

ZOMBIE FAMILY PICNIC

TEN-MINUTE PLAY

By Patrick Rainville Dorn

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A TASTELESS CANNIBAL COMEDY

SYNOPSIS: A typical zombie couple goes to pieces when their disgruntled teenaged daughter decides to become a vegetarian! Gorging itself on tongue in cheek puns, gross-out visuals, and keen insights into undead family dynamics, “Zombie Family Picnic” is a hilarious and tasteless cannibal comedy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 WOMEN, 1 MAN)

MORT (M)..... Zombie father.
DIANE (F)..... Zombie mother.
CORY (F)..... Zombie teenager.
DEE (F)..... Zombie child.
KAYE (F)..... Her twin sister, also a zombie.

TIME: Humanity’s last days.

PLACE: A cemetery.

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES:

Onstage: Free-standing gravestones with comical inscriptions, carved from thick sheets of Styrofoam insulation, painted, and affixed to a plywood base.
Brought on: picnic basket with plates, cups, containers of “food,” blanket or table cloth

THE FOOD:

The show's ongoing sight gag is the gruesome gore that the family eats, especially the twins. Try to make it look as realistic as possible, but at least some of it must be edible. DEE and KAYE can pretend to eat most of it, but they need to be able to put it in their mouths. Organic shapes and gooey textures are more important than creating recognizable body parts, and this can be done by modifying actual food items and covering them with soups and sauces. The twins can make a real mess of it, so long as they keep it all on themselves and the picnic blanket. Also, add non-edible props for them to pull out and pretend to eat, like a fake hand or foot (available at most novelty shops), a wig block made to look like a severed head, etc. Director will need to take care that the twins' "chowing down" does not distract from the dialogue. Let them pull out something especially gross to punctuate parts of the scene, rather than steal the attention.

COSTUMES/MAKEUP:

Basic zombie, only done up in a mockery of modern fashion and makeup styles: pale faces with dark circles under the eyes, disheveled hair. For a decomposing effect, try dabbing the face with spirit gum, allowing it to dry until tacky, then press on tissue and pull away. The tissue fragments will appear to be shredded flesh. Clothing should be ragged, jackets or coats split up the back but buttoned in front. No shoes.

ZOMBIE MOVEMENT:

A great deal of the fun in this sketch comes from the use of zombie movement. Except for DEE and KAYE, who spend most of the time stuffing their faces, give MORT, DIANE and CORY frequent opportunities to move around the stage. Spend a lot of time working with the actors to help them develop signature styles of movement: shuffling, lurching, gesturing with large muscle groups and using minimal fine motor skills.

AT RISE:

Five zombies ENTER, shuffling ONSTAGE. They carry a large picnic basket, blanket, etc. They are MORT (father), DIANE (mother), CORY (their teenaged daughter) and DEE and KAYE (twins). They set up for a picnic. Their movements are jerky and mechanical, arms akimbo, their heads often turned away from what they are actually doing.

MORT: This looks like a pleasant spot for a picnic.

DIANE: Oh, Mort, this graveyard is so romantic. It's where we had our first barbecue, back when the methane in the mass grave ignited.

MORT: Remember how we ate lady fingers by the handful?

DIANE: Yes, and you started laughing so hard one of the fingers came out your nose.

MORT: It's been a long, happy death with you, Diane.

DIANE: Thank you, Mort. What do you say we set our bones down here?

MORT: I'm so hungry, I could eat a truck driver.

DEE/KAYE: Yummy!

MORT: (*Peeks in picnic basket.*) I can't wait to see what you've dug up for us.

DIANE: My mother always said, the way to a man's heart is through his chest cavity.

MORT: Sit down, girls. It's devour hour!

CORY: (*Whining.*) Do I have to?

MORT: Now Cory, your mother went to a lot of trouble to prepare this grisly feast.

DIANE: I fixed your favorite dishes: kidney pie and blood pudding.

MORT: And baby back ribs.

DIANE: And for dessert: appendix a la mode!

DEE/KAYE: Yummy! (*Throughout the scene, DEE and KAYE proceed to eat the picnic lunch. See PRODUCTION NOTES for suggestions on how to prepare the "food."*)

CORY: I'm not hungry.

DIANE: What's the matter? Aren't you feeling well?

MORT: She probably spoiled her appetite filling up on fast food over at Dead Man's Curve.

DIANE: It's not like you to turn down family-style cooking. What is it?

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CORY: It's embarrassing, having a full-bodied banquet like this with you. What if one of my friends sees us?

MORT: And what's wrong with gorging ourselves as a family?

CORY: You're all so gross. Look at the twins. *(DEE and KAYE look up, entrails hanging out of their mouths.)*

DEE/KAYE: Yummy!

CORY: See what I mean? I wouldn't be caught live eating like that.

DIANE: But honey, they're just kids.

MORT: Well, I for one am not going to let a spoiled teenage zombie ruin my picnic. I'm digging in. Pass the toe jam, please. *(MORT begins eating.)*

CORY: Nobody understands me.

DIANE: We're trying to, sweetie, but all you do is moan and groan.

CORY: And you never let me have any new clothes.

MORT: *(Mouth full.)* Oh, there she goes with the fashion frenzy again.

CORY: I'm still wearing the same outfit I was buried in!

DIANE: I know, dear, but it's hard to get clothes that are slit up the back these days.

MORT: Why are you behaving so strangely all of a sudden?

CORY: I just want to be cool.

DIANE: But honey, you're already room temperature. Isn't that cool enough?

CORY: And I want my own mausoleum. I'm sick of sharing a crypt with the twins.

MORT: Now, that's not a bad idea. I was talking to the Cleavers over at the morgue. They said the cemetery is putting in a whole new development on the east side.

DIANE: Can we afford it?

MORT: We can if I take the graveyard shift. Just think of it: acres of artificial grass that never needs mowing or weeding, the latest in fake flowers that never wilt, and best of all, our shrouds wouldn't smell like crematorium smoke all the time.

CORY: And I could have my own slab?

MORT: Sure.

DIANE: I don't know. The east side used to be a river bed. You know what damp weather does to my complexion.

MORT: But they're putting in the latest Fiberglas vaults. No more of those old leaky concrete foundations. I tell you, I've been waiting my whole death for a grave like this.

DIANE: It sounds like a pretty big undertaking.

MORT: Let's take the plunge. You're only undead once.

DIANE: You know me, I've always said: "You dug your grave, now lie in it."

MORT: Please?

CORY: Pretty please with maggots on top?

DIANE: *(Relents.)* Oh, all right, we'll shuffle over there tomorrow night and have a look.

DEE/KAYE: Hooray!

DIANE: Girls, save some liver pâté for me! Cory, you haven't touched a thing. Please, just take a few bites. Do it for your dear, departed mother. You don't need to gorge yourself. Here. Just gnaw on a little brain lobe bon bon.

CORY: I'm really not hungry.

MORT: I find that hard to swallow.

CORY: All right, then. It's time I told you anyway. *(Pause.)* I've decided to become a vegetarian.

MORT: *(Chokes.)* Urrk! What?

DIANE: Oh, no! How could you?

MORT: That's the craziest thing I've ever heard. Have you been nipping at my embalming fluid?

CORY: It's no use trying to talk me out of it. My mind is made up. I don't want to eat corpses anymore.

DIANE: *(Covers DEE and KAYE'S ears.)* Please! Not in front of the children.

MORT: Why, I'd like to throttle you to within an inch of your undeath. We're zombies. Zombies eat corpses. We've been chomping on cadavers ever since the atomic experiments of the 1950s. It's who we are.

DIANE: Cory, please, reconsider.

CORY: My mind is made up.

MORT: Mind? What mind? Has someone eaten that brain of yours right out of your skull? A zombie giving up cannibalism is like a vampire giving up Bloody Marys. Or a werewolf turning his back on the moon. Like a mummy wearing a thong! *(They grimace at the thought, then continue.)*

DIANE: How will you get enough protein?

MORT: A vegetarian zombie? There's no such thing.

CORY: I've got it all worked out. First, I'll switch to eating dead animals instead of people. A road kill skunk here, a drowned rat there. Eventually, I'll just pull out their stomachs and suck up the contents: half digested pizza crust, moldy french fries . . .

DEE/KAYE: Yucky!

MORT: You'd give up fresh cornea still in the contact lens for pizza and french fries? I can't believe my worm-infested ears.

DIANE: Mort, calm down. Remember, last time you got upset your aorta exploded.

DEE/KAYE: Boom!

DIANE: Let me handle this.

MORT: Maybe you should. One more word about pizza and I'll lose my lunch and have to eat it all over again.

DIANE: *(To CORY.)* If you think you can get all the nutrients a decomposing zombie needs to keep her pale white pallor and low muscle tone, then go right ahead. *(Sighs.)* I guess that means no more bubbling bile beverage.

CORY: *(Disappointed.)* I guess not.

DIANE: No more pancreas pancakes.

CORY: *(Having second thoughts.)* Oh. I forgot about them.

DIANE: Next week for your deathday, I was going to fry up some fingernail fritters in elbow grease.

CORY: *(Drooling.)* And septum soufflé sprinkled with nostril nuggets?

DIANE: I guess I'll just give it to the twins.

DEE/KAYE: Yummy!

CORY: Hey, what about me? I'm a ravenous automaton too, you know!

DIANE: I suppose I could fix you a tossed green salad with fresh carrots and celery.

MORT: Not in my cemetery plot, you won't!

DIANE: (To MORT.) Hush. (To CORY.) With a chocolate marble fudge cake for dessert.

CORY: Ugh! I feel sick.

DIANE: If you're going to give up eating dead bodies, you might as well get used to the alternative.

CORY: (Reconsiders.) Maybe I won't do anything drastic . . . just yet.

MORT: That's my ghoul.

DIANE: Could I interest you in a little cartilage crunch?

CORY: Maybe for dessert. First, I'd like a filet of phlegm sandwich and a quarter pound heartburger.

DIANE: (To audience.) Anyone else dying for a little tongue in cheek?

ALL: Yummy!

THE END

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