

ZOMBIE LOVE

By Katelyn Beyke

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 Males, 9 Females)

LARA	High-strung and quick-tempered student director
AMY	Lara's sweet assistant, in love with Cal
CAL	Lara's badly-treated boyfriend
EMMETT	Stuffy lead actor
SHELLEY	Self-conscious actress
HANK	Strong, but stupid actor with Southern accent
MIKE	Small-time actor with high aspirations
DENNIS	Nerdy sound tech
JAMIE	Dennis' equally nerdy sister, the light tech
KATIE	Shy and quiet actress
DIANE	A costumer with an odd sense of fashion
FRANKIE	A jewel thief who stumbles into their rehearsal
ALEX	Frankie's very attractive partner-in-crime
OFFICER JOHNSON	A police officer chasing Frankie
OFFICER CARSON	Another
OFFICER BLACK	Another
JASON	Diane's boyfriend, Shelley's ex-boyfriend
GEORGE	Hank's cousin

NOTE ON CASTING

Although *Zombie Love* is written for a cast of eighteen, other actors may be added as extra zombies for a larger cast. Several of the roles can be played by either males or females with minimal changes in dialogue. These include JAMIE, MIKE, DENNIS, and the THREE OFFICERS.

SETTING

The stage is set for a high school production, so set pieces may have an unfinished look. The play is set in the tomb of a zombie king. A coffin lays parallel to the stage on the left. A bush stands stage right. Other set dressing can include tombstones, torches, moss, or other “creepy” accoutrements. A set of stairs leads down to the floor stage right.

COSTUMES

At the beginning of the play Shelley is dressed as a cheerleader and Emmett as a zombie. All others wear normal high school clothing. As the play progresses, other actors and actresses change, to varying degree, into zombie costumes. Many of these can be silly or zany to reflect Diane’s unusual artistic taste. Cal’s costume should include a football jersey or letterman jacket.

PROPS

Amy and Lara both carry clipboards throughout the play. Diane wears a seamstress’s measuring tape around her neck. Frankie brings on a cell phone and a large bag of jewels. Cal brings on an eyeliner pencil. Officer Johnson wears a walkie-talkie. Mike has a large book or another object suitable for knocking someone out. Cal and Emmett have fake swords. Frankie, Alex, and the three officers carry guns. A large piece of cardboard painted like a boulder sits on the stage.

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ACT I

(Lights up. EMMETT and SHELLEY stand center stage. HE is dressed in tattered clothes and zombie make-up. SHE wears a cheerleader's uniform and pigtails. THEY are the only two CHARACTERS in costume at this point.)

EMMETT: Oh, Madeline, is it really you? Have you come back to me even though *(overly dramatic pause)* I am a zombie?

SHELLEY: Gerard. It is I. I have come back, if only for a moment. I came to say I love you. Oh, Gerard, I love you. You may be smelly, and you may be losing your body parts, but that doesn't change the way I feel about you. *(SHE turns away from him.)* It's just that...

EMMETT: What? Tell me, Madeline. What is it? What makes you look so sad?

SHELLEY: *(Turning back.)* It's just that... Arthur. Arthur loves me. I think I still love him as well. I couldn't break his heart. He's been so kind to me. The earrings, the convertible, the trips to Europe. How can I tell him no?

EMMETT: Is this really the way you feel, my love?

SHELLEY: I'm so sorry.

EMMETT: *(Grabbing her wrist)* Then I shall have to hold you here against your will, for mine is a love that goes beyond the grave.

SHELLEY: *(Struggling)* No, Gerard. You must let me go. You can't do this!

EMMETT: Oh, but I can.

SHELLEY: Arthur will come for me.

EMMETT: He can't come for you if he's dead!

SHELLEY: No!

EMMETT: You will come with me now, into my tomb. We can live... and un-live... there together, forever.

SHELLEY: I can't. I need to live out here in this world with other people and sunshine and the birds.

EMMETT: Then I will stay here with you. We can buy a little house with a white picket fence and a table in the garden where we can drink tea with our friends.

SHELLEY: What friends, Gerard? How can we have friends when you are a rotting corpse?

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(LARA walks up to the stage from the back of the audience carrying her trusty clipboard. SHE talks as SHE climbs onto the stage.)

LARA: No, Shelley. You're playing her too angry. Think about it. She's tired. She's frightened. She loves him, but she can't face the shame of living with a dead man. Give it some more thought and the emotion will come to you.

SHELLEY: *(To herself)* Tired... shame... dead man.

LARA: *(Moving downstage left)* Try it again.

SHELLEY: *(Even cheesier)* What friends, Gerard? How can we have friends when you are a rotting corpse.

LARA: Better. Much better. That's your cue, Hank.

(HANK enters right.)

HANK: Sorry, Lara. I thought I came in on, *How can I kiss your lips when there's no skin left to kiss?*

LARA: No. That's your cue for scene seven.

HANK: I'm real sorry. I won't let it happen again.

LARA: You better not, you dolt. I would fire you if I could, but there isn't anyone else strong enough to pick up Shelley.

SHELLEY: Hey!

LARA: I'm not calling you fat. I'm calling them weak. Your line, Hank.

HANK: Master?

EMMETT: Yes, my evil minion.

HANK: Arthur Lake awaits you at the crypt entrance.

EMMETT: What does *he* want?

HANK: He desires to duel with you to win the affections of your future bride.

SHELLEY: No!

EMMETT: Take her to the mausoleum.

(HANK picks SHELLEY up and starts to carry her off stage right.)

HANK: Yes, Master.

LARA: No, Hank. You're completely flat. How can I make you into an actor if you're too stupid to know what emotion is? And Emmett... you're still saying the lines, not feeling them. How will the audience ever believe you're a zombie if *you* don't believe you're a zombie?

(AMY enters left. SHE, too, carries a clipboard, but less enthusiastically.)

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EMMETT: But I'm not a zombie.

LARA: Of course not, but you have to believe it. Okay. Everyone can take a five minute break, but Emmett...

EMMETT: Yes.

LARA: I expect you to come back *(with a flourish)* a zombie.

(HANK, EMMETT, and SHELLEY exit left.)

AMY: You okay, Lara?

LARA: Peachy, other than having to deal with complete idiots. Speaking of which—have you seen Calvin?

AMY: Cal? No. Is he not here yet?

LARA: Of course not. Has he ever been here on time?

AMY: I... well... no.

LARA: No, that would be too much to expect from him. As soon as I gave him one of the leads, he started acting like a diva.

AMY: No.

LARA: He's always late. He's always trying to step in front of the other actors.

AMY: He doesn't do that at all, and I'm sure he has a very good reason for being late.

LARA: What would you know about it, Amy?

AMY: *(Ashamed)* Nothing.

LARA: Exactly. Call him for me.

AMY: I already did.

LARA: Try again. I'm going to go get a drink. When I get back, I expect everyone on stage. Cast and crew. *(LARA exits left.)*

AMY: *(To herself)* Call him for me. Go get them. You want me to do your laundry and wash your dog for you while I'm at it?

(CAL runs in from right.)

CAL: Hey, did I miss anything?

AMY: Only the first four scenes, Cal. Where have you been?

CAL: I had an English paper to finish. Where's Lara?

AMY: She went to get a drink.

CAL: Are things going that badly?

AMY: A drink of water. You better be careful. She's in a bad mood, and I wouldn't be surprised if she blames it on you.

CAL: Of course. Always me.

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(CAL sits on top of the coffin. AMY hesitantly joins him, making sure not to sit too close.)

AMY: You do seem to be her favorite scapegoat. Of course, you have been late every day this week.

CAL: It's that project in English. It's killing me.

AMY: What do you have to do?

CAL: We were supposed to write a paper illustrating a day in the life of whatever profession we told Mr. Sims we planned to go into. Of course I had to try to be funny and say that I plan to be a criminal.

AMY: Of course.

CAL: While everyone else in the class gets to shadow a nurse or a lawyer, I have to go to the county jail and talk to some of the inmates.

AMY: Is that safe?

CAL: Perfectly, but talking to all of them has got me seeing crime everywhere. I attacked some guy for trying to take an old lady's purse last week. Turns out it was her grandson, and she was handing it to him.

AMY: It was heroic of you to try, at least. I don't know what I would have done. *(Dreamily)* I'm not strong or brave like you.

(LARA enters from left. AMY jumps to attention.)

LARA: There you are, you sniveling coward. Too afraid to show up on time?

CAL: I can explain.

LARA: Amy, go back stage and tell the actors who decided to come to practice on time like responsible adults to get on stage.

AMY: He didn't mean...

LARA: Just go, Amy.

AMY: *(Sarcastically)* Yes, Ma'am.

(AMY exits left. LARA takes her seat beside CAL.)

LARA: What's your excuse today, Calvin?

CAL: My alarm clock broke.

LARA: That was your excuse yesterday.

CAL: I haven't bought a new one yet.

LARA: Cal!!!

CAL: And my car ran out of gas so I had to run the whole way here.

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LARA: If you weren't so cute, I'd have recast your part already. (*SHE kisses him on the cheek.*) Now, do me a favor and don't show up late again tomorrow.

CAL: I promise I won't. I promise.

LARA: You better not. (*SHE stands as ACTORS and CREW trickle in from stage left.*) You can't behave this way. There is no excuse for showing up half an hour late.

CAL: (*Playing along with her begrudgingly*) I'm sorry.

LARA: I'll not stand for it. I don't care if you're the lead, I can recast you.

CAL: Of course. (*HE falls to his knees sarcastically.*) I beg your forgiveness. I entreat you to grant me a pardon. Oh please. Oh, gracious director, exonerate me!

LARA: Get up, Cal. Get out of my face before I kick you out.

(*CAL joins the other ACTORS as THEY sit or stand stage left, leaving room for LARA to pace as SHE delivers her speech.*)

Is everyone here now, Amy?

(*AMY enters stage right and stands behind LARA.*)

AMY: I think so.

LARA: Alright, people. I don't want to be mean, but we only have six rehearsals left and we have got to get this down pat.

(*HANK raises his hand.*)

What?

HANK: Six rehearsals?

LARA: Yes, six rehearsals.

HANK: I thought we only had three.

LARA: We did, until I saw your miserable performance and scheduled an extra three. Now, I had to fight the school to let us perform this play. I had to organize everything from auditions to the set to the crew by myself. I had to take on the role of director, and all so that *Zombie Love* would be performed on Harrison High School's stage, and I will not allow it to be anything less than perfect. What I expect from you is that you will give me the best performance of your lives. Everyone understand?

ALL: (*Unenthusiastically*) Yes.

LARA: Amy—notes.

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AMY: We have just a few notes here. Katie?

KATIE: (*Quietly*) Here.

AMY: We're having trouble hearing you from the back row. Keep working on those projection exercises I showed you. Mike?

MIKE: Yeah.

AMY: We love your enthusiasm, but let's not stand in front of the principle actors any more.

MIKE: I didn't think you could see me.

LARA: We can see you just fine without you upstaging the rest of the cast.

AMY: Jamie? Dennis?

JAMIE / DENNIS: What's up?

AMY: You guys are doing a great job. We just need the stage a little darker in scene three and the music a little softer throughout.

LARA: We'd love to be able to actually hear our actors.

AMY: Hank?

LARA: Skip him; we don't have an hour to discuss *everything* he's doing wrong. (*To HANK*) I'll talk to you after practice.

AMY: Emmett and Shelley, that was great. It really was. And, Cal...

CAL: U-huh.

AMY: Lara wrote down that it would have been nice to have Arthur in the first half of the play... for once.

LARA: I know that an all-day rehearsal was the last thing you guys wanted this weekend, but we need to make this work. Give me enthusiasm. Now get backstage and get ready to give this school the greatest show it's ever seen. You've got half an hour.

(*EVERYONE exits left.*)

Diane?

DIANE: Here, Lara.

LARA: Do you have the rest of the costumes done yet?

DIANE: Not all of them.

LARA: What part of six rehearsals left don't you understand?

DIANE: I'm sewing as fast as I can. It might help if you had found someone to help me like you promised.

LARA: I'm having trouble finding enough people to run this show as it is. I can't get you anyone. You'll just have to make do. Now, get what costumes you do have on the actors. Maybe that'll get them in character. Make-up too. Amy!

(*LARA exits right. DIANE starts to exit left, but SHELLEY steps in front of her.*)

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DIANE: Shelley.

SHELLEY: Diane.

(DIANE tries to step around her, but SHELLEY blocks her. THEY continue this until DIANE grabs SHELLEY and spins with her, ending up on the other side. SHELLEY calls after her.)

I can't believe you had the gall to show up here.

DIANE: I have a job to do, Shelley. So do you, so maybe you should just go backstage and get your costume on.

SHELLEY: I loved him.

DIANE: Well, obviously he didn't feel the same way.

SHELLEY: I'll make you wish you never saw him.

DIANE: You really don't want to start this now, honey.

SHELLEY: Why not? What can you possibly do to me?

DIANE: You're right. I would have trouble kicking your butt when it's covered with all that body fat.

SHELLEY: Hey!

DIANE: I may have to call my boyfriend to come kick your butt for me.

SHELLEY: I'll tear your hair out strand by strand.

DIANE: He'll still like me better.

(HANK and CAL cross from stage right and step in between the two GIRLS.)

HANK: You ladies okay?

DIANE: Oh, I think everything's good here, Hank.

HANK: It doesn't look okay.

CAL: The last thing we need right now is you two starting a fight.

SHELLEY: Because the costumer would find her skinny butt in the hospital?

HANK: Because Lara would kill you both.

CAL: Speaking of which, you might want to get backstage before she sees you. I just saw her hit Jamie over the head with that clipboard of hers for not being in costume yet.

SHELLEY: But Jamie's the light tech.

CAL: I didn't say it made sense. It's just what I saw.

SHELLEY: I don't know how you date her. She's a giant ball of crazy.

DIANE: It's almost as weird as Jason ever wanting to date a simpleton like you.

HANK: Ladies! Backstage. Both of you.

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(SHELLEY and DIANE exit left.)

CAL: Do you have any idea what that was about?

HANK: They're girls. It could be anything. Maybe Shelley stole Diane's lipstick.

CAL: Or had the audacity to buy the same shoes.

HANK: Or wore her hair the same way.

CAL: Or looked at the boy she liked.

HANK: Girls are a strange breed of creature, aren't they?

CAL: That they are, my friend. That they are.

(CAL and HANK exit left. LARA enters from right followed by AMY.)

LARA: Amy! Amy, where are you?

AMY: Right here.

LARA: Oh. Has George shown up yet?

AMY: Someone else didn't show?

LARA: Not just him, either. Mrs. Duncan said she was going to send a few of her students to be extras.

AMY: She said that?

LARA: She told me she'd ask for volunteers.

AMY: I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for them, then.

LARA: What about George? Have you seen him?

AMY: Who's George?

LARA: Hank's cousin. He said he'd help with the crew. Hopefully he's smarter than his cousin. I don't think I could handle another idiot right now.

AMY: *(Checks her clipboard)* I don't see any George on my list.

LARA: *(Grabs her by the shoulders and shakes her)* I need you to be on top of things, Amy. Go ask Hank if George is going to be here tonight.

(AMY exits right. LARA moves set pieces or looks around taking notes. KATIE enters left.)

KATIE: *(Very quietly)* Um... Lara? *(Slightly louder)* Lara?

LARA: *(Forcefully)* What?

(KATIE jumps back.)

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KATIE: I have a slight problem with my costume.

LARA: What part of it?

KATIE: The skirt.

LARA: It looks fine to me.

KATIE: This is my skirt. *(SHE pulls a ridiculous mess of a costume from behind her back.)* This is what Diane told me to wear.

LARA: Oh my! Is there anything she can do to make it less... hideous?

KATIE: I asked her, but she said she that what with all the other costumes she has to finish and her need to sleep once every couple of weeks she just doesn't have time.

LARA: Why don't you just wear the one you have on.

KATIE: She said it isn't right for the part.

LARA: And that clown castoff is?

KATIE: She said it was an expression of her artistic ability.

LARA: She told me when I asked her to be costumer that she had years of experience. Now I wonder if those years were spent sewing costumes for a circus.

KATIE: Oh.

LARA: Just wear the skirt you have on for now and I'll get things straightened out with Diane.

(KATIE exits left. LARA goes back to moving set pieces. FRANKIE runs in from right out of breath and carrying a large bag. HE doesn't notice LARA, but looks around for somewhere to run. SHE turns around to talk to him and HE throws the bag behind the fake bush.)

LARA: George?

FRANKIE: *(Puzzled)* Huh?

LARA: Are you George? Hank's cousin, George?

FRANKIE: Yeah, Hank's cousin, George.

LARA: You're late.

FRANKIE: I am?

LARA: Yes. Didn't Hank tell you when practice started?

FRANKIE: Hank who?

LARA: Your cousin Hank.

FRANKIE: Oh, yeah. Right. No—he must have forgotten.

LARA: That's just like him, the idiot.

FRANKIE: And who are you?

LARA: I'm Lara. I'm the director. *(Sarcastically)* It is my greatest pleasure to meet you. I need you to get started right away.

FRANKIE: Wow. Director, like a movie?

LARA: No... a play. Didn't Hank tell you anything?

FRANKIE: Yeah, right. A play.

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LARA: We've got a lot of work to do, so why don't you go backstage and find Amy. She'll tell you what to do.

FRANKIE: Amy?

LARA: The assistant director. She's backstage.

(FRANKIE looks around confusedly.)

FRANKIE: Backstage?

LARA: *(Exasperated)* You're definitely Hank's cousin. Just come with me.

(THEY exit left. AMY enters right. SHE goes to move the bush, and finds the bag instead.)

AMY: I keep telling them to put the props on the prop table, but do they listen? Of course not.

(AMY exits left. EMMETT and KATIE walk in left.)

EMMETT: So you see, Katie, you have to open your mouth very wide for the sound to travel.

KATIE: U-huh.

EMMETT: And you have to be aware of your diaphragm. Are you aware of your diaphragm?

KATIE: I guess.

EMMETT: You can't guess. You have to know. Do you know?

KATIE: I... uh.

EMMETT: What's your first line?

KATIE: I want your brains.

EMMETT: Okay, say it now like you're going to say it opening night.

KATIE: *(Louder and cheesier)* I want to eat your brains.

EMMETT: Did you feel that in your diaphragm?

KATIE: No.

EMMETT: Try again. This time lift up your chest. Take a deep breath.

Open your mouth. Put your thumb just above your belly button, and feel your diaphragm move.

KATIE: *(Following his directions)* I want to...

EMMETT: Open your jaws wider.

KATIE: I want...

EMMETT: Slower. Feel that diaphragm!

KATIE: I...

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EMMETT: Chest out. Chest out.

KATIE: (*Loudly and forcefully*) I want to kill you.

EMMETT: Well, that wasn't quite your line, but much better.

(EMMETT and KATIE exit right. CAL enters left carrying an eyeliner pencil. AMY enters right.)

AMY: You should be getting into costume.

CAL: I was actually wondering if you might help me with my make-up. I've never been any good with eyeliner.

AMY: I'm shocked.

CAL: Really?

AMY: (*Teasing*) You wear it all the time. I'd think you'd be pretty good at applying it by now.

CAL: You'd think, but I secretly get help from my mom.

AMY: Oh.

CAL: Yes. She has a very steady hand.

AMY: Very. You'll have to give her my compliments.

CAL: I will.

AMY: Maybe she can teach me her tricks sometime.

CAL: She teaches a class on Mondays at the Senior Center–Eyeliner 101.

AMY: Has she ever considered working in Hollywood? Make-up artists can make good money out there.

CAL: She thought about it for a while, but alas—her talent stops at eyeliner. With any other make-up she's useless.

AMY: Poor woman.

CAL: Since she's not here...

(HE holds out the pencil. SHE reluctantly takes it.)

AMY: I fear I'll be a poor substitute. I don't wear make-up often myself. I can't stand the way it feels.

CAL: You don't need to. You're pretty enough without it.

(Things become awkward for a moment, and THEY look away from each other. HE sits on the coffin.)

AMY: Was Diane not backstage? She usually does this for people. (*SHE goes to him and begins to apply the eyeliner.*)

CAL: She wasn't in either of the dressing rooms. I didn't want to bother her with this, anyway. It's just eyeliner, and she has so much to do.

AMY: But it's okay to bother me because I'm not at all busy.

CAL: That's not what I meant at all. It's just that she can get a little... volatile.

AMY: You should be well acquainted with that.

CAL: Are you referring to my sweet tempered lady?

AMY: No. I'm talking about the fire-breathing dragon you're dating.

CAL: Do you really think she's that bad?

AMY: Public humiliation of one's boyfriend isn't usually the mark of a nice person.

CAL: She had to say those things. She doesn't want people to think she's going to treat me any differently because we're dating. She's worried that they won't respect her.

AMY: There are better ways to earn respect than to constantly ridicule everyone. She could try being likable.

CAL: Where's the fun in that?

AMY: It's only people like Hitler who have fun torturing their friends like she does.

CAL: At least she doesn't have his moustache.

AMY: Would you still like her if she did?

CAL: I would have to put some serious thought into it.

AMY: There. All done.

(SHE hands him the pencil. HE stands, batting his eyelashes.)

CAL: Am I pretty now?

AMY: Very. Now get into costume before your girlfriend the harpy sees you.

(CAL runs off left. AMY looks after him wistfully then exits right. HANK and DIANE enter right.)

HANK: I'm not going to wear tights.

DIANE: Why not?

HANK: Maybe you haven't noticed, but I'm a guy.

DIANE: Men can wear tights. Robin Hood wore tights.

HANK: I'm not Robin Hood. I'm a zombie. Zombies don't wear tights.

DIANE: Sure they do.

HANK: Name one movie where zombies wear tights.

DIANE: Well... there's... I don't know. It's not like movies are definitive anyway. Real zombies might wear tights.

HANK: There are no real zombies, Diane. They're mythical creatures.

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DIANE: You don't know that.

HANK: Are unicorns and leprechauns real?

DIANE: It's never been proven that they aren't.

HANK: I don't feel comfortable wearing tights.

DIANE: Is it because you have big thighs?

HANK: No. It's because I'm a man.

DIANE: Because fat thighs are nothing to be ashamed of. You need to be proud of your body.

HANK: I'm not wearing tights!

(HANK and DIANE exit left. LARA and KATIE enter right. KATIE is now dressed in a ridiculous zombie costume.)

LARA: No. Tell her more rhinestones would not make it look any better.

KATIE: I don't think she's going to listen.

LARA: Make her listen.

KATIE: But...

LARA: Go!

(KATIE exits left. AMY enters left.)

LARA: How are things backstage?

AMY: Everything's running pretty smoothly. I think most everyone's in costume now. I've been helping out with the make-up.

LARA: What about Jamie and Dennis? Have you talked to them about the cue change in scene three?

AMY: I caught them up on everything we talked about.

LARA: Good. Do you think the coffin should be a little farther stage right?

AMY: I don't think there's any reason to move it.

LARA: Let's go ahead and see how it looks just a few inches farther.

(AMY waits for her to help, but LARA motions her to move it. AMY struggles to push it. LARA watches as SHE speaks.)

I was worried about you.

AMY: Huh?

LARA: I was worried that you weren't going to be able to keep up with all of this. I really had my doubts at the beginning, but you're starting to shape up.

AMY: *(Sarcastically)* Thanks.

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LARA: I needed someone who could take care of all of this trivial business for me. I have many more important things to do.

AMY: Of course you do.

LARA: It could have been anyone of course. A monkey could have done it, but I'm glad I picked you. You're so good at following directions.

AMY: (*Angrily*) Thanks.

LARA: How do you think Cal's doing?

AMY: What?

LARA: He's not a very good actor, is he?

(*AMY stops pushing.*)

AMY: I think he's doing a great job, especially since he's never acted before.

LARA: You know, you were right. It looked better where it was.

(*AMY pushes it back.*)

I didn't just give him the part because we were dating. Good heavens, no. I'd actually rather see less of him. If I hadn't needed another male actor, this relationship might have lasted a little longer.

AMY: What are you talking about?

LARA: I'm bored with him. He's not the most exciting man in the world, and he's always so cheerful. That really gets on my nerves.

AMY: Does he know about this?

LARA: Of course not. I'm going to wait until after the play finishes to tell him. I wouldn't want him to quit, would I? Where would I get another actor now?

AMY: You have no problem with just stringing him along like that?

LARA: No. Why don't you go tell Hank that I've decided to go ahead and cut the rest of his lines from the first act. If he can't get rid of that ridiculous accent I'll just have to give the rest of his lines to Mike. I don't want any of my characters sounding like imbeciles.

(*AMY exits right. CAL enters right. HE is now wearing a letterman's jacket with a plaid pirate on the back.*)

CAL: What do you think?

LARA: You look wonderful, darling. Very handsome.

CAL: You want to catch a movie after practice tonight? I'm in a generous mood, so we can go see a totally girly one. Lots of kissing and Johnny Depp.

LARA: Oh. I'd love to, but I've just got so much homework.

Zombie Love – Page 18

CAL: You want me to come over and help?

LARA: That's probably not a great idea either. It'll be late, and you know how my parents are.

CAL: I do. *(HE kisses her on the cheek.)* Next weekend then. It'll be my treat. *(HE runs off right.)*

LARA: What did I ever see in him?

(LARA exits left. JAMIE, DENNIS, and MIKE enter left. MIKE is now in costume.)

DENNIS: Of course they'll work. I got the cables from Jack. He's the best.

JAMIE: You have to hook them up correctly or they'll just short.

DENNIS: I saw it in *Make Magazine*. It said I can't mess this up.

MIKE: You guys have totally lost me. What are we talking about?

DENNIS: The special effects.

JAMIE: You know, the explosions and the gunshots.

DENNIS: Of course there won't really be any fire.

JAMIE: Of course not. We just need to hook my laptop to a converter and...

MIKE: Don't go all nerd on me, now.

DENNIS: It'll be awesome!

JAMIE: It's going to rock!

(THEY high five.)

MIKE: Why am I friends with you two? You totally bring down my cool points.

JAMIE: Like you're much better with all your talk of scrim.

DENNIS: And soliloquies.

JAMIE: And upstage.

DENNIS: And downstage.

JAMIE: And stage left.

MIKE: I get it. I'm a nerd, too. You don't have to let everyone else know.

JAMIE: Like it's some big secret.

DENNIS: We're not the ones who go around spouting Shakespeare.

JAMIE: Or trying to stage kiss girls.

MIKE: She wanted to know how. Besides, that's more action than either of you get.

JAMIE: Hey, I had a really hot date last week. A tall, handsome man took me to a tavern and then we went orc hunting.

MIKE: Online gaming doesn't count.

DENNIS: What about cyber dates?

MIKE: They don't count either.

Zombie Love – Page 19

DENNIS: Why not? I totally chatted with a girl for like an hour last night.

MIKE: Can you be sure she was a girl?

DENNIS: She said she was.

MIKE: It doesn't count. We need to find some girls.

JAMIE: Hey!

MIKE: And guys, I guess.

JAMIE: Thanks.

DENNIS: When are we going to find time to go looking for girls?

JAMIE: Ahem.

DENNIS: And guys. We're stuck here, thanks to you.

JAMIE: We wouldn't have signed up for this on our own, you know.

DENNIS: It's severely cutting into our online role-playing game time.

JAMIE: I haven't gained a new level in a week!

MIKE: Come on. You guys are the only ones in the school who could figure this stuff out. Of course, I asked you.

DENNIS: You didn't exactly ask us.

JAMIE: It was more like blackmailing us.

DENNIS: And we would never have agreed had we known that we would have practice every night.

JAMIE: Once on Saturday.

DENNIS: Twice every Sunday.

JAMIE: And special rehearsals on holidays.

MIKE: Don't get touchy. I've kept my end of the deal, haven't I?

DENNIS: Have you?

MIKE: Of course. I haven't told anyone how you two...

(LARA enters right, interrupting him.)

LARA: Where are you guys going?

DENNIS: We're just going across the street for a soda.

JAMIE: Seriously, take a chill pill.

LARA: I need you guys in the booth when we start. We can't do this play without lights and sound.

JAMIE: We'll be back.

DENNIS: No worries.

(JAMIE and DENNIS exit right.)

MIKE: *(Calling after them)* Grab me a root beer, guys.

LARA: I told you it was okay to go.

MIKE: I actually had something to ask you.

LARA: What?

Zombie Love – Page 20

MIKE: Well, I've been thinking. Zombie #4 is a really deep character, you know. He's complex. He has an agenda. I don't think that's really reflected in his lines.

LARA: He doesn't have lines.

MIKE: That's what I'm talking about. How's the audience going to get inside his head if he never talks.

LARA: They're not going to. You're an extra, Mike. No one cares about Zombie #4.

MIKE: I really think you're wrong there. I think that we can add some depth to the story. You know, he could love Madeline, too. It could be kind of a love rhombus.

LARA: I think a triangle is complex enough.

MIKE: But he could have a monologue in the third act. I've already got it written up. You want to see it?

LARA: Go get dressed, Mike.

MIKE: It's not a really long monologue. It's only about forty or fifty lines long—twenty minutes top. It's all about how he feels repressed by the standards of society. He'd love nothing more than to get a nine-to-five job and settle down with the little zombie wife.

LARA: Go get dressed, Mike!

(MIKE exits left. AMY enters left.)

LARA: You want more lines, too?

AMY: No.

LARA: What do you want? It better not be to tell me something else is wrong, because I don't think I could handle that right now.

AMY: You might want to sit down.

(LARA sits on the coffin.)

It's Shelley.

LARA: What about Shelley?

AMY: She quit.

(LARA stands forcefully, knocking over the coffin.)

LARA: What?

AMY: *(Righting the coffin)* She said Diane took her necklace.

LARA: Her necklace?

Zombie Love – Page 21

AMY: The one her mom gave her. She's worn it every day for the last three years—never takes it off. Well, Diane said it wasn't right for the show and she made Shelley remove it. Shelley went to the bathroom and when she got back the necklace was gone.

LARA: And she said Diane took it.

AMY: Actually, she said—*she stole it like she stole my boyfriend the dirty rotten...*

LARA: I get the picture. Is she still here?

AMY: I don't know. She was two minutes ago.

LARA: I'm going to go try to calm her down. You stay here.

(LARA runs out right. CAL runs in left.)

CAL: Is George around?

AMY: Hank's cousin?

CAL: Yes. Is he here?

AMY: I think he's backstage somewhere.

CAL: Okay, we've got to talk.

(HE leads her to the coffin and THEY sit.)

AMY: What's wrong?

CAL: There's something weird about him.

AMY: George?

CAL: Yes, George.

AMY: What's going on?

CAL: There's something wrong with him. He's... shifty.

AMY: Shifty?

CAL: Yeah. I don't think he's really Hank's cousin. They passed each other in the hall, and they didn't say hi, or smile, or anything.

AMY: So?

CAL: So, if you saw your cousin you wouldn't say hi?

AMY: Sure, but that doesn't mean anything.

CAL: It's more than that. He keeps looking around—opening cabinets and going through the broom closets. He's looking for something.

AMY: Like what?

CAL: Like something to steal.

AMY: Whoa. You can't go accusing people like that. This is your English project talking.

CAL: No. It's not. He's up to something.

AMY: You need to calm down and think about this. Do you really believe...

CAL: *(Cuts her off)* There he is. Hide!

Zombie Love – Page 22

(CAL and AMY duck behind the coffin as FRANKIE enters right talking on a cell phone.)

FRANKIE: No, Alex. I lost the bag... Yes the bag with the jewels. It's in here somewhere... What else was I supposed to do? The cops were right behind me... Don't worry. They think I'm this guy Hank's cousin... Yeah, I know. It's a good thing I've got this baby face... You better get here quick. I don't think I can carry on this charade much longer... I can't just leave. The cops could be out there right now. You'll have to sneak me out... Okay, Alex. Bye.

(FRANKIE looks around, and then exits left. CAL and AMY come out from behind the coffin.)

AMY: You were right.

CAL: I was right.

AMY: What are we going to do?

CAL: I don't know.

AMY: Well, we've got to call the cops.

CAL: Yeah. But what if we don't?

AMY: What?

CAL: We'll call them, just not yet.

AMY: Why not?

CAL: Just think about it. If we call them now, that Alex person will see them outside and get away. If we wait...

AMY: We can catch Alex, too.

CAL: We'll be heroes, and I'll get an A on my paper.

AMY: What's our plan?

CAL: We wait until Alex shows, and we tie him up.

AMY: Alex doesn't have to be a guy's name.

CAL: No, I guess it doesn't. We're going to have to keep our eyes open for anyone suspicious.

AMY: What are we going to do about the fake-George?

CAL: Leave him alone for now. If Alex calls back and he doesn't answer he... or she... will know something's wrong.

AMY: So, we're just going to let him roam around here?

CAL: We have to.

AMY: What if he hurts someone?

CAL: He's a thief. It's more likely that he'll take something.

AMY: What if he already has? Shelley's necklace! She thought Diane took it, but what if fake-George did?

Zombie Love – Page 23

CAL: That's possible. Hopefully we can catch him before he takes anything else.

AMY: We're going to need help.

CAL: Okay. You go tell Hank, and I'll talk to Jamie and Dennis.

AMY: Shouldn't we tell Lara?

CAL: No. There's no need to worry her over this. She's got enough on her plate with this show.

AMY: I don't know why you stick up for her. She treats you like dirt.

CAL: She's just stressed.

AMY: Because she's so much nicer usually.

CAL: I'm going to go find Jamie.

AMY: Maybe you should.

(CAL exits right, looking back at AMY as HE goes.)

(To herself) You might not stick up for her so readily if you knew what I know.

(HANK enters right.)

HANK: Hey, Amy. Have you seen George?

AMY: Which one?

HANK: Huh?

AMY: Your cousin George, or the man pretending to be your cousin George.

HANK: My cousin. Who are you talking about?

AMY: That new techie. He told Lara he was your cousin.

HANK: That shifty guy? I'm not related to him.

AMY: Of course not. He's some kind of jewel thief. Cal and I heard him talking to his partner. He... or she is on his or her way here right now.

HANK: Now?

AMY: I need your help. You've got to be on the lookout for anyone suspicious.

HANK: What am I supposed to do if I see him?

AMY: Or her.

HANK: Or her.

AMY: I don't know. Just hit him.

HANK: Or her.

AMY: Or her over the head with something big... and heavy.

HANK: Then what?

AMY: Throw him... or her... into the closet beside the girl's bathroom. Then we'll call the cops and they'll come and take them both away.

HANK: Should I tell anyone else?

AMY: No. We don't want to complicate things.

Zombie Love – Page 24

HANK: I need to go get dressed.

AMY: Yeah. Act like nothing's wrong. I need to find Lara.

(HANK and AMY exit right. KATIE and EMMETT enter right.)

EMMETT: Of course, I couldn't accept a part that small. Once you become a star, you can't go back. You wouldn't know about that yet.

KATIE: No.

EMMETT: You have to push your way into the world of theatre. You can't play it safe. You have to fight your way to the top.

KATIE: Yup.

EMMETT: You have to want it more than anything. Do you want it more than anything?

KATIE: Sure.

EMMETT: No. Be confident. You have to live theatre. You have to breathe theatre. You have to love it more than you love your own mother.

KATIE: Really?

EMMETT: Yes! Now tell me, do you love theatre more than anything?

KATIE: *(Meekly)* Yes.

EMMETT: Louder.

KATIE: *(Louder.)* Yes.

EMMETT: Really make me feel it.

KATIE: *(Aggravated)* Yes.

EMMETT: Do you feel it in your diaphragm?

(KATIE storms off left. EMMETT follows. MIKE, JAMIE and DENNIS enter left.)

MIKE: And so I told her that Zombie #4 doesn't have to be such a shallow character. You know what she said?

DENNIS: She told you to go get dressed.

MIKE: How'd you know?

JAMIE: You've told us already.

DENNIS: Eight times.

MIKE: Well, it's important.

(CAL enters left.)

CAL: Dennis, Jamie. I've been looking for you.

MIKE: Not me?

CAL: No. Can you give me a minute with them?

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MIKE: I can't be part of whatever this is?

CAL: No.

MIKE: Is it because I'm only Zombie #4? Because he's actually a pretty deep character.

CAL: Fine. Whatever. There's something going on here.

MIKE: Yeah, Lara won't give me any lines.

CAL: Shut up for a minute. That guy, George.

JAMIE: That shifty new techie?

CAL: Yeah. Well, he's more shifty than you think.

(CAL leads them off right. LARA and SHELLEY enter right.)

LARA: You can't leave me. I need you.

SHELLEY: You'll just have to find someone else.

LARA: I can't find someone else. You're the only person in the school who knows how to act.

SHELLEY: If you want me to stay, you'll have to fire her.

LARA: I can't. I only have two weeks left, and I can't send my actors out naked.

SHELLEY: I see where your priorities lie.

LARA: It's just a necklace. I'll buy you a new one. I'll buy you two.

SHELLEY: My mother gave me that necklace.

LARA: She can buy you a new one.

SHELLEY: My mother is dead.

LARA: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Please don't go.

SHELLEY: This just isn't working for me. I need to find someplace where I can develop my talents without harassment from that boyfriend-stealing...

(LARA and SHELLEY exit left. OFFICER JOHNSON enters right talking on a walkie-talkie.)

JOHNSON: I followed the suspect to Harrison High School, but I have been unable to apprehend him. I'm in the theatre now. I don't see anyone, but it appears that there is a rehearsal in progress.

(The lights go out.)

Something's going on here.

Zombie Love – Page 26

(Spotlight on Johnson.)

Is someone there? Hello?

(Creepy music and strange sounds are played.)

I need back up—immediately.

(MIKE enters right carrying a large book. HE is fully in costume now, and walking like a zombie. JOHNSON turns to see him and screams. MIKE hits her over the head with the book. SHE falls, and HE drags her off left after signaling to the tech booth. The lights come up and the music stops. AMY enters right.)

AMY: Lara. Lara!

(LARA enters right.)

LARA: I'm so glad I found you. I need you to take over for Shelley.

AMY: What!

LARA: I couldn't convince her to come back. I need you to play Madeline.

AMY: I can't do that.

LARA: Why not?

AMY: I can't act.

LARA: Sure you can. I'm sure once we get you onstage it'll just come naturally.

AMY: I get stage fright.

LARA: Get over it. I don't have time for your whining. I'm down an actress, and I need another. You fit the bill. Now get backstage and get dressed!

AMY: I can't do this.

LARA: You're going to have to. This show *will* be perfect.

(LARA drags AMY off left. GEORGE enters right.)

GEORGE: Lara? Lara Fields? Hank? Is anyone here?

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(HANK enters right, walks up to GEORGE and hits him on the top of his head. GEORGE falls. HANK catches him, throws him over his shoulder, and carries him off right. MIKE, DENNIS, and JAMIE enter left.)

DENNIS: We are in so much trouble.

MIKE: Why? We just apprehended a criminal.

JAMIE: But she's a cop!

MIKE: She's not a cop. She's just dressed like one so that she can sneak in here.

DENNIS: Are you sure?

MIKE: Definitely. Did you see her badge? Gina Johnson is a fake name if I've ever heard one.

DENNIS: Where'd you put her?

JAMIE: You didn't leave her where someone might stumble over her, did you?

MIKE: Oh, no. You don't think anyone's going to go into the men's room, do you?

JAMIE: Let's go find Cal and let him worry about that.
(THEY exit left. DIANE and KATIE enter left.)

DIANE: What's wrong with the skirt? Do you not like it?

KATIE: No. I love it, but Lara said she didn't like it.

DIANE: What does she know about costumes?

KATIE: I don't... Lara said that she doesn't think Zombie's would wear rhinestones.

DIANE: Of course they would. People are buried in their dressiest clothes.

KATIE: She said it looks like a clown costume.

DIANE: I'll show her a clown costume!

(KATIE follows DIANE off right. CAL enters left dragging JOHNSON. HE looks around, and then throws her in the coffin. AMY enters right.)

AMY: Call

CAL: Amy. I've got great news.

AMY: Me, too!

(AMY drags GEORGE in as CAL pulls JOHNSON half out of the coffin. THEY look at each other, look at the bodies, and the lights go down.)

END ACT I

Do Not Copy

ACT II

(Lights up. CAL and AMY are sitting on the coffin. JOHNSON and GEORGE are lying on the ground in front of them.)

CAL: There was only supposed to be one, right?

AMY: I think so.

CAL: We've got two.

AMY: I can see that.

CAL: So, which one is Alex?

AMY: Surely it's not the lady in the uniform.

CAL: Did you look at that badge? Gina Johnson is totally a fake name.

AMY: *(Indicating GEORGE)* You think it's him?

CAL: He's got a pretty dishonest look to him.

AMY: He can't be older than seventeen.

CAL: There aren't young criminals?

AMY: We'll just have to wait until they come around and ask them.

CAL: Oh, yeah. One of them is going to wake up and say—*Hey, I'm Alex and I'm a criminal.*

AMY: They might. They'll be all groggy and disoriented.

CAL: How do you know that?

AMY: I watch a lot of cop dramas on TV.

CAL: You can't believe everything you see on TV, Amy.

AMY: Do you have a better idea?

CAL: No. I guess not. What do we do with them until they wake up?

AMY: *(Gesturing to the coffin)* We can't fit them both in here, can we?

CAL: *(Gesturing to JOHNSON)* No, but we can stuff her back into it.

(THEY clumsily put JOHNSON back into the coffin.)

AMY: You think she'll have enough air in there?

CAL: Hank built it, so I'm guessing that there are plenty of holes.

(THEY close the coffin.)

AMY: And the other one?

CAL: Broom closet?

AMY: Alright.

(CAL and AMY each grab one of GEORGE's hands and drag him off left. DIANE and HANK enter right.)

HANK: First you want me to wear tights. Now a skirt!

DIANE: Not a skirt—a kilt.

HANK: What's the difference?

DIANE: Skirts are pretty, flirty pieces of clothing worn by girls. Kilts are carefully pleated, and very comfortable, alternatives to pants for men.

HANK: I'm not Scottish.

DIANE: Your character might be.

HANK: He doesn't have a Scottish accent.

DIANE: He could, though. We should really be thinking about how we can add cultural depth to this play.

HANK: Not with a kilt!

DIANE: Why not?

HANK: I'm a guy.

DIANE: You keep saying that as if I'm not aware of the fact.

HANK: Sometimes I'm not sure. No kilts.

DIANE: They're so manly, though.

HANK: Sure.

DIANE: Really. Scottish warriors used to wear them in combat.

HANK: With matching purses and lacy socks?

DIANE: No, with sporrans and dirks.

HANK: No kilts!

DIANE: If this is about your big thighs, I'll totally make it long enough to completely hide them. No worries.

HANK: NO KILTS!

(HANK and DIANE exit right. OFFICERS BLACK and CARSON enter left.)

BLACK: Johnson? You there, Johnson?

CARSON: I don't see her. Are you sure this is the right high school?

BLACK: She said Harrison High. This is Harrison High.

CARSON: You may have heard her wrong. It wouldn't be the first time.

BLACK: You aren't bringing that up again.

CARSON: We were supposed to go to the Taco-Mart to help apprehend an armed robber, but we ended up rushing, guns drawn, into a Burger Palace, probably scarring for life the eighteen attendees of that four-year-old's birthday party.

BLACK: We did get a pretty great sandwich, though.

CARSON: We're going to have to split up. I'll take backstage. You take the hallways.

(LARA enters right.)

LARA: Are you two here for the play?

CARSON: Yeah.

BLACK: What?

CARSON: *(To BLACK)* We're here for the play.

BLACK: Oh, yes. The play.

LARA: When I told Mrs. Duncan to send students to be extras, I thought I specified zombies. There aren't any cops in this play. Where'd you get those costumes, anyway? I hope you didn't pay much for them. They're not realistic at all.

BLACK: Hey!

LARA: We can use you in the eighth scene. You'll be attacking Arthur. Do you have any combat experience?

BLACK: Well, I chased down a guy and grappled with him to get a gun out of his hands.

LARA: What play was that?

CARSON: Uh... *Antigone*.

LARA: Really?

CARSON: It was a modern interpretation.

LARA: Come with me. We'll try to find you some costumes, and Katie and Mike can fill you in on what you're supposed to do.

(LARA guides them off stage left. JAMIE and DENNIS enter right.)

JAMIE: Dark elves are totally better. They have a much broader range of spells.

DENNIS: But elves are more powerful with the spells they have.

JAMIE: Only if you take the time to level them up. At lower levels dark elves clearly have an advantage.

DENNIS: I'll give you that, but if you aren't going to take the time to level up your characters, you might as well not even play.

(MIKE enters left.)

MIKE: Guys—I just saw Lara. We're going to start soon.

JAMIE: Soon is relative, Mike.

DENNIS: Is it five minutes soon or half an hour soon?

MIKE: She didn't specify.

JAMIE: If she's not going to be specific, there's no need to rush.

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DENNIS: We have plenty of time to just lay around drinking juice boxes and discussing elves.

MIKE: You may want to rethink that.

DENNIS: Why?

MIKE: You don't want to make her mad right now.

JAMIE: What will she do—fire us?

DENNIS: It would be a blessing.

MIKE: If you hate this so much, why don't you just quit?

DENNIS: Integrity.

JAMIE: That horrible virtue instilled upon us by our parents at a young age.

DENNIS: They had good intentions, but if they had known it would lead to this, they may have rethought it.

JAMIE: It'll also look good on our resume.

DENNIS: Because beating the last level of *Armageddon IV* just isn't enough for most colleges.

JAMIE: So we'll just have to go on hoping she fires us.

DENNIS: Not that she'd ever do that.

JAMIE: We're too valuable.

DENNIS: She wouldn't be able to find anyone to replace us.

JAMIE: Even if there was anyone else that could do it, they wouldn't help her out.

DENNIS: Not with the way she's been treating people.

JAMIE: Half the cast would have quit already if she hadn't made them sign a contract in blood.

DENNIS: It was a smart move, I'll give her that.

MIKE: You two have a strange sense of humor.

JAMIE / DENNIS: Thank you.

MIKE: Now get out of here.

DENNIS: Banished to the light booth again.

JAMIE: It's a good thing we have our computers up there.

DENNIS: We can totally beat another demon while we wait.

(THEY high five.)

MIKE: You guys are such dorks!

DENNIS: Because you're so cool.

(THEY exit right. FRANKIE enters right and looks behind the tree. When HE sees that the bag is no longer there, HE looks surprised, and then angry. CAL and AMY walk in left. Confident that THEY have captured his accomplice, THEY decide to have a little fun with him.)

Zombie Love – Page 33

CAL: Looking for something, “George?”

FRANKIE: Yeah. I dropped my contact.

AMY: Well, that’s a shame, “George.”

CAL: It’s practically a national emergency.

AMY: Maybe we should call the police.

CAL: For a matter of such great importance, they’d head straight over.

AMY: I’m sure they’d be more than willing to arrest... I mean assist you, “George.”

FRANKIE: Are you two trying to imply something?

AMY: Of course not. We were only trying to be funny.

CAL: He’s got no sense of humor.

AMY: None at all.

(CAL and AMY exit right. FRANKIE looks around the stage a bit more and follows them. EMMETT and KATIE enter left.)

EMMETT: Do you want to talk about the next scene? I think I might be able to help you find inspiration.

KATIE: I don’t know.

EMMETT: Of course you do. In this scene you need to show anger. You need to feel betrayed at the death of your fabulously handsome leader, who you’re probably secretly in love with. And you need to focus that anger when you attack Arthur.

KATIE: Okay.

EMMETT: Now, what makes you angry?

KATIE: Well, not much. I like to think I’m a pretty calm person.

EMMETT: Surely there’s something that riles you up.

KATIE: I don’t know.

EMMETT: You have to know. You have to find the emotion inside of you, or you won’t be able to convey that emotion to the audience.

KATIE: *(Angrily)* It makes me angry when people are always telling me what to do.

EMMETT: Perfect! I think you’re really starting to get in touch with your inner actress.

(LARA enters right.)

LARA: Good. You guys are here already. *(Yelling offstage)* Everyone get out here now!

Zombie Love – Page 34

(ACTORS and CREW enter from right and left. ACTORS are dressed in costume now. AMY wears a uniform several sizes too large for her.)

We're going to go ahead and start with scene seven. Amy—you may use your script tonight, but I want you off book tomorrow. Everyone, give it great emotion here. George? George?

FRANKIE: Oh, yeah.

LARA: Since Amy is taking over for Shelley. You're going to have to take over for her.

FRANKIE: What do I do?

LARA: I'll tell you as we go. It's really very simple. Go ahead and stand by the smoke machine. It's just off stage right.

(FRANKIE walks stage left.)

Stage right, George.

FRANKIE: Yeah... stage right. *(FRANKIE exits right.)*

LARA: Places, people.

(HANK, EMMETT, and AMY exit left. MIKE and KATIE move upstage, behind the coffin. CARSON and BLACK, looking confused, follow.)

Hey, you. Zombie #3.

BLACK: Me?

LARA: Yes, you.

MIKE: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Why aren't I Zombie #3?

LARA: What are you talking about, Mike?

MIKE: I was here first; I should be Zombie #3.

LARA: Why is that important?

MIKE: Because #3 will come before #4 in the program.

LARA: I need you to be Zombie #4, Mike.

MIKE: I don't want to be #4.

LARA: Zombie #4 is clearly the better part.

MIKE: How so?

LARA: You said it yourself—Zombie #4 is deep. He's complex.

MIKE: I could make Zombie #3 complex, too.

LARA: If you shut up, I'll give you a line.

MIKE: I want ten lines.

LARA: One line.

MIKE: Five lines.

LARA: One line.

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MIKE: One really long line?

LARA: One very short line.

MIKE: Deal.

LARA: Now, Zombie #3, you need to be offstage left. I assume you know *your* line.

BLACK: I...

LARA: *(Pointing stage left)* Offstage.

(BLACK exits left. LARA walks down the steps to the floor. SHE stands writing notes on her clipboard while watching the scene.)

Lights up.

(EMMETT shuffles in, followed by HANK who is carrying AMY. HE lays her on the coffin and acts as if HE is tying her up.)

EMMETT: Yes. Make the knots strong. My love is a feisty creature, and I don't want her fleeing.

(HANK joins the other zombies upstage.)

My darling Madeline. I did not want us to come to this. I never wanted to force my love upon you, but I would die without you.

AMY: *(Reading from a script, AMY is a very bad actress with little emotion. SHE is obviously nervous.)* But you're already dead, Gerard.

EMMETT: No. I am undead.

AMY: If you love me, you'll let me go.

EMMETT: It's because of my love that I can't. Picture it, Darling. We'll be here, together, forever. I'll take care of you.

AMY: You can't take care of me. You can't even take care of yourself. How many times have I had to sew your fingers back on?

EMMETT: We'll take care of each other, then. It'll be just you, and me, and our minions for all of eternity.

AMY: What about Arthur?

EMMETT: He won't be a problem for much longer.

AMY: You wouldn't.

EMMETT: I will.

AMY: No!

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(Long Pause. AMY, EMMETT, MIKE, KATIE, and HANK stare stage left expectantly. KATIE subtly motions to BLACK to come onstage.)

LARA: ZOMBIE #3!

(BLACK enters left.)

BLACK: I have a name.

(LARA storms up the stage and gets right in his face.)

LARA: Oh, yeah. What's your name?

BLACK: *(Afraid)* Zombie #3, Ma'am.

LARA: That's what I thought. Now please – *(SHE walks to far stage right and crosses her arms.)* continue.

(There is another long pause. BLACK looks around for help.)

Aren't you going to say your line?

BLACK: *(To AMY)* Hey, baby. I may be dead, but I'm still feisty.

LARA: *(Stepping closer to him with each word)* You didn't read the script.

BLACK: *(Backing away a step)* No...

LARA: You didn't read the script!

BLACK: I tried, but there were a lot of big words.

LARA: *(Shouting right in his face)* Of course there are a lot of big words.

This is a show of the highest quality. This is practically Shakespeare.

(Shoving him lightly) Do you even know who Shakespeare is, or are you too stupid?

CARSON: *(Stepping forward)* Leave him alone.

LARA: What?

CARSON: Of course we didn't read the script. We haven't had time to read the script. We weren't here two minutes before you shoved us in the dressing room. From there we got shoved into the make-up chairs.

Then we got shoved on stage. Now you're shoving him for not being able to read your stupid script in the middle of all this shoving.

LARA: Don't you raise your voice at me. I don't have to let you act on my stage.

CARSON: I don't have to be in your play.

LARA: Then don't. Leave.

CARSON: I think I will.

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LARA: Why don't you?

CARSON: I am. *(To BLACK)* Are you coming?

BLACK: I... I don't know.

LARA: You don't share your friend's attitude?

BLACK: I don't think so.

CARSON: Come on. *(Trying to hint subtly, but not doing a very good job of it)* We have a job to do.

BLACK: You go do the job. I'm going to stay here and keep an eye on things.

CARSON: Fine. Whatever. *(CARSON storms off left.)*

LARA: If you're not going to try harder to do this right, you might as well follow her.

BLACK: I'll do it perfectly. I promise.

LARA: Fine. Anyone else have any problems?

(EVERYONE shakes their heads, intimidated.)

Good. Let's start again. #3—your line is *Master, he's on his way.* *(LARA walks down the stairs to the floor.)*

BLACK: Master, he's on his way.

EMMETT: Yes. All according to my devilishly diabolical scheme. I must away, my Darling, but only for a moment. I want to be ready when that bumbling oaf arrives. Come, Minion.

(EMMETT and BLACK exit left.)

LARA: Jamie—lower the lights. Dennis—creepy music. George—fog.

FRANKIE: *(From offstage)* What?

LARA: The fog... turn on the fog machine.

FRANKIE: Oh... okay... How?

AMY: The red switch on the left.

FRANKIE: Stage left?

AMY: No—just left.

FRANKIE: Okay. *(Pause)* It's not working.

LARA: Just forget about it for now. Your line, Amy.

(The lights dim and eerie music begins to play.)

AMY: Shall none of you help me? None of you. Do you have no hearts?

HANK: No. He has taken our hearts, beating, from our bodies.

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AMY: What a horrible man is he—no not a man. A beast!

HANK: Yes, a beast, but a beast who has bound us all to him.

AMY: No, I cannot believe it. You must help me.

HANK: There is no way.

AMY: Surely you, too, have powers.

HANK: What powers?

AMY: He has developed the power to call objects to him. You can call a sword, or a gun, or a canon!

HANK: He is much stronger than we are.

AMY: You could still try. Oh, please. I am but a poor, innocent girl who had the ill fortune of once thinking that she might be in love with a rotting corpse.

HANK: How can I help?

AMY: See there. Points stage right. Oh... *(Realizing her mistake, SHE points stage right.)* Do you see that large boulder?

HANK: Yes.

AMY: Use your mind—call it here.

(HANK lifts his fingers to his temples and concentrates, but nothing happens.)

LARA: George. Are you even looking at the script?

FRANKIE: *(From offstage)* You never gave me a script.

LARA: Just bring the rock on.

(FRANKIE enters, carrying a large piece of cardboard painted like a boulder.)

No. We can still see you. Duck behind it.

(HE does so.)

Now try to make it look like it's floating. More movement. Wobblier!

That's it. Amy—your line.

AMY: Yes, yes! You can save us!

(EMMETT and BLACK enter left. BLACK joins KATIE, MIKE, and HANK. EMMETT, carrying the bag of jewels, crosses to center stage but stops when

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HE sees the boulder. FRANKIE recognizes the bag and drops the boulder. LARA walks onto the stage and picks it up.)

LARA: You idiot! You can't just go around dropping the props. You could have broken it. I don't have time to paint another.

(FRANKIE picks up the boulder.)

Continue.

EMMETT: *(Indicating the boulder)* What villainy is this?

AMY: It must have fallen from on high.

LARA: Set the boulder down gently now.

(FRANKIE sets it flat on the ground then stands to leave.)

No. You'll have to kneel behind it to hold it up.

(FRANKIE picks up the boulder.)

Kneel behind it. We don't want the audience to see you.

(FRANKIE crouches behind the boulder, holding it up.)

Continue.

EMMETT: No matter—our guest will be arriving shortly, and I am quite well prepared for him now.

AMY: What is that? What dreadful substance is hidden in the depths of that reticule?

(FRANKIE peers over the boulder, his eyes fixed on the bag.)

LARA: Behind the rock, George. No one wants to see your ugly face.

(FRANKIE ducks back down, scowling.)

AMY: What dreadful substance is hidden in the depths of that reticule?

EMMETT: Gold!

AMY: You cannot buy my love.

EMMETT: I don't intend to. What I plan on buying is his death.

AMY: How?

(Through the next few lines, FRANKIE edges the rock ever closer to EMMETT. Each time HE gets close to him, EMMETT paces in the other direction.)

EMMETT: These jewels, these baubles, these trinkets—they are all covered with a very fast acting poison. He will, of course, try to take them. As soon as his skin touches the gold, he will die a swift and incredibly painful death.

AMY: And if he doesn't take the bait?

EMMETT: Oh, but he will! If you have taught me nothing, Madeline, you have shown me that you humans care only for wealth. Avaricious—all of you.

AMY: You were human once, Gerard. Do you not remember?

EMMETT: Long ago, perhaps, but I am a better man now—a better man who will have the better woman!

(HE throws his arms wide, still holding the bag, and laughs maniacally. As HE does, FRANKIE reaches out to grab the bag.)

LARA: George!

FRANKIE: I was stretching.

LARA: What?

FRANKIE: I had a cramp. I was stretching.

LARA: You can have a cramp on your own time. During my practices you'll do as I say.

FRANKIE: *(Under his breath)* I could kill you.

(CAL, AMY, MIKE, and HANK turn suddenly and stare at him in fear.)

LARA: What?

FRANKIE: I said—right away, Madam.

LARA: Good. Your line, Emmett.

EMMETT: You, my faithful peons, are now to be witnesses to my triumph. I, a lowly corpse, will defeat Arthur Lake, star quarterback of the Plaid Pirates.

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AMY: You can't. He'll best you. He'll save me.

EMMETT: Even if he were to overcome his avarice and kill me, he won't make it out of here alive. My servants, you are to kill him.

AMY: What will happen to me then?

EMMETT: You will stay here alone forever.

AMY: You can't do that to me.

EMMETT: Don't worry, Pet. I'll not let that happen to you. Besides, how can he know that the only way to best me is to strike me directly through the heart with a silver blade?

MIKE: But what if she told him, Master? What if, because of her love for him, she betrayed you? Although I, too, love her, I cannot help but wonder.

LARA: Mike.

MIKE: What about my line?

LARA: We'll talk about it later.

MIKE: But I thought it might add to the dialogue.

LARA: You gave everything away. Stick to the script.

MIKE: Fine.

LARA: It's your line, Amy.

AMY: He will find a way. Love will guide him.

(CAL enters, brandishing a sword.)

CAL: Madeline. Fear not! I am here to bring you salvation.

AMY: Arthur!

EMMETT: Prepare for your demise, Arthur Lake.

CAL: I will vanquish you, you vile monster.

EMMETT: I have something for you, first. A gift, you might say. Take these jewels.

CAL: I care nothing for worldly treasure. I have come for my Madeline.

EMMETT: A noble man, indeed. *(HE draws a sword)* But that won't save you.

(THEY fight. Eventually CAL stabs him through the heart, and EMMETT falls to the ground in an awful, drawn-out death scene. As HE falls HE drops the bag. FRANKIE sees and inches closer and closer while still behind the boulder.)

EMMETT: What's this? A cold blade through my unbeating heart? I feel the life draining from my limbs. Madeline, forget me not, for I will love you from the pits of the underworld, for surely I deserve no better fate.

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(AMY, noticing FRANKIE, rushes to EMMETT's side, kicking the bag away from FRANKIE's outstretched hand as SHE passes.)

LARA: You're supposed to be tied up, Amy. Get back on your coffin.

(AMY sits back on the coffin, staring at FRANKIE with distrust.)

AMY: No. Don't say that. I loved you once, when you were a man. You were a good man, Gerard. I will remember you.
(FRANKIE slowly inches toward it again.)

EMMETT: My eyes are clouding over. My mind is drifting. I die.
AMY: Arthur, watch out!

(ZOMBIES attack ARTHUR, who kills them one by one. KATIE falls stiffly to the ground. MIKE flops over. BLACK dies cheesily. HANK falls over the bag, keeping FRANKIE from grabbing it.)

You've saved me.

CAL: *(Crossing to her.)* And now I can take you back to my mansion and make you my bride.

(HE bends down to kiss her, but ends up giving her a peck on the cheek.)

LARA: No. No. *No!* That was all wrong.

(Lights go up. Freaky music stops.)

Where was the passion in that kiss? Where was the love? And zombies—you all need to take a lesson from Emmett. I didn't believe that you were dead at all, especially you, Hank. My mother could die better than that. All you zombies come with me. I'm going to teach you what dying really is. Amy and Cal- you stay here and work on that kiss. It was pitiful! *(To CAL)* Kiss her like you'd kiss me.

(LARA, EMMETT, KATIE, MIKE, CARSON, and BLACK exit left. HANK grabs the bag and follows. FRANKIE throws the boulder upstage and chases after them. AMY and CAL stand awkwardly looking at each other for a moment.)

AMY: I... um...

CAL: So...

AMY: Kissing...

CAL: Yeah...

AMY: I'm gonna go... to the bathroom.

CAL: Good idea.

(AMY starts to leave right, but realizes halfway through that it's the wrong direction. THEY both laugh awkwardly as SHE turns around and exits left. CAL sits on the coffin, looking nervous. ALEX enters right. SHE wears a somewhat seductive, and obviously fake, police uniform. As soon as SHE sees CAL, SHE turns on the charm.)

CAL: Who are you?

ALEX: I'm Officer... Scary. I followed a suspect in here. He's about
(Gestures) this tall, brown hair, shifty-looking. You wouldn't be able to
tell me where he might be, would you?

CAL: Anything.

ALEX: It would be doing me a huge favor. I'm new on the job, and I'm not
very good yet.

CAL: Sure you are.

ALEX: Why don't you tell me where he is, and I'll leave you alone,
Handsome.

CAL: *(His voice gets all squeaky.)* Broom closet. Down the hall. On the left.

ALEX: Thank you ever so much, Doll. I'll be indebted to you always.

(ALEX exits left, winking at CAL over her shoulder as SHE leaves. AMY enters left. CAL talks as if in a daze.)

AMY: Who was that?

CAL: Officer Scary.

AMY: Who?

CAL: More like Officer Pretty.

AMY: Are you stupid? That was her. That was Alex!

CAL: No.

AMY: Yes.

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CAL: No, she was a real cop.

AMY: Did you see her badge?

CAL: No. I didn't need to.

AMY: What?

CAL: She had such an authoritative aura.

AMY: Snap out of it!

CAL: I'd let her arrest me any day.

(An act of desperation—AMY grabs CAL and kisses him passionately to bring him to his senses. As THEY kiss, LARA enters left. SHE drops her clipboard and looks shocked.)

CAL: Lara!

AMY: I can explain.

(LARA starts clapping.)

LARA: Bravo! You guys have really got that down. I'm surprised. I didn't expect you to get it so soon.

CAL / AMY: What?

LARA: That kiss was perfect. It had passion. It had romance. I want you to kiss just like that for the performance.

CAL: Yeah.

AMY: Just like that.

LARA: I'm going to go check on the others. If only they could make such great progress, we could actually have a chance at a good show.

(LARA exits left.)

CAL: You kissed me!

AMY: You were talking all crazy-like. I had to do something.

CAL: So... that's the only reason why?

AMY: Yeah. Um... I guess. Unless... you want it to mean more?

CAL: No... I mean... yeah... I mean... Lara?

(ALEX enters left.)

ALEX: Where's Frankie.

AMY: What?

ALEX: He told me that Frankie was in the broom closet.

CAL: No, that's Alex.

ALEX: No. I'm Alex.

AMY: I told you!

ALEX: And I'm telling you– (*SHE pulls out a gun and points it at AMY.*) if you don't let me know where Frankie is you're going to lose your little girlfriend here.

CAL: Actually, we're just friends.

AMY: Cal!

CAL: Oh, right. (*Points stage left*) There he is.

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