

WHEN THE SUN GOES DARK

A Play in One Act and Eight Scenes

by

Dana Pierangeli

4169 Bedaki Ave
Lowell, MI 49331
dmpier18@gmail.com
(616) 822 - 7677

Cast of Characters

SCENE 1

RYAN: Dad of Genny, husband of Nate

NATE: Dad of Genny, husband of Ryan, brother of Samuel in Scene 3

GENNY: 5 years old, wants to be an astronaut

SCENE 2

JAMES: nurse at hospital, his mother has been in a vegetative state at the hospital for 6 months

*BRANDON: Emergency Department Director and doctor at hospital

LACY: James's sister, Mom from Scene 6

NANCY: elderly patient at hospital

SCENE 3

SAMUEL: brother of the Nate from Scene 1, strained family relationship

SCENE 4

MADISON: host of the sleepover, Lacy's daughter

MACY: friend of Maddie, spunky and sometimes mean

LEA: friend of Maddie, in love with Freddy

EMMA: friend of Maddie, sensitive and concerned about the emergency

LACY: Madison's mom, James's sister from Scene 2

SCENE 5

*TAYLOR: journalist who just moved to LA from New York, Jordan's ex

*JORDAN: teacher and grad student at UCLA, Taylor's ex

SCENE 6

*KRIS: long-time employee who has recently been promoted to manager, daughter of Ms. Giovani

*TP PERSON 1: person fighting over toilet paper

*TP PERSON 2: person fighting over toilet paper

DRUNK WOMAN: instigating the fight between the two people, wants to share a drink with someone

ANNA: grocery store employee

GUNMAN: young White man

SCENE 7

MS. GIOVANI: old woman who lost her husband

SCENE 8

PROFESSOR WARREN: young woman, early 30s

MARIE: young mother in the class

RUSSEL: angry student trying to leave the classroom at all costs

MARTIN: professes love with Professor Warren

NICK

SOFIA

Various STUDENTS

* Character can be played by actors of any gender

SETTING

Various locations and times around the world.

TIME

The present.

ACT I

Prologue	A classroom.	Seattle, Pacific @ 6:20pm
Scene 1	A small house.	Boston, Eastern @ 9:20pm
Scene 2	A hospital.	Duluth, Central @ 8:20pm
Scene 3	A bunker.	Undisclosed Location, Mountain @ 7:20pm
Scene 4	A suburban home.	Duluth, Central @ 8:20pm
Scene 5	Outside.	L.A., Pacific @ 6:20pm
Scene 6	A grocery store.	Denver, Mountain @ 7:20pm
Scene 7	A gravesite.	L.A., Pacific @ 6:20pm
Scene 8	A classroom.	Seattle, Pacific @ 6:20pm

PROLOGUE

SETTING: Seattle, WA at 6:17pm.
College Astronomy lecture.

AT RISE: A professor stands at the
front of her Intro to Astronomy class
lecturing.

PROFESSOR

It takes approximately eight minutes for the sun's light to reach the Earth. Therefore, we are never seeing the universe in real-time, there's always a small delay.

STUDENT

So if the sun went out right now, it would take eight minutes for us all to die?

PROFESSOR

Well, we don't know for sure, since it's not likely to occur. But theoretically, there would be no natural sunlight or heat on earth after those eight minutes.

(One student leans over to the girl next to him. His lines are spoken over PROFESSOR's next few lines.)

PROFESSOR (cont.)

This is actually a fascinating thought experiment. If this were to theoretically occur, because the sun will no longer be providing plants with the ability to photosynthesize, it's likely that our world will quickly run out of oxygen. The molten core would keep our planet warm for a short time, but temperatures would drop dramatically within a week...

NICK

If the sun went out, I could keep you warm.

(BOY winks at GIRL.)

SOFIA

I'd rather freeze.

NICK

Even if the world ends? That's cold.

SOFIA

Well, I don't see the world ending anytime soon, so I don't think we really need to worry about that.

NICK

Okay, how about a bet? If the world ends, you have to kiss me.

SOFIA

Fine, in the very unlikely instance that the world does end and only the two of us survive, I will kiss you.

(NICK turns and high fives the guy behind him.)

PROFESSOR

... Humans and life as we know it, except for a lucky few, would cease to exist in a matter of weeks. So what do you think? How would people react if the sun went out?

(All phones begin vibrating and sounding furiously. Some students dive into the bags, others look around curiously. MARIE, who has her phone on her desk, immediately picks it up, ready to run out and make a call if necessary. PROFESSOR notices her first.)

PROFESSOR

Marie, please put your phone away.

(PROFESSOR notices that other students have theirs out as well.)

PROFESSOR (cont.)

Hey, hey. No phones in class...

(PROFESSOR notices her own phone lighting up. She slowly walks over to pick it up. Before she makes it to her phone, the University emergency lights and sirens start blaring. Chaos surrounds them. Classroom lights slam to black and we only see red flashing emergency lights. In the darkness, we hear an alarm and the alert.)

EMERGENCY. EMERGENCY. EMERGENCY.
REPORT FROM NASA: THE SUN HAS GONE DARK.
EIGHT MINUTES UNTIL THE LAST PHOTONS REACH THE EARTH.
SITUATION UNCLEAR. UNPRECEDENTED ISSUE.
SHELTER IN PLACE. PREPARE FOR DARKNESS.

REPEAT: THE SUN HAS GONE DARK.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 1

SETTING: Boston, MA at 9:20pm
Two bedrooms are set up with a divider between them. One has a king size bed with two people sleeping in it. The other is a small twin size bed with a mountain of books and stuffed animals surrounding it. Soft lamp light emanates from the twin bed area.

AT RISE: The two men in the king size bed are sleeping. A little girl is asleep in the next room.

(A man, RYAN, wakes up to the sound of his phone violently buzzing. He sleepily grabs his phone, putting on his glasses to read the alert. His husband, NATE stirs.)

NATE

(mumbles, half asleep)

Nooo. Ten more minutes.

(He sleepily opens his eyes and notices that RYAN hasn't laid down and is staring at his phone.)

What is it?

(beat)

Ryan?

(After a moment of hesitation, RYAN kisses NATE on the forehead.)

RYAN

Nothing. Everything is...

(They both hear a small voice from the other room, distracting them from their conversation.)

GENNY *(off)*

Daddy!

NATE

You want to get her or should I?

RYAN

I got it.

NATE

You sure? You've gotta work early tomorrow.

RYAN

I don't mind. You've had a long week. Let me take care of it.

(RYAN gets out of bed to make his way towards the other room.)

NATE

Can you grab my phone while you're out there?

RYAN

Babe, you need to sleep.

NATE

Please? I just want to check if he called.

RYAN

Nate, he's not going to call.

NATE

You don't know that!

RYAN

Baby, you haven't heard from him in years. I hate always seeing you get hurt by him.

NATE

I just thought with yesterday being the anniversary he would have called. I mean, god, I know he hates me but she was my mom too.

RYAN

I know, baby. I know.

(RYAN crosses back to the bed to sit on the edge, comforting NATE.)

GENNY (off)

Daddy!!

RYAN

Look, I bet he just forgot. I mean who knows if he even remembers what day it is down there. You can check it in the... in the morning. But for now, get some rest.

NATE

Fine. I love you.

RYAN

Love you too.

(RYAN exits their bedroom and takes a second between rooms to compose himself. GENNY is sitting on her bed holding a stuffed Bunny. RYAN enters.)

RYAN

What's wrong, sweetie?

(He sits down next to her.)

GENNY

Bunny had a bad dream. It was scary.

RYAN

What was she dreaming about?

GENNY

I dreamed that I was an astronaut, and I flew all the way to the moon! But then I got lost, and I couldn't find Bunny or Daddy or you, and I couldn't get back home, and it was really really scary.

RYAN

Come here, my little astronaut.

(RYAN reaches his arms out and Genny climbs into his lap.)

RYAN (cont.)

I thought you said Bunny had the bad dream?

GENNY

Oh. *(caught in the lie)* Well, Bunny had the same dream.

RYAN

Oh, Bunny had the same dream, I see. *(beat)* Sweetie, do you remember when we went to the museum to see the planets for your fifth birthday?

GENNY

At the plenenemium!

RYAN

Yes, at the planetarium. Now do you remember the nice astronomer that talked to us? Remember how she told us about all the cool stuff in space? How you can jump suuuuper high on the moon and float all around in the sky? That doesn't sound so scary, now does it?

GENNY

But space is so big! What if I get lost like in my dream?

RYAN

Space is very big. But you like adventure! Don't you still want to be an astronaut?

GENNY

I AM gonna be an astronaut! But... I still get scared sometimes.

RYAN

That's okay! Even astronauts get scared sometimes. It's a hard thing to do, and sometimes it will be a bit scary. But you're brave enough to fill the whole universe.

GENNY

Yeah. I'm brave! *(beat)* Dada? I'm still a little scared.

RYAN

You're still a little scared? Why don't you come sleep with me and Daddy?

GENNY

Yes please!

(RYAN picks up GENNY and Bunny and carries them both into his room. NATE sits up to greet them.)

RYAN

We have a visitor.

NATE

Uh oh. Did *someone* have a bad dream?

GENNY

Bunny did.

NATE

Oh no, poor Bunny. Looks like Dada took care of you. You and Bunny are safe now. Do you want a lullaby, sweetie?

RYAN

I think that sounds like a wonderful idea.

GENNY

Yes please! Can Bunny listen too?

NATE

Of course Bunny can listen. What would Bunny like to hear tonight?

GENNY

Hmmm...

(She holds Bunny up to her ear like Bunny is whispering to her. She whispers back and nods.)

GENNY

"You Are My Sunshine."

NATE

Good choice, Bunny. That's my favorite.

RYAN

Take it away, babe.

(NATE pulls GENNY to him while RYAN wraps his arms around both of them.)

NATE

(singing)

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine, you make me happy when skies are gray. You never know dear... how much I...

(NATE trails off as he falls asleep. GENNY opens her eyes sleepily when she notices the singing stopped. She looks up at RYAN.)

GENNY

(whispering)

Dada?

(RYAN nods and GENNY closes her eyes and snuggles deeper into the covers.)

RYAN

(singing)

How much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away

The other night, dear
While I was sleeping
I dreamed I held you in my arms
When I awoke, dear
I was mistaken
And I hung my head and I cried

You are my sunshine
My only sunshine
You make me happy
When skies are gray
You never know, dear
How much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away

(He realizes they have both fallen asleep while he was singing. He kisses each of their foreheads and leans his head back against his headboard. Tears are falling in earnest. He closes his eyes.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2

SETTING: Duluth, MN at 8:20pm
Hospital.

AT RISE: A young nurse is attending to
an elderly patient in a hospital room.
The Nurse is adjusting the patient's
record player.

JAMES

I think... I've got it!

(Just as he seems to have fixed it, the sirens begin to sound. He jumps back, thinking it's something wrong with the record player.)

NANCY

What did you do to my record player? Cut that racket out!

(Frantically swatting at the record player trying to get the noise to stop, JAMES is realizing that's not where the sound is coming from.)

JAMES

I don't think that's the record. Let me... I'll be right back.

NANCY

If you scratch my Sinatra I swear...

(JAMES runs out of the room.)

NANCY (cont.)

JAMES??

(JAMES comes across BRANDON and runs to him in a panic.)

JAMES

What's going on?

BRANDON

I don't know, the alarms just started blaring from every direction. Everyone is getting emergency alerts on their phones.

JAMES

What kind of emergency?

(beat)

BRANDON

They're saying the sun has gone dark.

JAMES

Oh, piss off.

BRANDON

I'm serious, James. Read it.

(JAMES rolls his eyes, pulling out his phone.)

JAMES

It's probably just a power outage or something... *(reading)* "Report from NASA: The sun has gone dark. Eight minutes... Prepare for darkness?"

(beat)

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

BRANDON

I don't know.

JAMES

Well, how did this happen?

BRANDON

I don't know.

JAMES

What do we do?

BRANDON

I DON'T KNOW! Okay?? I-... I don't know.

JAMES

This is insane! It's probably just a joke. I mean the sun can't just- just... *(beat)* It's gotta be a joke.

(Two nurses run up to the two for instructions. BRANDON addresses the group.)

BRANDON

I don't think it is. *(beat)* But whatever is going on, we have to do something. We have to take care of our patients.

JAMES

How? We've only got 8 minutes, what are we supposed to do in 8 minutes?

BRANDON

I'm not sure what exactly is happening, I don't think anyone is, but it doesn't sound like a supernova is occurring, so life could last longer than we think. Maybe a week, even a month before everything freezes over or-or oxygen becomes scarce. We need to be prepared to last as long as possible here, even if we don't.

JAMES

Okay. How can we help?

(Another doctor arrives.)

BRANDON

Let's move into lockdown procedure. I'll make an announcement over the loudspeaker, but make sure any staff you come across know the drill.

(The doctor and two nurses exit. BRANDON starts to follow them out. JAMES stops him.)

JAMES

Brandon, what about patients who can't be moved? Comatose patients, those in a vegetative state.

(loaded beat)

BRANDON

At this point, I don't think there's anything we can do for them. If anyone is going to survive this, we'll need all the resources we have. We can't risk it.

(long beat)

JAMES

Can I at least... can I say goodbye to her?

BRANDON

Of course. I'm so sorry, James.

JAMES

No, I understand. This is the right thing to do.

BRANDON

This is what we're trained for. Helping people in times of crisis. We can do this.

JAMES

Yeah. We can do this.

(BRANDON begins to exit and encounters another frazzled nurse. He explains the plan to her as they exit together. JAMES rushes to a nearby supply closet and starts emptying medical equipment onto a cart. His phone starts buzzing. It's his sister, LACY.)

JAMES

Are you okay?

LACY

James, I don't know what's going on but everything is going crazy! The newscasters keep saying the world is ending, and Darren is out of town, and Madison is having a sleepover so all these girls are over, and I don't know what to do with them. How am I gonna get them home? Their parents must be hysterical!

JAMES

Lacy, it's going to be okay. Take a breath.

LACY

It's not okay! How are you so calm? You're in a goddamn hospital right now, aren't you scared?

(A baby is crying on the other end of the phone. Lacy is shushing her.)

JAMES

Of course I'm scared! But we don't know what will happen after this. We have to stay calm. As calm as we can.

(A nurse approaches JAMES, who cups his hand over the phone and answers the question he knows she's about to ask.)

JAMES (cont.)

Start evacuating the patients in this hall to the basement. I'll start on this side.

LACY

I'm so sorry, this is the worst time to call. You're even more overwhelmed than I am right now. I just wanted to check in... hear your voice.

JAMES

I'm really glad you called, actually. I need to-

(JAMES is interrupted by the hospital loudspeaker. JAMES attempts to speak over it loudly.)

BRANDON *(off)*

Attention all hospital staff. Please begin transporting all mobile patients to the lower level immediately. Gather supplies and take shelter once all patients have been taken care of.

JAMES

I need to tell you something, and I know you're not going to like it, but hear me out. *(beat)* I'm going to take mom off the ventilator. I know you were holding on to the idea that she could get better, but it's been six months. At this point the chances of her recovering are so small. I don't want to give up any more than you do, but even if she did wake up and the world somehow hasn't ended yet, there's no way we could take care of her in that world. And there are others who could use the resources right now, I- I- just think it's the right thing to do. And if I do it now, then she-

LACY

James. *(beat)* Do it.

JAMES

What?

LACY

You're right. I know you don't hear me say it that often but you are right. This is the best thing for her.

JAMES

Are you sure?

LACY

No. *(beat)* But at this point, I'd rather we have control over it. You can say a few words. She can be with someone she loves. If something happens, I don't want her to be alone when it ends.

JAMES

Okay. I'll give her a kiss for you.

LACY

Thanks. Thank you, I... I'm so sorry. I know I haven't handled the situation well these past few months, it's just hard to let go, especially when everything was so uncertain. But it's time for her to be at peace. It's time for you to be at peace.

JAMES

Thank you.

LACY

I wish you didn't have to do it alone. You've been taking care of her for so long. I should've been there with you. I wish I could be there with you now.

JAMES

Don't worry about me. I'll take care of this, you take care of the girls.

(beat)

LACY

I love you, James.

JAMES

I love you too. I'll talk to you later.

(The word "Goodbye" hangs in the air, unable to be said.)

LACY

Yeah. Talk to you later.

(They hang up. JAMES debates whether or not to go into his mother's room or visit another patient. NANCY calls out from the other room.)

NANCY

James!

(JAMES takes a moment to compose himself and enters her room.)

JAMES

Sorry about that, Nancy.

NANCY

What's going on out there?

JAMES

Just a minor emergency, so we're actually going to evacuate you to the basement.

(A nurse enters, and JAMES turns to greet her.)

JAMES (cont.)

Emily! Perfect. Take Nancy down to the basement with the rest of the patients. I just have to take care of something quickly, then I'll be back to help. *(to NANCY)* Is there anything you need from me?

NANCY

Just don't forget to bring my record player down. Whatever's going on, I don't want to be listening to those horrible alarms.

JAMES

Absolutely... actually, would you mind if I borrowed it before bringing it down to you? Just for a second.

NANCY

Fine, but don't break it again.

JAMES

(he laughs)

I didn't bre-! ... Okay Nancy. I'll be careful. See you soon.

(EMILY wheels Nancy out in a wheelchair. JAMES walks over and picks up the album next to the record player. JAMES exits the hospital room with the record player in hand, and crosses the hall to an older woman hooked up to an IV. He sets the record player up on the table next to her and turns on the song — “Fly Me to the Moon” by Frank Sinatra. He sits on her bed and takes her hand.)

JAMES

Your favorite. I know we've tried this before, and I'm not expecting for Frank Sinatra to magically revive you, but I thought it might put you at ease.

(JAMES takes his mom's hand and squeezes. She withdraws — an involuntary reflex possible in a vegetative state.)

JAMES (cont.)

I hate when you do that. It's so hard to remember that it doesn't mean anything. It just makes me feel like... I'm failing you. *(beat)* I wish it didn't have to be like this. But it's time.

(He sits in silence for a moment, listening to the chorus of the song. He hums along.)

JAMES (cont.)

I love you, mom.

(JAMES kisses her on the forehead one last time for Lacy. He switches off the machines and takes out the IV. He watches as the heart monitor flatlines. He stands for a moment, listening to the music. Then he quickly wipes his eyes and face, straightens up, and exits the hospital room to take care of more patients. “Fly Me To The Moon” plays him out.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 3

SETTING: Undisclosed Location, NE at
7:20pm. Bare bunker

AT RISE: A man is sitting in his
underground bunker watching the news
on a clunky old television set. He is in a
tank top and boxers, surrounded by a
weeks worth of old food wrappers and
empty microwave meals. The
emergency broadcast interrupts the TV
program, softly playing in the
background

SAMUEL

(whisper)

I knew it.

(beat)

I knew it!

(beat)

I knew it! I knew it! I knew it!!!

(beat)

I knew it.

Fuck, it's go time. It's go time!

(He rips the key ring off his belt and runs to his giant, metal, built-in shelving unit. The top shelf is filled to the brim with food supplies: canned and jarred food, bottles of water, and sanitary supplies. The middle shelf is survival supplies: flashlights, aluminum space blankets, first aid kits. The bottom shelf is weaponry: matches, flares, hatchets, guns ranging from pistols to semi-automatics. He stares at the physicalization of all his hard work in awe, then gets down to business. He grabs a clipboard hanging from the inside of the shelving unit door and starts checking things off. He moves supplies around, checking behind cans to reveal even more cans, always replacing the supplies to exactly where they were. He is flipping through his checklist pages in a frenzy, finally ripping all the pages off the clipboard and throwing them in the air, having confirmed nothing has changed since yesterday.)

I fucking knew it!

(He catches one of the sheets of paper floating to the ground and notices something that isn't checked off.)

Where the fuck...

(He whips around, looking for the missing item. He throws cushions off the couch and thrusts his hands into the crevices. He triumphantly pulls out a taser gun and collapses on the torn apart couch. He starts messing around with his taser, fake firing it on unsuspecting victims.)

These are my beans! Get back!

(He accidentally tases a picture frame that falls to the ground. He looks around and spots the fallen picture frame. He checks to see if the frame is broken. It's not. The picture is of a younger Sam and a boy — his brother, NATE. He pulls out his flip phone and begins scrolling through. After a moment of scrolling, he snaps it shut. He turns to the frame, talking to the Nate in the picture.)

Nope. If you wanted to talk, you should have called me.

(He abandons his phone, setting it and the picture on the coffee table, and reassembles the couch. When finished with his task, he plops back down on the couch, staring at the picture in front of him.)

Do you even have my number? I bet dad never gave it to you. Typical. I should call dad!
(beat) No, he'd never come down here, he won't even visit the dang place. You should have seen him when I told him about the bunker. He went batshit! It was almost as bad as the time you told us about... No, nothing was worse than that time.

(SAMUEL stands and picks both items back up, glancing back and forth between the two.)

That was way worse.

(He opens his phone and goes to scroll through his contacts. He only has three. He hovers over the contact saying "MOM" for a moment. Then he presses the delete button. Nothing happens.)

Do I not have any service down here? *(beat)* Shit, no wonder I haven't gotten any calls!

(He looks at the clock on the wall, then examines the rest of the room — everything is in order.)

Alright, I've got, what, 5 minutes? I can quick run outside... just to make a call. Got nothing better to do, everything else's in order. Now where's my coat...

(He rummages around, collecting a giant winter coat, mittens, a hat. He's not wearing pants.)

Okay. Okay okay okay. You can do this. The world hasn't ended yet, has it?

(He sets the picture frame back exactly where he found it. He concludes his conversation with picture frame Nate.)

Talk to you soon.

(He walks over to the door to the bunker and cranks the wheel to open the door. It swings open. In front of him is a ladder leading to the outside world.)

You can do it.

(He slowly climbs the ladder, beginning to feel a breeze on his face. He climbs the last few steps and puts his hands on the earth for the first time in a few weeks. The sun is just beginning to set. He starts laughing, feeling the grass touch his feet. He lays down in it. Then he pulls out his phone, finally doing what he came to do. He hits the number his cursor has been hovering over. It rings for a while, then goes to voicemail.)

NATE (recorded)

Hey, it's Nate. You know what to do!

(A beep sounds.)

SAMUEL

Hey. *(beat)* How are you? *(laughs)* Probably not great considering the world is ending... Um, well I just wanted to check in. *(beat)* Sorry I haven't called or anything. I know it's been a while. Time flies when you're in a bunker! Hah. Not really, it's horrible. To be honest I don't even know what day it is anymore. I mean, I go out every once in a while... but mostly I've just been here.

(beat)

Look, I know things haven't been great between us... but that's really your fault. You broke up the family, all because you just had to tell us you're a... Well you really messed us all up, Nate. I mean did my best to keep the family safe — I built a whole goddamn bunker for fucks sake! Even though no one will even come down here but me — they all think I'm crazy. Hah. Well who's crazy now?? The world really is ending and I was right! I was right.

(beat)

But I wasted so many years getting ready for when life ends, that I never let my own life begin. Huh. How crazy is that?

(beat)

I do miss you. Dad does too I think, especially since mom's passed. Has he ever called you? I don't talk to him much. Bad service.

(beat)

Well, I should go, it's getting dim, and... Oh my god! You need to come to my bunker! You have to come, Nate! I have food and supplies and weapons stocked up. It's completely safe, for you, for... for anyone you're with. Now, there's not an exact address, you know, for security purposes, but it's-

(The machine cuts him off: the message is too long.)

NO! Shit, FUCK! No, it's fine. Just text it. It's fine.

(He plops down on the ground and slowly types out a description of where he is with one finger.)

There.

(He tosses the phone over his shoulder — he won't need it anymore now that everyone is else about to die.)

There.

(He looks up at the sun.)

Wow.

(He stays staring up at the sky as the sun fades. He doesn't return to his bunker. He wants to soak up these last few seconds of the life he once knew. The sun slowly fades and the stage goes black.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 4

SETTING: Duluth, MN at 8:20pm
Furnished basement of a
suburban home.

AT RISE: Four young girls sit around
in sleeping bags, eating popcorn,
watching a movie, talking and laughing.

MADISON

Oh, shhh. I love this part!

LEA

Chris Pine is soooo cute.

EMMA

Eww!

(The movie is interrupted by the emergency broadcast. A chorus of "Nooooo" erupts from the girls. A murmured version of the prologue announcement is heard from the TV.)

LEA

Go back!

EMMA

Where's the remote?

MACY

I don't have it.

MADISON

You had it last.

MACY

No I didn't!

MADISON

Yeah you did!

MACY

No I- oh wait *(giggle)* I'm sitting on it.

(She pulls the remote out from under her. All the girls start laughing.)

LACY (off)

Girls! Get your stuff together!

(EMMA turns her attention to what's actually happening on the TV.)

MADISON

(to MOM)

What?

(beat)

WHAT??

(MADISON looks at her friends and shrugs.)

MADISON (CONT.)

I don't know how to fix it.

EMMA

(staring at the news broadcast)

Hey. Hey! Look.

MACY

What?

(Off stage we hear a baby crying and LACY on the phone.)

MADISON

Ugh. Amy never shuts up.

LEA

Turn it back on!

(Having recovered the remote from MACY, MADISON points it wildly at the TV, aggressively pressing random buttons.)

MADISON

I can't get it!

(She throws the remote back on the couch.)

EMMA

HEY! The news person said the sun just went out.

LEA

What does that mean?

MACY

(feigning dramatics)

It's the end of the world!

(MACY jumps off the couch and pretends to faint. MADISON and LEA giggle.)

EMMA

It's not funny!

MACY

Oh shut up, Emma.

LEA

It's probably just some crazy conspiracy theory like aliens. "We come in peeeeeeace."

(LEA makes wavy hand gestures at MADISON who laughs and swats her away.)

EMMA

It looks serious!

MACY

You're so whiny.

EMMA

Hey!

LEA

Yeah, remember when she cried in Ms. Conner's class when she cancelled the field trip to the planetarium?

MADISON

You guys are so mean! Leave her alone.

MACY

We're just joking.

LEA

Yeah, Emma knows we love her, even if she is a wuss.

(LEA playfully shoves EMMA, who laughs and shoves her back.)

EMMA

At least I'm not a crazy, boy obsessed freak. Have you told Freddy you looooooove him yet?

MADISON

"Oh Freddy, I love you! Let's be together forever!" Mwuah!

(MACY, MADISON, and EMMA all make kissy faces at LEA.)

LEA

Wait, that's a good idea. I should call Freddy!

(The girls explode into excited chatter. MADISON turns off the TV so as not to distract from the prospect of love.)

MACY

Oh my god do it!

MADISON

He sooooo likes you, you have to call him.

EMMA

Aw, Freddy's so nice! You would be such a cute couple.

LEA

Okay I'll do it! If the world really is ending anyways, at least I won't die alone.

MADISON

You're not going to die alone, you'll be with us!

LEA

Booring. I'd rather die with Freddy. We'll spend our last night laying on a blanket under the stars just like Chris Pine and Mia in *Princess Diaries 2*.

EMMA

Ugh, you are so boy obsessed!

MADISON

Emma doesn't get it, she's Beth-obsessed.

MACY

Wait, you have to call her!

EMMA

Noooo, I don't think she likes me.

MADISON

Shut up she totally does.

LEA

Yes! We'll call together!

MADISON

Lea, you go first.

MACY

Just call him already!

LEA

I'm going! I'm going. I gotta plan what to say first.

MADISON

You're stalling!

MACY

You're totally scared.

LEA

I'm not scared! Fine. I'll do it right now.

(The room quiets as the girls huddle around the phone. LEA dials nervously.)

LEA (cont.)

Oh, um, hi Ms. Michaels. This is Lea, I'm in Freddy's class. Is Freddy there?

...

I reeeeeally need to talk to him.

...

It's an emergency!

...

No, not like the one we're having now.

...

Can I please just talk to him?

...

Thank you.

(The other girls giggle. LEA quiets them.)

It's him! It's him!

...

Ummm... hiiii Freddy. How are you?

...

That's great! Wait no, I mean, yeah, it totally sucks.

...

Well... I just wanted to see how you were doing and... FREDDY I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU WILL YOU BE MY BOYFRIEND BEFORE THE WORLD ENDS?!?

...

Okay. You too. Bye.

(LEA hangs up the phone abruptly.)

MADISON

So...? WHAT DID HE SAY???

(LEA looks around sneakily at her friends.)

LEA

I have a boyfriend!

(All the girls start screaming.)

EMMA

What happened? Tell us everything!!!

LEA

Well... I told him that I love him and want him to be my boyfriend... and he said "OK."
And then his mom started yelling at him for being on the phone so he had to go.

MADISON

That's so romantic!

MACY

You're going to be together forever.

EMMA

At least for the next five minutes.

(The girls yell at EMMA to "shut up!" They all break into laughter.)

LEA

This was such a good idea! Now, you call Beth.

EMMA

Ugh, I'm nervous!

MADISON

You have nothing to be scared about!

MACY

Yeah, if she says no, we're all gonna die anyways, so you'll never see her again.

EMMA

You're right!

(They all burst out laughing. LACY comes downstairs to confront the girls.)

LACY

Your parents are calling! Why are your phones busy?

MADISON

We had important calls to make!

LACY

Maddie, look at me. This is serious. Your friends need to call their parents.

MADISON

What do you mean? What's going on, mom?

(LACY realizes she is scaring her daughter and the other girls. She pulls MADISON into a hug.)

LACY

Come here, honey. It's going to be okay.

(AMY is crying upstairs.)

LACY (cont.)

Here, come upstairs with me. Girls, call your parents. Tell them you're okay and that we'll take care of you. Everything will be fine.

(LACY exits. MADISON looks behind at her friends and then follows. The three remaining girls sit in silence.)

MACY

Sorry Emma.

LEA

Yeah, sorry Em.

EMMA

It's okay. *(beat)* It'll be okay... Right?

LEA

It'll be okay!

MACY

It'll be okay.

(They all take hands comfortingly. MACY's phone rings. She looks at the girls before moving away to take it. LEA and EMMA look at each other and pull out their phones to call their parents.)

MACY

Dad, I'm fine. I'm sorry! I didn't see your call...

LEA

Mama! What's going on, Madison's mom said to call you?

EMMA

Hi Grandma. I don't know if you've seen the news, but I'm still at Maddie's, and her mom seems really freaked out.

MACY

No really, everything is fine. Are you guys okay?...

EMMA

I don't know what's going on, but it seems pretty bad.

LEA

Are you sure? Madison's mom seemed pretty freaked.

MACY

Is someone going to pick me up?...

LEA

Okay... Can you?

MACY

Oh. Okay. I'll get everything packed up just in case. I love you too.

LEA

Thanks mama. See you soon.

EMMA

Well um... call me back. And come pick me up. I'm getting scared.

(As the remaining girls are talking with their families, the lights fade to black.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5

SETTING: Los Angeles, CA at 6:20pm
Two people stand on opposite sides of the stage.

AT RISE: TAYLOR is unpacking boxes, JORDAN is reading a textbook. Their phones start vibrating. They both ignore it at first, busy with their tasks. TAYLOR is the first to pick up her phone. She reads and rereads the emergency alert. By this time, JORDAN has also gotten up to check his phone. After a moment of helplessness, TAYLOR hits a number on speed dial. JORDAN immediately picks up. They exit their respective rooms into the outdoors. Throughout the scene, they are pacing around the stage in a slow circle, never facing each other, never making eye contact.

Hi.

JORDAN

Hi. *(beat)* Are you okay?

TAYLOR

Yeah, for now. Are you?

JORDAN

Yeah.

TAYLOR

I can't believe this.

JORDAN

TAYLOR
Of all the things to end it, this is not what I would have expected. Climate change? Definitely. A nuclear war, absolutely. But the sun just... just fucking dying?--

(She breaks off, almost laughing, not even knowing what to say.)

JORDAN

I know. I mean, I thought it couldn't get any worse, but here we are.

TAYLOR

Here we are.

(long beat)

JORDAN

Are you scared?

TAYLOR

What kind of question is that?

JORDAN

I don't know... I don't really know how to make conversation in this situation.

TAYLOR

What situation? The world ending or talking to your ex?

JORDAN

Both.

TAYLOR

How have you been?

JORDAN

Apparently you don't know what to say in this situation either.

TAYLOR

(laughs)

Fuck off. *(beat)* Just distract me. Tell me something good.

JORDAN

I started grad school.

TAYLOR

Oh my god congratulations! Where?

JORDAN

UCLA.

TAYLOR

Wow. *(beat)* That's incredible. I'm so happy for you.

JORDAN

I'm so excited, I can't believe I finally got in.

TAYLOR

You're going to be such a good teacher. Seriously, you deserve this more than anyone.

JORDAN

Thanks.

TAYLOR

How are the kiddos?

JORDAN

They're awesome. Wild, but awesome. I'm really gonna miss them.

TAYLOR

Will you teach there again after school?

JORDAN

I was planning on it, but now...

TAYLOR

Oh. Right.

JORDAN

Yeah. *(beat)* How's the paper been? Harassing politicians into changing the world?

TAYLOR

It's great. I never feel like I know what I'm doing, but I really love it.

JORDAN

You're too hard on yourself. I bet you're the best writer in New York by now.

TAYLOR

(exhales)
Well, not anymore.

JORDAN

Oh. Right, because...

TAYLOR

Well, yeah, that and I, uh... I actually got a different job offer. *(beat)* From the... the L.A. Times.

(long beat)

JORDAN

Wow. I... wow.

TAYLOR

Yeah.

(beat)

JORDAN

Did you take it?

TAYLOR

Yeah.

JORDAN

Why?

TAYLOR

What?

JORDAN

Why did you take the job? New York was it for you, you never wanted to live in LA. Sure you liked it, but you always said New York is the place to be as a writer.

TAYLOR

Well... that was before I actually worked there and lived there. It just- I don't know, it wasn't right for me I guess.

JORDAN

Not right for you? You based your whole life on that move. You ended our relationship for that move! But now it's "not right for you?" Just like that?

TAYLOR

I didn't end our relationship for New York! And this isn't even about New York, it just wasn't the right fit. The job, the city, the people, all of it.

JORDAN

If that's not why you ended things, then why did you?

TAYLOR

Jordan, you fucking know why! We've had this conversation a million times, I don't know why we need to keep rehashing it. That's not why I fucking called you.

JORDAN

Then why did you call me?

TAYLOR

Because still I love you!

JORDAN

I love you too.

(beat)

TAYLOR

I really fucked us up didn't I?

JORDAN

It's not your fault. It just wasn't the right time for us.

(long beat)

JORDAN (cont.)

Are you already in L.A.?

TAYLOR

Yeah. I was... I- I was going to call you. I just got to town a couple days ago. I thought we could get a drink, catch up, maybe talk about... but it doesn't really matter now, does it.

(long beat)

JORDAN

Figures. We finally find ourselves in the same place at the same time and the world's ending!

TAYLOR

I miss the summer we were in L.A.

JORDAN

Me too.

TAYLOR

I was really looking forward to visiting the Observatory again. I just kept thinking about that night we went up to the park nearby and had a midnight picnic for our anniversary, and you tried to be all romantic and you said... what did you say again?

JORDAN

Don't... it was so cheesy.

TAYLOR

It was sweet! "I feel like our love was written in the stars..." And then you spilled that entire bottle of wine all over the blanket and soaked everything.

JORDAN

And you tossed the blanket away and started dancing to get dry. And you made me come dance with you even though you know I can't dance to save my life.

TAYLOR

I don't think you could even call what you did dancing.

JORDAN

Hey, you knew I couldn't dance when you started dating me!

TAYLOR

I thought maybe my expertise would have worn off on you, but you just have absolutely no sense of rhythm.

JORDAN

Well swing dancing is especially hard.

TAYLOR

It's not that difficult, you just have to get the...

JORDAN

The timing?

TAYLOR

The timing.

(beat)

JORDAN

I bet the sky is going to look incredible when the sun goes dark.

TAYLOR

Nothing will ever beat that night.

JORDAN

I've been walking to that park near the Observatory. I knew you wouldn't be there, but I guess I wanted to feel closer to you when it ended. I... I don't think I'm going to make it.

TAYLOR

Shit, wait- where are you? I'm here too, but I don't see you anywhere.

(JORDAN starts running.)

JORDAN

I'm at the edge of the park!

TAYLOR

So am I!

JORDAN

Where... I can't see you.

(They both realize how dark the sky is and stop walking.)

TAYLOR

I can't see anything.

(loaded beat)

TAYLOR (cont.)

Are you scared?

JORDAN

Not of this.

(They turn around and face each other for the first time, making eye contact. They drop their phones. They run towards each other, hands outstretched. Lights fade to one spotlight in the middle of the stage where two hands are stretched out towards each other, not quite touching.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 6

SETTING: Denver, CO at 7:20pm
Grocery store.

AT RISE: Manager is checking out a customer at a register. Other customers are milling around the store. They finish checking out the customer.

KRIS

Have a nice day!

(People around the store check their phones, which are buzzing loudly. The next in line doesn't come forward to start checking out.)

I can help you right here ma'am.

(She doesn't look up from her phone.)

Ma'am? Is everything alright?

(Wordlessly, she shows her the emergency alert on her phone. KRIS quickly scans the text on the screen. KRIS hears a crash somewhere in the store and snaps up, looking for where it came from. The store is breaking out into chaos, people running and screaming in all directions.)

KRIS

Uh... If you'll excuse me for one moment, please.

(The woman grabs her groceries and runs offstage. KRIS sprints to the opposite side of the stage to find two people fighting over a giant package of toilet paper while someone is drinking from an obviously just stolen bottle of whiskey cheering them on.)

What is going on here?

TOILET PAPER 1

Give it to me!

TOILET PAPER 2

I had it first!

DRUNK WOMAN

He had it first!

KRIS

Please, you don't need that much toilet paper!

TP 1

You don't know what I need.

KRIS

We have more in the back!

DRUNK WOMAN

There's no time!

KRIS

I can assure you-

(Realizing the presence of DRUNK WOMAN and exactly how she is drunk.)

Is that stolen merchandise?

DRUNK WOMAN

(clutching the liquor close to her chest)

Maybe it is, maybe it isn't...

KRIS

The sticker's still on the bottle!

DRUNK WOMAN

You want some?

KRIS

No, I don't want some! I'm working!

DRUNK WOMAN

You're really going to spend your last minutes on earth working?

KRIS

These are not-

(The two people fighting over the last package of toilet paper rip it in half. Now they are screaming at each other and frantically gathering up as many individual rolls as possible.)

KRIS

Wait! Please, we have more in the back.

(KRIS runs to the front to find an employee to get toilet paper. They arrives at the register to find an employee, ANNA, on her way out. KRIS is frantic, barely looking at ANNA as they speak. While KRIS is rambling, ANNA is quickly stealing from the cash register.)

KRIS

Anna! We need toilet paper from the back. Everyone is going crazy! One lady is getting drunk off our merchandise...

(KRIS takes in what is happening in front of them.)

KRIS (cont.)

What are you doing?

ANNA

I've got to get out of here. I'm sorry.

(ANNA sprints out of the store, stuffing the money into her apron and grabbing a box of cookies on a stand in front of the door on her way out. KRIS looks around, helpless as their store descends into chaos. They run over to the wall phone and dial 911.)

KRIS

Hello? Hello, I need the police, my store is being looted. Hello?

(They see three people run out of the store with armloads of stolen merchandise. The last person drops a few things and turns back to pick it up.)

Hey! HEY! Get back here! You can't just take that!

(He looks up in fear and then scampers away, leaving what he dropped.)

Everyone is going crazy! Corporate is gonna kill me. You have to help!

...

What do you mean no one can come?

...

This is an emergency!

...

I don't care what is going on in space! What does that have to do with my store?

...

You're 911! It's your job to handle emergencies!

...

You know what? Fine. I'll handle it myself.

(KRIS slam the phone down and then redials. They put themself on the store speakerphone.)

KRIS

(in a customer service voice)

Greetings, valued customers. There seems to be some confusion in the store today. Now I don't know what this crazy spam text is that some of you received, but we all must remain calm. I assure you that there's no reason to loot the store with The Bargain Hunter Barn's low prices! If you're looking for- (toilet paper or other essentials, there's plenty more in the back.)

(DRUNK WOMAN takes the phone from KRIS'S hand and begins her own announcement.)

DRUNK WOMAN

End of the world sale in the liquor aisle! Everything is FREE!

(KRIS battles for the phone back, holding DRUNK WOMAN at bay as they make the correction.)

KRIS

Pardon the interruption Bargain Hunters, but there is NO sale in ANY aisle because it is NOT the end of the world!

(DRUNK WOMAN regains the phone.)

DRUNK WOMAN

Look people, the world is ending, and there's nothing you can do about it. So relaaaaax. Have a drink with me! On the house, amirite... *(reading name tag)* Kriss?

(KRIS slams the phone back into the receiver. They whirl around to face DRUNK WOMAN.)

KRIS

I need you to leave the store right now. You are causing a disturbance, and I won't have it.

DRUNK WOMAN

You think I'm causing a disturbance? You should see the crazy guy waving around a gun in aisle 4!

KRIS

What are you talking about? We don't allow guns in the st-

(A gunshot goes off further away in the store. DRUNK WOMAN throws up at KRIS's feet. KRIS jumps back and runs towards the gunshot. On their way to investigate, they grab a plastic baseball bat from the toy aisle. They finally peek around the aisle the gunshot came from. A young man is grabbing all the canned goods and tossing them in a cart that is already overflowing with food. Another man is lying dead further down the aisle. Inching into the aisle with their hands raised, KRIS approaches GUNMAN.)

KRIS

Um, excuse me sir.

(GUNMAN whips his head around from grabbing canned goods and reaches for his gun. KRIS drops the plastic baseball bat in alarm.)

KRIS (cont.)

Wait! WAIT! Please. Ohhh my god.

(GUNMAN slowly lowers the gun, but only slightly.)

KRIS (cont.)

Um... Okay, I don't know why you're doing this or... why you even have a gun in a grocery store, I mean I know it's a red state and it's open carry, but god, why?

GUNMAN

For this exact reason.

KRIS

You're right! You're right, I'm sorry. Just, uh... keep doing whatever you're doing, but if you could not shoot anyone else that would be really great.

GUNMAN

Don't you get it? This is war.

KRIS

I'm sure this is just some misunderstanding. The world isn't ending!

GUNMAN

Yes it is. The sooner you accept that, the longer you'll survive.

KRIS

Please, just leave the customers alone, and you can do whatever you want.

GUNMAN

I don't want to do this! If he had just stayed out of my way, everything would have been fine. But there's not enough stuff for all of us.

KRIS

There's plenty of stuff! The store is full of stuff! In fact, I can run to the back and...

(KRIS starts inching away from GUNMAN.)

GUNMAN

You don't get it! Only the strongest will survive. If he takes some of these cans, only to die days later, it was all a waste. Those of us who actually have a chance at surviving this lose out on those supplies.

KRIS

You didn't have to kill him.

GUNMAN

He never would have survived this anyways. It was an act of mercy.

KRIS

Shooting someone is not merciful!

GUNMAN

Don't you think it's better to die now than suffer whatever is to come if you're not prepared for it?

KRIS

Why do you think you're prepared for it and he isn't?

GUNMAN

I've got a fucking gun. Look at him! The guy's wearing a bowtie and he said "excuse me" to get to the canned goods. You think someone like that's gonna last? Or someone like you?

KRIS

What do you mean, someone like me?

GUNMAN

You! With your speaker phone calls to stay calm. You run an entire fucking grocery store and you're not even taking advantage of that. You just don't have what it takes.

KRIS

No no no no no I- I have what it takes!

(GUNMAN slowly begins raising the gun to point at KRIS. KRIS backs away.)

KRIS (cont.)

Please, please! I have what it takes!

(There is a hint of regret in GUNMAN's voice.)

GUNMAN

It's better this way. For both of us.

(KRIS screams and dives out of the aisle towards the baseball bat as GUNMAN pulls the trigger. One shot is heard and a body thumps to the ground.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 7

SETTING: Los Angeles, CA at 6:20pm
Living room.

AT RISE: An old woman is sitting alone
in her living room watching the news.
The weather person is announcing the
news. A murmured version of the
prologue announcement is heard from
the TV.

MS. GIOVANI

Oh dear.

(MS. GIOVANI gets up and shuffles off to a kitchen cupboard, where she finds a small picnic basket. She rummages around, loading it with a blanket and a dusty bottle of wine. She takes a bouquet of fresh flowers out of the vase on her dinner table, wraps them in paper, and places them in the basket. She shuffles over to the front door, turns off the lights, and exits the house. She begins walking slowly but with a purpose. After a brief period of silence, she arrives at her destination: a neatly kept gravesite. She replaces a bouquet of flowers that sits in front of a grave, barely wilting, with the fresher set.)

MS. GIOVANI

The weather people said something crazy on the TV today, Sal. Apparently the world is coming to an end. It's been coming to an end for a while now, in my opinion. With the drugs and the wars and the wars on drugs. I'm surprised it took this long! But none of that is what's ending the world, the damn sun stopped working! The sun! Just up and quit! I could never imagine... say, oh well...

(beat)

Everything else I have to update you on is going to pale in comparison to this. But we do have a new neighbor. A nice young woman, moved here all the way from New York City! She doesn't seem to know anyone here, so I dropped off some pizzelles and gave her some advice. She seems so familiar, but I can't quite place her. Maybe it's just because she's a writer. Reminds me of you.

(beat)

Ah! Speaking of, I brought you some pizzelles. I made the lemon ones this time, which I know aren't your favorite, but Kris likes them and they might come home for Christmas this year. That would be nice, wouldn't it?

(MS. GIOVANI opens the container of pizzelles and places one on top of the gravestone. She starts nibbling at another.)

I forgot how many pizzelles the recipe makes. This batch could last till Christmas and still feed the whole family. I even sent some to Ryan and Nate for Genny's birthday just to get rid of some! You remember them, the nice couple that lived in that yellow house across the street. Their little Genny is 5 years old now! Seems like just yesterday they brought her home, the little bundle of joy. I guess that's what getting old does to you. Reminiscing, forgetting how many pizzelles to make. *(laugh)* Not that you would know. Say, oh well.

(beat)

Oh, I almost forgot! I brought something special for tonight.

(She pulls out an old wine bottle and two wine glasses.)

Do you remember this? *(beat)* Oh, yes you do. It's the bottle from our wedding! The one your parents brought us from Italy. We were supposed to drink it together, but after you passed it didn't seem right to drink it by myself. But I guess now is as good a time as any.

(She begins pouring the wine into his wine glass.)

Just tell me when... Oh my. Really Sal, there's no need to overindulge. You're not the one stuck on earth to see the sun quit.

(She chuckles at her own joke and sets his wine glass next to his grave. She then pours herself a small glass. She goes to put the bottle in the basket and accidentally knocks over Sal's wine glass with her elbow. It soaks the ground near his grave and part of the blanket.)

Oh goodness! Look what I did. What a mess. Well, it will probably be easier for you to drink that way!

(She takes a sip of her wine.)

Mmm! This is incredible! We really should have gotten a bottle of this on our Italy trip instead of that disgusting Amarone. *(beat)* You know I don't like dry reds, Sal, I don't know why you would have chosen that one. Ruined the whole trip! Oh, I'm just kidding. Nothing could have ruined that trip.

(beat)

If I had known that was our last vacation together, I would have... well, I don't know what I would have done. You know, I don't think I would have changed anything, that was a beautiful trip. You're right, knowing would have just made me sad.

(beat)

It was a bit short for my liking, but we had a beautiful life together. Even through the chemo, always laughing in that little hospital room. You know, I still send Christmas cards to that nice young doctor in Minnesota who treated you. Do you remember him? What was his name again?... Brandon! That's it. What a nice young man.

(beat)

And now we have wonderful children and grandchildren — did I tell you that Jordan's gotten into grad school? UCLA! What a smart kid — takes after you I tell you. I am so lucky.

(beat)

But if I could go back and change one thing... I would have loved to visit Italy again. The sights, the food... I could have lived there, Sal. Preferably with you. Though I'd do it by myself if I had to, I loved it that much!

(beat)

But I couldn't leave you here all by yourself. Who would have kept you company all these years? Certainly not the people who keep this place up. I tell you, some of the people around here make no sense! No sense at all. I wanted to dig some of your hydrangea up and plant it here next to you — it is beautiful this spring, coming in all baby blue. I would have thought they'd have bigger things to worry about than where I plant my hydrangeas, but apparently not.

(beat)

Can you imagine, that uptight little funeral home fellow chasing after me and my hydrangeas! Hah! It's a good thing the sun is going out so he won't be able to see it! Just picture it, Sal. Oh, well I know you never met him, but if you could have seen his face when I asked if there were two lakefront plots available. Why, you'd have thought I asked to buy the whole damn lake! I swear, some people in this generation have their priorities all backwards.

(beat)

Well, I've about had it with them. With this whole place for that matter. Is it any better up there? Or down here *(chuckle)*. Oh, I kid, I kid. *(sigh)* But I am ready, Sal.

(MS. GIOVANI looks down at her almost empty wine glass. She raises it towards the grave to make a toast.)

To being together again. It's about time, don't you think?

(MS. GIOVANI packs up the picnic, putting the wine and wine glasses away as carefully as she assembled it. She takes the blanket, spilled wine and all, and lies down next to her husband's grave on the plot that would have been hers. She closes her eyes for the last time and passes away.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 8

SETTING: Seattle, WA at 6:20pm.
College Astronomy lecture.

AT RISE: The same classroom from the prologue. Emergency lights and alarms are going off. PROFESSOR stands at the front of the room reaching for her phone. Students are in different stages of reading the texts, and most are frozen in confusion. PROFESSOR finally reads the emergency alert.

(Students get out of their seats. Some turn to others around them to confer, others stand isolated. Murmurs of confusion grow louder.)

STUDENT

What's going on?

STUDENT

Professor, what does this mean?

(PROFESSOR still stares at her phone.)

PROFESSOR

This is impossible. It's only ever been talked about in theory. I don't understand...

(The class grows more and more agitated. A few students begin packing up their stuff.)

STUDENT

Let's get the fuck out of here.

(The two sprint out of the room and a couple more follow. PROFESSOR turns to her desk and flips through one of her many astronomy textbooks.)

PROFESSOR

This doesn't make sense...

STUDENT

What do we do?

STUDENT

Come on, let's go!

STUDENT

But we don't know what's happening!

(Students who haven't left the classroom are frantically calling loved ones. Most aren't getting through or are going straight to voicemail. A cacophony of dial tones and "At the tone, please record your message" are echoing through the classroom.)

STUDENT

The phone lines are down!

STUDENT

My call won't go through!

(Student cries are growing as others join in. With the new development of phone issues, more are fleeing the room. Others are redialing, in a fruitless attempt to get through.)

RUSSEL

Why don't we have service?

(Just as yet another student is trying to escape, the classroom doors electronically bolt shut in the schoolwide emergency lockdown procedure. Students begin screaming.)

STUDENT

We can't get out!

STUDENT

Why are they doing this to us?

(The few students who didn't rush out in the beginning of the crisis are in a frenzy. Some are pulling on the doors, some are running to alternative exits, others are opening the windows. Two students who are pushing on the doors call to other students.)

RUSSEL

Come on! HELP US!

(He gives up on pushing and grabs a chair, slamming it repeatedly into the door. A few students come to help, most others back away in fear. The room is in turmoil; banging, dial tones, and screams are coming from all directions. In the chaos, PROFESSOR slowly approaches the window, watching the sunset and marveling at this scientific anomaly.)

RUSSEL (cont.)

Fuck this!

(The students surrounding the doors are giving up hope. RUSSEL grabs the chair and heads for the windows. He throws the chair at a large window next to PROFESSOR. The window shatters and the chair crashes to the ground four stories below. PROFESSOR is shocked out of her reverie as she is assaulted by broken glass.)

PROFESSOR

Stop this! What is wrong with you?

RUSSEL

What's wrong with you? You're acting like this is a meteor shower or something. The sun is dying and we're going to die with it. I'm just trying to get the fuck out of here.

PROFESSOR

And fall to your death? We're on the fourth floor, Russel. There's nowhere to go.

RUSSEL

Well, it's better than standing around here doing nothing!

(Students start to gather around RUSSEL and PROFESSOR.)

PROFESSOR

Look, I don't know what's going on out there any more than you do. But we have to stay calm. We can't go throwing ourselves out of windows!

STUDENT

How are we supposed to stay calm?

STUDENT

You're an astronomy professor. You should know what's going on!

PROFESSOR

This is an unprecedented issue-

STUDENT

Why can't you help us?

STUDENT

We're trapped here because of you!

PROFESSOR

Please, I'm sorry I don't know what to do! But all this chaos is just making things worse!

STUDENT

Stop fucking acting like everything is okay!

STUDENT

We're all going to die!

RUSSEL

Well, I'm not waiting around for that to happen.

(RUSSEL grabs the side of the windowsill and hoists himself up, cutting his hand on glass as he does so. He winces and loses his grip. The students around him scream. He teeters forward and PROFESSOR lunges for him, pulling him back into the classroom. She keeps a tight grip on RUSSEL and whirls around to face the class.)

PROFESSOR

ENOUGH.

(The classroom goes silent.)

PROFESSOR (cont.)

This is insanity. I get it, you're upset. We all are. But you're only making things worse for yourselves and the people around you. Is this really how you want to spend the last few minutes of your life?

(beat)

Get him some bandaids. They're with the first aid kit in the cupboard.

(A student rushes off and returns with the kit. She starts wrapping up his hand. PROFESSOR collects herself.)

PROFESSOR (cont.)

I'm sorry. This is a horrible situation, and I wish that we could all be with our loved ones somewhere safe. But we're not. We're here. And we need to take care of each other.

STUDENT

It's the end of the world.

PROFESSOR

That's the first time someone's ever said that and it might actually be true.

(Murmured chuckles come from a few students.)

NICK

(to SOFIA)

You lost the bet.

SOFIA

What?

NICK

You lost the bet. It's the end of the world.

SOFIA

Oh shit.

(The class erupts into laughter. It's a relief to think about something else for a moment.)

NICK

Well? I'm waiting...

SOFIA

I didn't think I'd actually-!

NICK

I'm kidding! I'm kidding, you don't actually ha-

(The class laughs. SOFIA leans over and grabs NICK's shirt, kissing him square on the mouth. She breaks away, smug.)

NICK (cont.)

Oh shit.

PROFESSOR

Anyone else want to profess their undying love for each other? We've got all the time in the world.

(MARTIN gets up and clasps his hands together, throwing himself forward.)

MARTIN

I love you, Professor Warren! Will you marry me?

PROFESSOR

What's my first name, Martin?

MARTIN

Um... professor?

PROFESSOR

I think you have your answer. But thank you for lightening the mood.

(There is a beat of silence. PROFESSOR notices one young woman is sitting away from the group, desperately dialing and redialing a number on her phone. A droning dial tone is heard. PROFESSOR approaches her.)

PROFESSOR

Marie? What's going on?

MARIE

I can't get through to my daughter.

(PROFESSOR sits down next to her.)

PROFESSOR

I didn't know you had a daughter. What's her name?

MARIE

Kaitlyn.

PROFESSOR

Can you tell me about her?

MARIE

She just turned five. And she's in kindergarten. She's home right now. I'd probably be putting her to bed soon. Reading books, singing lullabies.

PROFESSOR

Does she have a favorite lullaby that you sing to her?

MARIE

You are my sunshine.

PROFESSOR

That's one of my favorites too. My mom used to sing that to me when I was a kid.

STUDENT

It's getting darker.

STUDENT 2

How many minutes have passed?

STUDENT 3

Almost 7.

(Scattered murmurs from the class. Students begin to hold hands in solidarity and comfort. MARIE's call to her daughter finally goes through. She gets the voicemail box.)

MARIE

Janna! Thank god. Whenever you get this, put Kaitlyn on please. I need to... to say goodbye to her. Make sure she knows I love her. *(beat)* Baby, it's mommy. I love you so much, and I'm sorry I'm not with you right now. But don't worry, I promise I'll be home soon... I promise-

(MARIE is barely holding on to talk to her daughter. PROFESSOR takes her hand.)

PROFESSOR

You are my sunshine
My only sunshine

(PROFESSOR and a couple students who know the song join in. Martin sings directly to PROFESSOR WARREN.)

You make me happy
When skies are gray...

(The rest of the class joins in even if they don't know it well.)

You never know dear
How much I love you
Please don't take
My sunshine away

MARIE

Please don't take
My sunshine away

(MARIE ends the call. The song fades away and silence lingers. Hand in hand, together they watch the sun fade to black as the clock passes through its final minute.)

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY.