

## Blood Oath After Midnight

by James Wong

Lesson number one, included in the very fine print of the unwritten terms and conditions of 'night out on the town' section 4.7: any agreements entered into after midnight on an ethylated night out on the razzle simply, utterly, and without exception – don't count. There is zero obligation for anyone to mean what they say, or say what they mean. Section 4.8 goes on to make special mention of no obligation to be coherent or even to finish your sentences. All conversations are at the participant's risk, and each participant (anyone in earshot) should take necessary steps to minimise being on the receiving end of spittle during any verbal exchange. The recipient hereby understands the risks involved, whether real, imagined, or made up, and bearing in mind the fullness of all particulars, however easy or difficult to avoid, engages in conversation with this full and complete understanding.

Not knowing this simple rule of 'going outness' will leave you doubting, confused, blaming yourself, disappointed, and wondering what it takes to make friends and have a budding social life. Expect it to be difficult to pin people down (no refunds given if your expectations are not met, either in part or full) as you meet your best matey mates in the whole wide world ever (every single one of them) in the flurry of a dimly lit, oxygen-starved, and bullshit-laden air mass found in any venue, bar, club, or similar establishment. This most particularly includes any bar, club, or venue that is situated below ground level or where a strobe light is fitted (whether functional or defunct) or had been present, temporarily or otherwise within 24 months prior to entering the establishment. Here are some words of hard-won wisdom:

"Bullshit," coughs the narrator through a lightly clenched fist - from Jungle Jim (formerly known as Alan the accountant's assistant), who has jived, skived, bopped, be-bopped, breakdanced, congaed, and pogoed his way through five decades of party life.

"It sounds plausible enough tonight, but wait until tomorrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning."

Whoa! Now that is deep, so reader – do take some time to recover and let those pearls land, and may they land on fertile ground (think compost activator...!)

Anyway, back to the programme.

On entering said establishment, you may expect any, all, or none of the following: an evening of pantomime, playing 'be friends', 'best mates', 'I'm a well-intentioned individual - honest to god', 'you mean the world to me', or the plotting and planning of your next great adventure.

“I’ll meet you at gam (WTF!) at the top of the Sonnegga ski-lift. We can trek across the Fluela pass and drop down into the Rothorn Couloir - we’ll get fresh tracks - it’s going to be amazing.”

Reader I know - you can almost feel the crunch and squeak of freshly fallen snow beneath your booted feet!

Your mate, your best mate, then gives you a knowing look and wink with ‘but don’t tell anyone - let’s keep this between ourselves, just you and me, let this be our secret ’subtitled in the space just below his goatee.

Your brows will form a solemn V. Your jaw and chin working together to form a pillar of integrity and concern, your head tilting ever so slightly. Just to diminish any doubt that you’re not taking this seriously. And thus, a gentleman’s agreement is formed. This is the ritual that establishes that you’re both in *The Club* together - ‘Just you and me mate. You can count on me. My word is my bond. Solid. Thick as thieves. I gotcha. Yo ‘my man’. Your wink, cocked head, and the earnest raising of your eyebrows all employed to deftly, convincingly, and completely unconvincingly - invoke, conjure, and summon this blood oath into the world.