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# *Drakula halála* (1921): The Cinema's First Dracula

**ABSTRACT**

*This essay covers the history of Károly Lajthay's Hungarian film *Drakula halála* (1921), the cinema's first adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. The essay attempts to construct a production history of the film, as well as to create an accurate list of cast members and key filming locations. As *Drakula halála* is lost, the essay also features the very first English translation of an extremely rare 1924 Hungarian novella based on the film, which offers much insight into its narrative.*

**KEYWORDS**

*Drakula halála*  
Károly Lajthay  
Paul Askonas  
Lajos Pánczél  
vampire cinema  
silent horror films  
lost films

In recent years, a number of film historians discovered that F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) was not, as long believed, the first time that Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was adapted for the screen (Farkas 1997: 34–37).<sup>1</sup> Instead – even though it was hardly faithful to the novel – Hungarian director Károly Lajthay's *Drakula halála* marked the character's earliest film appearance, incorporating Stoker's vampire character into a tale that also drew heavily on Robert Wiene's *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920). Despite the growing awareness of *Drakula halála*, however, little is known of the film's production or its storyline, particularly in English-language texts.

1. I would note that all modern researches seem to have been greatly assisted by the hard work and research of Gyöngyi Balogh at the Hungarian Film Institute in Budapest.

2. I am very grateful to Gyöngyi Balogh for this information.

Announcing that the film was being produced, the Hungarian trade publication *Képes Mozivilág* wrote in 1921:

About twenty years ago, H. G. Wells' novel *Drakula*, one of his most interesting and exciting stories, was published as a serial in the *Budapesti Hírlap*, and then later published here as a book. The novel was highly acclaimed at the time, because the reader was fully absorbed into its exciting plot that featured so many unexpected turns.

(*Képes Mozivilág* 1921: 21)

Though the publication mistakenly named Wells as the author rather than Stoker, it did indicate that Lajthay intended to translate the 'basic ideas' of Stoker's *Dracula* onto the screen. Even if it would not become a direct adaptation of the novel, *Drakula halála* would rely heavily upon it for story ideas; its *Drakula* was not based on Vlad the Impaler or some new character: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* would become Károly Lajthay's *Drakula*.

Born in Marosvásárhely, Károly Lajthay (1885–1945) became an important figure in the Hungarian film industry during the 1910s. At times he was a writer (for *Átok vára* in 1918 and *Júlia kisasszony* in 1919), and on at least one occasion before *Drakula halála* he was a producer (for *Tláni* in 1920). But the bulk of Lajthay's credits were as director (of at least eight films prior to *Drakula halála*) and as actor (in at least fourteen films prior *Drakula halála*); for example, Lajthay appeared in Mihály Kertész's *A Magyar föld* (1917) and *A senki fia* (1917), as well as Alfred Deésy's *Nászdal* (1917), which co-starred Bela Lugosi.

According to censorship records, the Lapa Film Studio produced Lajthay's *Drakula halála*.<sup>2</sup> In late 1920, Lajthay visited Budapest in order to rent space at the Corvin Film Studio for a film that bore the working title *Drakula*. By that time, the theatre magazine *Színházi Élet* noted that Lajthay was one of several leading Hungarians who had left the Budapest film industry for Vienna. In an interview with the same publication, Lajthay said:

Film production in Vienna is virtually under Hungarian control, because Hungarian directors dominate the industry there. [Sándor] Korda and [Mihály] Kertész are extremely successful there. ... Now I am directing my film entitled *Drakula* [for a Vienna-based company.]

(Hungarian Film Directors in Vienna 1920)

Lajthay had co-written the *Drakula* script with Mihály Kertész, who had already been a prominent film director in Budapest, having worked at Phönix with Bela Lugosi on such films as *99* (1918). By the time of *Drakula halála* (as the film became known at some point during its production), Kertész was making films in Austria; years later, using the name Michael Curtiz, he would direct such Hollywood movies as *Dr. X* (1932), *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933), and *Casablanca* (1943).

As for his crew, Lajthay employed Eduard Hoesch, whom he called the 'best cameraman in Vienna' (Hungarian Film Directors in Vienna 1920). Hoesch would shoot *Drakula*'s interiors, though later credits suggest he was only one of two cinematographers who worked on the film. The other was Lajos Gasser, who had previously shot *Júlia kisasszony* (Hungarian Film Directors in Vienna 1920). Unfortunately, no surviving records indicate the names of other crewmembers.



Figure 1: Paul Askonas and Margit Lux in *Drakula halála*.

3. Deszö Kertész had previously appeared in numerous films, including Márton Garas's *Anna Karenina* (1918), in which he played Vronsky.
4. It should also be noted that *Képes Mozivilág* never actually said that Myl would portray Mary Land. Rather, the publication claims she would play the 'heroine'.

For the role of Drakula, Lajthay cast Paul Askonas (1872–1935), a member of the Deutsches Volkstheatre in Vienna. Among other films, Askonas had previously appeared as Svengali in Jacob and Luise Fleck's *Trilby* (1912). In the years following his work as Drakula, Askonas would portray Dr. Mirakel in Max Neufeld's *Hoffmanns Erzählungen* (1923) and Diener in Robert Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924). As for the other two key roles in *Drakula halála*, Lajthay cast Deszö Kertész (Mihály's brother) as the young male lead George, and Margit Lux as the heroine Mary Land.<sup>3</sup> Lux previously played a supporting role in Mihály Kertész's *Az ördög* (1918), after which she starred in his *Varázskering* (1919) and *Lu, a kokott* (1919); she had also appeared in Ödön Fritz's *Alraune* (1919, for which Kertész sometimes receives credit as co-director) and Pál Fejös' *Lidércynomás* (1920).

Margit Lux's appearance in *Drakula halála* has been the matter of a minor controversy, as the January 1921 issue of *Képes Mozivilág* claimed that Lene Myl (who was in fact a Serbian named Miléne Pavlovic) would play 'the role of the heroine'; they remarked on her 'impressive appearance,' and went so far as to say that she would 'ensure the success' of *Drakula halála* (*Képes Mozivilág* 1921: 21). Though she was essentially unknown, Myl had appeared in small film roles at studios in Rome and Berlin. Lajthay presumably spotted her in the Austrian film *Königin Draga* (1920), in which she had a supporting role alongside Askonas. Every other publication during 1921–1923 claimed, however, that Lux played Mary Land, not Myl.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it is definitely Lux who appears with Askonas in a *Drakula halála* publicity still published in *Színház és Mozi* in 1921; its caption specifically credits Lux as portraying Mary.

5. *Drakula halála* seems to have been Myl's only Hungarian film.
6. Anna Marie Hegener and Sonja Magda might well have portrayed Drakula's other brides; both are named in 'Hungarian Film Directors in Vienna'. Actress Paula Kende also appeared in *Drakula halála* and could well have been another of Drakula's brides.
7. Réthey had earlier appeared in Mihály Kertész's *Az ezüst kecske* (1916), *Zórd mester* (1917), *Halálcsevegő* (1917), *A kuruzsló* (1917), and *A szentjóni erdő tiika* (1917). Götz also appeared in at least one other silent Hungarian film, Lajos Lázár's *Taifun* (1918).
8. Elemér Thury had earlier appeared in Mihály Kertész's *Rablélek* (1913). Aladár Ihász had also worked with Mihály Kertész as well, having played the lead role in his *A kölcsönkért csecsemők* (1915); he had also appeared in Lajthay's *Labogó vér* (1919) and *Sundal* (1919).
9. In this publication, Lajthay notes that he 'completed external shots last month', meaning December 1920, 'near Vienna'. The article 'Hungarian Film Directors in Vienna' was more specific, quoting Lajthay as mentioning he had shot in Melk. However, in '*Drakula* – Károly Lajthay's Latest Film', *Képes Mozivilág* reported that – following the interiors at the Corvin Film Studio – Lajthay would 'resume the external shots in the Wachau near Vienna' (1920: 21).

Perhaps some cast changes occurred during pre-production, but it is equally, if not more possible that *Képes Mozivilág* – the same publication that had incorrectly claimed that H.G. Wells wrote the novel *Dracula* – simply made an error. It seems highly probable that Lux portrayed Mary Land, and that Myl portrayed some other, lesser role. For example, in 1921, Lajthay actually said, 'The major parts are played by Margit Lux, Lene Myl, and Askonas'; a cast list published circa 1924 by Lajos Pánczél also listed Lux as Mary Land, crediting Lene Myl with a small, unnamed role (I Attended a Wedding 1921: 26–27).<sup>5</sup> Given *Drakula halála*'s storyline, Myl likely appeared either as a nurse or – more likely, if an extant publicity photograph of her for the film accurately reflects her on-screen costume – as one of Drakula's brides.<sup>6</sup>

With Askonas, Kertész and (apparently) Lux in the lead roles, Lajthay cast Lajos Réthey – who had co-starred with Bela Lugosi in 99 (1918) – as the 'Fake surgeon,' and Karl Götz – aka Carl Goetz, who would later appear as Schigolch in *Pandora's Box* (1929) – as the 'Funny Man'.<sup>7</sup> Other on-screen talent included Elemér Thury, who had acted in Hungarian films since at least 1912, and Aladár Ihász, who appeared in a small number of films from 1913–1944.<sup>8</sup>

Script in hand and cast and crew in place, Lajthay shot some of the film's exteriors in and around Vienna, including in the village of Melk, in December 1920 (I Attended a Wedding 1921: 26–27).<sup>9</sup> The following month, beginning on 2 January 1921, he shot the interior scenes at the Corvin Film Studio in Budapest, which he believed was 'better equipped than any studio in Vienna' (I Attended a Wedding 1921: 27). Afterwards, he returned to Vienna to shoot additional exteriors in the nearby Wachau Valley (Hungarian Film Directors in Vienna 1920: unpaginated).

During the Corvin shoot, a journalist from the publication *Színház és Mozi* visited the set and wrote a story about the film's production, the most in-depth that was published:

It was not one of our famous prima donnas' weddings, nor one of our celebrated actors, or for that matter one of our successful writers, poets, sculptors, or painters; however, I nonetheless must insist that I attended a wedding. Firstly, because I de facto did; secondly, because it was the most unusual and extraordinary wedding ever witnessed by anyone.

I attended a wedding – at the Corvin Film Studio. The bridegroom – an actor – was none other than Asconas [*sic*], the most celebrated actor in Vienna, and the bride – an actress, of course – is Margit Lux, the nice, talented film actress who has been so highly acclaimed for crying so realistically on the screen.

Asconas [*sic*], Drakula *in persona* – a phantastic creature, some kind of modern bluebeard – brings a new woman into his amazing castle, this new woman being played by Margit Lux. He stops at nothing in order to possess the woman: he summons demons and spirits and strange creatures to gain control over her, but then a cross around her neck comes into view ... and Drakula, this wonderful, and at the same time mysterious creature, is dispelled by it.

That's how Drakula's wedding took place – in the Corvin studio, namely. Since I might not be able to give away anything by admitting now that *Drakula* is a film, I will say that it is a film destined to become

sensational, the plot of which must not be told due to the extraordinary excitement it conveys and the fact it will depend upon suspense when it appears on the screen.

Drakula's wedding gives a taste of the film's energies. There is an immense hall, dressed in marble, with a very, very long and dark corridor in the middle. That is where Drakula lives his mysterious life. It is night. The flutter and shrieks of a multitude of beasts can be heard, and the door in the middle of the hall opens. Beautiful women parade through it, all dressed in dreamlike costumes, all of them being Drakula's wives. But now Drakula awaits his new woman, the most beautiful and desirable of all. She will be welcomed with a rain of flowers.

How beautiful it will appear on the screen, I thought to myself while watching *Drakula* being shot at Corvin. Károly Lajthay, the great film director, worked all day without interruption to have Drakula welcome his new bride; when the film is finished, this scene will constitute just a small section of a four-act film. On the screen, this scene will not last more than five minutes, whereas it takes a full day's work to produce. The viewer, sitting in the theatre, will have no idea what extraordinary talent was required from the director to rehearse, shoot, and edit the sequences one by one.

(I Attended a Wedding 1921: 26–27)

*Színház és Mozi* then quoted Lajthay as claiming the film would be a 'super production', which were coincidentally the same words that Universal Studios used a decade later to describe their *Dracula* (1931).

But then the press information seems to stop. *Drakula halála* allegedly premiered in Vienna in February 1921, though no data has yet surfaced in Austrian trade publications or Vienna newspapers. If such a premiere occurred, the film would likely have born a German title, and even then it might not have been a direct translation; the name 'Drakula' could have been removed and an altogether new title used. More primary research in Austria will be critical to understanding *Drakula halála*'s distribution.

Why the film did not premiere in Budapest in 1921 is unknown. Perhaps there were legal problems or troubles with censors, but no record exists of either. At any rate – according to a 'Calendar of Events' listing in the April 1923 issue of *Mozi és Film* – distributor Jenő Tuchten presented *Drakula halála* to Hungarian audiences for the first time on 14 April 1923 (Calendar of Events 1923: 23). At that time, the film ran 1,448 meters in length. In the same issue of *Mozi és Film*, an advertisement promoted yet another screening in Budapest:

Drakula is coming

**THE REAL DRAKULA IS NOT DEAD!**

but he continues his triumph in full health, and appears again on May 12 or 19 **at the Royal-Apollo!**

Due to what promises to be an enormous demand, film exhibitors are advised to immediately book available dates!

(Advertisement 1923: 4)

But the enormous demand seems not to have occurred. For reasons unknown, the film quickly disappeared from theatre screens in Hungary and Austria. No evidence has yet surfaced that *Drakula halála* was ever re-released in either country, or that it was screened in any other country. The film seems to have vanished after the spring of 1923.

That disappearance includes film prints of *Drakula halála*, none of which survive. However, four publicity photographs have surfaced in Hungary in recent years. Two of them are portraits: one of Lene Myl, and the other of Askonas as Drakula, clad in black, his eyes glaring, his eyebrows accentuated by make-up, and his dark hair forming a widow's peak on his forehead. What is fascinating is that Lajthay apparently deviated from Stoker's description of Dracula, which included a 'long white moustache'. The clean-shaven Askonas thus appears none-too-different than would Raymond Huntley in the London stage version of *Dracula* in 1927 or Bela Lugosi in the Broadway version that same year, as well as in the 1931 Universal Studios film.

Though it is difficult to discern much information from the two surviving scene stills – and it is certainly dangerous to generalize too much based upon them – they tantalizingly suggest the film bore the influence of Expressionism, which may not be entirely surprising given the apparent influence that *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* had on the film's script. One of them shows Drakula and Mary Land with his brides; the other shows Drakula peering through a window (or open door, perhaps) at Mary. Both include some evocative shadows, and the latter depicts an artistically painted flat depicting a building and dreary sky in the distance. Though certainly not as stylized or exaggerated as *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, the image evokes an eerie and unreal landscape.



Figure 2: Paul Askonas (left) appears in this scene still from *Drakula halála*, which likely depicts the wedding between Drakula and Mary Land.

Only one other artefact survives that can help us understand the screen's first Dracula: a short novella that acted as a kind of 'book-of-the-film'. Apparently written by Lajos Pánczél (who had been a friend of Bela Lugosi's before Lugosi left Budapest in 1918), the novella *Drakula halála* was copyrighted and published in Temesvár in 1924, though there is the possibility an earlier edition appeared in either 1921 or 1923. How closely Pánczél's novella adapted the film's storyline is unknown, but it was evidently intended to be quite faithful, as it was promoted as 'Number 6 in a Series of Film Books'. Moreover, Pánczél begins the book by discussing the film and offering a list of its cast members.

The full text of Pánczél's novella is published herein for the first time in the modern age, as well as for the first time anywhere in the English language.

With regard to my research on both the film and the novella of *Drakula halála*, I offer great thanks to my dear friend Gyöngyi Balogh of the Hungarian Film Institute in Budapest, who is certainly the leading expert on Hungarian silent cinema. Moreover, I also wish to thank my colleagues János Szántai in Timisoara, Olaf Brill at Cinegraph in Bremen, and Brigitte Mayr at Synema, the Society for Film and Media in Vienna. With regard to the translation of the text from Hungarian to English, I offer my deepest appreciation to Péter Litván, whose kindness, patience, and assistance was invaluable.

*The Death of Drakula:  
A Novella of the Phantasy Film*  
by Lajos Pánczél

[Translated by Péter Litván and Gary D. Rhodes]

## PREFACE

This mystical story ushers us into the bizarre realm of unrestrained human fantasy. Entering into this stormy night of dreams and magic, we are faced with an ominous tale of frightening black shadows, of the dying, and of the living dead ....

In the midst of this piteous ensemble, there grows a budding, young girl. She is like an oasis in a barren desert wasteland, but unbridled madness savagely threatens her fragile existence. The weak little soul is a helpless captive of fate, which unmercifully forces her into life's raging waters, down its cascades towards impending doom, until – after much suffering – the golden gate opens, and the heroine reaches the shore of a bright and happy future.

This is brief summary of *Drakula's* enthralling plot, the film version of which is a product of the great Hungarian cinema industry. Written and directed by Károly Lajthay, the film is enacted by the following cast:

Drakula	Paul Askonas
Märy	Margit Lux
George	Dezsö Kertész
The Chief Surgeon	Elemér Thury
The Fake Surgeon	Lajos Réthey
His Assistant	Aladár Ihász
Funny Man	Karl Götz

Also featuring Lajos Szalkay, Károly Hatvani, Oszkár Perczel, Béla Timár, Paula Kende and Lene Myl.

## I. THE TRAGEDY OF OLD MR LAND

In the midst of some giant mountains covered with everlasting snow could be found a little Alpine village. Here, in majestic silence, far from the bustle of the world, lived little Mary Land, a poor seamstress. Each day in the life of this little lady passed sadly. Mary tried to overcome her loneliness and her heart's endless sorrow by devoting herself to work. She toiled unceasingly, day and night, in order to earn a meagre salary, which she used to support her sick father who was kept in a mental asylum at the nearby capital city.

In the poor little house where Mary lived, the sewing machine was forever buzzing; her soft, fragile little fingers were always moving.

Outside of Mary's home, the wintry landscape seemed to gleam with power. Surrounded by snowy mountains, the little village lived its own dream-like life like a tiny island surrounded by the sea's endless waters. A deep calm enshrouded the village, its peaceful citizens taking a rest from the year's hardships.

Mary's tiny house, where she had been born 16 years earlier, had once been home to great happiness. Her parents were wealthy; their house was free of sorrow, filled instead with laughter and joy. However, during a recent spring, Mary's mother fell ill, and not too long afterwards, Death delivered the poor woman from her misery.

Mary's heart bled for her deceased mother, and old Mr Land's grief was indescribable. The tragedy had such a terrible impact on him that he eventually lost his mind, causing Mary to follow the doctors' advice and have him committed to a mental asylum.

From that time onward, Mary lived a lonely existence in her home at the end of the village. She worked without rest in order to earn a living and pay for her father's care. After two sad years, though she was worn down by hard work, Mary's will power had not weakened. She would have sacrificed her own life to help her father. But regrettably, two years of care in the asylum did not improve old Mr Land's condition. He lingered inside the asylum like a living corpse. The doctors eventually came to the conclusion that his mental state was beyond repair, that he had mere days to live, and that a quick death would be an act of mercy for such a broken, suffering old man.

Mary visited her father every week, causing Mr Land's confused eyes to light up, beaming with renewed energy. When he would see his daughter, the old man nearly broke into euphoria: he hugged, kissed, and caressed his only child, because in secret he knew that the end was near and that he would soon have to bid his treasured daughter farewell. For her part, Mary tried to comfort her father, and, even when she was reduced to tears, she tried to remain silent. She bravely endured the painful goodbyes, and neither of them openly admitted that their world would never be the same ... They beguiled one another ... Their tearful glances were lies, promising a happy future and the hope of a new life, but deep inside they both heard the sorrowful sound of 'Fare-thee-well'.

Both of them spent their time yearning for their next encounter, but when they parted, they did so with the terrible feeling in their hearts of those who know, who *feel*, that death is at hand, and that they might see each other never more ....



## II. MARY AND GEORGE

During those sad, wearisome days, Mary's only comfort was George Marlap, who eventually became her fiancé. He loved her, and his heart brimmed with affection for the blossoming young girl. Though George worked as a woodcutter in the neighbouring village, he still called to see Mary every day. Those became her few happy hours ... It was only then that Mary's heart was freed from sorrow. It was only then that she could forget about her pain and imagine a happy future, one that would make up for all the agony she had suffered.

George devoted himself to Mary with tender love and attention. He also tried to spare his little bride-to-be from exhaustion, warning her that she was too obsessed with work and that it was too much of a burden for her sensitive nature. But Mary would not yield; she would not stop working. When George visited her on the holy day of Christmas, he could not believe that she was still working, working as hard as ever.

'Again you have been awake, working all night, my little Mary! Why don't you take better care of yourself? After all, today is a holiday, the holy day of Christmas, and I brought you this little tree. When I come back this evening, we will decorate it together.'

'My destiny is labour and self-denial,' Mary answered in a solemn voice. 'But I am not complaining ... I have had to deal with my situation in my own way ... I must keep carrying life's heavy burden.'

Then a tear welled in Mary's sad eyes ... The young man put the little fir tree on the table, bestowed a kiss on her lips, and departed.

'God be with you, my sweetheart!' George said, turning back to look at her before leaving. 'Goodbye!'

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That same night, George returned to his bride-to-be, and together they decorated the fir tree, a beautiful symbol of peace and love ... Then they prayed to the Lord in Heaven with their hearts full of gratitude, and as they prayed, they heard the chapel bells in the little village begin to chime, summoning the pious to midnight Mass.

They had already decorated the little fir tree with many glittering ornaments and candles, which cast a silvery light onto the two lovers. It seemed to create a halo around Mary's golden hair ...

At that minute, they heard someone mysteriously knocking on the door. George answered it to greet the unexpected visitor, who turned out to be the town's postman, delivering a registered letter for Mary.

The maiden hastily opened the envelope:

To Miss Mary Land,

We regret to inform you that your father's condition has worsened. You should attempt to visit him as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,  
Municipal Mental Asylum  
Dr Faigner, Director and Head Surgeon

Mary's eyes, which had been gleaming with joy, ran wet with tears ... Although she was well aware and prepared for the fact that her father had limited time, she was still taken aback by the news and tearfully placed her head on George's shoulder.

Then she quickly raised her head and said: 'We must not miss the midnight Mass. Let us hurry, George!'

Without saying a word, the young man took his fiancée by the arm. The little chapel's bell was still ringing throughout the village, and its devout citizens were busily making their way to the worship service ....

Neither Mary nor George would have missed the midnight Mass. The maiden and her fiancé looked to Almighty God, praying from the depth of their hearts that He might prolong old Mr Land's days ....

When the service was over, Mary nervously said to her fiancé: 'My dear, wonderful father! Who knows whether he will still be alive when I reach the asylum? The next train leaves in the morning ... I'm scared that I might be too late.'

George understood Mary's fears and tried to comfort her: 'Not a minute must be lost, Mary! Let me harness the horses, and then we will set out! Dawn will see us arrive at the asylum!'

Quick as it was thought, it was done. George readied the horses and a sleigh, and within a few minutes he was outside Mary's house, ready for departure. With great care, the young man seated the sad maiden in the sleigh, her own thoughts consumed by worry and fear.

The horses raced along with the lovers in full gallop. The little sleigh boldly glided down the frozen, snowy path, and the fairylike chime of its silver bells echoed throughout the darkness of the night ...

For hours, heavy, thick snowflakes floated down from the skies ... It was long after midnight. Worn out by grief, Mary lay down in the sleigh in order to sleep.

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The rising sun was already casting its golden rays when the lovers approached the city. With a few minutes, they reached the gates of the mental asylum. It was morning ... a crisp, fresh, winter morning. But soon the light of the sun struggled to beam through an increasingly dismal, cloudy sky ...

Frowning gloomily down at the young couple was an immense, sad, desolate building: the madhouse.

Mary shuddered, 'Oh!'

George embraced her tightly and sheltered the fainting maiden in his arms: 'What happened, my dear? What is wrong?'

'Every time I arrive at this place, I am nearly overcome. I am reminded that my poor, father must live here, his life empty and his mind hardly conscious. Oh, George, what a terrible fate! This house is the realm of the living dead; the most unhappy of men dwell here, and among them is my father! I could never forget the way he was. His wonderful face, his tender look, and the great devotion he had towards me. He raised me with so much love, and yet he's ended up here! Is this the end of his journey?'

George tried to comfort his fiancée, softly explaining: 'Be calm, dear. We cannot know the ways of providence, and we must live with God's will, however painful it is. Now be brave. I am confident that your father is still alive.'

George's words calmed Mary, and soon the couple reached the door of the madhouse.

Before entering, Mary said: 'Thank you, George, for bringing me here. I will return home on the evening train. Goodbye, my sweetheart!'

The lovers parted with a gentle kiss.

'Please do not be late, Mary,' George said. 'God be with you. Goodbye!'

Then the girl entered the house of sorrow. As she nervously walked through its archway, her heart filled with grief and her spirits sank. She was shaking with fear over her father's fate.

Mary anxiously asked the first man that crossed her path: 'Could I speak to Doctor Tillner, please?'

As soon as she asked for him, Doctor Tillner appeared. One of the most important doctors at the asylum, Tillner was wearing a white coat, preparing for his morning rounds. By that time, Mary knew Tillner quite well, because her father was a member of his ward.

With her eyes wide open, Mary questioned the doctor: 'How is my father? Is he alive? Please doctor, tell me everything!'

Tillner remained silent for a moment, and then he tried to calm down his desperate visitor by saying: 'Take comfort, Miss! Death will be salvation for your poor father. Come along and have a look at my patients. What a pitiful life these poor wretches must live!'

### **III. HUMANS REDUCED TO SHADOWS**

With an air of curiosity, Mary followed him. Doctor Tillner ushered her into the garden of the hospital, where so many of the inmates were gathered. They instinctively wanted to be outside on such a bright winter morning, which had a calming effect on their dead nerves and paralyzed spirits.

With scared and troubled eyes, a host of inmates stared at Mary, the unknown and unexpected interloper, as if they were all part of some picturesque panopticon. She kept close to the doctor, because – even though she did recognize a few of the patients from her previous visits – she was scared by the bizarre appearance of them gathered together. Her fear heightened when some of them moved towards her. Their eyes radiated with madness, and their slow steps dragged frail, wrecked bodies towards her as if she was their enemy.

Growing aware of the danger, Doctor Tillner motioned for the patients to withdraw. They moved away, but their gaze revealed a hateful, murderous light.

'Do not be afraid, my dear child,' Tillner said, trying to reassure Mary. 'They are all innocent people who wouldn't hurt a fly. It is only their appearance that is threatening. They are cowards, who would shrink back at the mere rustle of a leaf.'

Mary remained fearful of the poor, death-bound pariahs, and so the doctor continued to speak to her as he approached one of the inmates: 'This man here,' he said, 'was once a famous scientist, and now has the belief that his foot is made of glass and prone to break if he steps on it.'

Doctor Tillner then pointed out the fact that his feet were wrapped in thick scarves: 'Now he also believes that he is the Minister of Finance. He constantly doles out cheques worth billions to his friends.'

Mary observed the thin, haggard man dressed in bizarre clothes; he manically wrote in his notebook and then tore out pages from it, giving them to other inmates who passed his way. Each time he did, his pale face lit up with joy and happiness.

Then she became aware of a tall, gaunt man with bushy hair and a face that resembled Beelzebub. Turning to the doctor, she asked, 'Who is this formidable man? He is staring at me as if I am his prey. He virtually swallows me with his eyes, which are ablaze with all the terrible colours of hell.'

'He used to be an excellent composer,' Tillner replied. 'Now he believes himself to be a ruler. He wouldn't part from his royal cloak even to go to sleep.'

'He resembles the organ player who taught me how to sing some years ago,' Mary said.

'If you are not afraid, you are certainly welcome to speak to him,' the doctor said. 'I ask him questions in vain. He will not reply.'

#### **IV. DRAKULA**

Encouraged by the doctor, Mary slowly approached the man dressed in the cloak, who gazed upon her with a terrifying smile. Growing more confident among the patients, she asked him: 'How are you, master? ... Don't you remember me? My name is Mary Land ... Five years ago in the school ...'



*Figure 3: Paul Askonas as Dracula.*

'I don't remember,' the horrible man replied. 'I do not remember anything. I am Drakula ... the immortal!'

A wild fire then flared inside the man's heart. In a commanding voice, he exclaimed once again: 'Yes! I am Drakula ... the immortal!'

Mary Land shuddered at the sight of the awful man. She quickly regretted having spoken to him, but continued the conversation: 'Try to remember, master ... I was in the second row ... I sang soprano, and you often stroked my hair as a token of affection ... a long time has passed, but I can still remember everything.'

The madman shuddered: 'I have been alive for a thousand years, and I will live forever ... Mine is immortality ... Immortality! I possess eternal life ... People will die, the world will be destroyed, but I shall keep living!'

Deeply shaken, Mary shrank away from Drakula, who continued speaking: 'My life is a life eternal! Death will never come for me! Oh, do not believe that I, too, am mad! I stay here only because I love the living dead. I deeply pity them, and I want to give all of them life!'

Mary listened nervously to Drakula, the human monster, whose voice sounded like a roar from hell, and whose deep fiery black eyes glowed with dark flames. Then he towered over fragile little Mary as if he was going to squeeze her to death with one single movement.

Doctor Tillner, who had been watching the scene from a distance, rescued Mary and escorted her back into the hospital. The doctor ushered the girl into an operation room and said to her: 'Please, take a seat here while I have a word with the director about giving your father a room of his own.'

Mary replied in a trembling voice, 'I am so very disturbed by that terrible man dressed in black ... Drakula.'

'Please relax,' the doctor told her. 'Drakula only looks terrifying. You must not be scared of him. Calm down.'

Mary nervously sat down in the sterile, white operation room. She was still shuddering. Faced with an irrepressible and unceasing image, her thoughts struggled with Drakula. While she was waiting, consumed by her thoughts, one of the doors opened and a man who appeared to be a doctor entered quietly.

Mary grabbed at her chair. She was terrified by the stranger's weird looks. Though he wore a doctor's white coat, the man was one of the inmates. He was tall and had a gaunt face. The madman believed he was a doctor, always wore a doctor's coat, and always arrogantly tried to examine and operate on the other patients.

'I am Professor Wells,' he told Mary, 'a doctor of universal medicine. If you don't mind, Miss, I will examine you.' He then sat down next to her, staring at her with his eyes wide open.

## **V. THE TWO DOCTORS**

Mary had no idea that 'Professor Wells' was a madman disguised as a doctor, but she instinctively felt that danger was near. She feared, abhorred, and then shrank from this man who gazed at her with great intensity.

'Tell me, please, do your eyes not hurt?' the madman said, breaking the silence, and all of a sudden he started to examine her. 'My diagnosis is very clear! You are suffering from severe eye disease, Miss,' the fake doctor pronounced. 'If we do not operate at once, you will go blind!'

Mary was taken aback. Her doubts about the man vanished. She believed him and was convinced that he was indeed a doctor.

At that very moment, the door opened and another man wearing a doctor's coat entered. Professor Wells's face lit up and he said to Mary: 'If you don't believe me, ask my colleague,' and he pointed to the man who had just entered.

The other fake doctor scrutinized Mary's eyes and produced his diagnosis: 'Vulpis doloris! To be operated on without delay!'

Utterly terrified, Mary changed her opinion once more and tried to get away from the two men. But they grabbed the young maiden and threw her onto the operating table. They strapped down her hands and feet. Professor Wells then appeared over her brandishing a surgical knife that he had removed from one of the cupboards. All of this occurred within a few moments.

A terrible shriek then escaped from Mary's throat: 'For God's sake ... Let me go! Help!'

'Be quiet!' one of the fake doctors shouted at her.

'You should be glad that we have chosen to operate on you!' the other madman exclaimed. 'You will owe us your life, your eyesight ... It will take only a minute or two, and then it will be over!'

Mary cried: 'No! I won't let you do it! Let me go! Please, let me go!'

But the two madmen, their eyes wildly ablaze, descended on the maiden, who was now fighting with all her might. She desperately wanted to escape from the operating table, and while she was struggling, she kept crying: 'Help! Help!'

Her words echoed throughout the white operating room, but fate seemed determined to keep her where she was. Like a bird caught in a net, she was helplessly trapped in the claws of the two madmen. As an ominous, cruel silence fell across the room, Mary suddenly quit crying. The two madmen were just about to pierce open her eyes, when Doctor Tillner and his assistants rushed into the operation room, grabbed hold of the madmen, and freed the maiden from her straps.

Mary was lying there, swooning. She didn't recover consciousness for more than an hour. Doctor Tillner watched over her, checking her heavy breath and the convulsions of her body, which was still heavily affected by the terrifying adventure she had experienced. Eventually, she opened her eyes.

'What happened to me?' she asked with a frightened voice, her eyes full of terror. 'Have I dreamt an evil dream, or did those awful things actually happen to me?'

The doctor tried to comfort her as best he could. 'There is nothing that can hurt you now, little Mary!' he said. 'Forget what happened; consider it nothing more than an unpleasant dream.'

'It is so awful to think about!'

'You shouldn't have been in here alone, Mary, but nobody could have guessed that you might attract such strange visitors.'

Hoping to banish the terrible memories from her mind, Mary wiped her forehead, and then she left the operation room with Doctor Tillner's help.

Finally Mary went to see her father, who was near death. Though weak, he embraced his daughter. Mary's tears washed down her face ... then she heard a loud groan ... the father's outstretched arms lost their strength ... his bony fingers stiffened ... his head dropped to one side ... his confused eyes were forever shut ...

In tears, Mary held onto her father's corpse. Doctor Tillner raised her and took the sad, shaken young maiden out of the ward. Had his death, and her strange adventure with the two doctors, really happened, or were they simply a dream?



Figure 4: Károly Lajthay in *Vorrei morir* (1918).

The doctor helped the poor, fainting creature into a little room adjacent to the director's office and laid her on a couch so she could rest. But Mary longed to get away. To run from this house of hell, where she had suffered so utterly, where the most horrendous memories of her life had been born.

'Away ... I want to go away ... to escape ... My life is threatened here! Let me go!' the frightened little maiden kept crying.

Doctor Tillner was hardly able to keep Mary from fleeing. 'In such a terrible state of mind, you cannot leave,' the doctor said. 'Stay here for the night and have a rest. In the morning you will be fine, and then you can leave for home.'

The maiden felt inclined to follow the doctor's kind advice. She lay down on the couch, but said in a frightened voice, 'I beg you ... don't hurt me ... I haven't done anything.' Her eyelids then closed, and she fell asleep.

## **VI. DRAKULA'S ASSAULT**

Mary had been asleep for several hours ... When the tower clock struck midnight, Drakula appeared in the room like a ghost from hell. He quietly approached the sleeping girl and then touched her shoulder with his long, bony fingers, which caused Mary to awaken. Taken aback, she looked up at Drakula, whose eyes burned with all the horrendous colours of hell. A satanic smile formed on his lips before he grabbed the girl and began to drag her across the room.

'Follow me!' he commanded. 'We are going to my castle, the home of lust and delight! I want to save you! All of these men here are evil. They want to destroy you just like they destroyed your father!'

Mary listened in terror while Drakula continued: 'Flee from this Hell! Follow me and trust me. I am immortal, and I possess supernatural powers! Come!'

'No! ... For God's sake, leave me alone,' Mary protested. Then she nervously asked him a flurry of questions: 'Who are you? What do you want of me? By what right do you command me to follow you? Where do you want to take me?'

Without responding, Drakula grabbed her and set off for his castle like a whirlwind so that they would reach it before dawn.

Outside, the mysterious veil of night enshrouded the town. Large, soft snowflakes fell to the earth, and this black-and-white panorama created a weird, haunting effect.

The human monster dragged Mary into the night as if she was a helpless puppet ... Their desperate journey lasted for hours, until they finally reached a strange, enormous building: Drakula's castle.

Mary shuddered. Shaking in the icy wind, she was completely bewildered by her weird companion. She wanted to escape from Drakula's arms, but the monster was holding her firmly.

'Hah, my dear,' he laughed in his satanic voice. 'Joy and ecstasy are awaiting you! Why would you try to flee?'

'Let me go! Let me go!'

'You, too, will enter the realm of immortality, the palace of wonders: Drakula's castle! Do not be afraid; do not shudder! Be happy instead, for bliss is awaiting you! Come!'

The young maiden's protests were all in vain. Drakula's power overcame her.

Then an immense stone gate creaked open before them. Drakula had reached home with his prey.

Though scared, Mary was curious, and so she looked around in the interior of the palace: its weird architecture, its phantastic illumination reminded her of the strange realms that appear in fairy tales.

And then she smelled a weird and rank odour in Drakula's Castle, the smell of death and decay. This heavy, suffocating smell nearly intoxicated the mentally-broken young maiden.

'Why have you brought me here?' Mary finally asked. 'What do you want from me?'

Drakula replied triumphantly: 'You will never be able to escape! Tomorrow we will celebrate our engagement! You will be my bride! I will marry you with an immortal kiss, and you will stay here with my other wives, all of whom possess eternal life!'

Then, with a wave of Drakula's hand, the marble floor in the middle of the palace opened. A blue-violet light appeared from below ... the lush sounds of supernatural music could be heard ... and twelve beautiful women could be seen. With their exquisite bodies covered in veils, they danced to the rhythm of the soft music ...

Drakula told Mary: 'Before the sun rises twice, you will be among my subterranean residents!'

'No ... I don't want to be here, not for all the treasures in the world,' Mary screamed. Filled with despair, she grabbed the cross hanging around her neck and beseeched God to save her from such horrors.



'Damnation! ... Hell! ... The only means by which my power is paralyzed! ... Away with it!' Drakula shouted, after seeing the crucifix.

## **VII. THE WEDDING**

Soon the palace was lit up by the first light of dawn. As he began to flee, Drakula scowled, 'I hate the sunlight! It forces me away. But I shall see you again, tonight!'

Drakula disappeared, and all the gates of the palace closed behind him. Mary was left alone in the mysterious castle, and yet in every corner she could still see Drakula's satanic image grinning at her ... She wanted to flee from the terrible phantom, but her actions were all in vain ... Drakula's power prevented her from escaping.

Hours of agony passed ... Mary helplessly moved around in her prison ... She dragged her trembling limbs from one room to the next, in search of some relief, but to no avail ... The horrendous image of Drakula's cruel, grinning face seemed to be everywhere.

Evening was soon at hand ... Mary ran down into the park of the palace ... Just as she did, the great gate opened with majesty and Drakula entered ...

'How kind of you to receive me!' he said to the terrified maiden.

Drakula took Mary by her arm and led her through the palace. He told her: 'Go now, and dress for our marriage ceremony.'

Drakula then waved to his enslaved wives, who surrounded Mary and led her into a beautiful, flowery room. Inside it was a wedding dress adorned with gold, silver and priceless jewels. They dressed Mary, and when they had finished, Drakula's newest bride was led into the great hall of the palace, where the devil's son was eagerly expecting her.

Drakula approached her, offering her a lustful smile. Deprived of her own will, as if trapped in a dream, Mary yielded to the power of the satanic man.

'You are welcome, my beautiful bride,' Drakula flattered Mary. 'We are now celebrating a feast of joy, the eve of our nuptials!'

Shrill music was then heard ... It was the loud, weird music of some devilish wedding march, to which some strangely costumed ballerinas offered a wanton dance. The whole palace was covered in a mystical light ... Shocking colours interchanged. A flash of colourful light appeared and then faded, only to be followed by another flash of light. Drakula's engagement feast was luxurious, but strange.

'After the rain of flowers, my kiss will unite us for ever!' the bridegroom said to the bride.

In the wake of these words, thousands and thousands of flowers fell from the ceiling of the palace, like summer rain, covering the floor. Horrible, death-like odours filled the enormous hall. Then, Drakula bent his head towards Mary in order to bestow a kiss onto her lips. His mouth trembled from wild desire, and he opened his arms to embrace her.

But at that very moment Mary pushed Drakula away, reached for the cross hanging around her neck, and bravely revealed it to him, her eyes flashing as she did.

'The cross! ... The cross!' Drakula roared, shrinking back from the girl in terror.

At the sight of the crucifix, the entire hall was seized with panic ... Drakula and all of the other evil spirits fled. Mary seized her opportunity. She rushed through the castle gate and into the snowy night.

## VIII. DOWN THE PATH OF DEATH

Mary fled from Drakula and the palace of hell, but her tired legs could not take her very far. Fainting, she fell on some snowy ground beside a tree trunk; the rays of dawn were just starting to shine upon her. Later that same morning, a nice family discovered her and took her back to their house so that she could rest. However, they were unable to revive her.

Mary Land was unconscious, though a fever had taken control of her mind. She was tormented by cruel, gruesome images. Drakula's hellish face never ceased grinning at her. His eerie eyes, his satanic features, and his terrible hands seemed always ready to possess her. Those images danced in front of her unconscious eyes.

'No... no... Don't hurt me!' Sometimes a word or two escaped from between her parched lips, causing Mary's rescuers to watch her with great sympathy.

'We must call a doctor,' the head of the household decided. 'We won't learn anything from her until she regains consciousness. There might be information we need to know before then.' His younger brother then journeyed into the town to call a doctor.

All the while, Mary's agony persisted. She was tormented by nightmares that seemed as if they might destroy her. In an effort to help ease her fever, the family covered her burning forehead and face with snow.

Hours later, the room was almost silent. Only poor Mary's panting could be heard. But the quiet was broken when the door opened unexpectedly. Mary's rescuers saw a visitor clad in black standing at the threshold. It was Drakula. The devilish creature made the family shudder in fear.

Outside the wind was howling and blowing snow into the room. Without saying a word, Drakula closed the door behind him and quietly approached Mary. He paid no attention to the family members staring with wonder at his appearance.

'I am here because she requires medical help. Nothing else is more important,' Drakula informed the onlookers.

'But who sent you?' the head of the household asked. 'How did you know to come here? My brother has left to get a doctor from the town.'

Drakula chose not to answer. Instead, he approached the still-unconscious Mary, looked at her briefly, and then said: 'This young maiden is insane and must have escaped from a mental asylum. She must be removed from here as soon as possible. She is a threat to herself and those around her.'

Those standing nearby fell under the spell of Drakula's powerful words. An awkward silence followed. Drakula's blazing eyes hypnotized the family, who helplessly suffered as a result. Then it seemed as if he would never remove his violet, flashing eyes from Mary's poor body, which had become more and more disturbed since Drakula's arrival.

'Don't surrender me! Rescue me! Help ...! He is killing me!' she screamed, trapped in a state of extreme terror. Then Drakula once again displayed his cruel, hellish smile. With his arms crossed, he stood beside Mary while the horrified family watched.

Then the head of the household's brother arrived with a real doctor from the town. 'This doctor considers the young woman to be a dangerous maniac,' the head of the household said to the real doctor.

After examining Mary, the real doctor turned to Drakula and said: 'You seem to be wrong, dear colleague. All I can perceive are wounds ... and a

fever.' Then he proceeded to say: 'This seems to be quite an extraordinary case! Whatever it is, I will remain here, in order to watch over her.'

Disgusted by the real doctor's words, Drakula immediately disappeared from the house.

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Days passed ... Mary struggled to regain her health and, after a week had gone by, she was in much better form. She was cheerful again, as if nothing had happened. In fact, she could hardly recall the horrible events that had transpired. She just felt as if she had awoken from a terrible nightmare, but one that she could hardly remember. The family continued to watch over Mary as if she was one of their own relatives.

One day, after examining the little patient, the doctor happily announced: 'Mary is definitely getting better. Soon she will be fully recovered!'

## **IX. A CRUEL NIGHT**

One night, when everyone in the household was sitting together, a man arrived at their door. 'You have been requested,' he said to the surgeon. 'Somebody has had an accident at the sports field! They are waiting for you!'

'Who are you?' the doctor inquired.

'I am a coachman,' the man replied. 'It is me who takes the hotel guests to the train and back.'

'But it is pitch dark outside,' the doctor said with a concerned voice.

'You need not be afraid, doctor! I know the road by heart, and my horse is very reliable,' the coachman said reassuringly.

The doctor understood his duty and left with the coachman. He promised Mary and the others that he would return as soon as he had finished his work.

Outside the sky was pitch black and a heavy fog blanketed the landscape. The snow crunched under the two men's steps. The doctor took a seat inside the little carriage; the coachman sat on the box, lashed the horses, and the wooden frame was set into motion. The doctor turned back to look behind them. The bright window of the little house became an increasingly distant image as the carriage moved forward through the white snow.

The coachman drove faster and faster. The carriage seemed to fly on wings, as the road it travelled over could not be seen. The blackness of night and the thick fog seemed to hide everything. As he smoked his cigar during the long journey, the doctor thought about Mary, and he rejoiced in the fact that he had helped the blossoming young woman regain her life.

The carriage continued its journey, faster and faster, and the sound of the horses suggested the sole hint of life in the otherwise desolate and mysterious night. After a quarter of an hour had passed, the doctor asked the coachman, 'Where are you headed?'

Perhaps the question escaped the coachman's attention, or perhaps he chose not to hear it, as he kept silent and continued to drive the horses. The doctor was puzzled and so he asked even more loudly: 'Where are you heading? Where are you taking me? Stop!' But this call, too, was lost in the night. The doctor then felt his pockets; he had no weapon. He was now aware that his guide was part of some cruel plan.

However, the doctor did not lose faith. Encouraged by a sense of urgency and danger, the doctor once again raised his voice: 'Tell me, will you, where you are taking me? What is our destination?'

At that very moment, the little carriage reached a hazardous stretch of road that ran alongside a deep abyss ... Even a slight landslide would cause the carriage to fall to its doom.

Realizing the risk they faced, the coachman admitted: 'A strange man clad in black gave me a gold coin and ordered me to bring you here, doctor.'

'You miserable man! Turn back at once!' the doctor said. 'Our lives are in danger!'

The graveness of the situation and the doctor's warning did not fail to have an effect on the coachman who had been bribed by Drakula. He cautiously turned the carriage around and took his passenger back to the home where Mary now resided.

On the return journey, the doctor questioned the coachman further, but the coachman was unable to give anything more than a vague description of his employer. Nonetheless, his information was enough for the doctor to realize that the man who bribed the coachman was the same 'doctor' that had been at Mary's sick bed. That man had suggested that Mary should go to a mental institute as a ruse to kidnap her. However, all of this information was of limited help, since the doctor did not know where the mysterious stranger lived.

Meanwhile, the family's house was enshrouded by the deep silence of the night. The whole family was asleep; only little Mary was restless ... At about midnight, Mary awoke to an odd, frightening sound ... It was as if she heard the ghost-like wail of an owl ... Her entire body shuddered ... She looked around in the half-lit gloom of the house ... Her eyes turned towards a dim lamp ... She looked for the source of the mysterious sounds, but she saw nothing. Mary then sank back into her bed and tried to sleep.

The wind outside howled viciously, and so Mary was unable to close her eyes. The dim light of the lamp cast strange images around the room, and Mary believed she could see shadows flickering on a white wall.

Drakula invaded her thoughts ...

The kind family and the good doctor had helped her forget about the horrors of the past: its terrible memory had grown distant, but this horrible night brought it back to the forefront of her mind.

'To-who ... To-who ... To-who ...' Mary heard the hoots of an owl, but she did not know whether she really heard it or if it was yet another dream ... And the dark shadows kept creeping around the room. Sweat beaded from her forehead; her body was burning with fever. Overcome with distress and terror, she tossed around in her bed.

Mary desperately tried to forget everything, keeping her eyes closed in stubborn determination and pushing her head into the pillows. She wanted sleep, nothing but sleep. Her lips murmured prayers, beseeching God to grant her a deep and restful sleep.

Try as she might, her eyes would not close. On the contrary, no matter how hard she tried, her eyelids remained open. 'My God ... don't leave me!' she whispered, feeling that her fate was about to reach a terrible turning point.

Outside the wind howled more horribly than ever. It caused the windows to shake with a vengeance. Mary felt she could hear countless cries echoed in the roaring wind. The minutes passed slowly, which weighed on the poor maiden as if they were hours.

Mary looked once again into the vanishing lamplight; the lamp crashed down onto the floor, flames erupting in its wake, setting the carpet on fire and spreading across the little room. Jumping out of her bed, Mary fled from the sea of fire into the cold winter night ...

As if pursued by something, she ran and ran through the night ... She did not feel the cold of the snow or the lashes of the icy wind. She just ran and ran and ran ...

## **X. THE DEVIL HAS FLOWN AWAY**

At last the terrible nightmare ended.

Mary woke up and, with her frightened eyes, she looked around the operation room, where the snow-white furnishings and the operating table were reminiscent of death. They had a ghastly effect on the poor creature, who had just been freed from her terrible dream ...

The red rays of the rising sun appeared. Nature was waking up, and the hospital, too, with its wretched patients, was also coming to life. Looking worried, Mary ran across the room. She raised her frail hand to stroke her forehead.

Shuddering, she remembered her awful experiences, but her soul cheered up at the thought that they had only been a dream.

But then a terrible fear gripped her, and Mary began to worry once more. Since she had entered the madhouse, so many bizarre things had happened: the incident in the operation room and the cruel nightmare that seemed so real. Her nerves began jumping, and her heart was beating heavily. Then she heard a horrible sound that seemed to come from the asylum's garden.

Remembering her poor father, who had lost his mind, Mary grew worried. The icy hand of suspicion crept across her body. 'What if ... what if ... if I too ... ?' she shuddered.

At that moment, the door of the operation room began to creak open, but Mary wasn't strong enough to look at who entered.

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Doctor Tillner's morning rounds brought him to the operation room. Mary was still lying on the couch. Her eyes were open, but she was too weak to get up. The nurse standing beside her approached the doctor.

'She must have had very horrible dreams. She was crying out all night,' the nurse explained.

Doctor Tillner tenderly held the maiden. She was still shaking with fear and distress. She was still frightened of the satanic Drakula ...

'What is it ... what happened to me?' Mary nervously asked the doctor. 'Am I awake ... or I am still trapped in that awful nightmare?'

'Calm down, my dear,' Tillner said to her. 'It was just a dream. Please try to forget about it.'

## **XI. DRAKULA'S DEATH**

The mental patients had already gathered in the garden of the asylum. They continued with their strange habits. The scientist feared for his 'glass leg', but – acting as the 'Minister of Finance' – he continued to dole out checks. Drakula, the one-time composer, gave a speech about his immortality to a group of patients who quickly grew bored with him.

Among these living dead stood a heavyset little man who wore a tall, pointed top hat. A pair of enormous spectacles weighed down on his thick nose. His old, parchment-coloured face displayed a permanent smile, as if he was forever caught in a distorted laugh. He never ceased making strange jokes and was always playing pranks on his companions. He liked to fool the others, though they were long used to his habits.

This morning, the 'Funny Man,' as he was nicknamed, had somehow discovered a loaded revolver, which he began pointing at his panicked

companions. The armed madman then appeared before Drakula, pointed his gun at him, and laughed with a distorted grin.

Drakula nearly erupted with joy, telling the Funny Man: 'At last I can prove that I am immortal! Shoot!'

Drakula's voice boomed throughout the garden, causing the other patients to gather.

Drakula then thundered: 'What are you waiting for, you cowardly mongrel! All of you have always stared at me like fools, not believing in my immortality. Now, come here all of you, gather around and witness the truth! Drakula is safe from your bullets; they will not penetrate my body. Drakula is immortal! Ha ha ha! Come ... here ... all of you! And you ... raise your revolver!'

The Funny Man nervously began to back away from Drakula.

'No ... I dare not do it ... I dare not do it!' – he said, slowly lowering the revolver.

'So you are afraid? You coward! Shoot, as I command you to do! Here – aim at my chest!' Drakula shouted.

The terrified group that surrounded the two madmen surveyed the scene with heightened interest. Then, obeying his stern command, the Funny Man cocked the trigger of his pistol and fired ...

The bullet hit Drakula in the heart and killed him at once. His blood poured forth, staining the fresh snow with the colour red.

After the gun was fired, the terror-stricken patients scattered throughout the garden. Within moments, Doctor Tillner and his assistants stood beside Drakula's body.

'Drakula is dead,' one of the assistants told the doctor after examining him. 'The Funny Man has killed him with a stolen gun.'

At the sight of his gruesome deed, the mad murderer was at first seized with panic, but soon he began giggling once again. While the assistants tied him up and took him back to his cell, the Funny Man's face grew even more disfigured by his insane laughter.

## **XII. DOWN THE ROAD OF LOVE**

A sleigh stopped in front of the madhouse. Mary's fiancé George climbed out of it. After having waited in vain for his bride-to-be the previous night, he had rushed to the city in order to find her and take her back home.

Overjoyed at the sight of George, Mary ran up to him, fell into his arms, and then the two lovers shared a long kiss ...

'Thank God,' the young man said with the sound of relief and happiness in his voice. 'At last we are reunited ... I was so worried ... so anxious that something might have happened to you! ... But please tell me, why didn't you come back last night? What kept you?'

A flood of questions poured out of George's lips, but Mary did not have the time or desire to answer them: Doctor Tillner was approaching. He bid the young couple farewell, and they set out across the garden to leave the hospital. As they were walking arm in arm, they came across two assistants who were carrying Drakula's corpse on a stretcher. When the procession passed in front of her, Mary caught sight of Drakula's formidable face, which caused her even more fright than when he was alive. Nearly fainting, she drew close to George. Not knowing about her horrible dream, George was puzzled by her reaction.

The assistants carried Drakula away. As they did, a notebook dropped out of his pocket. George picked it up and examined the cover:

A DIARY OF MY IMMORTAL LIFE  
AND OF MY ADVENTURES –  
DRAKULA

Glimpsing the title and growing even more frightened, Mary demanded: 'Throw it away at once! I don't want to look at it! This man was the cause of my terrible dream!'

George followed her wishes. He threw the diary away, took Mary by the arm, and then helped her into his sleigh. Its little wooden frame then carried the lovers back home, back to happiness and to bliss.

During the journey, George repeatedly tried to get Mary to talk, but her lips remained sealed. She did not tell him a single word about the agony she had endured because of the terrible dream. George would not learn what had happened. Realizing she wished to remain silent, he never spoke of the bizarre incident again.

*The End*

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## Aims and Scope

*Transnational Cinemas* has emerged in response to a shift in global film cultures and how we understand them. Dynamic new industrial and textual practices are being established throughout the world and the academic community is responding. Our journal aims to break down traditional geographical divisions and welcomes submissions that reflect the changing nature of global filmmaking.

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*Transnational Cinemas* covers a vast and diverse range of film related subjects. It provides a new and exciting forum for disseminating research. The editors are seeking articles, interviews, visual essays, reports on film festivals and conferences. Articles should be up to 6,000 words in length and should be written in English, with all quotations translated.