

DRACULA EXCERPTS

Excerpt 1

Within, stood a tall old man, clean-shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere. He held in his hand an antique silver lamp, in which the flame burned without chimney or globe of any kind, throwing long, quivering shadows as it flickered in the draught¹ of the open door. The old man motioned me in with his right hand with a courtly gesture², saying in excellent English, but with a strange intonation³:—

“Welcome to my house! Enter freely of your own will!” He made no motion of stepping to meet me, but stood like a statue, as though his gesture of welcome had fixed him into stone. The instant, however, that I had stepped over the threshold⁴, he moved impulsively forward, and holding out his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed as cold as ice—more like the hand of a dead than a living man.

Excerpt 2

His face was strong—very strong—aquiline⁵, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely⁶ elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion⁷. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded⁸ over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness⁹ showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor¹⁰.

¹ Draught: British spelling of draft.

² Courtly gesture: A gesture characterized by elaborate and formal courtesy.

³ Intonation: The rise and fall of the voice when speaking.

⁴ Threshold: Any place or point of entering.

⁵ Aquiline: Curving like an eagle's beak.

⁶ Profusely: Abundantly.

⁷ Profusion: An abundance or large quantity of something.

⁸ Protruded: To jut out from the surrounding surface or context.

⁹ Ruddiness: A heavily red-brown color.

¹⁰ Extraordinary pallor: deficiency of color, especially of the face.

Hitherto I had noticed the backs of his hands as they lay on his knees in the firelight, and they had seemed rather white and fine; but seeing them now close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse—broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal. The Count, evidently noticing it, drew back; and with a grim sort of smile, which showed more than he had yet done his protuberant¹¹ teeth, sat himself down again on his own side of the fireplace.

Excerpt 3

I only slept for a few hours when I went to bed, and feeling that I could not sleep any more, got up. I had hung my shaving-glass¹² by the window, and was just beginning to shave. Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, and heard the Count's voice saying to me, "Good morning." I started, for it amazed me that I had not seen him, since the reflection of the glass covered the whole room behind me. In starting I had cut myself slightly, but did not notice it at the moment. Having answered the Count's salutation¹³, I turned to the glass again to see how I had been mistaken. This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! The whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself. This was startling, and, coming on the top of so many strange things, was beginning to increase that vague feeling of uneasiness which I always have when the Count is near; but at that instant I saw that the cut had bled a little, and the blood was trickling over my chin. I laid down the razor, turning as I did so half-round to look for some sticking-plaster. When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away, and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there.

Source:

Stoker, B., & Kaye, M. (1996). Dracula. Sterling Publishing Co.

¹¹ Protuberant: Thrusting out from a surrounding or adjacent surface, often as a rounded mass.

¹² Shaving-glass: Shaving mirror.

¹³ Salutation: An expression of greeting, goodwill, or courtesy by word, gesture, or ceremony.