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Playscripts, Inc.
450 Seventh Ave, Suite 809
New York, NY 10123

toll-free phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY
email: info@playscripts.com
website: www.playscripts.com

*Thanks to Christy Orabuena and the original cast of the West High School production in Torrance, California for all of their input on the script.
And, as always, thanks to Matt, my own personal cheering section!*

Cast of Characters

JULIE, middle of the road popular girl with a pragmatic view on life
TERRELL, Senior Class President, a bit arrogant and thoughtless,
but not mean

TOM, the “bad kid,” or is he?

BECKY, Julie’s best friend

GREG, Terrell’s best friend, football player

KENDALL, the G or L of GLBT. Eventually elected Vice President

EDIE/EDDIE, editor of the school newspaper and website

CJ, school newspaper and website staff, Edie/Eddie’s camera person
in the field

SKYLER, conspiracy theorist. Eventually elected to the Cabinet

GIRTY/GENE, one of Skyler’s followers, more alien invasion-centric

NICK(Y), one of Skyler’s followers

JORDAN, likes school, a bit geeky, tends to be a bully magnet

GERI/JERRY, Christian

MICHAEL(A), science fanatic

ANDI, desperate to keep the prom regardless of the state of the world

FINLEY, a bit of a burnout

CHRIS, office assistant and fan of following rules. Eventually elected
to the Cabinet

HAYDEN, band geek and proud of it. Eventually elected to the Cabinet

DARBY, worked in lunchroom for free lunch. Eventually elected to
the Cabinet

BRIANNA, cheerleader, super smart. Eventually elected to the Cabinet

MACKENZIE, petty thief, an actual bad kid, one of Tom’s crowd

MARTY, library assistant

LAUREN/LOREN

BRITNEY

ALEX, one of Tom’s crowd

ROSE/ROSS, one of Tom’s crowd, but less enthusiastic about it

KASEY, part of Tom’s crowd. Gets elected to the Cabinet

SYDNEY, freshman, eventually elected to the Cabinet

STUDENT ONE

STUDENT TWO

STUDENT THREE

STUDENT FOUR

STUDENT FIVE

STUDENT SIX

STUDENT SEVEN, part of Tom's crowd

STUDENT EIGHT, part of Tom's crowd

STUDENT NINE, part of Tom's crowd

STUDENT TEN

STUDENT ELEVEN, part of Tom's crowd

STUDENT TWELVE, part of Tom's crowd

FRESHMAN ONE, eventually elected to the Cabinet

FRESHMAN TWO

FRESHMAN THREE

CANDIDATE ONE

CANDIDATE TWO

CANDIDATE THREE

Character Notes

This play was written so almost all of the roles could be played by either males or females. It might surprise you how effective going against gender roles can be in *The End of the World...* For example, in the original production, MACKENZIE was played by a girl, even though in my mind that character was a boy when I wrote the script.

I see this play as a mosaic—some characters have very complete backstories, some characters have only two lines. But everyone adds to the big picture of the student body of Charles M. Russell High School in Great Falls. Just like in a film or a novel, you don't get every single detail about every character, but the viewer fills in the blanks with the information that's given. It's crucial that the crowd scenes have multiple dynamics at work—some students are thrilled at the turn of events, some terrified, some stunned.

This is a large-cast play, so on the page there are forty-six roles in the script. If you need more roles, more STUDENTS can always be added. If you need fewer roles, some of the STUDENT and CANDIDATE lines could be assigned to other characters.

Feel free to change any of the names of any characters in the play, even beyond the suggestions in the script. In the original production the name TERRELL didn't seem to fit the actor in the role, so we let him choose his own name. (He picked "Nate.")

Slang and Language

Slang seems to change daily, so feel free to change all of the slang terms to fit the current vernacular. There are also a few pop culture references in the script—feel free to change those as well.

Set

This show works best on a unit set with many levels and entrances.

Lighting and the Wall of Light

The biggest obstacle to producing this play will be the Wall of Light. In the original production, we determined the Wall of Light could be anywhere, so it moved to suit the blocking as needed. Having a bright light shining from offstage works well. For the scene when the students purposefully walk into the light in Act Two, we had the actors deliver their lines, then step forward into a spotlight which popped up just as they moved, then snapped out, allowing the actor to exit. For the prom, if you can have an upstage center door with a bright light positioned so when the door is opened, it shines straight out into the audience's face, that works wonderfully. But an offstage light works well, too.

In general, pace is important with *The End of the World...*, so black-outs should be avoided almost entirely. Scenes should overlap with light transitions.

And finally...

What is beyond the Wall of Light? Why did everyone disappear? I think that is a question each production should take great pleasure in figuring out for themselves...

Acknowledgements

The End of the World (With Prom To Follow) was commissioned by Christy Orabuena and West High School, Torrance, California. The play was first performed on November 16, 2011 with the following cast and staff:

JULIE.....	Julia Barrett
TERRELL	Alex Wolfson
TOM.....	Garrett Miller
KENDALL	Carly Saber
GREG.....	Grant Torre

THE END OF THE WORLD (WITH PROM TO FOLLOW)

by Sean Abley

ACT I

(In the dark we hear a cell phone ring, and then another.)

JULIE. Becky?

BECKY. Julie?

TERRELL. Greg?

GREG. Terrell?

(More and more cell phones ring. As the lights fade up, we can gradually see and hear more and more STUDENTS start talking to each other on their phones, their conversations overlapping. The tone of the conversations is full of confusion and questions about what is happening in Great Falls, but at this point we should only hear panic, not details. The conversations build to a cacophonous climax. Suddenly the lights shift to a spotlight on JULIE in the center of the STUDENTS. Everyone freezes as JULIE speaks to the audience.)

JULIE. I guess I should start keeping track of this stuff just in case there's anybody left to watch it one day. I'm posting these videos in the hopes that there *is* somebody out there, somebody outside the town borders of Great Falls. That's where we are, Great Falls, Montana. Does anywhere else even exist any more?

About a month ago every person in Great Falls, except the three hundred and fifty one students of Charles M. Russell High School, disappeared. Literally. Like, off the face of the Earth disappeared. Actually, I assume everybody in the rest of the world disappeared, too, but that's hard to prove considering the circumstances.

On Wednesday, September 15, I woke up at noon. Which was weird, because that was a school day and my mom should have woken me up. The house was super quiet. Actually, the whole neighborhood was super quiet. I got up, went downstairs, and...

(Lights up on STUDENT ONE, BRITNEY, and LAUREN/LOREN.)

BRITNEY. Mom? Are you still asleep?

LAUREN/LOREN. Hey, where are you guys? Did you leave already?

STUDENT ONE. Dad? Tony? Mom? (*Pulls out cell phone and dials BRITNEY.*)

BRITNEY. (*Cell phone rings, answers it:*) Hey, super weirdness this morning.

STUDENT ONE. My uncle and my parents are gone! I'm freaking out.

BRITNEY. Same here! I can't find my mom. The whole house is empty except me.

(STUDENT ONE's cell phone beeps.)

STUDENT ONE. Hang on, I have another call. It's Lauren/Loren.

BRITNEY. Put us on three-way.

STUDENT ONE. Okay. (*Answers the call, puts it on three-way:*) Hey, Britney and I are freaking out.

BRITNEY. Hey Lauren/Loren.

LAUREN/LOREN. Uh, I'm freaking out because my family is gone, but the cars are still in the driveway.

BRITNEY. What the hell is going on?

STUDENT ONE. I'm going to hang up and call the police. I'll call you back.

(Lights shift to STUDENT TWO and STUDENT THREE. They talk to each other on cell phones.)

STUDENT TWO. I'm still getting emails.

STUDENT THREE. Yeah, me, too. The power is on, at least in my neighborhood, and the water is still on.

STUDENT TWO. Are you getting anything on TV?

STUDENT THREE. No.

(Lights full. ALL STUDENTS burst into panicked conversation with each other as they exit. JULIE and BECKY are left in separate areas on stage, talking to each other on their cell phones.)

JULIE. Becky!

BECKY. Julie, what is going on?! My parents are gone, and I went over to my grandma's place, and she's gone, too.

JULIE. I can't find anybody, either. Even my grandparents in Rockford aren't answering their phone. I finally called Terrell and he's on his way over.

BECKY. You're lucky you have a boyfriend. I'm stuck in this house alone and I have no idea what to do.

JULIE. Come over here. Or no, when Terrell gets here, we'll come get you.

BECKY. Awesome, thanks.

(TERRELL and GREG enter.)

TERRELL. Hey!

JULIE. He's here. I'll call you when we're on our way over.

BECKY. Later. *(Exits.)*

(Lights down on BECKY.)

JULIE. I'm so glad you're here! I'm really freaked out right now.

TERRELL. You and everybody else in town. There's nobody on the streets except kids from school looking for their parents.

JULIE. The whole town? Your family, too, Greg?

GREG. Yup, gone. Woke up, nobody in the house, Mom and Dad didn't answer their cells.

JULIE. You guys, it's so sweet of you to come over. But you should be looking for your own families.

TERRELL. It's cool. We can all look together. Let's go start at your Mom's office.

JULIE. Okay. But we have to grab Becky on the way.

(TERRELL and GREG exit. JULIE crosses to center as lights shift to a spotlight on her.)

JULIE. Everybody called the cops—no answer. 9-1-1—no answer. Other relatives—no answer. Drove all over town, nothing. Everyone who wasn't a student at Charles M. Russell High School was gone. And then there was...the light.

(Lights shift to edge of town. There is a WALL OF LIGHT at the edge of town [either a bright light that shines from offstage, or light that cuts across the entire stage created by precisely focused lights]. A low-level hum or other nondescript noise. [NOTE: This sound is present for every scene that takes place at the Wall of Light.] FINLEY looks at it in awe.)

FINLEY. Whoa... *(Takes out cell phone and writes a text:)* Meet at truck stop edge of town. OMG. Emergency.

(STUDENTS enter from different areas, responding to text.)

STUDENT FOUR. *(Writing text:)* Something weird at Husky Truck stop. Meet me there.

STUDENT FIVE. (*Writing text:*) OMG get to truck stop 9-1-1.

GREG.(*Writing text:*) Hey T, meet me at the truck stop.

SKYLER. (*Writing text:*) Theory: Complete government breakdown. Or zombie uprising. Bring shotgun!

GERI/JERRY. (*Writing text:*) Rapture is upon us! Proof at truck stop!

(*STUDENTS continue to enter and write texts, their dialogue overlapping each other.*)

STUDENTS. (*Overlapping cacophony of text writing:*) Something up at truck stop, everybody meeting at Husky truck stop, heard a rumor freaky stuff outside town, etc.

(*Lights shift to Wall of Light. All STUDENTS look up.*)

STUDENTS. (*Writing text, unison:*) Meet me at the edge of town!

(*Edge of town. A large group of students, including FINLEY, SKYLER, MICHAEL(A), JULIE, KENDALL, TOM, EDIE/ EDDIE, BECKY, GREG, and TERRELL enter and gather at the Wall of Light at the edge of town. EDIE/EDDIE speaks to a flipcam carried by CJ, who also uses it to film what's happening.*)

EDIE/EDDIE. (*To flipcam:*) This is Edie/Eddie Thomas, Editor-In-Chief of the Charles M. Russell school newspaper and website. I'm at the Husky Truck Stop where there seems to be some sort of light surrounding the town. Just this morning almost everyone in town disappeared. The two events are assumed to be related. (*To CJ:*) CJ, point it at the action...

CJ. Oh, right... (*Films the action.*)

FINLEY. What is that?

SKYLER. A laser wall?

FINLEY. What's a laser wall?

SKYLER. A wall made of lasers.

JULIE. Maybe it's a force field?

TERRELL. Normally you can see through force fields. You can't really see through that light.

MICHAEL(A). "Normally" you can see through force fields? Because you have so much experience with force fields?

TERRELL. Shut up. What do you know?

MICHAEL(A). I know that there's no such thing as force fields, although they are, technically, possible.

TERRELL. And you are?

MICHAEL(A). Michael(a). I'm on the Science Team.

GREG. We have a Science Team?

TOM. Wow, the Senior Class President not knowing one of the less popular lower classmen. Shocker.

JULIE. Guys, don't fight.

(GERI/JERRY *enters.*)

GERI/JERRY. Praise God!

KENDALL. What?

GERI/JERRY. Do I stutter? Praise God!

MICHAEL(A). What does God have to do with this?

GERI/JERRY. Uh, only that this is obviously the Rapture and that's awesome.

MICHAEL(A). If it's the Rapture, then why are *you* still here?

GERI/JERRY. Um, well...

SKYLER. It's obviously some government force field, keeping us in here.

FINLEY. Or something else out.

SKYLER. Ooohh, good one. Zombie apocalypse caused by covert government experiments gone awry!

TERRELL. That's ridiculous.

MICHAEL(A). It's obviously some sort of natural phenomenon.

GERI/JERRY. You mean that natural phenomenon where everybody on Earth disappears and a Wall of Light surrounds the town? Global warming, right?

MICHAEL(A). Hilarious. Whatever it is, it's just light.

FINLEY. If it's just light, walk through it.

MICHAEL(A). (*Considers this for a moment:*) Uh...I think I'll do some more research first.

FINLEY. Anybody? Anybody gonna man up and walk through the light?

ALEX. Why don't you walk through it?

FINLEY. Well...

STUDENT SIX. I wanna go find my parents.

TERRELL. We all want to find our parents. But let's not start panicking yet. Some of us should go search, and the rest of us should try to come up with a plan. I'll text everybody when we figure it out.

(Most of the STUDENTS exit, leaving FINLEY, SKYLER, GERI/JERRY, TERRELL, JULIE, TOM, BECKY, GREG, KENDALL, GIRTY/GENE, NICK(Y), and MICHAEL(A) behind.)

FINLEY. Now what?

SKYLER. I'm gonna go get an axe.

JULIE. For what?

SKYLER. To decapitate zombies, obviously.

(SKYLER, GIRTY/GENE, and NICK(Y) exit.)

GERI/JERRY. *(Texting:)* "Prayer group tonight my place." *(To everyone else:)* I have a feeling the Charles M. Russell High School Lunch-time Bible Study group is about to expand its membership. You're all free to join us, of course.

KENDALL. Even the Gay-Straight Alliance?

GERI/JERRY. Absolutely. You guys were always welcome. Later! *(Exits.)*

KENDALL. I'm sure the GLBT students are gonna jump at the chance.

JULIE. What are we going to do?

TERRELL. I don't know. But I'm the class president. I have to do something, right?

TOM. Yes, please, save us from the evil light, Terrell!

TERRELL. Get bent. We need to organize. *(Takes out his phone and starts texting:)* "Meet at the gym in one hour. Get organized. Pass it on."

(Lights shift to reveal FOUR GROUPS OF STUDENTS responding to text.)

STUDENT GROUP ONE. *(Texting:)* "Meet at the gym in one hour!"

STUDENT GROUP TWO. *(Texting, overlapping GROUP ONE:)* "Meet at the gym in one hour!"

STUDENT GROUP THREE. *(Texting, overlapping GROUP TWO:)* "Meet at the gym in one hour!"

STUDENT GROUP FOUR. *(Texting, overlapping GROUP THREE:)* "Meet at the gym in one hour!"

(Lights shift to school gym. All STUDENTS enter. In the crowd there should be many varied emotions and reactions. Some students should be excited, some terrified, some crying, some angry, etc. STUDENTS should ad lib appropriate dialogue in a way that none stands out, rather it all blends together in a cacophony of voices. EDIE/EDDIE and CJ film the crowd. TOM, ROSE/ROSS, MACKENZIE, ALEX, and the rest of his crowd should sit as a group. Finally TERRELL gets up on a chair and tries to quiet the crowd down.)

TERRELL. Okay everybody, let's quiet down. Hey! Quiet down!

TOM. Why should we?

(There is a general rumbling from the gathered crowd in response to TOM. GREG grabs TOM.)

GREG. Keep it up, spider farmer.

TOM. Get your hands off me!

(Some STUDENTS pull them apart.)

TERRELL. Really, Tom? Every person in town disappears and you're gonna be the bad ass now?

TOM. I just asked a question—why should we? Who are you to tell us what to do?

TERRELL. I'm the senior class president.

(Some in the crowd boo.)

Look, I didn't make you guys to come here. You guys decided that yourselves. I'm sure everyone in town will come back soon, but until then we need to figure out what's going on and if anybody has any ideas, let's hear them.

TOM. I have an idea. Why don't you and your girlfriend and the rest of your crowd go back to your huge houses and butt out!

GREG. Why don't you shut up, you burnout loser? At least he's trying to help.

TOM. Yeah, his money's gonna do a lot of good now.

(The STUDENTS start arguing back and forth, some on TOM's side, some on Terrell's side. TERRELL tries to quiet the crowd down to no avail. Finally, GREG tries to punch TOM, and they start fighting. The CROWD goes crazy, with a handful of other STUDENTS joining the fight, pushing and shoving. Finally JULIE steps up onto a chair and shouts into a bullhorn.)

JULIE. *(Into bullhorn:)* Everybody stop fighting and shut up!!

(EVERYONE freezes, silent.)

Maybe you haven't noticed, but we're it. Everybody else is gone. We don't even know what's going on, and you're acting like you're fifth graders. You know how your parents would always say "If you want to be treated like an adult, act like one"? Well, it's time to act like one. (*Hands TERRELL a bullhorn.*) Here.

TERRELL. Where did you get this?

JULIE. Coach Schulte's office.

(*TERRELL steps up onto the chair.*)

TERRELL. (*Into bullhorn.*) Hey, everybody, let's get started. I feel like we should probably set up some kind of...um...maybe we should set up some rules or something? I, uh, I really don't know what we should do next.

(*TOM, now with a bullhorn of his own, steps up onto another chair. He speaks to the crowd.*)

TOM. (*Into bullhorn.*) I think what we should do next is whatever we want to!

(*Part of the CROWD cheers at this.*)

(*Into bullhorn.*) Yeah, the girls' gym coach had a bullhorn, too, Mr. President.

TERRELL. Tom, don't do this. We need to stick together.

TOM. That's exactly what we don't need. (*Into bullhorn.*) We may be the last people on Earth. Our families may never come back and we may die tomorrow. Do you really want to spend the rest of your life listening to this choad?

(*CROWD reacts.*)

(*Into bullhorn.*) I didn't think so! Let's go break stuff! Who's with me?!

(*Some of the CROWD reacts with cheers.*)

JULIE. Tom, stop!

TOM. (*Into bullhorn.*) Let's go take over Great Falls!!

(*TOM, MACKENZIE, ROSE, ALEX, and the rest of TOM's crowd cheer and race off through the crowd. The rest of the STUDENTS react with confusion, anger, whatever emotions are appropriate for their character as they file out of the gym.*)

EDIE/EDDIE. (*Into Cj's flipcam.*) The crowd here at Charles M. Russell High School has gone crazy and taken off. (*Grabs TERRELL.*)

Terrell Matthews, you're the Senior Class President. What are you going to do now? What's your plan?

TERRELL. We're gonna figure this out. Don't worry.

(Lights shift as JULIE moves center and speaks to the audience.)

JULIE. Despite Tom being a d-bag, to be honest, the first week was pretty great. A whole town without rules or parents? Are you kidding me?

(Lights shift for short scenes all over town.)

(Movie theater. JULIE, BECKY, TERRELL, GREG, and a handful of other STUDENTS.)

TERRELL. Welcome to your private screening of *(name of current hit movie)* and free concessions!

(EVERYONE cheers.)

BECKY. Breaking into the movie theater? Is this cool?

TERRELL. It's not breaking in because Greg and I have keys. It's a fringe benefit of being the projectionist.

GREG. And the concessions manager.

JULIE. Let's go make popcorn!

BECKY. Yes!

(Clothing store. BRIANNA and ANDI roll a rack of clothes across the stage.)

ANDI. Isn't this stealing?

BRIANNA. No! If everyone comes back, we'll totally return all of this stuff.

(Main Street. TOM and STUDENT SEVEN hitting golf balls down the street. STUDENT SEVEN swings, they watch the ball for a beat.)

STUDENT SEVEN. Oooh, so close!

TOM. Stand back. You have to get right in the middle of the street.

(TOM tees up a ball, swings, they watch the ball for a beat then—sound of glass breaking.)

TOM / STUDENT SEVEN. *(Unison, high five:)* Nice!

(Car on the road. SYDNEY is behind the wheel, driving very poorly and very fast. FRESHMAN ONE encourages and criticizes from the passenger seat. FRESHMAN TWO and FRESHMAN

THREE *are in the back seat. Each time the car turns or swerves, all the FRESHMEN lean and react appropriately.*

FRESHMAN ONE. Look out! (*Swerve.*) No, the other way! (*Swerve.*) Whoa, you're going to hit the curb! (*Bump.*) You can't drive on people's lawns!

SYDNEY. Why not? It's fun! (*Swerve.*)

FRESHMAN ONE. Let me have the wheel! You're only fourteen!

SYDNEY. You're only thirteen!

FRESHMAN ONE. Yeah, but I skipped a grade so I'm better at driving!

SYDNEY. Says who? (*Swerve.*)

(Giant mansion. SKYLER, GIRTY/GENE, NICK(Y), and a handful of other STUDENTS enter a giant mansion.)

SKYLER. This is perfect! I can totally reprogram the security system, we can get more cameras from the store, and we can board up all the first floor windows and make this a perfect fortress from the zombie uprising.

GIRTY/GENE. Or alien attack.

SKYLER. Or alien attack. But logically, it's probably a government experiment gone wrong over an alien attack. But it doesn't hurt to be prepared. We're totally taking this house!

NICK(Y). Skyler, this is the Governor's Mansion! Why don't we stay at the mall? There's food there and tons of supplies.

SKYLER. Are you kidding? There's way too many entrances to protect. The Governor's Mansion is where it's at! Who's gonna be better prepared for a zombie attack—

GIRTY/GENE. Or aliens.

SKYLER. Or aliens than the government who created them in the first place.

NICK(Y). But what if it isn't zombies or an alien attack. What if this is an experiment, and all this is taking place in someone's mind? Like, someone is dreaming all this, and if they wake up, we all disappear.

SKYLER / GIRTY/GENE. (*A beat.*) Good one!

SKYLER. But which one of us is dreaming?

(They look at each other for a moment.)

SKYLER / NICK(Y) / GIRTY/GENE. Dibs on the master bedroom!

(Bank. KENDALL and a group of STUDENTS taking money out of a bank.)

KENDALL. I used to work here during the summer as a teller. This makes me feel...

STUDENT EIGHT. Bad?

STUDENT NINE. Guilty?

STUDENT TEN. Dirty?

KENDALL. Awesome!

(School office. TOM is rifling through files while CHRIS tries to stop him.)

TOM. Yes! My permanent record! Thanks, Chris!

CHRIS. You can't take that!

TOM. I can and I will. Who's gonna look at it now?

CHRIS. That's not the point! You used our friendship and my office assistant status to gain access to confidential files that are school property!

TOM. I know—awesome, right? *(Hands CHRIS a file.)* And I got yours, too. Enjoy! *(Exits.)*

CHRIS. We can't just start breaking the rules! We have to have rules!

(Looks around, then furtively flips through the file. Reacts to the contents.)

I am too working up to my potential!

(Lights shift as JULIE moves center and speaks to the audience.)

JULIE. So, yeah, first week—awesome. By the next week, not so awesome.

(Lights shift for short scenes all over town.)

(Andi's house. BRIANNA consoles ANDI, who is crying.)

BRIANNA. Girl, it's going to be okay.

ANDI. No, it's not! My parents are never coming back!

BRIANNA. Yes, they are.

ANDI. I'm in this big house all alone!

BRIANNA. I'll totally move in with you. I hate my house, anyway...

ANDI. And there's not going to be any prom!

BRIANNA. Uh, well, is that really a big deal, sweetie?

ANDI. Yes! Yes it is a big deal! I'm a senior! I've been on the prom committee every year for four years, and now I'm the prom committee chairwoman and I have a killer theme picked out and now the world is ending and they're going to cancel the prom! (*Sobs.*)

BRIANNA. (*Doesn't believe it, but...*) You're right, it's definitely that important. What was I thinking?

(*Edie/Eddie's house. CJ enters Edie/Eddie's darkened house.*)

CJ. Hey, Edie/Eddie, you here?

(*Gunshot. CJ hits the ground.*)

Whoa! Stop! It's me!

(*EDIE/EDDIE enters with the gun.*)

EDIE/EDDIE. Don't just walk into my house like that!

CJ. Don't shoot at me like that!

EDIE/EDDIE. I didn't know who you were.

CJ. Dude, where did you get a gun?

EDIE/EDDIE. My dad had one.

CJ. Stop pointing that at me! Put that thing down! You could have killed me!

EDIE/EDDIE. (*Puts the gun down:*) Sorry. I'm just trying to protect the house.

CJ. Edie/Eddie, you know everyone in town. It's just the student body. Who's going to break in here?

EDIE/EDDIE. Do you know what else is out there? Who took all the people? What's on the other side of that light?

CJ. I'm sure it's all going to be fine.

EDIE/EDDIE. I'm not so sure...

CJ. Edie/Eddie, you're the press now. *The press.* You're the only person covering what's going on from inside. You're like the *New York Post* or something.

EDIE/EDDIE. I prefer *The New York Times*.

CJ. Just think of all those journalists you see on TV. They're running toward the disasters, not away from them. You have a responsibility to document everything that's going on.

EDIE/EDDIE. You're right. (*More confident:*) You're right! Let's go. We need to cut that footage together and get it up on the website.

CJ. You got it, boss!

(Jordan's house. JORDAN is approaching his/her front door with a bag of groceries. MACKENZIE enters from inside the house carrying a armful of clothes.)

JORDAN. Hey! What are you doing with my stuff?!

MACKENZIE. My stuff now. You should keep your doors locked.

JORDAN. But there's tons of stores totally open you can take stuff from!

MACKENZIE. But I like *this* stuff.

JORDAN. Don't be a jerk! That's stealing!

MACKENZIE. So? What are ya gonna do about it?

(Shoves JORDAN aside as s/he exits.)

(Lights shift to city jail. TOM, ALEX, ROSE/ROSS, and TOM's group gather at the jail. TOM has just splashed gas on the jail.)

TOM. Hello, jail. How've ya been? Look, it's been great, but I've seen far too much of your insides, dontcha think? I think it's time we go our separate ways. *(Takes out a lighter:)* Now, don't get all butt-hurt about it. It's not you. It's me. And by me, I mean me hating you.

ROSE/ROSS. Why are you talking to the jail?

ALEX. Shut up! He's being poetic.

ROSE/ROSS. Your face is poetic.

ALEX. So's your mom.

TOM. Yes, this means we're breaking up and no, I don't want to still be friends. *(Lights the lighter.)*

ALEX. Sweet!

TOM. Later. *(Leans in to light the jail on fire.)*

(Lights shift to Julie's house. JULIE, TERRELL, BECKY, and GREG are playing video games. BECKY gets a text.)

BECKY. *(Reading text:)* There's a fire!

JULIE. What? Where?

BECKY. The jail!

JULIE. What do we do?

TERRELL. Watch it burn, I guess.

JULIE. We can't just watch! We have to do something!

TERRELL. Like what? Have a big meeting and try to convince everybody to work together?

JULIE. Don't act like that.

TERRELL. I'm not acting like anything. They don't want me to try and help, I'm totally cool with that. It's easier anyway.

BECKY. Some of them did. If Tom wasn't there...

TERRELL. Ha, any story that starts with "If Tom wasn't there..." is an awesome story. Why couldn't that burnout disappear with the rest of them?

JULIE. You're such a guy sometimes. That's not a compliment.

TERRELL. Whatever. (*Motions for GREG to come with him.*)

JULIE. Where are you going?

TERRELL. Down to watch the fire. Coming?

JULIE. Sure.

(They exit. Lights shift to city jail. All STUDENTS enter from different areas and gather to watch the [offstage] building burn. Improvised, overlapping conversations can be heard as they enter. Some [probably TOM's friends and supporters] enter excitedly, cheering and high-fiving. Others are just curious. Still others are afraid. EDIE/EDDIE and CJ are filming the scene.)

EDIE/EDDIE. (*Into CJ's flipcam:*) We're here at the jail where someone has set the building on fire. It looks like almost the entire school is here watching it burn.

SKYLER. This is not cool! If this is a reality created by one of our minds, we can't start destroying it. That will lead to insanity!

BRIANNA. Too late.

GERI/JERRY. This is so awesome!

MICHAEL(A). Really?

GERI/JERRY. What can I say? I love fires.

JULIE. (*To TOM:*) Let me guess.

TOM. No guess needed. I torched it. Library's next.

JULIE. You are such a jerk.

TOM. Secretly you think this is awesome.

JULIE. Not true.

TERRELL. Dude, I think you're pretty much worthless, but I have to admit, this is pretty cool.

(The other STUDENTS agree.)

JULIE. You, too?!

TERRELL. I didn't say I liked the guy...

JULIE. That's it.

(JULIE climbs up on a riser and yells at the crowd, which pays little attention.)

Hey! Everybody! Listen up! Hey! We have to talk about this!

TOM. You forgot your bullhorn.

JULIE. Shut up. *(Shouts to the crowd:)* Who wants their parents back?

(The CROWD goes silent.)

Thought that would get your attention. Look, I don't want to be all 'I'm the boss' or whatever, but this isn't cool. Seriously, is this who we are now? We burn down buildings for fun just because our parents are gone?

TOM. Sure do!

TERRELL. You shut the hell up and let her talk!

TOM. Ooohh, tough.

JULIE. Shut up, both of you. And grow up while you're at it. Look, I'll admit it—I'm scared. Yeah, parents gone, dream come true. P.S., there's a light surrounding the town that could be...anything. Literally. We have no idea. I'm really scared. And I bet some of you are, too. Anybody want to man up and admit it?

(SYDNEY, FRESHMAN ONE, FRESHMAN TWO, and FRESHMAN THREE step forward.)

SYDNEY. We are.

JULIE. What's your name, sweetie?

SYDNEY. Sydney.

JULIE. Freshman, right?

SYDNEY. Yeah. I've never been away from my family except for, like, band camp. It's weird without adults around. We all moved into the same house because we're too scared to stay by ourselves.

FRESHMAN TWO. I don't know how to use the washing machine.

(Some in the crowd laugh.)

JULIE. Don't laugh at that. That's honest. That's a problem. Anybody else? Who doesn't know how to use the washing machine? Show of hands—who doesn't know how to cook for themselves? Or what to do if someone broke their arm? Or where the breaker box is in the house?

(Many hands have gone up.)

FRESHMAN ONE. I want my mom!

JULIE. I know you do. I do, too. Look, I know some of you think this is the best thing that's ever happened to Great Falls, but we have to figure out what to do until our families come back. We can't just burn down buildings and do whatever we want and ignore the consequences.

ALEX. Why not?

JULIE. Because...because we can't. It's juvenile and...destructive and...it just doesn't make sense. Just because our parents are gone doesn't mean rules are gone. It can't mean that. If it did, then we could just go around killing each other and it wouldn't matter. Does anybody really want that?

(TOM raises his hand.)

JULIE. You don't have to raise your hand.

TOM. So what do you suggest we do? Assuming I cared.

JULIE. I don't know. What do you guys want to do?

TOM. Whatever we want!

(Some STUDENTS agree with him.)

JULIE. Okay, other options?

ANDI. Let's have the prom!

JULIE. Uh, okay. Anybody else?

CHRIS. We already have rules, why don't we just follow them? I don't understand what's so difficult about that. There's laws, we're still here, just because everyone else is gone doesn't mean we have to just go crazy and destroy everything.

(Some STUDENTS agree.)

JULIE. I hear you. But maybe this is a chance for us to change some stuff? Just a thought.

GERI/JERRY. Michael(a) and I volunteer to research the light. Maybe we can figure it out. I don't know if anybody's paying attention, but it's actually moving.

(General hubbub from the CROWD.)

TERRELL. Like, away?

GERI/JERRY. No, like closer. Just a little bit, but it's definitely closer than it was.

(CROWD reacts with concern.)

TOM. So you two are going to *(Makes air quotes)* "figure it out"? How?

GREG. I'm gonna break that guy's air quotes off his hands.

MICHAEL(A). Research. You know, that thing you do when you have a problem you don't know how to solve? Oh, wait, you'd have to actually attend class once in awhile to know that.

TOM. Eat one, freak.

JULIE. Come on, guys.

EDIE/EDDIE. *(Motions CJ over with the camera:)* So the born-again Christian and the science geek are going to work together? Comment?

KENDALL. You better not let your clubs find out.

MICHAEL(A). Hey, in the end, *one* of the two of us is right. Might as well work together to find out who.

JULIE. Sounds good to me.

ANDI. I'd like to revisit the prom idea. Just because the world is ending doesn't mean we shouldn't dance and have punch.

(STUDENTS groan.)

JULIE. All that sounds good, but I feel like we still need some... structure, I guess is the word I'd use.

CHRIS. Let's vote. Majority rules. Everybody can agree on that, right?

TOM. Don't be so sure.

CHRIS. I say we vote on whether or not we follow the laws. Meaning the laws we already have. Majority rules.

SYDNEY. But who's going to enforce the laws?

CHRIS. We shouldn't have to enforce them if people would just obey them.

(All eyes on TOM.)

TOM. What are you looking at me for?

TERRELL. How about this—we come back here, or the gym or somewhere, in a week and vote on whether or not we want to figure

out laws and, I don't know, government and all that stuff. Majority rules. Everybody cool with that?

(The CROWD agrees.)

TERRELL. Okay, see everybody in a week.

TOM. And where is this meeting going to take place?

TERRELL. I'll send out a message. Probably the gym.

TOM. Dude, you're not in charge any more. Figure it out.

TERRELL. Then don't come! Just get out of my face.

(Most of the CROWD exits, except for TOM and MACKENZIE, ROSE/ROSS, ALEX, KASEY, STUDENT SEVEN, STUDENT EIGHT, STUDENT NINE, STUDENT TEN, STUDENT ELEVEN, STUDENT TWELVE, and a few others.)

MACKENZIE. That dude is a massive tool.

ROSE/ROSS. So's his girlfriend.

TOM. Nah, she's okay.

MACKENZIE. Are we really gonna vote on having laws and rules and all that crap?

TOM. Not if I can help it. We gotta figure out a way to stop it. Or at least get everybody to vote "No."

ALEX. How?

TOM. Talk to people. Convince them that the only people that should be telling us what to do is ourselves. Head out—we don't have much time!

(Lights shift to short scenes all over town.)

(Wall of Light. GERI/JERRY, and MICHAEL(A) have their laptops and other supplies with them as they examine the Wall of Light. GERI/JERRY is taking photos with a cell phone.)

MICHAEL(A). Okay, I marked off the ground in feet and inches. If the light keeps moving in, we'll be able to measure how much.

GERI/JERRY. Sounds good.

MICHAEL(A). You've been super quiet all the way out here.

GERI/JERRY. I'm having a bit of a crisis.

MICHAEL(A). About what?

GERI/JERRY. When all this first went down, I thought it was the Rapture. And then I was still here, and that pretty much means no

Rapture, at least not right now. And then I started thinking that... well...we might be in Hell.

MICHAEL(A). What?!

GERI/JERRY. Well, we're stuck here, we can't get out. The hand of God is obviously at work.

MICHAEL(A). But what about all the rest of us? If you were in Hell, wouldn't it be a super specific awful dungeon pit with hot coals and flames built just for you? There's over three hundred people walking around still.

GERI/JERRY. "Hell is other people." Sartre said that.

MICHAEL(A). Who?

GERI/JERRY. Jean-Paul Sartre. In the play *No Exit*?

MICHAEL(A). You read French plays?

GERI/JERRY. Yes, I do. Believe it or not, I don't just read the Bible.

MICHAEL(A). Hey, I never said you did. Somebody is prejudging my judgment.

GERI/JERRY. You're right. That's lame.

MICHAEL(A). No worries. Okay, I think we're set up here. Inches marked on the ground, camera set up. I guess our next step is to follow it around the town to make sure it goes all the way around.

GERI/JERRY. If it isn't Hell, what do you think it is?

MICHAEL(A). Honestly, I don't know. Best guess? Some sort of inter-dimensional anomaly. Multidimensions have yet to be proven, but there are some very reputable scientists who believe they exist. There's a whole universe of what people call paranormal phenomena that will eventually be proven to exist as physical realities.

GERI/JERRY. *(A beat, then busts out laughing:)* Ah ha ha ha ha! Oh, my Lord, you're killing me!

MICHAEL(A). What?

GERI/JERRY. I mean, you don't believe what's in the Bible, but you're all over inter-dimensional anomalies! Awesome. Ah ha ha ha!

MICHAEL(A). Alright, alright. Point taken. Let's just get this research done.

(MICHAEL(A) leads GERI/JERRY off as the lights shift to MACKENZIE with STUDENT EIGHT, STUDENT ELEVEN, and STUDENT TWELVE. They are throwing rocks through windows. Glass breaks.)

STUDENT TWELVE. Nice one! Ten points for the one on the second floor over the living room.

MACKENZIE. You really want them to stop our in-home shopping sprees?

STUDENT EIGHT. You mean, like, jail?

MACKENZIE. That's what they mean when they say they want to vote on rules, genius. And no more tagging.

STUDENT ELEVEN. For real?

MACKENZIE. Truth.

STUDENT TWELVE. Sucks, man.

MACKENZIE. Let's break 'em while we can.

(MACKENZIE, STUDENT EIGHT, STUDENT ELEVEN, and STUDENT TWELVE hurl rocks at off-stage windows. More glass breaks.)

(Lights shift to GOVERNOR'S MANSION. ALEX talking to SKYLER, GIRTY/GENE, NICK(Y), and the rest of SKYLER'S group.)

ALEX. You think they're gonna let you stay in the Governor's Mansion? No way.

SKYLER. Dude, they're not going to take our fortress. In this alternate reality, this mansion represents one of our brains. We can control it. Get lost.

ALEX. Don't be so sure. Why wouldn't they? Maybe they'll take it for themselves when they elect themselves governor. Maybe that's part of the experiment.

SKYLER. Dude, go spread your conspiracy theories elsewhere. We have to reinforce our REM-induced brain fortress.

(Lights shift to school newspaper office. EDIE/EDDIE speaks to the audience as s/he broadcasts via the web.)

EDIE/EDDIE. This is the Charles M. Russell High School webcast for October 2nd. First order of business—the hard copy edition of the school paper will cease publication, effective immediately. All content will still be available on the web. Second, the vote to determine the future of Great Falls will take place in just three days. Student body president, Terrell Matthews, has designated the school gym as official polling place. At stake—the future of Great Falls. Will a new government be approved by the student body? Or will rebel factions succeed in preserving the current anarchic state? I'd like to intro-

duce Finley Redland, Student Council Secretary and vote monitor. Welcome, Finley.

(FINLEY enters.)

FINLEY. Thanks, Edie/Eddie. I just want to remind everybody that not voting does not count as a “No” vote—if you want to vote against the, quote, “New Government,” you gotta actually cast a vote.

EDIE/EDDIE. Thanks, Finley. See you at the elections!

(*Lights shift to Julie’s house. JULIE and BECKY talking.*)

JULIE. I’m really worried about this election. What happens if they actually say, “Yes, we want laws”? Is Terrell really going to lead everybody?

BECKY. I think he’ll be fine. Actually, I think he’ll be great.

JULIE. I want to think that. But I don’t know. Tom gets him so riled up, and then he loses control of the crowd. I mean, he was elected Senior Class President because everybody likes him, not because he has some great leadership skills, let’s be honest.

BECKY. Are you guys okay?

JULIE. Us? Absolutely! No, no, no, this isn’t about Terrell and me. This is just... I’m worried. You know I want him to be awesome, and he will be, I’m sure. I’m just...worried.

BECKY. Well, I wouldn’t be. You said it yourself, everybody likes Terrell. He’s smart, and he’s confident and he’s mega cute—super jealous.

JULIE. (*Laughs:*) Shut up.

BECKY. Truth. Anyway, he’s going to be fine. You’ll see.

JULIE. I hope so.

(*Lights shift to TOM talking to ANDI, BRIANNA, and other STUDENTS.*)

TOM. What’s most important to you right now? (*Interrupts her as she starts to speak:*) Besides the prom.

ANDI. Rude. The same thing that’s important to everybody. Equal rights. Not getting murdered. Freedom of speech. Getting our parents back.

BRIANNA. Yeah, that, too, I guess.

ANDI. Brianna!

BRIANNA. I’m just being honest.

TOM. If Terrell and Julie and those guys end up getting enough votes, they're gonna want to create the rules and the government and the rest of us will be screwed.

BRIANNA. How do you mean?

TOM. Those guys in charge? Are you kidding me?

ANDI. I don't think it will be that bad.

TOM. Have they listened to you about the prom?

ANDI. Well, no, but nobody listens to me about the prom except these guys.

TOM. Think about it. That's all I'm saying.

BRIANNA. I just remembered something!

TOM. What?

BRIANNA. You're gross. Get out!

(TOM exits as lights shift to gymnasium. All STUDENTS file in. They all hold their ballots. FINLEY and some ELECTION VOLUNTEERS, including MARTY, all wearing protective goggles, enter with plastic garbage cans. EDIE/EDDIE and CJ enter with their flipcam to cover the vote.)

EDIE/EDDIE. *(Into CJ's flipcam:)* We're here at the Charles M. Russell gym for the vote on whether or not to officially follow the laws as they stand in Great Falls, or to abandon them altogether. Finley Redland and the Election Committee have entered the gym. Let's watch.

FINLEY. Okay everybody! Time to vote. Prepare your ballots!

(All STUDENTS show their ballots, which we now realize are all paper airplanes.)

On your mark!

(All STUDENTS raise their ballots in unison.)

Get set!

(All STUDENTS shift their planes back in preparation for flight.)

Vote!

(All STUDENTS throw their paper airplane ballots toward FINLEY and the ELECTION VOLUNTEERS' trash cans. A cheer goes through the crowd. The ELECTION VOLUNTEERS immediately begin gathering the ballots that didn't make it into the cans.)

The results will be final in three hours!

(As the STUDENTS file out, JORDAN stands up on a bleacher to make an announcement.)

JORDAN. Hey everybody! Don't forget, we're starting classes today in about ten minutes. Anybody interested in math, we're meeting right here. The schedule's posted on the website. Oh, and if anybody knows where Mrs. Chenoweth hides the teachers' edition of the advanced biology textbook, let me know.

(JORDAN gets down off the bleacher as a handful of STUDENTS, including CHRIS, ANDI, and BRIANNA, gather around and set up a circle of chairs. TOM and his group saunter up.)

TOM. Are you kidding me?

JORDAN. Believe it or not, some people actually like school.

TOM. False. Well, okay, nerds do, but they're only like half a person, really. *(To BRIANNA and ANDI:)* Wait, what are you two doing here?

MACKENZIE. Learning to count 2-4-6-8! *(Cracks up.)*

BRIANNA. What? Because I'm a cheerleader I'm supposed to be stupid? I'm in AP Calc, dumbass! *(Hits MACKENZIE with her book bag.)*

TOM. Okay, okay, don't get all Lady Aggro on us. *(Super sarcastic:)* Have fun learning!

(TOM and his crew exit as lights shift to Julie's house. JULIE and TERRELL are playing video games. Guitar Hero? JULIE's doing very poorly. Video game noises.)

TERRELL. Schooled!

JULIE. I can't concentrate on this at all. How long does it take to count votes?

TERRELL. I don't know. With Finley in charge? A week at least.

JULIE. I really hope this goes the way we want it to.

TERRELL. Yeah, me, too.

JULIE. Terrell, seriously, what are you going to do if everybody votes for laws and government?

TERRELL. Lead.

JULIE. Terrell...

TERRELL. I mean it. I'll stop screwing around and lead. Put Tom and his dirtbag friends in their place and run this town.

JULIE. How?

TERRELL. Greg and some of his teammates will take care of them. They can be my security force.

JULIE. You're not serious. Beat them up?

TERRELL. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know. Don't touch your ex. Don't worry, Greg won't mess up his pretty face.

JULIE. You're as bad as he is.

TERRELL. Yeah, right. What did you ever see in that guy, anyway?

JULIE. Nothing. *(She gets up and paces around the room.)* It's so weird here by myself. I moved everything into the living room so I don't have to deal with the rest of the house. It's like I'm camping or something.

TERRELL. Well, you know, we could go camping together. You have a big house. We could totally fit my stuff in here.

JULIE. Uh, yeah, that's not happening.

TERRELL. Why not? I'll totally keep you company, and you won't have to worry about being here by yourself at night. And besides, we're the boss now. The bosses. We're in charge. Nobody's around to tell us we can't.

JULIE. I'm telling us we can't! You're not saying you'll move in here to keep me company, you're saying you'll move in here to *(Air quotes:)* 'keep me company.' And I'm not doing that just because you're the last boyfriend on Earth.

TERRELL. But what about the future? What about future generations?

JULIE. Terrell, our parents have been gone for a month! I'm going to need a little bit more evidence about what's happening before I start repopulating the planet.

TERRELL. Epic end of the world cohabitation fail.

JULIE. You'll live. Actually, I think Becky is going to move in here with me. Hand me my phone. I want to see if the results are in.

(TERRELL hands JULIE her phone. Lights shift to school newspaper office. EDIE/EDDIE, talking to HAYDEN, broadcasts via the web.)

EDIE/EDDIE. Hello and welcome to "Who's Who At the End of the World Just In Case It's Not Really Over!" where I interview students from Charles M. Russell High School just in case...well, just in case. I'm Edie/Eddie, and this is Hayden.

HAYDEN. Hi everybody!

EDIE/EDDIE. Hayden, how would most people know you at CMR?

HAYDEN. I'm a band geek in the brass section.

EDIE/EDDIE. Oh, do you play trumpet? My friend Mark plays trumpet in the band.

HAYDEN. Uh, no. I play coronet. There's a difference.

EDIE/EDDIE. Okay... So it's okay to call the band members "geeks"?

HAYDEN. Uh, no. It's okay for the band members to call *themselves* geeks. Same with the drama club and the AV group. Self-applied labels are okay. But other people calling us geeks or, even worse, nerds, is unacceptable.

EDIE/EDDIE. That brings up a good point. What's the difference between geeks and nerds?

HAYDEN. Are you kidding? Geeks are people who are super into something, like enthusiasts or, some might say, zealots. Nerds are just... *(Non-verbal dismissive noise.)*

(FINLEY enters.)

FINLEY. Hey, we're done counting!

(CJ enters and removes a protesting HAYDEN. EDIE/EDDIE pulls FINLEY to the webcam.)

EDIE/EDDIE. We have breaking news to report. According to the vote monitor, Finley, all the votes have been counted and the results are in. Finley, what can you tell us?

FINLEY. Out of three hundred fifty one votes, pro new government got two hundred ninety eight, and anti new government got fifty-three. So the motion passes by majority rule, and everyone should meet at the gym tomorrow at 10 A.M. for the next steps.

EDIE/EDDIE. Thanks Finley! And awesome job on the paper airplane vote!

FINLEY. Just because we're voting doesn't mean it has to be boring.

EDIE/EDDIE. Okay, see everybody at the gym tomorrow at 10 A.M.!

(Lights shift to gym. All STUDENTS enter. TOM and his group gather together at one end of the gym, the rest at the other. TERRELL gets up on the bleacher with the bullhorn and speaks to the crowd.)

TERRELL. Hey everybody. So, it looks like the majority of us want to try and figure out some new form of government...

TOM. Hey, Terrell, we didn't elect you president. Who put you in charge?

CHRIS. Let him speak!

BECKY. Shut up, Tom!

MACKENZIE. Why should he shut up? He's got just as much right to tell people what to do as that nobody.

JULIE. Okay, who wants Terrell to lead the meeting? Raise your hands.

(A majority of STUDENTS raise their hands.)

I'd say that's a majority, and majority rules. Go ahead, Terrell.

TERRELL. If we're going to try and set up rules and stuff like that, we need people to do it. So I guess we need to elect some people to do that.

(TOM and his group respond with a round of "Boos," and the rest of the STUDENTS try to shout them down. JULIE gets up on the riser and takes the bullhorn.)

JULIE. Who thinks we should elect a cabinet of people to form the new government? Raise your hands.

(A majority of STUDENTS raise their hands.)

Awesome. Here... *(Hands the bullhorn back to TERRELL.)*

TERRELL. Okay, anybody have any suggestions as to how we do this?

CHRIS. I think we should just approve the Student Council as it stands to be the cabinet. I mean, we elected them already, right?

SKYLER. Yeah, but I would have voted for somebody else if I knew they were going to rule the last three hundred people on Earth.

(General agreement from the CROWD.)

FINLEY. If I may—I say anyone who wants to run should stop by the election office, also known as Mrs. Fox's room, and officially declare their candidacy by the end of the day. Tell me what office you want to run for, then we'll put out a ballot, and vote.

(JULIE starts to ask for a show of hands, but TERRELL interrupts her.)

TERRELL. Can we get a show of hands on that? All in favor?

(A majority of the STUDENTS raise their hands.)

Okay, Finley, you're on. Ballots by?

FINLEY. Day after tomorrow.

TERRELL. Cool. Thanks everybody!

(The STUDENTS disperse. JULIE, BECKY, GREG, and TERRELL hang back. BRIANNA, ANDI, and their friends pass them on their way out.)

BRIANNA. Girl, you should totally run for president.

JULIE. Me?

BRIANNA. Totes. You totally killed Tom and his whole ridiculousness. They listen to you. Well, as much as they listen to anyone. Later! *(Exits.)*

BECKY. Hey, I'm going to go load up my car and bring my stuff over.

JULIE. Cool. Keys are under that fake rock in the back yard.

BECKY. Got it.

GREG. I'll help you.

BECKY. Oh, okay, sure. Thanks!

(BECKY and GREG exit.)

JULIE. Hmmmm. Love is in the air. So that went okay.

TERRELL. Yeah, right.

JULIE. Don't worry about Tom. He's totally outnumbered.

TERRELL. I'm not worried about Tom. Why did you have to jump in like that?

JULIE. Like what?

TERRELL. Like I can't handle Tom and his loser friends. Every time he opens his mouth, you jump in and smack him down.

JULIE. I'm just trying to help.

TERRELL. I know. I just look like a...whatever.

JULIE. Terrell, don't be like that.

TERRELL. I'm not. Sorry. I'm just...I have to be honest, I was hoping that whole 'keep the current Student Council' thing was going to happen.

JULIE. *(Realizes:)* You don't want to have to run again.

TERRELL. No, I don't. I mean, who else could do it? I know everybody in the school. Well, almost everybody. I got elected once. I'm obviously the most popular candidate.

JULIE. You *were* the most popular candidate. People want different stuff now. Things change.

TERRELL. You mean Tom.

JULIE. No, I mean...things. Other things. Like, maybe I *should* run.

TERRELL. What?

JULIE. Well, I mean, you said it yourself. I did kind of calm the whole thing down just now.

TERRELL. You're gonna run for president against me?

JULIE. Well, not just you. I mean, I'm sure other people will want to run, too.

TERRELL. Yeah, but they're not my girlfriend. What are you doing?

JULIE. Terrell, this is important. We have to elect the best people for the job. We don't know what's going to happen down the road, and knowing everybody isn't really a qualification for running things.

TERRELL. The best people for the job? You don't think I'm the best person for the job.

JULIE. Well...no. Honestly, I don't. But that isn't a slam against you...

TERRELL. It's not? Then what is it?

JULIE. It's just...the truth. Look, you were elected once, but you ran on a platform of "More candy machines in the caf." And you did that because your dad owns a concessions company. It was a joke to you. You have a ton of money, and a lot of friends, and more importantly a lot more people who want to be your friend because you have a pool. I mean, come on, be honest about this. (TERRELL *is silent.*) Terrell, I'm not saying this to be mean. But it's time to speak the truth, don't you think?

TERRELL. (A *beat.*) Do not run against me.

JULIE. Terrell...

TERRELL. Don't do it. I'm warning you.

JULIE. (A *beat.*) You don't get to talk to me like that. (They *stare at each other. It's a standoff.*) I'm running.

TERRELL. Fine. Have fun in your house with Becky. I'm sure she'll be able to stop any murderers that break in.

(TERRELL *exits as BECKY enters.*)

BECKY. Hey, forgot my backpack.

JULIE. Terrell, that's horrible!

BECKY. Whoa, what's that all about?

JULIE. Nothing.

(JULIE and BECKY exit as lights shift to School newspaper office. EDIE/EDDIE introduces the CANDIDATES who appear in different places on stage making political speeches to the audience.)

EDIE/EDDIE. This is the Charles M. Russell High School webcast, election edition. There's a crowded field of candidates for this election, with different platforms, promises and, in some cases, bribes. Check out some of their campaign videos.

KASEY. What was important then? Popularity? Looks? Money? Status? And what's important now? Skills and knowledge. Knowledge of certain students. Knowledge of, say, why Kelly missed school that week. That must be worth a vote, right Kelly? Or how Chance managed to get that 'A' in Chem Lab without studying for one second. How about it, Chance? Do I have your vote?

SKYLER. This school, er, world, needs someone with a level head, and encyclopedic knowledge of the locations and functions of all secret government laboratories and experimental defense programs. And I'm just that paranoid!

CANDIDATE ONE. If I'm elected, everybody gets a free house. They can totally pick any house in town—for free!

(TERRELL has GREG by his side.)

GREG. Vote for this guy! Do it!

TERRELL. You know me. I'm the Senior Class President. You already voted for me once. I'm your man! Let's do this!

CANDIDATE TWO. If I'm elected, we'll bring back school!

CANDIDATE THREE. If I'm elected school will be closed forever!

TOM. We're gonna burn down the school! Don't vote for me! Don't vote for anyone! We don't need government! We need anarchy!

(CHRIS enters.)

CHRIS. Do you even know what anarchy means?

TOM. It means everyone does whatever they want.

CHRIS. No, it means self-rule in the context of a shared commitment to freely evolve individual morality with a goal of non-violence and a collective functional society based on principled behavior.

TOM. *(A beat.)* Whatever, loser.

JULIE. I don't have any fancy speech planned. You know who I am. I'm just a girl who wants what's best for Great Falls. I want what's best for everyone, even those people who aren't going to vote for me. I don't think we have to act like a gang of criminals just because no one says we can't. I think our families are going to come home some day, and I want them to be proud of how we handled everything while they were gone. If that sounds good to you, then—

ALL CANDIDATES. (*Unison:*) Vote for me!

(*Lights shift to Wall of Light. TOM, MACKENZIE, STUDENT SEVEN, STUDENT EIGHT, STUDENT NINE, STUDENT TEN, STUDENT ELEVEN, STUDENT TWELVE, ALEX, ROSE/ROSS, and other STUDENTS from TOM's crew hang out at the Wall of Light.*)

TOM. Look at this. (*Throws a rock into the light:*) You can just throw stuff in there.

MACKENZIE. I wonder if it burns up.

ALEX. It's probably a door to another dimension, and somebody's getting hit in the head with rocks that come out of nowhere.

(*ALL laugh and throw more rocks into the Wall of Light.*)

ROSE/ROSS. I wonder if anybody will actually vote for you.

TOM. I hope so.

MACKENZIE. First law—Terrell gets the electric chair.

(*ALL laugh. JORDAN enters.*)

JORDAN. Hey!

TOM. Hey yourself. What do you want?

JORDAN. You have my stuff! And I want it back!

MACKENZIE. What stuff?

JORDAN. You know what stuff. Those clothes you took out of my house! My parents' jewelry. You're wearing one of my dad's rings! Give it back!

TOM. Okay, calm down. Jordan, right?

JORDAN. Yeah.

TOM. Now, Jordan, did you see Mackenzie take this stuff?

JORDAN. Yeah, I did. Right in front of me. And s/he laughed in my face when I told him/her to stop.

TOM. Mackenzie, did you take Jordan's stuff?

MACKENZIE. I did not.

JORDAN. You're lying!

TOM. Now, Jordan, Mackenzie says s/he didn't take your stuff. And without other witnesses, I think you're basically out of luck. Look, Mackenzie will promise never to take anything else from your house—

MACKENZIE. I will?

TOM. So you don't have to worry about it any more, and you can just call it even and not have to get your butt kicked in front of everybody.

JORDAN. No! That's my family's stuff, that's my dad's ring, and I want it back! Give it to me, right now, or I swear, you'll be sorry!

MACKENZIE. Yeah? And how's that gonna happen?

(ALEX shoves JORDAN into MACKENZIE. They struggle for a moment, but MACKENZIE gets JORDAN in a headlock.)

JORDAN. Let go of me!

MACKENZIE. I warned you.

TOM. *(Laughs:)* Throw him/her into the light!

(MACKENZIE drags JORDAN over near the Wall of Light and holds him/her dangerously close to it. Everyone else laughs and cheers them on.)

MACKENZIE. Is that what you want? Huh?

JORDAN. *(Struggling:)* Let go of me!

TOM. *(Laughing:)* Do it! Exploratory mission! First one into the light!

MACKENZIE. You wanna go? Huh? You that brave?

JORDAN. *(Struggling even harder:)* I said let go!

MACKENZIE. Did you just try to scratch me?!

(JORDAN and MACKENZIE struggle against each other even harder, until MACKENZIE half pushes, half lets go and JORDAN flies backwards into the light and disappears. Silence. Everyone is stunned.)

ROSE/ROSS. What did you just do?

(Blackout.)

End of Act I

ACT II

(Lights up on gym. All STUDENTS except Tom, Mackenzie, Student Seven, Student Eight, Student Nine, Student Ten, Student Eleven, Student Twelve, Alex, Rose/Ross, and Jordan enter. They all hold ballots. FINLEY and the ELECTION VOLUNTEERS once again enter with the plastic garbage cans.)

FINLEY. I declare this election open for bidness. Please prepare your ballots.

(All STUDENTS crumple their ballots into balls.)

Aaaaaand...vote!

(Cheering, all STUDENTS toss their ballots toward the ELECTION VOLUNTEERS, who try to catch them in the garbage cans. Some try jump shots, some run up and slam-dunk, some just toss them. FINLEY and the ELECTION VOLUNTEERS scramble to gather up all the ballots.)

Election results will be finalized in two days!

(The STUDENTS begin to file out. BRIANNA and ANDI approach JULIE and BECKY.)

BRIANNA. Girl, you are totally going to take this!

ANDI. I voted for you!

JULIE. Thanks you guys!

ANDI. I sensed that you were pro-prom. I have a knack for spotting prom people, and you definitely ping prom. *(Semi-threatening:)* You are prom people, right?

JULIE. Uh, yes, absolutely. Team Prom all the way!

ANDI. Excellent! Good luck! *(As she exits:)* Who wants to be on the prom committee?

JULIE. I had no idea you were running for the cabinet.

BRIANNA. Yeah, I figured why not? Could be fun. I gotta go. I'm helping Jordan set up for class.

JULIE. Later.

(BRIANNA exits.)

BECKY. You might actually win this!

JULIE. I know. Crazy, huh?

BECKY. I'm going to go wish Terrell good luck. *(Off JULIE's look:)* I know, I know. But he's a friend, I want to be nice.

JULIE. And Greg just happens to be over there.

BECKY. So not that. See you back at home.

(BRIANNA crosses over to TERRELL, GREG, and CHRIS congratulating KENDALL.)

TERRELL. Good luck with the VP spot, Kendall.

KENDALL. Thanks! If I get it, I'll be the GLBTVP!

GREG. Dude, you got this!

TERRELL. You think?

CHRIS. Yeah, absolutely. Julie's nice and all, but a ton of people really like you. Most everybody I know said they're voting for you.

TERRELL. That would be sweet.

BECKY. Hey, guys.

GREG. Hey, Becky.

TERRELL. Visiting the enemy camp?

BECKY. Ha ha. I was just coming over to wish you luck. You did a good job campaigning.

TERRELL. Thanks. I appreciate it. Really.

BECKY. You're welcome. Okay, I gotta hit the store and then get home.

GREG. You need help?

BECKY. Sure! My car's out front.

GREG. Later, bud!

TERRELL. See you guys later.

(BECKY and GREG exit. BRIANNA enters and moves over to JULIE.)

BRIANNA. Hey, have you seen Jordan?

JULIE. Um, not today I don't think. Why?

BRIANNA. *(Calls over to TERRELL and CHRIS:)* Hey, Terrell, Chris, have you seen Jordan?

(TERRELL and CHRIS move over to JULIE and BRIANNA.)

TERRELL. No, why?

BRIANNA. S/he didn't show up for class. That's not like him/her.

TERRELL. That's weird. I don't remember seeing him/her at the election, but I wouldn't have been looking for him/her.

BRIANNA. (*Grabs CHRIS:*) Come on, let's go check at his/her house.

(*BRIANNA and CHRIS exit.*)

(*Lights shift to Wall of Light. TOM, MACKENZIE, STUDENT SEVEN, STUDENT EIGHT, STUDENT NINE, STUDENT TEN, STUDENT ELEVEN, STUDENT TWELVE, ALEX, ROSE/ROSS, and the rest of TOM's group are in the exact positions from the end of Act I—the scene takes place seconds after Jordan was thrown through the light.*)

ROSE/ROSS. What did you do?!

MACKENZIE. I didn't do anything! S/he wouldn't stop fighting me!

ROSE/ROSS. You threw her/him out!

MACKENZIE. I didn't throw her/him out!

ROSE/ROSS. (*To TOM:*) You told him/her to!

TOM. What?! That was a joke! I was joking!

MACKENZIE. You told me to! You said "First one into the light"!

TOM. I didn't tell you to do anything! I told Jordan to leave. (*To ALEX:*) You shoved him/her into Mac. You started the whole thing!

ALEX. Don't blame me!

(*ROSE/ROSS moves closer to the Wall of Light.*)

ROSE/ROSS. What do you think happened to him/her?

MACKENZIE. (*Moves closer:*) I'm sure s/he's fine.

ROSE/ROSS. (*Moves away:*) Get away from me!

MACKENZIE. What? You think I'm going to throw you through there, too?

(*EVERYONE takes a step back away from MACKENZIE.*)

I didn't throw him/her! It was an accident!

TOM. We're not saying it's not.

MACKENZIE. Then why are you all backing up? And by the way, good riddance to that freak. S/he was bugging the crap out of me even before this stupid... light...whatever.

ROSE/ROSS. We have to tell somebody.

MACKENZIE. Don't even think about it!

ROSE/ROSS. We can't just let him/her disappear!

TOM. Mac's right. If we tell somebody, they're all going to think Mac did this on purpose, and then they're all going to start looking at us like we're criminals or something. Do you really want them on your back after they win this "election"?

ROSE/ROSS. No. I guess not.

MACKENZIE. Then keep your mouth shut! All of you! If I hear that any of you said a word about this, we're gonna have a problem!

TOM. Mac, calm down.

MACKENZIE. Don't tell me what to do! I'm sick of you acting like our fearless leader, so just back off and leave me alone! (*Exits.*)

TOM. (*To EVERYONE else:*) Just...keep this quiet. Deal?

(*EVERYONE except ROSE/ROSS nods.*)

Deal?

ROSE/ROSS. Fine. Deal.

(*Lights shift to gym. JULIE and TERRELL are now left alone on stage.*)

JULIE. Terrell...

TERRELL. Remember that time when we were sophomores and neither of us had our drivers license yet? And we all decided to sneak out and take my mom's car after everybody was asleep?

JULIE. (*Laughs:*) I do remember that.

TERRELL. Your face when you couldn't get it out of neutral when we were rolling it out of the driveway was hilarious.

JULIE. Oh, my gosh, I was so panicked! And you guys were just standing there in the driveway with your mouths open when the car got away from you, watching me roll backwards down that hill. I thought I was dead! I was going to roll into a pole or into the lake or something and die.

TERRELL. I was looking at the school paper for the end of that year last night. The 'Most Memorable Moments' issue. Remember how we had to write our most memorable moments in code because Mrs. Keaton wouldn't let them print a moment that was illegal?

JULIE. Ha! Yes!

TERRELL. Funny. I realized last night that we don't have to sneak any more. We can do anything we want in the world...well, except leave Great Falls. But anything we were gonna do in our senior year? We can just do without worrying about getting caught.

JULIE. I know.

TERRELL. And that makes me really sad. I don't hate you, Julie. And I'm not mad at you for running for President. I guess I'm just sad about a lot of things lately. And I'm a guy, so that comes out as being a huge jerk. So, I apologize.

JULIE. Apology accepted.

TERRELL. Well, time to go home and wait for the results. See you back here in a couple days. (*Holds his hand out to shake:*) And may the best man win.

JULIE. (*Shakes his hand:*) May the best person win.

TERRELL. I stand corrected.

(*TERRELL exits, then JULIE exits. Lights shift to school newspaper office. EDIE/EDDIE, talking to webcam with DARBY.*)

EDIE/EDDIE. This is the Charles M. Russell High School webcast for October 15. Today on "Who's Who At the End of the World Just In Case It's Not Really Over!" I have Darby, who you might recognize from working in the cafeteria.

DARBY. Hi everybody.

EDIE/EDDIE. Okay, Darby, first question—Best side dish in the cafeteria? Pizza rolls, or tater tots.

DARBY. Oh, tots all the way. I mean, pizza rolls are like...always pizza. But tots can be whatever you want them to be. You can put cheese on them—cheddar tots. Put salsa on them—Mexicali tots. Honestly, the variations are endless.

EDIE/EDDIE. And how do you think you did in the election today?

DARBY. I think I killed it! My campaign strategy was—

(*FINLEY enters.*)

FINLEY. I have the election results!

(*CJ enters and pulls a protesting DARBY off camera. FINLEY steps in.*)

EDIE/EDDIE. We have breaking news! Election monitor, Finley, has just informed me the election results are in! As you recall, there were eight spots on the governing committee in addition to President and VP. Finley, what can you tell us?

FINLEY. With all the votes counted, the new President of Great Falls is—

(*Lights shift to JULIE center stage.*)

JULIE. After that day, Terrell and I broke up. At the time it seemed like it was for the best. But it really sucked not to have him around, to be honest. The elections were super close. But at the end of the day, the people spoke. And the New Government was put in charge.

(Lights shift to short scenes all over town.)

(Grocery store. MACKENZIE comes out of the store with a bag full of food. TERRELL and GREG, dressed as police officers, appear and grab him/her roughly.)

MACKENZIE. Sweet haul!

TERRELL. Nice try, Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE. Get your hands off me!

GREG. No can do, dillweed. You can't just grab whatever you want. All food is distributed from the food banks. You know that.

MACKENZIE. What are ya gonna do? Put me in jail?

TERRELL. Yup.

(TERRELL and GREG drag a protesting MACKENZIE off.)

(Lights shift to school newspaper office. EDIE/EDDIE is talking to the webcam with ANDI.)

EDIE/EDDIE. This is the Charles M. Russell High School webcast for December 11. Today on "Who's Who At the End of the World Just In Case It's Not Really Over!" I have Andi. Andi, how would most people know you?

ANDI. Most people would know me because I'm awesome.

EDIE/EDDIE. Okay...

ANDI. And the president and/or captain and/or co-captain of at least twenty groups, committees and sports teams over my four years at Charles M. Russell High School.

EDIE/EDDIE. Impressive.

ANDI. I know, right? But the reason I'm here today is to inform the public of a very important subject that the President's cabinet has thus far refused to address. I'm of course speaking of the prom!

(Pulls out a visual aid—a collage of prom images and "America's Got Prom." NOTE: Prom theme may be changed to reflect current pop culture.)

"America's Got Prom"! Okay, yes, food rationing is important and whatever, but the prom! Just because we may be the last people on earth, doesn't mean we should be robbed of a rite of passage for ev-

ery American teenager. I, and the committee, will of course consider other prom themes as long as they're as great as this.

(KENDALL enters.)

KENDALL. Hey, I need to talk to you.

(CJ enters and hustles a protesting ANDI off.)

EDIE/EDDIE. Is this an exclusive for our viewers?

KENDALL. (Hands EDIE/EDDIE a piece of paper:) What's this?

EDIE/EDDIE. An editorial about the negative repercussions of the President's cabinet's decision to reopen the school for classes.

KENDALL. It's voluntary! You don't even have to go!

EDIE/EDDIE. I understand that. But the writer of that piece has some really good points.

KENDALL. "Anonymous"?

EDIE/EDDIE. Freedom of the press, Mr/s. Vice President. It's the cornerstone of America.

KENDALL. The cabinet isn't happy about this. (Exits.)

(FINLEY enters.)

FINLEY. What's that all about?

EDIE/EDDIE. The cabinet is displeased with your article.

FINLEY. Then I did my job! (They high five.)

(Lights shift. TOM, STUDENT SEVEN, STUDENT EIGHT, STUDENT NINE, STUDENT TEN, STUDENT ELEVEN, STUDENT TWELVE, ALEX, ROSE/ROSS, and some other students in TOM's group hang out.)

TOM. They busted Mackenzie.

ROSE/ROSS. For what? Shoving Jordan through the light?

TOM. No, and shut up about that! It was an accident, and it's not going to happen again, anyway. Mac is in (Air quotes:) "custody."

ALEX. For what?

TOM. Stealing food, which is impossible if the store's just open and no one's there. That's just getting supplies.

ALEX. Man, that sucks out loud.

TOM. This is friggin' ridonkulous! I didn't vote for these guys, I don't care about their stupid rules! I'm not gonna sit here and bow down before the almighty seventeen year old President of Great Falls.

ALEX. You can't sit and bow at the same time...

(The group, except ROSE/ROSS, laughs.)

TOM. Shut up! You guys are with me on this, right?

GROUP. Yes! Absolutely! Etc.

TOM. Then I declare that we're seceding from Great Falls! We're our own country, with our own rules and my first decree as the non-leader of our new country is the President and the cabinet of Great Falls can bite me!

GROUP. *(Cheers.)*

(Lights shift to Governor's Mansion. GIRTY/GENE and NICK(Y) have pulled some of the boards off the window of the mansion. SKYLER confronts them.)

SKYLER. Why are you pulling the boards off the windows?! You're wrecking our perfect fortress.

GIRTY/GENE. It's been months! There's no way we're living in someone's brain. We need to be able to open the windows occasionally, let some fresh air in. It smells like the bio lab in here.

NICK(Y). The only thing coming toward the house is that light anyway.

SKYLER. Right, that light that mysteriously appeared and is getting closer and closer and no one knows what it is but everyone is too afraid to walk through it? That light? Yeah, that should be no problem if it gets in through the windows and into your consciousness...

GIRTY/GENE. *(A beat.)* Fresh air is overrated. Hit me up with that hammer.

(BRIANNA enters.)

BRIANNA. Hey, guys.

SKYLER. See? People can just walk right in. Perfect.

BRIANNA. Skyler, I need your help. Normally I think you're pretty much a complete whack job, but I'm starting to think you're the only one who might take this seriously.

SKYLER. And that is?

BRIANNA. Jordan's been missing for months now, and not just missing, but vanished. Like, there's no trace of him/her. No body, no note, nothing. It's like s/he just disappeared off the face of the Earth.

SKYLER. And you want us to investigate.

BRIANNA. Yeah, could you?

SKYLER. Well, we'll take your request under advisement and let you know our decision as soon as possible.

BRIANNA. Please, just be normal.

SKYLER. Okay, okay. Yes, we'll see what we can find.

BRIANNA. Thanks, guys. I appreciate it.

(Lights shift to Wall of Light. GERI/JERRY and MICHAEL(A) sitting in front of the Wall of Light.)

MICHAEL(A). It's sort of cool what it does when it moves over something solid, like that house over there.

GERI/JERRY. Sort of cuts it in half. I wonder if the rest of the house is on the other side? Or if it's just...nothing.

MICHAEL(A). Did you have to move yet?

GERI/JERRY. Yeah, it got to my house a couple days ago. I moved in with Heather. You?

MICHAEL(A). No, but I'll probably have to soon. It's like it's pushing us closer to the school. Funny, we couldn't wait to get out of school, and now something's pushing us back in.

GERI/JERRY. *(A beat.)* Why don't you believe in God?

MICHAEL(A). Who says I don't believe in God? I believe in God... just not for everything. According to most Christians I know, God's greatest gift to man was free will, so I have to believe that people, not God, are responsible for some things. Why don't you believe in science?

GERI/JERRY. *(Laughs:)* I do believe in science, just not for everything.

MICHAEL(A). Touché. So if you believe in science, how old is the Earth?

GERI/JERRY. *(Laughs:)* I'm not going to get into that debate with you. But I will say, regardless of how old it is, I can't look at the Earth and think that God didn't create all this, or at least get it all started. God invented science, you know.

MICHAEL(A). That is the beginning of an argument—

GERI/JERRY. Discussion.

MICHAEL(A). Discussion that could go around in circles all day long and never come to a consensus.

GERI/JERRY. I know. Fun, isn't it?

(SKYLER, GIRTY/GENE, and NICK(Y) enter. They are taking notes, photos and video.)

SKYLER. Make sure to get a good shot from the ground up, so we can see how high it is.

(GIRTY/GENE lies on the ground and takes a photo of the Wall of Light.)

MICHAEL(A). What's up?

SKYLER. Missing person. Jordan, been gone for months. We're gathering evidence. I'm pretty sure this light has something to do with it.

MICHAEL(A). Think s/he's on the other side?

SKYLER. Don't know yet, but that's our best guess. Maybe s/he's been deleted by our memory, but they didn't do a good enough job and there's memory fragments still in place.

GERI/JERRY. Actually, I was thinking we're all characters in some novel or screenplay, and the writer decided to edit him/her out.

SKYLER / GIRTY/GENE / NICK(Y). *(A beat.)* Oooh, good one...

(SKYLER, GIRTY/GENE, and NICK(Y) move on and exit.)

MICHAEL(A). Nice. Didn't think you had it in you.

GERI/JERRY. Quick, take a picture—Christian with a sense of humor. I'll let you in on a little secret—sometimes I use sarcasm, too.

MICHAEL(A). I promise I won't tell. I wonder if s/he went through the light. Man, I wish s/he would have told us first. Nobody's willing to walk through it, and we could have tied a rope on him/her.

GERI/JERRY. That's really sympathetic of you.

MICHAEL(A). You know what I mean.

GERI/JERRY. I wonder what Jordan thought was on the other side of this.

MICHAEL(A). Heaven, maybe?

GERI/JERRY. Or nothing. Maybe Jordan just wanted it to be over. We should get going.

(GERI/JERRY and MICHAEL(A) exit.)

(Lights shift to gym—six months after the election. KASEY, SKYLER, KENDALL, DARBY, HAYDEN, CHRIS, SYDNEY, FRESHMAN ONE, and BRIANNA enter for a meeting of the New Government. They will all sit at a large table facing the crowd. EDIE/EDDIE and CJ, carrying a camera or laptop, enter to cover the meeting for the press. S/he sets up the camera so the webcam can broadcast the meeting. ANDI, members of the PROM

COMMITTEE, GERI/JERRY, MICHAEL(A), and other interested STUDENTS enter as attendees to the meeting. They will all sit in front or to the side of the Cabinet's table.)

EDIE/EDDIE. (*To webcam:*) This is the live Congressional Broadcast for April 15. We're coming to you live from the Charles M. Russell gymnasium. The President's cabinet has arrived, so the meeting should be starting any minute.

SKYLER. Where's the President?

KASEY. It's been six months. You still haven't figured out they're late every meeting?

CHRIS. We should start. The Vice President is here, s/he can run the meeting. It's in the bylaws.

KENDALL. I'm not going to run the meeting. We're two minutes behind. You'll live.

(JULIE enters.)

JULIE. Sorry. I had to stop by the grocery store. Somebody broke in and stole food again.

CHRIS. There's a committee to handle that.

KENDALL. You don't have to go running to every crisis in town. That's not your job.

JULIE. I know, I just feel like I was elected, so I have to be there.

CHRIS. Let's get started. As the Secretary I hereby call this meeting of the Governing Committee of Great Falls to order. Please take your seats.

(*The CABINET MEMBERS sit.*)

Are there any opening statements to be made? No? Then first up is the Investigation Committee, Geri/Jerry and Michael(a).

(GERI/JERRY and MICHAEL(A) step up and position themselves to address the Cabinet.)

MICHAEL(A). We don't have a lot to report, except the obvious. The light is moving inward, toward the school. I gave the info to Brianna to do the math.

BRIANNA. (*Consulting her paperwork:*) At this rate, if it doesn't stop, we have fifty-eight days until the light meets in the middle.

(*Everyone takes a moment for this to sink in.*)

SKYLER. Well, unless they stop the experiment before then.

KASEY. They who?

JULIE. So what does that mean? What do we do when it pushes us all together and we can't go any further?

MICHAEL(A). We don't know.

GERI/JERRY. Pray.

MICHAEL(A). Okay, pray. And we don't know. We found out today someone named Jordan may have gone through the light months ago. But no sign of him/her, so we can't really gather any data from that.

(ANDI stands up and approaches the Cabinet's table.)

ANDI. I think this is the perfect time to discuss the next item on the agenda!

CHRIS. Andi, we have a protocol -

ANDI. Oh, shush. Now, as you know, I'm the head of the Prom Committee, and we've been trying for months, let me repeat, *for months*, to get your attention on this issue. And now it looks like we're running out of time, and I'm going to have to take matters into my own hands.

CHRIS. The cabinet recognizes Andi.

ANDI. This prom isn't just about having a prom. It isn't just about decorating the gym. It isn't about dressing up, although I do have a killer dress this year. This prom is about doing something that's just...normal. Wouldn't that be awesome? Wouldn't it be cool to have just one night to dress up, and dance, and sing along to songs, and make out with somebody and stop thinking about what's on the other side of that light, or where did everybody go, or how much food can I get at the distribution center? Okay, yes, before everything happened I couldn't wait for the prom because I was pretty sure I was going to be crowned queen. But this prom could mean so much more to everybody this time, and not just the popular kids. If we're going out in fifty days or whatever Brianna said, don't we owe it to the kids who would never have gone out, let alone to a dance, don't we owe it to them to make this something special? Shouldn't they have one night where it doesn't matter how much money their parents had? Or how much they weigh? Or who they're dating? Let's have one night where we put it all aside. Cliques didn't end when the world did. But we can end them for one night. I know if I only have fifty days left, I want them to count. I want them to count for everybody. So let's do that. *(A beat.)* I'm done.

(The Cabinet and onlookers applaud.)

JULIE. Thanks Andi. That was really great! Let's have a prom!

ALL IN CABINET. Second!

CHRIS. Motioned and seconded. All in favor?

ALL IN CABINET. Aye!

CHRIS. Motion passes unanimously. Congratulations, Andi. You got it!

ANDI. Yes!!! Ohmygosh guys, you will not be disappointed! Oh, this is so exciting. *(To the PROM COMMITTEE:)* What are you doing just standing there?! Get to work! We have less than two months! Go! Go! Go!

(ANDI and the PROM COMMITTEE exit.)

CHRIS. Is there any other new business?

(TERRELL and GREG enter, dragging TOM with them. STUDENT SEVEN, STUDENT EIGHT, STUDENT NINE, STUDENT TEN, STUDENT ELEVEN, STUDENT TWELVE, ALEX, ROSE/ROSS, and a handful of other students from TOM's crew follow. Everyone is arguing loudly. Finally CHRIS quiets them.)

Quiet! Quiet down! We will have order here! This is the cabinet of the President!

JULIE. What happened?

TERRELL. We arrested him on suspicion of pushing Jordan through the light.

TOM. That's not true and you know it!

TERRELL. Not according to your friend here.

TOM. S/he doesn't know what s/he's talking about.

JULIE. What did you see?

ROSE/ROSS. Jordan came over to get his/her stuff back that Mackenzie stole. They started fighting, and Alex shoved Jordan into Mac. Mackenzie dragged Jordan over near the light. Then Tom told Mac to do it, and Mac shoved Jordan through the light.

ALEX. You are so lying!

JULIE. And Jordan just disappeared?

ROSE/ROSS. Yeah. S/he never came back.

(EVERYONE reacts with shock.)

BRIANNA. You killed him/her!

(BRIANNA charges across the room and attacks TOM. DARBY and CHRIS race over and help pull her off.)

KENDALL. I want to clear the room! If you're not part of the cabinet, please wait outside!

(The ATTENDEES start filing out, leaving TERRELL, GREG, TOM, ALEX, ROSE/ROSS, and the CABINET behind.)

EDIE/EDDIE. You can't kick me out. I'm the press!

KENDALL. We're allowed to have closed door sessions. Please wait outside.

EDIE/EDDIE. Under protest! *(Exits.)*

CHRIS. Noted.

TOM. Perfect. The President and her boyfriend conspiring against the President's ex behind closed doors. Democracy at work!

JULIE. You're sure you saw this happen?

ROSE/ROSS. Absolutely.

ALEX. Traitor!

TOM. You have no authority over me! You're not the President! You're just some girl I dumped. And you're not cops, you're just kids from school. And when I get out of here, my friends and I are going to tear this school apart and there's nothing your little government can do about it!

JULIE. Can I just talk to him for a second? If they let you go, are you gonna run?

GREG. He can try.

TOM. No.

JULIE. Alright, come here.

(GREG and TERRELL reluctantly let TOM go. JULIE pulls him over to the other side of the room for privacy.)

JULIE. What are you doing?

TOM. I've seceded from your oppressive regime.

JULIE. Oh, shut up. Tom, what are you doing? Why are you doing this? Are you really trying to undermine this cabinet, and my authority, because I dumped you? Are you still holding on to that? Three years, Tom. It's been three years. Get over it.

TOM. You are so up your own butt over this. Still! They may have voted, and you may think you're the President of Great Falls or the world or whatever. But you're still the most self-centered person I've ever met.

JULIE. How so? Please, thrill me with your analysis of my up-my-own-buttiness.

TOM. First of all, I dumped you. Let's remember that.

JULIE. Okay, fine. Point for you. Good job.

TOM. I love that you don't even care why I dumped you.

JULIE. Should I?

TOM. You are so funny. Newsflash, Julie—you're awful. And your friends are awful. They're mean. They're bullies.

JULIE. Oh, like you aren't a bully. You egged Mackenzie on to push Jordan through that light!

TOM. That did not happen. I might be a jerk, and I might do mean things to people. But I don't systematically destroy people like your friends do. Take your boyfriend, for example.

JULIE. My ex.

TOM. Okay, your ex. Remember sophomore year when he started picking on that kid from Capital High who transferred in? Remember that? Remember how he made fun of that kid every day in gym? Remember how he used to get all his jock friends to make fun of that kid in the shower every day? You might say he terrorized that kid. Every day, Julie. Every day. That kid was terrified to come to school because of your boyfriend and his fratty friends. Remember? And don't lie to me.

JULIE. I remember.

TOM. And what did you do about it? Did you say one word to him? Ever? Did you try to stop him? Tell him that was mean? Defend the kid?

JULIE. No.

TOM. No. And maybe, just maybe, you laughed about it. Not a lot. Just a little. And you kept on dating Terrell, and you hung out with his friends, and you watched it all go down. You did nothing.

JULIE. That's not fair.

TOM. I'm going to ask you the question that every unpopular kid wants to ask the popular girls who stay with their ridiculous boy-friends when they know they're bullying other kids—Why did you stay with him?

JULIE. (*Thinks for a moment, then.*) I don't know. It's complicated.

TOM. Not for that kid in the shower it's not. They may have elected you, and you may think you're the President, but I know who you

really are. Make all the speeches you want. But on the inside, you're really, really ugly.

JULIE. (*Calls over TERRELL and GREG:*) Okay, you can take him now!

(*TERRELL and GREG come over and grab TOM. They drag him toward the exit.*)

TOM. We're not done here!

JULIE. We are done!

TOM. You're ugly, Julie! Really friggin' ugly!

JULIE. You may be right, but that doesn't change what you've done, which is break the law! Put him in the boy's locker room with Mackenzie until we can figure out what else to do with him. (*To ROSE/ROSS and ALEX:*) You two, don't get any bright ideas. We're going to want to talk to you more about this.

ALEX. Yeah, right! (*Races out.*)

(*GREG, TOM, and ROSE/ROSS exit.*)

TERRELL. Good job. You did the right thing.

JULIE. Did I?

DARBY. I have something to bring up that I think requires we clear the room.

KENDALL. Terrell, we have to ask you to leave.

TERRELL. Oh, okay. Let me know if you need anything else. (*Exits.*)

CHRIS. The committee recognizes Darby.

DARBY. After Tom burned down the jail, we turned the gym locker rooms into holding cells. We have a couple people down there for random things like stealing food and stuff, and that seems to be working pretty well. But what do we do if someone actually does something heinous, like kills someone or something? What if what Rose/Ross says is true and Mackenzie killed Jordan? I think we need to consider the possibility of the death penalty.

(*The CABINET reacts.*)

CHRIS. I agree.

BRIANNA. I do, too.

KENDALL. Wow, I sure don't!

JULIE. Me, either! I mean, seriously, yeah, we don't want people killing each other, but executing people?

DARBY. I know it sounds harsh, but think about it—we have three-hundred plus people left in a super stressful situation. The chances of someone snapping and going crazy are pretty high.

KASEY. We need something as a deterrent.

DARBY. Exactly.

SYDNEY. If we have the death penalty, who's gonna do it?

DARBY. What do you mean?

SYDNEY. Who's going to execute the criminals?

SKYLER. And how? How will they be executed? Somebody has to do it. It doesn't just happen.

HAYDEN. This is getting really dark.

SKYLER. You wanted to be on the cabinet.

DARBY. I don't have all the answers, but I think it's something we have to think about, and soon.

HAYDEN. Maybe we should table this discussion until Darby can bring us some details.

FRESHMAN ONE. I second that.

CHRIS. Motioned and seconded, death penalty discussion tabled until Darby can provide more details about the proposal. Any other business? No? Then this meeting is adjourned.

(EVERYONE just sits there, stunned. JULIE turns to KENDALL.)

JULIE. I think we just turned a really scary corner...

(Lights shift to school newspaper office. EDIE/EDDIE speaks to the webcam with MARTY.)

EDIE/EDDIE. This is the Charles M. Russell webcast for April 20. Today on "Who's Who At the End of the World Just In Case It's Not Really Over!" I have Marty, who was the library assistant.

MARTY. Hi, everyone.

EDIE/EDDIE. Okay, Marty, you're going to have to speak up for people to hear you. What were the best and worst parts about working in the library.

MARTY. The best part—

EDIE/EDDIE. Speak up.

MARTY. The best part was the smell of the old paperbacks. I wish they had that in a cologne so I could wear it all the time.

EDIE/EDDIE. Okay, that's officially weird.

MARTY. The worst part was when people would use the copier in the back room to make copies of their bare butts, and write "This butt's for you..." on it, then put them in random books so people would find them after they checked out the book.

EDIE/EDDIE. (*Tries not to laugh.*) That must have been, um, awful... Anyway, thanks for stopping by, Marty.

MARTY. I have something else—

(*CJ enters and removes a protesting MARTY.*)

EDIE/EDDIE. On a more serious note, I noticed something this week. When I was asking people to appear on the webcast for the "Who's Who At the End of the World Just In Case It's Not Really Over!" segment, I couldn't find everyone. I've been checking people off from the school's student list, and there's definitely people missing. With the light getting closer, it should be easier to find everybody. But there's at least twenty-three people that were here at the beginning that I can't find. Where are they?

(*Lights shift to various locations and Wall of Light. Short scenes all over town. Each student speaks, then exits through the Wall of Light.*)

BRITNEY. Last night I had a dream, and my Mom was there. She told me that this is a test to see if I'll walk through it. And I accept that challenge. (*Exits through Wall of Light.*)

LAUREN/LOREN. I can't take it here any more. It's going to close in on us anyway, why wait? I'm done. (*Exits through Wall of Light.*)

STUDENT TWO. I know there's something amazing on the other side of that light. I pray there is, anyway. Because it's time to go. (*Exits through Wall of Light.*)

ALEX. Sorry, Jordan. (*Exits through Wall of Light.*)

(*Lights shift to gym. All STUDENTS [except Tom, Mackenzie, Geri/Jerry, Michael(a), and the students that have already crossed through the Wall of Light] gather in the gym. EDIE/EDDIE and CJ set up to cover the meeting. The CABINET takes positions so they can speak to the crowd.*)

EDIE/EDDIE. (*To webcam.*) This is the live Congressional Broadcast for May 15. We're coming to you live from the Charles M. Russell gymnasium.

CHRIS. Could we get everyone quiet, please!

JULIE. We called this meeting because we're at the point where we're going to have to deal with the light surrounding the town. As

you all know, it's getting closer and closer to the school. Are Geri/Jerry and Michael(a) here? I'd like to have them update everyone. No?

BRIANNA. I can do it. According to our calculations, the light will come together on June 12th. We still don't know what's on the other side of it, but according to Edie/Eddie people have been disappearing, and we think they're going through the light. Nobody's come back to tell us what's on the other side.

JULIE. Does anybody have any ideas about what we should do?

STUDENT EIGHT. I thought we elected you to figure that out!

(Some STUDENTS vocally agree with STUDENT EIGHT.)

STUDENT ELEVEN. Why don't we tie a rope to somebody and send them through? We could pull them back so they don't disappear.

JULIE. That sounds like a great plan if anybody's game. Does anyone volunteer to go explore the other side?

(No hands raise.)

STUDENT ELEVEN. How about someone from the Cabinet?

KENDALL. You elected us to govern. We can't risk the consequences.

STUDENT EIGHT. Figures you'd say that.

KENDALL. And what's that supposed to mean?

JULIE. Does anyone have any other plan, or information about the light? *(A beat. No hands raise.)* Anyone? Look, I know you're scared about what's on the other side. I am, too. But we're going to have to face it eventually, like it or not. *(Surveys the crowd for a moment.)* I want to thank everybody for coming here today.

KASEY. Before we go, just so everyone knows, the school is now open for people to live in if they want to. It looks like we're going to all get pushed in there anyway, so feel free to come and set up your space.

JULIE. Thanks, everybody.

(The CROWD exits as lights shift to Wall of Light. GERI/JERRY and MICHAEL(A) stand facing the light.)

GERI/JERRY. I think I know something about this light that is absolute, and we'll both agree on.

MICHAEL(A). Yeah?

GERI/JERRY. Uh huh. What I know about this light is—I won't know what's on the other side until I'm on the other side.

MICHAEL(A). You're absolutely right. Look at that—it only took seven months to figure it out.

GERI/JERRY. Hey, we still don't have a cure for cancer, so I'd say that's pretty short for scientific research.

MICHAEL(A). Ah, so you're a scientist now?

GERI/JERRY. Are you a Christian now?

MICHAEL(A). Hmm, well...sort of.

GERI/JERRY. Exactly.

MICHAEL(A). I also know something that's absolutely true that we'll both agree on.

GERI/JERRY. Yeah?

MICHAEL(A). Yup. I know that knowing now is better than waiting.

GERI/JERRY. *(A beat.)* I think you're right.

MICHAEL(A). How about we find out together?

GERI/JERRY. I'd like that. I bet it's the Afterlife.

MICHAEL(A). And I'll bet you we'll just become random molecules and atoms floating around the universe.

GERI/JERRY. Yeah? How much? Put your money where your mouth is.

MICHAEL(A). Five bucks.

GERI/JERRY. You're on. Shall we?

(As appropriate, GERI/JERRY and MICHAEL(A) either take each other's hand or fist bump, then take a deep breath and exit into the Wall of Light together.)

(Lights shift to school. JULIE and TERRELL approach from different directions, both carrying a suitcase or two, bags, etc.)

TERRELL. Hey.

JULIE. Oh, hey!

TERRELL. Just moving some stuff into the school. Figured I'd get in before it's too late.

JULIE. Yeah, me, too.

TERRELL. Cool. Funny, looks like we're going to be living together after all.

JULIE. I'll be in the girls' wing, smart guy.

(BECKY enters from the same direction TERRELL entered. She is also carrying bags. She approaches TERRELL and kisses him on the cheek.)

BECKY. Hey, babe! Got my stuff. Oh, hey Julie.

JULIE. Hi, Becky.

(A moment of silence, then—)

BECKY. Super awkward... Alright, I'm going in. See you inside. *(Exits.)*

TERRELL. Look...

JULIE. Oh, don't worry. I'm not going to harsh on you...too bad.

TERRELL. She's nice.

JULIE. I know. She's sort of my best friend. So she's your date for the prom I guess.

TERRELL. Yeah.

JULIE. Got it.

TERRELL. What?

JULIE. It's just... Nothing.

TERRELL. It's never nothing. What?

JULIE. Nothing! I swear! Hand over the heart, totally swear! It's still a little weird seeing you with her, but hey, that's just how it is, right?

TERRELL. Yes.

JULIE. Go help her put her stuff away. Be a gentleman for once in your life.

TERRELL. I am a gentleman! You just never noticed.

JULIE. Yeah, right.

(TERRELL picks up his bags and heads toward the school entrance.)

TERRELL. See ya later.

JULIE. Terrell.

TERRELL. Yeah?

JULIE. Just...just let her win at Xbox occasionally. You know how you can get.

TERRELL. Will do. *(Exits.)*

(Lights shift to school newspaper office. EDIE/EDDIE and ANDI speak to the webcam.)

EDIE/EDDIE. This is the Charles M. Russell High School webcast for June 12th. The last webcast. We think, anyway. Not sure what's going to happen tomorrow. The light is pretty much just outside the

school now, so... But we do know what's happening tonight, and that's the prom.

ANDI. "America's Got Prom" tonight! I'm so excited! I think it's going to be a great night that we're all going to remember forever! (*Realizes what she's said, gets choked up for a moment:*) I, um...

EDIE/EDDIE. It's okay.

ANDI. No, we're not going to do this. (*Fans tears from her eyes:*) Nope. Today is awesome. We're going to have a great time tonight, and that's that. Did I say the theme?

EDIE/EDDIE. Go ahead, say it again.

ANDI. "America's Got Prom." And here's the thing—yes, it's a formal, but since this is the last prom, you can wear whatever 'formal' means to you. So be creative! Go to the drama costumes! Pick something fun! When you get there, dance with someone you'd never dance with in a million years! Or just dance! This is going to be the best time, I swear.

EDIE/EDDIE. I think I'm going to wear the mascot's costume.

ANDI. I love you for that! See you guys tonight! I love you all!

(Lights shift to boys locker room, a makeshift jail. GREG guards TOM and MACKENZIE.)

TOM. I'm going crazy in here. This sucks mas grande.

(JULIE enters.)

JULIE. Wow. I've never been down here before.

TOM. (*Bows:*) Madam President.

JULIE. You can get out of here.

GREG. But what about these two jokers?

JULIE. The prom is about to start. Go enjoy it.

GREG. Okay, whatever you say. (*Exits.*)

JULIE. (*Gestures to the door:*) Feel free.

MACKENZIE. Later. (*Exits.*)

(TOM gets up to leave.)

TOM. You're just letting us out of here?

JULIE. It's the last day on Earth. Figured you'd want to spend it making fun of people at the prom.

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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