

JUST ADD ZOMBIES

By Jonathan Dorf

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Cast of Characters

The High School Actors

MITCHY, male, decidedly not cool

CORA, female, attractive and planning to be a future star of the stage

PESSIE, whose name is short for Pessimism, but she's long on pessimism when it comes to her personality

EMILIA, female, whose name is not Amelia, quite the feminist

JULIET, female, not cast as Juliet and a bit of a tomboy

SYDNEY, female and a very nice person

WANDA, female and a voracious reader

CHAD, male, full of himself but easy on the eyes

The High School Crew and Staff

STAGE MANAGER, either gender, no-nonsense

FIRST, SECOND and THIRD TECHIES, either gender

SIGN GUY, either gender

BOX OFFICE PERSON 1, either gender

BOX OFFICE PERSON 2, either gender

The Adults

HOMELESS WOMAN, the one audience member at Friday's performance of *Romeo and Juliet*

CORA'S MOTHER and CORA'S FATHER, never home, even when they are

AUNT LILLIAN, Mitchy's aunt and the soon to be ex-drama sponsor

The cast size can range from a minimum of roughly 12 to an unlimited maximum. It's easily possible to include many other actors as non-speaking cast and crew members of *Romeo and Juliet* and later as zombie audience members.

For a smaller cast, we don't really need to see that many new zombies; they could be implied. Also, the Box Office roles could be doubled by Actors or Crew/Staff, and Aunt Lillian may be played by the actor who plays Cora's Mother. Feel free to be as creative as possible with multiple casting.

PRODUCTION NOTE

While Emilia wonders about being elected President in 2044, feel free to push back the date as necessary. It should be roughly 30 years from the year of your production.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Just Add Zombies premiered at Westmont High School (Campbell, CA).

A high school theater where we see both backstage and the house. A large poster near the stage promises "Romeo and Juliet" on "Friday and Saturday ONLY!" The show is in progress, but the only audience member appears to be a sleeping HOMELESS WOMAN, any age.

Backstage, MITCHY, mid-teens and an outcast among outcasts, sidles up to CORA, same age and way out of his league.

MITCHY

Do you want to get coffee?

CORA

Now?

MITCHY

After. I meant after the show.

CORA

Are you asking me out?

MITCHY

Uh...no. Not really. Well, maybe.
(Beat.)

Do you want me to?

CORA

Sure. If you were the last man on earth.

She goes on stage.

CORA (CONT'D)

Romeo, I come! This do I drink to thee.

She drinks from a vial and collapses, as if she were dead. Enter Mitchy as Romeo, who sees her on the ground.

MITCHY

Juliet! Noooooooooooo!

He's about to go to her, when her hand comes straight up and points at a line on the stage, evidently a boundary he can't cross.

He stops where he is and thrashes around, emoting to and fro, with an occasional "Nooooo." When he's milked it as long as humanly possible and then some, he drinks poison.

MITCHY (CONT'D)

Poison, do thy work.

(Beat.)

I die. I die over here because if I die by your side you've threatened to throw up in my mouth. I die - and I'm OK with your doing that if it means being closer to your radiant presence - until the part where you said you'd turn my groin into your personal driving range. O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick! Thus with a kiss I die, a kiss blown from the 10-foot minimum on which you insisted. I die-

STAGE MANAGER (OFF)

Die, please.

Beat. Mitchy dies. The lights start to come down.

CORA

(Getting up:)

Wait!

The lights go to black.

CORA (CONT'D)

I'm not dead yet.

The lights come back up.

CORA (CONT'D)

What's here? A cup? Poison I see, hath been his timeless end. I will kiss thy lips...

(Thinking better of it:)

no. O happy dagger! This is thy sheath!

She stabs herself. Blackout. Pause. The lights come up - it's the curtain call. The rest of the cast comes out: PESSIE, short for Pessimism but long on it when it comes to her personality; EMILIA, whose name is not Amelia; JULIET, not cast as Juliet; SYDNEY, too nice for her own good;

WANDA, doubling as dramaturg and wrapped up in reading a book as always (in this case, the *Complete Zombie How-To Handbook*), and CHAD, not a rocket scientist but not too tough on the eyes. Given that there's no applause, they seem unsure of what to do.

CORA (CONT'D)

(Sotto:)

Bow.

Beat. The lights shift to indicate that we're hearing a chorus of interior monologues.

JULIET

The creepy woman in the raincoat isn't clapping.

MITCHY

Chad, please don't steal my clothes again.

CHAD

I should steal Mitchy's clothes again.

EMILIA

Is there any way this can keep me from being elected President in 2044?

SYDNEY

I should say something welcoming.

PESSIE

I'm picturing all of your heads exploding.

JULIET

Stay focused. Bow, home, essay, soccer...

CORA

All I want is one standing ovation...

MITCHY

Cora, I would die for you. I am definitely never saying that out loud.

WANDA

I could read an entire chapter during this awkward silence.

CHAD

Pessie is kinda hot. Like angry hot.

CORA

Or for one of my parents to come. Once. Ever.

Beat. Back in real time,
desperate CLAPPING from offstage.

CORA (CONT'D)

This is embarrassing.

She leads an awkward cast bow.
Sydney waves at the Homeless
Woman.

SYDNEY

(Brightly:)

Hello, creepy woman in a raincoat. Hope you enjoyed the
show!

JULIET

She's not moving.

Juliet takes off part of her
costume to reveal a soccer
uniform.

CHAD

Probably passed out from Mitchy's B.O.

PESSIE

Wish I could have passed out.

EMILIA

I think there's something wrong with her.

Emilia leaves the stage still
carrying a prop sword and starts
toward the Homeless Woman.

CHAD

(To Juliet:)

You'd be so hot if you didn't dress like a guy.

JULIET

I dress like myself.

CHAD

Which is like a guy.

CORA

We always take two bows.

EMILIA

Just because she is not dressing like an objectified
stereotype-

CHAD

Amelia, is feminazi a language?

JULIET
I'll help you.

EMILIA
My name is Emilia.

CORA
I'm taking my second bow.

EMILIA
(To the Homeless Woman:)
Ma'am?

Emilia moves closer to the
Homeless Woman and extends her
sword.

SYDNEY
Don't stab her!

EMILIA
(Beat.)
Could this be interpreted as stabbing?

Emilia puts the sword in Juliet's
hand.

EMILIA (CONT'D)
You should do it.

PESSIE
If one of you stabs her and goes to jail, can we cancel
tomorrow's show?

CORA
Am I the only one who cares about getting recognized for our
hard work?

PESSIE
Cora, your own parents didn't come.

Lights up on CORA'S PARENTS,
wearing Hawaiian outfits.

CORA'S MOM
Honey, we're very sorry to tell you this in a note, but your
father and I are dead. Not to worry, we've been
cryogenically frozen, and the world's top experts are
standing by to revive us on Monday.

CORA'S DAD
We know you'll knock 'em dead.

CORA'S MOM

Alexander!

CORA'S DAD

Sorry. You'll break a leg-
 (to Cora's Mom)
 That's what they say, right?
 (back to Cora)
 We'll see you Monday, Corakins.

Lights down on Cora's Parents.

CORA

It's not like any of yours came either.

Juliet gives the Homeless Woman a
 gentle nudge with the flat side
 of the prop sword. Beat.

JULIET

I think she's dead.

EMILIA

And that is how a woman tells it like it is. Wait - she's
 what?

SYDNEY

Some people are really sound sleepers.

Emilia joins Juliet in checking
 on the Homeless Woman.

CORA

Maybe if we bow again it'll wake her up.

MITCHY

Should we call 911?

CHAD

(Mocking Mitchy:)

Should we call 911?

MITCHY

We've gotta tell somebody.

CHAD

What - like your Aunt Lillian?

Lights up on AUNT LILLIAN,
 Mitchy's aunt and, until a few
 minutes before, the drama
 sponsor.

She is somewhere else, possibly driving - which could be shown by her miming with a sound effect - or just holding a suitcase.

AUNT LILLIAN

Mitchy, I'm sorry for casting you as Romeo only because we're related. I thought your mother might finally speak to me after 17 years, but my decision was bad for your long term growth, bad for your moral compass, and thankfully you don't have any friends, or they would have hated your guts like everyone else.

(Beat.)

Ultimately, this experience has confirmed that I hate teaching, because as much as I thought destroying vulnerable adolescent psyches would be enough, I find myself needing something more fulfilling. That could be psychiatry or a stint as a CIA enhanced interrogator or a supervisor at the Department of Motor Vehicles. My road is wide open.

(Beat.)

Please tell your mother I gave it a shot, but the sight of your talentless body overwhelms our familial bond, and I never liked her much.

Lights down on Aunt Lillian.

WANDA

All clubs must have a sponsor present at official functions.

Wanda goes back to reading.

CORA

This can't be happening.

EMILIA

I know I speak for the entire cast of _____ High School's Romeo and Juliet when I say how deeply upset and moved we all are by this loss. This delicate flower of femininity-

PESSIE

This dead body is a hoot and a half too. Who are you even talking to?

EMILIA

I was making a statement.

MITCHY

We should call someone-

PESSIE

And tell them some lady died at our play?

SYDNEY
It happens.

PESSIE
Really? When?

Beat. Lights shift, and we're
back in the thoughts of the
frozen characters.

EMILIA
Maybe a statement is the wrong way to go.

CORA
If we can't perform, how will I ever get a standing ovation?

MITCHY
Cora, I would take a bullet for you.

JULIET
Did I kill her when I poked her?

SYDNEY
I'm sad about this woman, but I'm happy in general.

CHAD
Sydney is hot in a totally boring kinda way.

WANDA
Do I have another book in my bag?

PESSIE
Optimism. Try optimism.

MITCHY
I don't think I'd make a good hero.

CORA
This is my worst nightmare.

The lights shift. We're back in
real time.

MITCHY
Why can't we just tell the truth? We were doing the show,
this lady was watching, and she died.

EMILIA
I think we'll all look back at this as a time when hard
choices were made, maybe messy choices, but we did what we
had to do for our club, our school and this great country.

MITCHY
What?

WANDA
She's saying cover it up.

CHAD
I'm saying Mitchy did it.

MITCHY
We can't cover-
(To Chad:)
What?

Chad grabs the body.

CHAD
Somebody help me.

Emilia helps.

PESSIE
(Helping:)
I'm not the one who stabbed her.

JULIET
(Helping:)
I *poked* her.

MITCHY
This is wrong.

Sydney, Cora, and Mitchy don't help. Neither does Wanda, who reads.

PESSIE
Grab the head.

JULIET
Get a leg.

EMILIA
I've got *that* leg.

CORA
Wait.

PESSIE
What?

CORA
Maybe we *should* call the cops.
(Beat.)
If people thought we killed somebody, that would make us exciting.

PESSIE

Come see the serial killing drama troupe.

WANDA

(Looking up from her book:)

By definition, we can't be serial killers if we only killed one person.

SYDNEY

I'm not killing anyone.

JULIET

I'd lose my soccer scholarship...

EMILIA

Of course I can't kill anyone. How would that look?

CHAD

Wait - I've got it.

Chad grabs Wanda's book,

WANDA

Hey!

forcing the other three to take the body. They can't hold it and it tumbles to the ground.

CHAD

We're bringing her back to life.

(Beat.)

Zombies. Everybody loves zombies.

MITCHY

No, they don't.

CHAD

Why are there so many zombie movies then? And musicals and zombie defense books-

JULIET

Zombie appreciation month.

CHAD

Yeah. People appreciate zombies. And they would appreciate our plays more...a lot more...if we had a zombie...or two...in them.

EMILIA

You're saying we actually put a zombie in the play?

JULIET

Even if we wanted to, not like there's a how-to book.

CHAD

(Grabbing Wanda's book:)

You mean like *The Complete Zombie How-To Handbook*?

MITCHY

This is a bad idea.

CHAD

So leave, Mitchy. But when we're world famous, don't come knocking on our door begging to be in the show.

CORA

World famous people get standing ovations all the time.

EMILIA

(To herself:)

Yes, I am indeed responsible for the first fully integrated dead-undead high school in the world...

PESSIE

I'm almost excited. I never get excited.

CHAD

Then it's settled.

The lights dim as Chad begins a ritual using Wanda's book, but he's not terribly good at it.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Zombie-dee and zombie-
(rhymes with "doll")
dah.

WANDA

(under her breath - as in "I do")

Do.

CHAD

(pronounces like "alley")
Zombie-ally oxen free.

WANDA

(rhymes with "dolly")

Olly.

CHAD

Zimbabwe-

WANDA

Zombie.

CHAD

What?

WANDA

The word is zombie. Zimbabwe is a country in southern Africa, and I seriously doubt that anything written in Aramaic, even spoken backwards, is going to turn into Zimbabwe.

CHAD

I don't speak Ara - Ara...what?

WANDA

That's obvious.

EMILIA

Wanda, thank you for once again proving that sexist pigitry and ignorance go hand in hand.

CHAD

Shut up, Amelia.

EMILIA

Emilia. Emilia.

He turns to get away from her, but she moves with him, continuing to say "Emilia" in his ear.

CHAD

Feminazi. Feminazi. [etc]

EMILIA

Emilia. Emilia. [etc]

While Chad and Emilia go at it, Wanda picks up the book. She speaks as they fight.

WANDA

Zombie-dee and zombie-do
Zombie-olly oxen free
Zombie you and zombie me
Zombie do reh mi fa so la ti do

SYDNEY

Wanda?

WANDA

(Going into a trance,
building as she goes:)

Olleh aloh ruojnob molahs maalas gat netug awihcinnok oah
in...

The Homeless Woman begins to stir and stagger to her feet. She is indeed a zombie.

PESSIE

Houston, we have lift-off.

The lights dim to indicate time passing. The following events happen simultaneously in different parts of the stage. One, TECHIES tie Zombie Homeless Woman's feet. One of them might hold a net over her head to keep her from biting. In a smaller cast production, their lines could be reassigned to the named characters. In a larger cast production, their lines could be broken up further. During this, the named characters, except for Mitchy, engage in a series of conversations and prepare for rehearsal.

Two, Mitchy gathers weapons and protective gear that could range from the practical to the ridiculous and puts them in a sack. One must be a whiffleball bat. Other possibilities: a face mask, chest protector, frying pan, etc. Your production should choose whatever is practical and available.

Three, SIGN GUY, either gender, holds a stack of posters that should be visible to the audience, changing them periodically during the scene. The first is the original poster, which says "Romeo and Juliet" and on "Friday and Saturday ONLY!" Sign Guy drops that one (think the legendary INXS video) to reveal a new poster: "Now with a real live zombie!" and "Saturday night only!"

The next poster says: "Now with a real live zombie!"

The final poster: "Now with a
real ^dead ~~live~~ zombie!"

FIRST TECHIE

Do zombies drink soda?

SECOND TECHIE

Do they eat doughnuts?

CORA

The rules say we need an adult sponsor.

THIRD TECHIE

Are zombies smart enough to untie knots?

SECOND TECHIE

I'm not paying for a zombie to eat all my doughnuts.

CHAD

(Cornering Sydney:)

All this time we've been rehearsing - we haven't had a chance
to talk - really, really talk.

FIRST TECHIE

Since when did you ever pay?

CHAD

You wanna know my secret weapon?

SECOND TECHIE

I put in a dollar last month.

FIRST TECHIE

You put in a quarter last year.

CHAD

I confuse people. Everybody assumes I'm just here to meet
girls. And 'cause almost all the guys are either gay or
Mitchy, that totally works.

THIRD TECHIE

It would be really funny if they got loose and ate everybody.

SECOND TECHIE

Funny ha ha, or funny ironic?

CORA

The rules don't say "live" adult.

CHAD

But at the same time, I've got this sensitive side.

THIRD TECHIE
(Sarcastically:)

What do you think?

CHAD

I know - blows my mind too.

CORA

Can she sign with an X?

CHAD

My inner child is cuddly, he loves long walks on the beach,
and he's quite the little hottie.

EMILIA

Having a zombie sponsor our club is a major step forward for
equality.

CHAD

Maybe your inner child and my inner child...

CORA

Group photo!

All assemble with Zombie Homeless
Woman, a sign thrust into her
hands by Sign Guy that reads
"[Name of Your School] Drama
[Fill in the Year]." There's a
flash. Beat. The group
disperses until just the actors
and the Stage Manager are left on
stage as the lights come up full
for...

SCENE 2

The next afternoon. Rehearsal.
Zombie Homeless Woman moans and
drops her script.

CORA (CONT'D)

Mrs. Zombie Homeless Woman, hold onto your script.

MITCHY

She doesn't have any lines.

CORA

She still needs to follow along.

CHAD

Yeah, so shut up, Mitchy, or I'm gonna pound you.

SYDNEY

Here you go, Mrs. Zombie Homeless Woman.

Sydney holds out the dropped
script to Zombie Homeless Woman,
who bites her hand.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

(Hitting Zombie Homeless
Woman with the script:)

Ow!

JULIET

Are you OK?

SYDNEY

Don't bite. Biting is not nice, and you make nice people not
nice when you bite.

STAGE MANAGER

First aid kit!

A TECHIE runs off for the first
aid kit.

SYDNEY

I'm fine. She barely nicked me.
(Breathing deeply:)
I'm taking my calming breaths.

PESSIE

You're a goner.

SYDNEY

What?

STAGE MANAGER

Let's push through, people.

PESSIE

Did it break the skin?

Sydney looks. It did.

PESSIE (CONT'D)

You're toast.

SYDNEY

That is not nice, Pessie.

EMILIA

She's one of us. You should be more supportive.

JULIET

Yeah. Drama is like a team. Support.

PESSIE

I'm being honest with my teammate. Table for two in
Zombieland.

SYDNEY

I'm just going to wash up.

STAGE MANAGER

Everybody take five.

Exit the Stage Manager, Sydney,
Juliet and Emilia. Cora
contemplates Zombie Homeless
Woman, and Mitchy contemplates
Cora. Chad corners Pessie.

CHAD

You know, all this time in rehearsal, we haven't really had a
chance to talk. Not you and me. You wanna know my secret
weapon? I confuse people. 'Cause here I am, totally hot,
got the jock mojo working - is that the US army I hear in the
building - no, that's just the sound of my guns! Hooo! But
at the same time, I've got this sensitive side. My inner
child is tender, playful, he'll hold your hand and sit on
your lap. That's why I act.

(beat)

Maybe my inner child and your inner child could have a play
date.

PESSIE

Seriously?

She exits.

CHAD
(Following her off:)

What?

Cora approaches Zombie Homeless Woman.

CORA
What you're bringing to the Nurse is amazing. The way you wailed-

Zombie Homeless Woman moans.

CORA (CONT'D)
Yes, just like that - your sense of loss when you think I'm dead is so moving.

(Beat:)
You get it. The words are just - words, words, words - right? But you are going after the emotion. Shakespeare is all about emotion.

Zombie Homeless Woman moans.

CORA (CONT'D)
I thought we could practice. So I'm going to say an emotion, and you do it. Sad.

Zombie Homeless Woman moans.

CORA (CONT'D)
Good. Now happy.

Zombie Homeless Woman moans exactly the same.

CORA (CONT'D)
That was a little close to your sad moan.

Mitchy approaches Cora tentatively.

MITCHY
Cora, can I talk to you?

CORA
Try it again.

Zombie Homeless Woman moans exactly the same.

CORA (CONT'D)
I know it's hard. But sometimes you have to get past that self-consciousness and really go there.

MITCHY

It's really important.

CORA

Can't you see I'm collaborating?

MITCHY

This is a really bad idea.

CORA

(To Zombie Homeless Woman:)

Would you excuse us for one sec?

(As she steps aside to talk
to Mitchy:)

You're *this* close to just exploding that shell. Keep practicing.

(To Mitchy:)

What do you want?

MITCHY

Didn't you see what happened to Sydney?

CORA

She's fine.

MITCHY

What if she's not?

CORA

Why do you hate zombies so much? Zombies don't try to pull focus or step on your lines. Or ask you out in the middle of a show.

MITCHY

No. They'll just try to eat us.

CORA

You watch too many movies.

(Beat:)

I thought you liked me.

MITCHY

I do. You know I do. Not like I'd die for you or anything, but-

CORA

What?

MITCHY

Nothing.

CORA

I love acting. If you like me *that much*, why are you trying to destroy the one chance that people will actually come see me act?

MITCHY

I'm not.

CORA

It's my *life*, Mitchy.

MITCHY

I know.

CORA

Save my life.

STAGE MANAGER

(Entering:)

We're back, people.

CORA

(To Mitchy:)

Save. My. Life.

Enter the cast. Sydney, now a zombie, shambles in.

PESSIE

Yep. She's toast.

Sydney moans.

JULIET

OMG. Sydney, I'm so sorry.

EMILIA

Sydney, I want you to know that this doesn't change our relationship.

Sydney moans.

JULIET

Yes. We still think of you exactly the same. Movie night is totally on.

EMILIA

Emilia Durant stands by her friends.

(sotto to Wanda)

We're gonna need a rewrite on Lady Capulet.

Sydney moans as the lights fade.

SCENE 3

An hour later. The high school theater box office. Two bored BOX OFFICE KIDS sit around. They text, read, etc. A PHONE RINGS.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
 What's that?

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
 It's a phone.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
 It's not my cell.

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
 I've got a space alien ring tone.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
 Is there a box office phone?

They dig for the source of the RINGING and unearth an old school phone.

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
 I didn't know we had a phone.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
 What do we do?

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
 I don't know. This has never happened before.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
 I'm going for it.

First Box Office Kid picks up.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID (CONT'D)
 Hello? I mean, uh...

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
 (Whispers - say the name of the school:)
 _____ High School box office.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
 _____ High School box office. How may I help you?

Another RING. From here on out, the Box Office Kids are on a succession of phone calls.

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
Zombies? Uh yes. Yes we do.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
We have two zombies.

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
Yes, of course they act.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
Will they eat people?

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
I don't think they'll eat people.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
I don't know about that.

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
That's a definite maybe.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
Zombies do like to eat people.

SECOND BOX OFFICE KID
Come see who lives.

FIRST BOX OFFICE KID
Will anybody survive the show?

A succession of CALLERS, who could be live actors or voices, respond in the same sort of fast-paced "chorus."

CALLERS
We'll be there.
We wouldn't miss it.
I can't wait.
Zombies make me...hot.
I will totally pay money to watch people die.

Lights up on Cora's parents.

CORA'S MOM
Honey, we are so excited to see your play.

CORA'S DAD
Knock 'em legless, kid.

Lights fade and come up on...

SCENE 4

Wanda is deep into reading a book, or what appears to be a book. Sydney and Zombie Homeless Woman are tied up. Enter Mitchy carrying the prop sword. Wanda doesn't look up from her reading.

MITCHY

We have to do something.

(Beat.)

Wanda, this is getting out of control!

Wanda holds up a finger to tell him to wait. Pause. She lowers the book.

WANDA

Isn't that supposed to be on the prop table?

MITCHY

First the homeless lady, now Sydney - we've got to do something before it's too late.

WANDA

What do you wanna do - cut Sydney's head off?

MITCHY

She's not really Sydney. Not really.

WANDA

She baked you chocolate and butterscotch chip cookies three days ago.

MITCHY

She baked them for the whole cast.

WANDA

They were awesome cookies.

MITCHY

Chad took mine.

WANDA

Some part of her, deep down, may still be the girl who baked cookies. The experts are split.

Beat. Mitchy goes over to Sydney and Zombie Homeless Woman.

MITCHY

Sydney?

Sydney moans.

MITCHY (CONT'D)

(Going back to Wanda:)

They're gonna get loose. You know they'll get loose and start picking us off one by one.

(Beat.)

What if I off the homeless lady? We don't know her.

WANDA

Cora will never speak to you again if you ruin the show, and cutting anybody's head off with that prop sword would take hours.

MITCHY

I brought other weapons. I have a-

WANDA

Places are in an hour. We just have to make it through the performance.

MITCHY

And then what?

WANDA

Unfortunately, then I think we get sharper swords.

MITCHY

(Beat.)

Watcha reading?

WANDA

Rhinoceros.

This doesn't register with Mitchy. Beat.

WANDA (CONT'D)

The play about a whole town gradually turning into rhinoceri written in French by a mid-20th century Romanian playwright commenting on the rise of the Nazis?

MITCHY

OK...

(Beat.)

So if we're still performing in an hour, don't you have to do the rewrites now that Sydney's a...

WANDA

That's just taking a pen and going-

(Makes a slashing motion and accompanying sound effect:)

to all her lines.

MITCHY

That's not- Yeah. I guess it is.

(Beat.)

Do you think there's something wrong with me?

WANDA

Of course there's something wrong with you.

MITCHY

Oh.

WANDA

There's something wrong with everybody.

MITCHY

That's...wait - is that deep, or do I just not get it?

WANDA

It's deep.

MITCHY

So if there's something wrong with everybody - I don't know where I'm going with this... I don't know where I'm going with anything.

WANDA

There's something wrong with everybody in the eyes of somebody. Or somebodies. So either you let their eyes be yours, or you decide how to see yourself.

MITCHY

(Beat.)

I'm in awe of you.

WANDA

But Cora's the one you like.

MITCHY

Well, uh...

(Beat.)

Wait - are you saying you-

WANDA

And to you, there's something wrong with me.

MITCHY

No. You just always ignore me.

WANDA

I ignore everyone.

MITCHY

True.

(Beat.)

I just thought you were like everybody else.

WANDA

Nobody is like everybody else.

MITCHY

I think that was deep again.

(Beat.)

I think I want to kiss you.

They move closer together, as awkwardly as can be. Enter the Stage Manager just in time to ruin the mood.

STAGE MANAGER

You have those rewrites? I need to make copies for the crew.

Wanda grabs the pages on the table, takes a marker and crosses things out rather brutally.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)

Don't worry - I'm the stage manager. Creating awkward moments and not reacting at all is part of the job.

WANDA

(Holding out the pages:)

Here.

STAGE MANAGER

(Exiting with the pages:)

Continue.

MITCHY

So, uh...

WANDA

I'll uh...

MITCHY

I'll see you at warm-ups?

WANDA

Yeah.

Lights dim as time passes, and they exit and are replaced by Juliet and Pessie, now guarding Sydney and Zombie Homeless Woman, still tied up.

The zombies make occasional moans and look woeful and hungry as they try to move forward but can't.

JULIET

She looks so peaceful.

PESSIE

She has no brain.

JULIET

That's not true.

(Beat.)

Sydney?

Sydney moans.

JULIET (CONT'D)

See? She recognizes her name.

PESSIE

So does my dog.

JULIET

You're not very nice.

PESSIE

I'm nice to my dog.

JULIET

And maybe it's not so bad being Sydney. She doesn't have to do her homework anymore or study for the math midterm, which by the way is going to be horrible, and she can be in the play and not have to memorize lines. She doesn't have to worry about college applications and a failing grade on a paper about Schrödinger's Cat because she thought she was supposed to write about taking care of your pets. And she definitely doesn't have her parents on her case 24/7, pushing her to play on the boys' soccer team and never giving her a free second because every single thing she does is the most important event in her entire life and the path you walk is set in stone forever by what happens here. Or asking why don't you have a boyfriend or don't you think that boy is cute and why don't you ask him so you can finally go to a dance with someone, and she doesn't have to watch the cast list for Romeo and Juliet go up and explain why your name is Juliet and you can't even get cast as yourself.

PESSIE

(Beat.)

You won't be in high school forever.

Were you just- JULIET

No. PESSIE

I didn't think so. JULIET

PESSIE
If a bus runs you over, it's like saying, "You won't be lying there forever."

JULIET
That's what I thought.
(Going toward the zombies:)
It's just not worth it.

PESSIE
Wait - you were right! I was totally being supportive and optimistic. You can do it, Juliet!

The zombies grab Juliet.

JULIET
You couldn't have said that five seconds ago?

Want to read the rest? Follow the instructions on the play's page to order a perusal copy!