

THEATRE GHOSTS:

BLOODSUCKERS ... a survival guide

a play

by

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With so much theatre being created for 90 minutes or less presentations, theatre houses often close their doors by ten at night; leaving venues dark, yet presumably available to create additional revenue and/or bring in a new audience; one that doesn't even consider night life starting till after 9:00 pm. *THEATRE GHOSTS* is a series of 'after-hours' theatre. Made up of one act plays roughly forty-five to seventy-five minutes in length that are intended to be performed on a stage already in place for another production, regardless whether that production be *Noises off*, *Music Man*, *As You Like It* or *Raisin in the Sun*. The *Theatre Ghosts* plays utilize each venue as a theatre space—generally the same theatre space itself that the audience is attending...any dialogue pertaining to location or venue may and should be adjusted to match the venue.

CHARACTERS

IZZY - A motivational speaker

THE SETTING

The theatre space itself as is.

THE TIME

Now (late night).

SYNOPSIS

IZZY conducts an underground Ted Talk/Orientation on how to be a Vampire or avoid becoming a victim to one.

A NOTE ON THE DIALOGUE:

1. A slash “ / “ indicates the character with the next line of dialogue begins his or her speech (overlapping dialogue).
2. Dialogue in brackets “ [] ” is unspoken, although the character is thinking it.
3. Dialogue in parenthesis “ () ” is spoken aloud but is an aside.
4. Grammatical errors; sentences beginning in lower case; or UPPER CASE; used in place of common punctuation (even a few misspellings), were, indeed, intended.
5. A word or phrase surrounded by “ * * ” is to be both spoken AND written down—generally at the same time. In addition, the word or phrase (being written and said loud) will also be indicated in **bold type** between the two asterisks:
For example, *Vampire* would appear written here as ***Vampire***
6. A word or phrase that is to be written but not spoken out loud will be indicated in bold type within the stage directions surrounded by quotation marks:
For example, *You Suck* would appear written here as “ **You Suck** ”
(*sorry, a little vampire humor there—couldn't help myself*)

MUSICAL SELECTIONS & OVERHEAD PROJECTIONS

ALL MUSICAL RECORDINGS NOTED AND OVERHEAD PROJECTION IMAGES ARE PRESENTED HERE TO ESTABLISH STYLISTIC CONSIDERATION. ACTUAL IMAGES AND MUSIC CHOICES TO BE DETERMINED PER PRODUCTION.

(PRESHOW:

(IZZY welcomes people in and asks them where they want to sit. If there is assigned seating she tells them *“who cares, I think we’re done with ‘following the rules’ aren’t we?”: sit where you want OR sit over here [or over there].* we are getting the idea that she is reading the room, both taking temperatures and placing people where she wants them and at the same time slightly preoccupied.)

IZZY

Ok, are we ready? Is that everybody? Frankie?

(Lights out.

In the dark.

MUSIC ... Cindy Lauper's *All Through the Night*

Overhead projection: *Help me Make it Through the Night*



IZZY

(In the darkness:)

Welcome. Babies.

(Lights rise. IZZY [short for ISABELLE], our speaker for the night—make of her what you will—dressed to blend in with the rest of the audience, takes a drink of bottled water as she waits for the lights to settle as she switches to 'on':)

IZZY

I know, it doesn't have the same effect as me stepping out of the dark considering [I met with you and sat you] but you wanted the full show.

(Regarding the lights:)

Too much? Yeah, me too.

Frankie, [lights]?

(The lights step down half a notch.)

IZZY

Thank you—that's good.

(Another drink. She looks up to the Light Booth and nods or winks.)

(The music slowly fades out through the following:)

IZZY

I woke up this morning—scratch that: this evening—curious. Curious as to how today—how *tonight*—was going to be different. What choices I would make that I've never made before. And I have made some bad choices. Who else here has made some bad choices?

(If no one responds:)

Let me tell you how this works: I ask a question, you give an answer, otherwise we're gonna be here a long long time. So: Who else has made some bad choices?

(Raises her water bottle to toast:)

I'll drink to that.

(winks at one of us in the audience:)

Later.

(After taking a drink.)

And being a vampire..was not one of them. It wasn't even on the list. This was *not* my choice. It *was* a choice...but not *mine*. Some of you *are* here by choice. Some of you are here because somebody dragged you in here. (Need I say more?)

Welcome to:

(Using a flip board pad or white board (for purposes of moving forward in our text we will use the whiteboard as our frame of reference) she presents a prewritten message:)

"How to be a Vampire or Avoid Being Prey".

(Following which the same may appear projected overhead:)



IZZY (Continued:)

I know: not the best title I could come up with but..I already had the graphic; so.. Pay attention because—and I think you'll be happy to know—I am not selling any motivational books or tapes in the lobby, so if you think missed anything: just keep coming back. like uh

(Focusing on someone in the audience:)

You. You, have been here, how many times now?

(Regardless of our response or lack of:)

Don't answer me. You'll catch on...or die trying.

oh come on, that was funny.

So, you are probably wondering why I would—so ok...I've put you in three groups of uh of us here: Children of the Night. Allies. Enemies. And the fucking curious. (ok, so, that's four). I tried to seat you together—so you know that..you are not alone. And for your own protection. You're welcome.

OK, a little about me:

(Music starts. Manfred Mann's cover of *Blinded by the Light*)

IZZY

Thank you, Frankie.

(Overhead projection: My name is Izzy, what's yours?)



IZZY (Continued:)

Frankie, is our DJ, host, ally. Frankie's letting us use her beautiful theatre, here, after-hours for this so...

(Responding to Frankie—signaling her from the back of the house:)

(Frankie saw me do this a couple/four months ago down in San Diego and asked me to bring this to all of you.)

Your niece, right, Frankie? Frankie's niece. Can we give it up for Frankie's niece; are you here tonight, darling? Apparently not.

Love you, Frankie.

Back to me.

That's me, in the center. I was cute, right? Up top is my sister, Irene (typical first child: little bit controlling—which is a nice way of saying 'bitch') and the baby is/was Dora...Dora never saw another birthday.

(If there's an awe response:)

I know.

Times were tough back then. We didn't have it easy; I'm not saying we grew up on a farm in Iowa. Iowa would have been a step up (although I can't say the same today)—

—No, Frankie I will not get political. You'll get to know me [to know me is to love me].

Nope. I can hear you [in my mind], I don't need to hear you [in my ear].

Frankie wants me to wear an earpiece. She's old school, but she means well. Who else is a Frankie, here, tonight? [Meaning:] Who else here is an ally?

(Takes a quick read:)

(So the rest of you are—the rest of us... right)

(Pumping up her tone: leading us to complete the sentence:)

The rest of us aaaaaarrrrrrre:

(Whether or not anyone completes the sentence [vampires]: continuing on...)

But we weren't always [vampires]. I wasn't always—I went to school, like all/most of you, and I had dreams. I was gonna be a dancer. I trained. I would get up at the *ungodly* hour—before the sun was up (right?)—to knock out my chores so I could sneak out after school to go to Grover's Dance Hall where they were doing everything from ballet to Broadway, and this new thing called jazz. I think Mom knew—Dad was clueless—she never said anything; but she'd slip me an extra nickel when she could for bus fare; which, you know, back in the day..my father just wanted me to be somebody's wife. He was never really thrilled he could only produce daughters. Irene towed the line and uh...

(stops mid thought—)

IZZY (Continued:)

You didn't come here to hear about me. You came here to *celebrate* YOU...So...([quick summation:] never made it outside the county line... fast forward twenty..plus years. 1942.
I was now a line worker before...everything changed.

(Overhead projection: CUE: "Everything changed"—
Reverse Projection:)



IZZY (Continued:)

Not a line worker [cocaine] or a line worker [prostitute]—(don't look at me that way)—back in the day, a line worker meant the assembly line. So, I was a Rosie the Riveter kinda—for cars. Swing shift—the closest I ever came to... My dancing dreams were put on hold due to a little interruption better known as World War Two. got off work after dark—had to drive home in the—at night. Car broke down: walked three miles...made it two.

(Overhead Projection and music both fade out
through the following.)

IZZY (Continued:)

And that...that was the end of my dreaming. As it will be for you. Don't take it personally, my little Vampirettes, you will soon learn, you do not dream. So... Say farewell to the land of Nod. No dreaming. I say, 'live your dreams' instead.

(A slight beat.)

IZZY (Continued:)

(She launches back in—at the white board:)

Adapt and respond. or is Respond and adapt? who knows? no, I'm actually asking; I get 'em switched. We get switched—we get stuck.

(If someone responds with an answer: she writes it on their version on the board.)

We get stuck in the light of day while all the cool stuff is happening in the shadows. Right? Being a Vampire *can* have its—(*has its down side..we'll get into that later—*) but it also has—its perks. You with me? ***Perks*** What are the perks?

(Writes down responses...summarizing:)

The overall look. Yes.

(OR:)

What about the look?

Because who doesn't love the look; all the clothes. Right? The style. The darkness. The sex appeal. The aura of Power. Mood. What's *not* to love, right?

(debates...)

I'm not going to answer that. Just let that one lie in the room for a minute.

(Watching reactions, she considers rearranging people again).

Ok, you don't belong in that group. And you and—you know what?: Just stay where you are. Yeah.

So...the clothes:

(referring to her own unsterotypical attire:)

no. *Don't* stand out. You already have a target on your back, why give them your longitude and latitude? Blend in. Make-up: whatever floats your boat. And, tell me, where did they come up with this vision of.. what we are? Anne Rice? Buffy; Angel; Vampire Diaries—well, not so much Buffy, she was actually a nemesis. And Twilight? Any Twilight fans here? Oh my god. Aren't they so sweet? I love you for loving them. They're entirely wrong but you, you are entirely right.

What else? And then you wake up in the dirt without a tan, open my eyes and thought... "what the fuck do I do now?"

(She taps the board "ADAPT AND RESPOND")

(Overhead projection "ADAPT AND RESPOND")

Take a minute: let that sink in.

(She returns to the board as she lets us contemplate the pop-psych advice:)

(I can tell you, no one ever did this for me back in the day.)

*(She writes on the board *1)* *2)*:*

There is a two-step program at place here; not twelve—not seven—not five: two.

IZZY (Continued:)

(Filling in number 1):)

Figure out your *problem*.

(Filling in number 2):)

Get over it.

(a drink.)

So, who wants to see me fly?

Can none of you fly?

No one can fly?

([That's because it's] Hollywood bullshit.)

(Overhead projection: A black and white photo of a plant hooked up to a polygraph [circa 1960s], accompanied by music from the sixties psychedelic era: The Zombies' *She's Not There*)



IZZY (Continued:)

Frankie's trying to keep me on topic; No, skip it Frankie.

(If she detects a wait—what—why response from us:)

What—ok, fine:

Plants have feelings. This guy—I don't know his name—I should but I don't:) did a study back in..the sixties—where they set up two house plants side by side, like Ficus trees or something. And they hooked these trees up to uh that machine—you know like they do when they monitor earthquakes or uh on lie detectors. Then he had a bunch of different people come in and out of the room where the plants were and they whatever...sat, talked, walked around.

And then he sent in one man (of course it was a man) who came in and tore one of the plants up; ripped it to shreds. The plants screamed (on paper, of course). But they weren't done: this industry of science continued to monitor the surviving plant and sent the same people in and out again over the next few days and when the Man (our plant ripper) came back in—days later—just walking through—the remaining tree screamed..again. Take that, Vegans. Happy now?

Everything suffers. Sometime. Somewhere. Somehow. We have to make our peace with that. I didn't turn myself into this. Neither did you.

(End projection. Music fades out through the following)

IZZY (Continued:)

(Clearing the board:)

You can, of course, try to deny who you are now. You can remain a Vegan. You are no longer wired that way but...good luck. Welcome to your

(Writing it on the Board:)

Second Puberty

This will not be your last puberty.

(Looks out thru the audience at us:)

It appears all of you have—[already gone through puberty in your natural life so I assume you]—know what I'm talking about.

(Writing it down:)

Hormones

This is not.

(Draws a line or two thru ~~Hormones~~)

And there isn't another word for it. Nobody wants to make one up. *The Second Coming* was joked around for a while but the church got offended, so...—Yes, the Church. There is still the Church. There is..there is so much to cover. I'm sorry if we don't get through it all. I'm just... Sorry. Should we have an ice breaker?

(Adjusting to whatever reply we give:)

Not yet. Let's dive right in.

(Erases the White Board—creating a clean writing surface.)

Who can tell me what a Vampire is?

(Overheard projection: What is a Vampire?)



IZZY (Continued:)

What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the word
Vampire?

(Writes down audience responses—feeling free to comment accordingly such as:)

- *C'mon, help me out here. Somebody. Somebody starts. This is gonna be a long night, people.*
- *Good. Good. I like that one. No, that's stupid, I'm not writing that.*

((Should we insist she write down our 'stupid response'; as she writes:))

Really? Ok, I know what kind a crowd you're gonna be.

- *Keep 'em coming. "Undead"? No. No, we don't use that term. That's a Hollywood "Oh, bite me, bullshit": Don't like it.*
- *"Why me?" Did I hear, ***Why me?*** Perfect. Why not you, right? ***Why now?*** Anything else?*

OK, we can go with these. Or I have a few.

(Overhead projection: A list of answers: She checks off those from the audience supplied list that are also presented on the overhead.)