

The World, As We Know It

By Lauren Sydney

CHARACTERS

KIT ST. CLAIR, a news anchor, mid-30's

JESSE, a camera operator, mid-40's

TATUM, a news producer, mid-40's

ALANA, going home, late 20's

HEATHER, getting away, late 20's

BEV, a wife, 30's

CHARLIE, a husband, 30's

JAY, a list keeper, early 20's

COOPER, stoned, early 20's

INGRID, secretive, early 20's

SETTING City of Tacoma, Washington. June, 2032.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Afternoon, around 4pm

A newscaster, KIT, sits at their station. JESSE, a camera tech, is prepping the camera in front of them. KIT gathers their notes, then looks up at the prompter and camera in front of them.

JESSE

And we're live in three, two, one-

JESSE gestures as the lights change to a stark light on KIT.

KIT

Good afternoon. I am Kit St. Clair, and this is Tacoma One, your friendly neighborhood news of the greater Tacoma area. On the election front, Eastman gains traction in the polls, raising fourteen points and popular favor for the seat in the upcoming '32 Democratic National Convention. In local news, the Tacoma Zoo is on its way to incubating a fetal giant panda. If successful, this could potentially bring back the giant panda from extinction. Also later on we discuss how the rise of solar flares will affect your home gardens. More on that later. First, your local traffic report. Linda?

Lights on the newsroom stay up as lights illuminate a separate living space. During this time, a producer, TATUM comes into frame and whispers in the KIT's ear, showing them something on a tablet. JAY sits on the couch, drinking a beer and absent mindedly watching the news. COOPER enters with his own beer and a bowl of popcorn.

COOPER

Dude, the news? Really?

JAY

Did you see the pandas-

COOPER

Halftime will be over in two minutes.

JAY

Okay okay, fine. I'll switch it back.

During this dialogue, TATUM exits while KIT silently counts down and gestures for KIT to start. JAY picks up the remote just as a shaken KIT turns back to the camera.

TATUM

Breaking news. In NASA's recent storm prediction technology, the beginnings of a solar flare roughly the size of Australia has started to form. It is predicted to exit the sun's atmosphere and, is on course to erupt and strike earth in approximately twenty-four hours. Currently, it is on course to hit the Pacific Ocean, near the coast of Alaska. However, NASA confirms that this will set off cataclysmic tidal waves and earthquakes across the planet. Parts of the world that are not affected will experience total blackouts, and the global temperature will likely rise above levels sustainable for human life.

Kit pauses, clearly in disbelief. Or shock. They attempt to compose themselves.

This is the end of life on Earth as we know it. In twenty four hours, the world as we know it will cease to exist.

The light on the news station quickly snaps to black as JAY shuts off the TV. A moment of silence as the news sets in.

COOPER

Bro.

JAY

This isn't real. This can't be real. This has to be a prank.

COOPER

Would the news lie?

A long, sharp buzz tone rings on both JAY and COOPER's phones. They each pull out their phones and look at it.

JAY

I really don't think this is a prank.

COOPER

What the hell are we supposed to do?

JAY

I don't know. I really don't know.

COOPER

(He gets an idea) Call your sister. She's like a scientist or something, she'll know what's up.

JAY

Bev's a pediatrician.

COOPER

Same difference.

JAY

Not really. *(He pulls out his phone and types a number. A sharp dial tone)* I'm not getting any signal.

COOPER

(He follows suit.) Shit. Me neither.

There's a knock on the door. JAY opens the door, revealing INGRID.

JAY

(Surprised) Ingrid?

COOPER

(Less enthusiastic) Ingrid.

INGRID

Hi Jay. Cooper.

COOPER

What are you doing here?

JAY

Did you see the news?

INGRID

Everyone has seen the news. It's already a nightmare out there. Phones are down. People are driving like it's the end of the world-

COOPER

It *is* the end of the world.

INGRID

(Ignoring the comment). This was the closest place I could think of that I could go and get out of the way of all the people. Everyone in Tacoma is out there right now.

JAY

I just saw it on the news like two minutes ago, how is it already nuts out there?

INGRID

(point blank) Surprisingly, the internet travels faster than network television.

JAY

Point taken.

COOPER

So now we're stuck with you for the end of the world?

INGRID

I'm afraid so.

COOPER

(Displeased) Great.

INGRID

(Sarcastic) Yeah. Great.

The three sit in silence for a bit, no one making eye contact. COOPER plays a game of "how quickly can I chug this beer" before picking up JAY's beer and opening it for himself.

COOPER

So what now?

INGRID

I don't know. *(Joking)* If you had twenty-four hours left let live, how would you spend it?

COOPER

Easy. I'd sleep in.

INGRID

You would spend the last day of your life... sleeping.

JAY

Dude-

COOPER

I'm not done. I would spend the day with my mom and brothers. We'd grill out and have a picnic over at the park. The one with the big hill. Then, at the very end. I'd pack a bowl with Jay and watch it all go to shit. Also, Ingrid wouldn't be in my apartment.

JAY

I'm honored, man.

INGRID

(sarcastic) So am I.

JAY

What about you?

INGRID

Probably the same, minus the weed. Fly to Portland, spend the day with my parents. Take my dog to the park. See my friends from home. Then... I guess it doesn't matter. There's no way I'm getting on a plane now. I can't even get on the phone to say goodbye. We're stuck here.

A moment. No one knows how to follow that.

JAY

If we're stuck here, then let's make the most of it.

INGRID

What do you mean?

JAY gets up and exits to his bedroom, leaving COOPER and INGRID in uncomfortable silence.

COOPER

Ingrid-

INGRID

Not now, Cooper.

More silence. COOPER drinks, defeated. Finally, JAY enters with a list.

COOPER

(In an attempt to hold on to the masculinity that INGRID has worn down in three words). Cute diary, bro.

JAY

(Too engrossed in his journal to throw it back) It's not a diary.

INGRID

What is it?

JAY

It's a list. When I left high school, I made a list of everything I wanted to accomplish before thirty. I guess thirty just came a few years too soon. *(He tears the list from the book).*

INGRID

(Reading over JAY's shoulder) Go to Thailand. Get married. Learn to fly a plane. There's no way you can do all this in less than twenty four hours.

JAY

Well... maybe not *all* of it. *(He crosses out two items on the list. Then a third. Then a fourth.)* Everything else seems reasonable.

COOPER

Dude, do you really think you can do all this?

JAY

Why not? Some of these things can either be done right here. The rest we can walk to. Wifi still works, for now. Cable news is still running.

INGRID

But in less than a day?

JAY

I can do it if you'll help me?

INGRID

Me?

JAY

Both of you.

COOPER

No. No way. I'm not spending the day with her-

INGRID

I'm in.

Beat.

JAY

Cooper?

INGRID

Come on. What's your alternative? Spending the day helping out your best friend fulfill a few dreams, or sit in this apartment and wait for the end of the world?

Beat.

COOPER

Yeah, I'll wait here.

JAY

COOPER.

COOPER

Fine! *(stands)* But I'm not doing it for you. I'm doing it for her.

JAY

(He puts his hand between the two of them) Let's do this.

Ingrid places her hand down atop Jay's. The two look to COOPER, who's still reluctant. COOPER looks at INGRID, thinks. He looks to JAY, silently begging COOPER to give in. He does, and joins his hand in the center. Music. Blackout.

SCENE TWO

The same time

Lights back on KIT in the newsroom.

KIT

This is the end of life on Earth as we know it. In twenty four hours, the world as we know it will cease to exist.

The lights shift to a few seats outside a gate of the Baltimore airport. ALANA sits, reading a book and listening to music through earbuds. HEATHER walks in with her duffel bag and sits a few seats down from ALANA. She pulls out her phone and tries to use it, but it's dead.

HEATHER

Shit. *(She looks over to Alana.)* Do you know what time it is?

ALANA

(Pulling out an earbud) Sorry?

HEATHER

Oh sorry. I was just wondering if you had the time.

ALANA

Yeah. *(Checks her phone)* It's a little after four.

HEATHER

Thanks. I was stupid and packed my charger with my checked bag.

ALANA

Hang on a second. *(She shuffles through her backpack)* Here.

HEATHER

Thanks. I rarely see people with cord chargers anymore. But I can't seem to get rid of this old dinosaur. *(She holds up her phone-whatever the newest iphone is today)*. I'm Heather, by the way.

ALANA

Alana.

They shake hands. ALANA returns to her reading.

HEATHER

So, Alana. Where are you heading?

ALANA

Boston.

HEATHER

No way. Me too!

ALANA

Hey, coincidence.

HEATHER

What for?

ALANA

Going home. I was visiting my boyfriend.

HEATHER

Cool.

ALANA

You?

HEATHER

I don't really know.

ALANA

You don't know? (*She finally sets down her reading*)

HEATHER

I just... needed to get away, I guess.

ALANA

From?

Beat.

HEATHER

I guess everything. I got up this morning and I decided that I couldn't stay here. The world felt like it was too much. So, I packed as much as I could, took a taxi here and told the ticket lady to get me on the next flight out of here. (*A moment*). I'm sorry, I didn't mean to word vomit on you. I hardly know you.

ALANA

It's what you need at the moment.

HEATHER smiles. They share a moment before ALANA returns to her reading. HEATHER returns to her charging phone. She tries to turn it on, still nothing.

HEATHER

Shit. *(She turns back to ALANA)* I'm sorry, could I also borrow your phone? I need to call someone.

ALANA shuffles for her phone. Just then, a pilot, CHARLIE, crosses through with his suitcase. He's worried. Really worried. He and HEATHER make eye contact before he rushes off the other side of the stage. ALANA finally finds her phone, right when the same buzz as before rings. She looks at it.

ALANA

No.

HEATHER

What is it?

She looks at HEATHER, but doesn't respond. She's frozen. HEATHER slides over to look at what's on the screen. They look at each other. Music. Blackout.

SCENE THREE

Approximately an hour later, 5pm

KIT

The world as we know it, will cease to exist.

BEV, a wife in her mid-thirties, sets up a romantic dinner in her dining room. She's lighting candles, plating the food, etc. She exits, only to bring out a small wrapped gift. She places it in the center of the table. And sits. She waits. She checks her watch. She waits some more. Suddenly, a door opening and closing is heard off stage.

CHARLIE (off)

Bev? Are you home?

BEV stands, panicked. She makes final tweaks to the arrangement.

BEV

I'm in here!

The pilot from earlier, CHARLIE, enters. He sets down his suitcase. They embrace. BEV's embrace is more "I'm excited to see you." CHARLIE's embrace is more urgent, desperate.

CHARLIE

(Keeping his composure, barely) I'm so glad you're here.

BEV

Of course I'm here. I mean I took off work a bit early today, I've been home since a little before three. I needed to make sure everything was ready before you got home. With all what's going on. I figured we could use a nice night. Just the two of us.

CHARLIE

You got off work, for all this?

BEV

Yes, sit. Sit. (He does. She sits across from him. He looks at all the food and decorations in front of him.) I've done a lot of thinking today. About us. About our future.

CHARLIE

Bev-

BEV

I know that you've been wanting to start a family. And I know I haven't been ready. And I know it's been a little hard on you. But I've done some thinking. And I want to do what's best for us. I'm ready. (She laughs a bit) And it's just in time, too.

CHARLIE begins to cry. She stands to comfort him.

BEV (cont'd)

Hey. I know. It's bad timing. But I think we could really have a family. With you gone so much for work, and me finishing up my PHD on top of work, it'll be difficult but we can do it.

CHARLIE

Bev... have you looked at your phone in the last hour? Or turned on the TV?

BEV

No, I've been so focused on-

CHARLIE

Oh, Bev-

BEV

Wait. Before you say anything. I want to give you something. I think you'll like it.

CHARLIE

What could possibly-

BEV

You'll see.

She hands him the box. He looks at her, and opens it. We don't see what's in the box. He sobs. She hugs him. Music. Blackout.

Scene Four
Back to 4pm

KIT sits at their news station.

KIT

In twenty four hours, the world as we know it will cease to exist.

A long pause. Kit sighs.

To all the viewers out there still with me, all of us here at WKTV thank you for choosing us as your news source. I will be here,

reporting the information as quickly as we receive it. Until then, call your family. Call your friends. We'll be back with more information.

JESSE

And... we're clear.

KIT's composure shatters. TATUM reenters with their tablet as JESSE turns off the camera.

TATUM

How's everyone holding up?

JESSE

Jesus Christ, this isn't real, is it?

TATUM

(matter of fact) It is.

KIT begins to sob.

TATUM

Kit, this camera picks up 1840 High-Def. The viewers will practically be able to taste your tears.

JESSE

NASA could have gotten it wrong.

TATUM

It's NASA. They don't get things wrong.

JESSE

What the *fuck* are we supposed to do?

TATUM

Call your daughter. Call your parents. Otherwise, stay here and make sure the camera keeps running on Kit before tomorrow. I'm going home.

JESSE

You expect us to stay here while you get to go home? That's bull-

TATUM

I have a family. You have an apartment above a gas station and an ex-wife. Besides, all the other stations went dark. CNN, NBC, CBS, all the big letters. We're not going to leave Tacoma in the dust.

JESSE

But you're going to leave *us* in the dust?

TATUM

I'll be watching from home. Here's the tablet. Anything that comes from there plug it into the teleprompter. Good luck.

TATUM exits. KIT attempts to regain composure.

JESSE

What an asshole. How are you holding up?

KIT

How the fuck do you think?

JESSE

Jesus, you're acting like it's the end of the world.

JESSE air motions a "ba-dum-tss," on an imaginary drum set, clearly pleased with their pun. KIT stares at JESSE.

KIT

How are you not freaking out?

JESSE

Don't have a whole lot to lose. Besides, we've got a job to do.

KIT

What do you mean? Don't you have a family?

JESSE

Not really anymore. I have a daughter but... I couldn't get a hold of her on a normal day. I doubt she'd pick up now.

KIT

You don't know until you try.

JESSE

(deflecting) You know what, it's not important. *(They return to the iPad.)*

KIT

I've never really heard anything about your life. We've never really talked-

JESSE

It's not my job to talk. It's yours. I'm just here to hold the camera in place, and that's what I'm going to do.

KIT

Geez, you don't have to be harsh. I'm just trying to-

JESSE

Don't worry about it. I'm going to check for updates.

JESSE looks at the tablet. They sit in silence. Kit does their best to look camera ready, mid-mental breakdown. More silence.

KIT

I don't really have family either, you know.

JESSE

(beat) I'm sorry.

KIT

Don't be. It's been a rough day. Since we're here, that'll at least give Tatum some time with-

TATUM reenters.

JESSE

I thought you were going home.

TATUM

Roads are blocked. Everyone and their mother are out there. I have a better chance of dying out there than I do waiting until morning. I tried calling my husband, but phones are down. I'm stuck here.

KIT

I'm so sorry, Tatum.

TATUM blows past them to get to their office. KIT and JESSE look at each other, unsure of what to do. After a few moments of silence, TATUM reenters with a bottle of whiskey and three office mugs. They silently hand out the mugs, pours themselves a mug full of whiskey.

TATUM

I've been saving it for a special occasion.

They down the mug of whiskey before refilling it, and setting it on the news counter. KIT and JESSE share another look. JESSE shrugs, then fills their own mug, and then KIT's. The three cheer their mugs, before drinking. More silence.

KIT

So... what now?

BLACKOUT. Music, but it's like there's a scratch and it keeps glitching, before cutting out completely.

ACT TWO

SCENE FIVE

A couple hours later, around 7pm

KIT at the news station. They are significantly more chipper. Whiskey does that.

KIT

It is hour three in the countdown to the end of the world. NASA has now appropriately dubbed this event "Storm Sunny." We are still on close watch to see how this unfolds.

Lights shift to the airport terminal. HEATHER is now alone, sitting on the floor in front of the chairs. Her and ALANA's luggage surround her as she reads the book ALANA was previously. ALANA runs onstage with her backpack.

ALANA

You should've seen it. All the stores are shut down, but the gates are open. Most everything's been picked through. People really do go crazy when they think it's the end of the world.

HEATHER

It *is* the end of the world.

ALANA

Well, yeah. But... (*clearly uncomfortable by the subject*) It's not important. What *is* important is what I got.

ALANA sets down her backpack and pulls out various items. Snacks, a rolled blanket, two travel pillows, a few magazines, and whatever little trinkets she could stuff in the backpack.

HEATHER

Jesus Christ, was anybody watching any of this?

ALANA

Who in their right mind would keep working right now?

HEATHER

Fair point. (*She shuffles through the items, picking out the rolled up blanket*) What do you say to a little indoor picnic?

ALANA

That sounds like it would go perfectly with this last thing I got. (*She pulls out two mid-sized bottles of champagne out of the bottom of her backpack.*) What do you think?

HEATHER

Holy shit, they sell champagne at the airport?

ALANA

Makes sense, people come home after a long time away, proposals and celebrations happen here all the time. It's like forty dollars on a normal day. This isn't a normal day, so it was free dollars.

HEATHER laughs. They roll out the blanket and set up a little picnic, laying out snacks and the pillows. They each open their own bottle of champagne.

HEATHER

To us.

ALANA

To the weirdest day ever.

They drink for a moment in silence.

HEATHER

Can you pass me the twizzlers?

ALANA

Huh? Oh, yeah. *(She passes the twizzlers. She's clearly not okay.)*

HEATHER

Thanks. *(She notices the shift)* Are you okay?

ALANA

Me? I'm fine. Totally fine. *(She's not fine. She takes a drink).*

HEATHER

Alana.

ALANA

Yeah?

HEATHER

Talk to me.

ALANA

You don't want to hear about it.

HEATHER

Sure I do. You listened to me word vomit within thirty seconds of knowing me. What's up?

ALANA

(sighs) It's just... this isn't how I thought I'd be spending my last day. I thought I'd be a lot older. I'd have my family. Pat and I we're talking about getting married. He just finished dental school, it seemed like the right time. And now I'm stuck in the airport because there's no way I could drive out of here. It's not you. Meeting you and all is great, the whole situation just... sucks.

HEATHER

You really miss him, don't you?

Silence.

ALANA

I... no. *(beat. realization)* I don't. I don't think I miss him. Isn't that fucked up? I just spent hundreds of dollars on a plane ticket to fly out to see him. Twenty seconds ago I was talking about marrying the guy, but right here in this moment, when I think about it... I don't mind that he's not here.

HEATHER

Maybe that's more of the champagne talking than you.

ALANA

Yeah. Maybe. *(beat)* You never actually told me.

HEATHER

Told you what?

ALANA

You were talking a whole big thing about getting away from everything. What is everything?

HEATHER

It's nothing. *(She takes a swig).*

ALANA

Come on. I just bared my soul to you, it's your turn.

HEATHER

I don't know, sometimes you just need to get away from everything. My job sucked. My friends sucked. My family, well... I've always lived on the principle that I would work until I found someplace I felt settled, you know? If I didn't feel settled I would work until I found where I was, and if the work wasn't working, I would find a new place where it would, you know?

ALANA

(Beat) Was that even a sentence? *(she laughs)*

HEATHER

(unamused) Never mind.

They drink. Silence.

ALANA

Did you have anyone in your life?

HEATHER

I mean, I had friends, I guess.

ALANA

The ones that suck?

HEATHER

Exactly.

ALANA

Did you have a boyfriend or anything?

HEATHER

It's not important.

ALANA

Heather, what's the point of being cryptic right now? It's the end of the goddamn world. What do you have to lose?

HEATHER contemplates.

HEATHER

I dated someone for a while, but it didn't work out. We broke up pretty recently, in fact. My parents didn't really agree with us dating and we haven't spoken much since we got together.

ALANA

Oh, I'm sorry.

HEATHER

Don't be. It wasn't going to work out.

ALANA

Was he not very nice or something?

HEATHER

No, it wasn't that. It just wasn't going to work. I wanted to go and find a place where I felt settled and she... she was settled here. So I left.

ALANA

Oh.

HEATHER

Yeah.

The two sit in silence. HEATHER finishes off the remainder of what's in her bottle. After a moment, ALANA shifts closer and rests her head on HEATHER's shoulder. They sit in comfortable silence for a while. Then-

HEATHER

You know what? Fuck this.

ALANA

Huh?

HEATHER

We've been sitting here for three hours, drinking and waiting for the end of the world. You're right, it's a shitty situation and I'm over it.

ALANA

Heather, we can't leave. The roads are jammed and frankly way too unsafe-

HEATHER

You said Pat doesn't live too far from here, right?

ALANA

...Right.

HEATHER

You could probably walk there by then. People aren't driving on the sidewalks.

ALANA

Heather, that's crazy. There's no way.

HEATHER

How else are you going to see him? You can't call him. You can't drive to him. You won't know if you actually miss him until you see him. It couldn't be more than a few hours. That's like a hike.

ALANA

You're drunk.

HEATHER

You're damn right I am! And so are you. It's the perfect time to make a stupid decision. Are you in?

ALANA smiles. She hugs Heather. They stay there a minute.

ALANA grabs her backpack while HEATHER sits on the blanket.

ALANA

You coming?

HEATHER

It's all you from here.

ALANA

This was your idea.

HEATHER

You go ahead. You have someone to look for.

ALANA

But you're someone to me now, too.

HEATHER

Hey, if the world doesn't end tomorrow, you know where to find me.

ALANA

I'm going to hold you to that.

HEATHER

(smiles) I know.

HEATHER takes ALANA's leftover champagne bottle and starts finishing its contents. ALANA heads towards the exit, before taking one last look at HEATHER, then leaving completely.

Music. HEATHER watches her go. After a few seconds alone, she abruptly stands and starts to run after her, before stopping herself just in front of the exits. She looks back at the picnic the two had made. She walks around the space, picking up a travel pillow, touching the handle of the suitcase ALANA left behind. She sits for a second on the airport terminal chair, before realizing she had sat on something. She pulls out ALANA's book from under her. She looks at the book.

SCENE SIX

Around 9:30pm

KIT

In hour five, most major roadways are backed up due to heavy traffic and abandoned cars. We caution you to avoid walking under any tall metropolitan buildings, as it has been reported that a large number of individuals have started to jump.

Lights shift to a sidewalk in Downtown Baltimore. INGRID, JAY and COOPER run on, laughing.

COOPER

(*out of breath*) Dude. That was the funniest shit. I have ever seen.
In my entire life.

The boys high five.

INGRID

They really seemed upset. I hope we didn't ruin their day.

COOPER

They're going to be dead this time tomorrow, I think their day is
already ruined.

JAY

(*looking at his list*) Okay. "Crash a wedding and yell "I object!""
check. We're already halfway through.

COOPER

Hell yeah. We got this.

JAY

What next?

INGRID looks at the list.

INGRID

What about "Become a street performer for a day?"

JAY

Do I have enough time for that?

COOPER

Not really.

INGRID

What if you were a street performer for the next three minutes?

COOPER

That's stupid.

INGRID

This is *all* stupid.

JAY

Guys. Come on.

INGRID

Sorry.

COOPER

All right, fine. You have three minutes to be the world's greatest street performer. What do you do? Go.

JAY fumbles for a minute, unsure of what to do. Then, he gets an idea. Pulling out his phone and typing in something.

INGRID

You know you can't call anyone, right?

JAY

Hang on.

He gives his phone to Ingrid, then gets into position. He motions for her to hit play, which spurs a lip sync performance of "Old Time Rock and Roll," with much of the choreography from Risky Business that copyright laws will allow. How much of this song gets played is up to production, whether a short clip or the whole song. INGRID and COOPER dance behind him. At the end, he bows, INGRID and COOPER clapping for him.

COOPER

Hell yeah!

INGRID

(*feigning enthusiasm*) I'm your biggest fan!

COOPER

A tip for the performer. (*He fishes around in his pocket for a coin.*) There. One Quarter.

JAY

Yes, of course. Thank you kind sir, I will save and invest it wisely.

INGRID

All right. That's one.

JAY

Hold on, I'm going to find a bathroom. I don't think the suicide-flavor-slushie is agreeing with me.

JAY exits, leaving COOPER and INGRID alone. The tone immediately shifts.

COOPER

Ingrid-

INGRID

Not now.

COOPER

You keep saying that.

INGRID

And I'm going to keep saying it until the stupid sun burns us alive.

COOPER

Jesus.

INGRID

Sorry. This is just a lot. Spending my last day on Earth with you.

COOPER

How the hell do you think I feel? Hanging with the girl who dumped me without even telling me why doesn't seem like a perfect day to me either.

INGRID

What do you want me to say?

COOPER

I loved you, Ingrid.

INGRID

Look, I'm sorry, okay? Is that what you want to hear? I'm so fucking sorry.

Pause.

COOPER

I just want an explanation.

JAY reenters.

JAY

Okay. What next? (*INGRID and COOPER look at each other, not saying anything.*) Guys?

COOPER

I don't know, Ingrid. What do you think we should do next?

INGRID

I don't know, maybe-

COOPER

I have an idea.

JAY

Ok. Shoot.

COOPER

I think next we should say what we really think of each other. Get it all out on the table.

JAY

(*Checking the list*) I don't think I wrote-

COOPER

Why don't you start, Ingrid. *(She turns away, refusing to answer.)*
No? Fine. I'll start. Ingrid, you broke my heart. I don't think
I'll ever forgive you for that.

JAY

Whoa. Cooper-

COOPER

Do you want to know what was going through my mind when I came home
and you were gone? When I called you and your number was blocked? I
spent weeks looking for you. I thought something had happened to
you. We were together for almost two years and you couldn't even
bother to leave a note, or even a goddamn text? What the ever
living fuck were you thinking? I had to find out from my MOM of all
people, that you were living on the other side of the city with a
fucking dentist? Of all jobs, a DENTIST? I just... You're not who I
thought you were.

*INGRID looks at COOPER. She's nearly in tears. She almost says
something, but stops herself. She exits.*

JAY

Holy shit, dude.

COOPER

Where to next?

JAY

That was way too heavy. She's leaving, you have to tell her you're
sorry.

COOPER

No. I've been holding on to that for too long. She needed to hear
it as much as I needed to say it.

JAY

But Cooper-

COOPER

Dude. I'm done talking about it. Where to next?

JAY

Um. *(He looks through the list)* "Get on TV?" Are there still any TV stations running?

COOPER

I have an idea.

They exit. Music.

SCENE SEVEN

10:21pm

Lights shift to the news station. KIT, JESSE and TATUM are all sitting around. They're nearly through their bottle. They're all clearly drunk. They all have different numbers of fingers held up.

TATUM

Shit! *(They put down a finger and drink and the other two laugh.)*
Okay, okay. Never have I ever... had a one night stand? *(Both JESSE and KIT put a finger down and drink.)* Really?

JESSE

Yeah, you haven't?

TATUM

Nope, met my husband freshman year of college.

JESSE

Shit. *(They fill up their mug, effectively emptying the bottle.)*
Double shit.

TATUM

Don't worry. I have more in my office. It's not as good but hey, it gets the job done.

JESSE

Damn Tatum, I didn't expect this from you. *(They clink their mugs.)*

KIT

Okay. I got one. Never have I been married...

Both TATUM and JESSE put down a finger and take a drink.

JESSE

Cheap shot, Kit-

KIT

I'm not done. Never have I ever been married to someone (*looks at TATUM*) I actually cared about.

TATUM slowly puts a finger back up.

JESSE

Shit, Tatum.

KIT

Now we're getting somewhere.

Just then, a notification from the tablet. TATUM gets up.

TATUM

(*shifting quickly to work mode*) We got something.

They hook up the tablet to the teleprompter. KIT and JESSE get in position.

KIT

Is it bad?

TATUM doesn't answer.

JESSE

And we're live in three, two, one-

Stark television light.

KIT

Breaking news. NASA has confirmed that Storm Sunny will leave the sun's atmosphere, and strike around eight minutes later. The official countdown begins. Less than ten hours remain until the end of humanity. We will report back with information soon.

JESSE

And... we're-

Before JESSE can finish, JAY and COOPER burst in and run in front of the camera.

JAY

I'm on TV!

COOPER

Hi mom!

They high five. JAY blows a kiss to the camera before they exit. A silence falls over the station, as the three process the news and the chaotic young men that blew over that.

KIT

Holy shit.

JESSE

Ten hours?

TATUM

Less than ten hours.

TATUM exits to their office. The others retake their original spots. They look at each other, not saying a word. TATUM reenters with a bottle of cheap gin, and refills both their and KIT's mugs. They all drink.

JESSE

So Tatum-

TATUM

Who's next? Is it me?

JESSE

Hang on, we're not letting this go. You don't love Alan?

TATUM

I didn't say that.

JESSE

No but Kit did and you didn't disagree.

TATUM

Yeah, Kit what the hell was that?

KIT

Tatum, you're kind of a miserable asshole. There had to have been a reason for that.

TATUM

(clearly offended) Rude.

KIT

We only have ten hours left to live! If we're not honest, then what the hell are we doing?

JESSE

Kit's got a point.

TATUM

(sighs) Fine. You want the whole story? We got together in college, you knew that. And he seemed nice enough. I went to college in a red state and it was uncommon to find someone who didn't vote for Trump. I'm a Gen-Z kid, it didn't take much to win me over. But could I tell you that there was any passion there? No. Did I think I would grow to love him? Yes? Did I? No. But what does it matter now? What the hell does it even matter?

They drink. They all drink.

KIT

I'm sorry.

TATUM

Don't worry about it.

JESSE

Hey, at least you stayed married.

TATUM

What does it matter if we're still married if I never loved him? At least you loved your wife.

JESSE

She didn't love me back.

KIT

She loved you, she just didn't love your addiction to weed.

TATUM

(surprised) Jesse-

JESSE

Okay, you can't get "addicted" to weed.

KIT

You certainly seem addicted to it.

JESSE

It's Washington, it's legal.

KIT

It's 2032. It's been legal everywhere for years.

JESSE

Then why the fuck should she have such an issue with it?

TATUM

(sarcastic) Please, tell us how you really feel.

JESSE

She thought I was too much of a lazy shit, so she took my daughter and left. She just left and moved to goddamn Portland! It's been

almost two years since I've seen my daughter because of fucking Portland!

A moment settles between the three.

KIT

Fuck Portland.

TATUM

Yeah, fuck Portland.

JESSE

Fuck Portland!

They all cheers over their general distaste for Portland.

KIT

So... what the hell were those kids doing?

TATUM

Who knows. At this point I'm surprised that's the wildest thing we've seen so far.

JESSE

I wonder what it would be like to be home right now. Or stuck in your car on the highway?

KIT

I don't want to know.

TATUM

Me neither.

No one knows what to say next.

JESSE

So... who was next?

KIT

I think it was Tatum's turn?

TATUM

Right.

They each hold up a few fingers again, where they had all left off beforehand.

TATUM

Okay. Never have I ever...

Blackout. Music.

SCENE EIGHT

Just past midnight. About eight hours until the end.

KIT

With roughly eight hours to go, reports of riots have begun to break out in greater Seattle, some spreading outward to other towns and cities. If you're outside, please stay safe. If you're at home, stay home.

The light's snap to BEV and CHARLIE's living room, as CHARLIE clicks the TV remote off. He sits next to BEV.

CHARLIE

I don't understand why people think rioting would help anything in this situation. Protesting and damaging someone else's property isn't going to stop the sun.

BEV

(not paying attention) What do you think our baby would've done with his life?

CHARLIE

His?

BEV

I don't actually know. There's just a gut feeling.

CHARLIE

What do you think?

BEV

What do I think?

CHARLIE

You've been thinking about this, haven't you?

BEV

A little bit.

CHARLIE

Shoot.

BEV

I probably would've wanted to name him after your father.

CHARLIE

You would willingly name our child Gilbert?

BEV

Yeah, we could call him Gil, or Bertie. Something cuter.

CHARLIE

(He thinks) Gil is pretty cute.

BEV

And we would take him to church picnics, and when we're tired we could get my mom or Jay to babysit. Jay would be the best uncle-

CHARLIE

Jay is barely capable of taking care of himself.

BEV

Yeah but he would try, I could trust him with little Gil.

CHARLIE

And hey, if he gets sick, I know a pretty good pediatrician that would know exactly what to do.

BEV

(Laughs) And if Gil really wanted to see Europe or Japan, I know just the man that would get him there.

CHARLIE

(Smiles) Sounds like our little man would have a pretty damn good life.

She breaks down at the thought of this.

CHARLIE

Bev-

BEV

I don't understand. I mean, is there any proof that this is real? I'm no astrophysicist, but how the hell would one solar flare end the world?

CHARLIE

I don't really know the answer to that, Bev-

BEV

This is fake, it has to be. There has to be some other explanation. Or maybe it's a prank. It's some big prank that NASA decided to play. Like April Fools in June. There's no way this can be real-

CHARLIE

I don't know exactly what's going on either. But we can't pretend like it's not going to happen.

BEV

Why not?

CHARLIE

Because it's the end of the world, Bev! This isn't something we can ignore! We just have to appreciate the life we have and let everything else go.

BEV

...But this isn't the life you wanted though, was it?

CHARLIE

What does this have to do with anything?

BEV

Charlie.

CHARLIE

What?

BEV

I've heard you talking to your friends. About me.

CHARLIE

Where are you going with this?

BEV

I've heard what you said. "She's changed since we got married." "I miss the woman I met." How do you think I would react to this?

CHARLIE

Bev. You're overreacting over nothing.

BEV

Over *nothing*?

CHARLIE

Okay, that was a poor choice in phrasing-

BEV

Was everything you've said to Alan and Pat also a poor choice in phrasing?

CHARLIE

(*Running his hands through his hair*) I don't know what to say. I can't talk to you when you're like this.

BEV

Try me.

CHARLIE

I wanted a family. I've always wanted a family. I thought marrying a pediatrician would be the best chance for that. I thought we wanted the same things. But up until a few hours ago it felt like you chose your career over us.

BEV

I chose my career over family? You're gone half the week flying to God knows where for God knows how long. There's no way you would've known what I wanted because you're gone all the damn time!

CHARLIE

What the hell have we turned into, Bev?

BEV

Apparently not the people we thought we were.

An uncomfortable silence fills the room. BEV wipes away her tears.

BEV

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Bev.

BEV

Do you think we would've lasted if we got past tomorrow morning?

CHARLIE

I don't know.

BEV

Would you ever know?

CHARLIE looks at BEV. He pulls her in a long hug. She resists for a second, then gives in. They stay like this for a while, unsure of what's going to happen next.

Music. If possible for the production space, the lights on their home stay up as the separate lights on the other groups

come up. JAY and COOPER looking over the list. TATUM and JESSE fall asleep on each other while KIT looks at the tablet, drinking. HEATHER drinking alone at the airport. Then, a light on a new space- a bench, where ALANA sits. She's been crying. INGRID enters, and sits on the other side of the bench. They share a moment. BLACKOUT.

ACT THREE

SCENE NINE

Around 3am. About five hours until the end.

Lights up on the news station. JESSE and TATUM are still fast asleep on each other. KIT has sobered up a bit. They attempt to center the camera, figuring out a way to lock it in place.

KIT

And we're live in three, two, one-

They press the record button, then run over to their chair.

KIT

Hi all. If you're just tuning in with us now, I'm Kit St. Clair and this your friendly neighborhood, and probably only, news station left in the greater Tacoma area. On the election front, nothing has changed and nothing will change because we're all going to die. Pandas are still extinct and will probably continue to be extinct because guess what! We're also going extinct. If somebody is actually still watching because you don't have anything better to do with their last six hours on Earth, on the great Storm Sunny watch of 2032-

The lights in the studio cut out, along with the camera feed.

KIT

Shit!

This wakes up TATUM and JESSE.

JESSE

What the-

TATUM

What's going on?

KIT

Power went out.

JESSE

(Checking the camera). Shit. I don't think we're getting this back.

TATUM

(They fumble for a flashlight) Were you recording yourself?

KIT

Yeah. Wasn't too hard. I'm sure all two of our current viewers don't mind.

TATUM

Wow. You're not as useless as I thought.

KIT

Hurtful.

TATUM

(Mimicking KIT) Hey, we only have a few hours left. If we're not saying what's on our minds-

KIT

Yeah, yeah.

JESSE

Hell, phone service and most of the internet has been down for hours, aside from this direct feed from NASA. Who knows if anyone's televisions were working in the first place.

KIT

Great. Perfect. Exactly what I wanted to hear.

TATUM

This is it, isn't it?

JESSE

I'm afraid so.

KIT

What the hell are we supposed to do? I don't want to sit here bored for the rest of my life.

TATUM

I guess I don't see much of a reason to stay here if we're not serving a purpose.

JESSE

Where else are we supposed to go? A million and a half abandoned cars are blocking the roads. We couldn't get anywhere.

TATUM

There's a park a few miles away we can walk to. I'll grab a few blankets. Come on, let's go watch the end of the world.

KIT

I'm game.

TATUM

Jesse?

JESSE smiles. They all quickly pack up- TATUM grabs the bottle of remaining liquor. KIT and TATUM head towards the exit while JESSE looks around the space. They look at the camera.

KIT

Come on, Jesse. It's just a camera. It's not your second wife or anything.

TATUM slaps KIT on the arm.

JESSE

I'm just... this is where I had left really after Jen and... I'm going to miss this place.

TATUM puts a hand on JESSE's shoulder. They all share a moment together, and then exit.

SCENE TEN

Around 5am. Three hours until the end.

BEV and CHARLIE's living room. BEV is alone. She's packing a backpack with a blanket, a few snacks, etc. CHARLIE enters. They look at each other. Silence. After a few seconds of uncomfortable eye contact, BEV returns to packing.

CHARLIE

Bev-

BEV

Don't.

More silence.

CHARLIE

Can we talk about this?

BEV

Is there really anything else to say?

CHARLIE

Please, just talk to me.

BEV

I'm heading out.

CHARLIE

Where are you going?

BEV

The park.

BEV turns to leave. CHARLIE grabs her arm.

CHARLIE

(Close to tears) Bev-

BEV

Even if this is all some big joke, even if nothing happens, this would probably happen anyway. I'm just going to let it happen.

CHARLIE

It was one fight!

BEV

Do you think this was just one fight to you? One five minute argument had more honesty in it than any conversation we've had in years. We have been forcing this marriage to happen without even considering that this may just all be a waste of time. Does that seem like just one fight to you?

CHARLIE

...No. But-

BEV

Right. I'm going to the park.

CHARLIE

Bev-

BEV

Stop saying my name. It's not going to keep me here.

CHARLIE

Can you just hear me out? Give me thirty seconds.

Pause.

BEV

Fine. Thirty seconds.

CHARLIE

Thank you.

BEV

Twenty-seven seconds.

CHARLIE

Jesus.

BEV

Twenty-five.

CHARLIE

Okay, okay. I just want to say... I'm sorry. I'm so fucking sorry it's come to this. I loved you, I really did. How we got to this point, I don't know. I may not be the same person I was when we met, and you have to admit that you're not the same either. But goddamnit, if we're going to die in a few hours, then I want to spend my last few hours with you. Please, Bev.

The silence hangs in the air between the two of them.

BEV

I'm going to the park until the end of the world. If you don't want to be alone, that's where I'll be.

She exits. CHARLIE is alone. He sits on the couch, defeated. He looks at the opened gift from earlier. He picks it up, inspecting it. Music.

SCENE ELEVEN

Around 6am. Two hours until the end.

The airport terminal. HEATHER found another two bottles of champagne and drank most of them. She's drunk. She sings to her remaining bottle of champagne.

HEATHER

And alllllll of me... loves alllll of you...

ALANA enters. HEATHER doesn't notice.

HEATHER

(Tracing the bottle) All your curves and all your edges, all your perfect imperfections-

ALANA

What song is this?

HEATHER turns around, realizing how long she's probably been there. She struggles to stand.

HEATHER

My mom would sing it to my dad when I was a kid.

ALANA

Well, you sound like a dying-

HEATHER attacks ALANA in a long hug. ALANA struggles a bit to keep her upright.

HEATHER

I missed you!

ALANA smiles. She sits HEATHER on the terminal chair and takes the spot next to her.

ALANA

Okay, how much have you had to drink?

HEATHER

Just the right amount.

ALANA

(Laughs) It looks like it.

HEATHER

Why did you come back?

ALANA

For you.

HEATHER

For me?

ALANA

Yeah. For you.

HEATHER

What about Pat?

ALANA

I got lost on my way there. I found myself in a park, so I sat there for a while. I ended up talking to some girl.

HEATHER

(Struggling a bit to keep consciousness. She rests her head on ALANA's shoulder.) Some girl?

ALANA

Yeah, some girl. I broke and told her everything about Pat. And then I told her about you. And she said that I sounded way more comfortable when talking about you. Like I was at home. And I thought about everything you said about finding a place where you felt settled and... I wasn't settled with Pat. It sounds crazy, but I felt more at home, more settled with you in six hours than I did with him.

HEATHER

You mean that?

ALANA

It's the most I've ever meant something.

HEATHER

Wow, that's a lot of meaning. *(She puts her hand to her head, wincing.)* I need water.

ALANA

(Laughs) Yeah. You're right. *(A beat)*. Do you wanna get out of here?

HEATHER

Where? I can NOT drive-

ALANA

I know a pretty good park we can walk to. Come on.

They stand. ALANA takes Heathers bottle, and grabs a water bottle from her bag. She HEATHER hand, leading her offstage. Just before they leave, HEATHER pulls ALANA back, turning her around, and kisses her. Music. They stay there a moment, in an attempt to make the moment last more than a moment. They exit.

SCENE TWELVE

Around 7:15am, 45 minutes until the end

JAY and COOPER sit on a curb somewhere, defeated. COOPER looks through the list.

COOPER

Okay dude. "Eat a dozen donuts at once."

JAY

(Burps) Check.

COOPER

"Put Vanilla Pudding in a Mayo Jar and eat it in public."

JAY

No one even noticed!

COOPER

They're probably focused on the inevitable heat death of the universe or something. (He continues reading) "Find the last remaining twinkie in existence." Okay first of all, why are so many of these food related-

JAY

I do what I'm passionate about-

COOPER

Second, that movie is SUPER ancient-

JAY

-It's a classic!

COOPER

Also, Twinkies have been back for like, 20 years.

JAY

(He pulls out a twinkie) So? (He takes a bite and offers some to COOPER. He's uninterested) What's gotten into you, Coop?

COOPER

Don't call me that.

JAY

Aw, come on, Coop-

COOPER

I'm serious.

JAY

Jesus, what's your deal?

COOPER

Nothing. It's not important. *(He takes the twinkie from JAY and angrily takes a bite. With his mouth full)* "Hold your breath for a whole minute." Still not sure why that was a feat, but okay.

JAY

Check.

COOPER

"Stay awake for twenty-four hours."

JAY

(Checking his watch.) Check.

COOPER

"Fake a public marriage proposal."

JAY

Check.

INGRID

I was a pretty good fake crier.

*JAY and COOPER turn around to see Ingrid standing behind them.
COOPER bolts upright.*

COOPER

What are you doing here?

INGRID

Cooper-

COOPER

Let's go, Jay. It's almost sunrise.

INGRID

Wait. Please.

COOPER waits. He motions for her to go ahead.

INGRID

I was scared. I was scared that things weren't going to work out between us, that one day you'd wake up and realize that I wasn't what you wanted. I was so scared of losing you and I let that consume me. Last year my sister left her husband and took my niece with her down to Portland because she was miserable. I didn't want to wake up one day in that same place. So I ran. I ran and I didn't say anything because I thought it would be easier. My boss had a spare room, and so I hid. It was selfish, and if I could take everything back, I would. I'm not asking you to love me, or take me back. I couldn't even ask you to forgive me. But... I met this girl a few hours ago, and I listened to what felt like this incredible love story. It made me think about us, and about everything I put you through. Being around you for the past twelve hours has made me see that I've found a home in you, Cooper. Whatever time we have

left, I want to spend around you. I just want to feel settled. And I'm sorry that I took that away from you.

COOPER looks at her. The silence between them hangs in the air. Then, all the anger COOPER had been holding onto melts away as he pulls her into a hug. She cries. They stay like this for a moment. Then, JAY joins them, turning the moment into an awkward group hug.

JAY

Awww, the band is back together!

They all laugh. The stage gets brighter.

COOPER

How much time do you think is left?

JAY

I don't know.

INGRID

There's still one thing left on your list.

JAY

I'm pretty sure we covered everything we can-

INGRID

(Taking the list) I'm pretty sure there's still one more. "Watch one last sunset with the people who love you most."

JAY

(Scoff) Okay that's way too cheesy, there's NO way I would have written that-

COOPER

I'm in. Ingrid?

INGRID

(smiles) Yeah.

COOPER puts his hand in the center. INGRID joins in.

COOPER

Jay?

JAY looks at INGRID, then at COOPER. He smiles. He puts his hand in. Music. Blackout.

SCENE THIRTEEN

7:59am. Or, the end.

Technical note: The stage should get slowly brighter as the scene progresses.

The park. BEV sits alone. She's set up a little picnic for herself. ALANA leads HEATHER to a nearby park bench. They sit together. HEATHER grabs her hand and rests her head on ALANA's shoulder.

ALANA

Does this place work?

HEATHER

Couldn't think of a better place.

BEV notices this. She smiles to herself, but the happiness quickly fades. TATUM, JESSE, and KIT enter.

TATUM

Jesus, this place is packed.

JESSE

Do you think Alan might be here?

TATUM

I don't think it matters at this point. I have what I need.

KIT

(Looking around the park) Everyone and their mother decided to come here for a picnic, I guess.

TATUM

It's something familiar. There's something for everyone.

JESSE

In a picnic?

TATUM rolls their eyes. They set up camp. BEV watches this. INGRID, COOPER and JAY run on. They take a spot on the edge of the stage. COOPER pulls out a bowl and starts packing it.

INGRID

Dude.

COOPER

Hey, this is on my bucket list.

He lights it and takes a hit. He passes it to INGRID, who shrugs and takes it. JAY looks over, noticing BEV. He waves. She waves back. He runs over. They hug.

JAY

Where's Charlie?

She shakes her head. He gestures to the group, offering for her to join. She smiles. Just then-

CHARLIE

Bev!

BEV turns around. They lock eyes. JAY is unsure what's happening. She looks at Jay and nods. She hugs JAY, then turns around. JAY rejoins his friends.

BEV and CHARLIE are face to face. No one says anything. A moment. Then, BEV sits on her blanket. She pats the space next to her. He waits. She nods. He takes the spot next to her, leaving space between them. He turns to say something, but she stops him. She takes his hand. They don't need to say anything. Everything is okay.

Music. Everyone sits. Everyone waits. JESSE pulls out the bottle they've packed and takes a swig. He offers it to the other two, which they take.

JESSE

And we're live in three—

TATUM

Two—

KIT

One.

The stage gets brighter and brighter. It's uncomfortable how bright. Then, it snaps to black.

THE END