

DRACULA: 2004

Chapter Five: Ladies' Night

Written by
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PREROLL:

This episode of Dracula: 2004 has no content warnings, except for second-hand embarrassment and references that may make listeners feel old.

Care to take a bite?

SOUNDTRACK.

1. VOICEMAIL MESSAGE - MINA TO LUCY, MAY 2004

LUCY

(voicemail recording)

Hiiiiiii this is Lucy Westenra!
Since I'm not answering, I'm
probably sleeping, eating, at the
cinema or studying. Last one was
a joke - you know I'm not
studying! Anyway, you know the
drill - leave me a message,
darling! Byeeeeeeee -

The BEEP! cuts her off.

MINA

(voicemail)

Hi, it's Mina!

Listen, Lucy, I know I work
unsociable hours, but you need to
learn to pick up your phone! I
can't leave a message every time
I want to speak to you. You'd
better pick up the phone next
time, ok?

Anyway, news! I finally got a
letter this week from Jonathan
saying that he's coming home next
month. It was strange having a
letter from him - these days he
likes to email or text if he can
get away with it - but I suppose
he hasn't been able to find
anywhere with enough signal to
send a text from. I'm quite glad
he did send a letter, actually.
It's nice having something that
he wrote to hold and look at.

I can't wait until we're married.
Does that make me a bad feminist?

MINA (CONT.)

You know, I honestly don't care.
I love Jonathan and he loves me,
and frankly, I think the Spice
Girls will forgive me for it.

Just a reminder - it will be a
budget wedding, so just wear
whatever you want for the
bridesmaid's dress, ok? Don't let
your mum try and order a
limousine or anything!

Anyway, in other news, I'm
working away in the new teaching
assistant job - thank god it's
the summer term. I love the
students, most of the time, but
right now I cannot wait to be rid
of the little buggers. Just why
it takes a child ten times of
being told not to pull other
children's hair, I will never
know.

I've also started a diary - it's
an audio one, like Jonathan's. I
began it as a way to just keep my
thoughts in order, but I'm
beginning to find that I enjoy
keeping records of things and
sniffing out causes of problems
like Scooby Doo. I'd definitely
be Velma, for the record. You'd
be Daphne. Not sure about
Jonathan... maybe Scooby?

(laughs)

By the way, you never texted me
back about a certain handsome
not-so-stranger... Don't keep me
in the dark! Is it who I think it
is?

MINA (CONT.)

Oh, god, I've been talking forever and this is now the world's longest voicemail. I'm sorry, I'm sorry! Although this wouldn't happen if you'd just answer your phone, you know!

Call me back! Love you, bye!

BEEP!

CUT TO:

2. VOICEMAIL MESSAGE - LUCY TO MINA, MAY 2004

MINA

(voicemail recording)

You have reached Mina Munjal's phone. If this is about work, please leave me alone, it's the summer holidays. If this is Jonathan, leave me a message, babe. If this is Lucy, pick up your bloody phone! And if this is anyone else, couldn't you have sent an email?

BEEP!

LUCY

(excitable, effusive)

MINA! Darling, you have a real cheek to accuse me of never picking up when here I am, leaving you a voicemail. How the tables turn... oh, I forgive you anyway, because I love you and also I want to tell you all about Mr. Handsome.

Well. Firstly, you're absolutely right - it is who you think it is!

LUCY (CONT.)

I am completely head over heels for Arthur Holmwood and his curly hair. Do you think he puts product in it? Sometimes I think he must do, but then I run my fingers through it and it's the softest hair I've ever touched. No offence, darling, your hair is gorgeous, but Arthur's... woof.

Ok, enough about Arthur's perfect hair. We've been out a couple of times together - not dates per se, but definitely very friendly - and he has been a perfect gentleman. He pulled my chair out at the last restaurant we visited, like I was a heroine in an Austen novel, and I honestly thought I was going to explode with how much I fancied him. My crush is enormous, Mina. It's so huge I'm surprised it hasn't cast a shadow.

It doesn't hurt that he gets on so well with mum. She adores him and he has completely charmed her with all his name-dropping, which I think is hilarious. You should hear him when he does his "I met Princess Di" routine, it cracks me up every time. Ugh, Mina, he's so perfect it's ridiculous...

Anyway, I have to introduce you to one of Arthur's friends. His name is Jack Seward and he's a psychiatrist! He's a bit old - 31, apparently it takes ages to train in psychiatry - but I promise that you wouldn't be able to tell.

LUCY (CONT.)

I won't give you all the gory details on how we met right now (trust me, you need the full story on this) but I can tell you that if you and Jonathan weren't already together, you and Jack would be perfect for one another. He's got this kind of hyper-focused stare that seems to bore right through you, and I feel like all that spooky brain stuff is right up your street. You love all the scary things that creep me out. I still have not forgiven you for making me watch *The Exorcist*, you know!

Got to go, will call again soon and fill you in on everything. For the record, I agree on us being Velma and Daphne - I think Arthur would make a great Fred. Jonathan as Scooby, though? I think you're being a bit harsh.

Oh, and before I forget, I just got the date of my graduation ceremony through - it's on the 29th of September! Save the date!

Love you, byeeee!

BEEP!

CUT TO:

3. PHONE CALL - MINA TO LUCY, MAY 2004

We hear a RINGING TONE as Mina waits for Lucy to pick up. It goes on for three rings, before we hear Lucy PICK UP her landline.

LUCY

Hello?

MINA

Hey, it's Mina! I got your text -
what's this about three boys
asking you out???

LUCY

Mina! Oh my god. You would not
BELIEVE the day I have had. I'm
so tired I'm not even sure I
could tell you about it...

MINA

Don't you dare! I've been waiting
all day to hear this, you can't
back out on me now!

Lucy LAUGHS.

LUCY

Sorry, sorry, you're so easy to
tease! I'll tell you absolutely
everything. The gossip is coming
in buckets today, darling.

By the way, don't tell anyone
except Jonathan, will you? I know
you'll tell him anyway, but I
don't want to embarrass anyone
and I know you'll keep it a
secret if I ask.

Ok, so. You know how my mum likes
to say "It never rains but it
pours"? That's how today has been
- non-stop. I was hoping that a
certain someone might drop in and
say the magic words to me, but it
turns out that boys are like
buses: you wait all spring for
one, and then three come along at
once!

MINA

No way.

LUCY

Oh, yes. Not one, not two, but three boys showed up at my doorstep, one after another, wanting to ask me out!

MINA

You are the limit. How on earth did you manage to pull that one off?

LUCY

It's not like I planned it on purpose! I felt horribly sorry for the two I had to turn down - it was like kicking puppies. Anyway, it's easy for us to be smug about it, because we're both sickeningly in love and allowed to feel a bit superior. Do you want to hear the rest of the story or not?

MINA

Sorry, sorry, go on. I want to hear.

LUCY

Well. Number one showed up at mine first thing in the morning, and I'm bloody glad I happened to already be up, otherwise he would have caught me in my jim jams. Can you imagine having to turn someone down in your pyjamas? It doesn't bear thinking about.

It was Jack Seward, the psychiatrist I was telling you about! You remember?

MINA

Oh, yes, the one who does all the spooky brain stuff?

LUCY

That's the one. Well, I couldn't work out what on earth he was doing here at first, but he looked so serious I thought someone had died, so I brought him in and put the kettle on.

He was clearly trying to be cool, but he was wearing a trilby that he took off when he came in, put it down on the chair and then promptly sat on it. I think he'd forgotten it was there. He recovered pretty well, but then he started playing around with a scalpel as though it would somehow make him seem more relaxed, which was just about the weirdest thing I've ever seen.

MINA

I mean, I don't think having a scalpel is that weird.

LUCY

You wouldn't!

MINA

He could be an artist! They use scalpels to sharpen their pencils!

LUCY

You are way too generous. Anyway, I am very fond of Jack, so when he asked me if I fancied being his girlfriend, I turned him down in the absolute nicest way possible.

LUCY (CONT.)

I actually cried a bit doing it, which was kind of embarrassing, actually, since I wasn't even the one being turned down. He was very good about it - stiff-upper lip, stoicism, all that stuff.

It's a shame, really. I like him, just not... well. Also, I think he might be - you know. Batting for the other team, if you catch my drift.

MINA

Ohhhhhhh. Luckily, I've never been in that situation before.

LUCY

And may you never have to, darling! You and Jonathan are the dream team.

(pause)

... do you want to hear about the cowboy?

MINA

There was a cowboy???

LUCY

I never leave home without one!

(she cracks up)

Sorry, I couldn't resist. Yes, there was a cowboy and they are very handsome, let me tell you. Their name is Quincey, they're from Texas, and they are the most stereotypical cowboy you could ever meet. He's got a stetson, cowboy boots, a belt buckle the size of a dinner plate...

MINA

Does he do the accent? Please
tell me he does the accent!

LUCY

He does, he really does! Just
like Clint Eastwood!

MINA

(laughing)

Oh my god, do you think Jonathan
would dress up like a cowboy if I
asked him too? I think I'd rate
him in those boots.

LUCY

Frankly, I think Jonathan would
commit a murder if you asked him
to, darling. He's besotted. And I
can't blame him, you're an
absolute catch.

MINA

(a little flustered)

Oh, come on, Lucy, don't flirt.
We're both attached.

LUCY

And since when has that ever
stopped us before? I think it's a
crime that we're not allowed to
marry as many people as we like.
There are so many attractive
people out there who'd hurl
themselves at my feet - why on
earth shouldn't I be allowed to
have fun with all of them? You
included, of course, darling.

MINA

(fondly)

You're so full of love, Lucy,
you're overflowing with it.

MINA (CONT.)

Sadly, I plan on being boringly monogamous with Jonathan for at least a year. I'll see if either of us changes our minds after that and then get back to you.

LUCY

You're a sweetheart. I'll stop teasing and tell you about the cowboy.

Quincey moseyed up my front steps straight after lunch. Bless them, I think they were a bit nervous, but they tried so hard to hide it. He came and held my hands and said,

(in her best Quincey impression)

"Miss Lucy, I know I ain't good enough to regulate the fixin's of your little shoes, but I guess if you wait till you find a man that is you will go join them seven young women with the lamps when you quit. Won't you just hitch up alongside of me and let us go down the long road together, driving in double harness?"

MINA

Ok, right. You, missy, are categorically making things up.

LUCY

It's true, it's true, I swear! I think he likes to play up the cowboy thing to make me laugh - he knows I like all the old westerns.

LUCY (CONT.)

I went to see a double- bill showing of *Stagecoach* and *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly* at the Odeon with them a few weeks ago and I swear that when we came out, it was like their accent had been dialled up to a hundred.

After I turned them down - which was absolutely horrible, by the way, and involved a lot more crying - Quincey dropped the accent (most of it, anyway) and asked if there was someone else. I said that there was, and he said that he thought he could guess who, and promised me that we would always be friends.

MINA

Awww, that's sweet.

LUCY

They really are a charmer. I hope I can introduce you to them this summer when you come to stay.

MINA

My case is already packed! I can't wait.

So... did Arthur...?

LUCY

(gushing)

Oh, Mina... it was so romantic. You know that scene in *Bridget Jones* where Mark Darcy just sweeps Bridget off her feet and snogs her and then she says "Nice boys don't kiss like that"? And he says "Oh yes they fucking do"? And then he snogs her again?

LUCY (CONT.)

It was just like that. But more snogging.

MINA

Yes! YES! Do you know how long I've been waiting for you two to get together? Do you??? You've been pining for each other since the day you met and finally, finally, I can stop trying to subtly leave the room so you can have a minute to get your arses in gear and kiss. I can finally stop inviting you both to parties and then conveniently disappearing once you're both sitting next to each other on the loveseat...

LUCY

And I am eternally grateful. And also disgustingly in love. Really, I don't know what I've done to deserve it.

MINA

(relenting)

You deserve all of it, Lucy. You're one of the kindest, most generous people I know. And also a brilliant friend, when you bother to pick up the phone.

LUCY

(faux-outraged)

How dare you! I am a model phone answerer!

(pause)

... when it's charged.

MINA

It's alright, love, I forgive you. I'm so looking forward to seeing you in Whitby - I'll be on the train first thing on the 24th of July! You'll meet me at the station, right?

LUCY

You know I will. Drinks after? One of the bartenders at the local gives me free shots if I ask nicely. She's a babe, you'd love her.

MINA

Done. I'll see y-
(a thought occurs)
Wait, hang on, you never told me how you met Jack Seward!

LUCY

Oh, you're right, I haven't! Darling, let me spill all. I'd already met Quincey at uni when Arthur brought them to a house party, but I didn't meet Jack until later. I was on a night out in SoHo a few weeks ago... I forget the name of the place, but do you know that fab gay bar on Old Compton Street?

MINA

You did not meet him there.

LUCY

I absolutely did! Arthur and Quincey had dragged him along - they're old friends, met in Amsterdam while Arthur was on holiday there six years ago - and I accidentally bumped into them.

LUCY (CONT.)

Poor Jack, I thought he was going to self-combust. He went bright scarlet, like a tomato. I felt so bad for him that I bought him a drink and kept him company the rest of the night.

MINA

Aw, he sounds sweet.

LUCY

He is. You'd love him. Remind me to introduce you at some point, won't you? And Quincey too. I've told them all about you and they're both just dying to meet you.

MINA

I can't wait. See you in July - and since you're getting drinks, I'll have a G&T!

LUCY

Bye darling! Don't be late!

She HANGS UP. We hear about 2 seconds of DIAL TONE, before we...

CUT TO:

4. INT. MINA'S BEDROOM - EXETER, JUNE 2004

CLICK! Mina records her log on a dictaphone.

MINA

This is the audio journal of Mina Munjal, 11th of June, 2004.

MINA (CONT.)

I'm worried about Jonathan. He's not due back yet, and obviously I know that he's got no means of contacting me other than letters, but... I don't know. Something feels off. I can't put my finger on why, but it doesn't feel right.

I'll keep recording my thoughts here. It's comforting to know that while I'm recording my logs here in Exeter, somewhere in Romania Jonathan is doing just the same.

Maybe when he gets back I can collate the two and we can compare what we were doing on the days that we recorded entries. I reckon they won't be too dissimilar - both of us working ourselves into the ground so we can afford our honeymoon!

(she laughs)

Lucy offered to pay for it, which is sweet of her, but I'd prefer that Jonathan and I earned the trip, rather than receive it as a gift. Besides, she'll be putting me up for a whole summer next month. That girl is too generous by far.

I wonder what Jonathan's doing right now. Maybe he's recording a log, too. I wonder if he's thinking about me. I'm always thinking about him.

You know, doing all this recording and researching recently has got me thinking.

MINA (CONT.)

I know it's insane and impractical and completely out of the blue, but I've been thinking... about maybe going back to uni and studying journalism.

I know uni wasn't for me the first time - the crowds, the schedule, the workload, the people... you know the drill - and I think the course wasn't helping either. I just couldn't stomach the blatant cynicism of marketing. I couldn't see myself tricking people into buying products; I couldn't lie to people like that. It's not who I am.

But being a journalist... I could make a difference, you know? Maybe change the way people think about people like us - me, Jonathan and Lucy. It's a new millennium, and the world is changing... and maybe I could be the one to help change it. We've already abolished Section 28, what more could I change about this country if only I had a voice?

Well, you never know. I haven't even started looking for courses yet. But maybe, just maybe... this is the right path for me.

Jonathan, if you're listening to this in the future, I love you. For ever and ever and always.

MINA (CONT.)

Also, please come home soon,
because I recorded the latest
episodes of *Star Trek: Enterprise*
onto VHS for you so we could
watch it together, and I am dying
to know what happens next. If
you're not home within the next
month, I'm watching all of them
without you and telling you the
endings.

(pause)

I do still love you, though.

CLICK!

END CHAPTER FIVE.

CREDITS

This has been "Chapter Five: Ladies' Night" of Dracula: 2004, by Starstrider Productions.

This episode was written and directed by Francesca Mylod-Ford, and produced by Maddy Searle. The show is created and executive produced by Francesca Mylod-Ford.

This episode featured sound design by Maddy Searle, with music composed by Joash Kari.

Our actors were:

Michelle Kelly as Mina Munjal
and
Anusia Battersby as Lucy Westenra

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If you want Lucy and Mina to enjoy their hot girl summer, please consider rating and reviewing us wherever you get your podcasts.

Remember: Don't let vampires put you off coming home from your work trip. Otherwise, your fiancée will watch all the latest *Star Trek* episodes without you. It's just not worth it.