

Apocalypse Soon

By Pete Malicki

© Pete Malicki 2020

Permission to perform any or all of this play for any reason must be obtained from the author. Please contact him via email if you wish to use it.

Performance of this play may be subject to a royalty. Students, amateur/community theatres, auditionees, co-ops and not-for-profit enterprises are generally able to perform these plays for free.

Small payments are greatly appreciated and help the author continue writing. You can make a donation via his website.

Contact:

petemalicki@gmail.com

More plays and Pete's latest news:

www.petemalicki.com

Apocalypse Soon

©Pete Malicki 2015

Cast

A young man or woman.

Scene

I can't find the milk. I've been up and down each aisle five times but there's no milk anywhere. There's no one in here which I should probably find strange but I don't. I go back to aisle three and check behind the Oreos. Oh hey, it's the milk. Who put it there? I reach in and grab two litres.

Something smashes behind me. I turn. My heart almost turns to lead when I see the man. His clothing is torn, his hair looks like it's been ripped half out, his arms are bloody. He staggers towards me, eyes glazed and unblinking. Then he says, "Brains!" I drop the milk and back away, and he starts stumbling faster. I turn to run and another bloodied man grabs me and tries to bite my neck.

Screams. Confused for a moment before finding bearings.

That's the fourth time this week. I don't normally have dreams of any kind but this last week has been nightmare after nightmare. Mum comes in. "Honey, you okay?"

"Yes mum."

"That's the fourth time this week."

This is already established. I send her away and step into the shower to rinse off the sweat and maybe a little pee. A bit later I call my girlfriend. "Hey Jules, how you?" *(pause)* "Yeah, I'm alright." *(pause)* "Nah, I'm alright. It's... yeah, another one of those dreams." *(pause)* "Jesus, yes it's the fourth time this week. Did I make that my Facebook status or something?" *(pause)* "Well what can I do? I'm so damned tired but I have to stay awake through uni."

I know why this started. Every second Sunday I do a themed movie marathon with Jules. First one ever was Pixar movies, then obvious stuff like *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings*. We've done heaps and heaps of TV series and we once did eight back-to-back action flicks. Last weekend was zombies. *World War Z*, *28 Days Later*, *I Am Legend* and *Shaun of the Dead*. Now, I am *totally* not scared of zombies. What am I? A five year old? Zombies are stupid and impossible. But ever since we did this I've been having these really vivid dreams and it's starting to get out of control.

I head to university and put the undead out of my mind for a while. I sit up the back of Global Economics and watch the room fill up. This old guy Benson who has this creepy crush on me sits beside me and stares *discreetly* at me for a long creepy minute. He totally waited until there were no other seats before sitting down so I'm stuck with him.

The professor is talking about how China is a communist country but fiscally capitalistic... exporter of cheap goods thanks to low cost of labour... low regulation something government something.

The key thing I learn today in Global Economics is that Global Economics is an effective cure for insomnia. I wake up when my spidey sense senses that Benson is about to zero in on my inner thigh so I jump up and run to the loo. I can't wilfully go back to that creep so I go to the library and try to study what I'm missing. I read a book called Twentieth Century Economic Policy in China, but all I'm thinking is "What would I do if a zombie came around the corner?" I'd... run through natural sciences and kick that wooden table in. The leg would be good for both whacking *and* stabbing. Or I could make a break for the window past the self-help aisle.

What am I thinking about? I need to study.

The rest of the day passes unproductively and the evening the same. I dream I'm in class with Benson squeezing my thighs and staring like real deep into my eyes. It's more disturbing than the three zombies that come in and maul the Global Economics students. I wake up screaming when one grabs me from behind and starts eating my head.

"That's five times now, bumblebee."

I send my mother away and try to go back to sleep but now I'm scared of what I might dream so I lie awake until dawn. The day passes in a sleep-deprived blur. Two days later I have the dreams again, and this time the zombies are fast. It's utterly terrifying.

I have to do something about this. Jules comes over and we brainstorm ways to stop the nightmares. Sleeping pills? I'd rather not start at the extreme. *Increase* my exposure to zombie films. What, immunity through acclimatisation? I doubt that'll work. Meditation, sex – worth a try – exercise, cutting out cheese, listening to Bach. Then Jules says, "Babe, I think you need to face your fears."

Fears?! "I don't believe in zombies, Jules, and I'm sure as heck not scared of the *apocalypse*."

"Maybe *you're* not, but your subconscious is."

Now that was an interesting thought. Everyone knows it's impossible for dead people to come back to life, but *subconsciously* I might be scared of the whole concept, just like intellectually I know all cola is the same but subconsciously give me a Coke right now damnit.

Jules looks around my room. "Okay, tonight? Move your wardrobe in front of your door. If there *were* zombies, they couldn't get to you. That way your subconscious will feel safe."

I follow her advice and block my bedroom door before I go to sleep. Funnily enough it *does* make me feel safer. My dreams are sweet and filled with frolicking kittens, snow-capped mountains, an awesome round of laser tag and a really hot topless JESUS CHRIST A ZOMBIE JUST BURST THROUGH MY BEDROOM WINDOW!

I wake up screaming. Mum is pounding on my door. She can't get in. I get up but there's a lot of pee this time. "I'm alright," I say. "That the sixth time this week," she says.

I skip uni. Mum goes out so I don't get to ask her but I need to sort this out or I'll go crazy so I spend two hours nailing old fence posts I nick from down the street to the outside of my window frame. I'm taking this super serious so I do one lot horizontally then one lot vertically over the top.

I have forgettable dreams that night. Wake up in my dark room, get up, stretch, dress, push the cupboard out of the way, open my door AND MUM'S A ZOMBIE TRYING TO CLAW MY EYEBALLS OUT. Goddamn it! My dreams are *tricking* me now? Are you serious?

I move my cupboard and storm out of my room. Find a guy to install bars on all the doors and windows. It's going to cost three months of my crappy hospo job wages but it's the only way.

I call Carlos. Carlos is a short Spanish guy who is a hundred and ten kilos of pure, steroid-enhanced power. "Carlos? Make me strong."

Every day the nightmare creatures find a new way of getting to me and every day I counter them. I take my mum to Kung Fu. She's a black belt in four months. The zombies are backed up twenty metres deep and overrun the house. I buy a katana from some dodgy Russian guy on the internet. My dreams demonstrate that this is no good for close quarters fighting so I get my hands on a couple of knives. Still getting swamped so I make a plan to get a suit of plate mail armour. They'll never get through that.

Mum corners me a few days later while I'm dragging furniture around with my non-dominant arm and doing knife moves with my good one. "Honey," she says. Long pause. "Honey, are you being bullied in class?"

"No."

"It's just... all this army stuff. I found the crossbow, love. You're not planning anything stupid are you?"

"Stupid? No mum I'm just trying to get fit."

"By installing razor wire on the roof?"

"...Do you know how challenging that was? Best workout I've had in months."

I tune out what mum's saying and look her up and down. She's not in bad shape; she's only fifty-three and all that Kung Fu is doing her wonders. She could hold her own against the zombies, at least for a while. Would I be able to take her out if she turned? I don't know. Just because your mum's an undead monster doesn't mean it's easy to lop her head off. I reckon I have it over her *physically*, if nothing else.

This makes me realise something. The heaviest people would make the heaviest zombies. In my next nightmare I've cleared the neighbourhood of the dead and I'm trying to build a giant wall around the entire area to keep it safe. Dream me is a hard arse now. A zombie – which had been inside a house I thought I'd cleared – comes out of nowhere and collapses on top of me. It's a big fat one and I'm trapped beneath it. Damn it. I need to cater for this scenario.

My greaves arrive a few days later. I can't afford the full suit of armour so I drop out of uni to get in more hours at work. I'm spending a lot more time at the gym, too, and please don't tell my mum but Carlos has slipped me some special sports drinks so I'm starting to get totally ripped. I run for hours each evening so I have the stamina to escape a horde of them if necessary. Whenever I hang out with someone, I study their movement for signs of weakness. Sometimes when no one is around I'll step on strangers' ankles so they'll be way slower than me when they turn.

Seven months later my gauntlets come in and the suit is complete. I wear it to bed every night and I sleep better... for a couple of weeks. My nightmares always expose more weaknesses so I keep coming up with new strategies. Every day I become a little bit more prepared. Every day I am stronger, faster, smarter or otherwise more capable of survival.

People don't talk to me these days but what good are people anyway? Everyone I meet is a potential enemy in the apocalypse.

I start heading deep into the bush near our house and building fortifications there. A few rooms behind thick high brick walls. I dig a moat. Stock up on canned food. I collect years of supplies. *Decades*. I sleep here for weeks at a time. Then I stop going home.

People don't really come out here, but when they do they find me in full plate mail with a razor sharp blade or three. They don't stick around for long.

It takes many months but I finally feel prepared for the end of the world. When it happens, I will be waiting right here to slap it in the face.

Come and get me, apocalypse.

I am ready.