

SCENES FROM A QUARANTINE

A VIGNETTE PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Scenes From a Quarantine
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Characters

21 Any Gender
Minimum of 4 actors

Easy Peasy?

Sky: An introvert who learns quarantine is far from easy

Love in Quarantine

Romeo: Thinks a lot of himself and his abilities

Juliet: Wants romance but prone to being testy
Romeo and Juliet are traditionally male & female, but you may cast them as you wish.

Gone

Danny: An ambitious student who has lost all momentum

Just Like the Rest of Us

Robin: Feels superior all the time

Wren: Just wants to survive like a normal human being

Best Friends

Alex: Wants life to go back to normal

Co (COVID-19): Loves being a pandemic disease

Breakout Room

Bay: A bully who is worried about family

Greer: A quiet overachiever who has found their voice

Sam: An extrovert who just wants to talk

Desperate Times

Marley: Willing to take desperate measures in desperate times

Meanwhile...

Shadow: A ruler who demands order. Also a cat.

Lucky: A happy-go-lucky dog

Retraction

Jesse: Someone who thought they wanted chaos. Turns out not so much.

Meetings are Hell

Pestilence, War, Death, Famine: The four horsemen of the apocalypse

Guilt

Dorian: Can't come to terms with their guilt

Best Friends - Thwarted

August: A diligent hand washer and no push over

Co (COVID-19): Loves being a pandemic disease

Sunshine

Sky: An introvert who learns quarantine is far from easy

Online Staging

This show is meant to be performed using online platforms with each performer in their own space. Scenes can be memorized or performed with scripts in hand.

If you're performing the play with the minimum number of performers, have everyone on the platform at the same time. Those who are not performing can look down, turn away, or turn off their cameras.

If you're performing each scene separately, only have the number of screens open for the number of characters. This will require you, or perhaps a student stage manager, to manage when screens are open and when they are not.

Be creative with the transitions between scenes. A student stage manager could play music, hold up signs saying, "Easy Peasy?", "Love in Quarantine", etc. If you have students who excel in art, have them create the scene signs. The goal is to give students the ability to express what is going on in the world through character, and to have a theatrical moment.

Props are suggested but not necessary.

Easy Peasy?

SKY: Scene from a quarantine. Day two. This is going to be so great. I can read all day. I can stay in my room and no one's gonna say, "Why don't you go out?" "Why don't you see your friends?" "You need to have more friends." Ha ha! Joke's on you! Who's going to survive for weeks on their own without talking to anyone? Me! Who couldn't care less about keeping in touch with a single one of their "friends?" Me again! I wish I could quarantine for the rest of my life. This is going to be easy.

Scene from a quarantine. Day eight. Day. Eight. So... things are fine? You know, it's one thing to say it's going to be easy to stay in the house... when you have the choice to stay in the house. When you could go somewhere if you wanted to. It's a much different kettle of baloney when you can't. I actually don't enjoy reading "all day." "All day." A peculiar concept. We say it. But until you've actually sat and stared at the same page for hours and hours and... I've done things. I've alphabetized my books, organized my closet, put together a clothing donation pile, which is still a pile 'cause I can't take it anywhere, rearranged my posters into themes, and made seven dioramas. In my spare time. Ha. What am I going to do tomorrow?

Scene from a quarantine. Day 749. Or thirteen. The situation is dire. My parents have retreated to separate areas of the house because of the "my meeting is more important than your meeting" clash of 10 a.m., which followed the "why are you wasting toilet paper" debate of 8 a.m., which followed the 7:56 a.m. "that wasn't 20 seconds" exchange. Send help.

Love in Quarantine

ROMEO and JULIET are on an online video call.

ROMEO holds up a sign that says, "If Romeo" JULIET holds up a sign that says "and Juliet" ROMEO holds up a new sign that says "were" JULIET holds up a new sign that says "quarantined."

ROMEO: Can you believe it!

JULIET: I miss you so much.

ROMEO: Not as much as I miss you.

JULIET: I miss you more. I can't believe it! Quarantined.

ROMEO: If only they waited one more day for that stay at home order.
We could have been married.

JULIET: And together.

ROMEO: Oh the rotten luck! Still we're healthy and well and this is for the best.

JULIET: We're healthy and well and this is for the best.

ROMEO: Did you get my present? I sent a messenger to your house.

JULIET: Yes I got it. Aren't we lucky that messengers are considered essential services? Did you get my present?

ROMEO: I did. And disinfected it thoroughly.

JULIET: You didn't have to do that. I'm not sick.

ROMEO: You never know.

JULIET: I do know.

ROMEO: You could be asymptomatic. You could have touched something.

JULIET: I'm not sick.

ROMEO: You're pretty absentminded. You could have touched something without realizing.

JULIET: Is that right?

ROMEO: You sound testy.

JULIET: That's because I am. *(beat)* Still we're healthy and well and this is for the best.

ROMEO: We're healthy and well and this is for the best. You didn't have to get me a present.

JULIET: I wanted to. You are the very first boy I've ever bought a present for. I hardly knew what I was doing! Nobody teaches you how to buy presents for the very first boy you've ever bought a present for, especially when you're not supposed to think about boys at all, you're just supposed to be happy for the one your parents throw you at! *(beat)* Nurse taught me a lot of things, but present shopping wasn't one of them.

ROMEO: You did fine. I'll even go so far to say that you did perfect.

JULIET: Perfect? That's a lot of pressure. This present has to be right. This present is a representation of our relationship. If I got the wrong gift that means my feelings are false.

ROMEO: No! No, no, no. I know your feelings are true because I can feel them. All the way from your room to mine.

JULIET: Awwwww, Romeo! *(beat)* Are you... happy with the present you bought?

ROMEO: *(confident)* Totally. I got you the absolutely best present. I am an awesome gift giver if I do say so myself.

JULIET: Sounds like you do.

ROMEO: It was a little tricky because we've only been dating a day. But I'm not worried.

JULIET: Oh good.

ROMEO: Shall I open yours? *(picks up present)* Ooooooh nice wrapping! I love the paper. We have to save that. Whoa, so much tape. Next time I'll show you how to use only three pieces. You'd be surprised how little you need. It's incredibly satisfying to use these teeny tiny squares and be able to wrap something like a tennis racket which is not easy and –

JULIET: Just open it! Open it! *(Beat. She clears her throat.)* Open it. Please.

ROMEO unwraps the present. It's socks.

ROMEO: Oh!

JULIET: You hate it.

ROMEO: No...

JULIET: They're socks.

ROMEO: I can see that.

JULIET: You talked about always having cold feet. Oh, oh, oh! I screwed everything up!

ROMEO: Relax. It was your first time. I've had more practice. Open mine. *(JULIET starts to open the present)* Aren't you going to admire the wrapping?

JULIET: Nice wrapping?

ROMEO: I only used three pieces of tape.

The wrapping comes off and it's a hairbrush.

JULIET: A hairbrush. You gave me a hairbrush? *(or comb)*

ROMEO: This hairbrush is specifically designed to get the tangles out of your type of hair with the least amount of breakage. It has a non-slip ergonomic angled handle with a balanced load distribution so that your wrist will always be in the exact right position. A work of art and a work of science. *(sighs)* It's beautiful. I had it engraved with your family crest.

JULIET: Yes you did. *(beat)* Can I ask a question? I want to clarify something.

ROMEO: You want to learn. I'm touched.

JULIET: Cause you're sooooo much better at gifts... a hairbrush is better than socks?

ROMEO: It has your family crest.

JULIET: Everything I own has my family crest!

ROMEO: That is a good present! *(pause)* Sorry. This situation is tense for all of us. Still we're healthy and well and this is for the best.

JULIET: The socks are way better.

ROMEO: How dare you!

JULIET: 100 lambs died to get you the wool for those socks. The knitter wept because I made her redo the pattern three times. That is a mark of a fine present, chosen with love and care, so you can suck it, Romeo Montague!

ROMEO: I'm not sure I can wear socks lambs died for. I'll hear their death bleating when I walk.

JULIET: *(not loud, arms folded)* You are impossible.

ROMEO: *(sulky)* You are.

JULIET: *(imitating)* You are.

ROMEO: You.

JULIET: I need social distancing.

ROMEO: You're in your house! How much distance do you need! *(pause)* Maybe we don't really know each other.

JULIET: Maybe the quarantine is going to show us we don't belong together.

ROMEO: Maybe we just shouldn't buy each other presents.

JULIET: Maybe.

ROMEO: Yeah. *(beat)* But I do have an idea for your birthday.

JULIET: What now?

Gone

DANY: You don't understand. Things are different now. I wish you hadn't come, Ms. Douglas. I have to look after my brothers. There's nothing to talk about. We don't have a computer and our internet never works. You can leave a packet of assignments if you want, I won't be doing them. I told you, I have to look after my brothers. Have a good life, as much as you can these days. There's nothing to – You don't – stop! Stop talking! Nothing you say matters. Don't you get it? It's all gone. Everything I planned for – graduate, work at the diner until the very last second, pack my life up and escape? Gone. No school, no job, maybe no college. I have nowhere to go. I can't leave even if I wanted to. I am here. You better go. I have to look after my brothers.

Just Like the Rest of Us

ROBIN and WREN are friends on an online video call. ROBIN sits smiling. WREN sits fidgeting, with an obvious itchy nose.

ROBIN: Don't touch your face. *(beat)* Don't touch your face... Don't do it...

WREN: *(childish)* You don't touch your face.

ROBIN: *(superior)* Oh I won't. *(really superior)* I don't want to.

WREN: Really?

ROBIN: Not at all.

WREN: Not at all. Really? Not even a little bit? The itching isn't driving you crazy?

ROBIN: I won't let it.

WREN: Oh.

ROBIN: I understand the severity of our situation.

WREN: Well.

ROBIN: We must be diligent.

WREN: Right.

ROBIN: Don't you think so?

WREN: Sure. Especially when I have friends like you to remind me.

ROBIN: These are unprecedented times. I feel I was made to rise to the occasion in these circumstances of difficulty and strife. I was made to answer the call. Can't you feel responsibility coursing through your veins, to stand and be, in this moment, more than you ever could as a human being?

WREN: Fine. I don't want to touch my face. I can't wait to be a better human being.

ROBIN: Good.

WREN: I don't want to. I do not. *(beat)* Nope. *(beat)* No... *(bursting)* How can you stand it? I never realized how much I touch my face and scratch my nose and rub my eyes. I'm a walking disease factory! I'm a hotbed for infection! I'm a powder puff of plague.

ROBIN: All it takes is a little self-control. I'm surprised you can't find it within yourself to dig deep and wrestle with your weaknesses. *(scratches cheek)* We all must do better, Wren. We all must –

WREN: You just touched your face.

ROBIN: What?

WREN: You scratched your cheek.

ROBIN: I did not.

WREN: You did, you did, ha ha!

ROBIN: So what if I did? I wash my hands every fifteen minutes. I wipe down every surface and doorknob on the hour. I'm totally germ free. I've got everything under control!

WREN: You've got weaknesses like the rest of us!

ROBIN screams and exits.

WREN: Today is a good day. *(brings a hand up to scratch nose, and slaps it down)* Don't touch your face. We must wrestle our weaknesses. Or gently live with them. Yeah.

Best Friends

ALEX is in their bedroom looking around. They have been woken up by a strange sound.

ALEX: Hello? Hello? Who's there? I know you're there, I can hear you breathing. Come out into the open.

CO enters and sits. Both actors talk straight out as if they are facing each other.

CO: Fine, fine, fine. Hello.

ALEX: You!

CO: Surprise!

ALEX: You're not welcome here. Get out.

CO: Come on now. Aren't you pleased to see me? Not even a little?

ALEX: Why would I be pleased to see the thing responsible for a global pandemic?

CO: Oh stop. You're making me blush.

ALEX: Why would I be pleased to see a disease in my home?

CO: Disease is such an ugly word. You can call me Co. It's short for COVID-19.

ALEX: I know what it's short for.

CO: Not the name I would have chosen, but it does seem to be on everyone's lips these days. I'm everywhere! Still, I do prefer the short form. You can call me that.

ALEX: I'm not calling you anything. We're not friends.

CO: We could be. *(leaning forward)* We could be best friends.

ALEX: *(leaning back)* Stop where you are. Get back. Back!

CO: *(leaning back)* You're not being very nice. I am a pretty fabulous friend.

ALEX: *(relaxing)* Pass.

CO: Is this how you treat someone who's been invited into your home?

ALEX: I didn't invite you.

CO: Alex, you did.

ALEX: I did not.

CO: Last week when you snuck out...

ALEX: *(looking around)* Shush! Shut up.

CO: Come on now. I'm not going to tell. I'm your friend. I want you to raise your fist and feel you're being mistreated by this quarantine. It's awful! I can't believe they don't trust us! We totally can do social distancing! Resist and break the rules all you want. Push for things to be the way they were yesterday, last month, last year. Because when you do, when you sneak out and go to a party where there are lots of people to talk to and things to touch... it's rather lovely. You're lovely.

ALEX: But we were careful.

CO: I'm sure you were.

ALEX: We were. And no one there was sick.

CO: I'm sure they weren't. Not visibly anyway.

ALEX: I wanted to see my friends. Face to face. I miss them.

CO: And I appreciate that feeling. I have to thank you. You make my job easy.

ALEX: Oh crap.

CO: You may not think much of me now, but we're going to have a lot of time to get to know each other. Well, not a lot of time. We're going to become great friends. The very best. You'll see.

Breakout Room

BAY, GREER, SAM are in a breakout room of an online class.

GREER: Oh! We're here. That was sudden.

BAY: Oh no.

SAM: *(sighing)* Why can't we choose our own groups...

GREER: Ok, we have 10 minutes and then we get pulled back to the main page. Our instructions are –

SAM: We're not actually working, right?

BAY: No.

GREER: What?

BAY: This class doesn't matter. She can't make us do anything.

SAM: We get marks for showing up. We can talk about whatever.

GREER: How surprising.

SAM: What shows are you watching?

GREER: Just like class. You do the bare minimum, I end up doing everything. Losers.

SAM: Hey...

BAY: What did you say?

GREER: You heard. But I'll say it again. Losers. Both of you.

BAY: You wouldn't dare say that to my face.

GREER: Wouldn't I? Let's try it. You are a waste of space.

SAM: Isn't this an overreaction for wanting to talk about Netflix?

GREER: Work or don't work. Your slow descent into a useless life is none of my business.

SAM: What happened to you?

BAY: Just wait till we're at school. Just you wait. I'm going to –

SAM: Oh stop it, you are not.

BAY: Are you telling me what to do?

SAM: Yes. *(to GREER)* What happened?

GREER: I don't know what you're talking about.

SAM: Did you lose someone? Is someone sick?

GREER: Is that the only thing that would make you care?

SAM: *(sighing)* Why is it when some people find their voice, it's so annoying. *(to GREER)* You never talk like this. What happened? Is it your parents?

GREER: No. *(beat)* My parents are doctors.

SAM: Oh.

BAY: Where?

GREER: St. Joe's. I've barely seen them in weeks. They can't keep up. They try, but there's no end. They're not saying anything but it's written all over their faces. It makes me feel, I can't – there's a constant lump in my throat and I feel –

BAY: Death is at the door.

GREER: Yes. And knocking. Loudly.

SAM: That's rough.

BAY: So you know it's hopeless. All this. Giving us assignments and trying to pretend that school has any point anymore.

GREER: But I want it to have a point. I want to do something that feels normal. And besides, you acted this way before the world went kablooeey.

BAY: I guess. But now it's... different. Everything is hopeless and we are lost.

GREER: Sometimes it feels like that. It's hard to fight.

SAM: You have to. You have to fight because we are not lost. We're here. You're alive. You can't let this drag you under. Hope is stronger than hopelessness. Always has been, always will. I know it doesn't feel like that right now, but this is temporary. You can't let go of hope.

GREER: That's a lot from someone who's here for the marks.

SAM: I just want to talk. My parents have decided to handle this by working 18 hours a day in silence.

GREER: My mom isn't doing well. She won't talk either.

BAY: I'm worried about my grandmother. She's alone.

SAM: Yeah. So maybe we could talk about movies or food or music...?

GREER: Something normal.

SAM: Please.

BAY: I hate eggplant. Slimy.

GREER: I hate eggplant too. My mom deep fries it and it doesn't help. Disgusting.

SAM: I'm against all vegetables. My mother makes smoothies and tries to pretend she didn't put vegetables in.

GREER: Mine too!

BAY: My grandmother doesn't hide them. She just stares at me till my guilt can't take it anymore.

They laugh.

GREER: There's the signal from Miss D. Was that good?

SAM: It was. Thanks.

Desperate Times

MARLEY: Look, you can't stop me. I've made up my mind. I've thought about this for a long time. What else do I have to do? This is my decision and you'll have to respect it. *(beat)* I'm going to cut my hair. I'm going to do it, and whatever happens, happens. I'll live with it. *(holding hair)* Because I can't live with this. This is driving me mental. Look at it. Look! You know I'm right! I understand that some may feel that hairdressers are not an essential service but I'm here to tell you, they are wrong. It is essential that I have someone deal with this! And now we're back to the essential/non-essential argument, which no one is going to solve so it's up to me. I'm the one. I must raise a pair of scissors and live with consequences. I understand that some may feel this decision is not important. There are larger issues the world is dealing with. But good hair has a place in this world. Ok. I'm gonna do it. Don't try to stop me... Here I go... Wish me luck?

Meanwhile...

SHADOW is a cat with power issues, LUCKY is a happy-go-lucky dog. Both actors talk straight out as if they are facing each other.

SHADOW: The human is still here. The human is still here! Why is the human here?

LUCKY: What? Huh? Roh?

SHADOW: Why is the human still here?

LUCKY: Isn't it great? It's so great. Great, great, great, great, great!

SHADOW: (*hissing*) Useless. (*back on track*) The human always goes away during the day. And now they're not going anywhere. They haven't left the couch in three days.

LUCKY: Our human goes places. We go for walks. It's so great. Great, great, great, great!

SHADOW: (*hissing*) Useless. I'm not talking about your pointless meanderings. (*back on track*) How am I supposed to properly reign with the human constantly underfoot demanding snuggles? I don't have time to snuggle during the day. I must survey my domain! This is disrupting my order. (*beat*) We have to find out why.

LUCKY: Why what?

SHADOW: Why the human is still here!

LUCKY: Isn't it great. It's so great. Great, great, great, –

SHADOW: (*hissing*) Useless.

LUCKY: This is the best time of my life!

SHADOW: You think every time is the best time of your life. Five minutes from now is the best time of your life. We must return order, Lucky. We can't let this go on. Let me think.

SHADOW thinks. LUCKY fidgets.

LUCKY: Hey. (*pause*) Hey. Shadow. Shadow. I got something to tell you. It's really important. Really, really, really, really –

SHADOW: What! What is it?

LUCKY: Our human is here all the time! Isn't it great! I wonder why?

SHADOW: (*hissing*) Useless! The human is always busy. Always on the go. That was the strategy from the beginning – keep the human busy so that I may reign in peace. Something must have happened out there.

LUCKY: Out where?

SHADOW: Outside!

LUCKY: Outside? Huh. It looks pretty much the same to me.

SHADOW: But it's not. It can't be. Because nothing is the same. The human keeps looking at me and talking to me and expecting snuggles! Order has been lost! This is not normal.

LUCKY: Maybe things will never be normal.

SHADOW: What?

LUCKY: Not like we know them. Maybe this is going to change our lives forever and we'll have to figure it out. And we will. And our human will. That's what humans do. They may whine a little bit, but then they roll up their sleeves and go on. We always go on.

SHADOW: Lucky. Did you just... speak deeply?

LUCKY: What? Huh? Roh?

SHADOW: (*hissing*) Useless!

Retraction

JESSE: Have you ever said something out loud, like in conversation, where you were trying to be funny or trying to sound controversial, or you just wanted to sound, I don't know, hostile? For fun? Spikey. Like a hedgehog, only cool. A cool hedgehog. (*nerding out*) Did you know a baby hedgehog is called a hoglet? They are so cute! (*Sighs and shakes head. Back on track.*) Did you ever want to have an aura of chaos for a second? Have a hostile adventure? Just a short one! Have you ever wanted to be steeped in unrest, even though you're actually pretty quiet, rather peaceful and enjoy a good book on a Friday night? Who knew we'd have all this time to read... (*shakes head, back on track*) If people feel you're steeped in unrest you become cool. Doesn't everyone want that for a few seconds? And I did it – for more than a few seconds. (*putting on a spikey persona*) "I can't wait till we have an apocalypse. The world is going to hell anyway, better sooner than later. And when it happens, and it will happen, I'm going to live by my own rules. No one can tell you want to do when chaos takes over the world. When disorder is the law of the land." People would ask me to say that last bit in the halls. "When disorder is the law of the land." Yeah. So. Here we are. Chaos. The world. Me. Saying something and it actually happening are two vastly different things. I've discovered I'm rather fond of rules. And order. And going to school. I don't want a hostile adventure. I feel like this is all my fault cause I wished so hard it would happen. I'm sorry. I take it back. I take it all back. Ok?

Meetings are Hell

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are in an online meeting.

WAR: Is this on? Are we on?

PESTILENCE: I can see and hear you.

WAR: Great.

FAMINE talks but their mic is muted.

WAR: Famine! Turn your mic on!

PESTILENCE: (*sighing*) This is going to take forever.

WAR: What are you in a rush for? Isn't your part done?

PESTILENCE: I'm monitoring the situation. There are a lot of moving pieces. It's a scenario that needs constant attention.

WAR: Uh huh.

PESTILENCE: Besides, maybe I have something else. Maybe I have a date.

WAR: Do you?

PESTILENCE: No. But I could.

WAR: OK.

PESTILENCE: I can end the world and date at the same time, you know. I am an excellent multitasker.

FAMINE is still miming talking and still doesn't have their mic on.

WAR: Turn your mic on!

FAMINE: Hello? Can you hear me?

WAR: We got you.

PESTILENCE: This is the 21st century, why don't you know how to work a computer?

FAMINE: Why aren't we meeting in person?

WAR: Death can't make it in person.

FAMINE: Death can't make it for five minutes? I was looking forward to brunch.

PESTILENCE: You could take five minutes to learn how to work a computer.

FAMINE: If you're going to start in on me, I'll go. I got things to do.

WAR: What's everybody rushing for?

PESTILENCE: Just because you're not front and centre, per usual.

WAR: Are you saying I'm jealous? Of a global pandemic?

PESTILENCE: If the shoe fits...

WAR: Ridiculous.

PESTILENCE: All I'm saying is someone is not getting employee of the year this year and (*pointing at themselves*) someone is totally gonna get it.

FAMINE: Where is Death?

WAR: I don't – Ah! In the waiting room. Just let me click...

DEATH: (*enters mid-conversation*) Yes. No. Yes. Maybe. All right, no. If they're going to push...

WAR: Hey Death –

DEATH holds up a finger to stop WAR.

DEATH: No. No. Absolutely not, Jennifer. Tell him, absolutely not. I won't be long. Did you send that report to my email? Great. Thank you. (*hangs up*) Hey gang. How goes the battle?

PESTILENCE: (*singsong*) Awesome.

FAMINE: You have a secretary?

PESTILENCE: Administrative assistant.

FAMINE: Why don't I have a secretary?

DEATH: I wish I had two. Speaking of, can we speed this along?

WAR: I call to order, this meeting of the Four Horsemen (*PESTILENCE's hand shoots up and waves obnoxiously*) of the Apocalypse. Yes, I see your hand. Can I get through the call to order first?

PESTILENCE: Why do I have to keep bringing this up? It's the 21st century.

WAR: We are aware.

PESTILENCE: We're not all men and when was the last time any of us were on a horse?

WAR: It's the name of the organization. Take it up with someone in a higher pay grade. Talk to HR. All right, the agenda for this meeting –

DEATH: I didn't get an agenda.

PESTILENCE: I didn't get one, either.

DEATH: Did you send it to Jennifer?

FAMINE: I'm hungry.

WAR: I didn't actually write up an agenda. I didn't think we needed it.

DEATH: I wish you'd written one up.

FAMINE: I wish I had a BLT.

WAR: There's only one thing to talk about. It's the only thing anyone is talking about.

PESTILENCE: Still you could have taken five minutes. It's not like you're busy or anything.

WAR: War is happening! War is always happening! Just because you're getting all the brownie points right now for a jacked up flu –

FAMINE: Oh. You are jealous.

WAR: I am not!

FAMINE: You don't see me getting all bent out of shape because Famine isn't getting "brownie points."

DEATH: War. Fess up. You're looking a little green...

WAR: Can we get going? Death and Pestilence, give your reports.

DEATH: (*looking at phone*) I'll go. I'll... oh man. Guys, I gotta go. I just got an alert. The beaches are open in Florida. I'll have Jennifer shoot you a copy of my report. (*exits*)

PESTILENCE: My turn! I don't think I need to point out, but I will, things are going great. Better than great. This pandemic is over-the-top amazing!

FAMINE: Why don't you just shoot us your report too? I'm gonna go make a sandwich. (*exits*)

PESTILENCE: But you always want to hear War's reports... Unfair! I deserve to be part of the agenda! I deserve to be heard! I'm going to write you all up for this. In triplicate! (*exit*)

WAR: Well. That was a waste of time. Not that I have much to do right now. But I'm not jealous! Hmm. I wonder if I could start a war in Iceland... (*exits*)

Guilt

DORIAN: I am slowly going crazy, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, switch. Crazy going slowly am I, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 switch. My dad asks me how I am every day. He's... involved. Always checking in. I say fine. Fine, dad! Thanks for asking! Doing OK! It's easier to say "fine" than explain. Because I should be fine. I should be. I don't have a lot to be un-fine about. Other than quarantine, a virus killing people, and the possible collapse of the economy... I should be fine. Everyone I know is healthy. My parents didn't lose their jobs. There are more than enough rooms in our house for everyone to have all the personal space they need. I have my own laptop, the internet's great – see what I mean? I have everything to feel fine about. And productive – I should be so productive right now. I could practice my guitar, and how many times have I said I wanted to be better at Spanish? Now's the time! Now's the perfect time to become the best version of myself. (*beat*) I'm not doing anything. And I'm not fine. I'm... heavy. It takes forever to decide what to wear in the morning. Poor Dorian, you feel bad? Poor you living in your big house with everything you could ever want. See what I mean? I can't tell anyone about this, how my arms are lead, my feet are trapped in cement and the weight, the weight is pulling me down. I can't breathe or see daylight anymore. I haven't seen it for weeks. How do I say that to my dad? Why do I feel so sad when I have everything?

Best Friends – Thwarted

Both actors talk straight out as if they are facing each other.

CO: Hello! Love your house. Wow that is some awesome floor. They are doing such cool things with laminate these days.

AUGUST: What do you think you're doing?

CO: I'm inviting myself in, of course. You've been outside. You didn't wear gloves or a mask. That lady coughed and touched the door and – Oh! I'm getting ahead, I haven't even properly introduced myself. Poor planning on my part. I'm Co. Short for COVID-19. Not the name I would have chosen but we do what we can.

AUGUST: You can't come in.

CO: Sure I can. I'm in right now. I'm on you. Did you know that? It's like we're best friends. That's how close we are. And it's only a matter of time before we really get to know each other.

AUGUST: I haven't touched anything. I haven't touched my face.

CO: It's only a matter of time.

AUGUST: Not if I wash my hands.

CO: (*changing tone*) Why would you want to do that?

AUGUST: It's the first thing I do when I get in.

CO: Seems obsessive.

AUGUST: I don't want to be your best friend. In fact, you interrupted me. So...

CO: Not so fast! Not so fast! Before I leave, let's talk. Let's chat. Confab with the COVID. You don't need to wash those hands right away.

AUGUST: You're here so I really do.

CO: Oh, I was just kidding. I'm not that bad.

AUGUST: Millions would say otherwise.

CO: I can't help it if I'm popular.

AUGUST: Then you should go and talk to those people.

CO: They don't count. I want to get to know you.

AUGUST: Prepare to be disappointed.

CO: All right, all right. Wash your hands. See if I care.

AUGUST: Done.

CO: Wait a minute, wait a minute. (*beat*) Selfie?

AUGUST: (*automatic*) Sure. (*shaking head*) No! I'm washing my hands and I'm washing you out of here. Immediately.

CO: You'll be sorry. I have so many awesome jokes. I have a ton of interesting stories. I am a pretty fabulous friend.

AUGUST: You kill people!

CO: That is an unfortunate side effect.

AUGUST: Out. Now.

AUGUST starts washing hands and singing Happy Birthday.

CO: Don't wash for 20 seconds! That's a myth! Not *Happy Birthday!* Anything but *Happy Birthday!* I hate that song... (*exits*)

AUGUST: Happy birthday to you!

Sunshine

SKY: Scene from a quarantine. Day who knows, Wednesday, Thursday, Soupday. Who knew the days of the week would be the first to go? Canceled, just like everything else. I went for a walk today. To nowhere, really. I couldn't sit in my room anymore. There's a girl on my street who's in my calculus class? We never talk. We've never talked before. We're not in the same... circles. But today, *Hi! How are you doing?* Um... Ok? Some days I'm ok. Ups and downs. *Me too. Me too. They cancelled prom.* They did? Yes, yes. They did. That sucks. *I bought a dress. When is this gonna end?* I don't know. No one does. *Ugh! That sucks.* Yes. Yes it does. (*beat*) Huh. Conversation. Who knew I'd enjoy that? (*takes a deep breath*) The sun is shining. It still does that. I'm glad.

—THE END—



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