

The Zombies Walk Among Us

By Brian Kral

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DEDICATION

*This play is dedicated to my twin muses, Dale and Harper,
And to the resilient souls of Port-au-Prince*

STORY OF THE PLAY

When a devastating earthquake strikes Haiti, age-old fears and superstitions rise to the surface in civilized Port-au-Prince. For Alanis Ducette, the daughter of an aid worker, it brings nightmares of her dead sister and a conviction that zombies are intruding on everyday life. To exorcize her nightmares, she enters the threatening world of Haitian vodou and black magic—and uncovers a mystery no one in her family had dared reveal. About an hour.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

October 1-10, 2010. Rainbow Company Youth Theatre, Las Vegas, Nevada, with the following cast: Sasha Bond, Katarina Renee, Dale Segal-Kral, Martha Watson, Benjamin Onyx Dowdy, Shannon Lutz, Harper Kral, Conrad Kauffman, Michael Syverson, Audrey Cordero, Jackie Shick, Jenaisy Alfonso, Morgan Johnson, Alex Krabiel, Chelsea McLin, Alexis Phillips, Aleja Quinn, Ayoolu Walker, Tatiana Elizabeth Weiford and Francisco Weller.

* * *

The first production was dedicated to the outstanding South African actor Zakes Mokae, and to producer Val Lewton, creator of classic RKO horror films *Cat People* and *I Walked with a Zombie*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 6 w, 6 flex, plus ensemble, doubling possible)

Alanis Ducette (f): A teenager

Houngan Bossuet (m): Vodou conjurer or zombie master who serves the dark powers

Sinette (f): Older teen, assistant to Houngan Bossuet and Chantal's sister

Camilla Ducette (f): Alanis's dead sister

Daphne Ducette (f): A doctor and Alanis's mother

Chantal (f): A native Haitian teenager

Marie Plantain / Ti Marie (f): A psychologist

Teacher (flex): Educator who becomes a zombie

Lucien Ducette (m): Alanis's father

Servant (flex): French speaking servant of Lucien's named Simone

Worker (flex): A worker on the street

Clergy (flex): Delivers the eulogy at a funeral

Two Sports Fans (flex): Young soccer fans

Extras (flex): Zombies, Family Members at funeral, Vodou Dancer, and Vodou Ceremony Drummer

As written, students, soccer players, and tourists are not seen; however, a director may wish to cast extras for these characters.

PROPS

Large standing drum, clothes, bookbags, pillow, portable CD player, laptop computer, notes, reference books, portable TV, tooth, large steel barrel, thermos or pint of clear rum, crackers, aerosol/spray cheese, tray, paper cups, small bottle, older cell phone, wooden crate, boombox, small barbecue grill, large spoon, worn pot, small pill bottle, disposable picnic plates, beans and rice, forks, chair, paper napkin, matches or small light, candles, dark reddish colored rock, machete, thunderstone rock (see production notes), enamel bowl, alcohol, cloth, two jars of cornmeal, iPhone, oil lanterns, flashlight, two rolls of centimes or coins, scissors, pillow, long bamboo tube with brown powder, and a container holding Camilla's ashes.

PLACE

Port-au-Prince, about six months after the 2010 earthquake.

Scene 1: Graveyard, tent compound

Scene 2: Tent compound

Scene 3: Classroom

Scene 4: Tent compound

Scene 5: Alanis's father's home, the street

Scene 6: Graveyard with a raised tomb, tonnelle
(ceremonial arch)

Scene 7: Street, tent compound

Scene 8: Tent compound, the hounfour (temple) with a tonnelle, also a small hut with a spiderweb-type rope covering the entrance.

Scene 9: Tent compound

Scene 10: High point overlooking the coast.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Additional notes are at the end of the script, including staging notes, special effects, definitions of French or Haitian/Creole italicized dialogue, and Scene 4 alternative without alcohol.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Night. ALANIS DUCETTE looks down at a fog-choked graveyard from her tent compound. Just outside the graveyard, HOUNGAN BOSSUET pounds a sinister rhythmic beat upon a large standing drum, while SINETTE dances.)

UNIDENTIFIED HAITIAN VOICE: *(Heard above the drumming.)* In Haiti, there was always hunger and sorrow. But you also found joy...and great mystery.

(SFX: An earthquake. Within the graveyard, tombs shift, their concrete memorial slabs cracking, revealing bodies in and on the ground. SFX: There is a long silence, followed by a resumed drumbeat, similar now to a heartbeat, which leads into stronger percussion and rock and roll underscoring. Out of the graves and from the ground rise several ZOMBIES, responding to the strong musical beat. Their clothing represents both present day Haiti and its French Colonial period. The zombies shamle out towards the audience, engulfing the auditorium, as ALANIS watches from her separate vantage.

Behind Alanis, CAMILLA, dressed in a ghostly white communion gown, rises up and slowly approaches Alanis. As Camilla grabs her sister's shoulders, ALANIS screams and pulls away, falling forward into the graveyard.

The ZOMBIES notice ALANIS and now turn to steadily close in on her. She eludes them by leading them on a chase first through the graveyard, before returning to the elevated area, which is part of a tent compound for refugees and medical volunteers. Alanis runs to her tent and tries to wake DAPHNE, who sleeps on a cot. The zombies clamber up onto the elevated area in pursuit of Alanis and slowly begin to converge on her, forcing her to run away from them.

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BOSSUET and SINETTE go to the area where Daphne sleeps and enter the tent. Together, the Houngan and Sinette tip the cot upright, bringing DAPHNE to a standing position, although her eyes have remained closed. CAMILLA extends a hand towards her mother, and Daphne's eyes snap open. She moves slowly towards her deceased daughter, like a sleepwalker. Camilla takes her mother's hand and begins to lead her off.

ALANIS tries to run past the ZOMBIES, to stop her mother from leaving with Camilla, but she is pushed aside by them and then held back by BOSSUET and SINETTE. CAMILLA leads her MOTHER away, followed by the slowly moving zombies. Houngan Bossuet and Sinette release Alanis. The Houngan blows a handful of white powder into her face, and he and Sinette follow the group. Silence. Alanis is left alone in the stillness of the tent compound. She moves wearily back into the tent and lies down on the cot, where she falls asleep. BLACKOUT.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The next morning in the tent compound. A cloth folding screen is US. ALANIS is lying on the cot inside her tent, although she is clearly awake. CHANTAL sits in a small folding camp chair, holding clothes in her lap for Alanis and a bookbag for school.)

CHANTAL: *(Shaking head.)* I've had some weird dreams, too since that big earthquake, Alanis, but nothin' involvin' zombies and graveyards.

ALANIS: How do you know they were zombies?

CHANTAL: From the way you said they moved. And the blank looks in their eyes when they were chasin' you. Those were some old-time zombies for sure, girl.

ALANIS: Then why didn't they try to eat me?

CHANTAL: Now you're just talking silly. Zombies ain't cannibals. They're just bodies whose souls have been taken from 'em. They don't have no will of their own. They can only do what a *bokor*—a zombie master—tells 'em to. They don't care 'bout eatin' people. And they hain't got no goofy virus like rabies, makin' 'em foam at the mouth and spit up green stuff. You've seen too many Hollywood movies. They make all that up.

ALANIS: *(Thinking.)* There was someone there who seemed to be leading them, who wasn't a zombie.

CHANTAL: *(Nodding.)* That was the *bokor*. They're the ones you have to be afraid of.

ALANIS: I don't know. The zombies were pretty scary, too. And what was my sister doing there?

CHANTAL: Is she the one who died here in Haiti?

ALANIS: Yeah. About eight years ago.

(Slight pause. CHANTAL looks down.)

CHANTAL: I can't tell you nothin' about that. Just the strange way things are in dreams.

ALANIS: What do you think it means?

End of Freeview

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