

Double-Feature Midnight Movie

By Bob Gunner

She had never spoken to him before, so it was of course a completely unexpected surprise when she did on this breezy and chilly Halloween morning.

Standing like an angel in the yard next door, a soft glow seemingly surrounding her in the milky haze, like an aura of energy, full of life, and love, and incomparable innocent beauty.

He felt unworthy of her personal audience as dying wet leaves floated down, swirling and twirling from the enormous shade trees that framed him as he worked.

As he raked the leaves into neat piles in the front of his parent's and his modest home, she waltzed over to the white-washed picket fence and waved for his attention.

April January Collins had lived in the house next to his since he was about five, but Jonathan Broome could never recall a time she had ever even noticed him at all. He was the only child of his parents, an odd ball, and the 'strange kid' of the neighborhood (and at Buffalo High School), where they were both in the same grade and even shared several of the same classes.

But Jonathan was quiet, shy and introverted. His hobbies and interests were mostly surfing the Internet, superhero comic books, old classic horror movies and reading. And he read quite a bit, just about any book or magazine he could get hold of, and he was very intelligent and mature for his age.

April, on the other hand, was the community 'princess', a fragile and tender little golden-hair girl with a dimple on her cheek, spoiled and protected, and from one of the richest and most well-known families in town. He always felt that he was out classed whenever she was around him, and he would never in a thousand years be good enough to ever have the opportunity to become friends with the girl next door.

"Hey there, Jonathan, come here a moment, I have something I would like to ask of you," April said in her sexy, little-girl-like tone, "Sorry to bother you while you're so busy in the yard, but I promise it'll only take a moment."

Jonathan felt embarrassed, she had caught him at his worst. He was clad in filthy and faded jeans and damp t-shirt, a dirty and sweaty face, his hair untamed and wild, and he thought to himself, how bad an impression he must be making to her.

He stopped his chores and came to her by the fence, totally amazed and virtually stumped by her real beauty, even though she had not even put on her makeup this early in the day. She smiled at him, as he seemed so 'different' from most of the other boys his age at their school.

He was definitely less a threat than most of the other boys who had tried to give her all their attention this junior year at Buffalo High.

"Yes?" Jonathan replied in answer to her request.

"Good morning Jonathan, I was just wondering if you might have any plans for Halloween night?"

Jonathan thought for a moment he had heard her wrong, that she had probably said something completely different, but he had merely heard it out of context. "What am I doing for Halloween?" he replied, "I guess I'm just hanging around."

"Well, you see the reason I'm asking you this Jonathan is that a few of my friends and I were planning to go to the double-feature midnight movie at the old Axion Theater in town tonight, and I thought maybe you might like to join us?" she asked.

"The Axion, gosh, I thought it had closed down years ago?" he answered.

"Well yes, but not entirely, it only opens now for special events a couple times a year, and the owner keeps it in great shape. Every Halloween, Mr. Baker, the owner, has made it an annual tradition to present a horror-movie double-feature that lasts until about midnight or so. I have gone the last few years, and it really was fun, everyone dresses in costumes and masks and makeup and has a really great time, so I wondered if you might like to go with me this year?" she said.

Jonathan thought about it for a moment and said; "But, eh, I thought you were dating Charlie VanMiller from the school wrestling team pretty regularly nowadays?"

"Yes, I was, but we broke up during the summer because I found out he and I had nothing in common, and I really don't date any one specific boy anymore. I'm really just looking

for some interesting new friends Jonathan, and though we have been living right next door to each other all these years, I have never really had the opportunity to try to be your friend. I was wondering if maybe we could remedy that now?" she said, smiling at him with that perfect smile he thought would never be meant for him.

"And who else did you say is coming along?" Jonathan inquired.

"Just Tommy Bond and Chrissy Spencer," April replied. Jonathan knew Tommy from his gym class, and the guy seemed to be one of the few who had been friendly towards him through the years.

Chrissy Spencer and he had been lab partners in chemistry class their freshman year, and she too had always been very nice.

"I would be honored to go with you and your friends, I love horror movies you know," he said.

"Good," she replied, looking to be very excited about the reply, "You want to take your car or mine?"

"We can take mine," Jonathan answered, "It's not as new as yours, but it's clean and it runs pretty well."

"Ok, then, I'll meet you out by your car at about seven this evening, is that good for you?" she asked.

"Yeah, then I'll see you at seven," Jonathan said.

April did a little spontaneous dance move, and then skipped back off to her house, where she disappeared through the front door, but not before stopping for a moment and waving again at the red-faced boy. Jonathan went back to his chores and thought to himself how lucky today was going to be for him, Halloween was always a special day, but this Halloween was going to be the best one of all.

Perhaps this girl really did like him, and now he might be given a chance to become her friend after all these years of just thinking about it.

Jonathan had only gotten back to raking for a few minutes, when his mother came outside to bring him a cold soda, "Wasn't that the Collins girl April, I saw you speaking to over the fence Jonathan?"

“Yes Mom, it sure was, she was inviting me to come along with her and some of her friends from school to the Axion Theater in town tonight. There’s going to be a horror movie double-feature for all the teens,” Jonathan explained.

“Really? Well that’s very nice, you know I really think April is a sweet girl, maybe you two might just hit it off?” his mother kidded.

“Yeah, well don’t get your hopes up too high Mom, after all, she is pretty popular girl you know?” Jonathan replied shyly.

“Well, guess what? Your father and I went on our first date to the Axion. I didn’t know it was still open, I thought it had finally shut down and went out of business twenty years ago. People don't go to the movies much anymore, with DVD players, movie rentals, and cable television available everywhere. But when I was a teenager, there was no better way to go see a movie than on that big giant screen at the Axion. I can even remember when I was in the 7th grade, and the Axion burned almost to the ground that year.

Your father and I were there earlier that day but left shortly before the fire began. It was three of the most boring months of my life, but thankfully they rebuilt it and it opened again. Then everything went back to normal, and we had a place to go see new movies and meet our friends once more,” the woman told her son.

“Really, so how long has the Axion been around, Mom?” Jonathan asked.

“Well, let’s see, my mother told me it first opened in the 1940s. I think during the second World War. I seem to recall her saying “1943”, so I guess that would make it about sixty years old. I would guess that just about everyone in this town up to about twenty years ago had visited that theater to see at least one major movie during their lifetime. But this will be your first opportunity, won't it?” his mother questioned.

“Yes, it will. And you know Mom, I’m really looking forward to this,” Jonathan answered.

Jonathan’s mother smiled as she noticed the excitement in her son’s eyes and his voice as he spoke to her. He was a good and well-behaved boy, and deserved to have more friends, and a possible girlfriend might be just what the doctor prescribed. Maybe this would be the start of him beginning to get out a bit and enjoying his life a little more while he was still young enough to enjoy it.

Children in this small town seemed to grow up so fast. In just over a year, Jonathan would be going to college, and he needed to get out of his self-inflicted protective shell and learn to interact more casually with others his own age.

Jonathan spent most of that day deciding what he should wear as a costume for the event. He finally decided to make himself up as one of the 'Un-dead', one of the movies scheduled for the double feature was the George A. Romero classic "Night of the Living Dead", so this seemed very appropriate to him.

He borrowed an old worn and tattered pin-stripe suit from his father's closet (one that didn't fit him any longer) and his mother helped him with some make-up to become a pale-faced 'Zombie'. When Jonathan walked outside to meet April that evening, shortly after dark, he was pleased to see that she had dressed as a 'zombie' also. She was wearing a fake blood-stained old white prom dress. They would look perfect together, he thought to himself, feeling relieved he had made the right choice.

April told the boy that they would be meeting the other young couple in front of the theater, so after Jonathan and April's parents came outside and took some quick pictures of the gruesome costumed duo, they hastily apologized, and made their retreat for the movie theater.

After driving into town and parking in the back of the theater building, they found their companions for the evening holding a space in line for them in front of the Axion.

Everyone was dressed in Halloween garb and standing around mingling, joking and laughing in front of the box office, in the soft flashing magic neon glow and electronic hum of the colorful marquee.

The Axion looked as though it was a brand-new theater just opening for the first time, red-felt covered ropes slung from chrome posts kept the small but anxious crowd of teenagers in a neat procession leading to the box-office.

Tommy and Chrissy greeted Jonathan and April (dressed up in Raggedy Ann and Andy costumes), and both said they were glad that the boy could attend the event with them.

"I'm sure glad Ms. April here finally found a movie date that can hold a decent conversation with both her as well as us," Tommy joked, "Most of her dates for the past three or four years couldn't hold an intelligent conversation with a monkey!" the boy commented,

patting Jonathan jokingly on the back at the same time. Feeling a little overwhelmed by the nice comment, Jonathan just smiled shyly at his new friends.

The line began to move slowly, and soon the teens had bought their tickets and entered the theater, and were in line at the concession stand, as fresh popcorn popped, and the smell of hot dogs and other delicious food filled the whole room. The Axion was a masterpiece of well-implemented art decor and looked exactly the way it had when it was first built. It sparkled like it was new and the decorations were all bright and full of life, not dull and faded like Jonathan had first expected.

“Mr. Baker has been working here in this concession stand since he was a kid, way back when it first opened,” Tommy told Jonathan as he pointed to the old man working behind the counter.

“My Mom says he just keeps this place operating and offering special shows every once in a while, because he has never gotten over the love he had for the movie business out of his system. When he was about eighteen, he ran off to Hollywood to be an actor in horror movies. He actually got a few roles while he was there, and then met a young actress whom he fell in love with.

Unfortunately, his girlfriend was found some months later in her small apartment mysteriously and brutally murdered. They never found her killer, and so, heart-broken, Mr. Baker came back home and dedicated himself to the family business to get over his sorrows,” Chrissy said.

“Hey, my mother told me that exact same story,” April said.

“I was talking with my mother this morning, and she told me there had been a fire here back when she was in about the 7th grade, did any of you ever hear anything about that?” Jonathan asked.

“Yeah, my Mom has talked about that too, incidentally, she says it happened on Halloween night in 1959. She said it started up in the balcony seats somewhere. A couple of members of two local gangs of teenagers were up there picking on other kids who had come to see the movie. She said these teens were ‘greasers’, right out of Happy Days and ‘Kickers’, who liked to dress up in western garb.

“All of them went to school with her,” Tommy said.

“Really?, so what happened, someone started a fire or something after the movie was over or what?” Jonathan asked.

“No, it was worse than that, my Dad told me the fire began halfway through the second movie of that night's double-feature. He said fourteen of the teens, who were attending the shows for that night were trapped up there in the balcony and later killed by the blaze. There was no real explanation as to what started the fire, but the arson investigators pretty much agreed it had begun somehow up there in the balcony. The whole town got together and held a mass funeral for the victims in the school auditorium a few days later because there wasn't any other place large enough in this town to hold all the families at one time,” said Tommy.

“When Mr. Baker got the insurance settlement money a couple of months later, he had the place rebuilt, and then, like nothing had ever happened there, opened for business again. I did ask him once about the fire, and he told me; “Sometimes there is no reason that God takes the lives of so many young people,” He said he and the rest of the community had felt that the world must go on to pacify the families of the dead teens. And so, he had the theater rebuilt for this reason, even though many never got over such an awful tragedy,” April said.

“Strange thing is, that I don't know too many of my friends that are brave enough to watch the movie from up there in the balcony now, I think they must think it might be 'haunted' by the ghost of those kids who were killed up there,” Tommy added.

“Wow, now that's what I call a really 'spooky' story Tommy,” Jonathan commented, “Now, you guys are giving me shivers up my spine even before the horror movies start.”

The two young couples entered the darkened auditorium and found seats near the back of the theater, and Jonathan looked up to check out the balcony up above. It too had been rebuilt to its original location in the theater, and Jonathan noticed that there was even now a small scattered group of people up there in the seats in the darkness. Just a few couples and small groups of kids. But not many.

“It's kind of eerie looking, isn't it? Well, I personally have no desire to go watch the movies up there, and I definitely will not be visiting that balcony by myself any time soon,” Tommy commented, as Chrissy tried to keep from giggling.

“Now you guys stop trying to frighten my date, you hear?” April joked as she snuggled closer to Jonathan, again surprising him, and whispered into his ear, “I’m sure glad you came with me Jonathan, I feel much better having someone with me for scary movies.”

Jonathan smiled and sat up straight and relaxed in his seat. The lights slowly dimmed, and the theater became totally black, and then a shimmering beam of light shot down from the projectionist's booth, up back behind the balcony, and the movies began for the evening. The Elite Entertainment logo faded in and then out and the classic black and white zombie extravaganza began.

April began to scoot closer and even closer to Jonathan, then took hold of his hand and slipped it over her shoulder, “You don't mind, do you? I would feel safer if your arm was there.”

Jonathan didn't mind at all; he could see that April was really attracted to him and he wanted her to like him. He never really had a girlfriend all those earlier years in school, and he was tired of being harassed by some of the other teens who often picked on him for it. His hand touched her bare shoulder and she seemed to like the feel of it there, drawing even closer to him for more warmth. She smiled up at him and whispered; “Thank you Jonathan, that really makes me feel better.”

He smiled back that he agreed, and both watched the screen attentively as the flick began. Muffled hoots and giggling noises seem to come from up in the balcony every once in a while, and several times while they were watching the first feature, Jonathan and the others had been pelted by buttered popcorn and other small pieces of assorted trash being dropped down on them by some unknown assailant up there.

Jonathan and the others didn't feel like it was anything really threatening, probably just a bunch of immature teens playing their Halloween pranks on the innocent bystanders seated down below. So, he and his companions just tried to ignore the occasional bombardment of debris from above during that first movie. No one could get hurt from a hurled candy wrapper or a piece or two of popcorn that floated down into their hair.

The first movie ended, and colorful cartoon characters soon danced across the screen as images of soft drinks and food being sold at the concession stand, were flashed to encourage sales before the next movie began. The two giggling girls decided to make a quick trip to the

ladies' room to freshen up, while the boys decided to replenish their snacks before the next film started.

As they got up to walk down the theater aisle back out towards the snack bar, Jonathan noticed another boy about his age up in the balcony staring down at him. He couldn't really see the other boy very well, because it seemed to be much darker up in the balcony, but for some reason he felt uneasy about him. As they walked by, the boy seemed to snarl out a foul comment and flipped the bird at him.

"Did you see that?" Tommy asked Jonathan, "Did you see that creep up there flipping the bird at you?"

"Yeah, I did, but I sure don't know that guy, maybe he thought I was someone else? The lights are pretty dim in here. I'm sure that's what it was," Jonathan said.

"Maybe, but if I was you, I'd keep alert, just in case this guy wants to make trouble or something," said Tommy.

As they approached the concession area, Jonathan noticed the carpeted stairway leading up to the balcony, and another couple dressed as clowns (whom Jonathan recognized from school) slowly ascended down the steps and appeared to be leaving for the night.

Jonathan noticed the tears and trail of dripping mascara running down the girl's white grease painted cheeks as the two walked pass him, him making eye contact with the girl for just a few moments.

The nervous boy with her was whispering apologies in her ear as he tried to comfort her, the boy paused at the concession stand to make a comment to Mr. Baker, he overheard something about some gang members picking on them, and then the two turned and rushed out the front door of the building as though someone might come behind and pursue them into the night.

Tommy noticed the fleeing clowns too, and asked Jonathan; "That was Molly Cowan and Kelly White, wasn't it? What was that all about?"

"Yeah, I think so, I heard them say something about kids starting some trouble with them up in the balcony, I wonder if it was the same kid who cussed at me?" Jonathan questioned.

“Well, that’s a shame, because they always seem so happy and cheery together at school and I have never seen anyone being rude to them before,” Tommy replied.

The girls rejoined them, and they returned to their seats in the theater auditorium to get ready for the beginning of the second show. They kidded around and traded off tastes of chocolate covered raisins and Junior Mints, Goobers and Milk Duds. And then the lights dimmed once again, and the second movie of the double-feature, Wes Craven’s “The Hills Have Eyes” began.

As a family began to be menaced by a clan of cannibalistic rural mutants, Jonathan found April holding his hand firmly. And then she looked into his eyes and kissed him for the first time he had ever been kissed in his life by a girl other than his mother.

“Wait a minute, but I thought you just wanted to be friends?” he asked her in a soft whisper.

“I guess I never realized how sweet and kind a person you were before,” was her answer.

And as both teens stared into each other’s eyes, and prepared to kiss again, the unexpected happened. Something came falling down from the balcony and hit April square in the head. A medium size plastic soft drink cup, which smacked her right on the forehead, and was followed by a scattered rain of ice-cold cola which spread out and drenched all four teens.

“Are you hurt?” Jonathan asked his startled date. “No Jonathan, I’m fine, it was only just a soda, someone must have dropped it from up there by accident,” she added.

“Well, I don’t know about that. I’m betting you it was that guy who was giving you the bird earlier,” Tommy said to Jonathan.

“Yeah, you really think so Tommy? Maybe I better go have a talk with this guy and see what’s going on? Let him know I’m not who he thinks I am?” Jonathan added as he got up from his seat and headed out towards the vacant lobby and the balcony stairs.

“Jonathan, you want me to come along with you?” Tommy asked.

“No, Tommy, you just stay here with the girls and watch out for them, I’ll handle this guy,” Jonathan answered.

He was up those stairs in a matter of seconds, standing at the entryway to the balcony, his eyes trying to adjust to the darkness of the area. He saw the other teen laughing to himself as he stood near the front of the balcony alone. There were other shadows of theater patrons seated in the balcony seats but scattered much further back. All he saw at this time were unrecognizable outlines of those people in the higher seats.

"Hey, are you the one that just dropped a soda on us down there?" Jonathan asked with an increasing anger in the tone of his voice.

The other teenage boy's voice answered; "Maybe so, maybe not. So, what if I did?"

"I would say if you did, you're asking for an ass-kicking, that's what I'd say. You got it all over me, my girlfriend and our friends," Jonathan answered, slowly advancing towards the other boy.

"Yeah, well piss on you. If you think you're big enough to do something about it, bring it on big boy. I'm waiting here for you," the other voice said, only to be interrupted at that time by old Mr. Baker, who had suddenly appeared up on the top of the stairs and flashed a bright beam from his flashlight, quickly on and off at the two teens from the doorway entrance.

"O.K., that will be enough from both of you boys," he said firmly as he approached both of them. Baker walked toward Jonathan and the other boy in the darkness, and grabbed hold of Jonathan's arm, restraining him from advancing toward the other teen.

"What on earth is going on here now? You both know we don't allow no fighting in this theater," Baker firmly stated. "If you want to fight, you have to leave."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Baker, but this kid just dropped a full soda down on me and my friends who are sitting below, and I've never seen this guy in my life, so I don't know why he would," Jonathan explained to the old man.

"Is that right son, did you drop that soft drink on them?" Baker inquired from the other teen, who snickered and never replied to the question, and was now was nothing but a hobbling shape in the darkness.

"Well, well, well, won't you looky here now. If it isn't the good Mr. Baker?" the other unknown boy giggled as he recognized who the old man was.

Jonathan could only dimly see a look of confusion on the old man's wrinkled face as Baker squinted his eyes to get a better look at the face of the trouble maker, trying not to make a major scene that might disturb the other theater customers who had come to enjoy the Halloween double-feature.

“Do I know you, young man?” Baker sternly questioned.

“Yeah, I would say you know me really well Mr. Baker,” he answered.

Baker switched the flashlight on the other boy's face for a quick look, gasping and quickly shutting it back off while mumbling; “Oh god, it can't be... It's you.”

“It's who Mr. Baker?” Jonathan asked.

Baker hushed him and patted him gently on the shoulder and calmly told Jonathan to go back downstairs, that he and only he would be able to handle this specific troublemaker.

“Are you sure Mr. Baker?” Jonathan said.

“Yes, Boy listen to me now, for your own good you just go down and get your friends and leave this theater right now, I know how to handle the likes of these troublemakers here,” Mr. Baker answered.

And from the boy in the darkness; “Yeah, you run along boy, you just run off and take your little friends with you, because you know, I believe that's what your daddy would have done in a situation like this. A matter of fact, that's exactly what he did do with his date that Halloween of 1959. And I think that date would have been your mother now, wouldn't it have?”

Mr. Baker found himself suddenly remembering that fateful night's events of Halloween 1959, knowing the terrible secret of that day and how the fire had come about, starting with the troublemaker, just like now. He then, just as now, had come up to the balcony because of complaints from others, and found the teens bickering and fist fighting, struggling and wrestling around. Four 'greasers' with their leather jackets and Brylcreem duck tails and sideburns, and three other boys dressed like 'cowboys' in jeans and t shirts (cigarette packs firmly rolled in their sleeves) and straw cowboy hats.

He had pulled his lighter from his pants and lit it to get a better look at the trouble makers that night because the batteries had suddenly died in his flashlight, and then one boy

unexpectedly (yes, and he knew it was the same damn punk who was standing in front of him now) had kicked the blazing lighter from his hand.

In a moment of confusion and dazed, the Zippo flew up against the curtains, draped loosely along the art decor walls, and flames quickly grew and spread rapidly to the balcony's padded theater seats. Mr. Baker, in all the excitement and confusion, managed to get down that day from the balcony after the fire started, but the 'troublemakers' never had that chance.

They found themselves trapped by burning seats and then the falling wood beams from the ceiling on the farther side of the balcony. And it was there, screaming and fighting the wall of flames that they met their maker.

Since none of those who were up in the balcony that night lived to tell their story to anyone, and those who had been in the lower level saw nothing because of the smoke and darkness of the theater, Mr. Baker was able to keep his involvement in the incident a secret from all. The Axion was all he had left in his sad and disappointing life, and if he was to claim the insurance money to build it back to its grand glory again, no one must ever know...

"Boy, you just listen to me and go son, you go right now!" Mr. Baker insisted. Jonathan saw the look of fear in Mr. Baker's eyes and decided he must do what the man had requested him to do. But he felt that something was just not right. Jonathan turned and walked back down the stairs towards where his friends were sitting.

"April, Tommy, Chrissy, come on, Mr. Baker says we have got to leave," Jonathan said.

"What's wrong Jonathan? That bully has some friends up there with him or something?" Tommy asked the boy as all four got up from their seats and glanced up at the balcony to faintly see Mr. Baker in a face-off with the other boy.

"I can't explain it to you now Tommy, but Mr. Baker asked for us to leave and he was really serious about it," Jonathan said.

"Well, that's fine with me. I think this movie is stupid anyway,"

As they left the auditorium and made their way through the lobby, another person dressed as a 'zombie' began to slowly descend the stairs from up in the balcony. Jonathan looked closely at this stranger and realized that this time there wasn't a makeup job involved. Jonathan felt there was the possibility that maybe Tommy's joking around about the balcony

being haunted earlier might really be true. The trouble-making teen up in the balcony, and now this thing standing before him, could be the troubled souls of those teens killed by fire that Halloween day back in 1959.

And all of them were coming back now, this Halloween night some forty odd years later for their revenge.

“Hurry, let’s get out of here now,” Jonathan ordered the others, taking a moment to slam the glass door behind them as they escaped. Now all of them realized what was happening and were running for their lives. The walking corpse, its rotted skin slowly peeling away from its face, exposing its skull, smiled a full tooth grin and locked the doors behind them as its eyes glowed like red coals.

The four teens ran screaming to the back of the building and quickly got into their cars, pulling out of the parking lot together, and heading back together towards the Main Street of the little town. As they slowly passed the front of the grand Axion movie theater, they could see the lobby now filling up with other teens who had come to the double-feature who had seen the demons and also were trying to flee. Several familiar male and female faces pressed against the locked glass doors as they screamed and yelled, beating bloody hands against the glass trying to escape from something terrible, Un-dead and horrible.

Gray smoke then began to slowly whisk into the lobby from the upstairs balcony, Mr. Baker had realized the only way to fight these monsters now was to send them back to their fiery grave, and he efficiently had made use of the lighter (the original Zippo that started the first fire years ago) in his pants pocket to do this. This time though, unfortunately, Mr. Baker wasn’t going to escape from the fire that he started.

Tommy pulled his car up to the side of Jonathan’s, and yelled to him out the window; “Isn’t there something we can do to help Mr. Baker and all the others?”

Jonathan thought for a moment and replied; “Yeah, I think so, I think the police station is just up the street a bit, so maybe we can get some help there?”

Jonathan headed in the direction of the police station (followed by the car of the other couple). He began to speed up a bit, and then suddenly found himself intercepted by the flashing lights of a police cruiser that had been hiding on the side of the road with their

headlights turned off. Jonathan explained to the officer who came to his window about the new fire at the Axion.

The officer looked in that direction and saw it was true, the Axion now resembled a flickering torch in the cool night as flames appeared on the roof of the building and the theater glowed in the darkness. The police officer realizing what was going on, hurried back to his patrol car, made a quick call for assistance, and were soon met in a matter of minutes by other police and two fire engines in front of the theater.

Within moments, glass doors had been shattered and pried loose and open by the firemen, and thanks to the quick thinking of these arriving on the scene, almost all those from inside the Axion who could escape, were fleeing safely out into the night. Costumed characters running in all directions, yelling and crying and screaming. But the dead troublemakers found they could not leave the building to pursue their prey. Some invisible wall kept them from doing so.

And now, as Jonathan and April, and Tommy and Chrissy, felt sure the other theatergoers would be safe and protected, they drove away from the tragic scene that had come unfolded before them, they knew the police and firemen would fight the 'monsters' now if they had to. And realized this would be one Halloween night and one double-feature midnight movie in their life they would never forget.

Briefly for a moment in the glare of flashing lights and uniforms, as Jonathan turned his car around to head back toward his and April's homes and their waiting and now probably worried parents, he noticed a vaguely distorted figure of something up crawling on the roof of the now blazing building just above the marquee.

Somehow, he knew it was the teenage troublemaker from his encounter earlier in the balcony of the Axion. The intimidating and nasty undead thing noticed him and his date, waving while smiling at him through its burnt and melting flesh. One last time he flipped the bird at Jonathan as he and April sped away.