

THE MIDNIGHT CLUB

By Jonathan Dorf

Draft 2.1

Cast of Characters

DEREK, teen werewolf. A jock.
HORACE, teen on his way to becoming a zombie. Nerdy.
LOLA, teen vampire rebel without a cause but with a sprinkle of emo.
WANDA, teen witch. Bookish and a bit of a romantic.
ELSPETH, teen ghost. Full of angst.

Production Notes

Throughout, Horace "incants" a running series of facts almost inaudibly to himself in an effort to keep from turning into a full-blown zombie, breaking from it whenever he needs to plug into the action/dialogue of the play. While examples of this incantation are given at the opening of the play, each production should feel free to come up with its own "incantation" of facts. It is, however, necessary that at least some of the periodic table be heard to set up the ending.

It's important that Horace's incantation should remain more or less under his breath so as not to distract, and so that the conversations between the others can continue seamlessly over top of it. There will, of course, be moments in the play when the others hear him incanting and react to it, but otherwise it's important that Horace's incantations not take up separate dialogue time/space, or they will slow down the play.

Feel free to adjust Horace's sunrise-sunset line if you wish to reflect your local time, or not.

Occasional lines in brackets are meant to substitute for the dialogue they follow (for example, kilometers instead of miles if you're in a country that uses the metric system) as appropriate for your production.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Caribay Franke (Lola), Portia Juliette (Wanda), Vance Lovett (Derek), Katie Peabody (Elspeth) and most especially to Daniel Rashid (Horace), who orchestrated it all, for helping develop the play through a series of readings.

The sound of a closing door, made of the sort of heavy metal you'd find on a vault, and a key turning in a reinforced lock. The sound of heavy footsteps and a chain dragging on the ground as they move into the distance. Lights up to reveal a "classroom" space, with some desks. In it are a collection of teenagers. DEREK, a werewolf in human form, tries the door.

DEREK

You can't do this. Hey, Mr. Dread!
(Beat--half to himself:)
This is so not cool.

The others occupy themselves in various ways. LOLA, a vampire rebel without a cause but with a seasoning of emo, applies makeup in between pulling apart a doll. WANDA, a lonely, sensitive witch, tries to read a romance novel. ELSPETH, a ghost in the midst of existential angst, sits far removed from the others, motionless in quiet agony. HORACE, the nerdiest zombie you'll ever meet, is mouthing a neverending stream of facts to himself.

HORACE

(Incanting to himself:)
Prime numbers between 1 and 100--

The conversation continues over top of Horace's mumbled incantation, a pattern that continues throughout the play.

HORACE

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89 and 97.

(Pronounced WAH-GAH-DOO-GOO)

Ougadougou is the capital of

(Pronounced BUR-KEE-NA FAH-ZO)

Burkina Faso, formerly known as Upper Volta. Australia Day is celebrated on January 26th, the anniversary of the first settlement in Sydney Cove in 1788. The fleet of 11 British ships initially landed in Botany Bay.

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HORACE (CONT'D)

The world's three longest rivers are the Nile--4,132 miles--
the Amazon--4000 miles--and the

(Pronounced YANG-ZEE)

Yangtze--3,915 miles. The elements of the periodic table are
hydrogen, helium, lithium, beryllium, boron, carbon,
nitrogen, oxygen, fluorine, neon, sodium, magnesium,
aluminum, silicon, phosphorus, sulfur, chlorine, argon, etc.

LOLA

What did you think midnight detention was, genius?

DEREK

They don't know who my parents are. My parents are gonna-

LOLA

Leave you here?

Beat. Derek scratches at the
vault door, then starts to howl.

LOLA

Oh great.

DEREK

I can't help it. I'm missing my game.

LOLA

Looks like you're playing left out today.

DEREK

That's not a position.

Derek howls again. And again.
Wanda doubles down on reading,
while Horace continues incanting.

LOLA

Anybody have anything silver?

DEREK

Not funny.

HORACE

(Breaking his incantation
momentarily:)

I have a tooth with a silver filling.

LOLA

Seriously?

HORACE

It comes right out.

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WANDA

She's mocking you.

LOLA

Yeah, that's me. I'm a mocker.

DEREK

And you wonder why you never get invited to any of the parties.

LOLA

Not wondering, not caring.

DEREK

(Comebacks aren't his specialty:)

Well, you should.

WANDA

We're stuck here 'til dawn. We should all just try to get along.

DEREK

I shouldn't even be in here.

LOLA

Did the pig in bio eat itself?

DEREK

That wasn't me.

LOLA

We were all there.

HORACE

(To himself:)

I was in chem, actually.

DEREK

I was in wolf.

HORACE

(To himself:)

Grammatically correct: "I was in wolf form," or "I was a wolf."

DEREK

What?

HORACE

I said it would be grammatically correct to say "I was in wolf form," or "I was a wolf."

DEREK

(Advancing on Horace:)

What would it be, grammatactly, when I grammatactly break your face?

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WANDA

Leave him alone.

DEREK

(Still advancing:)

What do you say, nerd-dropping? Should I leave you alone?

Just as it looks like things might get ugly, from outside come the sound of the footsteps and chain dragging. Everyone freezes. The footsteps and chain drag themselves down the hallway, fading away.

DEREK

(Feinting at Horace:)

Boo.

Derek wanders toward a seat, detouring to hit on Wanda.

DEREK

Hey.

WANDA

Don't even.

DEREK

I can't say hey?

(Beat.)

It was one pig.

(Beat.)

OK--three pigs. Least I'm not like Brains over there.

HORACE

Don't call me that.

DEREK

Why not? Pretty soon it's gonna be the only word you can say.

HORACE

That's not true.

DEREK

Brains.

HORACE

Stop it!

DEREK

Make me, Brains.

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WANDA
 (Gesturing with her hand--it
 comes off as a geeky wrist
 flick--as if doing a spell:)

Stop!

Nothing happens. Awkward.

What? DEREK

What? WANDA

What's DEREK
 this? (Repeating her gesture:)

What's that? WANDA

You just-- DEREK

Did not. WANDA

Did too. DEREK

She can't do magic in here. LOLA

Why would I-- WANDA

Oh come on. Everybody knows you're a witch. LOLA

Wait--she's a witch? DEREK
 That's a witch thing? (Repeating Wanda's gesture:)

You don't think Jason--Mummy Jason with the perfectly
 preserved skin--actually made out with her on purpose, do
 you? And you call LOLA
him Brains? (Indicating Horace:)

WANDA

(To Lola:)

You are not a nice person.

DEREK

(To Lola:)

Did you just insult me?

LOLA

Yes.

(To Wanda:)

At least I'm honest. You don't hear me crying "I was in wolf"-
-

DEREK

I did not cry.

DEREK

It was totally a howl. Wolves
don't cry. Doves cry maybe,
but not wolves.

LOLA

--or "I didn't do a love
spell, Mr. Dread. Jason just
really, really likes me."

LOLA

When I spiked the punch at Nightmare Nocturne--which was
hilarious, by the way--everybody thinks they're drinking O-
neg, and instead they're getting holy water and red dye
number six--

WANDA

People could have been killed.

LOLA

Oh please--it burns for an hour going down--two, tops--and
you heal up in a week or two. My point is I owned it. I
walked right up to Dread and was like "guilty." I was hoping
he'd finally kick me out of this hellhole, but instead I get
sentenced to you. Talk about eternal freakin' torment.

Once more, the heavy footsteps
and chain in the hallway. All
freeze again. Beat.

WANDA

Let's all just not talk. Like Elspeth. If we do that, I'm
sure we can make it 'til dawn.

The conversation continues while
Horace incants under his breath.

HORACE

(Incanting to himself:)

Sunrise is at 7:17 AM. Sunset is at 4:32 PM. Total length of
day: nine hours, fifteen minutes and fifteen seconds.

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Who's Elspeth? DEREK

Ghost girl. LOLA

I don't-- DEREK

Of course you don't. LOLA

I could see her if I was in wolf. DEREK

In wolf form. HORACE
(To himself:)

What? DEREK

I can't see her either. HORACE

That's because you're Brains. DEREK

Stop being so rude. WANDA

Why don't you witch me then? DEREK

"Bewitch me" or, alternatively, "cast a spell." HORACE
(To himself:)

Dude, if you correct me one more time-- DEREK

You'll what? LOLA

Lola howls.

You shouldn't stoop to his level. WANDA
(To Lola:)

Nobody asked you, Witchless. LOLA

DEREK
Witchless. That's good.

WANDA
You are a mean, mean person.

LOLA
At least I don't have a broomstick shoved up my--

ELSPETH
(Stereotypical ghost moan:)
Oooooo...

DEREK
(Looking around cluelessly:)
What was that?

ELSPETH
Oooooo...

WANDA
Elspeth?

ELSPETH
Oooooo...

WANDA
Yes?

ELSPETH
Oooooo...

WANDA
Are you hungry?
(To the others:)
Is she hungry?

ELSPETH
Oooooo...!

LOLA
Ghosts don't eat, Witchless.

WANDA
Stop calling me th--

ELSPETH
Oooooo...!!

(Beat.)
Seriously, people?!

(Beat.)
None of this matters. You are all standing on the edge of an
abyss so empty that nothingness itself cries out in despair.

ELSPETH (CONT'D)

There is only shrieking, shrieking as every soul that ever was is torn apart, savagely slashed by talons of demons so frightening that a hundred thousand million puppies pee in their owners' pants. They pee in fear beyond all comprehension. They pee for the future you will never have. They pee in volumes so voluminous it will engulf you until all you can breathe is infection, pus ripping through you until you become forever oozing sores, the cankerous oblivion that awaits you. And puppies! Puppies!! Puppies!!!

And then she shuts off, as if she never was. Silence.

DEREK

Whoa.

WANDA

That was intense.

DEREK

I think I need a hug right now.

He tries to hug Wanda.

WANDA

I don't think so.

DEREK

I thought we just had a moment.

WANDA

No.

DEREK

But...

HORACE

I think what she means is that you had a moment and she had a moment, but it wasn't the same moment.

DEREK

Nobody asked you, Brains.

LOLA

(To Derek:)

In ten years you're going to be fat and bald and staring at the TV in some pay-by-the-week motel, and all you're going to have is that one wolf moon a month to remember the glory days.

HORACE

(Back to incanting:)

Lake
(Pronounced BI-KULL)
Baikal in Russia is the world's largest freshwater lake by volume, with a surface area of 12,248 square miles [31,722 square kilometers] and a maximum depth of 5,387 feet [1,642 meters].

DEREK

(Fleeing to another corner of the room:)

You undead chicks are way angry.

Wanda tries to take up her book again, leaving Lola and Horace together--just in time for Lola to witness some of Horace's incanting:

HORACE

Lake Superior, part of the United States Great Lakes system, is the largest freshwater lake by surface area--

LOLA

Why do you do that?

HORACE

What?

(Back to incanting:)

It measures 31,700 square miles [82,100 square kilometers]--

LOLA

That.

HORACE

It's important to keep your brain working.

LOLA

It's a little weird.

(Beat.)

But not like I'm exactly a role model for making good after-life choices.

HORACE

All I wanna do is graduate, go to college, get a decent job, maybe meet somebody.

LOLA

I'm sure it'll happen.

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HORACE
Probably not if I keep hacking the admin's computers.

LOLA
Why? Not like you need the grades.

HORACE
(Pointing at his head:)
Always in motion.
(Beat.)
I just don't want to be the drooler that repeats kindergarten
until the end of time.

LOLA
I'm sure you won't be.

HORACE
(Beat.)
You're really pretty when you're being nice.

LOLA
Nah.

HORACE
You are.

LOLA
You should see my suckface.

She makes as if she is sucking
someone's blood.

LOLA
Not attractive. You get a vein caught in your fangs and--

HORACE
I wouldn't mind.

Beat.

WANDA
Now that's a moment.

DEREK
Maybe we could try ours again.

WANDA
Not happening.

DEREK
OK.

(Beat.)
Happy for you, Brains.

Lola and Wanda shoot Derek dirty looks.

DEREK

What? I'm trying to be nicer.

WANDA

He hates "Brains."

HORACE

Brains.

Horace starts to sputter and choke. A moment of terrified realization crosses his face. Something is happening to him.

DEREK

Whoa.

WANDA

What's happening?

LOLA

I don't know.

HORACE

(Fighting it:)

Brrr...aaaiii...

DEREK

Dang.

HORACE

...nnnn...sss.

DEREK

Dude's going full zombie.

LOLA

No.

(To Horace:)

Fight it. Fight it, uh...

(To Wanda and Derek:)

What's his name?

WANDA

It's...

LOLA

How do we not know his name?

DEREK

He's a nerd. I don't know nerds.

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You should.

WANDA

Do you?

DEREK

I didn't even know he went here.

LOLA

Horace!

ELSPETH

Thank you. Horace, you gotta fight this.

LOLA

Brrr...aaa...iiiiiiiiiii...nnnsss.

HORACE

Think of your facts.

LOLA

(Blocking:)

Uh... We need facts, people!

DEREK

(Trying to help:)

Football is better than baseball!

WANDA

That's not a fact!

DEREK

Sure it is.

LOLA

A squared plus B squared equals C squared.

HORACE

Bbbb...rrr...aaa...

LOLA

More facts--anybody!

WANDA

I'm trying. They're hard to think of when you need them!

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