as they hunt for their prey. Paul clutches his hunting knife tightly.

Father Mueller enters from Dorina's bedroom and joins Paul.

FATHER MUELLER

She's now asleep. I was unable to coax her into eating, but she drank some of the broth I brought over from the apothecary. It seems to have brought some color back to her cheeks.

Paul pours a glass of wine for the priest.

PAUL

We all appreciate you coming here on my sister's behalf, Father Mueller. But I think there's still something you aren't telling us.

Mueller drinks the wine and considers his words.

FATHER MUELLER

Yes, dear boy. You are quite right. But there are reasons behind such actions. Reasons meant for your good. If you're unable to put your trust in the words of a lowly cleric, then so be it. But please trust your father, for he's a good and honorable man.

A WOLF'S HOWL echoes through the countryside. Both boy and cleric turn their eyes outside.

FATHER MUELLER

And God knows we need good men in times such as these.

14. EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

A lone black wolf SNARLS with hunger as it sprints through the tall grass. Its red eyes are focused on the firelight coming from the farmhouse several kilometers away.

15. INT. HOMESTEAD

Paul puts another log on the fire.

PAUL

Father, I'll keep watch here while you rest. The spare bed has already been prepared for you.

But Mueller isn't paying attention. Paul follows the cleric's gaze, which is fixated outside on Dorina. She's walking away from the house.

PAUL

How did she get out? I thought you said she was sleeping.

FATHER MUELLER

She was!

Paul grabs his coat and a lantern.

FATHER MUELLER

Paul, wait!

16. EXT. HOMESTEAD

Dorina has already covered a great distance from the house.

Paul repeatedly calls after her as he tries to catch up. She gives no indication of hearing him as she continues to walk. Her eyes stare straight ahead and her face is devoid of any emotion.

Father Mueller rushes outside with a torch to follow after the young man.

FATHER MUELLER

Paul, slow down! We'll bring her back together.

Paul stops dead in his tracks. He sees the black wolf not far ahead from his sister, its form visible against the moonlit sky.

PAUL

Dorina! Don't move!

His words have no effect. Dorina keeps walking toward the approaching wolf.

Still moving, the black wolf rises up to its hind legs, walking upright. Its dark fur begins shifting into the form of a cloak. The front legs grow larger, the toes stretching and multiplying, becoming long supple fingers. The snout recedes into the familiar shape of a human face. The face of Dracula.

PAUL
(trembling)
Dorina... get away from him. Get
away.

Dracula looks upon Dorina with hungry eyes. His lips part in what appears to be a smile, but quickly changes into a snarl of pearlescent fangs.

Paul draws his knife and starts toward the vampire.

Dracula shifts his gaze from Dorina to Paul.

A pack of wolves reveal themselves as they rise from hiding in the grass. They slowly move in on Paul.

FATHER MUELLER
Paul, no! Get back!

With a silent command from Dracula, the beasts descend on the young man. Even with the knife, he stands no chance.

Dracula returns his gaze back to Dorina, neither bothered nor distracted by the carnage or Father Mueller's cries of anguish.

17. INT. INN - BEDROOM - DAWN

Ivan jerks awake, hit with a dark premonition. He immediately gets up and gathers his things.

18. INT. INN - RESTAURANT

Ivan pays the Innkeeper while hastily eating a loaf of sloppily buttered bread.

IVAN
I'm looking for a man who lives
around these parts. His name is
Belmont.

The other patrons in the restaurant turn from their breakfast to listen closely. Ivan pays them no heed.

He slides a few extra coins to the Innkeeper.

INNKEEPER
Simon Belmont?

IVAN
It's of utmost importance.

INNKEEPER

No one seeks a Belmont otherwise.
You'll find him deep in the woods
just outside of town. He has a home
close to the foot of the Bordia
Mountains.

(slides the coins back to
Ivan)

But if you're in need of Simon
Belmont, you'll want every coin you
can carry, my friend. And all the
angels at your back.

The patrons watch as Ivan starts toward the door, several
crossing themselves.

INNKEEPER

What are you all looking at? His
business is his own!

The patrons grumble and turn back to their food.

19. INT. DENIS WOODS - DAY

Ivan cautiously rides through the woods, his eyes scanning
through the trees for any sign of human settlement.

He comes to a bridge crossing over a putrid black swamp. He
struggles not to retch as he quickens his horse's pace to the
other side.

He doesn't notice the ripples moving across the swamp.

20. EXT. DENIS WOODS - DAY

Ivan reaches the edge of the woods, immediately spotting a
small wooden hut with a straw roof. He knocks on the door. No
response. He calls out to the same result.

Undeterred, he sits on a nearby tree stump and waits.

The sound of twigs snapping grabs Ivan's attention. A HUNTER
emerges from the woods, carrying a deer carcass over his
back. On his person is both a sica blade and a whip. Ivan is
so taken aback by the vigorous-looking man that he's lost for
words.

The Hunter notices Ivan but doesn't seem surprised or
interested by his presence. He places the carcass on the
grass and grabs a large block of wood.

HUNTER

You're sitting on my chopping
block.

IVAN

Oh. Sorry.

Ivan sheepishly steps aside while the Hunter splits the wood.

IVAN

I'm looking for Simon Belmont. I
was hoping that maybe you could
tell me where he is.

Ignoring him, the Hunter takes the newly chopped wood into the hut.

Ivan waits once more, his irritation growing.

The Hunter comes out to retrieve the carcass.

IVAN

I only need a moment of your time.
My name is Ivan Bogdan--

Ivan's words fall on deaf ears. The Hunter continues back into the hut. Rage fills Ivan. He storms after the Hunter inside.

21. INT. HUT - DAY

Ivan shoves the door open with a loud bang.

IVAN

My daughter is dying! I think it's
because of a vampire.

The Hunter stops in his tracks. He turns around and studies Ivan.

HUNTER

You set foot inside my home without
permission.

IVAN

I'm-- look, I meant no offense. I'm
just trying to find--

HUNTER

Close the door behind you.

Perplexed, Ivan shuts the door.

HUNTER

Sit down. Where are you from?

IVAN

Jova.

~~HUNTER~~

HUNTER

That's almost two days of travel by horse. Why come all this way? Surely someone in your church could aid you in these matters.

IVAN

Jova's church is hindered by conduct and customs. Father Mueller cannot offer counsel or action without the bishop's permission. He sent me here.

HUNTER

Father Mueller? I know him well. Yes, I seem to remember him bemoaning the magisterium's lack of readiness.

IVAN

Then you must be Simon Belmont. He instructed me to give you this.

Ivan hands a scroll over to the Hunter called Simon. He carefully opens the rolled parchment.

SIMON (HUNTER)

(reading)

Greetings, my friend. I'm sorry to write you under these circumstances. There is strong evidence that a vampire may be in our midst for the first time in over 50 years. I fear that there are dark forces emerging to threaten our land once more. I humbly request that you come to Jova to investigate the malady of a young girl. I'm uncertain of how long she will live, so time is of the essence. God be with you on your journey. Father Theodore Mueller.

Simon's intense eyes go directly from the scroll to meet Ivan. He slowly rolls up the parchment.

SIMON

What do you know of Castle Dracula?

22. INT. SIMON'S HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Simon puts a plate of cooked meat in front of Ivan.

SIMON

Eat well. We'll set out after supper.

Ivan doesn't need any instruction. He digs into the food right away.

IVAN

I never knew the legend. I had heard stories about the castle being haunted, but I paid it no mind.

SIMON

It's no legend. It's been a brutal war between heaven and hell lasting centuries and the battleground has been our homeland. Castle Dracula is no mere fortress abandoned to time. It's a doorway into hell itself, a beacon summoning devils of all kinds. I've spent my whole life training for this dreaded day.

Simon walks across the room, looking at weapons and relics mounted on the walls. All have been acquired from faraway lands. England, Greece, France, Germany, Turkey, Russia, China, Mongolia, Japan and more. Ivan is enthralled by the exotic collection.

IVAN

How did your family come to bear this responsibility?

SIMON

I've long given up on questioning divine providence. It's enough that my family fulfills its role as God intended. My ancestors, Trevor the Great... Christopher the Righteous... each took up our ancestral weapon, the holy whip.

Simon uncoils the weapon from his side. Ivan's mouth is agape as the Hunter brandishes the deadly whip.

SIMON

A weapon blessed by the Hand of God. A vampire killer. They used it to thwart Dracula's plans and seal him away. This whip was passed down to me by my father. And before him, his father. And before him, his father. It's our legacy, Ivan, and I claim it proudly.

The Hunter begins packing various items and tools.

SIMON

I'll prepare for our journey.
There's still much for you to know.
(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

If your fellow villagers are as ignorant of Castle Dracula as you are, then we'll need to warn them.

Ivan grows deathly pale. His appetite lost, he sets aside his meal.

IVAN

I wish I had known. I could've protected her.

SIMON

There still might be hope. But we'll have to act fast. Steel yourself, my friend. For what lies ahead of us will call for unflinching faith and courage.

23. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Dracula hunches over a grand table, studying a map. The light of a candle reveals his newly changed appearance. His face is fuller, with more vitality. His hair and mustache have both darkened to a stallion black.

He traces a finger across the roads on the map, strategizing. Scheming. He stops on a town called "Aljiba" and places a marker on top of it, joining several other settlements.

Behind the Count, a hooded figure materializes from the shadows. It's DEATH, the Grim Reaper. The skeletal being is clothed only in rotted grey robes. In his bony right hand he wields a scythe. He glides over to the King Vampire.

DRACULA

Greetings, god of death. I did not expect your return so soon. I trust you bring you news of my army?

DEATH

Indeed, your numbers grow with each passing night.

The Reaper's voice is a rasp that resonates with the sound of tortured screams.

DEATH

But I did not come to discuss such matters. I bring you a warning. A man from the House of Belmont seeks war upon you.

Dracula turns away from his map to face Death.

DRACULA

Another Belmont. How tiresome.

The Count goes to his window to survey the land.

DEATH

Now is not the time for hubris, my Lord. You must increase your power while garnering our forces.

DRACULA

I've taken great care to do both. I already have several peasants in my thrall.

24. INT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Rows of freshly-made graves line the yard of the castle.

The soil of one of the plots begins to move. The pale young hand of a female bursts forth from the dirt, the fingers bared like the claws of a beast.

25. INT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

The body of Dorina lies in a wooden coffin displayed in the main room. Her skin is white as snow, the blood completely drained from her. Beside her body is another coffin containing Paul. The lid is closed. Friends, family, and fellow villagers sit around the recently departed youths in mourning.

Ivan stands frozen in shock, unable to do anything but stare at those he has lost.

Simon looks over to Father Mueller. The cleric's face and hands are covered in gashes and seeping wounds. But the injuries are nothing compared to the guilt he's carrying.

SIMON

You're certain of what you saw?

FATHER MUELLER

It was him. I recognized the face from old woodcuttings. The same terrible eyes and cruel mouth. Believe me, Simon. It was the Count.

SIMON

Then you know what must be done.

FATHER MUELLER

The bishop will never authorize it.

AUTHORITATIVE VOICE (O.C.)

Authorize what?

The voice is that of BISHOP STOIA. He stands imposingly in the doorway, regal and sagely in attire and demeanor. At his side are a pair of knights.

Father Mueller immediately turns and gives deference to the bishop.

Everyone else quickly realizes who's in the room and hastily pay their respects.

FATHER MUELLER

Your Grace, this is most unexpected. To what do we owe the honor?

BISHOP STOIA

You will not be so pleased when you hear of the reason for my visit, Father Mueller. Numerous deaths have occurred in the last few weeks of a mysterious nature. All of the priests in the local parishes have tended to their duties, save one. You.

FATHER MUELLER

I can assure Your Grace that my parish remains in order. I delegated my responsibilities to Father Alexandru before taking my leave.

BISHOP STOIA

You and I both know that Father Alexandru is hardly ready for such a task. He entered into the priesthood only three months ago. Why are you here?

SIMON

Mysterious deaths?

A knight steps forward to intercept Simon. His hand rests ready on his sword.

KNIGHT

This is an ecclesial matter and does not concern you.

BISHOP STOIA

It's quite alright. In fact, this is a good time to address some troubling rumors that have been going around recently.

The Bishop now has the full attention of everyone in the house.

BISHOP STOIA

I have heard reports from several clerics throughout the province speaking of children dying from unknown causes. Because of the nature of these inexplicable tragedies, it has led to unhealthy speculation. Superstitious nonsense like vampirism and sorcery. I will say to you what I have said to every other community I have visited. Such foolishness will not be tolerated. We have been given minds with which to reason and hearts with which to place our faith. But if both are not used in harmony, we fall into heresy and madness. (to Mueller) So I will ask again. Why are you here?

Father Mueller gathers his courage and wits as Bishop Stoia's eyes burrow into him.

FATHER MUELLER

Your Grace, when the child Dorina unexpectedly fell ill, her father came to me directly. He believed her ailment to be not only of the body, but also of the spirit. As I did not wish to perform any rite which could potentially dishonor our Church, I thought it prudent to... (looks to Simon) enlist the aid of someone learned about obscure illnesses. My actions were conducted privately, outside the purview of the Church.

BISHOP STOIA

That's what troubles me. What could possibly be so perplexing that you would feel it necessary to render your services without the resources or awareness of the Church?

Stoia takes a step forward, looming over the increasingly nervous Mueller.

FATHER MUELLER

As I said, Your Grace. I wanted to be certain. It felt inappropriate to ask for assistance when the circumstances were so unclear.

SIMON

And the authorities so slow to act.

Father Mueller throws Simon a glare.

BISHOP STOIA

You seem determined to insert
yourself into the conversation. Who
might you be?

SIMON

Simon Belmont.

BISHOP STOIA

Belmont? The family of folk heroes.
I've read of your clan's exploits.
Quite the fantastic stories.

SIMON

Indeed. But they're more than just
stories.

The knights try to suppress their snickering.

BISHOP STOIA

Would you care to show us some of
your mystical talents?

Stoia points to the whip at Simon's side. The Hunter is
unfazed by the ridicule. His gaze meets with Stoia's,
unbreaking and cool as ice.

SIMON

Perhaps you'll get the chance to
see them soon enough.

BISHOP STOIA

Unlikely. (to the crowd) The
children will receive a proper
Christian burial, as is their
right. Any attempts to disturb or
desecrate their resting place will
be met with swift and harsh
consequences. Take care to spread
these instructions to the rest of
your fellow villagers. Good day.

Bishop Stoia gives a final glare of warning to Father Mueller
before leaving the homestead.

Mueller lets out a puff of air, allowing himself to relax
once again.

Simon is not so relieved.

26. INT. CEMETARY - DAY

Father Mueller delivers a eulogy as the coffins of Dorina and
Paul are lowered into their graves.

Ivan holds his two little ones as they grieve together.

Simon keeps his distance, waiting until the service is completed before joining Father Mueller.

SIMON

We'll keep watch tonight.

FATHER MUELLER

What about the guards? Bishop Stoia will be looking for any excuse to brand us heretics.

SIMON

It won't be necessary to be in the graveyard. Vampires typically hunt loved ones first. She'll come to us.

FATHER MUELLER

I don't wish to bring the family into this. It'll only bring them more pain. Please.

SIMON

Very well. Ivan will be the only one who knows of our plan. Meet me back at the Bogdan farm before sunset.

FATHER MUELLER

Where are you going?

SIMON

I need supplies.

A MONTAGE:

27. INT. WOODLAND - DAY

Simon chops down a tree.

Ivan assists him as they cut the downed tree into smaller segments.

Simon begins fashioning pieces of the tree into wooden stakes. Ivan marvels at his speed and efficiency.

Once finished, Simon puts all the stakes into a leather bag.

SIMON

This should be enough. Let's head back. It'll be dark in a few hours.

MONTAGE ENDS.

28. INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Simon and Father Mueller sit beside the fireplace while Ivan nervously paces the room.

IVAN

You're sure this will work?

SIMON

Vampires are supernatural creatures, but they're bound by certain rules just like the rest of us. They can't go against their nature. When a vampire is first created, it's at its weakest. Your daughter will try to find someone familiar to attack first. She'll likely use their grieving to her advantage. That's why you have to be strong tonight, Ivan. Your daughter's soul depends on it.

Father Mueller retrieves a small wooden box.

FATHER MUELLER

I've done as you requested. They've been blessed, though it raised a few eyebrows from my brothers. I told them it was for a crusader heading into battle.

SIMON

You weren't wrong.

Simon opens the box. Inside are a pair of bladed weapons.

IVAN

Knives?

SIMON

Silver knives. It's purifying quality is useful against other monsters, not just vampires. The blessing will strengthen and extend their power.

IVAN

"Other monsters"? Just what exactly are we facing?

FATHER MUELLER

The apocalypse, if Dracula has his way.

IVAN

This is madness. How could this happen? How could you let this happen?

Simon swiftly moves between Ivan and the cleric.

SIMON
Sit down. Now.

Ivan's rage cools upon seeing Simon's intense eyes. He obeys.

SIMON
It's time that you know how this
all began.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

29. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Romanian soldiers rush against an onslaught of Ottoman Turks. Swords clash against shield. Battlecries are exchanged. Blood is shed and limbs are cleaved.

SIMON (V.O.)
More than two hundred years ago,
when our people were at war with
the Ottoman Empire, the Order of
the Dragon stood firm in defending
our territory. Among them was a
young and ambitious nobleman known
as Dracula.

A young Dracula in his 20s wears a suit of armor and grimly observes the chaos of battle from his horse. He draws his sword and rides into battle. He cuts down one Turkish soldier after another, blood spattering across his face. His eyes fill with desire to kill and punish the invaders.

A dying Turkish soldier lies on the ground, pleading to him for mercy.

Dracula sees a spear from one of his dead comrades. He retrieves the weapon.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)
He came from a family of brilliant
and cunning warriors. But it wasn't
enough. An advantage was needed to
win the war against the Turks. One
far greater than anything provided
by earthly alliances.

30. EXT. MOUNTAIN CAVE - NIGHT

Dracula and his kin stand before a group of occultists dressed in black hoods.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

And so Dracula's family made a pact
with the Devil. He would be the
chosen instrument for evil.

Dracula extends his hand. The leader of the occultists clasps it.

The hooded men enter the cave. Dracula and his kin follow.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

And in exchange for his soul, he
would study at the Scholomance,
learning forbidden knowledge. The
black arts. Sorcery. Alchemy.
Occult sciences. It was said that
his master was a fallen angel, a
being worshipped as a god of death.
Dracula excelled in his studies,
eventually surpassing even his
master.

31. EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

Dracula, covered in ice and snow, ascends the peak of the mountain. He gazes down across the wintry countryside with a triumphant smile.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

When he emerged from the darkness
after seven long years, Dracula was
a new and even more dangerous man.

32. EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - GATES - DUSK

A field of impaled people stands outside the property gates. Peasant and noble. Citizen and foreigner. Ally and enemy. No one is spared from Dracula's brutality.

Vassals on horseback ride past the grisly site as they make their way to the castle at the top of the mountain.

33. INT. TOWER - DUSK

Dracula is feverishly pouring over various books on sorcery and alchemy.

The group of concerned vassals stand at the end of the room, imploring him.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

But he still could not turn the
tide of the war.

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

Dracula's reign of terror had struck fear into the hearts of his enemies, but he had also sewn the seeds of his own destruction.

Dracula glares at the vassals and grabs a large stake hanging from a nearby wall.

34. EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - GATES - NIGHT

The vassals' corpses join the hundreds of other impaled victims, their faces twisted in expressions of sheer terror.

35. EXT. ARMY CAMP - NIGHT

A Turkish assassin stealthily moves among the Romanian troops. Finding a lone soldier, the assassin comes from behind and slices the hapless Romanian's throat.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

His thirst for power had made him arrogant and impulsive. His tactics were reckless and increasingly maniacal. But more than that, he had become blinded to the possibility that he could ever be defeated.

36. INT. DRACULA'S TENT - NIGHT

All is dark and quiet as Dracula sleeps soundly.

The assassin, now dressed as a Romanian soldier, enters with a knife drawn.

The assassin brings down his blade. Dracula doesn't even scream.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

All it took was a single moment of vulnerability and Dracula was slain. And so ended a terrible evil, or so it seemed.

37. EXT. BORGO PASS - NIGHT

A storm rages as a family of peasants ride their wagon across the rough terrain.

The eldest of the family points toward the mountains. It's Castle Dracula.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)
A few months after his demise,
people claimed to see lights once
again coming from the abandoned
castle.

One of the wagon wheels shatters upon hitting a depression in the road.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)
Others saw much worse.

Grumbling, the eldest climbs out of the wagon and into the rain.

He goes to inspect the broken wheel when he finds himself staring into the face of a ghoul. The peasant gasps and stumbles backward. He soon discovers that there's not just one, but a dozen ghouls surrounding the wagon.

The closest ghoul lunges for the peasant, sinking its foul teeth into the man's shoulder. The others close in and join. The peasant's screams are smothered by the rotting corpses feasting on him.

38. INT. CASTLE DRACULA - GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Noblemen and politicians of different stripes sit together at an enormous banquet table. They listen intently to their host, a figure standing in the shadows of the room.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)
A mysterious count took up
residence in the castle.
Ambassadors and leaders from all
over Europe came to visit and speak
with this charismatic figure.

Everyone is pleased with the Count's words and voice their approval.

The host steps into the light. It's Dracula, but not as he was in life. His ears have grown pointed. His canine teeth protrude over red lips. The hands have long pointed finger nails and the palms are hairy. He responds to them with a devilish smile.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)
Within a few weeks time, Count
Dracula had managed to conquer most
of Europe with promises of power
and wealth. Kings, queens, and
warlords were easily swayed by his
silver tongue.

39. INT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Demonic soldiers raze the settlement, setting fire to houses, shackling peasants and killing anyone who dares to fight back.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

And those who resisted were quickly stamped out.

THE FLASHBACK ENDS.

40. INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Simon holds out his whip, the light of the fireplace giving it an otherworldly glow.

SIMON

All had seemed lost. It was only when a band of warriors had gathered together to storm Castle Dracula that the evil was finally conquered. Led by my forefather, Trevor Belmont, the Count was vanquished. But his power remained dormant. The curse was destined to renew its strength every century. And ever since that day, my family has stood vigilant, fighting against Dracula whenever his evil returns to threaten our land.

Ivan sits in silence, pondering the Hunter's words.

IVAN

How could we have not known of this?

FATHER MUELLER

Alas, memories are short and kingdoms are quick to amend history. Even within the Church there is scepticism toward such things.

SIMON

She's here.

Ivan and Mueller look outside into the foggy night, bewildered.

IVAN

I don't see anything. How can you tell?

SIMON

Fog doesn't move like that.

41. EXT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Simon stands in the middle of the fog. Resolute. Fearless.

Father Mueller and Ivan watch from the door and wait.

SIMON

Dorina. Show yourself.

The fog swirls and coalesces, first taking the shape and then the intricate details of the young Dorina.

DORINA

You know me? How flattering.

Her demeanor is different. Not like a 16 year old. There's an adult confidence about her. A flirtatious inflection in her voice. She moves toward him.

SIMON

Stop.

Simon raises a crucifix. The sight of the holy icon weakens Dorina. She turns away, unable to look at it.

DORINA

(sobbing)

I just wanted to see my little brothers again. I wanted to hold them one last time before I go away forever.

Dorina's lamentation moves Ivan to tears. He steps forward, but Mueller bars him with an arm.

SIMON

Don't be fooled, Ivan.

DORINA

Please let me be.

SIMON

Remember what she is now. She's undead. A minion of Satan.

DORINA

I'm not!

SIMON

She'll say anything to get you to invite her inside. And when she does--

Ivan pushes past Mueller. He holds the silver knife ready.

SIMON

--she'll kill both of your children.

FATHER MUELLER

Simon! Look out!

Simon turns just in time to get grazed by Ivan's knife. The farmer knocks the crucifix out of Simon's hand followed by a swift punch to the head. Simon falls to the grass in a daze.

Ivan runs to Dorina and holds her in his arms.

IVAN

Dorina, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I wasn't there for you.

Father and daughter both share tears and tightly embrace.

IVAN

Forgive me. Please forgive me. I beg you.

DORINA

There's nothing to forgive, Papa. It wasn't your fault. Come. Let's wake Matei and Emil. I want to see them.

IVAN

Yes. Of course. They'll want to know that you're alright.

Taking her hand, Ivan leads her toward the house. Father Mueller stands at the entrance.

IVAN

Move out of the way, Father.

FATHER MUELLER

Never. Not for your life or theirs.

IVAN

I won't ask again.

FATHER MUELLER

Think for a second, Ivan. You nearly killed a man. And will you kill me? All to simply let your daughter into your house?

The truth of Mueller's words hits Ivan hard. He becomes disoriented. It's as though he's trying to see through a haze.

IVAN

Maybe... I need to sit down...

Ivan sits down in the grass.

DORINA

Papa, listen to me. You don't need to be afraid.

Father Mueller begins uttering a prayer of protection.

DORINA

I would never hurt you or anyone in the family. I just want to see them. I just want to say goodbye. Father Mueller's too blinded by religious nonsense--

The cleric's prayers grow louder and more intense.

DORINA

SILENCE!

Dorina pounces at Mueller, eyes fiery red and hands ready to ensnare.

SNAP!

Dorina stops short a few inches from Mueller's throat. She clutches at her neck, trying to free herself from the lash of Simon's whip.

The Hunter struggles to pull Dorina back from the cleric.

Mueller regains his courage and raises his right hand in front of the vampire. Wrapped around his wrist is a prayer rope with a knot in the shape of the cross.

Dorina screeches and falls to her knees, reacting as though blinded with a hot poker to her eyes.

FATHER MUELLER

You will not enter this house. You will not harm those children and add to your hellish legions. In Christ's name, I command you to be gone!

With a fierce jerk from his whip, Simon pulls Dorina back toward him and, with his sica, cleaves her head from her body, all in one swift motion.

Ivan gives an angonized howl upon seeing his daughter dismembered.

SIMON

Take him inside. Keep him quiet.

Father Mueller guides the grieving Ivan into the house.

Simon draws a stake and mallet from his leather bag. He places the tip of the wooden instrument over the heart of the headless body. He takes a deep breath and strikes.

Blood erupts from the newly-made wound. The body twitches violently. He strikes again. The hands grasp at the air, clawing in futility. A final strike. The body goes limp.

Simon pulls a clove of garlic from his bag. Taking the severed head, he gently opens the mouth and places the plant inside. He softly prays.

Ivan charges out the door and reaches for Simon's throat.

IVAN

You butcher! You murderer! You took
my child from me!

Father Mueller pulls Ivan off of Simon.

FATHER MUELLER

Ivan, look. Look!

The cleric points to the severed head. Dorina's previous expression of pure, ungodly hatred has been replaced with a serene countenance.

FATHER MUELLER

She's at peace now. All has been
made right.

Ivan violently shoves Mueller off of him.

IVAN

"Right"? How could this be called
"right"? You slaughtered a child.

FATHER MUELLER

She was not the Dorina you knew.
She was under Dracula's curse.

SIMON

Save your breath, Father. It's no
use.

IVAN

Get off my land! Go! Heretics!
Murderers! Blasphemers!

Simon and Mueller back away and mount their horses.

Ivan cradles the remains of his daughter, trying in vain to rejoin the head to the body as he mourns.

As Simon turns his horse to leave, he sees Matei and Emil coming outside to investigate. Their eyes are young and innocent, unready for the horrors in front of them.

INT. CHURCH - MUELLER'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Simon winces as he treats his sewn up wound with a medicinal herb.

Father Mueller brings him a cup of wine to help dull the pain.

The men drink in reflective silence.

SIMON

(hesitant)

There's something I haven't told you. Five nights ago, a woman came to visit me at my hut. She claimed to be lost. I made the mistake of allowing her inside and she nearly killed me. In all the years I've lived in Transylvania, I've never once encountered a vampire in this land. Not until that moment. I wasn't sure what to make of the situation until I received your message. Then it all became clear. I have to make the venture to Castle Dracula.

FATHER MUELLER

Alone?

SIMON

Yes. It's too great a risk to involve anyone else. I'm afraid I owe you an apology, Father--

FATHER MUELLER

No, Simon. I am a shepherd of this church. It's my responsibility to guard my flock. I failed to do that. And now a man has lost not only his child, but perhaps his faith in the Holy Church. I can only take comfort in knowing that his daughter is at rest with our Lord now.

Simon refills the cleric's cup.

SIMON

What do you think will happen?

FATHER MUELLER

Bishop Stoia is uncompromising in matters of doctrine. And despite the Protestants taking over our country, he has considerable sway in the local government. He'll likely have us tried and executed.

SIMON

Then we both need to get out of here.

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

I have friends in the northwest in Ondol. You can stay with them.

FATHER MUELLER

No, child. I'll remain here and continue my priestly duties until the authorities come for me. You, however, must finish the work we've started. I will be your advocate and do what I can to delay their search for you. But you must go and you must go now.

Simon gives deference to his friend and spiritual guide.

SIMON

With your blessing, Father.

Father Mueller performs a rite upon the Hunter.

FATHER MUELLER

With my blessing. God be with you, Simon Belmont.

42. EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - SUNRISE

The light of the day cascades over Transylvania, creating a sense of beauty and peace that belies the lurking chaos.

43. INT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Mueller lights his votive candle.

44. INT. SIMON'S HOMESTEAD - DAY

Simon begins writing in a leatherbound book at candlelight.

SIMON (V.O.)

(from the journal)

"Today begins my journey to Castle Dracula. I know not what lies ahead of me."

INTERCUT BETWEEN FATHER MUELLER AND SIMON

Mueller performs the rite of the eucharist. He breaks the bread and drinks from the wine.

Simon collects various tools and items from his armory: a chain with a spiked ball, two small bottles of holy water, and a wurfkreuz (throwing cross).

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

"I may not survive this quest. But if it's God's will that I not return, I wish to leave behind an account for my brethren."

Mueller kneels at the foot of the crucifix. He bows his head.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

"Here I will record the ordeals I face as I come against the forces of darkness. An account of utter horror. A testament of bloodshed."

Simon drags out a dusty wooden chest and opens it. Inside is a leather breastplate adorned with the image of a serpent coiled around a dagger. The Belmont coat of arms.

Mueller prays fervently, his shoulders sagging from the weight of anxiety.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

"God grant me courage."

Simon slips the breastplate on and straps it tight. He secures each of the items onto his belt and leather bag. He takes a deep breath. He's ready.

Mueller crosses himself and rises to his feet. He turns to face a group of knights waiting to arrest him. Bishop Stoia is among them, a rueful expression on his face.

Simon opens the door to discover a ghostly carriage awaiting him. A driver, clad in black, stands beside the horses.

DRIVER

Count Dracula wishes to meet with you.

45. INT. PRISON - DAY

Mueller is shackled to the ceiling naked, hanging by his wrists after a severe beating. He raises his gaze to see Bishop Stoia standing before him.

BISHOP STOIA

Do you have anything to say?

No response.

BISHOP STOIA

I've petitioned for leniency on your behalf. The only reason they haven't put you on the rack is because I promised them your cooperation.

FATHER MUELLER
I've told you what I know.

BISHOP STOIA
You've told me nothing. You've spoken of vampires and Count Dracula. Heretical nonsense. I need something I can take to the authorities. Where is Simon Belmont?

FATHER MUELLER
I don't know where he is. But God's providence has called him to Castle Dracula, where battle will be joined once again.

More superstition. Bishop Stoia struggles to maintain his composure. He summons a guard.

BISHOP STOIA
Unchain the prisoner. Put him back in his cell. See to it that his wounds are treated and he's well-fed.

The guard begins unlocking the shackles that are barely keeping Mueller upright.

Bishop Stoia looks at Mueller with deep sadness.

BISHOP STOIA
God forgive you, Theodore.

FATHER MUELLER
God forgive us both. We should've done more.

46. EXT. LAKESIDE - DUSK

The phantom carriage arrives from the forest, coming to an abrupt stop along the edge of the water.

Simon steps out of the carriage. He looks to the Driver, who points a shriveled finger further down the lakeside.

The Hunter walks on as directed, studying the unfamiliar scenery. He stops and looks at the crystal blue lake. It forms a U-shape around the mountains. At the top is Castle Dracula.

DRACULA (O.C.)
Captivating, isn't it?

Simon swerves with lightning-fast reflexes, his whip and sica already drawn and ready. The Count stands before him in long, elegant robes of black and scarlet trim.

Dracula approaches Simon, undeterred by the Hunter. The Count takes in the sight of the lake and mountains.

DRACULA

Lake Hermannstadt has provided me many advantages. But its beauty is what I prize most. So many mysteries and sights yet unseen. Look.

The light of the descending sun dances across the lake, creating a beautiful shimmer that ripples along the water.

DRACULA

A moment of sublime beauty, here and gone. Never to be captured again. Time after time, war has brought desolation to our country. And here we are again on the edge of conflict.

SIMON

Why did you bring me here, Count?

DRACULA

To spare our land from further desolation. It's within your power to do so. I offer you a proposal.

Dracula removes a map from within his robes and offers it to Simon.

DRACULA

There is a substantial piece of land in my domain, untouched by human hands. The soil is rich, the animals are plenty, and it borders on a river. This land is yours to inhabit and use as you see fit. You may bring family and neighbors to create a settlement. You can build churches and worship your God in peace. You can even be their king. Whatever you choose to do with your territory, I will not invade or interfere. I have only one condition. You must agree to end our hostilities and allow me to proceed with my designs.

Simon's eyes show no sign of being swayed. A flicker of frustration from Dracula.

DRACULA

You appear unconvinced by my proposition. I will elaborate. This truce will secure your legacy.

(MORE)

DRACULA (CONT'D)

If you decide to continue down the path of war, I will destroy you and stamp out your bloodline. When I have finished, there will be no memory of the Belmonts. This war has lasted for centuries and I will do what I must to bring it to an end, one way or the other. You can be humanity's beacon of hope or the harbinger of its destruction. What say you, Belmont?

The Hunter relaxes himself from his fighting stance. He allows himself a small smile.

SIMON

"For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"

Dracula's eyes burn red.

DRACULA

Foolish words from a martyred man.

SIMON

Better to be forgotten than remembered as cowering before Satan. You have my answer, Count.

The sun has set at last. Darkness.

DRACULA

Then our war continues.

Simon hurls his whip at the Count, but the vampire is too fast. Dracula has vanished.

The Hunter has not yet sensed that the Driver is standing behind him.

47. INT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Soil rises and headstones are turned aside. Fingers push through dirt and decayed faces emerge from graves. The dead are awake.

48. INT. JOVA - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

It's quiet. Those who aren't in the inn have retired to their homes.

At the center of the town square is the charred body of what was once Father Mueller, bound to a stake.

The only thing untouched by the flame is the prayer rope gripped tightly in his right hand.

The mob of ghouls shamble into town, moaning and gurgling from hunger.

49. INT. JOVA INN - NIGHT

Bishop Stoia sits alone at a table with a glass of wine. He's the only one that isn't enjoying himself. His mind, like his gaze, is far away.

The Bartender arrives with more alcohol.

BARTENDER

You asked for a bottle of wine?

BISHOP STOIA

Yes. Thank you.

BARTENDER

It's getting late. Will you be needing a room? I can speak with the innkeeper to arrange something.

BISHOP STOIA

No, that won't be necessary. Thank you.

The Bartender looks out the window and sees the remains of the execution.

BARTENDER

Shame about the Father. He seemed to have a heart for Jova. Guess there was more to him than we knew.

His words are like the twist of a knife in Stoia's heart.

The Bartender begins pulling the curtain to hide the gruesome sight when he suddenly stops. His eyes widen with horror.

BARTENDER

God in heaven.

Bishop Stoia rises from the table to see the ghouls congregating outside. One of the undead monsters spots the light from the inn. It begins approaching.

BARTENDER

Everyone get away from the windows. Bar the doors. Quickly!

The men move tables, chairs, and anything heavy to obstruct the doors while the bar maids cover the curtains and pass out makeshift weapons.

The Bartender puts out the last lantern. Whispers as everyone waits in the darkness.

THUMP. THUMP. The sound of hands banging against the door.

A villager begins murmuring the Lord's Prayer. Another man follows. The Bartender joins in as well. Pretty soon everyone in the room is praying. All except for Bishop Stoia, who's stunned from fear.

Their petitions are drowned out as the banging grows louder and more numerous. Soon it sounds like a drumroll announcing an execution.

A bar maids shrieks, unable to contain her terror.

One of the windows shatter. Ghastly hands reach inside for living flesh. The Bartender uses a knife to hack away at the undead intruders.

The front door is broken down and ghouls hungrily pour into the inn.

Stoia is shaken out of his fear. He now has clarity. He grabs a lantern from the bar.

Everyone falls back to the furthest part of the inn. They brandish their crude weapons and prepare to fight for their lives or die trying.

Stoia steps in front of the villagers and lights the lantern craddled in his arm. He throws it at the swarm of ghouls, unleashing a ball of flame that engulfs the monsters.

The bishop directs the villagers to a nearby window. The opportunity for escape creates chaos as the villagers fight to squeeze through the narrow opening.

The flaming ghouls advance on the quarreling humans.

50. EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT

Simon faces the Driver, ready for a battle.

SIMON

You must be here to take me home.

DRIVER

My master has given me leave to
kill you with utmost excruciation.

The Driver casts off his cloak, revealing his true form: ROWDAIN, a demonic reanimated skeleton. The creature's bones are blackened and cracked from centuries of battle and decay. He holds out his hand and conjures a broadsword.

Rowdain's bare jaws open to unleash an unholy roar. With a great leap, he brings his sword down on Simon.

The Hunter blocks the creature's sword with his sica, but only barely. Rowdain's strength is incredible, his sword drawing ever closer to Simon's flesh.

Simon drops to his knee and flips the skeleton over top of him.

Rowdain recovers quickly and rushes to attack once more. Simon is on the defensive. Every move he makes is a parry and dodge. There's no opening for a counterattack.

A stray swipe from Rowdain's broadsword cuts the strap to Simon's leather bag of tools. He's left with no choice but to leave it behind. The creature is relentless.

Simon locks blades with Rowdain. Gathering his strength, he shoves the demon back. Simon draws a vial of holy water from his belt pouch and casts it at the creature. The vial explodes on impact, creating a white-blue flame.

The Hunter quickly retreats into the nearby woods.

51. INT. JOVA - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The town has become an inferno as the villagers attempt to escape from their homes. A select few are brave enough to stay behind to keep the ghouls at bay.

Bishop Stoia helps the town elder Gavril load families onto a wagon.

BISHOP STOIA

Head east to Kleinenberg. There's a monastery there. Tell them Bishop Stoia sent you.

Stoia gives Gavril his prayer rope, distinctively crafted with beautiful jewel-like beads.

BISHOP STOIA

Show them this. They will believe you.

A low moan announces the approach of ghouls.

BISHOP STOIA

Go now. God be with you.

The wagon races out of the town. The villagers watch the shrinking sight of Bishop Stoia making his last stand against the ghouls, ready to die.

52. INT. WOODS - NIGHT

Simon runs deep into the woods, weaving through trees to create distance and obstacles for his foe.

Rowdain pursues. There's a gaping hole in his ribcage caused by the holy water's corrosive power. Despite this, the creature walks with disturbing patience and quiet.

The Hunter climbs up a tree and waits for Rowdain to approach. He catches his breath as he listens for his enemy.

The click of skeletal feet against soil. It's him.

Simon perches on the tree limb, sica ready. His eyes struggle to pierce through the darkness.

The clicking stops.

Simon freezes. He waits.

SIMON
(sotto voce)
Where are you?

Out of impatience, Simon slowly starts toward the neighboring tree limb. He discovers he's not alone. Rowdain is at direct eye level across from him. Simon nearly falls out of the tree.

The skeleton creature crawls toward him, one hand in front of the other.

Simon backs away, struggling to keep balance as he runs out of room to escape.

Rowdain rises to his feet and summons his broadsword once more. He raises the blade to strike--

The Hunter lashes his whip to another limb and swings away toward a distant tree.

As his momentum carries him forward, his weight is too much for the tree limb. It snaps, sending Simon plummeting. The Hunter desperately grabs at tree branches to break his 50-foot fall, only managing to slow his descent. He hits the dirt, the wind knocked out of him.

A long moment passes. Simon regains consciousness, slowly opening his eyes. The tree limbs above are directly in his path of vision. Rowdain has disappeared again. He turns his head to look for any sign of the creature on the ground. Nothing. He closes his eyes and tries to steady his breathing.

A rhythmic pattering catches Simon's attention. It's far away but growing closer. He inclines his head in the direction of the sound. It becomes more distinct.

He recognizes it as the clopping of horse hooves.

Simon's eyes snap open. Rowdain, riding on a skeletal horse, is charging straight at him!

The Hunter rolls out of the creature's path, narrowly escaping death. He leaps to his feet and prepares himself.

Rowdain comes around to charge again. The skeletal horse lets out a shrill neigh as it moves at unnatural speed. The creature has his sword ready to cut the Hunter down. In mere seconds he has reached his foe. He swings his sword at the Hunter.

Simon matches the creature's speed with a parry, but the sheer force of the broadsword shatters his sica.

With little time to plan, Simon retreats to a narrow path. He looks at the space between the trees and gets an idea.

Rowdain screeches. His horse rears back and charges for one final attack.

The creature searches for the Hunter among the trees. Embers of rage burn where Rowdain once had eyes. He begins cutting down trees as he rides.

Simon steps out onto the path and reveals himself. He has no sword. He has no whip. He'll be easily crushed.

No whip?

Rowdain realizes too late. He sees the whip lashed between two trees.

The horse runs directly into the whip's taut lash. The force of impact decapitates the skeletal steed and catapults Rowdain head-first into a tree.

Simon retrieves his whip and starts toward Rowdain. He stops. The creature's broadsword lies in the dirt.

Rowdain gets to his feet. A jagged crack runs along his skull and his jaw is unhinged. His resolve remains firm. He turns to face Simon.

The Hunter is wielding the broadsword. Rowdain holds out his hand to summon the blade. It remains in Simon's firm grasp.

SIMON

It no longer belongs to you.

Water drips from the edge of the blade. A few feet away lies a discarded vial of holy water.

Rowdain growls and pounces at the Hunter. Simon hacks off the creature's arm. Then another arm. Then a leg.

The creature is immobile and helpless. Rowdain can only stay upright on his remaining leg.

Simon swings his whip overhead in a circle once, twice, three times before striking Rowdain, pulverizing him.

53. EXT. LAKE SIDE - NIGHT

The phantom carriage remains as it was last seen, the horses patiently waiting for their next destination.

Simon puts out a hand to caress the steeds, but hesitates. He looks at the beasts with caution.

SIMON

I hope you're more friendly than
that last horse.

He climbs into the driver's seat and takes the reins. He turns the carriage around and sees colors of red and orange stretching toward the sky. Fire.

SIMON

Jova.

54. INT. JOVA - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Count Dracula casually strides among the carnage and destruction, admiring his army's work.

He stops outside a burning church and watches the flames as they consume the house of worship. He smiles, relishing every second of its desecration.

Death materializes before Dracula.

DEATH

My Lord, I bring news. Rowdain has
failed in his task. The Belmont
warrior is approaching Jova as we
speak.

DRACULA

Let him come. It is of no
consequence. Rowdain may not have
killed Belmont, but he served his
purpose as a useful distraction.
Our forces will advance into Yomi,
as planned. My powers yet grow. By
midnight tomorrow, all of hell's
strength will be in my grasp.

The church's roof caves in, causing the remaining structure to collapse.

With a satisfied sneer, Dracula turns with a great swirl of his cloak and starts toward the town's gate.

DRACULA

Come. Let us go out this evening
for pleasure. The night is still
young and I thirst.

55. EXT. JOVA - GATES - DAY

The phantom carriage arrives outside of the city. The fires have died down into black smoke. Simon climbs out of the carriage to investigate.

56. INT. JOVA - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Devastation. Nothing but ruined buildings and dead bodies. Simon sees the execution site for Father Mueller at the center. He goes to it.

SIMON

Forgive me, my friend.

BISHOP STOIA (O.C.)

(weakly)

No.

Simon jumps in surprise. Stoia is lying beside Mueller's stake, covered in dirt and ash. There's little left of his robes, his blistered and torn flesh exposed to the elements. His arms are wrapped around the bottom of the stake as though he were protecting it.

BISHOP STOIA

I'm the one who needs forgiveness.
I could've saved Father Mueller. I
could've let him go.

SIMON

But your pride and stiff-necked
skepticism got in the way.

Stoia gives a hacking cough and leans his head against the stake, exhausted. He nods and concedes.

BISHOP STOIA

My sister was accused of
witchcraft. Claims from a scorned
suitor. She was thrown in the river
and drowned. If she had been a
witch she would've floated out of
the water, they said. But they
waited too long. It was the Church,
Belmont.

(MORE)

BISHOP STOIA (CONT'D)

Local priests who peddled
superstition without a brain among
them. They had to be held
accountable, so that's what I did.

The bishop's anger triggers another coughing fit, causing him
to vomit blood.

Simon appears unmoved by Stoia's words or condition.

SIMON

Did anyone escape?

BISHOP STOIA

A few families. Some of us stayed
behind to fight back.

SIMON

Do you know where Dracula's army is
heading next?

BISHOP STOIA

The last I saw of them, they were
traveling eastward.

SIMON

Veros is the closest town from
here. I have to warn them.

BISHOP STOIA

There's no time. You know the
stories. The eve of St. George is
approaching. Evil will have full
sway. You must get to the castle
and stop Dracula before he becomes
too powerful.

Stoia falls on his back, catching his breath and gathering
strength.

BISHOP STOIA

I wanted to make amends. For
Mueller and my country. For God.

The bishop's eyes are wide and desperate. Simon recognizes
this as the look of a dying man. He searches for words.

SIMON

"For godly sorrow worketh
repentance to salvation not to be
repented of: but the sorrow of the
world worketh death." Rest now with
our Lord. His righteousness claims
you.

BISHOP STOIA
(sighing)
At last.

Stoia closes his eyes and grows still.

Simon's gaze shifts back to the remains of Father Mueller. He cuts the cleric's body down from the stake and finds a sheet to drape over it beside Stoia.

SIMON
I'll come back to bury you. I
promise.

He looks to the sky. Dark clouds are forming and moving quickly.

57. EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - DAY

The clouds gather above the dreaded fortress, blocking out the light of the sun. A bolt of lightning strikes the tower. But instead of destroying the structure, the electricity surges through the whole castle, invigorating it with unholy power.

58. INT. TOWER - DAY

Dracula lies in his tomb, awakened by the storm.

DRACULA
Yes. It begins.

A MONTAGE:

59. INT. CLOCK TOWER - DAY

Gears begin moving. The ticking of an enormous clock echoes against the walls of the castle.

60. INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - DAY

Chains operating pulley systems drag cages from out of pits of corrosive liquids.

61. EXT. BORGO PASS - DAY

Simon rides a single phantom horse with preternatural speed. The environment around the Hunter seems to blur and bend as man and steed hasten to their destination.

62. INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

Candelabras flare to life, illuminating the massive room.

63. EXT. MOAT - DAY

Enormous steel floodgates are lifted by chain pulleys, allowing water from Lake Hermannstadt to flow in and fill the once-empty ring around the castle perimeter.

64. EXT. BORGO PASS - DAY

Simon sees the castle rapidly approaching as he grips the reins. The speed of the horse is overwhelming.

65. EXT. DRAW BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge slowly lowers with a loud clang.

MONTAGE ENDS.

66. EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - GATES - DUSK

The rusty gates open to receive their new visitor.

Simon dismounts from the horse. He pets the steed in gratitude.

SIMON

Don't take offense, but I think
this will be our last ride, my
friend.

The Hunter makes his way toward the open gate.

Lined up outside the entrance, impaled skeletons from long ago turn their heads and watch as the Hunter steps into the Count's domain.

Once past the gate, Simon gets his first good look at the fortress. The architecture is a strange amalgam. Most of the castle is Romanian in style. Other parts show traces of Greco-Roman, German, or unknown origin.

Simon reaches the entrance, an old iron door. It's already unlocked.

67. INT. CASTLE DRACULA - PASSAGE - DUSK

Inside is a vast stone corridor leading to a winding staircase. The passage has no light except for what's coming from outside. Simon leaves the door open and proceeds.

68. INT. GREAT HALL - DUSK

Simon reaches the top of the stairs, the great hall creating a stark contrast to the confining passage.

Golden candelabras shine down on the beautiful tapestries and paintings. Beside the artwork are suits of armor and antique weaponry. A dining table sits a few meters away from a lively hearth. Scarlet curtains, once beautiful, now hang over the windows in tatters.

Simon's eyes stop on a painting that depicts a battle between Romanians and the Ottoman Turks. At the center of the artwork is a warrior on horseback. His sword is raised to the sky and his eyes are filled with rage. The expression is unmistakable. It's Dracula.

DRACULA (O.C.)

Good evening.

The Count's voice echoes across the great hall. It takes Simon a moment to find the source of the greeting.

He spots Dracula overlooking him from the balcony on the far end of the room.

DRACULA

Welcome to my house. I must commend you for your skill in battle. Rowdian was a formidable warrior and his horses a worthy prize. Regrettably, I'll be unable to entertain you this night. However, you may find the other company in this castle to be suitably stimulating.

A door opens. Dozens of ghouls enter, their eyes locked on Simon. With hungry growls, they attack.

The Hunter draws his sword and cuts two down, but the flood of revenants continues towards him.

He searches for an exit. He spots a door a few meters from the hearth and dining table. The ghouls are directly in his path.

Simon begins planning. He looks up to the ceiling candelabra. It's too high to reach with his whip.

His eyes go to the armor and weaponry on the wall. He grabs the largest shield. Taking a deep breath, he ducks behind the shield and runs through the sea of ghouls, barreling past them.

The Hunter leaps over the dining table and turns it on its side to create a barrier. He chops off one of the table's legs.

Next, he tugs on one of the scarlet curtains and pulls it to the floor.

The ghouls draw closer, fighting each other to get to the front so they can get a bite of fresh meat.

Simon flicks the curtain over top of the ghouls, covering them in a blanket of red.

Taking the table leg, the Hunter lights it from the hearth. With his new torch, he touches the flame to the curtain.

The fire rapidly spreads, setting the trapped ghouls aflame.

Simon runs to the door, giving a spare glance at the balcony. Dracula is gone.

69. INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Simon finds himself in a disused kitchen. Various cooking tools and utensils sit in their respective places, untouched and covered in dust accumulated over two centuries.

He moves a cabinet to barricade the door. Catching his breath, he looks through his leather bag and finds a loaf of bread. He takes one of the hanging kitchen knives, wipes the dusty blade on his sleeve, and cuts a slice from the loaf. He eats while contemplating his next move.

SIMON (V.O.)
(from the journal)
"It has taken me no time to
discover just how perilous this
castle can be."

70. INT. SERVANT QUARTERS - NIGHT

Simon explores the corridor of vacant bedrooms. The accommodations are spartan in comparison to the rest of the castle.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)
"What's worse is that it's near
impossible to navigate. The
architecture is like a twisted
Daedalus labyrinth, perplexing and
forgoing all logic or reason.
Natural law has no dominion in this
godforsaken place."

The Hunter sees the full moon through a bedroom window. It appears larger than normal, like it's being summoned to illuminate the fortress. The sight is hypnotic in its ethereal beauty.

SIMON (V.O., CONT'D)
"On the night of St. George, I'm
not sure which place is worse to
be, Castle Dracula or out in the
countryside. But if I don't stop
him tonight, nowhere will be safe.
I must press on."

Simon shakes off the daze and goes on his way.

71. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Dracula stands at his window, soaking in the rays of
moonlight, allowing it to strengthen him. The Grim Reaper
hovers close behind.

DEATH
Yomi has fallen. We now have total
control over the southern
territories.

The Count looks to the clock tower. The hands read 9 o'clock.

DRACULA
Then we should be strong enough to
proceed. I will raise the army.

The King Vampire starts to utter an incantation in a
forbidden language.

72. EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - NIGHT

The Count's spell creates a dark miasma that emanates from
the castle. It crackles with energy as the wind carries it
beyond the fortress.

73. EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The miasma spreads through fields and forests, twisting and
corrupting everything it touches. Gentle animals are
transformed into rabid beasts. Delicate flowers become
venomous snares. Rivers become putrified.

74. INT. YOMI - NIGHT

The vile fumes settle around the ruined village. It divides
itself into smaller clouds that move swiftly through the
settlement, searching.

One of the miasma clouds hovers over a scorched body. It
descends and seeps into the cadaver, becoming one with flesh
and bone.

The body twitches. It rises to its feet in a perverse contortion. The eyes open, bloodshot. Bones began to crack and flesh stretches, taking on horrific form.

75. INT. MONASTERY - TOWER - NIGHT

Gavril helps serve as a watchman with one of the monks.

MONK

We gladly appreciate your help, sir. But it's unnecessary. You should stay indoors with your family.

GAVRIL

Respectfully, Father, I refuse. As long as I know those things are out there, I will keep watch every night until this is over.

The monk doesn't bother arguing. He can see from Gavril's eyes that there's no changing his mind. They're the eyes of someone who has seen unspeakable horror.

Gavril studies the surrounding areas with the focus of a hawk searching for prey.

GAVRIL

So many lives needlessly lost. We should've listened to Father Mueller and that Belmont boy.

MONK

Belmont? You mean to tell me--

GAVRIL

Look! Out there, toward the forest.

Both Gavril and the monk look ahead and see the dark haze flowing out from among the trees.

The monk views the scene more closely through a Dutch telescope. His hands shake from fear. There's more than the miasma coming from the forest.

GAVRIL

What can you see? Is it them? The undead?

MONK

We must get everyone inside and bar every entrance. Hell's army is here.

The monk gives Gavril the telescope to see for himself.

Marching toward the monastery are hundreds of monsters of various sizes and shapes.

76. INT. MONASTERY - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

The families are escorted inside by the monks. The door is hastily barred shut behind them.

The hegumen, leader of the monastery, steps forward to address the visitors.

HEGUMEN

Allow me to have your attention.
This concerns all of you. His
Grace, the bishop, has charged me
with the responsibility of seeing
to your care and protection. And
now it seems that my leadership
will be put to the test. On this
night, Count Dracula has amassed an
army far larger and deadlier than
the monsters you saw in your town.

Commotion erupts from the hegumen's words. Women and children begin crying. Men shout with indignation.

HEGUMEN

I know that you're all scared after
everything that has happened. But
we must cling to the light of hope.
Dracula is an enemy of God and he
comes to stamp out our faith. To
drive us apart and crush us! Yet as
long as one of us lives, so does
the light. And where there is
light, he cannot win. We will
weather this assault. Hell will not
prevail. Hold fast and true,
brother and sisters. The light will
triumph!

"The Belmonts will fight for us!" a villager shouts.

The comment draws out strong words of both support and opposition. It swiftly escalates into physical conflict.

The hegumen and monks try to quell the violence, but are swept up in the competing mobs.

As the chaos unfolds, Ivan watches from a corner of the sanctuary. He draws his two boys close to him. His sunken eyes show contempt for his fellow countrymen.

DRACULA (V.O.)

(mesmerizing)

Yes. Leave these fools to quarrel.

A voice in his mind. It's powerful, authoritative.
Irrestistable.

Ivan moves to the entrance. He starts to lift the bar from the door.

A hand reaches out to stop him. It's Gavril.

DRACULA (V.O.)
Let nothing stand in your way.

As soon as Gavril sees Ivan's eyes, he knows. But before he can shout for help, Ivan stabs him with the silver knife.

He takes the bar off the door and pushes it wide open.

At the center of the monastery's courtyard is Dorina. She's fully restored to the beauty and vitality she had before death. She gives her father a radiant smile.

Carried by the Count's trance, Ivan walks toward the vision of Dorina. The walls of the monastery swirl and morph...

77. INT. FARMLAND - DAY

Ivan's back on his property. His daughter is there with him, alive and well. It all feels surreal. Tears fill his eyes.

DORINA
It's alright, Papa. It's all over now. You served the Count well.

IVAN
The Count?

DRACULA (V.O.)
Yes. The remaining survivors of Jova will become a valued addition to my army.

The scenic farmland begins to change. Traces of the monastery, desecrated and aflame, are becoming visible. His reality is literally coming apart.

DRACULA (V.O.)
Those deemed unfit will find use in more creative ways.

SCREAMS OF CHILDREN ring out.

IVAN
You monster!

A blinding flash of light!

78. INT. MONASTERY - COURTYARD - NIGHT

The illusion has disappeared completely. The monastery is in ruins. Ivan is the only living soul that remains.

DRACULA (V.O.)

You've fulfilled your role as a
valuable pawn. I now leave you to
your fate.

Overcome with grief, Ivan can do nothing but sag to the ground and weep.

79. INT. CASTLE VINEYARD - NIGHT

The servant quarters lead Simon directly outside to the vineyard.

Rows of lush grape vines create a path going deeper into the garden. Simon can see another structure in the distance that connects to the castle keep. He continues on.

As the path grows closer to the structure, it becomes decorated with Greco-Roman statues. Sculptures depict the old pagan gods, with particular focus on Dionysus, Pan, Thanatos, and Hades. Other statues are of monsters. Harpies, Gorgons, and the Minotaur.

Simon reaches the structure. The door is covered in moss and vines. Clearing it away, he recognizes the distinctive shape and design.

SIMON

A chapel?

80. INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Simon immediately feels unsettled when he enters. The walls are of a deep red that bathes the room in an ominous glow. Stain glass artwork shows the fall of Satan from heaven.

At the front of the room is a statue of a serpent coiled around a cross, as if crushing the life from the holy icon.

Disgusted, Simon kicks the statue over and shatters it.

GRIGORE, high priest of the occultists, makes his presence known.

GRIGORE

You're trespassing. How dare you
come into the Count's home and
commit this act of sacrilege!

SIMON

This entire castle is an act of sacrilege. And this room is a celebration of it. The walls are painted in the blood of innocents and you erect idols to worship the Devil. You will face judgment. Leave Castle Dracula. Turn away from your evil ways while you still live.

GRIGORE

Not a chance. Our master has promised us immortality and I intend to drink of all the world's pleasures.

Five more occultists enter the room, forming a circle around the Hunter.

Simon uncoils his whip for battle.

GRIGORE

I was once like you, seeking the pious and righteous path. Living to serve God. Then we discovered Dracula's writings, his wisdom. And he showed us a better path. Why live to serve a god when we can become gods ourselves? We've revived the master so that he may complete his conquest. In exchange, he will bring about our ascension--

Simon snaps his whip. Enough talk.

GRIGORE

Very well. Take up your cross. But do it elsewhere.

The high priest gives a flick of his hand.

Magically, the floor beneath Simon vanishes. He drops into darkness.

81. INT. PIT - NIGHT

Simon weakly opens his eyes. With no light, it's almost impossible to see. He can barely make out the outline of the towering figure that's dragging him by his legs across the stone floor. Exhausted, Simon loses consciousness.

82. INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Boiling liquids hiss and smoke as they are poured into a melting pool.

Simon is awakened by the disgusting odor. He finds himself in a cage suspended by chain.

A short, repulsive being called PURICI looks up at him with a wide smile, exposing blackened teeth. The creature isn't quite human. He's unusually short, with stubby arms, long bent legs, and a oversized hunch on his back.

PURICI

Don't you look delicious.

The hunchback pokes Simon's limbs with a stick and inspects him.

PURICI

Yes, very delectable. Shame that the Count has other plans for your body. I can just imagine the taste of your bone marrow. Oh well. There will be others to enjoy. Decebal! Come!

The creature known as DECEBAL sits on the floor against the wall, his hands resting on his knees. He rises and joins Purici. At his full height, he's eight feet tall and barrel-chested with limbs like tree trunks. His yellowed skin is a sewn patchwork of flesh from different corpses. Prominent veins stand out under his slightly translucent skin. Worst of all is the deformed skull wearing a thin, skeletal face and dead eyes.

Simon recognizes the monster as the one who was dragging him.

PURICI

Quite fearsome, isn't he? Sadly, he's a dullard. A failure. He would've been destroyed if I hadn't begged the Count to let me keep him.

Purici scurries up Decebal and perches on the monster's shoulder.

PURICI

He's the perfect slave. Silent and obedient. Who knows? If your parts become used on another failure, I might get a new worker to help me down here.

Purici leans in and inhales Simon's scent.

PURICI

Ah, Belmont blood! Strong blood. We'll use as much of you as we can. No sense in letting good meat go to waste.

Purici directs Decebal toward a table of glass containers preserving different human organs. He steps onto the table and sits beside them, stroking the containers with fond anticipation.

PURICI

The Count is a master of death, but it's not enough to rule that domain. He wishes to hold mastery over life.

SIMON

Only God is master of life.

PURICI

Not so! We have this beautiful specimen as proof. (pats Decebal's arm) We need only perfect our work. That's where you'll help us.

Purici pulls the cover off of a transparent tank. Submerged inside is a being assembled from different body parts. The experiment is unfinished. Most of the attached bones are exposed, lacking muscle or sinew.

PURICI

Our latest creation has been delayed from lack of materials. But the master told me we'll be getting new guests. I'm hoping we'll get someone tall. I'm not happy with the legs on this one. How tall are you?

SIMON

"New guests"? You mean the villagers from Jova?

PURICI

Jova, Veros, Yomi. You of all people should know how swiftly the dead can travel. I'm sure the army has already taken Kleinenberg by now. It's an exciting time to be an artisan of flesh.

Simon looks around the torture chamber and assesses his situation.

SIMON

What if I could find you something even better?

PURICI

Ha! Don't be insulting. You Christians can't even appreciate the taste of human meat.

(MORE)

PURICI (CONT'D)

Why would I expect you to provide me with good materials?

SIMON

Because they're our mutual enemy. The Count's disciples.

PURICI

Ridiculous. The master's disciples aren't my enemy.

SIMON

Then why are they up there and you're down here?

Simon waits as Purici considers his words.

SIMON

While they go out into the world and get their fill of everything, you're stuck in a cave piecing together dead bodies. They grow in power and prestige, while you stay the same lowly servant. Think about it. All that dark magic flowing through them. Strengthening their muscles. Prolonging their lives. That's far better flesh to be using than that of the average peasant.

PURICI

You've made your point. I suppose you'd want your freedom as part of the arrangement. But how would you fulfill your end of the deal?

SIMON

We would need a way of getting me in the same room with them.

PURICI

That's a simple matter. They come to the dungeon every few days to choose a prisoner to sacrifice. Decebal, open the cage.

The hulking creature unlocks the cage's heavy latch and releases Simon.

PURICI

You'll be the bait.

The hunchback flashes another disgusting smile at Simon.

PURICI

PURICI

I'm leaving nothing to chance,
Belmont. If you fail in your task,
I'll at least have your remains to
collect. Do you accept my terms?

83. INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

Grigore, joined by two cyclopean dogmen called psoglavs, follows Purici and Decebal through the dank passages of the dungeon.

GRIGORE

Excellent work, Purici. To have
Belmont all in one piece is quite
impressive. Not even the master
expected such a fortuitous outcome.
We assumed he would only be good
for wormfood after your pet had
found him.

Purici strokes Decebal's misshapen skull.

PURICI

Bah! I know good meat when I see
it. Besdies, Decebal's well under
my control.

Purici points to one of the prison cells. Decebal opens it
it.

A crowd of peasants huddle together in the cell. They quickly
move out of the giant's way.

Simon lies unconscious against the wall. Decebal picks the
Hunter up and throws him over his shoulder.

GRIGORE

You've truly outdone yourself. The
Count will be pleased to have his
mortal enemy on the altar.

PURICI

I could think of no greater way to
honor my master... and no greater
humiliation for this interloper.

84. INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Grigore strides into the chapel. His fellow occultists are
already waiting for him and the ritual has been prepared.

Before Purici and Decebal can enter, Grigore spins on his
heel to halt them.

GRIGORE

The guards will take Belmont from you. This is a sacred room. It must remain untainted by... lesser beings.

Purici gives a courtly bow of deference, concealing his hatred.

PURICI

As you wish.

Purici gestures a command and the giant tosses Simon to the stone floor like a sack of potatoes.

PURICI

When you've finished with him, have your guards deliver the body.

GRIGORE

I very much doubt there will be anything left for you to use, Purici. Now then, be on your way.

Grigore flicks his wrist and magically slams the door in the pair's faces.

The psoglavs place Simon on the altar.

Grigore stands over the Hunter, gloating.

GRIGORE

How ironic to send you out of here for frustrating our plans only to be brought back to become a part of them.

SIMON

Yes.

Simon opens his eyes.

Before Grigore can react, Simon swivels on the altar and locks his legs around the high priest. He grips him with a chokehold, squeezing until his neck breaks.

SIMON

Ironic indeed.

The psoglavs snarl and rush to attack.

Simon reaches into his boot and draws a concealed silver knife. He hurls the blade straight into the head of one of the psoglavs, killing it instantly.

SIMON

Purici! Now!

The door is kicked open. Decebal and Purici stand at the ready. The hunchback tosses a sack to the Hunter.

Simon reaches inside and finds his whip.

The remaining psoglav launches itself into the air, razor claws poised for a killing strike.

Simon dodges the assault and retaliates. The flash of his whip gouges the already hideous psoglav's face.

The five remaining occultists join the psoglav and close in on the Hunter.

Simon snaps his whip to keep them back.

SIMON

Last chance. Leave this castle or
face judgment.

The occultists draw ceremonial knives and move in for the kill.

The Hunter circles and swirls his holy whip above and around him. The lash blurs around Simon, looking like a deadly cyclone. Ribbons of light pour from the whip, surrounding him with divine power.

SIMON

Behold the power of a Belmont!

With a battle cry, Simon's weapon cuts down his foes in swift succession, shearing through cloth and armor, flesh and bone. Not even the psoglav is able to get close.

The Hunter ceases his attack, struggling to catch his breath. He looks down at the glowing whip then to the bodies surrounding him.

Purici gasps at the sight before him.

PURICI

I didn't think you could actually
do it.

Simon's gaze pierces Purici to the core. There's a ferocity long buried that has now been unleashed.

PURICI

Well, um... let's get these bodies
back to the shop.

85. INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Purici enthusiastically clears his work table, making room for Simon and Decebal to place the bodies.

PURICI

What an incredible day. I can't thank you enough for your tremendous deed. I must say that was quite an impressive display of power you showed earlier. Too impressive to let it slip from my grasp.

Decebal stands behind Simon and obstructs the door.

The Hunter reaches for his whip.

PURICI

Don't do anything foolish. I imagine all that effort from battle has left you weary. You'd only be prolonging your suffering.

SIMON

What are you, Purici? A demon?

PURICI

Yes... and no. I once served as a simple servant for the Count. Then he chose me for something infinitely greater, to be a vessel for his power, a demonstration of his vast knowledge and ingenuity.

SIMON

Pathetic wretch. Were it not for your unrepentant depravity, I would pity you.

PURICI

Spare me your sanctimonious drivel. You waste your words on me when they'd be better directed with prayers for a quick death.

Purici signals for Decebal to act, but Simon acts first. The Hunter leaps from the table of bodies, landing on another with glass containers of chemicals.

Simon grabs the closest container at hand and lobs it at Decebal.

The glass harmlessly shatters against the giant.

Simon grabs another and throws with the same effect.

Drenched and covered in shards of glass, Decebal growls and upends the table.

Simon falls to the floor and rolls under another table, crawling into the shadows.

Purici jumps about like an enraged insect.

PURICI

He's hiding under the tables, you
imbecile!

As the hunchback barks his orders, Simon slinks out of the dark to ambush him.

He pulls his lash around Purici's throat.

Purici chokes and frantically kicks his legs, his bug eyes bulging out of their sockets.

The Hunter slowly lowers him from the table to the floor. When Purici's feet touch the ground, the hunchback propels himself nearly two meters in the air, freeing himself from Simon's lash.

Purici gracefully lands on his feet at the other end of the chamber, the muscles of his peculiar legs flexing in a show of strength.

PURICI

Decebal, never mind about making a mess. We can put the pieces back together later. I want us to enjoy tearing him apart.

He grabs a bone saw from the instrument rack beside him.

Decebal retrieves an axe hanging from the wall.

86. INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

The imprisoned villagers hear the echoes of a fierce battle coming from the nearby torture chamber. They begin whispering.

"Was that the man they came for?"

"He's still alive?"

"Who is he?"

"He doesn't stand a chance against them."

"God be with that young man."

"He may be our only hope out of here."

Amidst the prisoners, an old beggar hushes them. He gestures with a wrinkled hand to be still and listen.

BEGGAR

He's a Belmont.

Murmurs of confusion are quickly silenced once more by the Beggar.

BEGGAR

How quickly your parents have
forgotten the wisdom of old. That's
why we're here today. The Belmonts
are a family charged by God to
fight evil. That armor he was
wearing, did you see the symbol?
That's their coat of arms. That boy
is fighting for us.

87. INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Simon pulls out Decebal's axe that's lodged deep into his chestplate, just over the family symbol. The blade's edge has a small trace of blood.

Purici licks his lips at the sight of the gore.

Simon brandishes the new weapon along with his whip.

Decebal lunges to grab the Hunter. Simon dodges the attack and slides under the giant, swinging the axe into Decebal's leg. The monster howls in fury as he goes down like a felled tree.

Purici leaps dizzingly across the room, easily dodging every attack from Simon's whip. He jumps over Simon and kicks off against a wall with bone saw ready.

The hunchback lands on Simon's back. Purici drags the bone saw across the Hunter's arm, drawing a stream of red.

Simon screams in agony. Fueled with adrenaline, he runs backward into the walls, slamming Purici repeatedly against the stone with a loud, wet, crack.

Purici's grip goes slack and he falls to the floor. Immobilized, he can only barely turn his head and watch as the battle unfolds.

Decebal rises. Leaning on his strong leg, he staggers toward Simon with murderous hands outstretched.

Simon prepares to swing his axe, but the giant swats the weapon out of his hand and pins the Hunter against the wall.

Decebal pulls back his free hand and punches Simon in the face.

Simon grabs for his whip. Decebal quickly yanks it out of his hands and tosses it away.

The giant punches him again. And again. Simon's nose breaks.

The Hunter's legs flail as his face continues to get caved in. With each blow, it becomes harder to stay conscious.

Desperate, he tries kicking at Decebal's injured leg. The tip of his boot nearly touches the giant's knee. He tries again, this time only grazing the cloth of Decebal's slacks.

Simon's vision starts to go black. He has only one more chance. Gathering his strength, he thrusts his foot and connects with Decebal's knee in a disgusting squelch.

The giant immediately releases Simon to nurse his wound.

Simon retrieves his whip. Barely able to stand, he searches for a new strategy. His eyes settle on the melting pool.

Decebal groans as he pushes his shattered leg back into place, the splintered bone scraping together as he stands once more.

PURICI

Get up, Decebal! Forget about your leg. I'll get you a new one. Do not let him escape.

Blind with pain and violent obsession, the giant storms toward Simon. Every item and tool in his path becomes a weapon to throw at the Hunter. But Decebal's aim is poor and his projectiles are easily dodged.

Simon waits as Decebal gets closer to him, towards the melting pool.

PURICI

Nowhere to go now, Belmont.

The Hunter pulls a lever and activates the pulleys that pour the corrosives into the pool. Chains clank as each stone urn collects the liquid from the boiler, reaches tipping point, and pours into the pool before returning to start again.

Decebal ceases his rampage. The two-meter melting pool is the only thing separating him from Simon.

The melting pool overflows with the acidic liquid, spilling onto the floor.

Simon readies his whip. Decebal starts toward him, limping as he rounds the edge of the pool.

The Hunter launches his whip. Decebal catches the lash around his wrist, unbothered by the inflicted wound.

Simon smiles. He gives a sharp pull. Decebal falls forward into the pool.

The giant screams and thrashes as the corrosive liquids eat away at his body.

His dead eyes are wide and pathetic as they look to the paralyzed Purici. The giant's body is reduced to nothing in a matter of moments.

Simon pulls back his whip. Most of it is eaten away, leaving nothing but the handle and a quarter of the lash.

SIMON
Where's my bag?

PURICI
(spits blood)
Why should I tell you?

SIMON
Because if you don't, I'll give you over to the villagers. They'll make everything you've just gone through look gentle by comparison.

PURICI
Alright, alright, fine! It's under my bed.

Simon reaches under the filthy cot and finds his leather bag. Everything is still there.

He takes the dungeon keys off the disabled hunchback.

PURICI
Wait. What are you doing? Where are you going?

SIMON
To find Dracula.

PURICI
You're not going to kill me?

SIMON
No. I'm going to do you a favor. I'm going to leave you here for your master to find you. If he's as powerful and worthy of devotion as you boast, he'll give you what you need. If not... you know what will happen.

PURICI
No, Belmont. Please don't leave me here--

SIMON
Think on your sins, Purici. You may not be long for this world. Repent while you still yet live.

Purici protests and screams as Simon slams the chamber door behind him.

88. INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

Simon unlocks the cell containing the villagers. Everyone expresses their delight at seeing the Hunter return. A few look over to the Beggar and regard him with gratitude.

SIMON

We need to find a way out of here.

Simon staggers and leans against the wall.

The Beggar sees the blood trickling down the Hunter's arm.

SIMON

I just need a moment to rest.

Simon collapses.

89. INT. AQUEDUCT - NIGHT

The gentle sound of flowing water reaches Simon's ears. Wrinkled hands bring a cup of water to his lips. He opens his eyes and sees the Beggar.

SIMON

What happened?

BEGGAR

You nearly died. That gash on your arm was worse than expected. We had to close the wound with fire. That's why you've been unconscious for so long, to say nothing of your other injuries. Lie still.

The Beggar touches Simon's broken nose and sets it.

BEGGAR

There. That should help your breathing. I didn't want to do it until you were awake.

The Beggar offers Simon a scrap of leather to put in his nose. He takes it.

SIMON

Thanks. Let's find the others and get moving.

Simon tries to sit up and winces.

BEGGAR

Rest. The others are searching for food and supplies.

SIMON

That's not wise. Do they have any weapons?

BEGGAR

There's no danger here.

SIMON

You're a fool if you believe that, old man.

He tries again to get up. The pain is too much.

BEGGAR

Then I'm in good company. Rest. I will fetch more water.

Simon strikes the floor with his fist. He reaches into his leather bag and retrieves his journal, quill, and ink.

SIMON (V.O.)

(from the journal)

"I've faced a series of delays in my quest tonight. Everything from the Count's fanatics to his abominable experiments have proven to be a thorn in my side. My wound is severe and I've had to take time to rest. I don't know what hour it is. Trapped in the bowels of this castle, neither sun nor moon can offer the comfort of their light."

90. INT. CANAL - NIGHT

The Beggar shuffles along the edge of the canal. He bends down, scoops water and takes a drink.

SIMON (V.O. CONT'D)

"Yet I'm still hopeful. I've found the captured villagers. They've proven their courage and strength of spirit through this awful tribulation. I owe them my life."

A ripple moves across the stream unseen by the Beggar. He scoops up more water and starts back to Simon.

SIMON (V.O.)

"I'll do what I must to get them home."

A scaly, claw-like hand comes up from the water.

91. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Dracula has a tome of spells open, reading details and flipping through pages. He lands on a chapter that displays an illustration of ritual human sacrifice, appalling in detail. He looks over to the clock tower. He slams the spellbook shut.

DRACULA

The altar should've been ready more than an hour ago. Where is Grigore?

Death raises his scythe, using it as a medium with which to sense other beings.

DEATH

He no longer lives. His soul has left this plane.

DRACULA

And Belmont?

DEATH

He remains among us.

DRACULA

Then he has overpowered my servants. Truly a foe worthy of his family name. But where is he now? That's the question. You will go to the chapel and seek answers. I will gather my kin for the next engagement.

Death bows his head and fades away into the shadows.

DRACULA

Concubines... flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood, I have need of you now. Come.

92. INT. STABLE - NIGHT

JOSEPHINE, a shapely vampire, lifts her bloody mouth from the throat of a young man lying on a pile of straw. She hears the Count's voice.

JOSEPHINE

At once, my Count.

93. INT. FOREST - NIGHT

A wagon lies tipped over on the road. A pair of vampires, ADINA and ROSALIA, have just finished draining the blood from a father, mother, and two boys.

DRACULA (V.O.)
I have blood for you unlike any
you've ever tasted.

Hearing his words, the two girls look to each other and smile wide with bloodied fangs.

94. INT. AQUEDUCT - NIGHT

The villagers, along with the Beggar, have returned to Simon. A mother plucks berries off a broken branch she found and feeds them to the Hunter. Several of the men work together and help him to his feet.

95. EXT. AQUEDUCT - NIGHT

The escaping party follows the canal as it leads out to an area resembling an ancient Greek temple. The village blacksmith takes Simon aside.

BLACKSMITH
This is it. We scouted ahead and
found a way out. Over that wall is
a cliff that we can scale down all
the way to the lake.

SIMON
What of the elders? Most of them
couldn't handle that climb.

BLACKSMITH
A few of us will stay behind while
the others get help.

SIMON
I don't want to be discouraging,
but I have doubts anyone will be
coming to help us.

BEGGAR
He's right. Who is left? The one
man who tried to warn us was burned
at the stake. Everyone else was
killed or captured. We only have
ourselves now.

SIMON
This aqueduct draws water from Lake
Hermannstadt and flows under and
around the fortress. There must be
some way out through the stream.

BLACKSMITH
Even if there is, we'd need a boat
to safely navigate the waters.

Simon studies the plantlife surrounding the temple. His eyes land on a set of healthy trees.

SIMON

Or a raft. Five of these tree limbs look strong enough to support about 10 people. You mentioned finding decorative swords earlier.

BLACKSMITH

Yes, in that temple.

SIMON

Get them and start cutting. We need to find a way to tie the trees together.

VILLAGE MOTHER

I can strip the bark and make twine. But I don't know how long it will hold.

SIMON

We just need long enough to get everyone out of Castle Dracula. Now go.

The villagers set out to do their work.

BEGGAR

And what will you do?

SIMON

I'm going to repair my whip.

Simon removes from his bag the chain and spike ball. He sets it aside and uncoils his whip. He twists the handle and begins turning it clockwise. It detaches from the frayed lash, which Simon tosses away. Next he begins connecting the chain by threading it to the whip's handle. Finished, he brandishes his newly modified holy whip.

BEGGAR

I remember hearing all the stories about your family and the vampire killer whip's power. I never thought I'd get to see it in person.

SIMON

This weapon has been broken and reconstructed many times over the centuries. As for this innovation, I can't take credit. It all goes to a single ancestor blessed with brilliance to solve our little problem.

He gives the whip a light flick, testing its weight. Satisfied, he snaps it out at a nearby temple statue, shattering it.

SIMON

Excellent. Remain here. I'm going into the temple.

96. INT. GREEK TEMPLE - NIGHT

Simon finds more sculptures dedicated to the Greek pantheon. He reaches the center of the temple where a lone pedestal stands on a circular platform. There's a Greek inscription: Επιμελητήριο της Μέδουσας.

SIMON

(reading)
"Chamber of Medusa".

BEGGAR (O.C.)

You can read that?

Simon glares at the intrusive Beggar that stands a few meters away.

SIMON

I told you to wait outside.

Torches around the pedestal flare to life. The circular platform begins to descend to a lower level. Simon looks up at the Beggar as the distance increases between them. The platform finally comes to a stop with an echoing clang.

BEGGAR

Very well. I'll wait here.

Simon takes one of the torches and steps off the platform. The lower room is small, stretching only three meters.

At the end of the room is a bust facing a mirror covering the entire wall.

Simon moves his torch toward the bust. It looks like the head of a woman, but it has snakes instead of hair.

He reaches out to touch the statue when one of the snakes lunges at him! Simon pulls his hand back quickly, only barely avoiding the venomous bite.

The rest of the snakes turn their heads to face Simon, hissing.

BEGGAR (O.C.)

Are you alright? What do you see down there?

Simon looks in the mirror, seeing that the face of the woman is not frozen but staring back at his reflection. She snarls at the Hunter.

SIMON

These ruins weren't always part of the castle. They were brought over and added to the architecture.

BEGGAR (O.C.)

I don't understand.

SIMON

Dracula is seeking whatever power he can add to his own. He found the head of Medusa, a demon that can petrify all who look directly upon her face. I think he's planning to restore her body and use her for his army. These rituals weren't intended solely for devil worship. They're meant to bring monsters into our world.

He touches Medusa's head with the torch. The demon screeches from the searing flames. Her snake hair thrashes and hisses, blackening and burning away.

SIMON

Tell the others to make haste. We need to leave.

97. INT. STREAM - NIGHT

The villagers work together and slowly ease the newly-completed raft into the water.

Simon steps onto the raft first. It's steady. He motions for the others to join. The villagers gingerly step aboard.

The Blacksmith grabs the steering stick and cuts the tether. The current immediately pulls the raft downstream.

Simon keeps watch for any obstacles, natural or supernatural. The Blacksmith and Beggar lean in to speak privately.

BLACKSMITH

How long do you think it will take to reach the lake?

SIMON

If the current's speed stays the same, I'd say a quarter of an hour. Hopefully.

BEGGAR

You don't seem very hopeful.

SIMON

I'm not. We're being hunted. I suspect the only reason we've been unbothered for so long is because it wants us in the water. Keep everyone away from the edge and stay vigilant. If you see anything unusual, say so.

98. INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Death arrives in the chamber. It's empty. Deathly silent. He sees the fallen psoglav guards.

His skeletal hand touches the demon blood spilled across the floor.

Through his dark powers, the blood shows him the events of their demise. Simon feining unconsciousness. The killing of Grigore. The fearsome power of the holy whip. Purici and Decebal standing at the door.

DEATH

Ah... treachery.

99. INT. STREAM - NIGHT

The speed of the current has increased drastically. The villagers grip the raft as it moves down a pitch black tunnel.

BLACKSMITH

I can't see a thing. Not even the end of the tunnel.

SIMON

Be still.

BLACKSMITH

At this speed, we risk losing control of the raft.

SIMON

If you feel the need to speak, let it be a warning or a prayer. Words of doubt have little use here.

The Blacksmith falls silent.

Scaly hands cling to the back of the raft. A head rises from the water. It, too, is covered in scales of dark red. Gills on its neck open and close. Worst of all are its black, unblinking eyes.

The creature, concealed in the dark, pulls the village mother into the water.

It happens quickly, leaving only the sound of splashing.

BLACKSMITH

Did you hear that?

Simon's whip is ready.

More monstrous hands appear, pulling another of the passengers into the stream. A brief holler escapes from the villager just before being choked out by the water.

SIMON

Everyone, move in close!

Hands appear from all sides of the raft, clawing around for any legs they can grab.

Simon squints in the dark, trying to see the attackers. He sees one of their heads come up from the water.

SIMON

Mermen. (to Blacksmith) Give me your stick.

The Blacksmith reluctantly hands it over. Simon strikes the merman creature directly in one of its black eyes.

The merman shrieks and dives back under the water. The other water monsters surrounding the raft begin screeching in unison.

All of the passengers cover their ears to protect themselves from the awful noise.

Simon winces through the piercing cacophony and beats at the mermen's hands until they've all released the raft and retreated underwater.

The Hunter holds the stick ready to attack. He waits for them to return.

The back of the raft begins to tilt up out of the water. The mermen are underneath, pushing it over. The villagers scream as they slide off, scrambling to hold on.

SIMON

Swim to the walls and hold on to something!

Simon is pulled under. He can make out the silhouette of the merman gripping his leg tightly. He looks over and sees several other villagers being dragged deep to the bottom by the water creatures.

The Hunter kicks the merman repeatedly in the head before it lets loose of him. Simon swims furiously to the top, gasping for air. He goes to the edge of the wall.

SIMON

Is anyone there? If you can hear
me, follow my voice.

BLACKSMITH

I'm here!

The Blacksmith splashes and flails as he clumsily swims
toward Simon.

A small point of light is visible at the end of the tunnel.

SIMON

Keep moving. Stay along the wall
and don't stop for anything.

BLACKSMITH

You're not coming?

SIMON

Not until I find everyone that's
still alive.

The Blacksmith nods and goes ahead.

Simon takes a deep breath and goes under. He descends lower
into the depths. He strains to see in the darkness, making
out only a few shapes. He comes up for air and tries again.

The exploration continues. All he finds are debris from rocks
and trees. Simon starts his ascent but catches movement from
his peripheral.

Two forms rapidly swim toward him. Simon's eyes go wide with
alarm as he prepares to fight.

The two forms grab and pull at him, holding on tight to the
Hunter as he kicks with all his strength to resurface.

Lungs nearly bursting, he at last reaches the top. Simon
pulls his fist back to strike when he realizes that they're
two teenage boys. He guides them to the wall.

SIMON

Was there anyone else with you?

TEENAGER

No. My father was with us, but...
they killed him. We're lucky we got
away from them.

SIMON

You're certain?

The younger teenager nodded, too terrified to even speak.

SIMON

Alright, then. What are your names?

TEENAGER

I'm Anton. (nodding to younger teenager) This is Iacob.

SIMON

Anton, Iacob... there are only four of us now.

Iacob buries his head in the wall and sobs.

SIMON

Come on. We need to get out of here.

Anton joins Simon but Iacob refuses to move.

ANTON (TEENAGER)

He's the only one in his family still alive.

SIMON

Iacob, there'll be time to mourn. But it's too dangerous to stay here. We're almost out of the aqueduct--

A BLARING ROAR shakes the walls of the tunnel.

The two boys freeze. Their eyes move to Simon for instruction.

SIMON

Go!

Hand over hand, the trio scale the wall.

A loud SPLASH comes from behind them. Simon spares a glance and sees a pair of horns protruding out of the water.

The Hunter slings his leather bag off his back and retrieves his wurfkreuz. He gives the bag over to Anton.

SIMON

Give this to the blacksmith. If I don't come back, he'll know what to do with it.

Simon dives and swims toward the horned beast.

Bubbles and light emerge from the monster's mouth as the water becomes super heated. Its head tears through the water and a jet of flame shoots out from its terrible jaws. The flame's light shows that it's a water dragon. The serpent is red, with a long neck leading to a spiked crest encircling its head.

The water dragon slithers through the water, moving past Simon and pursuing the two boys.

The Hunter grabs onto one of the serpent's scales and climbs onto its back. Wurfkreuz in hand, he pierces its hide.

The water dragon rears back in pain and turns its head to the human on its back.

Simon plunges the point of his throwing cross into its hide again. This time, he twists his weapon before withdrawing it from the wound.

SIMON

That's it. Dinner is right here.
Come take a bite.

He looks past the serpent to Anton and Iacob, who are nearly out of sight.

He inflicts another wound. The water dragon roars and tosses him off its body.

The serpent slithers around Simon, surrounding him with its entire body. It opens its maw. Fire and light can be seen rising up from its throat.

Simon sees his chance. He hurls the wurfkreuz. The perfectly balanced weapon spins, end over end, finding its target in the dragon's mouth.

The serpent chokes and hacks violently trying to expel the weapon embedded in its gullet. Each cough produces a mist of blood until it can no longer breathe. It crashes into the water, dead.

Simon allows himself a sigh of relief, unaware of a second dragon head rising from the water. Its eyes are trained on the unwitting Simon. It slowly approaches the Hunter and opens its mouth.

Simon's sixth sense alerts him. He dives just before the dragon strikes.

The serpent is in swift pursuit as Simon swims toward its dead counterpart.

Its mouth still open, Simon climbs inside the dead dragon, taking safety from its sibling.

100. INT. DRAGON - NIGHT

Simon swims deeper into its throat, finding an air pocket. More importantly, he discovers his wurfkreuz still lodged in the soft, swollen flesh of the dragon's gullet.

A hissing sound followed by a whisp of smoke draws Simon's attention. He grunts in pain and pulls back his foot, looking down to see that he's stepped in the dragon's digestive acid.

SIMON

Fuel for a dragon's fire.

Stepping aside, some of the fluids spill into a small puddle of water by his feet, bubbling and burning violently.

Further down the dragon's throat, more of the digestive juices have congealed into a pool of corrosive goop. Just above the pool are three ruptured sacs on opposite sides of the throat wall. Each are dripping the deadly fluid.

Simon looks back at his wurfkreuz, the cause of all the damage.

SIMON

Looks like you had more than a bad cough.

Simon gets an idea. He uncoils his whip and begins lashing at the walls of the dragon's throat.

101. INT. STREAM - NIGHT

The slithering dragon head detects vibrations. It sees movement. There's a bulge in the neck of its dead sibling. In and out, the neck twitches. The dragon's prey still lives.

The serpent moves in to investigate.

102. INT. DRAGON - NIGHT

Simon kicks and whips at the dead flesh, provoking and hoping for a reaction.

103. INT. STREAM - NIGHT

The dragon tilts its head in curiosity. Finally, it bites into its sibling's neck and pulls it upward.

104. INT. DRAGON - NIGHT

Simon slides as his environment moves from horizontal to vertical. He grabs the lodged wurfkreuz to keep from falling.

Water trapped in the dragon's mouth comes pouring down on Simon and into the viscous acid below. Acrid smoke rises from the chemical reaction. The Hunter coughs and tries to hold his breath.

Two sets of enormous fangs penetrate the wall of the dragon's neck. Water starts leaking in.

The gravity shifts once more in a horizontal direction. His feet now touching ground, Simon starts moving toward his point of entry when he's suddenly thrown into one of the fleshy walls.

105. INT. STREAM - NIGHT

The serpent is thrashing its head back and forth trying to tear its sibling's neck open.

106. INT. DRAGON - NIGHT

Simon struggles to keep balance as his environment jerks violently. He moves quickly. The pool of acid is building up with the accumulating water coming from outside.

He can see the teeth signaling the entrance into the belly of the beast.

107. INT. STREAM - NIGHT

The water dragon finally severs the neck in two, disregarding the half that has its sibling's head.

108. INT. DRAGON - NIGHT

Water comes flooding in, mixing with the acid pool. Bubbling and smoking.

The serpent's tongue licks along the inner walls of the neck in search of the Hunter. It's oblivious to the acid bomb it has in its mouth.

The chemicals build pressure, bubbling and rising until...

109. INT. STREAM - NIGHT

An explosion!

Bits of bone and flesh rain down as the remains of the twin water dragons sink to the bottom of the aqueduct.

Simon swims to the surface as fast as his body can carry him.

110. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Death throws Purici at Dracula's feet. The Count looks down at the hunchback from his throne, disgusted.

DEATH

I bring you the cause of your problems.

The paralyzed hunchback twists his neck to look in the direction of the Count.

PURICI

Master! What a relief to see you!
The Belmont warrior is headed this way.

DRACULA

Yes, I'm well aware. Why did he spare you?

PURICI

(laughs nervously)
You know the Belmonts with their self-righteous posturing. He was trying to sway me into betraying you.

DRACULA

And did you?

PURICI

No, Master. Never! I would never betray my lord and benefactor.

DEATH

Then why did you help Belmont kill the master's priests?

PURICI

No! Don't listen to this Reaper's words. He has it all wrong. The priests were mad with power. They planned to destroy you and seize the castle for themselves. I knew that Decebal and I were no match for their powers, so I tricked the Belmont warrior into fighting for us. Once he'd slain them, we were going to kill him and use him for experiments. But he was too strong. He overpowered us.

Dracula looks into the hunchback's wild eyes, searching for the truth.

DRACULA

You are an ambitious and resourceful creature, Purici. I can count you among my most successful experiments.

Purici drools and cackles happily, disgusting teeth on full display.

PURICI

Thank you, Master. I knew you'd believe me--

DRACULA

But... experiments are only as good as their usefulness. And you, my slave, have exceeded yours.

With a swipe of his scythe, Death decapitates Purici.

DEATH

Loathsome miscreant.

DRACULA

Do you have any clues as to Belmont's whereabouts?

DEATH

He knew of our prisoners. He will no doubt try to liberate them. Their best means of escape would be through--

DRACULA

--the aqueduct. An unlikely outcome of survival.

DEATH

Unlikely, yes. But not impossible.

DRACULA

Yes. I've made the mistake of underestimating the Belmonts before. Let's assume then that they'll successfully navigate the waters and reach safe haven.

DEATH

Shall I intercept them at the flood gate?

DRACULA

No. That won't be necessary. My concubines will be there to greet them.

A murder of crows fly into the tower and peck at Purici's remains.

111. INT. FLOOD GATE - NIGHT

The Blacksmith wrings out the water from his shirt while the two boys attempt to build a fire from fallen tree branches.

Simon climbs out of the water and lies on the ground. The villagers drop what they're doing and rush to help him.

BLACKSMITH

Are you injured?

SIMON

No.

BLACKSMITH

Good. We just need to open this flood gate and then we'll be free.

Simon nods and points to the crank system that operates the gate. Together they grab hold and rotate the crank, slowly opening the doors and diverting the stream outside the castle grounds.

Lake Hermannstadt welcomes the villagers with its water glittering in the moonlight.

BLACKSMITH

It's time I return this to you.

The Blacksmith unslings the leather bag and gives it to Simon.

SIMON

Thank you. I'll be needing this. Once you're out there, stay off the roads. They'll be hunting for anyone foolish enough to be out in the open.

BLACKSMITH

You're sure you won't come back with us?

SIMON

I can't. I have to finish this.

JOSEPHINE (O.C.)

Perhaps you would like an escort?

Simon and the villagers turn to see three vampire women standing beside the flood gate.

Josephine, the leader, steps forward.

JOSEPHINE

The Count has grown weary of your interference. He will see you now.

Idina and Rosalia have each seized one of the boys.

JOSEPHINE

I need only give the word and my sisters will tear these children limb from limb.

SIMON

Stop. I'll come quietly. Release the villagers. Allow them to return to their homes.

Josephine's eyes flare.

JOSEPHINE

You walk in our domain and dare to give commands?

SIMON

I do. Tell me, how valuable are you to the Count?

JOSEPHINE

We three are the lovers and consorts of Count Dracula, chosen and prized above all others in the land.

Without turning his gaze, Simon throws his wurfkreuz to the side. The throwing cross pierces Idina's heart, pinning her to the wall of the flood gate.

SIMON

Then you'll have to explain to your Count how your obstinance cost him a lover. Do you still wish to try me?

JOSEPHINE

(fuming, to Rosalia)
Let them go. For now.

Rosalia allows the boys to join the Blacksmith.

Along the castle wall, a passageway opens and leads to an ascending stairwell. The two vampires stand waiting.

Simon and the villagers exchange looks one last time before parting ways.

112. INT. CLOCK TOWER - NIGHT

Dracula stands on a platform in front of the reverse side of the clock's face. The hands read a quarter past two.

The two concubines arrive with Simon.

JOSEPHINE

Simon Belmont, as you commanded.

DRACULA

Well done. Where is Idina?

The vampires look at one another, afraid to speak.

Dracula's eyes flare red.

DRACULA
I will deal with you both later.
Leave us.

The sisters look at Belmont with hungry eyes.

DRACULA
Now.

His last word is like a force, compelling them to leave.

DRACULA
(to Belmont)
You've come here for a battle. It
was rude of me not to attend to
such matters personally. A mistake
I won't make again.

In a split second, Dracula has moved from one side of the room to directly in front of Simon. He grabs the Hunter by the neck and throws him into one of the clock gears.

Simon wipes blood from the side of his head. He staggers to his feet and snaps his whip.

Dracula doesn't slow his pace as he approaches the Hunter.

DRACULA
You presume to think that your
weapon makes me fear you. It
doesn't. I fear no man.

Simon flashes his whip. Dracula holds out his wrist and catches the chain. Wrapped around his arm, its holy power sears through the Count's flesh.

Dracula pulls the chain, bringing Simon toward him. The Count strikes the Hunter and shrugs off the whip's chain.

He looks at the still-smoking burns on his arm.

DRACULA
The legendary vampire killer... the
holy whip touched by God and
bestowed upon the Belmonts. A truly
magnificent weapon. In the past, it
was the harbinger of my defeat. But
now my strength exceeds its power.

Dracula drags the weakened Simon to the edge of the platform. Down below are hundreds of gears and mechanisms. For a human being, it's an oversized meat-grinder.

DRACULA
Your legacy ends here, Belmont.

With a nudge of his foot, Dracula rolls Simon off the platform to the gears below.

113. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Death is awaiting the Count as he enters the chamber.

DRACULA

It is done. The Belmont warrior clan is no more. Whatever hindrances he may have caused are no longer of any consequence. My kingdom is secure.

He pulls back his sleeve and holds his burnt arm out to the moonlight. The lunar beams restore the skin, closing the wounds and leaving his arm as good as new.

DRACULA

Where are Josephine and Rosalia?

DEATH

They have not been here, my Lord.

DRACULA

They must be brooding after I denied them Belmont's blood. No matter. Let them hunt for now.

114. INT. CLOCK TOWER - NIGHT

Simon opens his eyes. At first, he's confused. He looks around and realizes that Josephine is carrying him over her shoulder as she scales the wall of the tower. Rosalia is only a few feet away. He's been saved... for now.

They reach the top of the platform. Josephine gently places Simon on the ground. The two vampires hover over him, licking their lips.

JOSEPHINE

We couldn't let such blood go to waste, no matter how much we adore our Count.

Rosalia runs her tongue along the wound on Simon's head, tasting his blood. She shudders with delight.

Josephine climbs on top of Simon, her eyes inches from his.

JOSEPHINE

What would you do if you could live forever?

ROSALIA

Josephine, you mustn't say such things--

JOSEPHINE

Silence! What has the Count done for us? We get crumbs from his table. Peasants with weak blood. Here we have a warrior. A hunter. An inheritor. (to Simon) You have the power to destroy Dracula forever, but your body is weak. How far are you willing to go to have your victory?

SIMON

You have nothing I want.

JOSEPHINE

Oh, I'm not so certain of that.

SIMON

If it's God's will, He will carry me to victory.

JOSEPHINE

Tsk tsk. Ever the faithful servant. Let's just see how long your faith can last.

She kisses Simon deeply. She pulls away. Her eyes move to his throat.

ROSALIA

Drain him slowly. I want to enjoy this for as long as possible.

Josephine laughs, her white fangs fully visible. She leans in toward Simon's throat. Her teeth pierce the skin and blood begins to trickle. Suddenly, she screams and is pulled away from her prey.

Death's hand is gripping her by the throat!

DEATH

More treachery! The Count has grown careless with whom he entrusts power. I will see to it that you are both properly punished.

The Grim Reaper readies his scythe for execution when Rosalia leaps at him, bending his bony wrist until it snaps in half.

As Josephine struggles in Death's grasp, her eyes glow red.

In an instant, hundreds of red eyes appear in the clock tower. Bats, hidden in the darkness, have been awakened! The winged beasts swarm and attack the Reaper.

Death swats at the bats with his stump of a wrist, unable to defend himself.

In the chaos of battle, Simon gets to his feet and finds his whip waiting for him. He slips out unnoticed.

Rosalia continues clinging to the Reaper, trying to break the remaining hand that's gripping Josephine.

ROSALIA
Release my sister!

DEATH
No.

Death's scythe, lying on the ground, begins to hover and spin toward his heedless aggressor.

JOSEPHINE
(choking)
Rosalia! No!

The spinning scythe cuts Rosalia in half.

Josephine's life force starts to drain from her body, creating a dark aura around the Reaper that grows with each second.

Closing her eyes, she gives one final command to the army of bats before she shrivels up and crumbles into dust.

The bats come together, circling Death and assaulting him head-on as a wave. The force of their attack sends him falling backward into the face of the clock, shattering it and plunging him into the lake far below.

115. INT. HALL OF CANDLES - NIGHT

Simon steps down a long tunnel filled with rows of candles on each side of him, leading out into the night.

SIMON (V.O.)
(from the journal)
"I've prepared this final entry in anticipation of my death. I pray that whoever reads this journal will not only find guidance in our fight against evil, but also faith. For it's faith that has carried me this far."

116. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Dracula looks out and sees the damaged clock tower.

SIMON (V.O., CONT'D)
"And with faith, I will not fear
the darkness ahead."

117. INT. STAIRS TO THE TOWER - NIGHT

The Hunter looks at the steps leading into Dracula's keep. Beneath the stairs is nothing but the night sky. The tower is directly connected to the stairs, with no other supports. Like the rest of Castle Dracula, its construction is pure magic. He ascends.

118. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

The tall doors open to welcome Simon. Straight ahead, the Count waits at his throne.

Simon approaches Dracula, examining the room and planning for the imminent battle.

The Count rises. Simon readies his weapon.

Simon unleashes the holy whip, but instead strikes the throne and shatters it. The Count is too fast.

Dracula appears behind Simon. The Hunter is swift and dodges the vampire's claws.

The Count closes his cloak around him and begins uttering the forbidden language. He spreads his cloak like wings, launching a volley of fire balls.

Several of the projectiles strike Simon, setting him aflame. He dives to the floor and smothers them before they can cause serious harm.

Dracula picks the Hunter up and throws him into the remains of his shattered throne.

DRACULA
I've already proven myself the
better warrior. Submit.

Simon gets to his feet.

SIMON
(spits)
No. While I live, I still fight.

He flicks his whip.

DRACULA
Then let us end this fight now.

Simon swings his whip; first, overhead in a circle, then above and around him, preventing the vampire from getting near. He closes his eyes.

SIMON

(praying)

Lord God, grant me the power of the
Belmonts once more, that I might
inflict your judgment upon this
devil!

The Count shows his first sign of fear as he waits for what comes next. But the whip doesn't change. There's no glow, no surge of power. Simon's face falls.

DRACULA

It appears your god has forsaken
you. Perhaps you were deemed
unworthy of the whip. Or perhaps
your god has grown tired of
humanity. I will gladly take charge
of this world in His place.

Simon feigns an attack, triggering Dracula to dodge. The Hunter launches his true assault, hurling his whip toward the Count's head.

The spiked ball connects, lodging itself deep into Dracula's face.

Simon grabs the chain lash and pulls Dracula forward, piercing him through the heart with a small wooden stake. The Count's eyes are wide with surprise.

DRACULA

How did you--?

Dracula follows Simon's gaze to the remains of his throne... his wooden throne.

SIMON

I've been given all I've needed.

119. EXT. TOWER - NIGHT

The dark clouds spread apart as a beam of light pours down upon the castle tower.

120. INT. FIELD - NIGHT

The legion of demon soldiers march toward Castle Dracula with wagons full of caged humans. Looking to the strange sky, they halt and wait in anticipation.

121. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

The ceiling explodes around Simon and Dracula, exposing them both to the heavens.

Simon looks up and sees an opening in the clouds. He knows what to do.

SIMON

Be gone, son of Perdition!

Simon pushes the stake deeper into Dracula and steps away.

The opening from heaven sends a focused beam of light onto the Count.

Dracula screams as the divine light melts away his flesh and bones, turning both into a disgusting liquid that swiftly evaporates into red dust.

The light stops.

122. INT. BORGO PASS - NIGHT

The Blacksmith, Anton, and Iacob stand in awe as the dark clouds close around the hole, brightening and spreading apart.

BLACKSMITH

The wrath of God... he's done it.

123. INT. FIELD - NIGHT

Waves of demons crumble into dust, leaving only the captured humans.

Among the prisoners are Matei and Emil. The two boys look with curiosity at the lock on their cage. Touching it, the lock crumbles apart with ease.

The fellow prisoners cheer at the sight, bursting out of their cells and embracing one another.

124. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Simon reclaims his whip from the red dust that was once Count Dracula.

A low RUMBLE reverberates from the bowels of the castle. Dust shakes loose as the walls crack.

Calm and composed, the Hunter leaves the tower.

A MONTAGE:

Simon descends the stairs as debris falls around him.

Inside the clock tower, gears and mechanisms come loose and fall apart.

The clock tower collapses and falls over into the lake.

In the bowels of the castle, the torture chamber's stone floor splinters and cracks, spreading all the way to the melting pool and unleashing a deluge of acid that flows outside the room.

Debris blocks the floor of the canal, causing it to overflow, submerging the entire aqueduct, dungeon, and washing away the temple.

The red chapel caves in, breaking the unholy stained glass and burying the blasphemous chamber forever.

125. EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - NIGHT

Simon takes but a few steps out of the fortress before it disintegrates and is swallowed up by the earth. The final sounds of its destruction ring loudly through the mountains. A powerful wind comes to drown out the last cries of Castle Dracula's dissolution.

Simon turns to look at the ruins of a once powerful castle.

SIMON

"The heathen raged, the kingdoms
moved. He uttered His voice, the
earth melted. Come, behold the
works of the Lord, what desolations
He hath made in the earth. He
maketh wars to cease unto the end
of the earth. He breaketh the bow,
and cutteth the spear in sunder. He
burneth the chariot in the fire. Be
still, and know that I am God. I
will be exalted among the heathen,
I will be exalted in the earth."

With a weary limp, he begins his journey back to civilization. The first rays of the sun form an outline across the mountain range.

126. INT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

All has been set right. Animals are in their natural form. Beautiful flowers are restored. Rivers are once again clean and teeming with life.

INT. JOVA - DAY

Returning villagers pick through the destruction of their homes, salvaging what they can.

A wagon enters through the gates with supplies. Men gather to collect the items and clear away rubble to begin building a shelter.

An elderly couple carry Matei and Emil as they stand in line to receive food.

SIMON (V.O.)
(from the journal)
"I have fulfilled my role and taken
my place in the destiny of my clan.
The Belmonts remain steadfast in
their war against Dracula."

127. INT. CEMETARY - DAY

Simon drives a wooden cross into Father Mueller's freshly made grave. Beside it is a recently finished grave belonging to Bishop Stoia.

SIMON (V.O., CONT'D)
"I'll continue writing in this
journal while serving as guardian
and protector of my people. But for
now, I will rest and fulfill my
promise to a good friend."

He places a comforting hand on the cross. His final goodbye.

He starts for home, walking across a wide and beautiful span of green land full of new graves.

FADE OUT:

END

