

*Re: Dracula Episode 41: August 6—
Smells like Death*

[Soft music plays.]

MINA

Mina Murray's journal, sixth of August.—Another three days, and no news. This suspense is getting dreadful. If I only knew where to write to or where to go to, I should feel easier; but no one has heard a word of Jonathan since that last letter. I must only pray to God for patience. Lucy is more excitable than ever, but is otherwise well. Last night was very threatening, and the fishermen say that we are in for a storm. I must try to watch it and learn the weather signs. To-day is a grey day, and the sun as I write is hidden in thick clouds, high over Kettleness. Everything is grey—except the green grass, which seems like emerald amongst it; grey earthy rock; grey clouds, tinged with the sunburst at the far edge, hang over the grey sea, into which the sand-points stretch like grey fingers. The sea is tumbling in over the shallows and the sandy flats with a roar, muffled in the sea-mists drifting inland. The horizon is lost in a grey mist. All is vastness; the clouds are piled up like giant rocks, and there is a "brool" over the sea that sounds like some presage of doom. Dark figures are on the beach here and there, sometimes half shrouded in the mist, and seem "men like trees walking." The fishing-boats are racing for home, and rise and dip in the ground swell as they sweep into the harbour, bending to the scuppers. Here comes old Mr. Swales. He is making straight for me, and I can see, by the way he lifts his hat, that he wants to talk....

(pause)

I have been quite touched by the change in the poor old man. When he sat down beside me, he said in a very gentle way:—

MR. SWALES

I want to say something to you, miss.

MINA

I could see he was not at ease, so I took his poor old wrinkled hand in mine and asked him to speak fully; so he said, leaving his hand in mine:

MR. SWALES

I'm afraid, my deary, that I must have shocked you by all the wicked things I've been saying about the dead, and such like, for weeks past; but I didn't mean them, and I want ye to remember that when I'm gone. We old folks that be daffled, and with one foot abaft the krok-hooal, don't altogether like to think of it, and we don't want to feel scared of it; and that's why I've took to making light of it, so that I'd cheer up my own heart a bit. But, Lord love ye, miss, I ain't afraid of dying, not a bit; only I don't want to die if I can help it. My time must be nigh at hand now, for I be old, and a hundred years is too much for any man to expect; and I'm so nigh it that the Old Man is already whetting his scythe. Ye see, I can't get out of the habit of chafing about it all at once; the chafts will wag as they be used to. Some day soon the Angel of Death will sound his trumpet for me. But don't ye dooal and greet, my deary!

MINA

—for he saw that I was crying—

MR. SWALES

If he should come this very night I'd not refuse to answer his call. For life be, after all, only a waiting for something else than what we're doing; and death be all that we can rightly depend on. But I'm content, for it's coming to me, my deary, and coming quick. It may be coming while we be looking and wondering. Maybe it's in that wind out over the sea that's bringing with it loss and wreck, and sore distress, and sad hearts.

(beat)

Look! *Look!*

MINA

—he cried suddenly:

MR. SWALES

There's something in that wind and in the host beyond that sounds, and looks, and tastes, and smells like death. It's in the air; I feel it coming. Lord, make me answer cheerful when my call comes!

MINA

He held up his arms devoutly, and raised his hat. His mouth moved as though he were praying. After a few minutes' silence, he got up, shook hands with me, and blessed me, and said good-bye, and hobbled off. It all touched me, and upset me very much.

I was glad when the coastguard came along, with his spy-glass under his arm. He stopped to talk with me, as he always does, but all the time kept looking at a strange ship.

COASTGUARD

I can't make her out,

MINA

...he said;

COASTGUARD

She's a Russian, by the look of her; but she's knocking about in the queerest way. She doesn't know her mind a bit; she seems to see the storm coming, but can't decide whether to run up north in the open, or to put in here. Look there again! She is steered mighty strangely, for she doesn't mind the hand on the wheel; changes about with every puff of wind. We'll hear more of her before this time tomorrow.

STEPHEN

This episode featured Isabel Adomakoh Young as Mina Murray, Graham Rowat as Mr. Swales, and Nathan Blades as the Coast Guard. Dialogue editing by Stephen Indrisano. Sound design by Tal Minear. Produced by Ella Watts and Pacific S. Obadiah, with executive producers Stephen Indrisano, Tal Minear, and Hannah Wright. A Bloody FM Production.