

# Midnight Howl

## Alexis Shrewsbury

### Characters

JAMES: *Male, mid-20s. Cautious.*

RAY: *Male, mid-20s. Impulsive.*

MR. CANIS: *Male, soon to be deceased from fresh injuries.*

WEREWOLF: *(Can be shown through puppetry or simple costuming and makeup).  
Chain around the neck like a leash and collar. Obedient.*

POLICE OFFICER: *Down to business.*

### Notes

*The set is versatile, with backdrops / panels that can be easily changed out. One panel is the hallway of the mansion. Another panel is that of an “upstairs” bedroom. The front door is located stage left. Physical comedy between actors and the set is encouraged.*

## Scene 1

Lights up on the entire stage. The background panel of the hallway has large blood splatters and large claw marks in the center. JAMES and RAY enter from the back of the theater aisles (stage right) gradually making their way toward the stage as if this was the path to the mansion.

**JAMES**

This place gives me the creeps.

**RAY**

I see no room for concern.

**JAMES**

I mean, what kind of “business” keeps Mr. Canis right before midnight?

**RAY**

More skeletons in the closet you think?

**JAMES**

I'll say...

MR. CANIS flops out from stage right, crawling backwards on the ground. His clothes are torn and bloodied. A chain is around one of his ankles. He stares at something offstage with terrified eyes.

**MR. CANIS**

No! Wait! AH!

He's yanked back offstage by the chain. RAY and JAMES step on stage (far downstage). They begin crossing to stage right towards the front door as the chaos unfolds behind them.

**JAMES**

You think Mr. Canis could be a murderer?

MR. CANIS limps out on stage with the long chain still around his ankle. The other end of the chain is hidden offstage. He runs away to the best of his ability towards the front door.

**MR. CANIS**

Help! Help me!

MR. CANIS reaches the front door and cracks it slightly open before an offstage being yanks him down to the floor by the chain attached to his ankle. The door is left askew.

**RAY**

If he is, he's not hiding it very well.

MR. CANIS claws at the ground as the offstage being pulls the chain around his ankle to center stage.

**MR. CANIS**

No! No! No!

AH!

MR. CANIS screams as the chain tugs him completely offstage.

RAY and JAMES should now be nearing the front door of the mansion. A howl is heard offstage.

**JAMES**

(Startled by the howl, hiding behind RAY)

You know, this place is notorious for having wolves around.

**RAY**

So?

**JAMES**

(Panicked)

So hurry up and let's get inside!

RAY pauses in front of the door and turns to JAMES.

**RAY**

Hey, easy! Relax and really think. What's the worst that could happen?

JAMES pauses and takes a deep breath. He then looks up.

**JAMES**

I guess the full moon does look nice.

**RAY**

See, that's the spirit!

RAY goes to open the door.

And look, they even left the door open for us.

RAY pushes open the door and the two walk inside. JAMES closes the door behind him.

**RAY**

Hello, hello? Mr. Canis?

**MR. CANIS**

(Offstage)  
AHHHHHHH!

**JAMES**

(Clutching his heart)  
What was that?!

**RAY**

Maybe we took Mr. Canis by surprise.

**JAMES**

I knew we shouldn't have come early.

**RAY**

Being early is being professional.

RAY and JAMES finally notice the obnoxiously large blood stains and claw marks on the back wall.

**RAY**

Whoa. That's hard to miss.

**JAMES**

And yet, we missed it.

RAY and JAMES turn to the wall, their back facing the audience. While they're turned, MR. CANIS is rolled out in a chair on stage, chains wrapped around his entire body, dead.

**RAY**

(Observing the bloodstained wall)  
Maybe the claw marks represent those new nature themed art pieces.

**JAMES**

(Observing the bloodstained wall)  
It looks so real.

**RAY**

Realism at its finest then.

**JAMES**

(Observing the marks closer)  
It's still dripping.

JAMES finally turns around to see a dead MR. CANIS.

**JAMES**

(Panicked, frantically trying to get RAY's attention)  
Ray!

**RAY**

What? (He turns around) Oh—

RAY and JAMES run to the body.

**JAMES**

Is that Mr. Canis!?

**RAY**

Maybe. Or, what's left of him anyway.

**JAMES**

What happened?!

**RAY**

His clothes are completely torn to shreds.

**JAMES**

Okay, I want to go home now!

**RAY**

We just got here.

**JAMES**

And our employer is dead!

A loud howl is heard offstage. JAMES dashes behind RAY.

**JAMES**

(Freaking out)

I knew it! It is a wolf! It must have slipped into the house and killed Mr. Canis!  
(Grabbing RAY to tug him back) See? Mystery solved. Now let's go!

**RAY**

(Pulling back)

Relax. It's probably not hungry anymore after eating Mr. Canis.

**JAMES**

This is no time for jokes, Ray!

JAMES runs to the door and tries to open it, but the door doesn't budge.

**JAMES**

What?!

He attempts to pry it open again, to no avail. While RAY continues observing the body, JAMES dashes to the other end of the stage across from the door, setting himself up to charge nearly at full speed through the locked door.

RAY pulls a tuft of fur from the body and observes it. JAMES starts charging towards the door.

**RAY**

(Thinking)

Thick fur—

JAMES slams into the door but topples backwards, not jiggling the door out of its locked position in the slightest.

**RAY**

(Interrupted by JAMES's slam)

James, what are you doing?!

JAMES stands and presses his back to the door.

**JAMES**

We're trapped!

**RAY**

That's impossible. We just came in that way.

RAY goes over and shoves JAMES away from the door to test the handle himself. It's still locked.

[Beat]

**RAY**

Well then...

**JAMES**

What are we going to do?!

**RAY**

(Thinking)

There's gotta be a way out of here.

RAY's face lights up with a plan and he smiles at JAMES.

**RAY**

Oooooor—

**JAMES**

No—

**RAY**

Time for the Ray and James detective duo—

**JAMES**

(Pulling out his phone)

I'm calling the police.

**RAY**

Wow okay. Way to shoot a guy down.

**JAMES**

(To the phone)

Hello officer? I would like to report a mauling.

**RAY**

You're making the wrong decision.

**JAMES**

(To the phone)

Yes, in the mansion on the hill.

**RAY**

They're going to come in and search the place themselves.

**JAMES**

(To the phone)

Possibly a wolf, as far as I know.

**RAY**

There's a secret here just waiting to be found!

**JAMES**

(Whispering, to RAY)

Shut up!

(To the phone)

Yes, and we're trapped in the house.

**RAY**

(Thinking to himself)

Meaning it all might be connected.

**JAMES**

(To the phone)

Of course, thank you.

JAMES hangs up the phone.

Seven minutes.

**RAY**

Great! That gives us time to explore.

**JAMES**

Are you insane?!

**RAY**

We can search for a key to the front door or another exit.



**JAMES**

That creature could still be in here!

**RAY**

And standing still only makes you more tempting as a meal.

RAY starts to exit.

**JAMES**

That isn't funny.

RAY turns to face JAMES, now walking backwards.

**RAY**

Yes it is.

**JAMES**

(scolding)  
Ray.

RAY turns again.

**JAMES**

Ray, get back here!

RAY disappears offstage.

**JAMES**

Ray!

[Beat]

JAMES glances down at the mauled body. He stops his foot and makes a motion as if he was strangling a certain someone before dropping his hands to his sides.

**JAMES**

Ray, if the animal doesn't get you, I'll kill you myself!

JAMES follows RAY and exits. Blackout.

## Scene 2

Lights up on the bedroom with RAY walking in.

**RAY**

Ah ha! Found it!

(Looking behind him for JAMES)  
James?

[Beat]

**RAY**

(Groaning)  
Ugg...

RAY goes out the door. Moments later, he's yanking JAMES in by his shirt collar.

**JAMES**

Hey hey hey!

**RAY**

(Releasing JAMES)  
C'mon. Let's get searching.

**JAMES**

What? I don't want to snoop through their personal things.

**RAY**

You want to get out of here?

**JAMES**

(Obvious)  
Yes.

**RAY**

Then shut up and snoop for a key.

RAY begins rummaging through nearby drawers. Reluctantly, JAMES follows and snoops in a different dresser.

**JAMES**

Remind me how I got dragged into this again?

**RAY**

Mr. Canis requested we give him an interview—

**JAMES**

(Blunt)  
And now he's dead.

**RAY**

(Sarcastically)  
Yes, which was very rude of him not to tell us. Anyway, interviews require a note taker and since you're my partner, you were graciously invited to come along with me.

**JAMES**

And you didn't have any other partners to ask?

**RAY**

Nope, just the one.

**JAMES**

It was a rhetorical question.

**RAY**

Ah ah ah, I ask the questions in this relationship. You're the written word, I'm the vocal voice.

RAY pulls out a large shirt that's been torn and shredded near the side.

Whoa. Look at this.  
(Examining the shirt)  
That's an...interesting fashion choice.

A low growl is heard. JAMES freezes up.

**JAMES**

(Stiff, frozen from fear)  
Ray?

**RAY**

Mm?

**JAMES**

Did you hear that?

**RAY**

No.

[Beat]

**JAMES**

Are you sure?

**RAY**

I'm a little busy here, James.

**JAMES**

(Growing impatient)  
Busy? With what? Searching through drawers?

**RAY**

(Confident)  
Searching for evidence. And a possible family conspiracy to uncover.

**JAMES**

Is everything just business to you?

**RAY**

No.

**JAMES**

Everything a story?

**RAY**

No.

**JAMES**

Everything just to benefit YOU?

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**RAY**

(Offended)  
Now wait a minute!

**JAMES**

Then why aren't you listening to me!

**RAY**

Because I can't listen all the time to the boy who cried wolf!

**JAMES**

Oh, real mature! You know what, I—

JAMES gasps when he “sees” something in the hallway. The snarling gets louder.

**JAMES**

Ray, get down!

**RAY**

What?

**JAMES**

I said get down!

JAMES lunges towards RAY and yanks him down under the bed.

**RAY**

Ow! What gives—

**JAMES**

(Aggressively)  
Shh!

WEREWOLF walks in with slow meticulous steps on two legs. A chain hangs from its neck like a leash and collar. A low snarl is heard as it scans the room.

**RAY**

(Whispering)  
What is that?

**JAMES**

(Whispering)  
Now you believe me?

**RAY**

(Sarcastically)  
No, I just think it's a big dog that wants to go on a walk. (Angry) Of course I believe you!

**JAMES**

Well I had to make sure!

**RAY**

(Pulling out his phone)  
I'm taking a picture.

**JAMES**

Are you crazy?!

**RAY**

Imagine the headlines! "Famous interview team James and Raymond uncover the secret beast of the Canis household."

**JAMES**

Or how about: "Famous interview team found dead after sticking their nose where it shouldn't belong!"

**RAY**

Ah, now you're thinking.

**JAMES**

Ray!

**RAY**

I'll only have to peek.

**JAMES**

Would you just—

Watch me.

**RAY**

JAMES forcefully grabs RAY and keeps him under the bed.

(Yelling)  
Stay down!

**JAMES**

JAMES gasps and covers his mouth. WEREWOLF turns its head to the bed and snarls. Silence from JAMES and RAY as WEREWOLF brings their head towards the bottom of the bed and stares at JAMES and RAY.

[Beat]

(Nervously)  
Ha ha...Nice bed you have here doggie.

**RAY**

WEREWOLF lets out a loud snarl and tries to snap at them.

Run!

**JAMES**

JAMES and RAY scramble from below the bed. WEREWOLF hits their head on the bed frame trying to lift up their head, allowing JAMES and RAY to escape out the bedroom door.

WEREWOLF regains its stance and glances to the doorway before letting out a sharp howl into the sky.

Awoooooo!

**WEREWOLF**

Lights fade to black.

### Scene 3

Lights up on the hallway with the bloodstains on the wall. MR. CANIS is still laying dead in the chair with chains around him. JAMES and RAY are offstage, acting as if they were running through the mansion to get back “downstairs.”

**JAMES**

(Offstage)

What did you think was going to happen?!

**RAY**

(Offstage)

Did you have any better ideas?!

**JAMES**

(Offstage)

Yeah, it’s called not aggravating the beast!

**RAY**

(Offstage)

I’m not a dog person, okay!?

**JAMES**

(Offstage)

You would be a snack right now, you know that!?

**RAY**

(Offstage)

Oh thanks for throwing that back in my face!

JAMES and RAY stumble out from stage right.

**RAY**

(Out of breath)

Think we lost it?

WEREWOLF howls from offstage.



Nope!

**JAMES**

JAMES and RAY bolt towards the front door and try to knock it down.

It still won't budge!

**RAY**

We're doomed!

**JAMES**

Not yet!

**RAY**

RAY leaves the door and searches the area for a weapon, scanning inside more drawers. RAY eventually eyes Mr. CANIS and the chains still around his body.

(Getting an idea)  
Perfect.

**RAY**

RAY runs over to the body and tries to untangle the chains.

What are you doing?!

**JAMES**

Trying to undo the chains so we can trap the thing. Give me a hand here.

**RAY**

JAMES goes over to the body to help. He delicately touches the chains as if he didn't want to get his hands dirty.

This is revolting.

**JAMES**

**RAY**

Well that's not a very nice thing to say about Mr. Canis. Even if he is dead.

A howl from offstage and the lights flicker. The source of the noise is getting closer. The two become frantic.

**RAY**

Hurry!

**JAMES**

I'm trying! I'm trying!

**RAY**

Then try faster!

**JAMES**

You are insufferable!

**RAY**

We can fight later, more untangling!

Another loud howl followed by flickering lights that then fade to black, as if the mansion is suffering a power outage. In this portion, JAMES and RAY should not be seen by the audience, and the jingling of the knotted chains they undo is loud and apparent.

**JAMES**

(In the dark)  
Great, just great!

**RAY**

(In the dark)  
Keep moving! You grab that side I'll grab this side.

**JAMES**

(In the dark)  
I can't see either side of the chain!

**RAY**

(In the dark)

Then hand it to me!

**JAMES**

(In the dark)

Don't rush me—whoa!

A loud thud is heard (JAMES had tripped on the ground). More rusting of metal is heard as RAY grabs hold of another end of the chain.

**RAY**

(In the dark, pulling on something)

Got it! But the chain's caught on something heavy.

The lights flicker back on, revealing WEREWOLF and RAY face to face as RAY had grabbed hold of the WEREWOLF's chained leash in the distortion of the darkness. JAMES is on the ground who had tripped from the rest of the entangled chains.

RAY shows an embarrassed smile and, without saying a word, carefully lets go of the WEREWOLF's chain. RAY then steps back slowly.

WEREWOLF snaps at them, startling RAY and having him tumble to the ground. JAMES and RAY slowly crawl backwards on the floor as WEREWOLF approaches them. POLICE OFFICER enters outside the door.

**RAY**

Oh no...

WEREWOLF lunges at JAMES and RAY and the two scream, but WEREWOLF stops in its tracks when POLICE OFFICER knocks on the front door.

**POLICE OFFICER**

Hello? Police.

WEREWOLF perks up its head. RAY and JAMES watch the beast in silence.

**POLICE OFFICER**

(Knocking forcefully)  
Hello? Anyone in there?

Staring at the door, WEREWOLF backs up from JAMES and RAY before running offstage.

**RAY**

It's gone.

**JAMES**

Are we safe—

POLICE OFFICER kicks the door open. RAY and JAMES jump to their feet.

**JAMES**

Why does it work for them when they slam the door down?

**POLICE OFFICER**

Are you two alright?

**RAY**

We're fine, but that beast is—

**POLICE OFFICER**

(Verbally pushing them out)  
We'll handle him. Get out of here while you're unharmed.

**JAMES**

Thank you officer.

JAMES and RAY run to the front door, but RAY pauses by the doorway, looking back at the officer.

**RAY**

(Thinking, to himself)  
Wait a minute—

**JAMES**

Ray, come on! Let's go!

JAMES grabs RAY and the two exit. POLICE OFFICER goes over to examine MR. CANIS's dead body. WEREWOLF emerges, slowly heading towards POLICE OFFICER.

**POLICE OFFICER**

What a mess we have here.

WEREWOLF growls behind POLICE OFFICER and POLICE OFFICER turns and stands in shock.

**POLICE OFFICER**

(To WEREWOLF)  
It's you! Bad dog! Bad dog!

WEREWOLF whimpers and bows their head down.

**POLICE OFFICER**

(To WEREWOLF)  
How many times have we talked about not killing inside the house? The whole plan was to kill the blackmailer outside so the interviewers could write it off as an unfortunate accident. The station is not going to be happy.

WEREWOLF drops their head down further. POLICE OFFICER sighs and pats WEREWOLF's head.

**POLICE OFFICER**

Can't change it now. Come on Mr. Canis, let's move the body.

POLICE OFFICER rolls MR. CANIS in the chair offstage and exits with WEREWOLF.

Blackout.