

"The dead are so terribly dead when they're dead." -  
Larry Darrell, The Razor's Edge

MEDEA (V.O.)

Once upon a time, in the not too  
distant future, there unlied a zombie named Otto.

MEDEA (V.O.)

It was a time, not much different from  
today, when zombies had become, if not commonplace,  
then certainly unextraordinary.

MEDEA (V.O.)

Zombies had evolved over time and  
become somewhat more refined.

MEDEA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They had developed a limited ability to  
speak, and more importantly, to reason. Some say it  
was primarily owing to the fact that the practice  
of embalming had fallen out of favour.

MEDEA YARN (V.O.)

Others say it was simply a natural  
process of evolution. Each new wave of zombies was  
beaten down and killed by the living, who found  
them to be an irritating and irksome reminder of  
their own inescapable mortality, not to mention an  
echo of their own somnambulistic, conformist  
behaviour.

MEDEA (V.O.)

But the few zombies who survived  
annihilation managed to pass on the intelligence  
they had acquired to subsequent generations,  
perhaps through some strange telepathy only shared

by the dead...

MEDEA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...or perhaps by a kind of clandestine guerrilla activity born out of resistance against the violent and unceasing hostilities of the living.

MEDEA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Still others say it was, and always had been, just a metaphor.

OTTO (V.O.)

It's not easy being undead. The living all seem like the same person to me, and I don't think I like that person very much. I try to relate to them, but it's difficult. I was a zombie with an identity crisis. And until I figured it out, I was stuck eating whatever non-human flesh was available.

OTTO (V.O.)

I have no idea where I was headed that night. I can't recall what was going through my brain. It's difficult now, to have clear thoughts. I only have vague memories of the time before. Sketchy images, like charcoal drawings, that float in and out of the soup of my consciousness. They could be real or imagined. I have no

real way of knowing.

OTTO (V.O.)

I had no idea where I had come from, or where I was going. I only know that I was being drawn forward by some overpowering smell. The smell of human density. The smell of flesh. Berlin.

INTERTITLE: UP WITH DEAD PEOPLE  
A MOVIE BY MEDEA YARN

MEDEA (V.O.)

A new wave of gay zombies had emerged

MEDEA

I did not find Otto. Otto found me. He saw one of my casting flyers and showed up at my studio to audition for a role in Up with Dead People, the political zombie movie that I had been working on for years. My magnum corpus. My dissertation on the dead.

MEDEA (V.O.)

He looked extremely abject, wearing clothes that appeared to have been lived in for days, if not weeks, or months, which smelled like they were on the verge of rotting. He had obviously been homeless for some time.

MEDEA

He vaguely reminded me of the other boys I had already cast in *Up With Dead People*: lonely, empty, dead inside. In a way he fit the typical porn profile: the lost boy; the damaged boy; the numb, phlegmatic, insensate boy willing to go to any extreme to feel something, to feel anything.

MEDEA (V.O.)

To me it seemed like the only sane and logical response to a dead and sterile world.

MEDEA (V.O.)

But there was something different about Otto. Something more... authentic.

MEDEA (V.O.)

I had to make a movie about Otto. I had no choice.

MEDEA

Isn't it divine, Adolf? I love shopping here.

ADOLF

Yes, Medea, it's beautiful. But why did we have to come so early?

MEDEA

It's Hella's birthday. I wanted to pick out something fresh out for her.

ADOLF

A fresh headstone. How  
unthoughtful of you.

MEDEA

Thank-you, Adolf. I love  
birthdays. Each year they  
bring you closer to death.  
Look, Adolf! A heart-shaped  
one!

MEDEA (CONT'D)

I'll take two of these.

FRITZ

Otto intrigued me from the  
very beginning. I considered  
his particular form of mental  
illness a healthy response to  
a materialistic world that  
had become soulless and  
deadening. I knew  
immediately that Otto was,  
for this reason, the perfect  
subject for Medea. He was the  
hollow man, the empty  
signifier upon which she  
could project her political  
agenda.

MEDEA

Where have you been? I've  
been waiting for almost an hour.

HELLA

I'm so sorry, darling. I  
tried to give the taxi driver  
directions, but he didn't  
seem to hear me. They never  
seem to hear me.

MEDEA

You know how much I hate waiting. How are you ever going to replace the hour that I wasted waiting for you?

HELLA

I don't know. I'll think of something. Forgive me?

MEDEA

All right, all right. Don't get all riled up. It's not the end of the world. Not yet.

HELLA

Don't be angry with me. I can't bear it.

MEDEA

Ok, calm down.

OTTO (V.O.)

I wanted to consume the living, to devour human flesh, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. At first I thought it might have something to do with the time before, when I was alive. It occurred to me that I might have been a vegetarian. Or worse, a vegan. But that wasn't exactly it.

MEDEA

Are you miserable, darling?

HELLA

Oh, yes, my love, yes!

Terribly!

MEDEA

I've met the most fascinating  
boy, Hella. His name is Otto.  
He actually believes  
that he's dead. A walking corpse.

HELLA

Marvelous! Hemlock Tea?

MEDEA

I love the smell of a  
graveyard in the afternoon.  
It smells like...

HELLA

Yes, my dear?

MEDEA

Extinction!

MEDEA

In an industrialized society  
which has reached a point of  
abundance that is  
characterized by the  
production of "unproductive  
goods" - tech gadgets, excess  
waste, planned obsolescence,  
luxury items, excessive  
military build-up, etc. - a  
certain repression over and  
above the one necessary to  
advance culture is forced on  
its citizens.  
The redundant, unnecessary  
work upon which advanced  
capitalism is predicated,  
characterized by a deadening  
or stupefying effect - a kind  
of zombie state - results in a

distraction from their own personal and sexual needs. A person who functions normally in a sick society is himself sick, while it is only the "nonadjusted" individual who can achieve a healthy acting out against the overly strict restraints and demands of the dominant culture. The idea of a "common sense" notion of "reality" or "sanity" under such a noxious system is absurd.

MEDEA (CONT'D) (V.O.)

Considering that all dominant discourses are defined and controlled by the ruling class, the first step to becoming a revolutionary is to act out against any consensual reality. Clearly, as a homeless vagabond who believed he was dead, Otto was conducting his own, one-man revolution against reality.

HELLA

Medea! I thought you'd forgotten.

MEDEA

No, my dear. Unhappy Birthday Hella.

MEDEA (V.O.)

In a superstitious age, many believed that the return of the dead signified a punishment of mankind by God. A theological explanation such as this gained even more popularity when it became apparent that the latest cycle of zombies was homosexual. A gay plague had descended on humanity.



MEDEA

I needed to find out what had caused Otto to believe that he was dead.

BUTCHER

Otto! Warte mal...

ZOMBIE BOY

Sorry about that! Are you all right?

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)

Hey, do not go in there. It's so dead. Really.

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)

Shame. Because you put a So much effort into your ensemble. Really really cool.

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)

Wow, you even smell authentic.

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)

Have we met before? You seem familiar.

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)

Hey listen, I'm probably moving way too fast, but that's my style. I live around the corner. Maybe we could have a drink. You and me?

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)

C'mon. It's dead in  
here. Come on.

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)  
I'm going to wash  
this off. I'll be right back. OK?

ZOMBIE BOY (CONT'D)  
That was amazing. Can I see  
you again sometime?

MEDEA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
When it was discovered that the gay  
undead craved the flesh of men, they were hunted  
down and eliminated even more ruthlessly than  
previous generations. Gangs of marauding street  
youths stomped on the heads of zombies and set them  
on fire until they ceased to exist.

MEDEA  
What do you do for a living?

OTTO  
A living?

MEDEA (O.C.)  
An unliving.

OTTO  
I'm unemployed.

MEDEA (O.C.)  
Where do you live? Unlive.

OTTO  
I'm homeless.

MEDEA (O.C.)  
Where do you sleep?

OTTO  
I never sleep. Zombies never

sleep.

MEDEA (O.C.)

What about the time before  
you were dead. Can you  
remember anything about that?

OTTO

Not really. It's murky.

MEDEA (O.C.)

You don't remember any family  
or friends?

OTTO

No, except...

MEDEA (O.C.)

Except...

OTTO

The other day on the subway,  
I thought I remembered  
something.

MEDEA (O.C.)

Something or someone?

OTTO

Someone. A boy.

MEDEA (O.C.)

A boyfriend.

OTTO

Maybe. I guess.

MEDEA (O.C.)

Can you remember his name?

OTTO

No. I can only remember  
what he smelled like.

MEDEA (O.C.)

What did he smell like?

OTTO

Chlorine.

MEDEA

Any other memories?

OTTO

I think I may have worked in  
a butcher shop.

MEDEA

A butcher shop? What makes  
you think that?

OTTO

I wasn't particularly keen on  
appearing in a movie. I was  
perfectly satisfied with the  
anonymity of the dead. But  
she was willing to pay me,  
and I needed the money. I had  
to rent a room and get off  
the streets. It was too  
dangerous out there for a  
zombie.

MEDEA (O.C.)

What is the privilege of the  
dead?

OTTO (V.O)

To die no more.

MEDEA (O.C.)

What do you mean by that?

OTTO (V.O.)

You don't have to worry about  
dying if you're already dead.

MEDEA

All right, all right, that's enough. You had me at "I am dead." You got the part. Let me introduce you to my cameraman. Adolf!

OTTO (V.O.)

She introduced me to her brother, Adolf, and told me that she wanted to follow me around the city with her camera while I acted like a zombie. I told her I didn't have to act.

MEDEA

My lovely girlfriend, Hella Bent.

OTTO (O.C.) (CONT'D)

She also introduced me to her girlfriend, Hella, and a couple of actors who were appearing in her other zombie project, Up with Dead People. Their names were Fritz and Maximilian.

MEDEA

My other actors, Maximilian and Fritz.

OTTO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They were a band of outsiders, so I figured it would be the perfect cover for me. Besides, with a camera following me around, no one would suspect I was a real zombie. I'd just be playing one in the movies!

OTTO (V.O.)

That afternoon, Medea showed us some of her early silent movies. The ones that put her on the underground map. If the underground has a map.

DUET FOR SOMNAMBULISTS

LASCIVIOUS BALLET OF MEDITATION ON THE ORDEAL OF THE DEATH RITUAL IN THE MIRROR OF TRANSFIGURED NIGHT

MEDEA

Fritz, I want you to let Otto stay with you for a few days and keep an eye on him, at least until we finish the movie. I don't want to lose him.

FRITZ

He thinks he's a zombie!

MEDEA

He's only acting that way because he knows I'm making a zombie movie. He's living the part. Unliving the part.

FRITZ

He's homeless, delusional, and possibly schizophrenic! Plus he seems to have some kind of eating disorder. Remember the cannibal of Rotenburg?

MEDEA

You have a lock on your bedroom door, don't you?

FRITZ

Why don't you let him stay here?

MEDEA

Fritz, he's obviously been without a home for a long time. He needs a warm bed and some male companionship.

FRITZ

Well if you think I'm going to sleep with him, you're crazy.

MEDEA

Come on, Fritzzy. Just be nice to him. You want us to make another movie together, don't you?

OTTO (V.O.)

As we were leaving Medea's studio that day, Fritz told me that he had a spare bedroom in his apartment that I could use until I got a room of my own.

OTTO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He showed me his place and then offered to run me a bath. I tried to tell him that zombies don't take baths, but he insisted.

FRITZ

Good night.

MEDEA (V.O.)

Ok, that's it. Now, camera. And action! Now raise your hand up out of the grave. That's

it. Raise it as a protest  
against all the injustices  
perpetrated against your  
kind. Raise it in solidarity  
with the lonely and the weak  
and the dispossessed of the  
earth, for the misfits and  
the sissies and the plague-  
ridden faggots who are buried  
and forgotten by the  
heartless, merciless,  
heterofascist majority.  
Rise! Rise!

MEDEA

You got that?

ADOLF

Yeah.

MEDEA

Get lost, you little  
snot. You're ruining my shot.  
Hey Adolf, I rimed. Keep  
shooting. Now we have to do  
it all over again. Ok, I want  
you to focus on meat.  
Because the world is meat.  
We are meat.  
Do you understand?

MANAGER

Was ist hier los? Was treiben Sie hier?

MEDEA

I have no idea what you're  
talking about.

MANAGER

Das ist ein Supermarkt. Also  
raus hier oder ich hole  
die Polizei! Ich hol die Polizei!

MEDEA



Cut, cut!

MEDEA

In this scene I want you to imagine that you are drawn to the slaughterhouse like the prince of the dead returning to his beloved homeland. As a zombie you are intoxicated by the lurid perfume of bloody carnage - the sweet systematic slaughter that could only have been devised by the diabolical mind of modern man. For you it is a lotus land, an idyll of truth and beauty, a symbol for mankind's quest to turn the earth into an industrialized wasteland of casual extermination and genocide. Do you understand?

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Good. Just think of it as a metaphor for the heartless corporate technocracies that govern the earth and you'll be fine. Give me your jacket. Are you ready, Adolf?

MEDEA (O.C.) (CONT'D)

And Action.

MEDEA

Garbage, garbage everywhere. Garbage as far as the eye can see. Garbage cluttering the environment and demeaning nature. Spent nuclear fuel rods containing

radioactive isotopes with half-lives of a thousand years or more seeping into the earth. Plastics with irreversibly linked molecules effortlessly achieving the kind of immortality that men can only dream of.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Garbage dumps are the great mass graveyards of advanced capitalism. Did you know that on average one American consumes as much energy as 370 Ethiopians, and that Americans throw out 200,000 tons of edible food every day? That the United States produces approximately 220 million tons of garbage each year, enough to bury more than 82,000 football fields six feet deep in compacted garbage? And although I can't think of a better use for football fields, we must be aware that it's the gluttonous, mindless consumers of the developed industrial countries who are burying the third world in an avalanche of putrescence and decay.

OTTO

Why did you bring me here?

MEDEA

Because, my dead darling, this is your kingdom! This is the earth that you and your kind will inherit. Some day all of this will be yours!

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Heil Otto! Prince of the  
zombies!

Now go up to the heap and claim  
your kingdom.

Hurry up, we haven't got all day!

MEDEA (O.C.) (CONT'D)

All right, all right, cut,  
Adolf. That's a wrap for  
today.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Here's your daily wages.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Don't lose it. Put it in your  
wallet.

OTTO

My wallet?

MEDEA

Yes, your wallet.  
The thing in your back  
pocket?

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Otto. Otto, what's wrong? You  
look like somebody just  
walked over your grave. So to  
speak.

OTTO

It's nothing.

MEDEA

Ok, don't forget. My studio,  
tomorrow. Don't be late.

Adolf, are you still rolling?  
I said cut!

FRITZ (CONT'D)

I'm heading over to Medea's  
studio. It's our big day. The  
final scene of Up with Dead  
People!

OTTO

Up with Dead People.

FRITZ

Are you coming with me?

OTTO

No. I'll be over later.  
There's something I have to  
do first.

FRITZ

Okay. See you later, Otto.

OTTO (V.O.)

Is it possible to come back  
from the dead?

MEDEA

Fritz. Where's Otto?

FRITZ

I don't know.  
He told me he would be here

MEDEA

I thought I asked you  
to keep an eye on him

FRITZ

Medea, I'm not my zombie  
brother's keeper.

MEDEA

When did you last see him?

FRITZ

This morning, at breakfast.

MEDEA

How was his mood?

FRITZ

His mood? He only has one mood. Dead.

MEDEA

Undead.

What did you do to him?

FRITZ

I didn't do anything. He checked his wallet and he remembered something.

MEDEA

What are you trying to do? Resurrect him? Lazarus was the first one and Jesus Christ the second. Are you planning to complete the Holy Zombie Trinity?

FRITZ

I suppose, you prefer him to stay the way he is. After all, you do have a movie to finish. Don't you, Medea?

MEDEA

Well Fritz, I think you might be a little jealous.

FRITZ

Don't be insulting! And if you plan on finishing this movie with me in it, I suggest you start rolling.

MEDEA

All right, boys. Listen up. I've gathered you here to participate in something historical. Today we film the final scene of Up with Dead People, the politico-porno-zombie movie that I've been working on for too many years to count owing to the fact that no one would give me the funding. My brother Adolf, whose dedication to the project has been unwavering, will be behind the camera, as usual, and my long-suffering girlfriend, Hella Bent, is here to provide immoral support.

MEDEA

And of course the star of the picture, Fritz Fritze, will be playing out his last scene as the revolutionary leader of the zombie uprising. Fritz, come forward, please.

MEDEA

I will now recount the narrative of the movie as it has evolved thus far.

MEDEA (V.O.)

Fritz, our anti-hero, returns home after a long day of forced labour in the fashion mines. The advent of a new wave of gay zombies has made everyone even more paranoid than usual about homosexuals, now commonly known as the purple peril.

Entering his apartment, Fritz finds his longtime companion, Maximilian, dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound on the kitchen floor. He could no longer live in an environment of persecution and paranoia. The bullet to his brain, however, does not prove enough to prevent Maximilian from being reanimated. After recruiting his lover, Fritz, the necromantic duo begins to plan an uprising against living civilization. They are interrupted by a gang of thugs brandishing baseball bats. Maximilian is shot in the head again and, this time, permanently exterminated.

FRITZ escapes and, inspired by the martyrdom of Maximilian, begins his rise to infamy as the guerrilla leader of the homosexual zombies, the gay Che Guevera of the undead.

MEDEA (V.O.)

In the beginning he recruits his followers one by one, luring homosexuals into dark alleys and fucking them into immortality.

BOY

Man, that party was just awesome.

MEDEA (V.O.)

Soon he has recruited enough members to form a gang of his own, a small army of gay

zombies who recruit members by fucking, killing, and partially devouring vigorous young men, not necessarily in that order.

RUDOLF

Hello, Otto.

OTTO

Hello, RUDOLF.

RUDOLF

Whoa. You look kind of pale.

OTTO

Yeah.

RUDOLF

In fact, excuse me for saying, but you look like death warmed up.

OTTO

Thanks for the warmed up part.

RUDOLF

We met on this very bench, what was it, three years ago?

OTTO

I'm not sure. I kind of lost track of time.

RUDOLF

I used to see you reading on this bench all the time.

OTTO

That's funny. I never read anymore.

RUDOLF



Don't you remember?

OTTO

My memory is a little fuzzy.

RUDOLF

I gave you my phone number  
Right over there. Wrote it  
on the back of your library  
card.

OTTO

I do remember that.

RUDOLF

So what's up? You still a  
vegetarian?

OTTO

No.

RUDOLF

No? That's funny. You always  
hated the meat. I guess I'd  
hate meat too if my father  
wss a butcher.  
How are your parents?

OTTO

I haven't seen them lately.

RUDOLF

That's too bad. I really  
liked your Dad. ...you're at  
the hospital.

OTTO

The hospital.

RUDOLF

You don't have to pretend. He  
told me all about it.  
The loony bin.  
...eating disorders,  
melancholia, schizophrenia.

Disorders of  
the soul.

OTTO  
Disorders of the soul.

RUDOLF  
I figured you didn't want to see me  
anyway, considering the way  
things ended.

OTTO  
The way things ended.

RUDOLF  
Look, I know it was wrong of  
me to dump you like that, but  
I'm just no good in those  
types of situations. When you  
told me you were sick, I  
didn't know what to do.  
I figured you'd be better off  
without me.

OTTO  
Better off without you.

RUDOLF  
Come on, Otto. Don't make me  
feel worse than I already do.  
I've never been good with  
sick people. You seem to be  
doing okay now, though.  
Right? I mean, you look good.  
I like the new Goth thing. It  
suits you. You might  
want to think about taking a  
bath every once in a while though.  
You're a little gamey. You  
smell like a dead mouse. No  
offense.  
Anyway, I really have to get  
going. It was nice seeing you  
again.

OTTO

Nice seeing you again.

RUDOLF

Oh, I almost forgot. I brought you this book you lent me a long time ago. I thought you might want it back.

RUDOLF (CONT'D)

I didn't get a chance to read it. It's a little too depressing for me. See you around, Otto.

MEDEA

In the final scene, FRITZ has gathered together his insurgent sissies from beyond the grave, his macabre Mujahideen, to prepare them for their last stand against the overwhelming forces of the deadened living. He has brought them together for a final orgy of the dead. Adolf, roll camera. Action.

FRITZ

Otto, what happened?

OTTO

I got bashed.

FRITZ

Come on. I'll take you home.

FRITZ

There doesn't seem to be too much blood.

OTTO

Zombies don't bleed.

FRITZ

We better check the rest of you. Let me take this off.

OTTO

I'll do it.

MEDEA (O.C.)

All right, cut. That's a wrap.

MEDEA (O.C.)

Now that the movie is finished, what will you do?

OTTO

I'm not sure. All I know is, I can't unlive in the city anymore.

MEDEA

Why not?

OTTO

Because the living have no respect for the dead.

MEDEA

So you still believe that you're dead?

OTTO

I am dead. I mean, I don't think I'm dead. I'm dead.

OTTO

I really didn't know what my destination was, but something told me to head north. The cold doesn't bother me. In fact I find it comforting. It preserves my

flesh.

OTTO (CONT'D) (V.O.)  
Maybe I'd find more of my  
kind up there, and learn  
to enjoy their company. Maybe  
I'd discover a whole new way  
of death. At one  
point I did consider ending  
it all, like at the end of  
Medea's movie. But how do you  
kill yourself if you're  
already dead?