

Dark Guardian

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Dark Guardian

by [Spectral_Cat](#)

Summary

While in Budapest, Dracula comes across a familiar face, and suddenly what he's wanted for centuries seems within his grasp. But facing a ghost from his past brings up unexpected feelings, and getting revenge may not be as simple as he thinks.

Notes

Edit: changed from T to M rating because I'm paranoid

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

It had started with the wanted posters.

In the four hundred years since his resurrection, Dracula had often wondered what had become of the one who killed him. He had searched for him, in the beginning. In battlefields and holy sites, places long forgotten by the rest of the world. But it was useless. He assumed Gabriel must be locked away in Heaven, too ashamed to face what he had done. He knew it must have been hard for him, that he was just acting on orders. But Dracula had lost his ability to sympathize long ago. It had been replaced by something deep and black that bubbled and festered like a tar pit.

Dracula had no notions of purity about himself. He knew he had been a cruel man in his past life, as in this one. But how many had God struck down in his own name? How many innocent souls had perished in service to the Church? And he had been loved by an angel, once. He viewed God's order for his death not just as senseless and tragic, but insulting and hypocritical.

Over the years, he had acquired many things others would envy - wealth, status, lovers. These were all pleasant distractions from the gnawing reminder in the back of his mind that he would never get what he sought after above all else - revenge. While he was not happy, he was content, and he supposed that was the best he was ever going to achieve.

So one warm summer night, when he happened to spot a sign on one of his hunts through the streets of Budapest, one that displayed a strikingly familiar face, he froze in his tracks.

The sign bore the image of a man with long, dark hair that fell down to his shoulders in waves, covered by a wide-brimmed hat. And although the bottom half of his face was concealed by a mask, Dracula would know those eyes anywhere.

Gabriel

How was that possible? After all these years of searching and finding no trace, evidence of Gabriel had suddenly been dropped into his lap? It seemed too good to be true.

He inspected the poster closer, skeptic, and noticed the lettering on the bottom read: **Van Helsing: Wanted Dead or Alive.**

"Is this what you're going by these days?" he asked out loud, incredulous, as he ran his fingers over the words. He had no idea what he could be doing back on Earth, or why anyone would be after him, but if this man really was Gabriel, he would have to find him. Only then would he know for certain. In the meantime, he had to make sure no one else got to him first.

Dracula spent the rest of the night tearing down every single poster he could find. He even made a meal out of two constables unlucky enough to be caught in the act of hanging them up. While the Gabriel he knew was strong, resilient, and would never allow himself to be captured so easily by humans, he wasn't going to take any chances. Not when he was so close.

The next day, the sun was covered by a thick sheet of gray clouds, and so he spent it scouring the streets, listening intently for any whisper of the name 'Van Helsing.' The people of Budapest were notorious gossips, and he had no problem picking up information as he lurked about.

Apparently, this Van Helsing had come to Budapest to track down a nachtkrapp—a large, raven-like creature with rotting flesh that had killed several locals over the past few months. Dracula had heard of it, but had never paid much attention. The nachtkrapp was hardly a threat to him, and it made a convenient scapegoat for his and his brides' own killings.

Even though the citizens were desperate for the deaths to stop, they wanted nothing to do with a man who had gained such an infamous reputation from slayings in other cities all over Europe. While some said that he served God, that his mission was a holy one, others said he was a vigilante who killed those he himself deemed unworthy of life. A judge, jury, and executioner.

In his lifetime, Dracula had known both those things to be true.

Later in the day, he returned to his palace to rest and be with his brides, telling them he would need to go out again that night to attend to personal business. They begged him not to, as it was unusual for him to be gone two nights in a row. He assured them that he would be back by dawn, and was able to soothe them enough that they did not protest further. He had never told anyone about Gabriel, not even them, as they often grew jealous of the attention he gave others. But once Gabriel had been taken care of, Dracula would be able to focus on his future with them.

He left as soon as the sun went down, and made his way to the surrounding forest, knowing the monster never attacked in the city. If he could find the nachtkrapp, he could find Gabriel.

He wasn't sure what he would do once he actually found him. He couldn't kill an angel, but his resurrection had gifted him with powers and abilities others had only dreamed of. If he couldn't kill Gabriel, he could at least make him wish he was capable of death, and send a message to his oh-so-loving God in the process.

The night dragged on as Dracula worked towards scouring every corner of the forest, listening for even the slightest noise that seemed out of place. He eventually changed into his demon form to scan the treeline, but even that seemed futile. Perhaps Gabriel had already defeated the creature and fled before the townspeople could catch up with him. The thought disheartened him, to be teased with what he wanted most, only for it to be taken away just as quickly.

Dracula knew the sun would be up within a few hours, and he was ready to give up and retreat home when a sudden, deafening noise echoed over the treetops. It sounded like the caw of a great bird, and Dracula raised his head in anticipation. In the distance to his right, a flock of smaller birds burst from the canopy like sparks from a fire, and he knew he had found his target.

Dracula flew as fast as he could towards the commotion, then landed when he got closer, not wanting to draw attention to himself. As he walked, he morphed back into his human form,

as swift as a shadow, and stopped once he came to a clearing. He crouched behind a bush and waited eagerly, sure that this was the right spot. Before he had time to doubt himself, he heard more of the beast's noises, accompanied by rapid human footsteps and a thundering heartbeat.

Suddenly, a man crashed into the clearing, followed by the large, hissing nachtkrapp. It raised its exposed skull and screeched at the man, who skidded to a halt just in time to turn and face the beast. It was then that Dracula saw his face, and if he had a heartbeat, it surely would have stopped in his chest.

Gabriel was just as beautiful as he remembered him. Time seemed to slow down as he drew a pistol from his belt and fired at the creature, his face a mask of righteous fury. Dracula had never seen him use a gun, but he wielded it with the same flawless grace as he did any other weapon. He saw the familiar glint of triumph in Gabriel's eyes as he fired once, twice, three times, and the bullets sunk into its target's chest. The nachtkrapp roared, its front instantly becoming soaked with thick, black blood.

It collapsed onto the ground, and the silence that followed drenched the clearing like fog. There were no other sounds of life around them, nothing that indicated anything else at all existed in the forest. The only thing to be heard was Gabriel's own labored breathing. He did not take his eyes off the creature and did not lower his gun, and as he stared intently at the beast, Dracula studied him further.

While Gabriel's beauty remained, something about it had changed. His face was marred by stubble and scratches, by lines and dark circles under his eyes, as if he had not slept in days. It was as if he were looking at a marble statue that had become worn over time, by both age and lack of care.

Before he had time to dwell on that, however, Gabriel began to lower his gun, his eyes still never leaving the nachtkrapp. Cautiously, he put one foot in front of him, then the other, until he was only a few paces away from the body.

Dracula saw it twitch a second before Gabriel did. His eyes lit up with sudden realization, but it was too late. The nachtkrapp suddenly shot out with a clawed wing and made contact with him. Gabriel was flung through the air and landed against a nearby tree with a sickening thud.

Dracula watched him, expecting him to get up at any moment. But Gabriel remained still, even as the nachtkrapp slowly advanced towards him.

He was suddenly filled with rage. The thought of another monster getting a hold of him after he had come all this way was maddening. Gabriel was *his*.

He leaped from his hiding spot and was on the beast in an instant, changing into his demon form before he even realized it. It collapsed easily under him, having already been injured, and let out a shriek that would cause any normal man to collapse from fear. Despite its condition, it fought back with a vengeance, digging its claws into Dracula's back.

The pain went unnoticed by him as he sunk his fangs into its neck. Its blood tasted foul, but he continued to bite and tear, feeling its veins snap like twine beneath his teeth. He attacked in such a frenzy that he failed to realize when the nachtkrapp ceased to move. Only the thought of Gabriel, lying nearby, caused him to come to his senses. He released the nachtkrapp, and its corpse made a grotesque splattering noise as it fell to the ground. It was then that Dracula realized he had almost decapitated it.

He shifted to his human form and wiped the blood from his mouth before turning towards Gabriel. Dracula couldn't help but note, with some amusement, at how pathetic he looked. Gabriel had once been a leader, who commanded armies with authority and whose power went unmatched to any mortal. But now he had no army. He was utterly alone.

Dracula thought, then, of how alone he had been during the first few years of his new life. It seemed a sort of poetic justice that Gabriel should suffer the same fate.

He walked towards him slowly, taking it all in. He had been waiting centuries for this moment, and he felt his skin tingle in excitement. As he grew closer, he noticed a large gash on his forehead that was bleeding. Dracula had never known Gabriel to shed blood. It made him seem weak. Vulnerable. *Human*.

Was that possible? Had Gabriel fallen? It would certainly explain what he was doing on Earth, and his sorry excuse for a fight, but not much else. He couldn't imagine what had caused him to fall, but knew it didn't matter. Whatever the cause, it worked considerably in his favor. He felt his lips curl back in a sly smile as he realized what this meant for him. If Gabriel was human, that meant he could be killed, and Dracula could finally, truly get even. Most would deem it cowardly to attack a man while he was down, but Dracula didn't care. The last battle they fought had hardly been fair.

Dracula was upon him now, and as he reached for Gabriel, something caught his eye. A glint of silver, coming from his right hand. Slowly, he knelt down and lifted it up to inspect it.

A ring. *His* ring.

Dracula squinted, not quite believing what he was seeing. It was slightly tarnished due to the years, but the dragon insignia was unmistakably his. The thought that Gabriel had kept it all this time baffled him. Had he kept it to hold on to some part of Dracula? Or had he kept it merely as a trophy? Remembering the look of regret in Gabriel's eyes as he had driven a sword through him, Dracula thought the former a more likely possibility, but he refused to accept it. He had come here for revenge, after all, and any form of compassion on Gabriel's part interfered with his plans. He simply couldn't allow that to happen.

He grabbed Gabriel by the collar of his leather coat so that his head rolled back and his throat was exposed. A brief memory came to his mind of a time Dracula had run his mouth, breathy and hot, over that throat, but he pushed it away stubbornly. Now was not the time for nostalgia. This was his moment of triumph.

He raised a clawed hand, savoring the moment before he delivered the finishing blow. He imagined how good it would feel to slash that throat and have hot blood, Gabriel's blood, spray over him. He imagined the look in Gabriel's eyes when he awoke to the agonizing

realization of his own imminent demise, and looked upon the face of the one he had betrayed.

Dracula prepared to put his plan into action. He raised his hand higher, above his head, summoned every ounce of strength he had to bring it down...and found he could not.

He remained frozen, waiting for his hesitation to vanish, but it never did. Letting out a noise somewhere between a growl and a sob, he released Gabriel and buried his face in his hands.

“Damn you,” he hissed through his fingers. He cursed himself for being so weak. Even while unconscious, Gabriel had the power to render him useless. He had been waiting for this moment for so long, and now that it was finally here, he could not even go through with it. And, deep down, he knew why.

Dracula had expected to feel nothing but rage when he found Gabriel. While that feeling was there, there was also a deep sense of longing that had stilled his hand. A longing for his old life, for the old Gabriel. But that was something that would never happen again.

Unless...

He found his conflicting thoughts returning. He knew it was foolish to entertain such thoughts, but he entertained them nonetheless. What if there was some part of Gabriel that still loved him? What if there was a way for Dracula to gain back all that he had lost?

Giving himself over to the longing, Dracula reached out, ran his fingers over the bloody cut on his forehead, and whispered, “Gabriel.”

Gabriel sighed beneath his touch, his eyelids fluttering ever so slightly, and Dracula froze in his ministrations. But the moment passed, and Gabriel sunk into the depths of unconsciousness once again.

Unable to help himself, Dracula brought his bloody fingers to his mouth and licked. The taste was intoxicating, washing away the horrid taste of the nachtkrapp’s blood and filling him with a warmth he had not felt in years. *Angel blood*, he thought to himself, though he knew that was no longer what Gabriel was. The thought filled him with a strange sense of awe all the same.

He had the sudden urge to devour Gabriel then, to be full of him, but he resisted his violent desires. Instead, he lifted Gabriel’s hand and pressed a deep, bloody kiss to the ring he wore there, as if to still leave some mark upon him.

He wondered why Gabriel had never sought him out in all their years of being apart. Did it have to do with him falling? Perhaps Gabriel was not even aware he had been resurrected.

The thought of not knowing how Gabriel would react to him had kept Dracula from attempting to wake him, but he suddenly found himself reaching for him once again. His hand was almost touching his cheek when a sudden, high-pitched voice came from beyond the trees.

“Van Helsing?” the voice cried out. “Van Helsing!”

At that, Gabriel stirred beneath him again, and Dracula shot back towards his previous vantage point. He had just concealed himself when a small friar burst into the clearing from the opposite side.

“Van Helsing!” he exclaimed again, and ran towards Gabriel, who was just opening his eyes.

“Carl?” he asked roughly, then moaned and clutched his head in pain.

The sound of Gabriel's voice was sickly-sweet, threatening to bring up both good and painful memories, and Dracula forced himself to remain composed.

The man called Carl was almost to Gabriel when his eyes fell on the nachtkrapp. He stopped in his tracks, and his face went pale.

“What is it?” Gabriel said, having managed to sit up more, and finally looking at his companion. He followed his gaze, and his expression changed to match Carl's.

They remained in stunned silence for a moment before Carl found his voice. “Honestly, Van Helsing, I know you were supposed to kill it, but isn't that a bit much?”

“I...didn't do this,” Gabriel said, his brow furrowed in confusion. “The last thing I remember is it attacking me. And then...” He closed his eyes and put his hand over the wound on his forehead. He was quiet a moment, then opened his eyes and let out a frustrated sigh. “I don't know.”

“Well, what the hell could have done something like that?”

Gabriel slowly managed to stand up, using the tree behind him as support. He approached the corpse near him while his friend shrank back in horror. He knelt, studying the gaping wound in the beast's neck, the lines on his face deepening with every passing second.

“Some kind of animal, maybe?” he finally concluded, though he didn't look entirely convinced as he crossed himself and went to lean back against the tree. It was then that he looked down and noticed his bloody ring, and a confused frown spread over his face.

“What kind of animal could have done that? A bear? A wolf?” Carl asked, looking around nervously.

Gabriel looked up and scanned the clearing, but stopped when his eyes landed on Dracula's hiding spot. His face was unreadable, but his eyes held a strange mixture of curiosity and foreboding. As he stared, his ringed hand came up to his chest, and was shortly covered by the other one.

For a moment, Dracula thought that he had seen him. Part of him almost wanted that to be the truth. He thought, perhaps, Gabriel could sense him, that some remnant of their connection still lingered.

Carl seemed completely unaware of the feeling hanging in the air. “Well, whatever it was, I don’t want to be around if it decides to come back for dessert,” he said as he picked up Gabriel’s gun, lying nearby. “Let’s get back to camp, shall we?”

Gabriel made no move to leave, or even acknowledge him. His eyes remained completely focused on Dracula’s location.

“Van Helsing?”

Gabriel blinked, as if snapping out of a trance, and turned towards Carl. “Right, let’s go.”

He took a few steps before he stumbled, and would have fallen if his companion hadn’t caught him.

“Come on, try to stay upright. I’m not carrying you, I threw my back out last time.”

For the first time that night, Gabriel smiled, and Dracula remembered how he used to melt at the sight of it.

He watched them until they were out of sight, and fought the urge to follow. A plan had begun to form in his mind, but the opportunity had passed to enact it just now. He could easily dispatch the friar and overpower Gabriel, but knew that could be counterintuitive. No, for his plan to work, Gabriel would need to come to him willingly.

The friar’s presence disturbed him, however. Gabriel may be human, but he was obviously still a slave to the Church. That could be the reason he had not looked for Dracula. They could be keeping the truth from him.

It made his plan more difficult, but not impossible. Gabriel had fallen, been rejected by his own heavenly father. And now that he was on Earth, he was despised by both humans and monsters alike. He stood on the threshold between the world of mortals and that of the supernatural, and both doors were firmly locked to him. Dracula would be the one, above all others, to accept him. He could offer Gabriel the freedom the Church could never afford him. This time, he would make sure that no one stood in their way, not war or the Church or even God himself. Together, they could take revenge on a world that had dared to keep them apart.

He felt it was only a matter of time before their paths crossed again, and then he could enact his plan. Dracula knew they would come after him eventually, especially with what he and his brides had in store for the future. It seemed that Dracula and Gabriel were bound together by some great force, perhaps a force even greater than God. He wanted to believe, truly, that their destinies were intertwined, that there was a reason for them to have come together in the first place, despite everyone else being so against it.

Whether Gabriel would have him or not, only time would tell. If he refused his offer, there was always Dracula’s original plan. But he did not want to dwell on that. For now, it was enough to know that they would be reunited again.

Until then, he would watch from the shadows, and wait for the day when, perhaps, Gabriel would be his again.

End Notes

This fic is dedicated to my two friends, one of whom sadly passed away earlier this year, but also loved this batshit movie. The other said "there's something wrong with you" when I said Dracula and Van Helsing had sexual tension.

This fic is what's wrong with me, apparently.

Anyways, this came about when I realized Dracula really doesn't act all that surprised when Van Helsing shows up in the movie. Some call that bad writing, I call it an opportunity.

As with everything I write, thank you for reading, and feel free to leave a comment!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!