

Don't Lose Your Head

By Dana Hall

CAST:

CAROL: Female. Back from the dead for one night. Open age

MARK: Male. Back from the dead for one night. Open age

LISA: Female. A mortal visiting family.

NOTES:

This show is done with minimal props and production has the playwright's permission to alter staging to fit their performance needs. Mark and Carol are undead and very cautious about moving their heads too quickly as their heads could fall off. Have fun with it!

SYNOPSIS:

What would you do if you came back from the dead for one night?

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AT RISE: The living room of Mark and Carol Hoffman. It is Halloween night.

MARK is on the couch as **CAROL** enters the living room. There is not much in the living room as it has not been lived in but rather staged for selling.

CAROL: I just love the little one's in their costumes.

MARK: Oh, like that piece of cheese that came to the door.

CAROL: He wasn't cheese, he was a sponge. It's from a cartoon- Mark.

MARK: Sponge? What kind of costumes are these? Back in the day, we'd make our own costumes. None of this store-bought crap.

CAROL They're kids- ease up.

MARK: Could they use an ounce of creativity before they extort you for candy? Ridiculous, like that kid dressed as chocolate ice cream/

CAROL: Did it have a face?

MARK: Yeah.

CAROL: That wasn't ice cream dear.

MARK: What time did Lisa say she was coming by?

CAROL: She said she'd be over after work.

She checks the time.

CAROL: (Cont.) Oh- wow she'll be here soon.

MARK: I'm surprised you invited her.

CAROL: She's family.

MARK: She's your first cousin once removed Carol.

CAROL: What can I say she was so excited to see us and we didn't have plans--

MARK picks up the remote.

MARK: Speak for yourself.

CAROL: Not like I could just walk away. She saw us checking out. Oh, come on we never get to see anyone anymore.

MARK: We saw plenty at the grocery store- I'm good.

CAROL: Oh don't be a stick in the mud.

Carol starts straightening up the place a bit.

MARK: We've been dead for a while Carol. What do we say if she starts asking questions?

CAROL: Oh, I don't know - we were traveling for your job.

MARK: Where do I work?

CAROL: Wherever you want Mark.

MARK: Wayne Enterprises.

CAROL: Where's your cape?

MARK: It's a diversified multinational conglomerate owned by Bruce Wayne/

CAROL: No.

MARK: Fine, I'll just wear the cape.

CAROL: I was kidding about the cape.

MARK: I can't believe our old place was still on the market.

CAROL: I know! It's a gem I thought someone would've scooped it up by now.

MARK: You think anyone will notice that we're here?

CAROL: The agent left a card on the table, looks like there isn't a showing until tomorrow night - the place is all ours- again.

MARK: Did you hear that?

CAROL: Sounds like a car- probably Lisa pulling in.

CAROL adjusts her scarf and **MARK's** scarf.

MARK: I look ridiculous.

CAROL: You look handsome. - Distinguished.

MARK: Could've worn a cape but- *no my wife won't let me*. It's Halloween no one would think twice/

CAROL: We need to look normal and not raise suspicion. Besides, you know they don't attach the head very well- they just shove your spirit back into these things. We don't need any accidents with Lisa here.

MARK: I highly doubt anyone would suspect we were undead and as long as I don't make any sharp movements the old noggin is fine. See- look.

He demonstrates neck movement.

CAROL: You're going to knock it off again. Don't ruin our first time back!

MARK: Me- ruin it? We get this one night a year and *this* is how we're going to spend it?

CAROL: Well, it's not like *you* planned anything. I thought a simple night at home would've been nice - just like the old days. Excuse me for living!

MARK: You're not alive!

Doorbell or knocking.

CAROL: Shhh...That's the side door, it must be her. **(Calls)** Come in, doors open - we're in the living room!

LISA comes in and greets **CAROL** and **MARK**.

LISA: Well-well, if it isn't the Hoffman's - no costumes tonight?

MARK: I tried but/

CAROL: No- no. We'll leave that to the kiddos this year.

MARK: Nice costume yourself.

LISA: Good one- Mark. You've always been a jokester! I didn't have time to change after my shift. I know you two must be so busy now that you're back in town. I had to stop by

and catch up/

MARK: This year has felt like an eternity.

CAROL elbows MARK. CAROL sees LISA's grocery bag.

CAROL: Oh I'll take that, you shouldn't have brought anything/

LISA: (reveals) It's a carton of eggs.

MARK: Well, my cholesterol was high but what the heck - you only live once/

CAROL shoots MARK a glare.

MARK: It's just a saying.

LISA: Ha. This guy! It's not for dinner. It's for those hooligans out there.

CAROL: You throw eggs at children?

LISA: I defend myself and my property. I busted some teenagers stealing at the store and for two days straight my car has been covered in yolk. So these babies are my insurance policy. I noticed you didn't have any decorations up and thought maybe you might need some insurance too so I brought them in.

MARK: We picked up some candy today to hand out. We should be fine.

LISA: Full size or regular?

CAROL: Licorice.

LISA: I'll just leave these right here- you might need them more than me. So what have the two of you been up to? It's like you just up and left one day- I tried calling but your number didn't go through.

CAROL: Oh- yeah sorry about that Mark's job had him take on a client in... Australia and well duty calls.

MARK is looking confused.

LISA: Oh I didn't know you were an international man of business Mark! What do you do?

MARK: It's a diversified multinational conglomerate/

CAROL clears her throat and shoots him a look.

MARK: (Cont) I'd hate to bore you with the details/

LISA: I'd love to see Australia one day. Did you see a kangaroo?

MARK: I can say I've seen a lot of things this year that I never thought I would - that's for sure.

CAROL: So Lisa, how have things been for you?

LISA: Nothing exciting here. Just picking up some extra shifts -- the last time I talked to the two of you - where were you going?... Somewhere down south/

CAROL and MARK: Nashville.

LISA: Right! How was it?

MARK: The Smoky Mountains were beautiful.

LISA: Oh where did you stay?

CAROL: Yah Mark - *where* did we stay? I remember the drive then the *creek*...

LISA: Oh did you go swimming?

MARK: You could say that/

They both rub their necks then catch themselves.

CAROL: Enough about us- any Halloween plans tonight?

LISA: Nah, I was never one to really get into it. But it's a fascinating holiday, isn't it? I remember as a little girl asking grandma why we dress up for Halloween.

MARK: Simple- candy.

LISA: Well, yeah but she said the farmers believed once their crops died there was a window of time when spirits could rise from their graves- so people dressed up to scare them off.

MARK: (Starts coughing) Sorry, I just swallowed my spit and went down the wrong pipe.

LISA: Oh here- let me loosen your scarf a bit.

CAROL: No! No, he's fine.

Carol smacks Mark on the back hard.

CAROL: Happens all the time/

MARK: (winded) Yup- All better.

CAROL: See.

LISA: What was I saying?

CAROL: Oh just something about farmers trying to explain the change of season I suppose/

LISA: Right- yah a lot of cultures believe there's a window where our world and the afterlife overlap. *(In a fun spooky voice)* Where the souls of loved ones can walk the earth again. Ha! I know what I'd do if I came back for one night- I'd haunt those little jerks that egged my car. What would you do?

CAROL: Do with what?

LISA: If you came back from the dead?

MARK takes the remote and clicks on the TV and puts up his feet.

MARK: I guess I'd kick up my feet and turn on Sportsnet.

CAROL knocks his feet down.

CAROL: Can't someone come back and want a quiet night in?

LISA: (Laughing) I highly doubt anyone would want to sit around their house on their only day back in the world!

CAROL: (slow build of panic) One day. That's it. You think one would want to cram in everything but the pain of every interaction, knowing it's your last, knowing it's fleeting, is too much. Trying to decide what to see, whom to visit, being hit with feelings you took for granted it's all so heavy. You want to absorb every single moment but how? How can you? *(realizing)* ...is likely what someone *might* experience or whoa it's a little hot in here-- anyone else thirsty, I'm thirsty- are you thirsty? Let me grab us some drinks.

CAROL leaves.

LISA: *(To Mark)* Was it something I said?

MARK: No, no she's just a bit flustered. We haven't seen... family in a while.

LISA: Oh, because for a moment there I thought she was going to lose her head.

MARK: They don't attach it as thoroughly as one would think. That's for sure.

LISA: *(Laughing)* Oh, you could always make me laugh.

CAROL *comes back with random drinks and puts them down on a table.*

CAROL: Sorry, we don't have much in the house.

LISA: Oh, thank you but I'm fine.

CAROL *holds out a juice box to LISA*

CAROL: Are you sure?

LISA: Yeah, I'm sure. I didn't notice your ring before- it's lovely.

CAROL: Thanks.

LISA: I didn't mean to upset you - I know I have a tendency to ramble on and on.

CAROL: Oh don't give it another thought. I found what I came for/ what I thought I'd lost.

MARK: Really because this is hardly a quiet evening at home/

CAROL: Not that- this/

CAROL *shows Mark a ring*

MARK: Your Mother's wedding ring.

CAROL: I hid it in the way back of the cabinet - it was still there. Can you believe it?

LISA: That's so sweet. I bet she will love that you found it! Wait...

LISA *listens intently.*

Did you hear that? Right there. Sounds like eggs-

MARK: How could you possible/

LISA: Oh I can tell that sound. Get away from my car you candy suckers! Looks like I'm serving breakfast early.

LISA grabs the carton of eggs and runs off stage.

MARK: I still don't understand why you invited her (*looking towards the offstage window*) but boy does she have an arm. Must be lifting all those heavy grocery bags.

LISA sits next to MARK admiring the ring.

MARK: Do you want to visit her? We can.

CAROL: I can't.

MARK: I understand.

CAROL: They never found our car - she thinks we ran off to Paris or somewhere exotic. Let her live out her last years thinking we're living it up.

MARK: You're a good daughter.

LISA comes running through the living room.

LISA: It's not me they're after, it's YOU. You guys and your licorice. I told you - you are in a FULL-SIZE neighborhood. Good thing I had more ammo in the car. Here take these and follow me.

LISA gives MARK and CAROL a bag containing eggs.

CAROL: I can't hit a child.

LISA: Those aren't *children* tonight- egg or BE EGGED!

MARK and CAROL look at each other and grin. They run out after LISA. After each line we can hear a 'bang or splat.'

MARK: (OS) This is for store-bought costumes!

CAROL: (OS) Careful Mark.

MARK: (OS) And costumes that are puns! You're NOT Clever!

CAROL: (OS) Your scarf is coming loose- Mark. Mark!

MARK: (OS) JUST A MASK!? You're not even trying! HOW. DARE. YOU!
We hear several "eggs splat" in a row.

CAROL (OS) Look out Mark! No! His head!

LISA (OS) Aaaaaiiiiiiii! It can't be- Aaaaaiiii! Aaiii!

CAROL (OS) I'll wrap it in this towel they can reattach it later.

A ball or watermelon is wrapped tightly in a white towel (add some prop blood if desired). Or you can do away with the head reappearing and keep everything Off Stage.

CAROL: (OS) Oh no it's so slippery! Grab it! grab it!

LISA: (OS) Aaii! I think I'm going to faint.

We see the head of MARK roll across the stage or bounce. CAROL enters to get MARK's disembodied head and delivers her last line as she leaves the stage.

CAROL: (to Mark's head) So much for a quiet night in! Next time *you* plan something.

-END PLAY-