

Coppola's Dracula a novella by Kim Newman

A treeline at dusk. Tall, straight, Carpathian pines. The red of sunset bleeds into the dark of night. Great flapping sounds. Huge, dark shapes flit languidly between the trees, sinister, dangerous. A vast batwing brushes the treetops.

Jim Morrison's voice wails in despair. 'People Are Strange'.

Fire blossoms. Blue flame, pure as candle light. Black trees are consumed ...

Fade to a face, hanging upside-down in the roiling fire.

Harker's Voice: *Wallachia ... shit!*

Jonathan Harker, a solicitor's clerk, lies uneasy on his bed, upstairs in the inn at Bistritz, waiting. His eyes are empty.

With great effort, he gets up and goes to the full-length mirror. He avoids his own gaze and takes a swig from a squat bottle of plum brandy. He wears only long drawers. Bite-marks, almost healed, scab his shoulders. His arms and chest are sinewy, but his belly is white and soft. He staggers into a program of isometric exercises, vigorously Christian, ineptly executed.

Harker's Voice: *I could only think of the forests, the mountains ... the inn was just a waiting room. Whenever I was in the forests, I could only think of home, of Exeter. Whenever I was home, I could only think of getting back to the mountains.*

The blind crucifix above the mirror, hung with cloves of garlic, looks down on Harker. He misses his footing and falls on the bed, then gets up, reaches, and takes down the garlic.

He bites into a clove as if it were an apple, and washes the pulp down with more brandy.

Harker's Voice: *All the time I stayed here in the inn, waiting for a commission, I was growing older, losing precious life. And all the time the Count sat on top of his mountain, leeching off the land, he grew younger, thirstier.*

Harker scoops a locket from a bedside table and opens it to look at a portrait of his wife, Mina. Without malice or curiosity, he dangles the cameo in a candle flame. The face browns, the silver setting blackens.

Harker's Voice: *I was waiting for the call from Seward. Eventually, it came.*

There is a knock on the door.

'It's all right for you, Katharine Reed,' Francis whined as he picked over the unappetising craft services table. 'You're dead, you don't have to eat this shit.'

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