

2222 THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

By Michael Soetaert

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CHARACTERS

(21 or more: 2 guys and 2 girls, and 17 either, plus extras.)

ZOMBIES: You can probably pull it off with as few as six extra Zombies. But why stop there? In fact, how many can you get? Only those with speaking lines will be officially listed as characters. Torn clothes, ghoulish makeup... I mean... they're Zombies. Keep in mind that Zombies are dressed how they would've been when they became a Zombie. You don't get to go home and change. You know, Zombie cheerleaders, janitors, lunch ladies... the possibilities are endless. If you want, you can even paint up anybody in the crowd who wants to be a Zombie.

BRIAN: He is the movie star playing the role of **Blake**. Really, really, stupid. But terribly handsome, and terribly vain. Let's face it; you can go further on looks than you can on talent. He really thinks he's more famous than he will ever be.

CLOUGHEÏE: (*It's pronounced Chloe*) The Female movie star playing the role of **Holly**. Brooklyn accent. Tough, but really, not too bright. Likes to chew and (*on cue*) pop gum. Can be a bit rough around the edges.

EUGENE VAUGHN: Male, but can be played by a female with minor changes. 40ish. He is the Director. He is absolutely clueless, and he knows it. Timid. He's the type of guy who owns several sweater vests.

PROFERRO: Male, but can be played by a female with minor changes. Older (*50s*); rotund. He is the Producer who is famous for how cheaply he can make a movie, and it's really cheap. For all practical purposes, he is also directing the play. Forceful and totally lacking anything close to tact. He's the open collar and heavy gold chain type of guy.

CAROL: Male. 20-something. No, not Carl. It's Carol. Writer. This is the first movie he's ever written, not that he's really written anything. Constantly trying to figure out what's going on, not that he ever will.

ERIN: Female. 20-something. Assistant to the Producer: The love interest of Carol. Young, pretty, but really needs a make-over. Tends to be bookish. There's a lot more to her than meets the eye, but I'm not giving away the end.

GERALD: Male. 20-something. He is with the Union, though his main job is to avoid work. A bit slovenly. Like Erin, there's a lot more to Gerald than meets the eye.

ZOMBIE #1: Like any of the other Zombies, only the numbered Zombies get lines. Torn clothes, ghoulish makeup – you know... a Zombie. Have some fun with the artificial blood. If you have spare body parts for them to carry around... Good Lord... what kind of theatre are you running there, anyway?

ZOMBIES #2, #3, and #4: Just like Zombie #1, only more of them. Have fun.

BOB: He's just a zombie who happens to have a name.

ZOMBIE UNION LEADER: Dressed like a teamster... well, a Zombie teamster. Coveralls, name sewn above the pocket, and lots of blood.

HICK: One of the non-zombie actors. He wears coveralls and a straw hat. The role he's playing is a hick, but he's truly not.

BUSINESSMAN: One of the non-zombie actors. He wears a three piece suit that is absolutely dripping with blood. He'll talk, though, like he's from Brooklyn. After all, he's not in character.

DELIVERY PERSON: (*or woman*) Dressed in a brown uniform with "Transgalatic Delivery Company: When it simply has to get their eventually" embroidered on his back.

MAKE UP: This is somebody who is always waiting in the wings with a makeup case. Should be dressed in typical backstage attire: black shirt and pants, a back stage pass around her neck or simply "crew" on her shirt... or both. You should know she's getting union wages, because that's all the work you're going to get from her.

VOICE OFF: Can be covered by just about anybody back stage, but if you have somebody with nothing better to do... why not?

SET

Very basic. A blank highschool stage, which is what it's supposed to be.

MUSIC

Two simple songs. No back-up music necessary.

TWO ACTS

ACT ONE: An evening late in the fall.

ACT TWO: The next day.

PROPS

CAROL

Script (*like all the scripts, it should be a large, rather beaten up affair; his will have several notes stuck all over it*)

Pen

Several legal writing pads

Small Styrofoam cooler

Handkerchief

Necktie

VAUGHN

Script

Director's megaphone

Several loose pieces of paper

PROFERRO

Script

A list of cast members

Box of matches

A key on a chain

Watch

BRIAN

Almost empty soda cup with straw (*the noisier, the better*)

Script

CLOUGHEÏE

Bubble gum

Spray paint can that is crudely covered with a piece of paper that says "Hair Spray"

"Pepper Spray" (*your call, but I wouldn't go for realism here*)

Styrofoam coffee cup "hat" with a rubber band strap

Script

ERIN

Clipboard with various papers attached

Styrofoam for her head

DELIVERY PERSON

Clipboard

GERALD

Lunchbox

Large key ring with as many keys as you can get

Watch

Piece of Styrofoam (*for his chest*)

Two Styrofoam coolers (*one for his head and one for Carol's*)

Broom

A Cellular Commutations device of your choosing

A hand-held calculator

MAKE-UP PERSON

A tackle box supposedly full of make-up

HICK

Chainsaw (*does not need to be operational*)

BUSINESSMAN

Severed arm that squirts blood out the end. Once again, I wouldn't go for realism here, but it's your call. (*You can find "severed" arms in any Halloween supply store, and they often have a shirt sleeve on them.*

Just hide a plastic squeeze bulb up the sleeve with the tube coming out the end. Just squeeze it and it squirts.)

ZOMBIES

Body parts, but not for every Zombie – whatever they happen to be snacking on

Various things to occupy them on break, like magazines, sandwiches, cards...

You might even want to give some of them copies of the script

UNION ZOMBIE LEADER

A contract

Hard hat

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ACT ONE

At open the auditorium is dark with the curtains open. The stage is blank. PROFERRO and VAUGHN should be sitting facing the stage down front Left as unobtrusively as possible. CAROL should be in the audience down Right. Suddenly, CLOUGHEÏE bangs the door open and enters from the far end of the auditorium and then runs down the middle aisle.

CLOUGHEÏE: *(screaming; but with a bad Southern accent and questionable acting ability)* Zombies! Zombies! Run for your life!

(On cue, right when SHE screams, every door in the auditorium will open at the same time, with plenty of back lighting, and, naturally, ZOMBIES will come in. Truly, how many can you get?)

(noticing the other ZOMBIES) Aggghhhhhh!!! (SHE screams)

(CLOUGHEÏE will make a break for the stage, but just as SHE gets on the Apron, even more ZOMBIES will come out of the wings and the back curtain. ALL of the ZOMBIES will converge on CLOUGHEÏE making Zombie sounds, whatever that might be, and just when THEY're about to get her, ZOMBIE #1 will stumble and bump into BRIAN, who's a Zombie, too, only he gets a name. The stumble should reverberate through ALL the ZOMBIES, who will then shove each other back – very un-Zombie-like – until PROFERRO will yell cut.)

BRIAN: Hey. That hurt!

ZOMBIE #1: Sorry.

(VAUGHN, from the time of the first stumble, has been fumbling with his director's megaphone. PROFERRO, in aggravation, stands up, pulls the megaphone from VAUGHN, considers using it, but throws it down on the ground instead and....)

PROFERRO: *(shouting with authority; not needing the megaphone)* Cut!

(EVERYBODY stops living-dead in their tracks. THEY are scared, not knowing what to expect.)

(*making his way to the stage*) What in the name of Romero was that?

(*During the following, the OTHERS will stand around visiting with each other, generally acting bored.*)

BRIAN: (*indignant; pointing*) He stepped on me!

ZOMBIE #1: (*truly contrite*) Sorry.

PROFERRO: You're supposed to be a Zombie! Zombie's don't say "Ow!"

BRIAN: (*whining*) But it hurt.

ZOMBIE #1: I said I was sorry.

PROFERRO: And Zombies don't apologize!

ZOMBIE #1: Sorry.

PROFERRO: (*more to the OTHER ZOMBIES*) Listen, people.

Especially all you extras. I know there's been several delays in filming, and I know the script is not yet complete, but let's try to be professional here. We're on a tight schedule. Just because this is the first day on the set doesn't mean we can't get it right!

BRIAN: Listen! Why do I have to be a Zombie? Why can't I have a chainsaw? I'm supposed to be the big name. Big names aren't Zombies!

PROFERRO: (*coddling; puts his arm around BRIAN*) And you are the big name, Brian, baby. Don't you see? This role is perfect for you. It fits your acting style!

BRIAN: What? Being a Zombie?

PROFERRO: (*animated*) No! You're not *just* a Zombie. You're a Zombie with *feelings*. And what you feel is love. You see, that's why you're chasing what's her name.

CLOUGHEÏE: (*stepping up; disinterested; after popping her gum*) It's Clougheïe. It's spelled C-L-O-U-G-H-E-Ï-E, with two dots above the I.

BRIAN: And it's pronounced Chloe?

CLOUGHEÏE: Yeah. I wanted a name with distinction. One that would stand out in the credits, you know. That's where you get your exposure.

BRIAN: (*after a beat*) That makes sense. (*checking her out for the first time; a bit sleazy*) So... you're my leading lady...

CLOUGHEÏE: (*tough*) Yeah, but don't be gettin' no ideas.

BRIAN: (*even more sleazy*) Ideas?

CLOUGHEÏE: (*on the tough side*) You know what I mean! Look, I just don't wanna be misunderstood. When I went into acting, I promised my daddy (*SHE quickly crosses herself*) I'd never make one of *them* kinda movies. That's why I only make *these* kinda movies.

BRIAN: What? Zombie movies? (*truly curious*) Is there steady work in that?

CLOUGHEÏE: No. I meant movies that are filmed outdoors. They only make *them* kinda movies inside.

BRIAN: (*puzzled*) But we *are* inside...

CLOUGHEÏE: Yeah, but we're pretending to be outside.

VAUGHN: (*making his way to the stage; timidly*) Ummm... what's next?

PROFERRO: Who are you?

VAUGHN: Don't you remember? You hired me. I'm the director.

PROFERRO: Oh, yeah. You're umm....

VAUGHN: It's Vaughn. Eugene Vaughn. It's my directorial debut.

Remember? And Daddy said if this is good, we can even do a sequel.

PROFERRO: Of course I remember. But let's not get the sequel before the quill. (*laughing at his own joke*) Get it?

VAUGHN: Get what?

PROFERRO: (*only the slightest bit put out*) Well, then, if it's your debut, let's get to debu-ting.

VAUGHN: OK. But I'd still like to know what's next.

PROFERRO: How should I know what's next? (*shouting*) Writer!

Where's the writer!

CAROL: (*as HE gets up from a seat in the house*) I'm right here. (*over the next few lines, HE will make his way to the stage*)

PROFERRO: Explain it to him, Carl.

CAROL: It's Carol, with an O.

PROFERRO: Carl. Carol. What's the difference?

CAROL: An O.

PROFERRO: (*looking at him critically for what very well may be the first time; after a beat*) What kind of name is Carol for a guy, anyway?

CAROL: My father named me after Carol O'Connor. You know, Archie Bunker?

PROFERRO: Your father was Archie Bunker?

CAROL: No. My father named me after Archie Bunker.

PROFERRO: Then why didn't he call you Archie? Oh, never mind.

Look, Harvard, explain to what's his name...

VAUGHN: It's Vaughn, but you can call me Eugene.

PROFERRO: (*pretty much ignoring VAUGHN; to CAROL*) Explain to Vaughn what's next.

CAROL: (*HE will drop several of the legal pads HE's trying to shuffle as HE makes his way to the stage; finding the pad HE wants*) It's the love scene. After Blake saves Holly...

BRIAN: Who's Blake?

CAROL: You are.

BRIAN: Oh.

CLOUGHEÏE: Who's Holly?

CAROL: You are.

CLOUGHEÏE: Oh.

CAROL: After Brian saves Clougheïe from the other Zombies, then we have the big love scene.

BRIAN: Don't get me wrong... *(checking out CLOUGHEÏE once again)* I mean, I like the idea of a love scene and all...

CLOUGHEÏE: *(not afraid of violence)* I'm warning you!

BRIAN: But... I mean... I'm a Zombie. Since when do Zombies fall in love?

PROFERRO: *(coddling him)* Since now. Trust me, Brian, baby. You're gonna love it. The crowds are gonna love. And the critics are gonna love it. It's a Zombie apocalypse love story. You're gonna love the ending, isn't he Carl?

CAROL: It's Carol.

PROFERRO: Whatever.

CLOUGHEÏE: Hey, are we gonna be much longer here?

PROFERRO: Are you chewing gum?

CLOUGHEÏE: Yeah... why wouldn't I be?

PROFERRO: Because you're about to get eaten by a Zombie!

CLOUGHEÏE: I thought you said he was going to rescue me.

PROFERRO: But you don't know that.

CLOUGHEÏE: But you just told me.

ZOMBIE #2: Hey, my makeup is starting to itch.

ZOMBIE #3: I'm hungry.

ZOMBIE #4: I need to go to the bathroom!

PROFERRO: We're on a tight schedule here folks! We can't stop every time somebody has a little discomfort.

ZOMBIE #1: I said I was sorry.

ZOMBIE #2: My makeup is still itching.

ZOMBIE #3: And I'm still hungry.

ZOMBIE #4: Never mind.

PROFERRO: *(disgusted)* Oh! Alright! *(looking at his watch)* Let's take lunch. Be back in 30!

BRIAN: *(in a huff as HE storms off)* I'll be in my trailer!

CLOUGHEÏE: You don't have a trailer. You have a tent.

BRIAN: Yeah, but my contract says I get to call it a trailer. So I'll be in my trailer!

(The ZOMBIES start to wander off, as does CAROL.)

PROFERRO: *(to CAROL)* Wait a minute there.

CAROL: Yes?

PROFERRO: You do have that script ready for me, don't you?

CAROL: (*uncertain*) Why... yes...

PROFERRO: Because if you mess this picture up, you'll never work in this town again.

CAROL: We're on location. I doubt if anybody's ever going to work in this town again.

PROFERRO: That's not what I meant. I meant Hollywood! I mean the big times!

CAROL: Oh. (*after a beat*) I don't understand why we're in such a hurry anyway.

PROFERRO: Oh course you don't understand! If you understood you'd be the producer! We're on a tight schedule because we're not the only studio making a movie about 2222. (*animated, once again*) When all the twos come together at 22 seconds after the twenty second minute on the twenty second hour of February 22nd in the year 2222 – 22-22-22 2222 – When all them twos come together it will reverse the polarity of the earth. The dead will become living, and the living will become dead. (*with great theatrics*) The Zombie Apocalypse!

CAROL: I know. I made it up. Remember? I'm the one who wrote it.

PROFERRO: It doesn't matter who made it up. All that matters is who gets the movie out first.

CAROL: But don't you want a good movie?

PROFERRO: Good is subjective. Profit is objective. Remember that. It doesn't matter how good the movie is if it comes out second.

Nobody ever remembers the second movie. We'll just be a remake. A jimmy come lately. A sequin. We'll be nothing more than a cliché! (*taking a menacing step toward CAROL*) And, son, there ain't nothin' worse than a cliché.

CAROL: But...

PROFERRO: But nothing! It's better to put out a bad movie first than a great movie second. (*putting his arm around CAROL's shoulder and trying to be sincere, but just not quite making it*) Don't you see, Carl?

CAROL: Carol.

PROFERRO: Whatever. Even if we make a bad movie, we've got it made. You know, it's really hard to make a bad movie. Why, the worse the movie is, the better chance of getting a cult following. And then, the next thing you know, somebody makes a Broadway musical, and then they'll make a movie version of the musical, and we can sit back and draw royalties for the rest of our lives! (*dreamy*) Ahhh... the American Dream. To work once and get paid forever.... (*serious*) But we have to get it out first! (*walking away*) I expect to see the script on my desk by tomorrow! (*shouting*) Make up!

(The MAKE UP PERSON enters Left carrying a makeup box and in no particular hurry follows PROFERRO off Right. While THEY're leaving, GERALD has been peeking out from the Left Wings. Once THEY're clear, HE will come out, always looking around a bit nervous. CAROL will not see him.)

GERALD: Welcome to the set.

(CAROL will jump and turn around.)

(offering his hand, which CAROL will take with caution) I'm Gerald.
(THEY shake) Don't worry about Proferro. I know this is only your first day, but you'll get used to him.

CAROL: Actually, they bought my script almost two years ago. This is the first time I've ever met anybody in person. I still don't understand why I had to come all the way out to... where are we?

GERALD: The reason why you had to come all the way out here is because they can't wait any longer for the end... or so I've been told.

CAROL: I don't have an end because they keep changing it!

GERALD: Welcome to the business.

CAROL: How long have you been here?

GERALD: This is my second day.

CAROL: What is it you do around here?

GERALD: I'm in the Union.

CAROL: *(waiting a beat for more, when HE's certain there's no more explanation)* Oh. So... have you done this sort of thing before?

GERALD: Oh, yeah. You'll get used to it. It's a bit hectic, but it's all about staying on schedule.

CAROL: So how long do you think this shoot will last?

GERALD: If we stay on budget, two days.

CAROL: Wow. Two days for one location isn't very long... is it?

GERALD: Location? Who's talking about location? I'm talking about the entire movie.

CAROL: Two days! That's impossible!

GERALD: Don't tell that to Proferro. He's never produced a movie that went over schedule or over budget. He's the king of the Double B's.

CAROL: Double B? What's a Double B?

GERALD: You know how they have A movies and B movies?

CAROL: Yeah?

GERALD: Well, keep going until you have to double up.

CAROL: Oh.

GERALD: So... you're the writer... right?

CAROL: Not lately.

GERALD: Having trouble with the end of the movie?

CAROL: *(a bit put off)* How would you know?

GERALD: Rumors. A movie set is nothing but rumors. It bothered me at first, but I learned the secret: Believe them all.

CAROL: *(puzzled)* I'm sorry... but what?

GERALD: So have you thought of a name for the movie, yet?

CAROL: *(puzzled by the abrupt change)* What?

GERALD: You know... a name. That which it shall be called?

CAROL: Oh. *(thumbing to a page in his script)* 2222, The Zombie Apocalypse: The Sunset Saga, Love Bites

GERALD: Kind of a long name, don't you think?

CAROL: You do? I always like a short title, but everybody keeps telling me it needs to be descriptive so that everybody knows what the movie's about before they ever see it. Apparently that's how people decide which movies they want to see.

GERALD: Well, it is a bit long...

CAROL: We've already shortened it twice.

GERALD: That's shortened?

CAROL: Yeah. The first title was the entire first act. It's so hard to come up with just the right title, you know.

GERALD: Well... how about just 2222: *The Musical?*

CAROL: But it's not a musical.

GERALD: It could be.

CAROL: No! That would just be stupid.

GERALD: Oh... well... yeah. We couldn't have that. *(after a beat)* Hey, you seem likeable enough, so I thought that we could be friends.

CAROL: What? We hardly know each other.

GERALD: Yeah. I guess we could do it that way, too, but my way's quicker. Listen, if you want, I'll come back at lunch.

CAROL: I thought this was lunch.

GERALD: Naw. It's only a break. He calls all breaks lunch.

CAROL: What does he call lunch?

GERALD: Lunch. What else would you call it?

CAROL: Ummmm....

GERALD: Hey, I gotta go because if I ever stay too long in the same place then it's pretty obvious I got nothin' to do, but, yeah, I'll be seein' you later.

(GERALD exits. As CAROL is looking Left, BRIAN enters Right. HE has an all but empty soda cup that HE will nosily suck on from time to time.)

BRIAN: *(being just a bit too chummy)* Hey, You're just the guy I wanted to see. That chick I'm supposed to be in love with in the movie...

CAROL: You mean Clougheie?

BRIAN: Yeah, that's her name. She's hot. I was wondering if you could, you know, help a guy out?

CAROL: I'm sorry, but what?

BRIAN: (*holding up his script*) I was just looking over the script, and do you realize that I'm supposed to be in love with her and we never make out?

CAROL: Nobody kisses a Zombie.

BRIAN: Yeah, but, like, since this is supposed to be the future, I was thinking that maybe we could.

CAROL: What's the future got to do with anything?

BRIAN: (*ignoring CAROL's objections*) You know... maybe one really good make out scene?

CAROL: No!

BRIAN: (*disappointed*) Wow, dude. You don't have to get all gnarly. See if I ever help you out!

(BRIAN exits Right. As HE's exiting, ERIN enters Left. SHE has her ever-present clipboard that SHE is enmeshed in as SHE enters, not making eye contact with CAROL, but that's OK, because HE is enmeshed in his script, not looking up either. CAROL will turn to the right just as ERIN reaches him, and the two will bump into each other. THEY will each drop what THEY're holding in the ensuing collision.)

ERIN: (*embarrassed: trying to pick up what's been dropped*) Oh. I'm terribly sorry.

CAROL: (*equally embarrassed; also trying to pick up what has fallen*) Oh, it was my fault. Are you OK?

(The TWO with their hands full, will stand up and look at each other truly for the first time. THEY are smitten.)

ERIN: (*after a beat*) Hi.

CAROL: (*coming to his senses*) Oh... Hi. I didn't hurt you did I?

ERIN: Not at all. Are you OK?

CAROL: I'm fine. Fine. Are you sure you're OK?

ERIN: I'm fine. Really. (*SHE notices SHE has some of his papers*) Here.

CAROL: (*noticing HE has her clipboard*) Here.

(In the process of handing each other their papers, THEY will drop them all over again.)

BOTH: Oh! I'm sorry. (*THEY will then each laugh as THEY pick up their things*)

ERIN: *(once everything is properly sorted out; offering her hand)* Hi. I'm Erin. I'm the Assistant to the Producer.

CAROL: *(taking her hand for much too long, but SHE doesn't seem to mind)* I'm Carol. I'm the writer.

ERIN: Oh! You're the person I was looking for.

CAROL: *(cooling off a bit)* I suppose Proferro sent you to see if my ending is done yet.

ERIN: *(a bit embarrassed)* Yeah. I'm sorry.

CAROL: Oh, it's not your fault.

ERIN: It's only that Proferro says there's going to be problems if you don't have an ending figured out pretty soon.

CAROL: You see, that's the problem. I really don't have an ending. I used to have an ending, but that was before it was supposed to be a love story. And then we had the budget cuts and couldn't use a helicopter. And now they keep changing the location on me. First I was writing a screen play for New York City. Then it was Kansas City. Then it was Carson City. Now it's high school stage in Union City. I don't even know what state I'm in anymore.

ERIN: Oh... he probably has a good reason.

CAROL: Like no budget.

ERIN: Well, we can use the school for free, as long as we wait until after the girls' basketball practice is over. And besides, it's only for the indoor shots.

CAROL: Where we're pretending to be outside...

ERIN: Because it's cheaper.

CAROL: Oh, I guess you're right. I'm sure it'll all make sense... eventually.

ERIN: Hey. I'm sure whatever ending you'll come up with will be wonderful, especially if it's a love scene.

CAROL: *(a bit clueless)* Why would you say that?

ERIN: *(a bit embarrassed)* Oh, no reason.

(VAUGHN enters left. HE fumbles with his megaphone for a few beats.)

VAUGHN: *(using the megaphone; more toward nobody in particular)*

OK! It's time for the love scene!

BRIAN: *(coming out from Right)* Hey! It hasn't been thirty minutes!

PROFERRO: *(as HE enters from Left)* It's Day Light Savings Time.

BRIAN: Oh. OK.

PROFERRO: Come on everybody! We're wasting daylight!

BRIAN: I thought we were indoors.

(The following lines are while ALL the OTHER ACTORS come on stage.)

PROFERRO: We are, Brian, baby. Only the indoors are now outdoors.
It's part of the whole Apocalypse thing.

BRIAN: I'm puzzled...

PROFERRO: Of course you are.

BRIAN: *(tries to make sense out of what PROFERRO just said but decides it's easier just to push forward)* This is set 200 years in the future, right?

PROFERRO: *(checking his watch)* More than less.

BRIAN: Then how come the future looks exactly the same as it does now?

PROFERRO: *(more to CAROL; cynically)* I'm sure it'll be explained eventually in the script... *(to BRIAN)* Besides, how would you know it wouldn't? *(PROFERRO will extricate himself from the conversation and move to his spot down front Left)*

(CLOUGHEIE, who has entered Right, crosses to BRIAN and CAROL, where SHE watches each back and forth as THEY talk... kinda like a very patient cat watching a can of tuna.)

BRIAN: *(to CAROL)* You mean people are going to be wearing the same clothes as they do now?

CAROL: *(thinking fast)* Why would they change if it were comfortable?

BRIAN: And they're going to drive the same cars?

CAROL: Yes, but with tiny nuclear reactors that give off no radiation.

BRIAN: How is that possible?

CAROL: It's the future.

BRIAN: Oh. *(after a pensive moment)* And they have the same hair styles and... well... everything?

CAROL: *(losing patience)* Look! The original version had the whole earth turn into Zombies, except for isolated pockets of resistance. And then the people on the Space Station had to come down, except their ray guns won't work anymore.

BRIAN: Why not?

CAROL: Because they won't!

BRIAN: Then how can they save all the people on earth?

CAROL: Because they can!

CLOUGHEIE: *(finally cutting in)* Why wouldn't the astronauts be Zombies too?

BRIAN: Because they were shielded in titanium bunkers, but we couldn't afford that, so they changed it to Styrofoam. And they cut the special effects budget so I had to write the entire space station out. Look! You really want to know what the original story was about? Badgers! It was about a happy badger named Buddy who was having trouble with an obnoxious Rabbit named Lester, but with the help of Steve

the Squirrel they worked out all their problems and it all ended with the animals arm in arm singing about how wonderful life is when the sun sets on another beautiful day.

BRIAN: *(with a chuckle)* That's funny.

CAROL: It wasn't supposed to be funny!

CLOUGHEIE: But this is nothing like that.

CAROL: *(calming down a bit)* Except the twilight part, but I thought that was kind of stupid even in the original version.

VAUGHN: *(trying to be inspiring)* OK, everybody, listen up. This is the big love scene. Blake, you're a Zombie.

BRIAN: Who's Blake.

VAUGHN: You. It's your character's name.

BRIAN: Oh. *(pause)* Why wouldn't you just call me Brian? I mean, that's my real name.

VAUGHN: *(amazing patience)* Because I'm trying to get you in character.

BRIAN: *(after a deep pause)* Oh... OK.

VAUGHN: *(trying to emote the feeling HE wants)* OK. You're a Zombie. But something down deep is still you. Something down deep still loves Holly...

BRIAN: Who?

CLOUGHEIE: That's me.

BRIAN: Oh.

VAUGHN: ...And that love comes out and you say...

BRIAN: *(reading from the script, flat)* "Brains."

VAUGHN: You don't just say, "Brains!" It's *(with over the top heart breaking emotion; a sob would be nice)* "Brains!" Let me see that emotion come out!

BRIAN: *(flipping to the next page in his script; with no emotion at all)* And then I say, "Brains."

VAUGHN: But it's not just "Brains," it's *(with sappy love)* "Brains!"

BRIAN: *(flips another page)* And then I say... "Brains." Do I ever say anything other than "Brains"?

VAUGHN: *(aside, aimed at CAROL)* Hard to tell. *(to BRIAN, with enthusiasm)* Consider it a challenge. Who couldn't act well with Chekov writing the script?

BRIAN: Who's Chekov?

CLOUGHEIE: He was that guy on Star Trek.

BRIAN: I didn't know he was a writer.

CLOUGHEIE: Oh, yeah. He was an artist.

VAUGHN: OK! Now let's make this a print! Places!

(THEY ALL do. BRIAN takes CLOUGHEÏE in his arms menacingly, but yet, HE's hesitant to eat her brains, which sounds awful, but it's what Zombies do.)

PROFERRO: *(cutting in)* And... Action!

VAUGHN: *(aside)* Aren't I supposed to say that?

CLOUGHEÏE: *(totally different character, but really bad, both the accent and the acting... you know, backhand across the forehead...that sort of thing)* Oh! Blake! It breaks my heart to see you this way. But I know it's still you. And I swore I would never stop loving you. After all, a promise is a promise!

BRIAN: *(breaking character)* Really?

VAUGHN: Cut! Cut!

BRIAN: *(realizing the mistake)* Oh. Sorry... I mean... never mind.

VAUGHN: *(to CLOUGHEÏE)* Back up a line and let's take it from there.

CLOUGHEÏE: *(SHE gets back in character, throwing the back of her hand over her forehead)* After all, a promise is a promise! *(breaking character; to VAUGHN)* Was that a OK place to start?

PROFERRO: Cut! *(beginning to lose patience)* Yes! It was a great place to start. Why don't we start there again. *(yelling)* And this time stick to your lines. *(realizing HE's been yelling at CLOUGHEÏE alone, turns to BRIAN)* Both of you!

CLOUGHEÏE: I got it already!

VAUGHN: *(looking at PROFERRO)* Action?

PROFERRO: Yes! Action!

CLOUGHEÏE: *(striking pose)* After all... A promise is a promise.

BRIAN: *(vicious)* Brains!

CLOUGHEÏE: *(really over the top)* If you must eat my brains, then Bon Appetite! If the only way I can be with you is to be a Zombie, then so be it. I promised you my heart, but you can have my brains, too!

(BRIAN drops CLOUGHEÏE from his arms, causing her to fall on the stage with a more annoyed "ow" than the more painful version.)

(getting up; angry) You dropped me! *(SHE then slugs him hard in the chest)*

BRIAN: Oh, sorry. *(just now realizing his chest hurts)* Ow!

PROFERRO: Cut! *(to BRIAN)* What was that?!

BRIAN: I'm sorry, but she's really creeping me out here.

PROFERRO: How can she be creeping you out?! You're a Zombie!

BRIAN: I'm just saying, when a chick starts talking that way, your pets aren't safe.

PROFERRO: You don't have any pets! You're a Zombie!

(During the following conversation, several ZOMBIES will step back onstage and mill about.)

CLOUGHEÏE: You know... I've always wondered about that. Why aren't there Zombie animals? You know, Zombie cats and dogs and cows and other animals? Like possums and kangaroos?

BRIAN: *(trying to act intelligent)* They're related you know.

CLOUGHEÏE: What?

BRIAN: Possums and kangaroos.

CLOUGHEÏE: Everybody knows that.

PROFERRO: OK everybody! Let's get back to work. I want to film the fire scene while there's still daylight, you know!

VAUGHN: *(fumbling through the loose pages that comprise his copy of the script)* But aren't we filming indoors?

CAROL: *(looking through his notes)* Umm... Excuse me... but what fire scene? I haven't written a fire scene.

PROFERRO: Don't worry about it. You just haven't written it yet. We're filming it before you do.

CAROL: But I wasn't planning on writing a fire scene...

PROFERRO: What do you mean? How can you have a Zombie movie without a fire scene? It's where somebody gets the brilliant idea to set a Zombie on fire, like that would stop him. So this Zombie – all in flames, you see – goes around setting everything else on fire, and it always ends with something blowing up.

CAROL: *(inspired)* You know... that sounds really cool. *(checking his script)* That would work right after the cafeteria scene. Or before... or during.

PROFERRO: See. I told you you just hadn't written it yet.

CAROL: So who are we setting on fire?

PROFERRO: *(checking his list)* Somebody named... Bob.

BOB: *(alarmed; stepping forward)* What?

PROFERRO: *(to CAROL)* See? There he is.

BOB: *(duly alarmed)* Nobody told me I was going to be set on fire!

PROFERRO: What's to worry? We'll goop you up so you won't get burned, at least not too badly, and then we'll put you out before you die. What's to worry?

BOB: No!

PROFERRO: What? They do it all the time.

BOB: But I don't.

PROFERRO: Oh, c'mon. It probably won't hurt at all.

BOB: No!

PROFERRO: *(trying to get tough)* Listen. It's in your contract. You have no choice.

BOB: Yes I do. I don't have a contract. I'm only an extra. There's no way you're setting me on fire! *(HE turns and stalks off the set)*

PROFERRO: Fine! *(yelling)* Where's my assistant?

ERIN: *(running up)* I'm right here, sir.

PROFERRO: *(handing her a box of matches)* Here, go find somebody to set on fire.

ERIN: What?

PROFERRO: Don't tell me you're squeamish, too.

ERIN: *(thinking fast)* Ummm... I don't think we can set anybody on fire, sir, at least not inside the school. They have rules, you know. Fire codes.

PROFERRO: What's our education system coming to when you can't set somebody on fire? Well that's just dandy. *(after a beat)* Maybe we can blow somebody up.

ERIN: I'm pretty sure that's against the rules, too.

PROFERRO: Rules! Schmules! *(to VAUGHN; sarcastically)* Well maybe we can film the love scene then. What do you think?

VAUGHN: *(shocked)* You're asking me my opinion?

PROFERRO: Not really.

VAUGHN: *(crestfallen; as always, fumbling with his megaphone)* OK, everybody, if it's not too much trouble, let's take up where we left off with the love scene.

(NOBODY pays attention to VAUGHN, continuing to mill about like THEY were before.)

PROFERRO: Places!

(EVERYBODY quickly clears the stage.)

VAUGHN: OK. Blake...

(BRIAN stepping back on the stage from where HE was at in the wings; looks up questioningly.)

(to BRIAN) That's you...

BRIAN: Oh. *(HE returns to the wings)*

VAUGHN: *(to EVERYBODY, who happens to be off stage)* Blake has just fought off the other Zombies, and now he's returned to Holly... *(SHE steps out from Right)* that's you. Let's see some emotion here, people! *(as HE gets off the stage)* And... action!

(BRIAN enters as a Zombie.)

BRIAN: Brains! (*HE sees HOLLY*) Brains?

CLOUGHEÏE: Oh! Blake! It's me! Holly! Remember me?

BRAIN: (*passionate*) Brains!

CLOUGHEÏE: You do! You do remember me!

(*THEY embrace. SHE suddenly breaks character, pushes him away, and smacks him. During the following PROFERRO will have his head in his hands.*)

(*angry*) Stop that!

BRIAN: What did I do?

CLOUGHEÏE: You know what you did!

BRIAN: It's in the script! I'm supposed to hug you!

CLOUGHEÏE: Not like that you don't!

BRIAN: Well how else would I do it?

CLOUGHEÏE: Like this. (*SHE does one of the hugs where you just bend close, not really touching the other person*)

BRIAN: Nobody's going to believe that!

CLOUGHEÏE: Then how about this? (*SHE slugs BRIAN in the stomach, causing him to double over; SHE then turns and storms off the stage*)

PROFERRO: (*finally*) Cut!!

BRIAN: (*finally getting his breath back*) She's right. That is more believable.

PROFERRO: Writer!

CAROL: (*running up*) Yes, sir?

PROFERRO: Did you see that?!

CAROL: Yes...

PROFERRO: I liked it! Make it work with the rest of the script. (*to the WHOLE CREW*) Lunch!

(*EVERYBODY scatters, leaving CAROL alone on the stage. ERIN crosses from Left.*)

ERIN: How's it goin'?

CAROL: Did you hear that? He wants me to change the script to make that scene work. I don't even know how the script is supposed to work to begin with.

ERIN: You can do it.

CAROL: (*surprised*) Really? Do you really think so?

(*ERIN nods her head yes.*)

CAROL: Why?

ERIN: *(gently touching his face)* Because I believe in you. I believe you can.

CAROL: *(taken aback)* You do?

ERIN: *(taking her hand back and shuffling her feet in embarrassment)*
Oh, I know we've just met, but there's something about you that... that I like.

CAROL: You do?

ERIN: Sure... you don't mind, do you?

CAROL: Mind? I... umm... ahhh...

PROFERRO: *(from off stage; loudly)* Where's my assistant!

ERIN: *(as SHE runs off)* Sorry, I gotta go.

(ERIN exits Left, leaving CAROL, love-struck, standing there watching her go. GERALD enters Right with his lunchbox, unseen by CAROL, not that HE would've noticed him had HE entered from the Left. CAROL's thoroughly smitten. With whip cream and cherries – it's a technical term. HE will pretty much continue to stare off into the abyss during the entire following conversation.)

GERALD: Hey. I thought I'd see what you're doin' for lunch. You going out?

CAROL: No.

GERALD: You bring your lunch?

CAROL: Umm... No.

GERALD: Want to share a cucumber, lemon cress sandwich with bean sprouts on a dark Russian rye? *(explaining, though there is nothing from CAROL indicating that an explanation is necessary)* When your mother will still fix you a lunch, you take what she gives.

CAROL: *(finally; still staring off)* I just had the most amazing experience of my entire life.

GERALD: OK, but if you change your mind, I'm sure I won't have eaten it.

CAROL: I think I just met the girl I love.

GERALD: Well, that would probably be better than half a sandwich.

CAROL: I'm being serious.

GERALD: Who is it?

CAROL: That girl...

GERALD: *(after a beat)* Thanks for clearing that up for me.

CAROL: The girl... the one who's the Producer's Assistant.

GERALD: Yeah. I know her. What's her name?

CAROL: I don't know.

GERALD: And you're in love with her?

CAROL: Maybe...

GERALD: So... have you guys gone out?

CAROL: No.

GERALD: Had long talks?

CAROL: No.

GERALD: Talked at all?

CAROL: We said, "Hello."

GERALD: Well, I suppose that's a start.

CAROL: I took one look at her, and... It was just like in the movies.

GERALD: Just to clarify things... not this movie, right?

CAROL: What movie is that?

GERALD: Right. Umm... Not to ruin the moment... but don't you think that's a bit weird? I mean... we are talkin' love here. Right?

CAROL: Yeah... I suppose.

GERALD: Real definite there. I mean, is it me? Admittedly I've never experienced love at first sight, but I find the whole idea just... weird. I mean, if I were going to spend the rest of my life with some chick I'd at least want to know if she liked country music. The older stuff is alright, but if I gotta wake up to country music every morning or wake up alone, I'm thinking being alone is a pretty good choice.

CAROL: (*oblivious*) It was just the way she looked at me. It was as if she understood everything. She knew it all.

GERALD: Well, I can see you're not listening to a word I'm saying.

CAROL: And I saw it in her eyes, too. She's the one!

GERALD: Hey, I think I'll be going. I think I'll feed my sandwich to the squirrels. I hope that's not against the law. It probably should be.

(*GERALD heads towards Right just as CLOUGHEÏE enters from that direction. SHE is angry.*)

(*to CLOUGHEÏE*) Want a sandwich?

CLOUGHEÏE: Die, nerd.

GERALD: (*as HE's exiting*) I really can't blame you. It's not that good of a sandwich.

CLOUGHEÏE: (*SHE shoves CAROL from behind, snapping him out of his trance*) Listen! You've got to change the script!

CAROL: What? Why?

CLOUGHEÏE: It's that creep I'm supposed to be in love with!

CAROL: You mean Brian?

CLOUGHEÏE: Yeah. He's really creeping me out!

CAROL: Well... he *is* a Zombie...

CLOUGHEÏE: That's not the problem! The guy's just creepy!

CAROL: Ummm... What do you want me to do?

CLOUGHEÏE: Kill him!

CAROL: What?!

CLOUGHEÏE: You know... write him out of the script.

CAROL: *(relieved)* Ohhh! *(back to perplexed)* What? No! I can't write him out of the script. It's supposed to be a love story. You need two people to have a love story.

CLOUGHEÏE: *(grabbing his shirt and getting in his face)* Fine! But if you have me kiss him, you'd better have an orthodontist!

(SHE lets him go and storms off.)

PROFERRO: *(calling from off Right)* Writer! Where's the writer?

CAROL: *(snapped back to reality)* Here I am.

PROFERRO: *(entering)* Well a lot of good you're doing me here! We've got problems. I've got Zombies wanting to know why we're still listening the same stupid songs 200 years in the future.

CAROL: *(thinking fast)* It's an oldie format. They never change their play list. *(HE turns to go but stops on PROFERRO's line)*

PROFERRO: Wait a minute, boy. We got more problems than just that. Now I gotta know. Are you going to bring me an ending or not? Unless I know pretty darn soon, I'm going to be running into trouble with the Unions and we're going to have to start paying late fees on all the body parts. Do you realize for intestines they charge by the inch? So I gotta know, son, are you going to give me a finished script or not?

CAROL: I was just getting ready to go proofread it right now.

PROFERRO: If you think you can keep pulling the sheep over my eyes, boy, you're mistaken. I know when I'm getting the walk around.

CAROL: Yes... yes sir.

PROFERRO: If I don't have a finished script in my hands by tomorrow, you're out. Through. Finished. Do you understand?

(CAROL meekly nods.)

It's not that I don't like you, son. It's just business, and business comes first.

(PROFERRO exits right. CAROL watches him go. As HE's leaving, GERALD enters with a small Styrofoam cooler.)

GERALD: Dude! Man! Where have you been?

CAROL: Right here.

GERALD: Well you should've been where I was looking. It would've been a lot easier to find you.

CAROL: But I never left.

GERALD: Which is really weird. *(after a beat)* Never mind. Look. We've got to get out of here. It's not safe.

CAROL: What's not safe?

GERALD: It's the Kleinsmith-Füentermann Effect.

CAROL: The what?

GERALD: You know how you don't believe any of this is real?

CAROL: It's because it's not.

GERALD: Well wake up smell the orange juice, buddy. The whole Zombie Apocalypse is going to be caused by all those twos coming together at the same time, right?

CAROL: Not really, it's made up.

GERALD: Of course it's made up, but when those twos come together, it's going to shift the poles, positive will become negative, ying will become yang, and the dead will come to life.

CAROL: No.

GERALD: Yes. Unless you're protected.

CAROL: (*grabbing the Styrofoam for emphasis*) You can't be protected by Styrofoam!

GERALD: (*taking the Styrofoam back*) Right. But there's some people on the Internet who've done the math.

CAROL: (*suddenly intrigued*) Where can you get on the Internet around here?

GERALD: Brian's got it in his trailer. It's in his contract.

CAROL: Brian doesn't have a trailer. He has a tent.

GERALD: Don't let him hear you say that. That's in his contract, too.

(*beat*) But, yeah, dude, like it's all over the Internet.

CAROL: What is?

GERALD: The Kleinsmith-Füentermann Effect. They're these two dudes, see, and they did research back in the '70s, like on old Nazi war prisoners...

CAROL: What?

GERALD: I just threw that in to make it sound better. But you see, they really did these experiments where they found out that it's possible for thought waves to have a causal relationship with physical objects. (*responding to CAROL's blank look*) What that means is that the more people think about something, the more likely that something is to happen. It's like mass telekinesis.

CAROL: You're making no sense at all.

GERALD: What it means is that since we started doing publicity on this movie, more and more people believe that something as silly as a Zombie Apocalypse based solely on numbers could actually happen.

CAROL: Of course it can't!

GERALD: Except for the Kleinsmith-Füentermann Effect. You see, *they've done the math*. Well, not Kleinsmith or Füentermann. But this other guy has. He's figured out that all it takes is for the majority of the people on the planet to believe that the Zombie Apocalypse

will be in 2222, and that in itself will shift the polarity. When people believe the negative, it becomes positive. Just like politics.

CAROL: But there's nothing to believe! It's all made up.

GERALD: So you say. But according to their calculations, with all the pre-movie publicity... *(holding up his cellular communication device)* ... the Apocalypse is scheduled to start... well... pretty darn soon.

CAROL: Soon? It's not supposed to happen for two hundred years! And it's not even going to happen then. It's not real!

GERALD: I don't understand how the math works. But according to Kleinsmith and Füntermann, the more people that believe in something just makes it happen that much quicker.

CAROL: What?

GERALD: Dude. Because everybody has been thinking about the Zombie Apocalypse, then that's going to make it happen... like really quick.

CAROL: How quick?

GERALD: The latest prediction is... *(checks his watch, takes out a pocket calculator and figures, and then does some air math)* ...like, tomorrow.

CAROL: Tomorrow?!

GERALD: *(offering to show him the calculator, as if that would help)*

Well, it's tomorrow evening, give or take. Although I'm not sure if they figured in time zones and stuff like that. But, yeah, tomorrow.

CAROL: Tomorrow? That's just crazy!

GERALD: Call it crazy if you want, but it *is* on the Internet.

(PROFERRO enters.)

GERALD: Hey! Gotta go. *(HE starts to go)*

PROFERRO: Hey! You!

(GERALD stops with a pained look on his face.)

GERALD: *(turning; timidly)* Me?

PROFERRO: Yes. You. Who are you?

GERALD: Really... nobody.

PROFERRO: Well... who cares. What is it you do around here?

GERALD: I'm in the Union.

PROFERRO: *(incredulous)* Seriously? Who's not? Look. We need somebody to set on fire. You're it.

GERALD: *(alarmed)* I can't act!

PROFERRO: Who said anything about acting?

ERIN: *(running onto the set)* Sir! The Key Grip just fell off a ladder.

PROFERRO: So?

ERIN: He's hurt, sir.

PROFERRO: (*somewhat concerned*) Is it serious?

ERIN: He's broken both legs and thinks he's a Cadillac.

PROFERRO: A Coupe de Ville or a Sedan?

ERIN: He didn't say.

PROFERRO: That's awful! (*after a beat*) He's not in the way or anything is he?

ERIN: No.

PROFERRO: Good. Good. (*after a beat*) What am I going to do for a Key Grip? (*seeing GERALD*) Never mind being set on fire. You're now the Key Grip.

GERALD: (*relieved*) Oh, thank Romero. (*after a beat*) Hey, what does a Key Grip do?

PROFERRO: They grip things. Keys. Don't worry, you'll learn as you go.

(*GERALD starts to leave.*)

Hey! Where ya goin'?

GERALD: To go find some keys...

PROFERRO: Oh, no, you don't. You're staying with me. (*HE grabs GERALD by the arm; to CAROL; trying to sound fatherly, but not quite being convincing*) Now look, son. I want to know why you haven't given me the end of the movie yet.

CAROL: Well, sir, it's because they keep changing everything. I had a beautiful ending where Brian saved Clougheie from the other Zombies, and then he fought them to the death in the Statue of Liberty while she escaped from the torch on a hang glider. But they don't have the Statue of Liberty in... wherever the heck we happen to be. This town doesn't even have a grain elevator!

PROFERRO: I'm not wanting to hear your excuses, son.

CAROL: I thought you were.

PROFERRO: I'm a man who wants things to get done. And what I expect to get done is this movie. Now, no more dwadlin'. There's ink to be used! Why aren't you off somewhere writing?

CAROL: Ummm... I'm trying to get inspiration?

PROFERRO: Well how's this for inspiration. We're shooting the finale tomorrow afternoon. If you don't have the ending by then, you're fired!

CAROL: I know. You've already told me.

PROFERRO: OK, then, if you don't have the end, you'll never work in this town again.

CAROL: I know.

PROFERRO: Oh... did I already use that threat, too?

CAROL: Yes.

PROFERRO: OK then, fine! You've forced me to get serious. If you don't have the end written by tomorrow afternoon, then the only job you'll ever be able to get is writing scripts for reality TV shows!

CAROL: That's just mean!

PROFERRO: You don't get to the top of this business by being Mr. OK Guy. *(to GERALD)* You! Let's go find some keys!

GERALD: *(as THEY're leaving; to CAROL; angry)* Thanks a lot, buddy!

CAROL: What did I do?

(PROFERRO and GERALD exit, leaving CAROL and ERIN alone.)

CAROL: *(to no one in particular)* Well that's just great!

ERIN: What?

CAROL: I've ticked off the only one around here who wanted to be my friend.

ERIN: *(hurt)* What about me?

(Enter BUSINESSMAN Right covered in blood.)

BUSINESSMAN: *(to ERIN)* Hey, are you Carol?

CAROL: No, I'm am.

BUSINESSMAN: *(looking him over)* No kiddin'? Whatever. Hey, some guy named Vaughn...

CAROL: You mean the director?

BUSINESSMAN: No kiddin'? He's the director? Whadaya know? But, yeah, he wanted me to let you know the doo-hickey that squirts blood is broken and he may not be able to get it fixed. *(HE holds up a severed arm for CAROL to see)* See? It's not squirting. *(it suddenly squirts "blood" on CAROL)* Oh. I guess it's working. *(HE shakes it, then looks at it)* Oh. I guess it's not.

CAROL: *(exasperated)* What do you want me to do?

BUSINESSMAN: I don't know. He just said to tell you.

(HE leaves. ERIN comes forward.)

ERIN: *(timidly)* Hey...

CAROL: *(aggravated; short; while trying to wipe the "blood" off with a handkerchief)* What?

ERIN: *(a bit hurt)* I just thought that maybe you'd like to...

(Enter HICK carrying a chainsaw. HE is splattered in blood.)

HICK: *(with a severe twang)* Some fella named Vaughn...

CAROL: The director?

HICK: Well ya don' say? I thought that other feller was the director.

Well, that there feller says you gots to come up with somethin' other than the chainsaws.

CAROL: What? How can you have a Zombie movie without chainsaws?

HICK: Well, we can only do the filmin' at night, ya know, an' the neighbors have been raisin' a ruckus about the noise. Se we gotta come up with somethin' else. Somethin' more quiet.

CAROL: What?! You're kidding me! How can the Apocalypse be quiet?

HICK: *(with a totally different accent)* Geeze, dude. Chill. I'm just delivering the message. *(HE leaves.)*

CAROL: *(notices that ERIN is still there; sharp)* What?

ERIN: I just thought you'd like to talk is all...

CAROL: Does it look like I have time to talk?

ERIN: *(taking a step back, with head down)* I'm sorry.

CAROL: *(curtly)* Oh, no, you're not! You're just like them. Everybody wants me to fix everything. Well, I can't do it! Just leave me alone and let me fail in peace!

ERIN: *(almost in tears)* Fine! *(SHE runs off Right crying)*

CAROL: *(immediately realizing what a jerk HE was)* Oh, Erin... I'm so sorry. *(but, of course, SHE's already gone. His head is down when BRIAN enters.)*

BRIAN: *(agitated; somewhat in CAROL's space)* Look, dude, I need to know.

CAROL: *(confused)* Know what?

BRIAN: I asked you real friendly like to do me a favor. Now I need to know if you're going to come through?

CAROL: *What favor?*

BRIAN: *(shifting to nervous, looking around to make sure THEY're alone; more buddy-buddy; lots of hand motions)* You know, with the chick... What's her name...

CAROL: *(incredulous, a great word)* What?

BRIAN: *(back to hard; his finger in CAROL's face)* Look. All I'm sayin' is that when I ask a favor, then I expect a favor.

(BRIAN turns and stalks back off Right. CAROL will turn that way and watch him go. During his next line, CLOUGHEÏE will enter Left.)

CAROL: That doesn't even make sense!

CLOUGHEÏE: *(grabbing CAROL by the shoulder and spinning him around to face her; with her fist in his face)* I'll tell you what don't make sense. It don't make sense for you to write any love scenes between the two of us, because if you do, then you're gonna make me really mad. And when I'm really mad, then I'm really mad.

(CLOUGHEÏE gives him a short shove backwards and then turns and exits back Left. HE will watch her as SHE goes. Over the next line GERALD will enter Right with a large key ring full of keys.)

CAROL: That doesn't make sense, either!

GERALD: *(angry)* Way to go, buddy. *(HE will startle CAROL, who will jump and spin around to face him)* Now look what I gotta do! Do you have any idea how many keys there are on a movie set? Well I'll tell you: tens! And now I've got to hold them. Every last one of them. And I blame you.

CAROL: What'd I do?

GERALD: I'll tell you what you did! You made me stand around too long, that's what! I come and try to warn you about the Apocalypse – which is tomorrow, by the way! I don't care what you say! – and this is the thanks I get. They have a name for guys like you in the Zombie Apocalypse, you know, and it's called lunch! *(HE turns to leave, but then turns back around to face CAROL)* Oh, yeah. Proferro now wants you to write a make out scene with Brian and Clougheïe. Good luck with that! *(HE turns and heads off Right)*

PROFERRO: *(off Left)* Writer!

(For a moment CAROL doesn't know whether to go after GERALD or answer PROFERRO. HE then decides, and with head down, turns and goes off Left. Curtain.)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Morning of the next day. At curtain all the “ACTORS” are milling around on the stage, visiting, reading the newspaper, drinking coffee... you know, avoiding work. VAUGHN will enter Left and fumble with his megaphone.

VAUGHN: *(after much trouble trying to hold both the script and the megaphone)* OK, everybody. This is the last day of filming. We're on a tight schedule here. *(HE tries to take a piece of paper out of the script folder and ends up dropping everything but the piece of paper; after a moment's hesitation, HE decides that all HE really needed was the paper)* OK, first we've got the romance scenes to do...

(Both CLOUGHĒ and BRIAN make menacing gestures at CAROL from different parts of the stage.)

...then we break for lunch. And after lunch it's the big finale. And Mr. Proferro says if we can get through shooting this morning's scenes before noon, then maybe he'll get us back the key to the bathroom.

(GERALD holds up his keys and shakes his head, “No,” in defiance.)

So... ummm... let's go out there today and show an abundance of enthusiasm! *(VAUGHN starts to clap enthusiastically, still holding the paper, and realizes quickly that no one else is clapping at all, so HE quits; after a beat)* OK... places everyone... please?

(EVERYBODY starts to slowly move into place. As THEY are all moving, GERALD crosses to CAROL.)

GERALD: Hey, buddy, how ya doin'?

CAROL: *(surprised)* I thought you were mad at me.

GERALD: I was, which was really stupid. Besides, you can't really have very many friends if you're always angry. And besides that besides, I really got a cool job. I never knew keys could be so fascinating.

CAROL: Well, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you have to work.

GERALD: Hey, man, ya opened my eyes. You know, it's a lot easier to actually work than to try and avoid it. *(sincere)* Look, about being eaten by Zombies...

CAROL: Hey, forget about it.

GERALD: No. I mean the Zombies are *really* going to be here. The latest calculation is for right after lunch, our time.

CAROL: Who does these calculations?

GERALD: Somebody named B. Dogg. He's got his own blog.

VOICE: *(from Off Right)* Hey! Who's got the key to the cameras?

GERALD: *(holding up his keys)* Coming!

CAROL: *(as GERALD's leaving)* Cameras have keys?

GERALD: I'm telling you, there's a lot to learn. *(exits Right)*

(By now the entire stage should be empty except for CAROL, who's standing in the middle of the stage.)

PROFERRO: *(standing up from his seat in front of the house Left; gently, to CAROL)* Well?

CAROL: Well... what?

PROFERRO: *(angry)* Well are you going to stand there all day, or are you going to get off the stage and let us film this picture!

(CAROL will quickly exit Left.)

And... Action!

(CLOUGHEIE will enter from Right and BRIAN will enter at the same time from Left. THEY will gracefully cross to the center stage, almost like ballet dancers, if that's something you can do almost, take each other's hands, and look lovingly into each other's eyes while the entire ZOMBIE CAST enters and makes a semi-circle behind them. CLOUGHEIE and BRIAN then begin singing while the other ZOMBIES sing backup, mostly the angelic "wooo's." The song should be as good as you can get it, which means it's totally out of character for BOTH of them. The whole time CAROL, who has made his way down front, will be looking through his copy of the script trying to find out where THEY are – after all, HE didn't write this song – until HE finally just gives up.)

BRIAN: *(singing)* If you're alive and I am dead...

CLOUGHEIE: Would you really eat my head?

BRIAN: Please don't think me too unkind

If I love you for your mind.

CLOUGHEIE: I've loved you from the very start...

BRIAN: With all my missing body parts.

BOTH: I will always love you,
even when my life is through.

There is nothing that I wouldn't do,
because I am in love with you

BRIAN: Chop me with a 'copter blade,
a light pink mist that slowly fades.

CLOUGHEÏE: I'd wear white late in the fall;
miss important telephone calls.
BRIAN: I'd be an undead walking corpse.
CLOUGHEÏE: I'd suffer a bad charley horse.
BRIAN: A shotgun blast to the head,
stumble around until I'm dead...
CLOUGHEÏE: I'd miss a one day only sale,
or have a broken fingernail.
BRIAN: I'd take a chainsaw through the guts.
CLOUGHEÏE: Or half a dozen paper cuts.
BRIAN: I'd be covered with stinky mold.
CLOUGHEÏE: I'd get a really bad head cold.
BRIAN: Call me crazy...
CLOUGHEÏE: Call me strange...
BOTH: But my love for you will never change.

There will only be you,
even after my life is through.
There is nothing that I wouldn't do,
because I'm in love with you.
I'm in love with you.

(At the end of the song BRIAN and CLOUGHEÏE will be holding each other's hands as THEY stare lovingly into each other's eyes. THEY will hold that pose during the following lines. During the course of the following lines, PROFERRO will be making his way to the stage, pushing CAROL in front of him, with VAUGHN tagging along behind.)

CAROL: Since when is this a musical?
PROFERRO: It's just one song.
CAROL: It's not a question of numbers. It makes no sense.
PROFERRO: Of course it doesn't.
CAROL: You don't care if it doesn't make sense?
PROFERRO: Does it matter? This is a movie about the living dead and you're complaining about logic?
CAROL: *(pointing at BRIAN)* A minute ago this guy had difficulty grunting, and now he's singing falsetto!
PROFERRO: Who cares? With a little luck, we can cash in on the soundtrack, too.
CAROL: What? I thought you said there was only one song.
PROFERRO: That's right.
CAROL: How can you have a sound track with only one song?
PROFERRO: How many do you need? Besides, by the time they figure that out, they'll already own the CD.

(CLOUGHEÏE suddenly pulls away from BRIAN in disgust.)

CLOUGHEÏE: *(angry)* What do you think you're doin'!?

BRIAN: What? I was just holding your hands.

CLOUGHEÏE: Oh, no, you weren't. You were doing that thing with your fingers!

BRIAN: What thing?

CLOUGHEÏE: That thing you were doin'! Don't try to act innocent!

BRIAN: But...

CLOUGHEÏE: *(getting in his face)* Listen, creep. You touch me again and you won't need make up!

BRIAN: I didn't do nothin'!

CLOUGHEÏE: Well how this for nothin'?

(SHE takes a swing at BRIAN, but HE ducks)

BRIAN: Ha! You missed.

CLOUGHEÏE: *(stomping on BRIAN's foot)* I didn't that time.

(CLOUGHEÏE turns and stomps off stage Right, while BRIAN, reaching for her, follows. HE has to drag his newly injured foot as HE goes, and with his hands reaching for CLOUGHEÏE, HE ends up looking very much like a Zombie. GERALD, who has just entered Right, sees what looks like a Zombie going after CLOUGHEÏE.)

GERALD: It's the Apocalypse! It's started! *(HE checks his watch, casual)* A bit early... *(to CLOUGHEÏE, who is already off stage)* I'll save you!

(GERALD then tackles BRIAN. The TWO roll around on the floor for a bit before BRIAN finally pushes him off.)

(covering his head with his hands; terrified) Don't eat me! I don't wanna be a Zombie!

BRIAN: *(trying to get up)* What is wrong with you!

PROFERRO: Cut!

VAUGHN: I didn't even think we were filming...

PROFERRO: *(aside)* Of course we were. It's digital. We're always filming. *(PROFERRO crosses to where GERALD and BRIAN are BOTH slowly getting up.)* What is going on here?!

GERALD: I... I thought he was a Zombie.

PROFERRO: *(to BRIAN)* See! I told you you'd be believable. *(yelling)* Writer!

CAROL: *(crossing)* Yes?

(When PROFERRO takes his eyes off of GERALD to talk to CAROL, GERALD will quickly sneak off.)

PROFERRO: I like it. Make it work.

BRIAN and CAROL: Make it work?

BRIAN: I get attacked and you like it? I'll be in my trailer!

(BRIAN storms off.)

ZOMBIE UNION LEADER: *(coming out from Left)* OK, everybody, it's time for a Union break.

(SOME of the ZOMBIES will wander off stage, but MOST of them will pretty much just stand around casually talking to each other, generally acting totally out of character for Zombies.)

PROFERRO: You can't call a break!

ZOMBIE UNION LEADER: Sure I can; it's in the contract. *(holding up a piece of paper)* We get to take scheduled breaks, and you got one scheduled. *(reading from the paper)* It says, "Brian exits, take a break." He exited, so we're breakin'.

VAUGHN: But that was only when Brian was supposed to have exited.

ZOMBIE UNION LEADER: Then maybe you should've put that in your schedule.

VAUGHN: Can't we be reasonable? We're never going to get the keys to the restroom like this.

ZOMBIE UNION LEADER: *(laughing)* Reasonable? Yeah, right.

PROFERRO: Fine. I may have to give you a break, but it doesn't say how long. *(shouting)* Where's Clougheie and Brian?

BRIAN: *(re-entering; still limping a bit)* I'm right here.

PROFERRO: Then, where's Clougheie?

BRIAN: *(a bit mischievous)* Oh... I imagine she's off putting on her hair spray...

PROFERRO: Fine! You stay here!

(PROFERRO goes off Right looking for CLOUGHEIE. CAROL is left frantically writing in his notebook at center. After a moment, HE stops, and in a fit of frustration, tears out the page and wads it up, then throws it on the ground. HE looks up to see ERIN approaching from Right.)

ERIN: *(walking up, timid)* Mr. Vaughn wanted you to know that the check didn't clear, so he wanted you to know that we aren't doing the entire lawnmower scene. He wanted you to plan accordingly. *(ERIN turns to go.)*

CAROL: Erin?

(SHE stops with her back to him.)

Erin... I'm... I just wanted to say... I'm so sorry about what I said to you yesterday. I know you're not really that way.

(ERIN turns toward him, smiling, with tears in her eyes. Play it for the sap; you won't be disappointed.)

Do you forgive me?

(ERIN nods, trying not to cry. THEY both take a step toward each other and are just about to embrace when the DELIVERY PERSON enters Left.)

DELIVERY PERSON: *(reading off his clipboard)* I got two cases of assorted body parts. They told me there'd be somebody over here who could sign for them.

ERIN: *(in disbelief)* Two cases? We were supposed to get three!

(The following lines are as THEY're both exiting Left.)

DELIVERY PERSON: Well two is all they sent.

ERIN: Two's not enough!

DELIVERY PERSON: Lady, I just drive a truck.

(CLOUGHEË enters Right still holding a spray can. SHE has bright green hair. It should be more than obvious SHE is furious. Several people will notice her hair and whisper while THEY try to hide their pointing.)

CLOUGHEË: *(pointing at BRIAN as SHE steps purposefully toward him)* You! You did this to me!

(Those who hadn't noticed CLOUGHEË's hair before see it now. THEY all look on in shock.)

PROFERRO: *(who has entered from Right; the minute HE sees her hair)* Make up!

CLOUGHEË: *(to anybody who'll listen)* He switched my hairspray for spray paint! *(SHE tears off the piece of paper that's been taped around the can; it should be more than obvious that it was of poor quality; to BRIAN)* You did this to me!

PROFERRO: (*truly puzzled*) You painted all your hair green and never noticed?

CLOUGHEÏE: Of course I noticed. But once I started, I had to finish, didn't I? I couldn't just leave it half green, could I?

PROFERRO: Make Up!

MAKE-UP PERSON: (*annoyed*) I'm right here.

PROFERRO: Oh... never mind. We haven't got time. Writer!

CAROL: Yes?

PROFERRO: Do something!

(*As PROFERRO crosses down front, CAROL will quickly say something to CLOUGHEÏE, who will look at him puzzled, so HE'll have to tell her again. SHE'll finally walk off, no less sure of what SHE's going to do.*)

(*shouting*) Places! And that means if you're not in the scene your place is off stage!

(*EVERYBODY very quickly scatters, leaving the stage blank.*)

VAUGHN: And....

PROFERRO: Action!

(*CLOUGHEÏE, with green hair, enters from Left, acting helpless and afraid. BRIAN, as a Zombie, will enter Left, unseen by CLOUGHEÏE.*)

BRIAN: (*angry*) Brains!

(*CLOUGHEÏE screams and spins around.*)

(*noticing her green hair, trying hard not to laugh*) Brains?

CLOUGHEÏE: (*once more over the top*) Oh, Brian! Don't you recognize me? The Zombie radiation turned my hair green. Oh! Please say that you still love me!

GERALD: (*who has crossed next to CAROL down front Right*) Zombie radiation?

(*CAROL only shrugs as if to say, "I don't know!"*)

CLOUGHEÏE: Oh! Brian! Don't tell me my green hair is too hideous for even a moron like you to love...

(*VAUGHN starts to frantically thumb through his script because HE knows CLOUGHEÏE is no longer reading her lines.*)

(cuddling up to BRIAN; seductively) I'd... I'd let you kiss me if you wanted to... You big hunk of Zombie, you.

BRIAN: *(hubba hubba)* Brains!

(BRIAN roughly grabs CLOUGHEË and dips her, as only a Zombie could. Just as HE's moving in for the kiss SHE takes a small spray canister from behind her back and sprays him in the face with pepper spray. I suppose if you're really into realism you can use real pepper spray, but I think I'd go with a small, plastic, pump spray bottle filled with water. BRIAN responds appropriately from getting sprayed, dropping CLOUGHEË and screaming with his hands over his eyes. CLOUGHEË gets up and kicks him in the shin, causing him to fall over and scream even more. SHE then turns and storms off right. With a touch of red Kool-Aid in BRIAN's hands on top of the water CLOUGHEË already squirted, BRIAN's whole face can be red the next time we see him.)

PROFERRO: And... Cut!

VAUGHN: *(clumsily trying to find the right page in his script)* That wasn't in the script... was it?

PROFERRO: Who cares! Great work everybody! Let's take four. *(HE exits Left)*

BRIAN: *(finally)* She maced me!

VAUGHN: *(sniffing the air)* Actually... I think it was pepper spray.

BRIAN: She pepper sprayed me! Why did she do that?

VAUGHN: *(still looking through the script)* I... ummm.... I really don't know. *(HE will devote his entire attention to his script during the next sequence, missing it all.)*

CLOUGHEË: *(re-enters right)* You wanna know why I pepper sprayed you? It's because you're a pre-vert!

BRIAN: But I didn't do nothin'!

CLOUGHEË: Yeah, but you were thinkin' it!

(SHE quickly crosses to BRIAN and sprays him once again; HE screams and stumbles off Left.)

And that's for the hair. And you're lucky I like the color! *(SHE then turns and storms off Right)*

VAUGHN: *(finally looking up to an all but empty stage)* I think I found where we're supposed to be.... *(HE will look up and realize that EVERYBODY has pretty much left)* Oh!

(VAUGHN will disappear off Left, leaving CAROL onstage trying to make changes to the script.)

GERALD: (*entering from Right; panicking*) Listen! The Zombie Apocalypse! They moved up the time.

CAROL: Good for them.

GERALD: This is serious! They say it's going to happen sooner than tonight.

CAROL: What will I wear?

GERALD: Don't you get it? People can start turning into Zombies *at any minute*.

CAROL: Don't you get it? It's just like you knocking down Brian. It's not real. Repeat after me... It's...

(*GERALD doesn't say anything.*)

No, really, repeat after me... It's...

GERALD: It's...

CAROL: Good. It's not real.

GERALD: It's not real.

CAROL: Good.

GERALD: Just the same, I brought you this. (*HE holds out a piece of Styrofoam*)

CAROL: What is that?

GERALD: It's a piece of Styrofoam. Best to put it on now.

CAROL: Put it on?

GERALD: Yeah. You put it on and then the Zombie radiation can't affect you. Don't wait until the last minute, because it may be too late.

CAROL: I'm not wearing a piece of Styrofoam on my head!

GERALD: (*unbuttoning his shirt to reveal Styrofoam on his chest*) Head? I thought you had to wear it over your chest! (*starting to go*) C'mon! We've got to make ourselves some hats.

CAROL: You go on ahead.

GERALD: OK! (*HE goes off Right*)

CAROL: My only friend is insane. (*HE see's ERIN as SHE is quickly passing through*) Erin! Wait a minute.

ERIN: (*in a hurry*) Proferro can't find the severed limbs. I've got to hurry.

CAROL: (*taking her by the hand*) No... please. Wait. Just for a minute. Look. I don't know how this movie's going to turn out, but I don't think it's going to go well. And I don't know if I'll ever get the opportunity... Well... I just wanted to say...

PROFERRO: (*off*) Assistant!

ERIN: I have to go.

CAROL: (*hurridly*) I just wanted to say that no matter what happens, I don't care, because I got to know you, and that's all that matters.

PROFERRO: (*entering; stern*) Where have you been? How can we shoot the cafeteria scene without severed limbs? (*HE spins and exits from whence HE came*)

ERIN: I'm sorry... I gotta go. (*SHE follows PROFERRO off*)

(*CAROL stands dejected for a moment and then PROFERRO re-enters from the same direction HE left, closely followed by ERIN.*)

PROFERRO: Oh! Never mind the cafeteria scene. It was a stupid idea anyway. Not even Zombies are going to want to hang out in a high school cafeteria. (*shouting*) Listen, everybody, this is it! We're doing the final love scene. (*not quite as loud*) This is where Brian will finally kiss Clougheïe.

CLOUGHEÏE: (*entering Right; furious*) Oh, no! No way. It ain't in my contract.

BRIAN: (*entering Left; self-righteous; pointing at his script for emphasis*) It's in the script! If it's in the script, then that means you gotta do it.

CLOUGHEÏE: No it don't.

BRIAN: Yes it does! It's in the script!

CLOUGHEÏE: Well I don't care! (*to whomever wants to listen*) I ain't kissing that... that... hack!

BRIAN: (*offended*) Hack? Who you callin' a hack?!

CLOUGHEÏE: You heard me. I called you a hack! You couldn't act your way out of a laundry basket.

BRIAN: Like you would know a laundry basket!

CLOUGHEÏE: Like you would know good actin'!

BRIAN: You wouldn't know good acting if it moved in next door!

CLOUGHEÏE: You wouldn't know good actin' if it was livin' in your basement!

BRIAN: Yeah? Well you wouldn't know good acting if... if... if it was sleeping in the top bunk. (*rather proud of himself, thinking HE's got the final say*)

CLOUGHEÏE: Oh! And you know good acting!

BRIAN: Like you're gonna tell me how to act! (*throwing his hand on his forehead and badly mimicking CLOUGHEÏE*) "Oh! Blake!" (*no longer mimicking*) I'll have you know I received a Gore™ for Best Display of Gratuitous Violence by a Supporting Actor In Support of the Best Supporting Actress in a Sequel That Was Made in the Same Year as the Preceding Movie with a Budget of Less than \$100,000.

CAROL: (*not impressed in the least*) Wow. I bet the competition was fierce.

CLOUGHEÏE: (*suddenly very impressed; awestruck, if you will*) You got a Gore™?

BRIAN: I beat out Ted Underwood in *Triple Amputation*.

CLOUGHEÏE: What movie was you in?

BRAIN: *Sorority House Slaughter Five: Return of the Hatchet*.

CLOUGHEÏE: (*really impressed*) You was in *Sorority House Slaughter Five*? Who did you play?

BRAIN: Remember the scene where the homeowner goes out to the garage. The guy in the deep freeze... That was me.

CLOUGHEÏE: (*getting a better angle; a realization*) That was you! I've seen people jump out of freezers before, but when you did it, it was so real!

BRAIN: The trick is to cover yourself with water and then spend an hour in a real freezer. Nothing beats realism.

(*As THEY're walking off, arm in arm...*)

Yeah. I was scheduled to come back in eight, but after six we were pretty much through.

CLOUGHEÏE: That's a shame.

(*THEY exit.*)

PROFERRO: (*excited*) That's a wrap!

CAROL: How can that be a wrap?

PROFERRO: Do you think we're going to get any closer?

CAROL: You got a point.

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