

## **Characters**

- Ula (F)** An eloquent and precise vampire. The hotel owner. Kia's mother
- Kia (F)** A young friendly vampire. Ula's daughter
- Cat (F)** A young, polite and inquisitive human being

**(Lights up. Tabs open. Hotel owner, Ula is showing a new guest, Cat, to her room at a Carpathian hotel. There is a door at stage left and another at stage right leading to an ensuite. Cat places her rucksack on the room's single bed. There is also a chair and a small table with a landline telephone on it)**

**Ula:** This is your room.

**Cat:** It's very spacious.

**Ula:** You can see the old castle and the river from your window.

**(Cat looks towards the audience)**

**Cat:** Oh, yes; it's a lovely view.

**Ula:** Breakfast is served from 8am. Dinner is from 7pm.

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**Cat:** Is there any room service?

**Ula:** Yes. Just pick up that phone and dial 9. Someone will answer.

**Cat:** Thank you. I'm sure I'm going to be very comfortable here.

**Ula:** Will you be staying in Carpathia long?

**Cat:** I'll be here for two weeks. I'm on a hiking holiday. I've always wanted to visit Carpathia.

**Ula:** You are alone?

**Cat:** Yes. I like to walk on my own. I enjoy the quiet, you know – just the bird song and the faint sound of the wind in the trees.

**Ula:** Pardon me for asking but you won't be walking alone at night will you?

**Cat:** Oh, no. I like to get up early and start hiking in the morning. I'm tucked up in bed reading my book by 9 o'clock at night.

**Ula:** Good. That is good. It might not be safe outside at night.

**Cat:** Why?

**(Cat is suddenly surprised by a spooky, SFX. mysterious howling noise that is heard from offstage. Ula and Cat look towards the audience)**

**Ula:** There are dark forces – invisible, malicious things that come out at night.

**Cat:** Oh. What sorts of things?

**Ula:** Harmful things. Nameless spirits that cannot be seen.

**(Slight pause as Cat considers this information)**

**Cat:** So, these nameless scary things can't be seen?

**Ula:** Yes.

**Cat:** They're invisible?

**Ula:** That's right.

**Cat:** So, how do you know they're out there?

**Ula:** We can sense them.

**Cat:** You can sense them?

**Ula:** We can.

**Cat:** Which sense do you use to detect them?

**Ula:** What?

**Cat:** I mean, do you smell them? Are they smelly?

**Ula:** **(Slightly irritated)** No. They're not smelly. They have no smell.

**Cat:** Can you hear them? Are they noisy? Do they crash about in the forest, knocking trees over and making a big din?

**Ula:** **(A little impatiently)** They make no sound. **(Mysteriously)** They drift on the wind like wisps of smoke.

**Cat:** Like *invisible* wisps of smoke?

**Ula:** **(Uncertainly)** Er, yes.

**Cat:** That can't be heard?

**Ula:** I suppose so.

**Cat:** Can you touch them?

**Ula:** Of course not!

**Cat:** Can you taste them?

**Ula:** No! That's ridiculous. Why would we want to taste them?

**Cat:** So, if you can't see them, touch them, smell them, hear them, or taste them, how can you sense them?

**Ula:** We just can! We use our other sense.

**Cat:** Oh, I see. You use your other sense.

**Ula:** We do.

**Cat:** **(Puzzled)** Hmm. Well, I've only got five senses. I thought everyone had five.

**Ula:** Some of us have an extra sense.

**Cat:** This extra sense that you've got – what does it do?

**Ula:** That's not important right now. We have some rules in the hotel.

**Cat:** Okay.

**Ula:** No garlic is allowed in here. Customers must close all the curtains if they leave the room during the day.

**Cat:** Really?

**Ula:** For the safety of our staff.

**Cat:** Seriously?

**Ula:** Yes. Daylight is harmful to our staff. When they are attending to your room, the curtains must be drawn shut.

**Cat:** Of course. That's no problem. I'll keep them closed.

**(Ula points towards offstage right)**

**Ula:** The ensuite bathroom is through there. I must leave now. Here is your room key. Enjoy your stay.

**(Cat peers offstage right into the ensuite. Ula hands the room key to Cat and is about to exit when Cat asks another question)**

**Cat:** I notice that there are no mirrors in here and **(Points offstage right)** there are none in the bathroom either.

**Ula:** That is correct. None of our rooms have any mirrors.

**Cat:** Why is that?

**Ula:** Our kind has never found any use for mirrors.

**Cat:** Your kind? Who are your kind?

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**Ula:** My race are an ancient people. We have lived here in these valleys for thousands of years. We have our own traditions, our own unique needs. We have no need for pieces of glass that reflect things. They do not, in fact, reflect...us.

**Cat:** But I'll need a mirror, especially in the bathroom.

**Ula:** Very well. If you must have one, I'll ask one of our staff to bring you a mirror.

**(With eyes closed tightly and index fingers pressed lightly against the sides of the head, Ula is silent for 3 seconds. Then, with eyes open again, and fingers removed from head, Ula speaks again)**

**Ula:** There. I have instructed a staff member to bring your mirror here.

**Cat:** But you didn't say anything.

**Ula:** My kind communicate in many ways.

**Cat:** You used thought-power, didn't you?

**Ula:** Yes; that is one of the means we have of contacting each other.

**Cat:** You're very lucky. I wish I could use thought-power. It would save me a lot of money in texting and phone calls.

**Ula:** Indeed. Texting and phoning would be useless anyway. It is impossible to get any kind of signal in this part of the Carpathians.

**Cat:** Don't your other guests need mirrors in their rooms?

**Ula:** You are the first outsider guest we've had at the hotel.

**Cat:** Do you mean that all your other guests are your people?

**Ula:** Oh, yes; our other guests come from all over the world, but all of them have ancestors from this part of Carpathia. Excuse me. That will be the staff member with your mirror.

**(Ula exits and returns with a mirror that's wrapped in a cloth. Ula hands the mirror to Cat)**

**Cat:** Thank you. I didn't hear anyone knock on the door.

**Ula:** That's right. I...

**Cat:** **(Cutting Ula off)**...Sensed it. Didn't you?

**Ula:** Correct. I must leave now.

**Cat:** OK. What's your name?

**Ula:** Ula. My name is Ula. I manage The Bat Wing Hotel.

**Cat:** Ula. That's a lovely name.

**Ula:** Thank you. I am named after my great, great, great, great, great, great grandparent, Ula The Impala.

**Cat:** Ula The *Impala*? Like the antelope?

**Ula:** I would assume so.

**Cat:** Shouldn't that be Ula The *Impaler*? That would make more sense.

**Ula:** Possibly. Spelling was not considered a key survival skill back in those days. Ula was ruler of all these mountain lands.

**Cat:** That's an impressive family history. My name's Cat. I've no idea why. I think my parents just liked the sound of the word.

**Ula:** It is a fine name. Cats are revered in our culture. It has been a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Cat.

**Cat:** And I've really enjoyed our chat, Ula. I'd like to learn more about your mysterious people.

**Ula:** And I would very much enjoy telling you more of our ancient history. Would you do me the honour of joining me and my family for a drink on the terrace after your dinner tonight.

**Cat:** I'd like that. Thanks.

**Ula:** Excellent. Shall we say 9 o'clock then? It will be dark by then.

**Cat:** That sounds perfect. I just wondered though – I won't be drinking blood will I?

**Ula:** **(Pretending to be serious)** Well, *you* won't be drinking blood. Everyone else will.

**(Cat looks shocked but then Ula smiles and laughs. They laugh together)**

**Cat:** Phew! You had me fooled there, Ula.

**Ula:** Please excuse my little joke. There will just be wine for us to drink. Carpathian grapes make the best red in the whole region. My partner and our daughter, Kia, will be dining with us. Kia is about your age. She has never met a mortal person before.

**Cat:** Really?

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**Ula:** Yes; I think you two will have much to talk about. I will leave you to unpack now.

**(Ula is about to exit but pauses)**

**Ula:** One more thing.

**Cat:** Yes?

**Ula:** You must lock this door at night when you're inside the room. It is absolutely vital that you do that. Never leave it unlocked at night.

**Cat:** Another little joke?

**Ula:** I'm afraid not. This is a serious thing.

**Cat:** **(A bit nervously)** OK. I'll definitely do that. Goodbye. I'll see you later.

**(Ula bows and exits. Cat unwraps the mirror and looks into it)**

**Cat:** **(Spoken to herself)** I think I'll put this in the ensuite.

**(Cat exits carrying the mirror at stage right. There is a knock at the stage left door. Cat enters from stage right without the mirror and opens the stage left door. Kia enters, a little nervously. Kia is carrying a vase containing white flowers)**

**Kia:** Sorry to disturb you. I thought you might like these for your room.

**(Cat speaks her next line as she takes the vase and places it on the table)**

**Cat:** Thanks. That's very thoughtful of you.

**Kia:** Do you like them?

**Cat:** Oh, yes. They're lovely.

**Kia:** They're moon flowers. They are white now, but when they're exposed to moonlight, they each take on a new, dazzling colour.

**Cat:** Wow!

**Kia:** Some will be colours that you've never seen before. There is a full moon tonight. If you open your curtains then, you will see them change. It will astound you.

**Cat:** I can't wait. Thanks.

**Kia:** I'm Kia.

**Cat:** It's nice to meet you, Kia. I'm Cat. You're Ula's daughter aren't you?

**Kia:** Yes. I saw you when you arrived. I could sense that you were not one of our kind. You are a mortal.

**Cat:** I am.

**Kia:** Do you mind if I ask you a question, Cat?

**Cat:** No; of course not.

**Kia:** What does it feel like?

**Cat:** What does *what* feel like?

**Kia:** Knowing that you are going to die one day.

**(A slight pause as Cat considers this)**

**Cat:** It's not really something that I think about. I suppose it's just going to happen and, you know, I can't do anything about it.

**Kia:** I would be frightened if I were mortal – knowing that one day I'd just be gone forever from this place.

**Cat:** We try not to dwell on it. I've got a question for *you*, Kia.

**Kia:** Please. Go ahead.

**(A slight pause)**

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**Cat:** Do you drink people's blood?

**Kia:** Only blood from the recently dead when we can get it. Otherwise, we drink the blood of animals.

**Cat:** So, not from living people?

**Kia:** Goodness me! No. It was forbidden hundreds of years ago by our ancestors.

**Cat:** That's good to hear. There's something else I've always wondered about.

**Kia:** Yes?

**Cat:** How do you put your make-up on without a mirror. How do people shave in the morning?

**Kia:** We have the ability to see ourselves from the outside. How can I best explain this? Let me see. You mortals view the world outside from inside your heads. It's like you're in a little room, gazing out through the window and you can only see what's visible from that window. We see the world from outside the room. We see all things in all places at the same time.

**(A slight pause as Cat considers this. She taps the side of her head with her index finger)**

**Cat:** But you can't see what's going on inside here, inside the *little room*? Is that right?

**Kia:** That is true. We cannot read others' minds.

**Cat:** **(Suddenly excited)** Ooh! Can you turn into a bat?

**Kia:** Only at night.

**Cat:** That must be amazing. I'd love to do that. It sounds like magic.

**Kia:** It seems perfectly normal to us.

**Cat:** I...I've got so many questions.

**Kia:** Good. I would be very happy to answer them all.

**Cat:** Can you hypnotise people?

**Kia:** My parents can and they're teaching me how to do it.

**Cat:** I wish I could do it.

**Kia:** I will show you what I've learned later.

**Cat:** That would be great. Thanks. This is going to be so much fun.

**Kia:** I know. It's funny isn't it though? I can't go out in the daytime and you can't go out at night.

**Cat:** That's right. I hadn't thought of that. When do you sleep?

**Kia:** My people take their rest from 6 am to 11 am in summer and from 9 am to two in the afternoon in winter. We need little of what you would call sleep.

**(Kia pauses and briefly presses her fingers against her temples)**

**Kia:** Mother is about to knock on the door.

**(There is a knock at the door. Cat open it and we see Ula in the doorway)**

**Ula:** Come on now, Kia. I do hope she's not bothering you, Cat.

**Cat:** Oh, no. We've been chatting.

**Ula:** Anyway; your father and I need you to help setting up the bar.

**Kia:** Okay, Mum. I'll see you at dinner, Cat.

**Cat:** Yes. See you later, Kia.

***(Kia and Ula exit)***

**Cat:** **(Spoken to herself)** Hmm. 6 am until 11 am. That's five hours.

**(Cat opens her rucksack and takes out a wooden mallet and a large sharpened wooden stake that has dried blood on it. She holds one of these in each hand and smiles to herself)**

**Cat:** This is going to be a lot easier than I expected.

**(Lights down. Tabs closed)**