

DRACULA'S BOARDING HOUSE

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Matthew Carlin

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DRACULA'S BOARDING HOUSE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Four men, four women, one offstage male voice)

COUNT DRACULA

Fanged and bloodthirsty. *(54 lines)*

RENFIELD

Eats insects and brags about it. The Count's assistant. *(47 lines)*

LOU LAWSON

Only living heir to Uncle George. *(112 lines)*

CASEY STIGLER

Lou's friend, vampire bait. *(108 lines)*

LYDIA

Dracula's wife, age 472 plus. *(18 lines)*

ELENA

Dracula's second wife, 95 years younger than LYDIA. *(7 lines)*

SHY

Another wife. *(1 line)*

GIRL

The Count's victim. *(6 lines)*

VOICE OF UNCLE GEORGE

(4 lines)

PLACE

An old, decrepit country house.

TIME

The present.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- Scene 1:** Out in the forest, night time.
Scene 2: Out in the forest, day time.
Scene 3: Drab, spooky living room of an old country house.
Scene 4: The same, later that evening.

SCENE 1

Setting:

This scene is played in front of the curtain. There is an old log and cut outs of a few trees and shrubs to indicate the country. Wolf cries are heard in the distance.

At Rise:

The lights are very dim. The dark-caped figure of COUNT DRACULA strides in from stage left. HE carries himself with an arrogance befitting the Prince of Darkness. He is followed by a very clumsy confidant, RENFIELD, who carries a lantern. The howls increase in volume as THEY enter.

DRACULA: Ah yes. Sing to me my children of the night, your Master has arrived. *(HE laughs insanely.)* Rejoice, for the night is ours! Do you hear them Renfield? What music they make!

RENFIELD: Yes, Master.

DRACULA: Renfield! This house. You are quite positive it is deserted?!

RENFIELD: Oh yes, Master. The owner passed away recently and had no children. All of the townspeople said so. There will be no one there, Master. I promise.

DRACULA: And everything has been properly prepared? The coffins have been delivered and my wives await me?

RENFIELD: *(Arrogantly.)* Piece of cake.

DRACULA: I hope you are right Renfield or you will become dinner for my children in the forest. *(Pause.)* I grow weary of moving from place to place. Do you understand me Renfield?

RENFIELD: Y-y-yes, Master. *(DRACULA casts RENFIELD aside and strides forward. RENFIELD meanwhile has spotted something behind the log. In the following moments, ignoring DRACULA, he stalks his prey.)*

DRACULA: Soon the hated sun will fill the sky. We must go quickly! For tomorrow . . . *(HE lets the sentence trail off, smiling hideously.)* Yes, tomorrow! Come Renfield! *(HE starts off right. RENFIELD, however, is still trying to capture his prey. DRACULA turns around and calls viciously.)* Renfield!

RENFIELD: Yes Master!

DRACULA: Come!

RENFIELD: But Master, there's a mouse, a nice fat, juicy one and I'm hungry, Master. You promised me that I could have all the rodents I wanted if I was a good boy! *(HE stomps his feet, jumping up and down.)* I'm hungry!

DRACULA'S BOARDING HOUSE

DRACULA: *(Baring his fangs, snarling.)* So am I, Renfield!

RENFIELD: *(Stops jumping immediately.)* Oh! Oh no! I'm right behind you Master. I'll just grab my trusty lantern here and I'm right behind you.

DRACULA: At once!

DRACULA exits stage right.

RENFIELD: Yes, Master. At once. *(RENFIELD grabs the lantern but suddenly spots the mouse again. HE pounces and pretends to come up holding a wiggling mouse by the tail. HE giggles to himself.)* I got him! I got him!

RENFIELD squeals with delight and literally waltzes off stage right still holding the mouse singing, "Some Enchanted Evening."

Blackout.

SCENE 2

Setting:

Lights are up full. It is daylight on the same set as SCENE 1.

At Rise:

LOU and CASEY enter left. LOU is a klutz. HE carries suitcases which he swings from side to side as he looks around at the strange surroundings. Suddenly, CASEY stops to wipe his forehead with a handkerchief and LOU collides with him.

CASEY: Will you watch where you're going? What are you trying to do?

LOU: Sorry Casey.

CASEY: Well you should be. Dragging me out here on a day like this. It's hot!

LOU: I'm sorry. *(HE crosses to the log.)* Here, why don't you sit down and rest a while.

CASEY: I think I will. *(HE sits.)* I'm only doing this for you, you know. *(LOU sits on one of the suitcases. HE starts to answer, but CASEY continues talking.)* I put my neck on the line for you. I quit my job just to come all the way out here with you. Now, why do you think I'd do a thing like that? Tell me, why do you think I'd do a thing like that? *(LOU tries to answer again, but CASEY*

continues.) Because I'm your best friend, that's why. You remember that! (*HE rises and crosses to LOU.*) After all, what are best friends for if they won't quit their job when you need them to. Am I right? Of course I'm right. (*LOU tries to answer each question, but can't get a word in edgewise.*) Who was there for you when they came with the news about your Uncle George's death? Who was there for you? Who was there when they told you that you inherited a big, old mansion on a big country estate? Who did all of these things for you? (*HE pauses for an answer.*) Well, aren't you going to answer me? (*LOU starts to answer.*) Don't I deserve an answer?

LOU: (*Finally.*) If you'd just shut up long -

CASEY: - shut up?! Shut up?! Oh that's just great!

LOU: You know what I meant.

CASEY: No, no, Lou. It's all right. I'll be fine. You try to be a friend these days and look where it gets you . . . in the middle of a forest with a suitcase. Just dandy.

LOU: I know, I know. I appreciate everything you've done for me, especially the job thing.

CASEY: Well, I should think so! You should be ashamed of yourself. Where's the gratitude?

LOU: I'm so ashamed.

(*LOU pulls out a handkerchief and blows his nose loudly. BOTH pause.*)

LOU: Hey Casey?

CASEY: Yeah?

LOU: Are you sure this idea of yours is gonna work? I mean, I never even knew I had an Uncle George. I don't even know what the house looks like.

CASEY: Don't worry! The lawyer said it was a huge house with lots of rooms, didn't he?

LOU: Yeah. But, I've never managed a hotel before. It's going to be an awful lot of work.

CASEY: Look, Lou. Like I told you. It's not going to be a hotel. It's going to be a boarding house.

LOU: Right. A boarding house.

CASEY: That's right. A boarding house.

LOU: What if the house is made of bricks?

CASEY: What's that have to do with anything?

LOU: Well, you said it was going to be a boarding house . . . but if it's a brick house . . . no boards -

CASEY: I'm telling you not to worry. I lived in a boarding house for five years. I know exactly what to do.

DRACULA'S BOARDING HOUSE

LOU: You know how it works?

CASEY: Absolutely.

LOU: Okay. Well . . . well . . .

CASEY: Sit down, will you. I'll explain it again. Now. If you were a customer at our boarding house I would explain to you that you'll clean your own room. Take care of your own things. Just like it was your own home. Are you with me on this?

LOU: No. I've never had my own home.

CASEY: Improve.

LOU: My mother has a lovely home though.

CASEY: Close enough. We charge them a hundred bucks a week to stay in our house. We'll make a fortune.

LOU: A hundred bucks a week? That's a lot of money.

CASEY: You better believe it. And for another fifty bucks, they can get board.

LOU: Bored?

CASEY: That's right.

LOU: We're gonna charge them fifty bucks to get bored?

CASEY: Yes indeed.

LOU: How are we gonna do that?

CASEY: Do what?

LOU: Make them bored?

CASEY: We don't make them bored. We give them board. They eat their board.

LOU: I'd eat if I was bored, too.

CASEY: You're not making any sense. I'm telling you, I know what I'm talking about. I lived in a boarding house for almost five years and everyday I had my board.

LOU: You were bored everyday?

CASEY: Of course, I had to live, didn't I?

LOU: I wouldn't call that living.

CASEY: The board was actually quite good. Come on, let's get going, all this talk is making me hungry.

Bewildered, LOU continues mumbling as they BOTH exit right.

LOU: It's making me bored.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

Setting:

A drab, spooky living room. There are entrances left and right and a door to the hall up center. The furniture is old and covered, in most cases, with sheets. Everything is covered with dust. There are cobwebs in the corners and one large cobweb hangs across the right doorway. Center is a large crate, about six feet in length. There is a small table and chair and a flashlight and candlestick sit on top of the table.

At Rise:

LOU and CASEY enter right carrying a flashlight. LOU walks directly into the cobweb and becomes entangled in it. CASEY helps him get it off. As THEY enter, the lights come up.

CASEY: What a dump! I thought your Uncle had money.

LOU: I wanna go home!

CASEY: Ahhh!

LOU: This place is creepy. I've seen places like this in the movies. There's always this guy wearing a black cape who goes around biting people on the neck.

CASEY: Very unsanitary.

LOU: Yeah, it's not healthy either. Every time this guy would walk into a room, he'd say, "Good evening!" (*Classic Dracula style.*) Just like that, "Good evening!"

CASEY: Things like that don't happen in real life.

LOU: I hope you're right. (*Imitates again.*) "Good evening!"

CASEY: Stop it, will ya. Listen, I'm going to take a look around. You stay here and see if you can find anything.

LOU: Like what?

CASEY: I don't know.

LOU: Nope, nothing here, let's go..

CASEY: Come on! There's nothing to be afraid of. (*LOU is unconvinced.*) Stay here and take a look around. If you need me, just holler.

LOU: All I have to do is holler?

CASEY: Just holler. Now wait here, I'll be right back.

CASEY exits stage left door with a flashlight. LOU wanders around talking to himself. It is obvious he is very frightened.

LOU: "Good evening!" I'm not scared. That stuff only happens in the

DRACULA'S BOARDING HOUSE

movies. *(Whispers.)* Casey? Casey? *(A little louder.)* Casey?
(Screaming.) CASEY!

CASEY enters.

LOU: Oh, good. I just wanted to make sure you could hear me.

CASEY: Of course I can hear you. Now don't call me unless you really need me. I'm going to go look for a couple of beds.

LOU: Okay, okay.

CASEY exits. LOU is still nervous.

LOU: I'm not scared. I'm not afraid of anything. *(Singing.)* Who's afraid of the big bad - *(As HE talks, the top of the crate, center stage, raises up slowly and a hand reaches out. The crate makes a creaking noise as it opens. Hearing it, LOU freezes.)* Casey, is that you? *(HE does not want to turn around.)* You're trying to play a trick on me. Well, I don't scare that easy. No sir. Casey? Oh Casey?! *(HE turns around slowly and sees a hand lifting the top of the crate. HE turns back and tries to yell for CASEY but stutters. Meanwhile, DRACULA rises from the crate and hides behind the chair up center.)* C-c-c-asey?! C-C-CASEY?!

CASEY runs in and grabs LOU by the shoulders. LOU is still calling his name.

CASEY: What's the matter with you? Sshhh!

LOU: *(Finally stops and tries to explain.)* There was a - and I - I - thought it was - a - but it wasn't - and the - hand - there was a - oh - and - *(HE gesticulates wildly.)*

CASEY: Will you calm down? Calm down and tell me what happened.

LOU: There's someone in that coffin.

CASEY: Now what would someone be doing in that crate?

LOU: Sleeping?

CASEY: Why would anyone sleep in a crate?

LOU: He was tired.

CASEY: You're trying to tell me that someone, some person, is sleeping in that box?

LOU: No.

CASEY: You're not?

LOU: No, I woke him up.

CASEY: Nonsense.

LOU: But I saw him.

CASEY: *(THEY cross to the crate.)* Come over here and I'll prove it to you. *(Pause.)* Well, go ahead. Open it up.

LOU: I'm not touching anything. You open it.

CASEY: You're the one seeing things. Now open it up. *(LOU hesitates.)* Go on! *(LOU goes to the crate, turns his head away, and opens it. CASEY looks inside.)* See, nothing. You've been watching too many movies.

LOU: There's probably a trap door. Did you look for a trap door?

CASEY: *(Disgusted.)* No I didn't look for a trap door.

LOU: But -

CASEY: But nothing. Now I'm going to look around some more. Don't call me again unless it's an emergency.

CASEY exits.

LOU: *(Imitates CASEY.)* Don't call me again unless it's an emergency. *(Cautiously approaches crate, slowly opens the lid, sees nothing, the lid slams down.)* I knew there wasn't anybody in there. I was 'hallucinatin' that's all. *(Becomes agitated, starts to whistle. Walks over to the chair, his back is to DRACULA. DRACULA reaches for him, but LOU moves at the last minute to look at an old painting on the wall. Again, HE backs up close to DRACULA. DRACULA swings a fist at him, but LOU sneezes and avoids the punch. LOU moves forward and blows his nose on a handkerchief.)* It sure is cold in here. *(Sees a candle on the table.)* A candle.

The candle holder is mounted on a piece of flat wood or cloth strip. Someone underneath the table could control it without the audience noticing. Each time he tries to light the candle, it is pushed away and then pulled back. DRACULA stands behind him pretending to "control" the candle. Every time he tries to light it, it moves across the table. LOU reacts in disbelief until he becomes so frightened he yells for CASEY.

LOU: Casey! Casey! *(HE continues calling until CASEY runs in.)*

CASEY: What is it now?

LOU is too distraught to speak. He explains the situation through pantomime.

CASEY: What are you trying to say? Are you trying to tell me that candle moved across the table? *(LOU nods excitedly.)* All by itself? Back and forth? *(LOU nods.)* That's amazing, Lou. *(LOU*

DRACULA'S BOARDING HOUSE

nods.) You idiot! I've had it! (*CASEY leads LOU to the chair and makes him sit down.*) You sit here until I get back, don't move. I think I've found a place for us to sleep tonight.

LOU sits there and faces away from the candle. He peeks at the candle a few times and then decides to try to light it again. DRACULA emerges from his hiding place and as LOU reaches for the candle, it moves again, LOU faints, face down on the table. DRACULA comes forward looking LOU over.

DRACULA: Mortals.

RENFIELD enters from the hallway, chasing a cockroach. He chases it around the crates, under the sheets, but he doesn't notice DRACULA until he speaks. RENFIELD is still under the sheets.

DRACULA: Renfield!

RENFIELD: (*Pops his head up, still under the sheet.*) What?

DRACULA: Come to me at once.

RENFIELD: But dinner, Master.

DRACULA: Come!

RENFIELD: Yes, Master, yes. (*HE falls off the sofa, stumbles and falls flat on the floor. He finally frees himself from the sheet and crawls to DRACULA.*) Yes Master?

DRACULA: Renfield. (*Points.*) Who is this man?

RENFIELD: What man?

DRACULA: This man!

RENFIELD: Oh. (*RENFIELD walks over to LOU, bends down, lifts LOU's head, and then drops it with a thud. HE walks back over to DRACULA.*) I don't know.

DRACULA: (*Advances on RENFIELD.*) You fool! You told me no one was living here!

RENFIELD: The place is empty, Master. All except for him.

DRACULA: And the one upstairs.

RENFIELD: All except for him and the one upstairs.

DRACULA: (*Grasps him by the collar, furious.*) Dispose of them immediately!

RENFIELD: How?

DRACULA: Destroy them. When I return, I wish to be alone with our guest.

RENFIELD: Guest, Master? What guest?

DRACULA: I believe I will take a new bride this night.

RENFIELD: But Master, what about your three wives?

DRACULA: Keep them out of my sight. I shall return soon, Renfield.

Do as I say.

DRACULA strides off dramatically twirling his cape.

RENFIELD: *(Watches DRACULA exit.) Show off! (HE looks at LOU, then goes over to the desk and pulls out a can of bug killer. HE approaches LOU, but after a few steps, he points and giggles. His mission changes and his walk becomes stealthier. He disappears behind the table and sprays the can several times.) I got you! I got you! Ha, ha! (HE rises and suddenly with a huge cockroach in hand, begins to waltz and sing, "Some Enchanted Evening." He holds it up triumphantly.) No cockroach is going to get away from me! (Stops and gulps the bug down. He begins to laugh, forgetting about LOU. He rolls onto the sofa with his feet up in the air, perfectly content.)*

DRACULA's three wives: LYDIA, ELENA, and SHY enter. ELENA and LYDIA stalk RENFIELD. THEY grab him by the legs and flip him over to his stomach. In their greedy haste to take a bite, they hit heads and bounce back. As they do, RENFIELD jumps up and crosses center stage.

LYDIA: Watch where you're going, you old bat!

ELENA: I saw him first. I get the first bite.

LYDIA: Are you kidding? I wouldn't bite after you if my life depended on it. You haven't cleaned those rotten teeth of yours in three hundred years!

ELENA: At least I still have mine, you gap-mouthed grandmother!

LYDIA: Grandmother?! Why, I'll have you know I'm ninety-five years younger than you! Drac got you in 1692. He didn't get me until 1787.

ELENA: You may be younger, but you are definitely worse for the wear!

LYDIA: Why you . . . *(The two lady vampires start to tangle. SHY taps LYDIA on the shoulder.)* What do you want?

SHY: *(Points to RENFIELD who is trying to sneak away.)* I think he's getting away.

LYDIA: *(To ELENA.)* Now look what you've done!

LYDIA and ELENA quickly cut off RENFIELD's escape.

RENFIELD: Now girls, let's not be hasty! *(THEY begin to circle him.)*
Girls . . . girls . . . look! It's a mouse!

LYDIA/ELENA: A mouse! *(THEY scream and leap on top of the*

DRACULA'S BOARDING HOUSE

couch clinging to each other.) Where? Where is it? (THEY look around frantically, shrieking in fright. RENFIELD sneaks behind them, but finds SHY blocking his path.)

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