



2-PERSON SCENES

This scene is from a Stage Partners play, free to read in full at yourstagepartners.com.

8 Minutes Left by e.b. lee

1M, 1F
Drama

(The world is coming to an end at exactly 4:44PM today, and no one has had any time to prepare. 8 Minutes Left follows the residents of Charlesville, NJ as they navigate their final moments on this Earth. Note: The OBSERVER is a narrator who watches all the residents, who bounces a ball as time ticks down. The stage directions mentioning them are left in for context, but they do not speak in this excerpt.)

(Lights up on a movie theater concession stand center stage. It's a mess. Maybe the cash register is open and emptied, discarded candy boxes everywhere, like the place has been ransacked by sugar-starved gremlins. RAVEN sits on the floor, leaning against the counter, scrolling on her phone, munching on popcorn, sipping on her drink. She could be anywhere.

ELIJAH peers outside, he's trying not to pace but failing at it. He looks over at RAVEN—he's equal parts intrigued and afraid of her.)

ELIJAH: Everyone's lost their damn minds.

(RAVEN shrugs.)

ELIJAH: And the buses aren't coming.

RAVEN: *(Not looking up:)* Yeah, everyone's got places to go, places to be. Busy busy busy, that's the American way.

(She sighs heavily, searches for an outlet nearby, maybe less than a foot away, plugs in her phone and resumes scrolling and munching.)

ELIJAH: ...I don't understand. We *do* have places to go...most of us. *(Continues to pace.)* Why would they stop running? Not everyone has a car, not everyone drives. I'm completely dependent on the bus. My moving from Point A to Point B is completely determined by someone else. I'm at the beck and call of someone else, I'm wholly incapacitated!

(ELIJAH glances at RAVEN, who is thoroughly ignoring him. She laughs at something on her phone.)

ELIJAH: Your phone working? What are you looking at? Is the news on?

(RAVEN finally looks up, as if this is the most laborious thing in the world.)

RAVEN: Old Vines.

I'm watching old Vines.

ELIJAH: What? Vines? Those six-second videos...? They still have those?

RAVEN: Correction: six seconds of *absurd perfection*. And yes, you can find anything on the internet if you look hard enough. RIP Viners.

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Wanna see?

ELIJAH: No—what? Raven, why aren't you trying to get out of here?

RAVEN: Where am I going to go, Elijah? You heard what they said. Also? We fought off that crowd. We've earned this.

All the free popcorn.

Oh, and slushies. Blue and the red together, for the win.

ELIJAH: You're...incredible.

Maybe I can...

RAVEN: Walk? Run? Take a hike? Hitchhike?

ELIJAH: No! Do you not watch the news? I can't hitchhike! They could *do* something to me, they could hurt me, I could, I could—

RAVEN: Die?

(A beat.)

ELIJAH: I'm not getting in a stranger's car.

(ELIJAH looks at his watch, goes back to pacing and peering out for the bus.)

RAVEN: Want my car?

ELIJAH: What?

RAVEN: Do you want my car? To drive to...wherever you clearly gotta go. You're messing up my zen...with all of *this*.

ELIJAH: You're giving me your car? You've known me barely two weeks and this is the most we've ever talked.

RAVEN: Like any of that matters right now?

...

I know you enough to know that you need to not be here, but can't figure out a way to just... go.

...

Anyway, if you want it, it's yours. You're gonna need to pop the clutch hard, I can give you a running start down the dip in the back lot if you want, I guess.

Here.

(RAVEN tosses her keys to ELIJAH, but he's too slow and they hit him/drop to the ground.)

ELIJAH: I don't know what any of those words that you just said mean. I...don't have a license.

RAVEN: Nobody's gonna pull you over /

ELIJAH: / I can't drive. I don't operate heavy machinery.



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RAVEN: It's a car.

ELIJAH: Exactly.

RAVEN: Welp, that's all I've got. Suit yourself, just...if you're gonna pace, please do it elsewhere.

(ELIJAH picks up her keys to hand them back to her, but RAVEN doesn't reach for them. She gets up to refill her drink.)

RAVEN: Where are you even trying to go anyway?

ELIJAH: I don't know, my shift ended fifteen minutes ago, I was going to go to Shoprite, like I always do on Tuesdays, maybe pick up some of those pizza rolls and a diet soda—

RAVEN: It's the end of the world, and you wanna go *grocery* shopping? I take it back. You can't have my car.

ELIJAH: What? You already offered it to me and I already refused it, so—

RAVEN: ...

ELIJAH: What? I'm hungry. And I like to eat at set times.

(RAVEN gestures at the food concession stand, "Hello?")

ELIJAH: I can't do that, that's stealing!

RAVEN: Oh my god, are you serious right now?

ELIJAH: Look, we can't all be revolutionaries, okay!

You act soooooo cool, you're so above everything. Oh, look at me, I'm *Raven*, I wear all black and never talk to anyone, *even my name is cool*—

RAVEN: *(Getting up:)* Oh, I am so not doing this with you right now—

ELIJAH: —I'm unshakable, nothing scares me, not even the end of the world—

(RAVEN grabs a candy bar from the concession stand, unwraps it, takes a bite, unfazed by ELIJAH's mini man-tantrum.)

ELIJAH: —Oh, look at me now! Why do I need to pay for anything? Who invented the concept of *money*? *What's capitalism anyway? Break the system! Fight the power!* I'm such a *rebel*.

RAVEN: Are you done yet?

This is not rebellion. This is...common sense.
Survival.

(RAVEN shoves the candy bar at him. Begrudgingly, ELIJAH takes a bite and chews. He instantly calms down.)

ELIJAH: Wow.



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Sorry about that.
I get really cranky when my blood sugar drops.
...May I?

(ELIJAH gestures for her to hand over the candy bar for another bite, RAVEN yanks it out of reach.)

RAVEN: First bite's free. Go get your own!

ELIJAH: No, I'm fine. It's okay.

RAVEN: Elijah.

You helped me when all those people came running out of the theater, all manic, grabbing whatever they could on their way out. Stealing money...for what?

ELIJAH: And that woman just screaming for a manager...! Like you could even do anything about the world ending.
Yeah, she was...not nice.

RAVEN: She was a total jerk.

Anyway, why'd you stay and do all that, if not to secure our food source?

ELIJAH: ...Because without order, there's only chaos. *(Clutches his belly.)* Ooooh.

RAVEN: Was that your stomach?
You gotta eat something, bud.

(Finally, ELIJAH tentatively roots through the mess of snacks. Picks up a few things, sets them down, still undecided.)

RAVEN: Wow. You really really have a hard time defying authority, don't you?

ELIJAH: I just don't know what I want, okay!

RAVEN: Don't think, just grab. Eat what you want. Stuff your face.
You don't have time for indecision!
This is about survival!
What! Do! You! Elijah! Want!

ELIJAH: I want—popcorn!

RAVEN: Good!

(RAVEN shovels some popcorn into a container and puts it on the counter.)

RAVEN: What else!

ELIJAH: And, and...maybe something sweet! Like...M&Ms or Reese's Pieces or... Swedish Fish!
(RAVEN grabs all the candy, rips all the containers open, dumps them into the popcorn, shakes it up.)



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ELIJAH: Whoa, whoa, whoa. What are you doing?

Are you *mixing* everything? Isn't the candy just going to drop to the bottom? This is crazy—

RAVEN: It's all going to the same place, live a little!

(RAVEN takes a handful, shoves it into her mouth. He follows suit. They chew.)

ELIJAH: Um.

...This is *good*.

RAVEN: Yep.

(RAVEN hands ELIJAH her slushie.)

RAVEN: Just try it. Red and blue, mixed.

(He does. It's also good. ELIJAH slurps it down. RAVEN throws a handful of popcorn at him, hits him in the face. He reacts.)

RAVEN: You deserved that.

(ELIJAH shrugs, then throws a handful of popcorn back at RAVEN. This could escalate into a tiny food fight, with both of them cracking up a little.)

ELIJAH: You're...goofy.

RAVEN: Look who's talking!

ELIJAH: I'm glad I stayed.

RAVEN: You didn't have much of a choice.

But me too.

It beats being alone.

(Their laughter dies down. She grabs his wrist, looks at his watch. At this, something breaks a little in RAVEN.)

Over at stage left, the OBSERVER bounces their ball. DUNK.)

RAVEN: Is that the real time...?

ELIJAH: I think so, yeah.

(Again, the ball. DUNK, DUNK.)

RAVEN might crouch down here, put her head between her knees, deep breathing.

Throughout the next section, the OBSERVER bounces their ball progressively faster.)

RAVEN: ...Is the room moving

or something?

It's hard to, I feel a little—

I feel a little light-headed...

Oh, please not now.

ELIJAH: No?

Raven?



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Not now, not now. Augh, I hate this—

Feeling

Everything feels so...

What's going on?

Overwhelming and...small

And pointless...

Hey.

I can't...

(RAVEN might start to hyperventilate here. ELIJAH tries to comfort her, but her panic is taking over.)

ELIJAH: Hey.

Hey, are you okay?

(ELIJAH finds an empty popcorn bag, helps RAVEN to breathe into it.

The OBSERVER slows the pace of the bouncing until finally stopping once RAVEN begins to calm down.)

ELIJAH: Hey, you'll be okay.

That's right, just keep breathing. In, out. In, out.

Where's your phone?

Maybe, let's

Let's watch the, the thing you were watching before.

Maybe it'll help a little, take your mind off of everything.

I know it's a lot, that's why I was so focused on doing all my regular stuff/

RAVEN: / It's why I did nothing.

And it's all nothing now.

How much time do we have left until

ELIJAH: It doesn't matter.

Nothing...?

We should watch something, take our

minds off everything

It'll be okay, alright?

I promise.

(ELIJAH finds her phone, frantically looks up the clip, plays it. They lean on the counter, RAVEN moves in closer as she's puffing into the bag. They begin to watch.)

ELIJAH: ...

This is...some weird shit.

(RAVEN laughs a little, nodding.)

RAVEN: So weird.

ELIJAH: Perfectly weird.

RAVEN: Perfectly absurd. I told you.



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(ELIJAH watches RAVEN watching the video on the phone until her breathing begins to calm down. Maybe she hip-checks him, a small gesture of affection and thanks. Maybe he hip-checks her back.)

RAVEN: You're a good person to have around in an emergency, you know that?
Who knew?

ELIJAH: Yeah, that's me...Mr. Calm-Under-Pressure. Did you not see me earlier, like five minutes ago?

RAVEN: Shhh. My favorite part's coming up.

(They lean in and huddle over the screen, laughing a little, the glow of the screen on their faces as the light dims.)

End of Scene.

8 MINUTES LEFT by e.b. lee

Length: 90-100 minutes

Cast Size: 7-22 actors (suggested casting: 5F, 5M, 5 any)

Genre: Dramedy

Synopsis: The world is coming to an end at exactly 4:44PM today, and no one has had any time to prepare. *8 Minutes Left* follows the residents of Charlesville, NJ as they navigate their final moments on this Earth – from a couple with a bunker in their backyard who can't quite figure out how to get in, to two elderly frenemies who fight over their favorite park bench, to a mother observing her children on a playground as she wonders what their lives would have become, this thoughtful and keenly observed play manages to find the intimate humor of humans in crisis.

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