

JUST ADD ZOMBIES

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Cast of Characters

The High School Actors

MITCHY, male, decidedly not cool

CORA, female, attractive and planning to be a future star of the stage

PESSIE, whose name is short for Pessimism, but she's long on pessimism when it comes to her personality

EMILIA, female, whose name is not Amelia, quite the feminist

JULIET, female, not cast as Juliet and a bit of a tomboy

SYDNEY, female and a very nice person

WANDA, female and a voracious reader

CHAD, male, full of himself but easy on the eyes

The High School Crew and Staff

STAGE MANAGER, either gender, no-nonsense

TECHIES, either gender

SIGN GUY, either gender

BOX OFFICE PERSON 1, either gender

BOX OFFICE PERSON 2, either gender

The Adults

HOMELESS WOMAN, the one audience member at Friday's performance of *Romeo and Juliet*

CORA'S MOTHER and CORA'S FATHER, never home, even when they are

AUNT LILLIAN, Mitchy's aunt and the soon to be ex-drama sponsor

The cast size can range from a minimum of roughly 12 to an unlimited maximum. It's easily possible to include many other actors as non-speaking cast and crew members of *Romeo and Juliet*, as participants in the choral scenes and later as zombie audience members.

For a smaller cast, we don't really need to see that many new zombies; they could be implied. Also, the Box Office roles could be doubled by Actors or Crew/Staff, and Aunt Lillian may be played by the actor who plays Cora's Mother. Feel free to be as creative as possible with multiple casting.

A high school theater where we see both backstage and the house. A large poster near the stage promises "Romeo and Juliet" on "Friday and Saturday ONLY!" The show is in progress, but the only audience member appears to be a sleeping HOMELESS WOMAN, any age.

Backstage, MITCHY, mid-teens and an outcast among outcasts, sidles up to CORA, same age and way out of his league.

MITCHY

Do you want to get coffee?

CORA

Now?

MITCHY

After. I meant after the show.

CORA

Are you asking me out?

MITCHY

Uh...no. Well, maybe. Do you want me to?

CORA

Sure. If you were the last man on earth.

She goes on stage.

CORA (CONT'D)

Romeo, I come! This do I drink to thee.

She drinks from a vial and collapses, as if she were dead. Enter Mitchy as Romeo, who sees her on the ground.

MITCHY

Juliet! Nooooooooooooo!

He's about to go to her, when her hand comes straight up and points at a line on the stage, evidently a boundary he can't cross.

He stops where he is and thrashes around, emoting to and fro, with the occasional addition of another "Nooooo." When he's milked it about as long as humanly possible and then a bit longer, he drinks poison.

MITCHY (CONT'D)

Poison, do thy work.

(beat)

I die. I die over here because if I die by your side you've threatened to throw up in my mouth. I die, I die, and I'm OK with your doing that if it means being closer to your radiant presence - until the part where you said you'd turn my groin into your personal driving range, so I thought it would be better to respect your space. O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick! Thus with a kiss I die, a kiss blown from the 10-foot minimum on which you insisted. I die-

STAGE MANAGER (OFF)

Die, please.

Beat. Mitchy dies. The lights start to come down.

CORA

(Getting up:)

Wait!

The lights go to black.

CORA (CONT'D)

I'm not dead yet.

The lights come back up.

CORA (CONT'D)

What's here? A cup? Poison I see, hath been his timeless end. I will kiss thy lips...

(Thinking better of it:)

no. O happy dagger! Much better. This is thy sheath!

She stabs herself. Blackout. Pause. The lights come up - it's the curtain call. The rest of the CAST comes out: PESSIE, short for Pessimism but long on it when it comes to her personality; EMILIA, whose name is not Amelia; JULIET, not cast as Juliet; SYDNEY, generally too nice for her own good;

WANDA, wrapped up in reading a book as always (in this case, the *Complete Zombie How-To Handbook*), and CHAD, not a rocket scientist but not too tough on the eyes. Given that there's no applause, they seem unsure of what to do.

JULIET

What do we do?

Juliet takes off part of her costume to reveal a soccer uniform.

CORA

Bow.

Beat. The lights shift in some way to indicate that we're hearing a chorus of interior monologues.

JULIET

The creepy man in the raincoat isn't clapping.

MITCHY

Chad, please don't steal my clothes again.

CHAD

I should steal Mitchy's clothes again.

EMILIA

Is there any way this can keep me from being elected President in 2044?

SYDNEY

Is that a man or a woman in the raincoat?

PESSIE

I'm picturing all of your heads exploding right now.

JULIET

Stay focused. Bow, home, essay, soccer...

CORA

All I want is one standing ovation...

JULIET

Be the ball.

EMILIA

Be strong, yet feminine.

CHAD

Juliet would be kinda hot if she didn't dress like a guy.

CORA

Or for one of my parents to come. Once. Ever.

MITCHY

Cora, I would die for you. OK - I am definitely never saying that out loud.

WANDA

I can read an entire chapter during this awkward silence.

CHAD

Pessie is kinda hot. Like angry hot.

CORA

If everyone claps, then I'll know I was good.

SYDNEY

That *is* a creepy woman in a raincoat.

Beat. Back in real time, they
bow awkwardly. Desperate
CLAPPING from offstage. Sydney
waves at the Homeless Woman.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

(Brightly:)

Hello, creepy woman in a raincoat. Hope you enjoyed the show!

CORA

This is embarrassing.

JULIET

She's not even moving.

EMILIA

I think she's asleep.

SYDNEY

She probably had a long day.

CHAD

Probably passed out from Mitchy's B.O.

MITCHY

Hey - I don't smell.

PESSIE

Wish I could have passed out.

MITCHY
(Sniffing his armpits:)

Do I?

(To Wanda:)
Can you tell me if I smell?

Wanda reads, holding up a hand to ward him off.

MITCHY (CONT'D)
Sydney, could you tell me if I smell?

SYDNEY
Uh...

CHAD
Dude, how do I say this: Sydney's nice to everybody, so she's nice to you, because you're everybody. Sort of. But she's not your friend. She's not gonna sniff your pits.

JULIET
I think there's something wrong with her.

SYDNEY
What's wrong with me?

JULIET
Not you. The lady in the audience.

Beat.

EMILIA
Someone needs to take the lead here.

Emilia leaves the stage still carrying a prop sword and starts toward the Homeless Woman.

CHAD
You'd be so hot if you didn't dress like a guy.

JULIET
I dress like myself.

CHAD
Which is like a guy.

CORA
We always take two bows.

EMILIA
Just because she is not dressing like an objectified stereotype-

CHAD
Amelia, is feminazi a language?

JULIET
I'll help you.

EMILIA
My name is *Emilia*.
(To the Homeless Woman:)
Ma'am?

CORA
I'm taking my second bow.

EMILIA
It has always been *Emilia*.

Emilia moves closer to the
Homeless Woman and starts to
extend her sword.

SYDNEY
Emilia, what are you doing?

EMILIA
I'm being a strong woman and taking charge of the situation.

SYDNEY
Don't stab her!

EMILIA
I'm not going to stab her. I'm just going to nudge her.
Could this be interpreted as stabbing?

Emilia puts the sword in Juliet's
hand.

EMILIA (CONT'D)
You should do it.

JULIET
OK...

PESSIE
If one of you stabs her and goes to prison, can we cancel
tomorrow's show?

SYDNEY
Be careful.

EMILIA
Women can handle swords too, Sydney.

CHAD

Especially women who dress like guys.

EMILIA

In 20 years, when Juliet is the boss of the boss of your boss, send me a postcard.

CORA

Am I the only one who cares about getting recognized for our hard work?

PESSIE

Cora, your own parents didn't come.

Lights up on CORA'S PARENTS,
wearing Hawaiian outfits.

CORA'S MOM

Honey, we're very sorry to tell you this in a note, but your father and I are dead. Not to worry, we've been cryogenically frozen, and we have the world's top experts standing by to revive us on Monday.

CORA'S DAD

We're sorry to miss your show, but we'll know you'll knock 'em dead.

CORA'S MOM

Alexander!

CORA'S DAD

Sorry. You'll break a leg-
(to Cora's Mom)
That's what they say, right?
(back to Cora)
We'll see you on Monday, Corakins.

Lights down on Cora's Parents.

CORA

It's not like any of yours came either.

Juliet gives the Homeless Woman a gentle nudge with the flat side of the prop sword. Beat.

JULIET

I think she's dead.

EMILIA

And that is how a woman tells it like it is. Wait - she's what?

SYDNEY

Some people are really sound sleepers.

Emilia joins Juliet in checking
on the Homeless Woman.

JULIET

Not this sound.

(Poking again:)

She's dead.

CORA

Maybe she's just in a coma.

MITCHY

Should we call 911?

CHAD

(To Mitchy:)

Nobody asked for your opinion.

MITCHY

What did I ever do to you?

CORA

Maybe if we bow again it'll wake her up.

EMILIA

I think I was never here.

PESSIE

Your name's in the program, genius.

MITCHY

We've gotta tell somebody.

CHAD

What - like your Aunt Lillian?

Lights up on AUNT LILLIAN,
Mitchy's aunt and, until a few
minutes before, the drama
sponsor. She is somewhere else,
quite possibly driving - which
could be shown by her miming with
a sound effect - or just holding
a suitcase.

AUNT LILLIAN

Mitchy, I'm sorry for casting you as Romeo only because we're
related.

AUNT LILLIAN (CONT'D)

I thought your mother might finally speak to me after 17 years, but my decision was bad for your long term growth, bad for your moral compass, and thankfully you don't have any friends, or they would have hated your guts like everyone else. I feel even worse for the other actors who had to work around a lead-encased cement block. Yes, I could have cast Chad, or I could have drafted some member of a minimum security prison work gang picking up garbage on the highway, or the escaped zoo iguana I found hiding in my toilet the morning of auditions. Please convey my apologies to all. Ultimately, this experience has confirmed that I hate teaching, because as much as I thought destroying vulnerable adolescent psyches would be enough for me at this stage in my life, I find myself needing something more fulfilling. That could be psychiatry or a stint as a CIA enhanced interrogator or a supervisor position at the Department of Motor Vehicles. My road is wide open.

(Beat.)

Speaking of the road, please don't try to find me. Tell your mother I gave it a shot, but the sight of your talentless body overwhelms any possible familial bond, and I never liked her that much anyway.

Lights down on Aunt Lillian.

CORA

If we don't have a sponsor, can we still perform?

WANDA

All clubs must have a sponsor present at official functions.

Wanda goes back to reading.

CORA

This can't be happening.

EMILIA

Of course I was here. I am taking charge and making a statement.

(Beat.)

I know I speak for the entire cast of _____ High School's Romeo and Juliet when I say how deeply upset and moved this loss is to all of us. This delicate flower of femininity - uh, feminimi - another beautiful female spirit-

PESSIE

Yeah. And this female dead body is a hoot and a half too. Who are you even talking to?

EMILIA

I was preparing.

MITCHY

We should call someone-

PESSIE
And tell them what?-

MITCHY
and Emilia can make a statement.

PESSIE
Some lady died at our play?

SYDNEY
It happens.

PESSIE
Really? When?

Beat. Lights shift, and we're
back in the thoughts of the
frozen characters.

EMILIA
Maybe a statement is the wrong way to go.

CORA
We can't perform without a sponsor.

JULIET
Did I kill her when I poked her?

SYDNEY
I'm sad about this woman, but I'm happy in general.

CHAD
Sydney is hot in a totally boring kinda way.

WANDA
Do I have another book in my bag?

CORA
We've worked so hard.

MITCHY
Cora, I would take a bullet for you.

PESSIE
Optimism. Try optimism.

SYDNEY
People die at plays all the time.

CORA
Well, *I've* worked so hard.

MITCHY
I don't think I'd make a good hero.

PESSIE

Everything will be fantastic, and I will still get credit for my extracurricular requirement even if our sponsor goes MIA and the show crashes and burns.

EMILIA

Maybe we should regroup.

JULIET

Stay focused. Don't panic.

The lights shift. We're back in real time.

CORA

(To Mitchy:)

It's all your fault we have no sponsor. I'll never get a standing ovation if we have no sponsor!

Beat. Mitchy claps for Cora. He is sincere and looks ridiculous.

MITCHY

Come on, everyone.

They stare at him as if he's ridiculous.

CORA

Stop.

Mitchy keeps clapping.

MITCHY

Come on - Cora was amazing. She deserves a standing ovation.

It's obvious nobody is going to join in.

CORA

Mitchy, stop it!

Mitchy stops.

PESSIE

I'd say something really cruel right now, but I'm too busy trying to figure out what to do with this dead body!

MITCHY

Why can't we just tell the truth? We were doing the show, this lady was watching, and she died.

EMILIA

While that may seem like the obvious choice, Mitchy, sometimes the road less traveled is ultimately the more rewarding one.

MITCHY

What?

WANDA

She's saying cover it up.

CHAD

I'm saying Mitchy did it.

MITCHY

We can't cover-

(To Chad:)

What?

EMILIA

I'm simply saying we should look at all of the options.

JULIET

But nobody killed anyone.

EMILIA

I'd hate to see that poke come back to haunt you.

SYDNEY

Everybody knows I'm too nice to kill anyone.

CORA

One standing ovation. That's all I wanted when I woke up today.

PESSIE

(Beat.)

We have to get rid of the body.

MITCHY

Are you nuts?

SYDNEY

But we were just doing the play and poof, she died.

CHAD

Exactly. It all adds up.

Beat. Chad grabs the body.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Somebody help me.

PESSIE
 (Helping:)
 I'm not the one who stabbed her.

JULIET
 (Helping:)
 I poked her.

MITCHY
 This is wrong.

EMILIA
 (Helping:)
 I think we'll all look back at this as a time when hard choices were made, maybe messy choices, but we did what we needed to do for our club, our school and this great country of ours.

Sydney, Cora, and Mitchy don't help. Neither does Wanda, who continues to read.

PESSIE
 Grab the head.

JULIET
 Get a leg.

EMILIA
 I've got that leg.

PESSIE
 Can we get some stage crew?

CORA
 Wait.

PESSIE
 What?

CORA
 Maybe we *should* call the cops.

PESSIE
 (To offstage:)
 Hold on that!

CORA
 If people found out we killed somebody at one of our shows-

SYDNEY
 But we didn't kill-

CORA
They'd think we did-

SYDNEY
At least *I* didn't.

CORA
And that would make us exciting.

PESSIE
Come see the serial killing drama troupe.

WANDA
(Looking up from her book:)
By definition, we can't be serial killers if we only killed one person.

CHAD
Does this mean we need to kill more people?

SYDNEY
I'm not killing anyone.

JULIET
I'd lose my soccer scholarship...

EMILIA
Of course I can't kill anyone. How would that look?

JULIET
or my financial aid.

PESSIE
The body's getting heavy.

CHAD
Wait - I've got it.

Chad grabs Wanda's book,

WANDA
Hey!

forcing the other three to take the body. They can't hold it and it tumbles to the ground.

CHAD
We're bringing her back to life.

CORA
Huh?

Zombies.
CHAD

(beat)
Everybody loves zombies.

MITCHY
No, they don't.

CHAD
Why are there so many zombie movies then? And musicals and zombie defense books-

JULIET
Zombie appreciation month.

CORA
People appreciate zombies, and they would appreciate our plays more...a lot more...if we had a zombie...or two...in them.

PESSIE
You're saying we actually put a zombie in the play?

EMILIA
You can't have a zombie in a play.

PESSIE
We let Mitchy in.

MITCHY
Hey!

CHAD
I got it: we rename the play *Zombie Invasion*, and I save all of the hotties - well, if we had any-

JULIET
Even if we wanted to, not like there's a how-to book.

CHAD
Duh - yes there is.

WANDA
It's just a book.

Pessie holds out her hand for the book.

CHAD
(Giving it to her:)
The Complete *Zombie How-To Handbook*.

MITCHY
This is a bad idea.

CHAD
So leave, Mitchy. But when we're world famous-

CORA
Did you say world famous?

CHAD
-don't come knocking on our door begging to be in the show.

EMILIA
(To herself:)
Yes, I am indeed responsible for the first fully integrated high school in the world...

PESSIE
The ritual looks pretty clearly laid out. It might work. I'm almost excited, and I never get excited.

The lights dim as Chad begins a ritual using Wanda's book, but he's not terribly good at it.

CHAD
Zombie-dee and zombie-
(rhymes with "doll")
dah.

WANDA
(under her breath - as in "I do")
Do.

CHAD
(pronounces like "alley")
Zombie-ally oxen free.

WANDA
(rhymes with "dolly")
Olly.

CHAD
Zimbabwe-

WANDA
Zombie.

CHAD
What?

WANDA
The word is zombie. Zimbabwe is a country in southern Africa, and I seriously doubt that anything written in Aramaic, even spoken backwards, is going to turn into Zimbabwe.

CHAD
I don't speak Ara - Ara...what?

WANDA
That's obvious.

EMILIA
Wanda, thank you once again for proving that sexist pigitry
and ignorance go hand in hand.

CHAD
What?

(Beat.)
Shut up, Amelia.

EMILIA
Emilia. Emilia.

He turns to get away from her,
but she moves with him,
continuing to say "Emilia" in his
ear.

CHAD
Feminazi. Feminazi. [etc]

EMILIA
Emilia. Emilia. [etc]

While Chad and Emilia go at it,
Wanda picks up the book.

WANDA
Zombie-dee and zombie-do
Zombie-olly oxen free
Zombie you and zombie me
Zombie do reh mi fa so la ti do

CHAD
What the-

SYDNEY
Wanda?

WANDA
(Going into a trance,
building as she goes:)
Olleh aloh ruojnob molahs maalas gat netug awihcinnok oah
in...

The Homeless Woman begins to stir
and stagger to her feet. She is
indeed a zombie.

PESSIE
Houston, we have lift-off.

The lights dim to indicate time passing. TECHIES (or cast members in a smaller production) tie Zombie Homeless Woman's feet. One of them might hold a net over her head to keep her from biting.

While this is going on, the named cast members - or others, have a series of conversations in bits and pieces. Only Mitchy is excluded; he's gathering various weapons and protective gear that could range from the practical to the ridiculous and putting them into a sack. One should be a whiffleball bat. Among the other possibilities: a face mask, chest protector, frying pan, etc. Your production should choose whatever is practical and available.

Meanwhile, SIGN GUY, either gender, holds a stack of posters that should be visible to the audience, changing them occasionally during the scene. The first is the original poster, which says "Romeo and Juliet" and on "Friday and Saturday ONLY!" Sign Guy drops that one (think the legendary INXS video) to reveal a new poster: "Now with a real live zombie!" and "Saturday night only!"

The next poster says: "Now with a real ~~live~~ zombie!"

The final poster: "Now with a real ^dead ~~live~~ zombie!"

CHORUS OF STUDENTS

Do zombies drink soda?
Do they eat doughnuts?

CORA

The homeless lady's an adult, right?

CHORUS OF STUDENTS

Are zombies smart enough to untie knots?
Do they eat more doughnuts than before?

CHAD

(Cornering Sydney:)

All this time we've been rehearsing - we haven't had a chance to talk - really, really talk.

CHORUS OF STUDENTS

Who's paying for extra soda and doughnuts?

CORA

We just need an adult for a sponsor. That's all the rules say.

CHORUS OF STUDENTS

What if they're a zombie boy scout?

CHAD

I confuse people. Everybody assumes I'm just here to meet girls. And 'cause almost all the guys are either gay or Mitchy - and I'm Chad - that totally works.

CHORUS OF STUDENTS

What do you call a zombie on a sugar high?

CORA

Does the adult need to be alive?

CHORUS OF STUDENTS

I don't know - what?
I don't know - I was asking you.

CHAD

But at the same time, I've got this sensitive side.

CORA

Can she sign with an X?

CHAD

I know - blows my mind too.

EMILIA

Having a zombie sponsor our club is a major step forward for equality.

CHAD

My inner child is cuddly, he loves to take long walks on the beach, and he's quite the little hottie.

EMILIA

And a zombie woman makes this victory even sweeter.

CHAD

Maybe your inner child and my inner child...

CORA

Group photo!

All assemble with Zombie Homeless Woman, a sign thrust into her hands by Sign Guy that reads "[Name of Your School] Drama [Fill in the Year]." There's a flash. Beat. The group disperses until it's just the actors and the Stage Manager left on stage as the lights come up full for...

SCENE 2

The next afternoon. Rehearsal.
Zombie Homeless Woman moans and
drops her script.

CORA

Mrs. Zombie Homeless Woman, hold onto your script.

MITCHY

She doesn't have any lines.

CORA

She still needs to follow along.

CHAD

Yeah, so shut up, Mitchy, or I'm gonna pound you.

SYDNEY

Here you go, Mrs. Zombie Homeless Woman.

Sydney holds out the dropped
script to Zombie Homeless Woman,
who bites her hand.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

(Hitting Zombie Homeless
Woman with the script:)

Ow!

JULIET

Are you OK?

SYDNEY

Don't bite. Biting is not nice, and you make nice people not
nice when you bite.

STAGE MANAGER

First aid kit!

A TECHIE runs off for the first
aid kit.

SYDNEY

I'm fine. She barely nicked me.
(Breathing deeply:)
I'm taking my calming breaths.

PESSIE

You're a goner.

Want to read the entire script? Order a free
electronic perusal copy today!