

# **NEXT**

**By Austin Lamewona**

**A Three act Drama**

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Characters (In order of appearance)

Henry

Doc

Clay

Danielle

Sandra

Sam

Miles

Jackie

Juliet

Police officers\*

Set

A division of three neighboring apartments. The middle apartment takes up the majority of the stage. Since the play has scenes in all three apartments, this middle apartment must be changed at times.

For the most part, this portion of the set represents Henry and Clay's apartment. It is furnished with a round table, four chairs, and a mini-fridge.

\*If necessary, Henry and Doc may function as the two police officers.

Act One  
Scene One

Henry & his therapist—Doc—are sitting in 2 chairs positioned in front of the set, an apartment composed of a table, four chairs, and a mini-fridge.

Henry

Shouldn't you have one of those long chairs for me to lie down on?

Doc

Heh. That's an old one.

Henry

Yeah, I know... So, how are we supposed to start this?

Doc takes out a clipboard on which he takes notes throughout the play

Doc

Well, Henry, as you can probably imagine, you're not the first person I'm seeing about this.

Henry

Okay.

Doc

Which doesn't mean you're insignificant.

Henry

Got it.

Doc

If anything, it means you should delve deeper into your specifics.

Henry

Terrific. Where do you want me to start?

Doc

If you can remember, start with the very first day it all started to happen. Don't spare any details; I'd like to know the entire story.

Henry

Alright. I'm gonna stop once we get up to two hours, though. I don't have this kind of money.

Doc

Fair enough.

Henry

Okay... (Both he and Doc stand. The chairs are removed.) I can't remember the actual first day that it started happening, but I can tell you everything about the day I started to realize what was going on. (As Henry says this, he and Doc walk to opposite sides of the set.) I was working on a creative writing assignment for school. (Henry walks onto the set, sits down, and begins the scene.)

(His roommate, Clay, walks in.)

Clay

Hey, Henry.

Henry

Hey, Clay.

Clay

What're you writing there?

Henry

I'm trying to answer one of the prompts for creative writing.

Clay

Which prompt?

Doc

(Interrupting) This is the class you took where?

Henry

At college.

Doc

And this was your...

Henry

My junior year.

Doc

Alright, go on.

Henry

Okay...

Clay

Which prompt?

Doc

I'm curious; what was your major?

Henry

Look, Doc—if you keep interrupting me, I'm never going to finish.

Doc

Alright, Henry. I just thought I should get to know you at least a little bit.

Henry

...I majored in journalism, Doc.

Doc

Good to know. (Doc eases offstage.)

Clay

Which prompt?

Henry

Write a short story about you and another person as the last people on the planet.

Clay

Mmm...

Henry

What?

Clay

I told you not to take that class, Henry.

Henry

What do you mean?

Clay

I mean you suck at this creative writing thing. You should stick to nonfiction. You know, I finished that particular prompt last Wednesday in class.

Henry

I don't suck... I'm just having writer's block or something.

Clay

Writer's block is a myth, Henry. All it is is an excuse people like you use when they're not creative enough to advance the plot.

Henry

So you've never had writer's block?

Clay

I never said that. All I'm saying is that it happens to some more than others. Take you for example, Hen. I've known you for what, three years now? I'd bet money that you've just been sitting there, thinking, for forty-five minutes.

Henry

Shut-up, Clay.

Clay

That's what I thought, pal. Now, as a person who rarely suffers from this "writer's block," I do have a way to help you out. Would you like to swallow your pride and ask for my help?

Henry

No. (Clay feigns leaving.) Fine! (Clay waits expectantly) Clay, would you please help me answer this prompt?

Clay

Good job! But here's the thing; I can't just straight up give you an answer—that'd be cheating. Here's what you do: You picture the situation and go through the motions. It all happens in your imagination. Up here. (Tapping his head)

Henry

(After thinking) Clay, what do you think we would do if we were the last people on earth?

Clay

I told you Henry, that's cheating. It's against my code of ethics.

Henry

No, I just wanted to—

Clay

Are we still on for that Dinner Party with Jackie and Sam and Miles tonight?

Henry

Yes.

Clay

And Danielle and Sandra are coming with us?

Henry

I think so.

Clay

Well where are they?

Henry

I don't know... I think I'll call Danielle to check.

Clay

Like you need an excuse.

Henry

What was that?

Clay

(Louder) Like you need an excuse.

Henry

Shh... It's ringing.

There is a knock on the door.

Clay

Got it! (He goes to open it. It is Danielle, dressed nicely, who walks in)

Danielle

Hey guys.

Henry

Hello.

Clay

Where's Sandra?

Danielle

She called to say that she'd be here in a little bit. I think she was busy with something; she didn't really tell me what was going on.

Clay

Just as long as we're not late... (In Henry's ear) Make a move...

Henry

So Danielle?

Danielle

Yes?

Henry

If you and I were the last people on the planet, what do you think we would do?

Danielle

This is for the creative writing prompt, isn't it?

Henry

Yes.

Danielle

If it's just you and I?

Henry

Yes.

By this time, Clay has slinked his way out of the room. Henry takes notes on a legal pad.

Danielle

Hmm... Well, we could travel the world.

Henry

But then we'd have to learn how to fly.

Danielle

Right. That's probably out of the question.

Henry

We can just stay inside the country.

Danielle

Yeah, there's nothing wrong with that. There are plenty of places to go in America.

Henry

Plenty. So we have location. What to do though?

Danielle

...We could do anything. We could get into one of those overpriced museums for free.

Henry

They definitely lock the doors.

Danielle

We could buy some dynamite.

Henry

You're terrific, Danielle... We could uncover the country's darkest secrets if we snoop around enough.

Danielle

Right! They have to have actual documents of every conspiracy somewhere in Washington.

Henry

Exactly—I say we do that before we blow up the museums.

Danielle

Deal.

Henry

What else?

Danielle

We have to decide whether or not we want to repopulate the earth.

Henry

Repopulate?

Danielle

Yeah, we could be the next Adam & Eve.

Henry

...Alright. Yeah, sure—if it's okay with you.

Danielle

This prompt is starting to grow on me. We should ask Sandra when she gets here.

There is a knock on the door.

Henry

It's open!

Sandra

(Entering) Guys, something interesting just happened.

Henry

Hold it, Sandra—we have a question for you.

Sandra

This is really important.

Henry

So is this!

Danielle

If you and Henry were the last two people on earth, what would you do?

Sandra

I was coming from my Econ class—

Henry

Sandra, will you answer the question?

Sandra

I'd end up killing you because you'd never take the time to listen to me, Henry!

Henry

Okay! I guess it can wait...

Sandra

Are you ready for this?

Clay

(Reentering) Hey, team. Ready for what?

Sandra

Do you remember how, about a month ago, that man who lived like three blocks from here just died and no doctor could find any cause of death or anything? I think his name was Richard Welk.

Danielle

Yeah, it was.

Sandra

And then two weeks ago, the same thing happened to the little kid.

Henry

Jordan Benson, right?

Clay

There's not a connection, is there?

Sandra

Nobody knows, but what I'm getting at is, there was a third case that literally just happened.

Henry

And?

Sandra

I was just coming from Econ, and there were police, and an ambulance... It was some kid at our school this time.

Henry

What?

Danielle

That's terrible!

Sandra

Rumors were going around that he was a freshman majoring in psychology named Clyde.

Danielle

My goodness.

Henry

Wow...

Clay

Well, I know we're all thinking it, but one less psychology major isn't all that bad a thing.

Danielle

Clay!

Clay

What?

Danielle

A kid died.

Clay

Look, I'm just trying to be positive. Clyde is bringing a damper to our dinner party night.

Danielle

So insensitive...

Sandra

Do you think it's a virus or something?

Danielle

That's what it's looking like.

Henry

Listen, maybe Sam and Miles or Jackie will know something about it. Clay and I will get dressed, and we can head over early.

Sandra

Alright...

Act 1  
Scene Two

Clay, Danielle, and Sandra exit. The set changes to the neighboring apartment. As this happens, Doc walks back onstage to talk with Henry.

Doc

So those are your friends—Clay, Danielle, and—

Henry

Sandra.

Doc

Right. Tell me about your relationships with them.

Henry

Okay. Who should I start with?

Doc

Why don't you start with Sandra?

Henry

Sandra and I were really good friends going all the way back to the sixth grade. We always told each other everything... We sort of developed this shared dream that we would go to college together, and we did.

Doc

What about Danielle? She seems to be a... A love interest of yours. Am I correct?

Henry

Yep.

Doc

For how long?

Henry

Since Sandra introduced her to me halfway through freshman year.

Doc

And you had never acted upon them, had you?

Henry

No.

Doc

Hmm... And Clay? He seems to be quite the character.

Henry

Clay and I actually started sharing an apartment without really knowing each other all. But since day one really, He's been my best friend.

Doc

Why?

Henry

What?

Doc

Why is he your best friend? Why him?

Henry

Oh... I don't know, Doc. Do you really want me to try and think up an answer?

Doc

Yes, I do. Is it similar personalities, or shared interest, or what?

Henry

No, no, we're pretty different... I don't think that there has to be a specific reason why you're friends with someone. It just has to work.

Doc

Hm... Good.

Henry

Good? Are you sure?

Doc

Yes, Henry. So dinner party with the neighbors—what did you call them?

Henry

Sam and Miles lived to the right and Jackie and her kid on the left.

Doc

Splendid. Tell me about them.

Henry

Well, alright. I guess I'll start with Sam and Miles... They were still pretty freshly married at the time. I think just two months.

By this time, Doc and Henry have gone their separate ways offstage. The set has been changed to the neighboring apartment. Various accessories of various colors are strewn all across the floor. Sam and Miles stand, looking into a mirror.

Sam

Yes.

Miles

Yes?

Sam

Yes, we'll go with blue.

Miles

Sam, why is it so important that we match?

Sam

I always feel more unified. We're like a team. Like we morph into one person. You feel that too, don't you?

Miles

Eh.

Sam

Eh?

Miles

I kind of hate blue.

Sam

Hate? You've never once told me you hate blue.

Miles

There'll always be one thing you don't know about me.

Sam

I don't like that.

They look back in the mirror.

Miles

Besides, you can't deny that any shade of blue on me is vomit-inducing.

Sam

Oh...

Miles

Sam?

Sam

It's just...

Miles

Oh no... Sam, let's go. Let's go right now.

Sam

I'm sorry, Miles.

Miles

Sam, please—I was joking—it was a joke—blue's great! I love it! I love how blue—

Sam

(Picking up a red accessory of some sort off of the ground.) We'll switch to red. Go find some red.

Miles

No!

Sam

Go!

Miles

Fine! (Goes into a different room.) We're gonna be late! We should just go!

Sam

Just find something and we'll go. I bet you Clay and Henry haven't left yet. Can you hear them?

Miles

Yeah!

Sam

Are they about to leave?

Miles

No, they're still there!

Sam

Good. Make sure we leave before they do—remember last time when Clay got to the appetizers first?

Miles

If that little bastard eats all the food again—

Sam

We won't have to worry about it if you hurry up!

Miles

Right!

Sam

Can you hear them?

Miles

Yeah, they're just talking!

Sam

Oh... What are they talking about?

Miles

You want me to eavesdrop?

Sam

Yes! ...Can you hear them?

Miles

Why don't you come up here and listen yourself?

Sam

Because it's wrong if two people do it—you know that! Are you next to the thin part of the wall?

Miles

...Yeah!

Sam

What are they saying?

Miles

Will you be quiet so I can hear?

Sam

...Yeah!

Miles

I think those two girls—Sandra and Danielle are there...

Sam

Oh! I love those two!

Miles

They're talking about some kid who died!

Sam

Really? What happened?

Miles

I don't know yet... Hold on... They're making it seem like there was nothing wrong with him—like he just died!

Sam

Oh! Like that... Like that man that was on the news last month—what was his name?

Miles

I think Richard Welk... This kid went to college with them... His body just stopped working...

Sam

What was his name?

Miles

...I think she might have said Cliff!

Sam

Okay!

Miles

I think they're done talking... They're about to leave!

Sam

Oh! Did you find any red?

Miles

Yes! Let's go! Let's go! Come on! (He comes running back into the room with a half tied bow tie)

Sam

Wait! Fix your tie! Never mind, just do it on the way! Wait!  
(They turn to the mirror.) Okay, we look great; Come on! (They run to the door and fling it open. Henry and friends are in the doorway.)

Sam

Oh! Hi! We were just about to head over. Were you?

Sandra

Yes, but we were just talking, and we wanted to—did you hear about that kid?

Sam

Kid? What kid?

Miles

Yeah, we heard about him.

Sam

Come in!

Clay

Sandra was just telling us about this kid that died on campus a couple hours ago—his body just shut down.

Sam

Like Richard Welk?

Sandra

Exactly like Richard Welk.

Danielle

And Jordan Benson, that seven-year-old from Middletown who died.

Miles

There was a seven-year-old?

Henry

Yeah, it happened a couple weeks ago.

Clay

Point is, we were kind of starting to think that there might be something weird going on.

Miles

You're thinking it's a virus, aren't you?

Sandra

Yes. We were starting to worry, so...

Danielle

We were wondering if you knew anything or had any thoughts.

Sam

Everyone come in, sit down, calm down, and we can talk a little bit before we go. There is absolutely nothing to worry about, I promise! I'll get some apple juice or something. Stop worrying, kids. There's nothing going on—tell them, Miles. (She goes to get the juice.)

Clay

So what do you think, Miles?

Miles

I don't know... My gut's telling me that everything's fine—if it was real, it wouldn't be happening so few and far in between, would it? Maybe these autopsy doctors are slipping.

Sandra

The medical community hasn't really addressed it at all.

Miles

But I'll bet you anything they know at least a little more than we do.

Sandra

So you do think something is going on?

Miles

My official stance is that I don't know what I think.

Sandra

Do think that a doctor would know?

Miles

Maybe.

Clay

Then we should just go ask Jackie, shouldn't we?

Miles

That is a good idea.

Clay

We should've gone there first. I'm starving.

Miles

Clay, you eat everything again and you're buying me and Sam lunch tomorrow.

Clay sprints out of the room. The rest of them rush after him. Sam comes in with the apple juice.

Miles

Sam, we're going to Jackie's!

Sam

Right now? Should I bring the apple juice? Yes! I will! For goodness sake, Miles, fix your tie!

Miles

Ah! Will you do it? (He and Sam are alone again in their apartment.)

Sam

Sure.

Miles

Sam?

Sam

Yes?

Miles

You know I love you?

Sam

What makes you say that?

Miles

Oh, I don't know...

Sam

You're not worried, are you?

Miles

No. Not really. I just felt like you should know that.

Sam

Well, I do know that. Come on, weirdo—let's go.

Act One

Scene Three

Doc and Henry are back in their chairs in front of the set.

Doc

Miles and Sam seem like two wonderful people.

Henry

We would always go to them if we had any questions, difficulties—anything. They were kinda like mentors, you know.

Doc

I'd like you to expand on that.

Henry

Expand on what?

Doc

Do you think you could tell me more about your relationships with them?

Henry

Sure, I guess. If you want to hear it.

Doc

I'd like to hear anything and everything you have to say, Henry.

Henry

Alright, Doc... Expand on the relationships, right?

Doc

Right. Go ahead.

Henry

I'm not really sure where to start.

Doc

Start from the beginning—how do you know them?

Henry

Okay...

Doc

Henry? Are you alright? I know it's not pleasant, but you've got to say something.

Henry

Alright... I'm fine, Doc... So, um, I knew Sam before Miles—I met him about a month or two later. Sam was eight years older than me, I think—she was at the apartment when Clay and I first moved in—she was the manager of a restaurant called Brenda's.

Doc

I've been there. It's a good one.

Henry

Solid place... My first encounter with Sam was actually kind of embarrassing.

Doc

Too embarrassing to tell?

Henry

Oh, no—just a caught-with-my-pants-down type of embarrassing.

Doc

Okay. Let's hear it.

Henry

So Clay and I were on our second day of living in our apartment.

Doc walks to side of set. He stays onstage for this relatively short scene. The set has been changed back to Henry and Clay's apartment. There are stacks of boxes. Clay and Sandra are sitting at the table. Henry walks onstage and opens the fridge as they begin the scene.

Sandra

Do you two plan on ever having food here?

Clay

What do you mean? We have push pops!

Henry

And I bought some ginger ale this morning.

Sandra

That's not food.

Henry

Would you like some?

Sandra

Fine... Have you met your neighbors yet?

Henry

No.

Clay

Yes.

Henry

Yes?

Clay

Yes. The lady next door invited me over for dinner tonight.

Henry

What?

Clay

The lady next door invited me over for dinner tonight—

Henry

Clay, I heard what you said. Am I invited?

Clay

Did anybody invite you?

Henry

When did you even have time to have a conversation with her?

Clay

Yesterday.

Henry

Where was I?

Clay

I don't know. Probably busy moving boxes or something. You know what? I should actually be heading over in a couple minutes.

Henry

Oh... Well...

Clay

Henry, If you want to come so badly, just walk over and ask her if you can.

Henry

That'd be weird.

Clay

Really? Sandra, go next door and get yourself invited.

Sandra gets up and walks out the door.

Henry

Wanna bet she won't be able to do it?

Clay

Sure. She will, Henry, you don't know that lady like I do.

Henry

You just met her yesterday!

Clay

Let's see... I have a couple nickels, three sticks of gum...

Henry

I'll bet five dollars.

Clay

You have five bucks?! And you didn't buy anything other than push pops and ginger ale?

Henry

So no bet?

Clay

Yes, bet! Henry, I'm taking away your spending privileges.

Henry

Ha!

Clay

I'm serious! (Sandra reenters) If you have that kind of money and you can only think to buy a couple cans of ginger ale...

Sandra

She might be the nicest person I've talked to in a while.

Clay

Right?

Sandra

Her name is Samantha - she's been living on her own here for four years. All i did was introduce myself to her.

Henry

And you invited yourself?

Sandra

She invited me.

Henry throws five dollars at Clay.

Clay

Henry, how do you feel about pudding cups?

Sandra

Clay, she actually said we can head on over right now—she just came from the grocery store, and she left some of her bags downstairs. She'll be up in a minute.

Clay

Alrighty, Sandy—

Sandra

Don't call me Sandy—

Clay

Let's bounce.

Henry

So am I on my own tonight?

Clay

You know what, Henry? Instead of sitting there, complaining and feeling sorry for yourself, you can just come with us. We'll introduce you.

Henry

Thank-you! I think I'll bring some ginger ale.

Clay

Alright.

Sandra

Just let yourself in. (Clay and Sandra go next door.)

Henry finds a sack from a nearby box and stuffs some bottles of ginger ale inside. He goes next door to Sam's apartment. There is a table with an exotic-looking vase on it. Henry almost immediately knocks it over upon entry. He catches it, but when he turns to put it back, Sam enters her apartment. She sees Henry, thinks he's an intruder, and kicks him in the face.

Act 1  
Scene 4

Henry

(Laughing) She'd called the cops before Clay and Sandra even realized anything was going on.

Doc

Wow.

Henry

But after that, she apologized and started inviting me out to lunch, runs—things like that.

Doc

Sounds great.

Henry

It was.

Doc

So now I suppose I'll hear about Jackie and the dinner party?

Henry

Yeah, yeah. So, like I said, Jackie was a doctor, and there was her seven-year-old daughter, Juliet, who— (Henry's phone starts ringing. He looks at it.) I'm sorry, but can I take this?

Doc

Sure, go for it—I'll step out.

Henry

Thanks, Doc. (Doc steps out and Henry answers the phone.) Hey, Clay... No, I was in the middle of it, but it's fine... No, don't worry about it... Well, he's just having me tell him everything that happened... I'm still sort of at the beginning... The dinner party... Ice cream? Yeah, sure, Clay, of course... Hey, if you get here and it's past nine, come get me. I don't have... Exactly... I know... I will... Alright, buddy, see you in a little bit... Alright... (Call ends.)

Doc walks back in.

Henry

That was Clay.

Doc

Everything's alright?

Henry

Yeah, yeah... He uh... He just wanted to know if he and I could go get ice cream after this.

Doc

Okay.

Henry

So, Jackie?

Doc

Yes.

Henry

Jackie went to finish school to become a doctor a while after she had her first kid.

Doc

She had two children?

Henry

Yes. (They start to walk offstage.) One was actually in college and the other was her seven-year-old, Juliet.

Juliet comes on stage with her mother, Jackie, following behind.

Jackie

Are you ready for dinner, Juliet?

Juliet

Yes.

Jackie

Do you think it'll be fun?

Juliet

Yes.

Jackie

Do you remember the rules?

Juliet

No yelling, no screaming, no shouting.

Jackie

Good. Something on your mind, kiddo?

Juliet

Mom, are you sure that these people are your friends?

Jackie

Sure. Why?

Juliet

My friend Johnny told me that adults don't really even have friends.

Jackie

Is that right?

Juliet

Yes. Johnny never lies.

There are knocks on the door.

Jackie

Alright, Juliet. Forget what Johnny said and let's have some fun.

Jackie and Juliet walk offstage as Doc asks a question.

Doc

Henry, if you don't mind me interrupting, how exactly do you know Jackie?

Henry

You mean other than her being her neighbor?

Doc

Being a neighbor doesn't automatically get you invited over for dinner. Tell me how you all got to know her.

Henry

Alright. It's actually a funny story: One time, Clay and I were climbing trees, and on the way back down, Clay fell, kind of knocked his head on a branch, and broke his arm when he hit the ground. He looked like he was unconscious and I started to think he was just messing with me, but I took him to the hospital, and Jackie was the doctor who took care of him.

Doc

And you didn't know she lived next door?

Henry

That's the funny part—no. When we found out, Jackie was real excited. Apparently, Clay was "quite the patient."

Doc

And he wasn't?

Henry

Oh, he probably was.

Doc

Would you like to continue with telling me about dinner with the neighbors?

Henry

Sure. But it was like an hour before any of us had the backbone to bring up the deaths in front of Jackie.

Everybody except for Jackie and Juliet are sitting in Jackie's apartment.

Clay

Alright, they're gone. Who's gonna ask her?

Sandra

I don't think we should. She might think that it's the only reason we came for dinner in the first place.

Miles

You just don't want to ask her.

Sandra

Why don't you do it?

Miles

I know her the least well out of all of us. It'd look weird if I asked her.

Sam

Well, someone has to do it.

Juliet

(Reentering with her mother) Here comes the pie! (They set the pies down on the table.)

Jackie

Does anyone want one? (There is no answer.) Wow. More for us then. (She sits down, but doesn't take any pie. It is silent for a few moments.) Alright, what's going on here?

Danielle

You know what's going on with the deaths, don't you, Jackie? You're a doctor.

Jackie

I was starting to think you would never ask.

Clay

Aha! You are hiding something!

Miles

I called it.

Sandra

I'm the one who thought of asking her.

Jackie

Actually, I don't know any more than you all do.

Miles

Really? Even you don't know anything?

Clay

Wink if you've been told to say that.

Jackie

Even I don't know anything. Of course I haven't been at work for a week.

Clay

For real?

Sandra

Why?

Jackie

I had a minor knee surgery done on Wednesday. You know, my son was supposed to call to hear about my surgery, but he hasn't.

Danielle

He'll call.

Henry

Jackie, your son goes to our school and we don't even really know him at all.

Danielle

Yeah, what does he look like?

Henry

Does he look like you?

Danielle

I bet he looks like her.

Henry

Juliet does.

Juliet

Hey! I do not!

Jackie

You two are right; Clyde looks just like us... (Juliet stifles a yawn.) Time for bed, Juliet.

Juliet

But I wanna stay here!

Jackie

Let's go.

Juliet

Okay, mom. (Jackie and Juliet exit.)

Clay

Did you guys—

Sandra

You don't think—

Danielle

No—

Henry

Couldn't be.

Sam

I'm sorry, what's happening?

Clay

Her son's name is Clyde!

Sam

So?

Miles

Oh, shit.

Sam

What?!

Henry

Sam, there was a freshman at our school who died a couple hours ago.

Sam

I know, I know—we talked about this—Cliff, right?

Clay

His name was Clyde.

Sam

Clyde?! Miles, you said his name was Cliff!

Miles

Well, it's not!

Sandra

Wait a second—what are we supposed to do?

Clay

What do you mean?

Sandra

What if that kid who died is her son? Do we tell her, or do we let her find out on her own?

Henry

I don't know.

Danielle

But we don't even know if dead Clyde is Jackie's Clyde.

Miles

Yeah, there's probably more than one Clyde. Sandra, do you know his last name?

Sandra

I don't... I'll call someone to see if... (As Jackie reenters, Sandra jumps up and leaves.)

Jackie

Well, the kid's asleep. Where's Sandra going?

Clay

I don't know.

Sam

The bathroom!

Miles

So Jackie, you haven't been in the loop of the medical world lately, have you?

Jackie

No, no, I haven't—I'm sorry I don't have anything to tell you guys.

Danielle

It's fine, Jackie. Dont apologize.

Jackie

I try to keep work at work and home at home. And Juliet's been really happy that I've been here all week.

Henry

...But you do know about those... three deaths, don't you?

Jackie

Yeah, I do... I was actually the doctor who pronounced Richard Welk dead—I don't think I've told any of you that. It was a horrible feeling especially since I had next to no idea what was going on. Then when the next one happened I actually wasn't in work, but still... Henry, did you say that there were three? There's only been two.

Miles

There was a third one a few hours ago.

Danielle

A kid at our college—

Sandra bursts back into the room.

Sandra

Jackie, your—I'm sorry, but, I was—I heard—I—

Jackie's phone rings. After a reluctant glance at the others and the tense quiet that has occurred, she answers it.

Jackie

Hello? ...Yes, speaking... what? ...My son...

End of Act 1

Act Two  
Scene One

The set has been changed back to Henry and Clay's apartment. There has been a death. Two police officers are standing in the apartment, talking with each other. Showing up at these particular kinds of death scenes have become a formality.

Officer 1

The fifth one this week.

Officer 2

It's only Tuesday.

Officer 1

Yeah... what did you tell those other three kids to do before I got here?

Officer 2

I just told them to go down to the lobby. They were shaken up pretty bad. You could tell they've lost way too much sleep.

Officer 1

Who hasn't?

Officer 2

I know I have.

Officer 1

I'm just lucky nobody I know's gone.

Officer 2

You know what I read somewhere?

Officer 1

What?

Officer 2

I read that everyone who is going to die from the virus has already contracted it.

Officer 1

Really? That's an interesting one.

Officer 2

Yeah. That same article said that one in two people in this city have it.

Officer 1

Wow... Well, it's been nice knowing you.

Officer 2

Hey!

Officer 1

We should joke while we still can... I haven't heard that one yet.

Officer 2

That theory?

Officer 1

It sounds like it might have truth to it.

Officer 2

Probably not though.

Officer 1

You never know... if it is true, the government closed the city borders for no reason.

Officer 2

I think it was more of a precautionary measure than anything else.

Officer 1

Yeah. Probably.

Officer 2

Alright, so what now?

The very end of this scene should partially overlap with the beginning of the next scene.

Act Two  
Scene Two

Doc and Henry are in the chairs. Doc's first line should occur before the lights have come back on.

Doc

Henry, Henry—slow down, Alright? I'm gonna need you to slow down and calm down—deep breaths... three deep breaths, Henry... good? Start somewhere else—anywhere else—why don't you tell me what led to this?

Henry

Okay, Doc... so about a month passed after that dinner party, and the rate of people dying was increasing on the daily.

Doc

And they still didn't know what was going on?

Henry

All they'd said was that it was some sort of indeterminable, undetectable virus or something like that. I don't think anyone knew much more than that.

Doc

Sounds frightening.

Henry

It was. People were going nuts. To be fair, so were we.

Doc

You and your friends?

Henry

Yeah. (He gets up and walks back on the set as Doc goes offstage.)

Clay

(Walking in) Henry, you know how they closed the borders a couple weeks ago?

Henry

Yes.

Clay

Well, the store just ran out of our pudding cups.

Henry

Not the chocolate!

Clay

Yes, the chocolate.

Henry

No!

Clay

It gets worse—apparently, they can't restock until the city reopens.

Henry

Oh man... What are we gonna eat?

Clay

I don't know. It sucks, doesn't it?

Henry

It does... Clay, we should be worried about more than our pudding cup supply.

Clay

I know.

Sandra walks in.

Henry

Sandra!

Sandra

Hey guys.

Clay

We really should start locking that door.

Henry

What's up?

Sandra

Well, Danielle had a sneezing fit, and she made me leave.

Clay

Ha!

Henry

Sneezing isn't a symptom though, is it?

Sandra

There are no symptoms—she just thought that if she was sick and her immune system was down, she might be susceptible.

Clay

That's unselfish of her—whenever I'm sick, I make sure Henry gets sick too.

Sandra

That's funny.

Henry

It has never been funny.

Sandra

So if you don't mind, I'm gonna stay here until she lets me go back.

Henry

Do you have any of your stuff?

Sandra

No; I'll probably sneak back to get it tonight.

Clay

Well you can sleep on the table.

Sandra

Thanks.

Clay

No problem.

Sandra

Have you two heard about Jackie?

Henry

No.

Clay

What?

Sandra

She got fired about three weeks ago.

Clay

Really?

Henry

How did we not know that?

Clay

What happened?

Sandra

She didn't follow protocol on one of the dead people that came in one day—apparently they've been real strict with it.

Henry

Oh, no.

Sandra

And she's starting to struggle a little bit—she had to pay for her son's funeral, and she's still dealing with student loans and everything.

Henry

How do you know all that?

Sandra

I called her yesterday to see how she was doing.

There is a knock on the door.

Clay

It's open!

Jackie enters.

Henry

Oh, Hi!

Jackie

Hey, kids. (She sits.)

Clay

What's up, Jackie?

Henry

How are you doing?

Jackie

Not so good - I lost my job recently.

Clay

How come?

Jackie

I didn't follow protocol when I pronounced somebody dead.

Clay

On purpose?

Jackie

No, it's just my mind slipped—I'm not having the best time.

Sandra

It'll be alright, Jackie.

Jackie

It won't be though... if things keep up at this rate, there'll be no people left in the city by November. That is a fact.

Henry

But Jackie, it'll slow—

Jackie

That's the thing though—it won't slow down—at least there's no indication to suggest that it would... I'm sorry... That's probably not true... I'm not sure what to believe really, but I guess that's just the pessimistic view on things. I'm sorry, I actually came over here to ask you and Clay something.

Henry

What?

Jackie

I haven't been doing too well lately, obviously - well, I suppose no one has... Point is, I don't really want Juliet to keep seeing me like this. So I was wondering, if it's okay with you, if Juliet stays here every so often while I try and fix myself up.

Henry

That's totally fine.

Clay

Yeah, we love Juliet.

Henry

And it's summer, so we don't have school or anything.

Clay

And we really don't have any other friends, so we're in this apartment anyway.

Jackie

You two are great kids, you know that?

Henry

It's really no big deal.

Jackie

Of course, I'll pay you—

Henry

You don't have to do that, Jackie.

Jackie

But I—

Clay

Henry, let's not make any rash decisions—

Henry

Don't, Jackie.

Jackie

Okay. But I'll be the first you come to if you ever need a favor, alright?

Henry

Alright.

Jackie

Do you mind if I send her over now?

Henry

Not at all.

Jackie

Okay... thank-you so much, boys. (Jackie leaves.)

Sandra

That was scary.

Clay

Yeah...

Sandra

It's weird to see her like that, you know? She's always been a rock.

Henry

It'll pass.

Sandra

Maybe. How are you guys gonna deal with Juliet?

Henry

I don't know. How do you deal with kids in general?

Clay

We could probably handle it.

Henry

Probably.

Clay

Most likely. We've got everything it is that a kid would ever need.

Henry

Do we?

Clay

Yeah, sure we do. Let's see... She might need water.

Henry

Maybe, yeah—maybe she will.

Clay

The tap isn't too bad...

Henry

Do you think she still plays with toys?

Clay

If she does, we definitely have a deck of cards sitting around here somewhere.

Henry

Toothpaste?

Clay

We've got plenty.

Henry

Clothes?

Clay

She's got her own.

Henry

Oh... Maybe she'll want food...

Clay

Oh, fuck.

Act Two  
Scene Three

Back to Henry and Doc for a little bit while the set is being changed to Sam and Miles' apartment. They don't sit back in their chairs—they can just make their way from one side of the stage to the other while talking.

Doc

Is there a reason why Jackie didn't want Sam and Miles taking care of her daughter?

Henry

You know, I think Sandra asked that same question.

Doc

Is there an answer?

Henry

Yes; it turns out, Jackie had gone to ask them right before she came to us.

Doc

And they said no?

Henry

I don't think it's that they said "no." Apparently, they were just doing so badly themselves that Jackie decided that Clay and I were the better option. (As he says this, he and Doc go offstage.)

Sam

Miles, I don't see how you can be so calm.

Miles

Well, it doesn't really matter whether you can see it or not. Listen, I don't want to talk about it anymore. It's not a big deal.

Sam

Not a big deal?

Miles

It's not.

Sam