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Summary

Bela Mordecai Vidor was born October 14, 1940 in Nagyvárad, Hungary (now Oradea, Romania), near the castle that reputedly inspired the Dracula story. He has one sister, Yaffa, six years younger born in a refugee camp in Poking (Pocking), Germany. His mother was Esther (née Grossman), who had one brother, estranged; he never knew her parents. His father was Imre, whose own father took the Vidor name in lieu of the historical family name, Venateraner (?), originally from Venice. His father had one sister, Magda; both were also from Nagyvárad. He obtained a university degree in commercial art. Many of Bela's relatives converted to other religions; few were practicing Jews and he rarely practiced Jewish rites and religious customs.

When the war started, Bela's parents lived in Budapest. He relates a story about the difficulty her mother had in finding a hospital in Budapest to birth him. Shortly afterwards, his father was sent to a labor brigade while his mother, grandmother, great aunt and he stayed in a hidden apartment, known to their neighbors but not the authorities.

After the Russians arrived, his mother and he joined his Aunt Magda at an apartment building in Budapest. During the winter, two soldiers invaded the apartment but his mother barely avoided rape. His father returned shortly thereafter remaining together about one year while trying to go to Israel. He describes his life while in a DP camp run by the United Jewish Appeal awaiting departure. He learned to speak Yiddish, where previously he knew only Hungarian. They arrived in Israel May 1948, via Marseilles and Cyprus. His parents divorced in 1950; custody was awarded to his father and grandmother. His father began to suffer from schizophrenia and went through extensive treatment. Bela's sister was placed in an orphanage. His mother, who had married an American, Mr. Silver wanted him to join them in 1958, but he and his sister waited until 1961.

Bela spent much of his life in America in Oakland, CA. His profession in the U.S. was a dental lab technician. He has two daughters.