

# The Vampire

by  
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adapted in English  
by  
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## Prologue

*The overture portrays a storm.*

*At rise, the Heaven is dark and all objects confused. It lights up little by little. The scene takes place in a basalt grotto whose long prisms end in unequal angles facing Heaven, the arch is bare; the circle of the grotto is strewn with tombs and diverse shapes, columns, pyramids, cubes of rough and clumsy workmanship.*

*On a tomb in the foreground, one sees a young girl lying on a bed, plunged in the most profound sleep. Her head is leaning on her arm and covered by her veil and hair.*

*Opposite her, Oscar is seated. He rises and paces about the stage uneasily. The light progressively increases. A shape that embraces a luminous cross arises in the grotto and stops. The angel of the Moon, in a floating white robe, addresses Oscar.*

### ITURIEL

What do I see? Is it you, my dear Oscar? You, the genius, the protector of marriage in these dreadful parts that I myself fear to light up? Yes, all the lugubrious scenes of the night whose starry escort serves to dissipate the horror doesn't affright me until I approach the grotto of Staffa. When the first rays of the Moon break on the dazzling snow of the summits of Caledonia, I shiver despite myself—and the sight of these tombs seizes me with a horror I am still unable to explain to myself.

### OSCAR

Grace be rendered you, Ituriel. Your arrival consoles me and reassures me—for as for me, I can no longer defend myself against an invincible horror in this dwelling. But, do I need to tell you what case brought me here? Let one of your glances fall on this tomb.

### ITURIEL

What do I see? A young girl sleeping in these parts where all breathe uncertainty and terror.

OSCAR

You don't yet know all the secrets. This young girl is Miss Aubrey, the most beautiful and the richest heiress in Scotland. Tomorrow she must marry Count Marsden who possesses vast lands—superb—in Scotland and who is known throughout Europe, which he has just crossed, by the renown of his wit and the perfection of his qualities.

ITURIEL

What strange luck brought her into these solitudes?

OSCAR

The Count de Marsden is not expected until tomorrow. Miss Aubrey was following the hunt with her brother, when the terrible storm arose that your first rays had so much difficulty dissipating. You know, Heaven was on fire, the Earth trembling and the sea shaking to the depth of its abysses.

ITURIEL

Then, it's you who saved her. Ah! I recognize you in this case—but what are you doing in the midst of the ices of Staffa?

OSCAR

No spot on Earth fixes my attention more than this, when it's a question of marriage—and that an innocent young girl, unaware of the misfortunes that are reserved for her, is ready to fall from the arms of love to those of death.

ITURIEL

Explain yourself. Is it true that horrible ghosts can sometimes, under the appearance of the rights of marriage, cut the throat of a timid virgin—and drink her blood?

OSCAR

These monsters call themselves vampires. A power, whose inscrutable decrees we are not permitted to scrutinize, has permitted that certain funereal souls—doomed to torments that their excesses have attracted on Earth, play with this terrible right that they exercise by preference on the virginal bed and on the cradle as soon as they descend, formidable, with the hideous power that death has given them. By and by, more privileged because their career is short and their future frightening, they obtain, and assume, shapes lost in the tomb and reappear in the light of the living—under the aspect of bodies they have animated.

ITURIEL

And this young unfortunate was pursued?

OSCAR

Wandering shades of Vampires, in the clouds of the night, have increased by their clamors the tumult of the storm. Some insidious voices, though internal, have misled her steps to the grotto of Staffa. She rushed there to find an asylum against the storm, when chance caused my eyes to fall on her from the highest celestial regions. I followed her to save her.

ITURIEL

And these monsters have appeared?

OSCAR

The first hour of day wakens them in their sepulchres. Once the reverberation of the hour struck has expired in all the echoes of the mountain, they fall back, motionless into their eternal dwellings. But there's one amongst them on whom my power is more limited. What am I saying? Destiny itself never can recall his decrees. After having brought desolation to twenty separate lands, always vanquishing, always living, always more thirsty for the blood which preserves his frightful existence, in thirty-six hours, at the first hour of evening, he must finally submit to nothingness, a legitimate punishment for a train of insoluble crimes, if he cannot join to him one more crime, and add yet another victim.

ITURIEL

Nothingness!

OSCAR

The most severe of punishments inflicted by the Great Spirit. And as his future is without resources, he has all the resources of the present. He can take all shapes—assume all languages, use all seductions. Nothing of the appearance of life is lacking in him, but death, which never abandons its prey entirely, has imprinted its mark on his face. And even this is hidden from the eyes of those he wishes to deceive.

ITURIEL

Alas! What do you hope to do? Our power is limited—and the realms of death are sacred to us.

OSCAR

They are not shut to divine justice. Since a term was placed on the crimes of the Vampire—why can't I halt this course? Whatever may be the duties which call me elsewhere, don't be astonished to find me two or more times in Scotland.

ITURIEL

Ah—may you succeed in your plans! Your conversation has kept me a long while above these grottos.

*A distant clock can be heard sounding one o'clock in a tone. The gong repeats it echo by echo.*

OSCAR

Stop and look.

*All the tombs open from the moment the hour strikes. Pale shades half leave and fall back under the tombstones, in proportion as the noise vanishes in echoes.*

*A spectre dressed in a shroud escapes from the most noticeable of the tombs. His face is revealed.*

*He rushes to the place where Miss Aubrey is sleeping.*

SPECTRE

(shouting)

Malvina!

OSCAR

Withdraw.

SPECTRE

She belongs to me.

OSCAR

(seizing the young sleeping girl)

She belongs to God, and soon you will belong to nothingness.

SPECTRE

(withdrawing, but threatening still as he repeats)

Nothingness.

*Ituriel crosses the stage in a cloud.*

*All light vanishes. The scenery changes and represents one of Sir Aubrey's apartments.*

BLACKOUT.