

7. VAN HELSING & SEWARD SIDE 1 | Act 1, Scene 14, p 49-51

*VAN HELSING is a woman. Not only that, she's a woman in a cowboy hat. [SEWARD] is a good man, but starts out the play as a product of his era— has some trouble listening to women. Lines removed for the purpose of audition material.*

VAN HELSING I— am Dr. Van Helsing.

SEWARD *You?*

VH — what, you were expecting a withered old Dutch man?

SEWARD But— you're a woman!

VH You noticed.

SEWARD And you are— you can't be— a doctor?

VH — There are a few universities, now, that admit women.

SEWARD For a *fee*, yes.

VH And who you are, exactly?

SEWARD I am— Doctor Seward.

VH Seward. Got your letter. Came to help. *(she holds out her hand to shake)*

SEWARD But—

VH You're welcome.

SEWARD But—

VH *(she drops her hand, and strides past him)* Hold my hat.

SEWARD But—!

VH — What have you been giving her?

SEWARD I— opiates— to calm her.

VH Opiates to make her muddled and tractable— incapable of resistance. Stupid choice.

SEWARD EXCUSE ME, Madame—

VH *Doctor.* Has Miss Westenra said anything of note?

SEWARD Only... babbling; she's been hallucinating—

VH What exactly did she say?

SEWARD Nonsense, rubbish, I don't know— I was not marking it.

VH Typical.

Now— let's take a closer look—

SEWARD I must insist—

VH Shush, Seward! Let me work.

SEWARD *"Shush?"* What— what can I do?

VH *You—* can fetch me a coffee.

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VH Didn't the transfusion work?! Isn't she improved?!

SEWARD Yes—

VH Then stop questioning my methods!

SEWARD Not until you tell me what the— h-e-l-l is going on!

VH H-e-?

SEWARD I will not curse in front of a lady!

VH I am no Lady. But I am a medical professional!

SEWARD I am ALSO a professional, and you have no right to exclude me! Blood transfusion— that has a rational basis. And I concede that she is better!

VH /very good of you./

SEWARD / But what does that have to do with— with garlic on the sill, or silver crosses or— dancing around toadstools under a full moon, or whatever you are about to propose? You still will not tell me what this dis-ease is!

VH You're not ready to hear it.

SEWARD I am a modern man, I am a man of science, I am perfectly open-minded.

VH You seem to me, Seward— to be someone who believes only in his own senses. But you must trust, that I know firsthand what I speak of, even if it is— outside the realm of your known experience. (*she takes a deep breath, then:*) I believe your fiance is under the control of a supernatural creature.

SEWARD Excuse me?

VH / *Das Wampir* in German, *vetalas* in Sanskrit; *izcackus* in Hungarian. Tales of these beings date back to the Mesopotamians—

SEWARD Is this a *joke*—

VH Narratives vary, but there are stories from every culture— consistencies / that cannot be overlooked—

SEWARD / STOP! Stop! Those are OLD WIVES' TALES!

VH When the ruling class write history, the words of the common people, of women— become superstition / but there is truth in—

SEWARD / Unbelievable—

VH The unbelievable quickly becomes believable— if pigheaded men will only listen!

SEWARD — What are you— looking for, money? No doubt you'll charge a hefty fee to conduct your exorcisms?!!!

VH I'm warning you, Seward—

SEWARD No, I'm warning you. Get out of this house! I will treat Lucy myself from now on!

VH — watch over her, fool.

SEWARD Out!