

**WE ALL GO A  
LITTLE MAD SOMETIMES**

An Alternate Script  
for *The Play's The Thing*

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## Horror!

Dread. Disgust. Anxiety. Desperation. Madness. Fear. These are some of the key ingredients of Horror, and the best stories of the genre use them in a witch's brew to stir up something delightfully macabre. The range is broad: classic stories like *Dracula* and *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* work to evoke our darkest fears, while films like *The Exorcist* and *Drag Me To Hell* explore the nature of the evil the resides inside each of us.

Whatever the flavor, Horror essentially involves the big bad Other, whether it be supernatural or not. You know the Other. It is the ancient vampire that needs to tear into your jugular to sustain its undeath. It is the serial killer that uses parts of humans as furniture. It is the demon sneaking into your soul and wrecking havoc on your family. It is the gargantuan monster--mutant or primordial--stomping its way through downtown Manhattan because, well, the city is in its way.

The thing that makes the Other scary--the thing that elicits all those delightfully awful states of mind--is that, because of its weirdness, we do not know how to dispatch it. It requires cleverness and no small bit of luck to figure out just how to stop the monster from getting you. When you unload your shotgun on the werewolf and it keeps coming, you know you're in trouble. When you bury the bones of the vengeful spirit and go home to find it still haunting your house--yeah, you have still got problems. And when you recite the ancient ritual to keep that vast, tentacled abomination from shredding reality and your sanity along with it--and the ritual fails--guess what? That's right: you are on the hook for the whole mess.

But at the end of the day, Horror stories center on confronting the monster. It is never easy to figure out just what to do, but usually, Horror is satisfying because there is some way or other to escape the evil, or to end it, or at least to neutralize it. Horror stories, however,

never end cleanly. Perhaps the only escape is to embrace madness. Perhaps the only way to destroy the monster is to set in motion its own return from oblivion. And perhaps the neutralization that worked so perfectly... was all part of the monster's plan.

In short:

- Invoke terrible states of mind, like fear, desperation, and madness
- Confront us with a supernatural, or at least unnatural, Other
- Force us to figure out how to stop the monster, usually through ghastly trial and error
- Leave us with uncomfortable, unfinished endings

## New Actor Type: The Odd One

While other actors may take on a role with gusto, the Odd One turns every role inside out. She makes it hers in way that leaves an indelible imprint on the audience, rewriting what they thought was possible with the role. Her weirdness, and she is quite strange, is imprinted on the Character, and it can be hard to remember what you thought of the part before she played it.

For this reason, it can appear at times like The Odd One does not have much variety in her acting toolkit. She plays each part in a way that evokes the same kinds of strangeness, the same emotion of slight discomfort on the part of the viewer. But it is a mistake to assume that she cannot do more; her weirdness just strikes the same places in interesting ways. Any production is lucky to have her energy and charm.

And despite her abilities, there is almost always a sense of sadness that surrounds the Odd One. While it may be an asset now, her weirdness once set her apart, and it usually leaves a subtle mark upon her soul. Happiness is not foreign to her, but her expressions and actions betray a sense of loneliness and pain, a heart that has been wounded but dares to dream again.



Famous Examples: Helena Bonham Carter, Crispin Glover, Christina Ricci

Quote: "With any part you play, there is a certain amount of yourself in it. There has to be, otherwise it's just not acting. It's lying." -- Johnny Depp

Onstage Ability: The Odd One sees the world differently than everyone else. You may spend a story point to create a Prop or a Place without a roll.

Offstage Ability: The Odd One attracts strange Characters. Spend a story point to add a new Character to the Play for the Playwright to portray.

Direction: At the Playwright's request, the Odd One must tell the story of her Character's tragic past in the form of a monologue.

## **New Rules for Horror**

### **Offer The Black Die**

Horror movies are often beset by troubles. With so many chainsaws, knives, and guns floating around the set, there is always the potential for a key stunt to go awry in a fatal way. And, of course, there is no end to the rumors that the set could be haunted by the subject material. To represent this constant danger, the Playwright can offer an extra black die to any roll made by the Actors. The total of the black die will help with the roll, but if the die comes up as a one, the Actor dies from a tragic accident on the set. The Player must make a new Actor to continue his or her role in the film.

### **The Other is Myself**

Horror stories often involve contact with the Other, the forces of darkness that confound our attempts to make sense of the world, but they also speak to our own dark desires. The Actors, then, can learn quite a bit about themselves by acting in Horror films--the best of which make them face their own true selves. At any point that Actors encounter the Other during the film, they can spend a story point to alter any element on their sheets, including changing their Logos, Pathos, and Ethos scores. They cannot add anything, but they can swap dots between Acting Chops, exchanges Parts, Plots, or Props, and even change their Acting Type.

## **New Parts / Plots / Props / Places for Horror**

### **New Parts**

#### **The Professor**

You have studied for years to learn the ancient knowledge that was once lost to the world. Now you must decide how to use what you know.

Invoke: Gain two dice when your ancient knowledge is relevant.

Compel: You can never know enough. Keep digging, no matter the cost.

#### **The Priest**

You joined the church to serve your community, but you walk alone as shepherd to your flock. You may believe deeply, or you may be questioning your faith, but you have too many people counting on you to show weakness.

Invoke: Gain two dice when you call upon symbols of your Faith for strength.

Compel: The temptations of the mortal world entice you. Give in enough to show your humanity.

#### **The Criminal**

Whether from malice or need, you have turned to a life of crime to sustain yourself. You know people you would prefer not to know, but you are welcome in the darkest parts of

the world.

Invoke: Gain two dice when utilizing your criminal talents.

Compel: You are not good at trusting people. Betray them before they betray you.

### **New Plots**

#### **Ensnared By (The Other)**

You have been ensnared by a supernatural curse to serve the Other. You bend to its will despite your best attempts to resist it.

Invoke: Gain two dice when you do the Other's bidding.

Compel: You hate what you have become. Harm yourself to protect the ones you love.

#### **Hunter Of (The Other)**

You have sought the Other for years, perhaps decades, and seek to end its existence. You will not be dissuaded from your quest.

Invoke: Gain two dice when your knowledge of the Other's ways can help you.

Compel: You are too invested. Act unwisely to advance your goals.



**Cursed By (The Other)**

The Other has taken an interest in you, perhaps because it needs your lifeforce to sustain it. You cannot help but be flattered by its interest.

Invoke: Gain two dice when the Other wishes to protect you.

Compel: You are drawn to the other as well, and wish to learn its secrets.

**New Props**

Shotgun: Add one die when confronting the Other.

Ancient Texts: Add one die when performing dark rituals.

Blessed Cross: Add one die when resisting the Other's supernatural powers.

**New Places****Haunted Mansion Set**

Everyone knows the story of the mansion that sits atop the hill at the edge of town.

Only a fool would enter alone...

Potential Places: Creaky Hallway, Dark Basement, Local Graveyard

**Urban Jungle Set**

The slums of the city are not places for the faint of heart; dark things lurk where the

authorities dare not look.

Potential Places: Abandoned Church, Dark Alleys, Filthy Streets

## Dracula, a Horror

Endlessly revisited (and often parodied), few Horror stories are as timeless and enduring as the story of the Transylvanian Count. When young Englishman Jonathan Harker attempts to conduct a real estate transaction with Count Dracula, he becomes the Count's prisoner, barely escaping with his life. Yet, things grow even darker when the Count follows Harker back to England, attacking his friends and loved ones. Dracula is merciless and relentless, defeated only with the aid of the vampire hunter Van Helsing, who instructs the heroes on the Count's weaknesses.

*Count Dracula*, the mysterious Transylvanian noble

Starting Part/Plot/Prop: The Exile, In Love with Mina, Letter

"For one who has not lived even a single lifetime, you're a wise man, Van Helsing."

"I never drink... wine."

*Jonathan Harker*, Mina's fiancée

Starting Part/Plot/Prop: The Hero, Betrothed to Mina, Lantern

"At least God's mercy is better than that of these monsters, and the precipice is steep and high."

*Lucy*, Mina's close friend and confidante

Starting Part/Plot/Prop: The Maiden, Friend to Mina, Coin

"I supposed that we women are such cowards that we think a man will save us from fears, and we marry him."

"Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?"

*Mina*, a young Englishwoman

Starting Part/Plot/Prop: The Maiden, In Love with Jonathan, Fan

"I heard dogs howling. And when the dream came, it seemed the whole room was filled with mist."

"A woman ought to tell her husband everything – don't you think so, dear?"

*Renfield*, a mental patient mysteriously tied Count Dracula

Starting Part/Plot/Prop: The Fool, Ensnared by Count Dracula, Knife

"No, no, master. I wasn't going to say anything, I told them nothing. I am loyal to you master."

"Flies? Flies? Poor puny things! Who wants to eat flies?"

*Van Helsing*, a Dutch professor

Starting Part/Plot/Prop: The Professor, Hunter of Count Dracula, Blessed Cross

"Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain."

"Like them we shall travel toward sunrise; and like them, if we fall, we fall in good cause."

**Act 1** → Dilapidated Castle Set--Cold Hallways

Jonathan Harker is sent from England to Transylvania to conclude a real estate transaction with Count Dracula. When he arrives, he finds the Count to be pleasant, but intimidating and intense. Often, he feels that the Count is eyeing him like a piece of meat. During one night, Harker is accosted by three female predators, who appear poised to devour Harker until Dracula chases them off. Eventually, Harker realizes that Dracula means to keep him captive in the castle and stages a successful escape.

**Act 2** → Seaside Set--Small Cottage

Back in England, Mina and Lucy discuss Lucy's suitors at Lucy's cottage in Whitby. She has three, and must pick one in order to be married before she is too old. The two women have heard rumor of a shipwreck near their location; the crew was all dead and the only cargo was Transylvanian dirt. Later that night, Mina finds Lucy sleepwalking in a cemetery; the only mark on her are two small pinpricks found on her neck. Mina helps her back to her bed, but grows gravely concerned about her friend.

**Act 3** → Seaside Set--Small Cottage

Harker arrives in Whitby with Van Helsing, a paranormal expert he found while returning from the East. Together, Harker and Van Helsing work to protect Lucy and Mina with garlic charms and blood transfusions, but their efforts come too late for Lucy. She is turned into a vampire herself, and the two men must destroy her in her tomb. The destruction is bloody and gruesome; Harker must plunge a stake into Lucy's heart while she "sleeps."

**Act 4** → Street Set--British Streets

Mina and Jonathan, now married, return with Van Helsing to England to pursue Dracula. The group sterilizes the earth in which he sleeps and destroys many of his hiding places. As they work to hunt down Count Dracula, however, Renfield guides the Count to Mina, Dracula's next victim after Lucy. Once bitten, Mina begins to make the slow transformation into a vampire.

**Act 5** → Dilapidated Castle Set--Cold Hallways

Driven back to his Transylvanian homeland, Dracula flees England and returns to his crumbling castle. He is pursued by Van Helsing, Mina, and Jonathan, who work to destroy his three vampires servants and then finally reach the Count himself. The Count's death appears to reverse Mina's transformation, but she is forever altered by her experiences with the dreaded vampire.