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Dramatic Publishing



NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Adapted for the stage

by

LORI ALLEN OHM

Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD)

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NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

A Full-length Play
For 12 Men, 5 Women, 15-20 Zombies

CHARACTERS

ZOMBIE #1 Tall. Graying hair.
BARBARA Young blonde woman. Twenties.
JOHNNY..... Barbara's older brother. Twenties.
CORPSE ON THE STAIR..... Woman.
BEN..... Black man. Late twenties.
HARRY COOPER ... Middle-aged. Ben towers over him.
HELEN COOPER..... Harry's wife.
KAREN COOPER.. . The Coopers' eleven-year-old daughter.
TOM Muscular, helpful young man.
JUDY..... Tom's girlfriend.

15 to 20 ZOMBIES (gender and age flexibility)

RADIO NEWSCASTER (VOICE-OVER)

NEWS ANCHOR

DR. GRIMES

BILL BARDOUGH

SHERIFF "CHIEF" McCLELLAN

TWO ARMED, UNIFORMED DEPUTIES

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD premiered at The Roadhouse Theatre for Contemporary Art in Erie, Pennsylvania, in September and October 2000.

PRINCIPAL CAST

Barbara DANI VANDERHOFF
Johnny DAVID MOLNAR
Zombie #1 DON DOMBROWSKI
Harry Cooper DON E. KIRSCH
Helen Cooper MONICA LEWIS
Karen Cooper KELSEY APPLEBEE
Tom ERIC LA PRICE
Judy ELLY VAHEY
Ben DOUG MASSEY
Corpse on the Stair TINA HALLORAN
Radio Voice-over DANIEL L. CURRY
News Anchor ROB KOCUR
Dr. Grimes DAN PRUYN
Bill Bardough AARON PACY
Chief McClellan BRAD FORD
Deputy CHRIS WLOCH
Deputy TIM SCOTT

ZOMBIES

BOB BURFORD, JASON FRIED, BRANDON LOPEZ,
NOAH ROGERS, MARY WOLTERS,
KATHY BUSSIERE-TIRAK, GARY GARN, DAVID MCNEILL,
BARRIE RYNISH, VERONICA LINDSEY,
DAVE DICOLA, CRYSTAL LEVANDOWSKI, JANET NARDO,
SANDRA SCHUSHCU, JENELLE DOMBROWSKI,
TONY LEWANDOWSKI, ANNA MARIE PECK,
CHRISTIAN TIRAK

TECHNICAL STAFF

Director LORI ALLEN OHM
Assistant Directors SCOTT MCCLELLAND, KIM MC.
Stage Managers MICHELLE SHIELDS, SEAN MORGAN
Set Design LORI ALLEN OHM, SCOTT MCCLELLAND
Lighting Design JOHN BIGGIE
Sound Design RICK DIBELLO
Costumes KIM MC.
Makeup CHRIS HALE
Wig Design JEANNE SANTOS

PRODUCTION NOTES

ZOMBIES *must not* acknowledge or interact with the audience under any circumstances until the line at the end of the play. Otherwise, according to the rules of the world of the play, the audience would be eaten. The audience becomes a part of this world at the end of the play when the ZOMBIES turn their attention to the audience.

The number of ZOMBIES is two at first, and should increase over the course of the play to build the suspense.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Butler County, Pennsylvania, 1968. The Sunday of the spring time change and the following morning. With the optional exception of blood, the entire production is staged in black and white, including the main setting, lighting, properties, costumes, hair and makeup. The few short scenes which do not take place in the main setting should be played with special lighting to separate them from the principle playing area.

SCENE 1

(The audience is the graveyard. The main setting remains black in Scenes 1 and 2. Pause in the blackout. A sudden, bright flash of light represents the radiation from the Venus probe. Pause. Lights up in the audience to a late, hazy afternoon in the graveyard. Two unburied corpses rise and trundle over the grounds to exit. Lights fade.)

SCENE 2

(BARBARA enters graveyard from back of audience. JOHNNY follows, carrying a memorial floral "wreath" shaped like a cross.)

BARBARA. They ought to make the day the time changes the first day of summer.

JOHNNY. What?

BARBARA. Well it's eight o'clock and it's still light.

JOHNNY (*pockets car keys*). A lot of good the extra daylight does us. We still have a three-hour drive back. We're not gonna be home 'til after midnight. (*They move toward the grave.*)

BARBARA. Well if it really bugged you, Johnny, you wouldn't do it.

JOHNNY. You think I want to blow Sunday on a scene like this? You know, I think we're either gonna have to move Mother out here, or move the grave into Pittsburgh.

BARBARA. She can't make a trip like this.

JOHNNY. Oh, tell me she can't. Is there any of that candy left?

BARBARA (*with her back to him, slipping a piece of candy into her mouth*). No.

JOHNNY (*reads wreath*). Look at this thing: "We still remember." I don't. You know, I don't even remember what the man looks like.

BARBARA. Johnny, it takes you five minutes.

JOHNNY. Yeah, five minutes to put the wreath on the grave, and six hours to drive back and forth. Mother wants to remember, so we trot two hundred miles into the country, and she stays at home.

BARBARA. Well, we're here, John, all right? Which row is it in?

JOHNNY. Boy, there's no one around here.

BARBARA. Well, it's late. If you'd've gotten up earlier...

JOHNNY. Ah, look, I already lost an hour's sleep with the time change.

BARBARA. I think you complain just to hear yourself talk. There it is.

JOHNNY (*puts the wreath on the grave*). I wonder what happened to the one from last year. Each year we spend good money on these things, we come out here, and the one from last year's gone.

BARBARA. Well, the flowers die, and the caretaker or somebody takes them away.

JOHNNY. Yeah, a little spit and polish, clean this up, and sell it again next year. I wonder how many times we bought the same one. (*BARBARA kneels, crosses herself and bows her head in prayer. Distant thunder rumbles and continues throughout the scene. Pause.*) Hey, come on, Barb. Church was this morning, huh? (*Pause.*) Hey, I mean praying's for church, huh? Come on.

BARBARA. I haven't seen you in church lately. (*Rises.*)

JOHNNY (*laughs*). Well, there's not much sense in my goin' to church. Do you remember one time when we were small, we were out here? It was from right over there. I jumped out at you from behind a tree, and Grandpa got all excited and he shook his fist at me and he said "Boy, you'll be damned to hell!" Remember that? Right over there. Boy, we used to be really scared here.

BARBARA (*scolding*). Johnny.

JOHNNY. Well, you're still afraid.

BARBARA. Stop it now. I mean it.

(*ZOMBIE #1 enters through audience. JOHNNY teases...*)

JOHNNY. They're coming to get you, Barbara.

BARBARA. Stop it. You're ignorant.

JOHNNY. They're coming for you, Barbara.

BARBARA. Stop it. You're acting like a child.

JOHNNY. They're coming for you. Look! Here comes one of them now.

BARBARA. He'll hear you.

JOHNNY. Here he comes now. I'm getting out of here.

(JOHNNY runs from her. ZOMBIE #1 lunges at BARBARA, grabbing and pawing her.)

BARBARA. Johnny! Johnny, help me! Help me!

(JOHNNY crosses to BARBARA and pries ZOMBIE #1 from her. ZOMBIE #1 chokes JOHNNY. As JOHNNY's body slumps, ZOMBIE #1 takes a bite from his cheek. BARBARA trips, rises and runs through audience to exit with ZOMBIE #1 after her.)

SCENE 3

(Main setting. The living room contains a fireplace, sofa, chair, radio, an end table and a telephone. R, two windows flank the front door. A door on the upstage wall leads to the kitchen. A partially devoured CORPSE lies on the stairs leading to the second floor. Behind a door, which is barred from the inside, a staircase leads down to the cellar where a bare bulb emits a dim light. The cellar contains a laundry table, a stool, a stepladder, an overloaded laundry basket, a small can of kerosene and a box of canning jars. A masonry trowel and a large key ring with three keys hang on the cellar wall. In the cellar, HARRY and HELEN COOPER tend to KAREN, who

lies on the laundry table, barely conscious, covered by a blanket. TOM stands with his arms around JUDY. Silence. The front door shakes. HARRY turns off the light. The front door gives, and BARBARA enters disheveled and missing her shoes, slamming the door behind her. ZOMBIE #1 lurks around outside. Two more ZOMBIES enter audience back and amble toward the house. Seeing ZOMBIE #1 outside, BARBARA draws the curtains and scrambles backward, nearly tripping over the couch. She crosses to the cellar door, pulls on the knob, then exits to the kitchen. HARRY ascends the stairs and listens through the door. HELEN tries to whisper something to him and he admonishes her. Offstage, silverware rattles in the kitchen, and BARBARA enters the living room with a barbecue fork. She dials the phone twice, but it's dead. She slams the receiver in the cradle and looks out the window. She crosses to the stairs, trips on the CORPSE and screams. She stumbles to the front door, throws it open, and blinding headlights fill the stage. BEN darkens the door, holding a tire iron above his head, ready to strike a blow. ZOMBIES close in behind him. BEN pushes BARBARA into the house and locks the door.)

BEN. It's all right. Don't worry about them. I can handle them. Probably get a lot more of them as soon as they find out about us. This pump out here is locked. Is there a key? *(Picks up the phone.)* I suppose you tried this. *(He puts the receiver back and tries the cellar door. BARBARA cowers against the wall.)* Do you live here? *(Sees CORPSE.)* Jesus. *(Pokes CORPSE with the tire iron.)* We gotta get outa here. We have to get where there are some other people. Well, we better take some

food. I'll see if I can find some. (*Exits kitchen. BARBARA crosses to the kitchen and addresses BEN through the door as he knocks around.*)

BARBARA. What's happening? (*BEN mumbles something indiscernible to her.*) What's happening?

(*Glass breaks as ZOMBIES smash one of BEN's truck's headlights. BEN enters and looks out the window.*)

BEN. They're smashin' out my headlights, man. (*Pause.*) Two of them. (*Holds BARBARA by the shoulders. Her head lolls a bit.*) There are two of them out there. Have you seen any more around here? I can take care of those two.

BARBARA. I don't know.

BEN. Look, I know you're afraid, but—

BARBARA. I don't know! I don't know. What's happening?!

(*BEN firmly sits her on the sofa. More glass breaking as ZOMBIES smash the other headlight. BEN opens the front door. A ZOMBIE tries to enter, and BEN pushes it outside. Another ZOMBIE appears in the threshold and grabs BEN. With the tire iron, BEN bludgeons the ZOMBIE, and it falls outside. The CORPSE on the stairs rises and makes its way toward BARBARA who sits, unaware. The CORPSE reaches her and she screams. BEN enters, gives the CORPSE one wallop to the head, and it falls. BARBARA crosses to the front door and locks it. Another ZOMBIE enters from the kitchen. BEN pushes it back into the kitchen and after a struggle, BEN is heard boarding up the back door. BEN enters living room and picks up the legs of the CORPSE. BARBARA stares at it.*)

BEN. Don't look at it! (*Drags the CORPSE outside. Re-entering, he locks the door and stands with his back against it. He examines the blood on his hands and wipes it on his pants. A few more ZOMBIES trickle in through the audience and wander about. Some exit, some circle the house, some stand and stare.*) They know we're in here now. We gotta get some lights on in this house. (*Turns on a light in the living room and exits to kitchen. After a pause, he re-enters with two hammers.*) Why don't you see if you can find us some wood or some boards. Something over there by the fireplace. Something to nail this place up with. (*Pause.*) Look, goddamn—! (*Regains composure.*) I know you're afraid but we have to try to board the place up tight. I'm gonna board up the windows and the doors. Do you understand? We'll be all right here until someone comes to rescue us. But we have to work together. You have to help me here. Now I want you to get some wood so we can board the place up. Do you understand? Okay? Okay? (*She nods. BEN exits to kitchen and clatters around. BARBARA picks up a music box from the fireplace mantle and opens it. It plays a haunting melody, and she stares into it. BEN enters with a stack of boards, some with Contac paper on them, and exits to kitchen again. BARBARA picks up a couple pieces of kindling from the fireplace. BEN enters with another stack of boards and some nails. BARBARA stands, holding the kindling. BEN boards up the two windows and the front door while he speaks. He gives a nod toward the kitchen.*) I've got that room pretty secure. If we have to, we can run in here and reinforce this door. It won't be long before those things pound their way in here. They're

afraid now. They're afraid of fire, I found that out. Do you know a place back down the road called Beakman's Diner? Anyway, that's where I found that truck I have out there. (*Takes BARBARA's kindling and hands her a box of nails.*) Here. I want you to pick out the biggest nails you can find. (*BARBARA sits and picks out one nail from the box.*) There's a radio in the truck. I jumped in to listen to it, but a big gasoline truck came screaming down the road. There must've been ten or fifteen of those things chasing after it, grabbing and holding on. Now I didn't see them at first. I could just see that the truck was moving in a funny way. Those things were catching up to it. One right across the road. Slammed on my brakes to keep from hitting it myself. It went right through the guardrail, I guess. I guess the driver must've cut off the road—there's a big gas station by Beakman's Diner. It went right through a billboard, ripped over a gas pump, and never stopped moving. By now it's like a moving bonfire. Didn't know if the truck was going to explode or what. I can still hear the man. Screaming. These things just backing away from it. I looked back at the diner to see if there was anyone there that could help me. That's when I noticed that the entire place had been encircled. Wasn't a sign of life left except—by now there were no more screams. I realized that I was alone. Fifty or sixty of those things just standing there. Staring at me. I started to drive out. I just plowed right through them. They didn't move. They didn't run. They just stood there, staring at me. I just wanted to crush them. They scattered through the air like bugs. (*Pause.*)

BARBARA. We were riding in the cemetery. Johnny and me. Johnny. We—We came to put a wreath on my fa-

ther's grave. Johnny. And—And then he said, "Can I have some candy? Barbara?" Um, we didn't have any. And. Oh! It's hot in here. It's hot. *(Pulls on her coat.)* And, and he said "O-o-h, it's late. Why did we start so late?" And I said, "Johnny, if you'd've gotten up earlier we wouldn't be late." Johnny asked me if I were afraid, and I said "I'm not afraid, Johnny." And then, this man started walking up the road. He came slowly and Johnny kept teasing me and saying "He's coming to get you, Barbara!" And I laughed at him and said "Johnny, stop it." And then Johnny ran away and I, I went up to this man and I started to apologize. And. And.

BEN. Why don't you just keep calm?

BARBARA. And I looked up and I said "Good eve—" *(Frantic.)* And he grabbed me. He grabbed me and he ripped at me! He held me and he ripped at my clothes.

BEN. I think you should just calm down.

BARBARA. And I screamed "Johnny! Johnny! Help me. Oh help me." And he wouldn't let me go. He ripped at— And then Johnny came and he ran and he, he fought this man. Then I got so afraid I ran. I ran and I ran and Johnny didn't come. We thought— *(Pause.)* We have to wait for Johnny. We better go out and get him. We have to go out and get Johnny. He's out there. Please. Don't you hear me? We've got to go out and get him. *(Rises, grabs BEN.)* Please! We have got to go out and get Johnny! Please! Help me, please!

BEN. Don't you know what's going on out there? *(Holds her by the wrists.)* This is no Sunday school picnic!

BARBARA. Don't you understand? My brother is alone!

BEN. Your brother is dead!