

## The Blood Countess: Thoriko Monologue

Minister

Ah... Thank you, Mistress Black and thank you for that charming introduction. And to this assembly of good, young Romanian and American students, I say Good Evening.

I should point out, in the spirit of education, that Miss Black's greeting was... how we say... not entirely correct. You see; Miss Black referred to a part of our history here that we do not, as a culture, like to... how you would say... divulge. I should also point out that as a good Hungarian from these parts, the Slovakian pronunciation of this castle and the name of one of our most infamous citizens should have been met with polite silence.

I and the people from my era are learning to not take things so seriously and not to wait for the "proper" description of a place we all know so well: CHAKH-teet-suh, castle of the Countess Alžbeta Bátoriová de Ecsed.

It is odd, I believe, that we should be so set in our ways, the Hungarian and Slovak residents of Ardeal, but you must indulge us in our little disagreements as they predate your country, my country and even the Jesus Christ by several hundred years. For many years – many thousands of years, truth be told – the people of these Carpathian mountains have fought. We fought the Dacia, the Carpi, the Visigoths, Huns, Gepids, Avars, the Bulgars and of course the Nazis, and, more recently, the Communists. For all this time, we fought and often together. But we never once lost our fierce loyalty to the ways of our separate cultures. This I believe you call stubbornness.

After the end of Communism, we fought our most important fight. For twenty years, ethnic Hungarians and Slovaks have jointly toiled for historical significance and communal identity. The problem was that this identity included the famous place called Transylvania and our disgraceful, murderous, nobles. Perhaps you've heard of a Count Dracula and a Countess Bathory?

A difficult thing to embrace until Miss Sainz contacted me on behalf of Mistress Black and her University to remind me that Vampire Tourism is the second largest industry in these parts and, with her help and that of this castle and its famous yet despicable occupant, we could bring enough resources to this region to be able to succeed as a global financial player in the world market.

So it is with this newfound sense of history and the promise for a brighter future for the region that I welcome you to, in English, Transylvania and the castle of Elizabeth Bathory, the Blood Countess.