

MURDER IN A CEMETERY

By

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Dedicated to my favorite Murderpros. #DyingForALiving

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LADY SANGUINA (F) - A stereotypical vampire. The hostess of the crypt-warming party. Think red, black, and capes.

IGOR (M or F) - Lady Sanguina's head servant. Wears a dusty suit. British accent, lisp. Big into scientific experimentation. For the purposes of this script, Igor will be he/him.

R.M. STEIN (M or F) - From the Law Offices of Fred & Stein. Lady Sanguina's lover. Has small, tasteful bolts in the neck, maybe a few subtle stitches on the face. For the purposes of this script, R.M. will be he/him.

YOLANDA HUMMINGBIRD (F) - Lady Sanguina's best friend forever. A New-Age witch. Lots of healing crystals. Probably some glitter.

PETUNIA/JASPER "SCRATCH" N. SNIFF (F or M) - A werewolf unaware of their werewolfery. Messy hair. Invited to the party by Doctor von Doktor. For the purposes of this script, Scratch will be she/her.

DOCTOR VON DOKTOR (M or F) - A doctor to the supernatural. Secretly in love with Scratch. For the purposes of this script, the doctor will be he/him.

ZOMBIE SID (NB) - A zombie friend of Lady Sanguina's. Igor's ex. Aggressively nonbinary. Can only speak in grunts and groans. Translations are in Appendix A, and are numbered to correspond to each line.

BRUCE MCCLANE (M) – Private investigator. Jimmy's dad. Grizzled. One cool customer until he's riled, though once he is riled he is VERY LOUD.

JIMMY MCCLANE (M) - Bruce's teenage son. Jenny's boyfriend. Earnest. "Golly!"

JENNY JAMES (F) - Teenager, Jimmy's girlfriend. From the wrong side of the tracks. Leather jacket and jeans.

PROFESSOR BLUDD (M or F) - A classic vampire. Dresses like a professor - think elbow patches. Looks middle-aged, is quite a good deal older than middle-aged. Is definitely Better Than You. Outranks Lady Sanguina in a vampire world. For the purposes of this script, Professor Bludd will be he/him. Translations of Professor Bludd's latin lines are in Appendix B, and are numbered to correspond to each line.

GERALDINE PIM (F) - A representative from the Hierarchical Organization for Wayward Lycanthropes (H.O.W.L.). Just at the crypt to reach out to Scratch. Dressed professionally.

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ACT I
SCENE 1

The living room in LADY SANGUINA's crypt. The furniture is Victorian and very uninviting. There is a large horizontal sarcophagus upstage center. There are three doors, one on stage left, two towards stage right. The door at stage left is the door to the outside. The door at the far right is to the dining room, and the door closer to center is to a hallway leading to the rest of the crypt.

LADY SANGUINA and R.M. STEIN enter from the hallway door, carrying some black crepe paper and tape. They are in the middle of an argument. Lady Sanguina speaks over-the-top formally, while R.M. speaks with a normal, modern tone. As they argue, they are twisting the crepe paper and hanging it along the walls.

SANGUINA. I have told you before that I do not wish to speak about this with you.

R.M. You're being ridiculous. We both know that you're being ridiculous.

SANGUINA. It is you who is ridiculous.

R.M. Very mature. Maybe you should act your age—oh, except you won't tell me what that is.

SANGUINA. You are aware that I am a...new...vampire.

R.M. (*Exasperated.*) New like what? Like last year? Or like a hundred years ago?

SANGUINA. I have told you before that I do not wish to—

R.M. Speak about this with me, yeah, I know. I'm just trying to get some context, here. I mean, we've been together for four months and you won't even tell me who turned you into a vampire in the first place! And I told you who reanimated me! I even told you my *real name*.

SANGUINA. Dr. Stein didn't name you, he initialed you. Remains comma Mortal. "R.M." It is a charming name.

R.M. If you say so. But I told you about all that on our third date.

SANGUINA. It was so romantic. (*Gracefully, she takes his arm.*) The moonlight highlighted the stitches on your face winsomely.

R.M. That was such a beautiful night. You looked terrifying.

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SANGUINA. (*Touched.*) Thank you.

R.M. I offered to let you drink my blood that night. You remember?

SANGUINA. So thoughtful.

R.M. (*Pulling away from her.*) I wanted to share that with you. The blood and, you know, the experience of giving it to you. (*Pause.*) Or whatever. But you won't even tell me your name.

SANGUINA. It is Lady Sanguina, as you well know.

R.M. Your real name. The name you were born with.

SANGUINA. When a vampire is *reborn*, they receive their true name. Mine is Sanguina.

R.M. (*With a sigh.*) You're right, I'm sorry. (*Lady Sanguina sniffs and adjusts her cape. They return to hanging the crepe paper. Brief pause.*) You don't have to act so smug about it.

SANGUINA. I have never in my unlife been smug.

R.M. Yes, you have. You're smug all the time. It's like your default setting. You're the Queen of Smug. (*Pause.*)

SANGUINA. If anything, I am the *Lady* of Smug.

R.M. (*Fed up.*) All right, that's it. (*He steps away from the crepe paper, crossing his arms. Lady Sanguina crosses to him, tries to enfold him in a hug, then pulls away sharply.*)

SANGUINA. What's that you're wearing?

R.M. Special necklace. Wore it just for you. Silver. (*Lady Sanguina steps back, surprised.*)

SANGUINA. Come now, my dear...

R.M. Maybe I won't stay for dinner tonight. Maybe I'll go out to eat.

SANGUINA. There is no call to be dramatic. Where would you go, if not here?

R.M. I'd go for *Italian*. (*He stalks off through the door to the hall.*)

SANGUINA. Talk to me! (*Lady Sanguina sweeps after him, but before she can make it far, IGOR pops through the dining room door.*)

IGOR. Mistress Sanguina.

SANGUINA. Igor, I have told you many times that it is "Lady Sanguina."

IGOR. Of course, Mistress. I just wanted to ask your opinion on something to do with the dinner service.

SANGUINA. (*Impatient.*) What is it?

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IGOR. Some of the caterers insist that the guests will not enjoy the blood sausages or the blood soup. They think there should be some sort of vegetarian option.

SANGUINA. Such as?

IGOR. Some seasoned summer squash perhaps? I have some growing in my basement lab, and they only very slightly glow in the dark. (*YOLANDA HUMMINGBIRD enters from the dining room, pushing Igor aside. She wraps Lady Sanguina in a hug, and Lady Sanguina looks a little uncomfortable.*)

YOLANDA. The place looks great! I've already put the blessings on the bathrooms and the dining room, but I wanted to wait until everyone gets here to do the blessing on the whole crypt. I used some powdered Sasquatch fur for a ritual in one of the bathrooms so it kind of smells like B.O. in there, sorry.

SANGUINA. Good evening, Yolanda. I trust you slept well today?

YOLANDA. Yeah, *all* day, 'cause you kept me up all night doing that inspection tour of the crypt with the bigwigs. Plus all the party prep! It was worth it, though, it's super goth-y in here. I'm so excited for you!

IGOR. Mistress Sanguina?

SANGUINA. Yolanda, what do you think of summer squash for the vegetarians?

YOLANDA. Yum!

SANGUINA. Summer squash is acceptable, Igor.

IGOR. Yes, Mistress. And there was that other matter I wanted to speak to you about, Mistress, if you've a moment?

SANGUINA. I'm not sure if now is the time, Igor.

IGOR. Well, yes, I understand, but you did say we would speak of it again this week, so if I can just bend your ear...?

SANGUINA. What is it?

IGOR. It's about my salary. I've been employed as your servant—

SANGUINA. —assistant—

IGOR. As you say, your assistant, for a goodly amount of time now, and I just wondered...?

SANGUINA. Wondered?

IGOR. If you could see your way towards giving me a raise?

SANGUINA. Oh. Uh. Well, you see, Igor, the thing is...I've just had all this work done to my new home, and I'm just not sure if my budget can stretch to...I had it in mind that we would talk about this in the new year. Funds are limited, you understand.

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IGOR. But I had thought you were independently wealthy!

SANGUINA. My cash is...all tied up in investments right now. Stocks and things like that.

IGOR. Stocks. I see.

SANGUINA. Perhaps in the next quarter.

IGOR. Perhaps. (*Beat.*) If you'll excuse me, ladies, I'll attend to the dinner staff. And apparently I've some Sasquatch to clean out of one of the bathrooms. Miss Hummingbird. (*He nods to Yolanda and Lady Sanguina, then exits.*)

YOLANDA. (*To Lady Sanguina.*) I heard you and R.M. fighting again. Everything okay?

SANGUINA. Some of the recurrent issues of which I have made you aware. (*She drops the stiff formality.*) He just doesn't wanna *listen*, Yolanda!

YOLANDA. He'll come around. He loves you!

SANGUINA. Yeah. (*She spots the half-finished crepe paper decorations.*) Oh whoops, I gotta finish hanging this.

YOLANDA. I'll help, here. (*They work on hanging the crepe.*)

SANGUINA. He really wants me to drink his blood. It's like, ugh. Can he just move past it or what?

YOLANDA. You could just drink it? How bad could it be?

SANGUINA. You know why I can't. (*They finish with the crepe paper, and stand back, surveying it.*)

YOLANDA. Well, it's very...

SANGUINA. It's chintzy.

YOLANDA. Distinguished? Here, let me try something. (*She pulls off one of her crystal necklaces and waves it around at the decorations.*) Oh goddesses of the Earth, show us the true glory of this crepe paper! (*Beat.*)

SANGUINA. It's crap. I'm taking it down. (*Lady Sanguina starts tearing down the paper. After a minute, Yolanda helps. When they've finished, Lady Sanguina wads it up into a ball and flops onto the sofa.*)

SANGUINA. (*Continued.*) I just want my party to be perfect, Yolanda.

YOLANDA. (*Sitting next to her.*) It will be. I promise. Just wait'll I do my blessing! Everything will be uplifted.

SANGUINA. (*Not believing her.*) Yeah, sure.

YOLANDA. I'm serious! You remember that time when Stevie Pinkman made you cry when we were ten? And I did a curse on him?

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SANGUINA. I remember I threw sand in his face.

YOLANDA. Well, I was still in training. But don't you feel better knowing that I cursed all of his descendents? And of course you've seen his Facebook page.

SANGUINA. I don't think I have. People usually don't friend you on Facebook when you throw sand in their faces.

YOLANDA. Both of his kids have cankles.

SANGUINA. Right. *(Pause.)* What are cankles again?

YOLANDA. All I'm saying is that if I could do magic like that when I was ten, just think what I can do for you now, after years in training. You'll see; it'll bolster everyone's spirits.

SANGUINA. No, I don't want any spirits in the crypt! We had enough trouble with the poltergeist. *(The doorbell rings. It is a few notes of a funeral dirge. Lady Sanguina stands in a hurry and hustles to the dining room door.)* Igor! *(Igor pops his head out of the door instantly.)*

IGOR. Yes, Mistress?

YOLANDA. How did he get here so fast?

SANGUINA. *(To Igor, shoving the crepe paper into his hands.)* Please dispose of this. I must attend to my guests.

IGOR. Yes, Mistress. As you command.

SANGUINA. And the door?

IGOR. Yes, of course. *(Igor crosses to the door and opens it. ZOMBIE SID is waiting on the other side. They are wearing a jacket or sweater with a name tag reading "They/Them" on it. When the door opens, Zombie Sid catches Igor's eye. They stare at each other for a moment, then Zombie Sid turns their head away, embarrassed.)*

SID. Unnnnh... [1] *(Igor, remembering himself, hustles out the dining room door.)*

SANGUINA. *(To Zombie Sid.)* Zombie Sid! What an absolute delight to have you here. Yolanda, do you know Zombie Sid?

YOLANDA. I can't say I've had the, uh, pleasure.

SANGUINA. Zombie Sid, this is an old friend of mine, Yolanda Hummingbird, she is the witch who will be placing a blessing on my crypt. Yolanda, this is Zombie Sid.

YOLANDA. She's a zombie, I'm guessing.

SID. *(Pointing at name tag.)* Mmmnnnuhhhhh... [2]

SANGUINA. Zombie Sid prefers the pronouns they/them.

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YOLANDA. Right, sorry. (*Zombie Sid lurches toward Yolanda and extends a hand to shake.*)

SID. Nnnnuh puhhh meeeeh hunh. [3] (*Zombie Sid and Yolanda shake hands. Yolanda is trying not to look too disgusted.*)

YOLANDA. Nice to meet you, too.

SANGUINA. Yolanda, I've neglected to provide you with a drink. Allow me to fetch one for you now. Nothing for you, I assume, Zombie Sid? (*To both of them.*) Please, have a seat. Make yourselves comfortable. (*Lady Sanguina exits. Yolanda sits on the end of the couch. Zombie Sid shuffles over and sits directly next to her. Yolanda tries to subtly cover her nose with her sleeve. She coughs.*)

YOLANDA. So...um...how long have you known Lady Sanguina?

SID. Uhh huhhmmmmuh puh mmmeeeeeuh huhh— [4] (*The doorbell rings again. Yolanda lunges off the couch and opens the door. PROFESSOR BLUDD is on the other side, his nose already turned up at the room. You get the idea that if he could be standing dramatically holding an opera cape over his face, he would be.*)

YOLANDA. Professor Bludd! Great to see you again after the tour last night.

BLUDD. Yes.

YOLANDA. Zombie Sid, this is Professor Bludd, he's the grand pooh-bah something—

BLUDD. The grand high monarch of the Eastern Region of Vampire Kind.

YOLANDA. That. (*To Professor Bludd.*) This is Zombie Sid. (*Zombie Sid heaves themselves off the couch to shake hands.*)

BLUDD. Ah. I see Lady Sanguina is once again showing her liberal tendencies. Inviting a zombie to a crypt-warming. Very unusual. (*He shakes Zombie Sid's hand with mild distaste.*)

SID. Hehmmmmmmmm. [5]

BLUDD. Quite. (*R.M. enters from the hall door.*)

R.M. I thought I heard the doorbell ring; hello again, Professor Bludd.

BLUDD. Ah. You're the lawyer, yes? From the inspection last night?

R.M. My firm, Fred & Stein, helped with the building permits, yeah. Oh, and Zombie Sid. (*To Zombie Sid.*) How's that case on property rights after death coming along? I know you're working with my partner on it.

SID. Uhhnnnnnn, mih-mih. [6] (*So-so. Zombie Sid waggles a hand.*)

R.M. It'll get there. (*There is a knock on the door. Proffer Bludd opens it, revealing GERALDINE PIM, looking very professional in black and white. She cranes her*

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neck to look around at the people in the room. She opens her mouth to speak, but Professor Bludd cuts her off.)

BLUDD. Who are you?

GERALDINE. Geraldine Pim. I've come looking for—

BLUDD. We're not interested in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, thank you very much, goodbye. *(He closes the door in her face. Lady Sanguina appears at the dining room door again, holding a drink for Yolanda.)*

SANGUINA. Yolanda, here you are. *(She hands Yolanda the drink.)* Ah, Professor Bludd. Welcome. *(Coolly.)* R.M.

R.M. Sanguina. *(The doorbell rings. Lady Sanguina glides over to the door and opens it, revealing DOCTOR VON DOKTOR and PETUNIA "SCRATCH" N. SNIFF.)*

SANGUINA. Wonderful! Come in, please. Everyone, this is Doctor von Doktor. And who is this you've brought along with you?

DOCTOR. This is Petunia N. Sniff, a former client of mine from a prior practice.

SCRATCH. My friends call me "Scratch."

SANGUINA. Welcome, Scratch. *(Igor enters from the dining room.)*

IGOR. Would anyone care for drinks?

R.M. *(With great fervor.)* Yes, please. I'll have a gin and tonic. *(Igor goes around the room taking the rest of the drink orders quietly while the conversation continues, and eventually exits. Lady Sanguina goes with him.)* Doctor, I don't think we've met. *(They shake hands.)* And, may I ask, why "Scratch"?

SCRATCH. It's a little embarrassing. I had a bad case of fleas when I was a kid. I scratched so much that—

R.M. *(Laughing.)* Right, right. Well, let me introduce you two around the room. This is Yolanda, Zombie Sid, and—

DOCTOR. Hello Zombie Sid. Hello Professor Bludd. *(To R.M.)* Two of my patients.

SCRATCH. Excuse me. Is he a zombie? *(Zombie Sid once more indicates their name tag.)*

SID. Hunnnnnnh. [7]

SCRATCH. Sorry. They. Are *they* a zombie? A real one? *(Igor quietly re-enters with a tray of drinks and quickly serves them to each of the party guests - except for Zombie Sid, who doesn't drink since they are a zombie. Conversation continues*

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lowly in the background between Zombie Sid, R.M., and Professor Bludd while the Doctor and Scratch converse.)

DOCTOR. I did tell you what kind of party this is, didn't I?

SCRATCH. I didn't expect it to be so...in-your-face. And you know so many of the guests already!

DOCTOR. It's a small community, and you know, there aren't that many doctors like me who specialize in this particular type of clientele.

SCRATCH. I see.

DOCTOR. You really have to work all hours with this group! *(The Doctor laughs awkwardly.)*

SCRATCH. It was nice of you to invite me. I thought it would be awkward since I used to be your patient and all, but I feel like I've gotten to know you a little better since you started volunteering at the animal shelter.

DOCTOR. *(Joking.)* It's for the dogs!

SCRATCH. Yeah, I work there for the dogs, too.

DOCTOR. No, it was a joke.

SCRATCH. It was?

DOCTOR. "For the dogs"? No? *(An uncomfortable moment. Doctor and Scratch both sip their drinks.)* I guess I know why you work at the animal shelter.

SCRATCH. Yeah, for the dogs. *(Doctor laughs, and Scratch is confused.)*

DOCTOR. No, I just meant that—of course you have a natural affinity to, to the animals, given your condition.

SCRATCH. My condition?

DOCTOR. Not that I mind. I mean, I wouldn't have asked you to come if I minded.

SCRATCH. Minded what? *(Igor taps his fingernail against R.M.'s glass to get everyone's attention.)*

IGOR. Excuse me, everyone. It is an honor to welcome you all here to my Mistress's crypt. The establishment of this home has been a long time coming, so we are all here to celebrate its successful completion. And now, allow me to introduce the hostess herself: Lady Sanguina! *(Lady Sanguina enters to polite applause from the guests and Igor.)*

SANGUINA. Thank you all very much for being here. As Igor was saying, this day has seemed just over the horizon for over a year—now it's finally here, and I am so

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pleased to welcome you all to my new home. We are going to have a lovely dinner in just a little while, with blood sausages and soup, among other things—

IGOR. Some succulently seasoned summer squash—

SANGUINA. Yes, thank you, some (*Inadvertently copying Igor's lisp.*) theath—*seasoned* summer squash. Before we do that, however, my dear friend Yolanda Hummingbird, a witch of no small prominence, has agreed to do a blessing on the crypt. Yolanda? (*Yolda steps forward, removing several crystal necklaces as she does so. She bows her head for a moment, deep breathing.*)

YOLANDA. (*Suddenly, startling several people.*) OH!, spirits! Bring protection to those in this household from those out there who would wish harm on its occupants! (*She waves various crystals in different directions as she continues.*) Bring in only those who will not hurt us! Protection from outsiders—ha! Let us all be successful in our endeavors! Success—ha! Bring interest and excitement to our lives (or unlives)! Excitement—ha! Bless this home! Bless this crypt! In the name of mother Earth! (*She takes out a handful of glitter and blows it into the air. A lot of it gets onto Scratch, who sneezes.*) Thank you. (*More polite applause.*)

SANGUINA. Thank you, Yolanda. We all feel a little blessed now, I believe. Anyhow. If anyone is interested, dinner is being served in the dining room. Please join us! (*All start making their way toward the dining room. Igor insinuates himself in front of Zombie Sid.*)

IGOR. Zombie Sid, I just wanted you to know. I remember you eat a lot of other sorts of brains, but I know how hard it can be to come by *human* brains, so I took the liberty of growing one in my lab. It's been prepared with special attention by the cook tonight.

SID. (*Touched.*) Yuuuuhhhhh muhhhh bwahhhhhh...fuh meh? [8]

IGOR. Yes, well. (*They look at each other for a moment. It gets awkward.*) I just remembered from when we...excuse me. (*Igor exits, and Zombie Sid lurches offstage as well. Lady Sanguina is the last to exit, but before she can, there's a knock on the outside door. She crosses and answers. Geraldine Pim is standing there again.*)

GERALDINE. Hello, I'm looking for—

SANGUINA. Why is there a stranger at my door? Did we not *just put* a blessing on this house?

GERALDINE. I don't mean to intrude—

SANGUINA. Listen. I am very important in the vampire community, and—

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GERALDINE. Vampire?

SANGUINA. Yes. Vampire. I am a vampire.

GERALDINE. You?

SANGUINA. What exactly about this is confusing.

GERALDINE. Sorry. You just don't seem to...you're not...

SANGUINA. Excuse me, but I do not have time for this foolishness. I am hosting a party!

GERALDINE. If I could just speak to— *(Lady Sanguina slams the door in Geraldine's face. She composes herself, then floats her way dramatically across the stage and through the dining room door. The stage is empty for a moment. There is a rattle at the outside door, as if someone is picking the lock. The door abruptly opens and two teenagers spill through it: JENNY JAMES and JIMMY MCCLANE. Jenny looks tough in a leather jacket, t-shirt and jeans, while Jimmy looks very prep.)*

JIMMY. Aren't we going to get in trouble for sneaking into the cemetery?

JENNY. Nah. We're very sneaky.

JIMMY. *You're very sneaky. (Jenny pokes at Jimmy's stomach to make him laugh, which he does, and then he closes the door behind them.)*

JENNY. *(Looking around.)* I thought this was just gonna be some empty mausoleum, but this is like...kinda swank.

JIMMY. I know, gosh!

JENNY. *(Fondly.)* "Gosh"? Is this the 1950s?

JIMMY. *(Bashful.)* Come on.

JENNY. You're adorable when you blush.

JIMMY. At least they have an actual casket in here. *(He crosses to the sarcophagus and jumps up to sit on it.)* Even if this does look like Dracula's sitting room.

JENNY. Your dad's not gonna follow us, is he?

JIMMY. I turned off the creepy nanny-tracking app on my phone. Jeez, I don't get why he can't just be cool about us spending time together! I'm sixteen. I'm basically an adult.

JENNY. Sure you are, champ. *(They grin at each other, holding hands.)* He just knows that I'm a bad influence on you.

JIMMY. You're a great influence on me! You got me a part-time job working with you at the shoe store.

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JENNY. Yes, because I selfishly wanted you to spend more time with me. (*She hops up onto the sarcophagus next to him.*) But let's face it: I am the one who convinced you to break into a tomb with me.

JIMMY. You bring me to the nicest places. (*More grinning, then Jenny sobers.*)

JENNY. At least your dad cares, you know? My family doesn't give a single crap about where I am right now. As long as I keep the paychecks coming.

JIMMY. I'm sorry.

JENNY. (*It's not okay.*) It's okay. Gotta feed the 'rents habits, right? Earn my keep.

JIMMY. You deserve better.

JENNY. I have better. I've got you.

JIMMY. Aw, gee.

JENNY. (*Laughing.*) Seriously? Where do you *come* from?

SANGUINA. (*Offstage.*) Well, if everyone's finished, I suppose we can move along with drinks in the parlor! (*Jenny and Jimmy look at each other. Uh-oh.*)

JIMMY. There are people here? We should hide.

JENNY. You're such a wuss. (*She punches him affectionately, then pulls him down from the sarcophagus with her, and around behind it. They duck down so they are no longer visible from the audience. The party guests trickle in again, everyone except for Igor, most of them looking vaguely queasy and all of them holding drinks.*)

SANGUINA. (*As she enters.*) You all eat so quickly! I suppose you were just eager to get to the after-dinner drinks. (*All nod, give various affirmatives.*) Yes, that's what I thought. Oh, excuse me. (*She touches her mouth as if something is bothering her there. Her next speech is garbled, as if she has something in her mouth.*) If you'll pardon me, I need to freshen my makeup. (*She exits. The party guests, who were barely holding together rictuses, drop the act with great relief.*)

SCRATCH. I don't want to be rude, but—did that squash seem kind of...glowy...to you? (*Another chorus of affirmatives.*)

DOCTOR. I thought I was prepared for anything tonight, but I'm just not sure how prepared I could be for blood soup.

BLUDD. I found the soup very pleasant.

R.M. Of course you did.

SID. Wuhh muhh bwayyym wuhh shmishhhummm. [9]

SCRATCH. What did they say?

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YOLANDA. I'm glad you enjoyed your food, Zombie Sid. (*Igor enters, holding a tray of beverages.*)

IGOR. More drinks, anyone?

R.M. I will...yes... (*He holds up a finger and drains his beverage, then exchanges it with a full glass from Igor.*) Absolutely, thank you.

IGOR. (*Going to Professor Bludd.*) Another glass of O-positive for you, sir? Heated, of course.

BLUDD. I suppose I'll indulge. We are celebrating, of course. (*The conversation continues, lowly.*)

SCRATCH. (*Sotto voce, to Doctor.*) How much longer are we celebrating? I could go for a rare steak right about now.

DOCTOR. (*Same level.*) Me, too. Let's stay a little longer, to be polite, though. (*Conversation resumes at the normal level.*)

IGOR. (*To R.M.*) You'll get no argument from me, sir. Of course, I've found formaldehyde to be an excellent alternative to hot sauce.

BLUDD. I don't believe that is what he meant, Igor. (*Yolanda pulls R.M. aside as he drains his glass.*)

YOLANDA. (*Quietly.*) Do you think maybe you should slow down?

R.M. (*Same level.*) Do you think maybe you should mind your own business?

YOLANDA. I don't want to interfere in your relationship—

R.M. Then don't.

YOLANDA. —but Sanguina's my best friend, and she really cares about you. You could take it a little easier on her. (*R.M. stares at her for a moment, then calls out at full volume.*)

R.M. Igor! Oh no, look what's happened. I've run out of things to drink.

IGOR. Easily remedied, sir. (*He exchanges glasses with R.M. again. R.M. wiggles the glass at Yolanda as if taunting her, making a face. He crosses back to Professor Bludd, who is chatting with the rest of the group.*)

SCRATCH. (*Mid-story.*) —and the guy honestly smelled like a dumpster, I thought I was gonna yak!

BLUDD. (*Guiding Scratch downstage by the arm.*) May I have a word with you? (*Softly.*) That is perhaps not an advisable story for mixed company.

SCRATCH. (*Same level.*) Get your hands off me, vampire man!

BLUDD. I know that my people and your people do not always get along—

SCRATCH. "My people"?

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BLUDD. —but I thought, as your elder, I ought to impart some of my considerable wisdom into your shell-like ear.

SCRATCH. You know, I can think of the perfect place for you to impart some of your “considerable wisdom”—

DOCTOR. (*Intervening.*) Scratch, why don’t you come join me over here with Yolanda?, she has some interesting theories on eliminating odors through the power of healing crystals... (*He gently guides her back to the conversation. Professor Bludd sniffs haughtily and walks back into the main conversation.*)

YOLANDA. (*To the group.*) —and I thought about casting a spell over the entire high school gymnasium, but sometimes it seems like such a waste of spiritual energy, you know?

R.M. Right. Don’t want to waste any of your spiritual energy “casting spells.” (*Zombie Sid pulls Igor downstage for a quiet conversation.*)

SID. (*Under their breath.*) Whhhuhhh emmubuvvuh whimmimmih habow? [10]

IGOR. (*Same level.*) I’m not sure what everyone is whispering about. Shouldn’t you be asking the others this same question?

SID. Wuhhhmyyaahhkih yeeuuuuh. [11]

IGOR. It’s no good asking me, is what I’m saying.

SID. Weeeuhhh fummm prllleehhhh guhhbbaaaah. [12]

IGOR. You’re right, we should probably get back before someone notices that we’re whispering over here. (*Everyone has stopped talking in the background and is watching them. Igor and Zombie Sid turn slowly. All stare for a moment. Lady Sanguina swans back onto the stage, flourishing her cape.*)

SANGUINA. Ahh, thank you for waiting, everyone! Raise your glasses! I would like to propose a toast. (*Igor and Zombie Sid shuffle guiltily back into place. All raise glasses except for Zombie Sid, who just raises an arm.*) Yes, I’d like to propose a toast. Excuse me. (*She sips at her beverage, which is in an opaque container.*) As I was saying. This toast is for the health of this home, but mostly it is for all of you, who were so gracious as to share its christening with me, even if the dinner was truly spectacularly awful.

SCRATCH. It was great!

YOLANDA. It was awful, we can say it was awful. (*All laugh, relieved.*)

SID. Mahhh dinnuuh wuhh greh! [13]

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SANGUINA. Yes, well. At least we all have our drinks. (*She sips at her glass again, looking unwell.*) In any case, to all of you, and to me for throwing the party of course, hahaha, and to the crypt.

ALL. To the crypt! (*They toast and sip their beverages. Lady Sanguina takes one more sip from her cup, then places it gently on the sarcophagus. She coughs once, twice, a little blood flies out of her mouth, then she full-on collapses on the floor. All gasp.*)

R.M. Sanguina! (*He stumbles to her side, falling to his knees beside her.*) Sanguina, are you okay?

DOCTOR. Stand back, everyone! (*Yolanda pulls R.M. away so the Doctor can get closer to Lady Sanguina.*)

YOLANDA. What's wrong with her? (*The Doctor checks her pulse, lifts her eyelids to look at her eyes, then he gives her a hard tap on the cheek. Finally, he looks up.*)

DOCTOR. She's dead. (*Various reactions of shock and dismay.*)

R.M. Wait, wait, what do you mean "she's dead"? Of course she's dead! She's a vampire, she's supposed to be dead!

YOLANDA. Doctor, do you mean that she's...?

DOCTOR. Yes. The final death. (*To Igor.*) Will you help me carry her into the other room? (*Doctor and Igor lift Lady Sanguina and begin to carry her out through the hall door. R.M. starts following afterward, distraught.*)

R.M. Wait, you—you're just going to—

SCRATCH. (*Catching him and holding him back.*) Hey, buddy. It's gonna be okay. (*R.M. rips away from Scratch, points at her.*)

R.M. In no way is this gonna be okay. Okay?

SCRATCH. Sure, man. I didn't mean... (*Zombie Sid makes a move to open the door to the outside.*)

YOLANDA. Hey!

R.M. Hey, Zombie Sid, not so fast! We don't know how she died, she might have been *killed!*, and it could have been any one of the people in here who killed her, so no one is leaving! No one. Is leaving.

SCRATCH. Shouldn't we, like, call the police or something?

R.M. I wouldn't really recommend that. The police aren't gonna be real understanding about a vampire's murder, since as we all know, vampires don't

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exist. No. We have to figure this out ourselves. And by we, I mean me, because I don't trust a single one of you. (*Igor and the Doctor enter again.*)

BLUDD. How do you propose to solve a crime on which we've no information?

DOCTOR. We have some information. Igor?

IGOR. I took some blood from Mistress Sanguina. I believe it was poison that killed her.

YOLANDA. You're saying my best friend was *murdered*? Really?

SCRATCH. What could poison a vampire?

IGOR. That is a very good question. I'd like to do some experiments in my basement laboratory to see what I can see.

R.M. Good idea, good idea. You do that, Igor.

IGOR. Of course, sir. I'll just—

YOLANDA. Wait! We should question people, right? Shouldn't we question Igor?

IGOR. (*Defensive.*) I don't know anything!

YOLANDA. But you were her butler, right?

IGOR. I wasn't her butler. I was...her assistant. Her...associate.

R.M. It stands to reason you'd know all about the household, though. Who would have had motive to...to kill her?

IGOR. I really think my time would be better spent—

YOLANDA. What did you think of your boss? Did you have any grudges against her?

SCRATCH. Forget it. It's not him.

YOLANDA. What? How can you tell?

SCRATCH. He smells innocent.

IGOR. You can...smell me? From all the way over there?

BLUDD. Of course she can. (*Under his breath.*) You twits.

DOCTOR. What is it about him you can smell?

SCRATCH. Mostly he smells like formaldehyde. A little bit of summer squash. Something...vaguely organic...

DOCTOR. Like a vegetable?

SCRATCH. Like an organ. You know, in your body? But I don't smell any guilt.

R.M. What about me? What do I smell like?

SCRATCH. Well, frankly, you smell like you've been pickled.

YOLANDA. Even *I* can tell that. I did say you should stop drinking.

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BLUDD. Are we all quite finished with this? Let's get on with this farce so we can all decide it was the cook and move on with our unlives.

SID. Hyuhhh, hyuhhhh! [14]

DOCTOR. Could it have been the caterers?

IGOR. The caterers were all goblins.

R.M. Yeah. If goblins were gonna murder you, they'd just stick a knife in your throat.

SCRATCH. (*Sotto voce, to Doctor.*) The caterers were goblins? That explains a lot.

YOLANDA. (*Trying to calm people down.*) Maybe...maybe we should go around the room and say who we are and how we know—*knew*—Sanguina. Okay?

BLUDD. And what will that accomplish?

SCRATCH. We'll at least be on the same page. I'll start. My name is Scratch, I run an animal shelter, and the Doctor invited me as his guest to the party. I only met Lady whoever tonight, so I have no motive.

R.M. Her name was *Sanguina*.

BLUDD. Yes, but we all know how your type feel about vampires. I mean, that much is common knowledge.

SCRATCH. That's the second time you've told me about "my type," Professor Whoop-de-doo, and I'm gonna start taking offense soon. (*Professor Bludd looks outraged, but the Doctor cuts him off before he can get too worked up.*)

DOCTOR. Why don't you go next, Professor? How did you know Lady Sanguina?

BLUDD. Hmmph, very well. I am Professor Bludd. I teach ancient Welsh history at the university. Sanguina was another member of the vampire community, of which I am a regional monarch.

R.M. But why did you come here tonight?

BLUDD. I was *invited*.

DOCTOR. Fine. What about you, Zombie Sid? Tell us about yourself.

SID. (*Gesturing to themself.*) Muhh? Eh... [15] (*They pull a small asexual flag out of their jacket and wave it.*)

R.M. What's that supposed to mean?

IGOR. That they're asexual.

SID. Uhhn-hunnnnh. [16] (*They pull out a small genderqueer flag and wave that.*)

SCRATCH. And nonbinary. (*Zombie Sid pulls out a little flag that has the line of a heartbeat from a heart monitor inside a circle, with a slash across it. They wave it a little more enthusiastically.*) I don't know that one.

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DOCTOR. It means they're UnAlive.

SCRATCH. Not "undead"?

DOCTOR. Well, there's no need to be rude to them just because they're UnAlive.

YOLANDA. What about you, Doctor? Why are you here?

DOCTOR. I was Lady Sanguina's physician. I'm actually the physician of several people here. I serve the supernatural community as a whole.

BLUDD. So you would know how to dispose of a vampire, should the opportunity arise.

DOCTOR. What are you implying?

R.M. Right, well, I'm R.M. Stein, I'm a lawyer, Lady Sanguina was my—my girlfriend, and I think we should really be talking to Yolanda, anyway.

IGOR. Yes, of course. Miss Hummingbird? You ought to tell us who *you* are.

YOLANDA. I guess. You all already know I'm a witch. Lady Sanguina was my best friend, so I came to do a blessing on her crypt.

R.M. Some blessing. You might as well have put a curse on her.

YOLANDA. Excuse me?!

R.M. Your blessing didn't work! She didn't have any protection!

YOLANDA. If you'll remember, I did a blessing to protect her from everyone *outside* of the crypt! But obviously the killer was already *in* here.

R.M. And it must have been you! You knew her best!

YOLANDA. Yeah, but *I'm* not the one who was having an argument with her tonight!

SCRATCH. *Enough!* Clearly it could have been anyone, and we have no idea who it was! It could have been you, Doctor! Or you, Zombie Sid, for all we know! Or even the two teenagers who are hiding behind that sarcophagus over there! (*A slight pause.*)

JENNY. (*Still hidden.*) There are no teenagers behind the sarcophagus! You must be hallucinating! (*Another pause, then the Doctor crosses upstage to look behind the sarcophagus.*)

DOCTOR. (*Kindly.*) Come on out. You might as well. (*Jenny and Jimmy stand up, shame-faced, and troop out from behind the sarcophagus, Jimmy holding tight to Jenny's arm as if frightened. As Jimmy goes by.*) That's some cologne you're wearing, kid. (*Once they're out and settled he prompts them.*) What are your names?

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JENNY. I'm Jenny James and he's Jimmy McClane. And we didn't have anything to do with whatever weirdness is happening in here.

YOLANDA. How long have you been hiding back there?

SCRATCH. Since we came back from dinner.

R.M. Ha! So they were here, they could have done it!

JIMMY. We didn't even know the lady who died. We just...snuck in.

BLUDD. To someone else's home? To what end?

JIMMY. To, uh...to make out?

JENNY. (*Grinning and shoving him playfully.*) Stop it.

JIMMY. (*Grinning and shoving back.*) You stop it.

R.M. Both of you stop it! This is serious! Someone is dead!

SID. Hummuhmuh puuhhpuhh ahh diihhh. [17]

R.M. Okay, yes, *several* people are dead. Including me. Sort of.

SCRATCH. You might as well tell us everything you know, kids.

JENNY. Hey, why is this all about us? (*The outside door suddenly slams open. There is a flash of lightning in the doorway, and a crash of thunder. Bruce McClane is revealed, standing menacingly on the doorstep.*)

BRUCE. JIMMY!

R.M. Who the hell are you?

JIMMY. (*Mortified.*) It's my dad.

BRUCE. THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S YOUR DAD. (*He stomps into the room and towers over Jimmy and Jenny.*) You thought I wasn't gonna find you?!

JIMMY. I turned off that tracker app!

BRUCE. Bold of you to assume there was only *one* tracker app.

JIMMY. Oh.

BRUCE. We gotta talk about how it came to be that you'd sneak around behind your old man's back. 'Cause I have some objections I wanna put in. (*Behind Bruce's back, various party guests gesture to each other in pantomime. The Doctor mouths, "What do we do???" Igor shrugs an expressive "I don't know!"*) Your mother trusted you to me before she died, and if that means that I stalk your every move with the use of technology, then I stalk your every move. Because clearly you're not to be trusted with the kind of freedom I was giving you! (*Professor Bludd mouths and gestures, "Do we kill him?", drawing a finger across his throat. Several people react with silent "What? NO!"s. Scratch mouths "What is wrong with you?"*)

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JIMMY. But, Dad—

BRUCE. I should've known when you got that job at the shoe store that you weren't trying to get on my good side—you were just trying to please *her!*

JENNY. Mr. McClane.

BRUCE. I'll deal with you in a minute. (*R.M. is gesturing and mouthing, "Do we knock him out?" Yolanda, pointing furiously, indicates that she will knock R.M. out.*)

JENNY. (*To the rest of the room.*) You might as well just tell him. He's a private detective—he can probably help.

BRUCE. Private *investigator.* (*For the first time realizing there are other people in the room.*) Wait, what? (*He looks around.*) What do you need a P.I. for, anyway?

SCRATCH. To solve the murder— (*Someone claps a hand over her mouth.*)

BRUCE. *Murder?* Who was murdered? (*No one's talking.*) Okay, I'm calling the police, I have some contacts in the force. (*He pulls out his cell phone.*) No bars. (*To everyone, but especially to Jimmy.*) Stay right where you are, don't move, don't touch anything—especially not each other, I'm looking at you, children— (*He heads for the outside door but Zombie Sid lurches in front of him to stop him.*) What is this? Some kind of a...costume party?

YOLANDA. Does Zombie Sid *smell* like they're at a costume party? (*Bruce advances on Zombie Sid, who rolls their head up to look at him.*)

BRUCE. Hunh, well. I don't like to judge people. Maybe this person doesn't have access to a shower.

DOCTOR. Have you ever heard of vampires, Mr. McClane?

BRUCE. Sure, in movies and things.

DOCTOR. The murder victim was a vampire.

BRUCE. For the costume party.

BLUDD. (*Stepping in front of Bruce.*) No. (*He smiles, revealing his fangs.*)

BRUCE. Okay.

YOLANDA. Listen, we could really use your help. Sorry, what was your name?

BRUCE. Bruce McClane.

YOLANDA. Hi, Bruce. I'm Yolanda. My best friend was killed about half an hour ago, and we can't talk to the police about it. Um, yet.

BRUCE. Why not?

IGOR. They might not believe us. *You're* certainly not believing us.

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BRUCE. If there's been a *murder*, they'll have to— (*The most intimidating people in the room have come to stand in front of him, threateningly.*) You know what. Why don't I take a look. I'll give you my professional opinion, which will definitely be to call the cops, and then we can take it from there.

R.M. Perfect.

DOCTOR. Glad to have you on board. If you'll come this way, we can show you the body, and Igor, I believe you were going to run some—

IGOR. Tests, yes, I'll do that presently.

BRUCE. (*To Jimmy and Jenny, as he's being led through the hall door.*) Don't even think about moving! We are *not done!* (*Bruce, R.M., Professor Bludd, the Doctor, Yolanda, Igor, and Zombie Sid all exit, chattering as they go. Jenny, Jimmy, and Scratch are left onstage. Jenny and Jimmy have resumed holding hands. The pair and Scratch warily examine each other.*)

SCRATCH. So. (*She searches for words.*) Murder, am I right?

JIMMY. What?

SCRATCH. I mean, that was your dad?

JIMMY. (*Glum.*) Oh. Yeah. Sorry about that.

SCRATCH. It's not your fault. Well, no, actually. It *is* your fault. So. Apology accepted.

JENNY. Why didn't you go with the others?

SCRATCH. I don't know, I—I kinda just didn't want to see a dead body again.

JENNY. Fair enough.

JIMMY. (*Blurting.*) My dad isn't always like that. I mean—most of the time he's really nice.

JENNY. I shouldn't have convinced you to come out with me tonight.

JIMMY. You didn't exactly have to convince me.

JENNY. Still. I know how your dad feels about me.

JIMMY. He just doesn't know you.

JENNY. No, that's not it. He knows enough about me, and about my parents, from being a detective. He thinks I'm not good enough for you.

JIMMY. Well, that's just—that's really stupid.

JENNY. Yeah. (*Pause.*) Maybe he's right to want to break us up, though. Look what I got you into tonight. We're witnesses to a *murder*.

JIMMY. We didn't really see it, though.

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JENNY. Whatever, it doesn't matter. I'm just saying. Everyone at school thinks it's really weird that you're with me. And your dad doesn't approve. Maybe we should just...

JIMMY. Jenny...

SCRATCH. God, I miss being a teenager like I'd miss having a hole in the head. (*Jenny and Jimmy had forgotten that Scratch was there. They jump, startled.*) I feel for you kids, you know? Sometimes you feel like your life's just...out of control. Sometimes I find myself just wondering when I lost track of it all...every once in awhile I'll wake up in the middle of a field with my clothes all torn up and feathers in my mouth and I'll just think..."how did I get here?" And that's the point, isn't it. Sometimes you just don't know. (*A long pause. Finally:*)

JENNY. What the f—? (*The doorbell rings. Jimmy crosses to stage left to answer it. He opens the door, revealing Geraldine standing behind it.*)

GERALDINE. It's me! I found the doorbell! (*Igor, Professor Bludd, R.M., Yolanda, Doctor von Doktor, and Bruce start piling back onto the stage, chattering amongst themselves.*) May I please speak to (*She consults a slip of paper.*) Petunia N. Sniff?

SCRATCH. That's me.

GERALDINE. Wonderful! My name is Geraldine Pim, I need to talk to you about— (*Yolanda has crossed the stage and arrived at the outside door.*)

YOLANDA. We don't want any girl scout cookies. (*She closes the door in Geraldine's face. To Scratch.*) We need to talk with you about what we found.

R.M. We need to talk about what we found, period. Mr. McClane?

BRUCE. I don't know why you're all looking at me like I'm in charge. I'm just here to get my son back from that hooligan he's been hanging around with.

JENNY. Hey!

JIMMY. Jenny doesn't even *like* soccer! (*Pause.*) That is what 'hooligan' means, right?

R.M. Let's look at what we know: Sanguina collapsed right after her toast. Have we looked in her glass?

YOLANDA. That is a *really* good point! (*She rushes over to the cup, still on the sarcophagus. She lifts it and sniffs it.*) Huh.

R.M. What is it?, give it to me. (*He takes the cup from her, examines it.*) This is...this is just water.

SCRATCH. I could've told you that.

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BLUDD. (*Rolling his eyes.*) As could I.

R.M. How?

SCRATCH. Blood smells a certain way.

R.M. Smell this water, here. (*He shoves the cup at her.*) Is there silver in there or something?

SCRATCH. (*After smelling the cup.*) No, it doesn't smell like silver. It's just water. And fluoride, apparently the city is watching out for everyone's teeth.

R.M. Well, how else can a vampire be killed? (*All turn to Professor Bludd.*)

BLUDD. Why is everyone looking at me?

IGOR. Because you're a vampire. You must know other ways a vampire can be killed.

BLUDD. Do *you* know all the ways in which a *human* can be killed?

IGOR. Yes.

BRUCE. Okay, let's leave Igor out of this, 'cause he's just...creepy. Let's start with: who wanted the deceased dead?

IGOR. Perhaps someone who was having a lovers' spat with her. (*He indicates R.M.*)

BRUCE. That's a good start. Anyone else have ideas?

SCRATCH. Doctor. You were saying on the way here that you couldn't stand the way she treated some of your other patients.

BRUCE. Tell us more.

SCRATCH. He said she was snooty and kinda racist.

BRUCE. Doctor?

DOCTOR. (*Defensive.*) I just didn't like the way she spoke to some of my werewolf patients. She called them mongrels.

BLUDD. They *are*, you know.

DOCTOR. (*Putting a finger in Bludd's face.*) Watch yourself.

BRUCE. Now we're getting somewhere. Other ideas?

BLUDD. I don't see why we should discount the children. (*All look to Jenny and Jimmy.*) It might be they were playing a teenage...prank?

BRUCE. I'll ask the questions around here, pal. Or, wait. No, I won't! I never said I'd—!

YOLANDA. What about Igor? I heard you asking Sanguina for a raise, and she wouldn't give it to you!

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IGOR. I needed more supplies for my experiments. How is someone supposed to extract the essences of various substances if someone doesn't have—

BRUCE. So you *were* upset with your pay. Interesting.

IGOR. What about Scratch? I think we can all assume that she would have a good reason to wish the Mistress dead.

SCRATCH. I only met the woman tonight!

BLUDD. But we all know— (*Everyone starts talking over one another. Bruce's voice cuts through eventually.*)

BRUCE. Okay. Okay! That should be everyone. Right?

JIMMY. Hey, whatever happened to that UnAlive person?

DOCTOR. They said they were going to the bathroom. At least, I think that's what they said.

JENNY. Why does a zombie need to use the bathroom?

DOCTOR. I didn't ask. (*There is a thump on the dining room door. All turn to look. Scratch glances around at everyone, then slowly opens the dining room door. Zombie Sid is standing behind it.*)

ALL. Zombie Sid! (*Zombie Sid pitches forward and Scratch catches them. There is an enormous knife sticking out of Zombie Sid's back. Everyone gasps. Blackout.*)

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