

Somewhere in Transylvania, Dracula the monster lies sleeping in his coffin, waiting for night to fall.

Now he starts to stir. The fluttering of his eyelids are a response to some age-old, unexplainable instinct that the sun is nearly down and his time is near. Tonight, he is particularly hungry and as he lies there, he decides who this evening's victims will be. The baker and his wife, he thinks to himself. Succulent, available, and unsuspecting. The thought of the unwary couple whose trust he has carefully cultivated excites his blood lust to a fever pitch, and he can barely hold back these last seconds before climbing out of the coffin to seek his prey.

Suddenly he knows the sun is down. Like an angel of hell, he rises swiftly, and changing into a bat, flies pell-mell to the cottage of his tantalizing victims.

"Why, Count Dracula, what a nice surprise," the baker's wife says. (He has once again assumed human form, as he enters their home, charmingly concealing his rapacious goal.)

"What brings you here so early?" the baker asks.

"Our dinner date," the Count answers. "I hope I haven't made an error. You did invite me for tonight, didn't you?"

"Yes, tonight, but that's not for seven hours."

"Pardon me?" Dracula queries, looking around the room puzzled.

"Or did you come by to watch the eclipse with us?"

"Eclipse?"

"Yes. Today's the total eclipse."

"What?"

"A few moments of darkness from noon until two minutes after. Look out the window."

"Uh-oh - I'm in trouble. Must be going - aha - oh, god..." Frantically he fumbles for the door knob.

"Going? You just came."

"Yes - but - I need a little fresh air. It was nice seeing you..."

"Sit down. We'll have a drink."

"No, I must run. Er - you're stepping on my cape."

"Relax. Some wine."

"Wine? Oh no, gave it up - liver and all that, you know. And now I really must buzz off. I just remembered, I left the lights on at my castle - bills'll be enormous..."

"Please," the baker says, his arm around the Count in firm friendship. "You're not intruding. Don't be so polite. So you're early."

"Really, I'd like to stay but there's a meeting of old Roumanian Counts across town and I'm responsible for the cold cuts."

"Rush, rush, rush. It's a wonder you don't get a heart attack." "I'm making Chicken Pilaf tonight," the baker's wife chimes in. "I hope you like it."

"Wonderful, wonderful," the Count says, with a smile, as he pushes her aside into some laundry. Then, opening a closet door by mistake, he walks in. "Christ, where's the goddamn front door?"

"Ach," laughs the baker's wife, "such a funny man, the Count."

"I knew you'd like that," Dracula says, forcing a chuckle, "now get out of my way." At last he opens the front door but time has run out on him.

"Oh, look, Mama," says the baker, "the eclipse must be over. The sun is coming out again."

"Right," says Dracula, slamming the front door. "I've decided to stay. Pull down the window **shades quickly - QUICKLY!** Let's move it!"

"What window shades?" asks the baker.

"There are none, right? Figures. You got a basement in this joint?"

"No," says the wife affably, "I'm always telling my husband to build one but he never listens."

"I'm all choked up. Where's the closet?"

"You did that one already, Count Dracula. Mama and I laughed at it"

"Ach - such a funny man, the Count."

"Look, I'll be in the closet. Knock at seven-thirty." And with that, the Count steps inside and slams the door.

"Hee-hee - he is so funny. Oh, Count, come out. Stop being a big silly." From inside the closet comes the muffled voice of Dracula:

"Can't - please - take my word for it. Just let me stay here. I'm fine. Really."

"Count Dracula, stop fooling."

"I tell you, I love this closet."

"Yes, but..."

"I know, I know... it seems strange, and yet here I am, having a ball. I was just saying to Mrs. Hess the other day, give me a good closet and I can stand in it for hours. Now, why don't you run along and check back with me at sunset. Oh, Ramona, la da da de da de, Ramona..."

Now the Mayor and his wife, Katia, arrive. They are passing by and have decided to pay a call on their good friends.

"Hello. I hope Katia and I are not intruding?"

"Of course not, Mr. Mayor. Come out, Count Dracula! We have company!"

"Is the Count here?" asks the Mayor surprised. "It's so rare to see him around this early. In fact I can't ever remember seeing him around in the daytime."

"Come out, Count Dracula!"

"Where is he?" Katia asks, not knowing whether to laugh or not. "Come on out now!"

The baker's wife is getting impatient. "He's in the closet," says the baker, apologetically.

"Really?" asks the mayor.

"Let's go," says the baker, knocking on the closet door. "Enough is enough. The Mayor's here."

"Come on out, Dracula," His Honour shouts, "let's have a drink."

"No, go ahead. I've got some business in here."

"In the closet?"

"Yes, don't let me spoil your day. I can hear what you're saying. I'll join in if I have anything to add."

Everyone looks at one another and shrugs. Wine is poured and they all drink.

"Some eclipse today," the Mayor says, sipping from his glass.

"Yes," the baker agrees. "Incredible."

"Yeah. Thrilling," says a voice from the closet.

"What, Dracula?"

"Nothing, nothing. Let it go."

And so the time passes, until the Mayor can stand it no longer and forcing open the door to the closet, he shouts, "Come on, Dracula. I always thought you were a mature man. Stop this craziness."

The daylight streams in, causing the evil monster to shriek and slowly dissolve to a skeleton and then to dust before the eyes of the four people present. Leaning down to the pile of white ash on the closet floor, the baker's wife shouts,

"Does this mean dinner's off tonight?"