

Before Time Jeffrey Lo 1
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Before Time

A Ten Minute Play by

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SETTING:

A Café.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Joel – Male, 20

JJ – Male, 17

Sarah – Female, 20

PLAYWRIGHT’S NOTE:

If you need to re-type the script in any way for production purposes, please keep to the format in terms of punctuation, spacing between stage directions and lines, or placement of ellipses. I want the director, actors and designers to interpret the script as it is presented on the pages here.

RUNNING TIME:
Approx. 10 Minutes

Before Time

*A café. Three tables.
At the center table sits JOEL, 20.
The other two tables are empty. For now.*

*JOEL scarfs down a soda and sandwich
while flipping through a magazine.*

*JJ, 17 and wearing a backpack, walks into
the café looking around. He's not sure what
he's looking for. He looks nervously but with
intent.*

*JJ is stopped in his tracks by JOEL.
Unbeknownst to JOEL, JJ watches as he
continues about his magazine and meal. JJ
considers what to do next but can't get
himself to continue. JJ exits.*

*JOEL continues about his business. He
noticed none of it.*

*SARAH, 20, strolls into the café. Unlike
when JJ entered just before, JOEL
immediately notices SARAH. He borders on
staring at her but stops just before crossing
that line.*

*SARAH notices JOEL from the corner of her
eye and is amused by the half second longer
he looked at her. She places her book on one
of the empty tables and exits to order her
lunch.*

*JOEL looks up for another second to watch
her.*

*JJ returns. He sees SARAH off in line and is
taken by her, not at all in a romantic way
but boy is she beautiful. JJ refocuses back to
business. He looks at JOEL and takes a seat
at the final empty table.*

JOEL is disappointed he finished his soda.

Aww man...

JOEL

JOEL shrugs and picks up his sandwich. JJ musters his courage and just before JOEL takes another bite.

Hey.

JJ

JOEL

Hm? Oh.
Uh... 'Sup.

JJ
(Pulling out the same type of soda can:)

Want one?

JOEL

What?

JJ

Do you want one?
A soda. I saw you just finished yours.

JOEL just looks at JJ, weirded out.

JOEL

Seriously?

JJ

Sure. Why not?
(With a laugh:)

Is that weird or something?

JOEL

Yeah.

JJ
(Stops laughing:)

Oh.

JOEL

Like if you weren't a teenager I'd be super sketched out by you right now.

JJ

I see.

JOEL

I mean think about it –

Say you weren't you but some 53 and a half year old going up to me, an innocent college student, and said -

(In creepy predator voice:)

Hey there pretty 21 year old little boy, do you want some of my... "drink?" I promise you there's no rape drugs in this. Heh heh heh....

(Abruptly back to his normal voice:)

That'd be pretty weird right?

A quick pause.

JJ

Yes.

JOEL

Yup. Weird.

Pause.

JJ

But you're 20...

JOEL

What?

JJ

You said you were 21. Aren't you 20?

JOEL

How would you know?

JJ

Oh...

Just a... guess...

JOEL

Yeah, whatever, it doesn't make a difference.

JJ

Just wondering is all... you seemed 20...

Pause.

JOEL goes back to his magazine.

JJ opens the soda and starts to drink it.

He lets out a huge refreshing sigh.

Silence.

JJ (*cont'd*)

So did you want that soda?

JOEL

You've got to be kidding me.

JJ

You can have my soda if you want it.

JOEL

Nah, I'm good man. It's yours, ok?

JOEL goes for another bite of his sandwich but again, just before he gets to bite he is again interrupted by –

JJ

I mean, I have a lot.

JOEL

What?

JJ takes out 5 more cans of the same soda.

JOEL (*cont'd*)

Why the hell do you have so many?

JJ

I just do.

JOEL

You just carry all of those around with you everywhere?

JJ

Yeah. All the time. They're my, uhh, favorite...

(Offering the drink:)

Come on, I know you want it. I saw you were enjoying that soda a whole lot earlier...

JOEL

Fine.

(Takes the soda:)

You're so weird.

Cool. Enjoy it. JJ

Um. Thanks man... JOEL

As JOEL opens his soda. JJ opens his second one and quickly chugs it.

SARAH returns with a number for her order. JOEL notices her immediately. She smiles at him and puts her number on her table.

Hi. SARAH

Hi. JOEL

How's your day going? SARAH

Oh, not so bad JOEL

JJ
(Trying to distract them:)
Mmmm... It'll kill you but god they taste good...

SARAH laughs at JJ and checks her phone for a moment.

JOEL nods and smiles but really means, "Please leave me alone now."

And how's yours going? JOEL

Can't complain. SARAH

Huh... JOEL

SARAH

What?

JOEL

That's a funny way to put it.

SARAH

Yeah, well, that's how I feel.

That's how I like to look at things – nothing spectacular has happened to me today but nothing terrible has happened either. So today, I have nothing to complain about. And when you think about it, that's a really good thing.

JOEL

Yeah... you're right. That's a nice way to think of a day.

SARAH

Thanks.

(Beat)

And, I mean, nothing spectacular has happened to me today – *yet*.
Who knows what's in store for me.

SARAH smiles at JOEL again. This time, he smiles back.

SARAH *(cont'd)*

Hey.

JOEL

Yeah?

SARAH

I need to use the restroom, would you mind watching this table for me?

JOEL

Of course. I'm going to be here all day...

*JOEL watches SARAH walk away.
JJ watches JOEL.
A moment.
JOEL remembers where he is.*

JJ *(cont'd)*

What are you looking at?

JOEL

What? Nothing don't worry about it.

Her? She's not that cute. JJ

JOEL looks at JJ like he insulted his family.

You're crazy. JOEL

Ok maybe that's not true. JJ

Uh, yeah, she's gorgeous. Idiot. JOEL

No need to call me names. JJ

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL! JOEL

Ok, ok, she's beautiful but you don't want to talk to her.
She's a bitch. JJ

Now she's a bitch? JOEL

Um... JJ
Yes.

Really? And *you* know this? JOEL

Sure. JJ

Do you know her somehow? JOEL

Yes, actually, I do. JJ
(Suddenly calm and telling the truth:)

JOEL

... and she's a bitch?

JJ

Well –

JOEL

She doesn't seem like a bitch.

JJ

I know –

JOEL

She seems pretty wonderful.

JJ

OK! OK! She's not a bitch!

JOEL

THEN WHY ARE YOU CALLING HER A BITCH!?

JJ

Inside voice, I'm right here...

JOEL

You've got to be kidding me...

JJ

Why are you getting so defensive? You don't even know her.

JOEL

Because!

(Almost rambling:)

Because she's just minding her own business, trying to get a cup of coffee while she does her homework or something and she doesn't need assholes like you giving her a reputation for no reason when she did nothing wrong.

...

And she seems nice...

... and she smiled at me...

... and look it's not like this world has some sort of surplus of good people lying around so maybe the few good people **we do** have should be protected from assholes like you before they become NOT good people...

(Beat).

Are you trying to stop me from talking to her cause *you* want to talk to her? Cause, bro, I'm sorry to be the one to have to tell you this but you're way too young for –

JJ

No! I don't want to *talk* to her! Gosh! That's gross!
Just... you don't want to talk to her anymore. Ok? Trust me. Please.
Like, if you happened to feel the urge to talk to her again...
For any reason...
Don't.

JOEL

What is it to you?

JJ

JUST DON'T OK!

JOEL

Whoa!

JJ

Sorry...

JOEL

Ok. Who are you?

JJ

No one.

JOEL

No.

JJ

Don't worry about it.

JOEL

WHO ARE YOU?

JJ

...

JOEL

What is your name?

JJ

Joel...

JOEL

No it's not.

JJ

Yes it is. My name is Joel.

JOEL

Your name is Joel?

JJ

Yes.

JOEL

My name is Joel.

JJ

I know...

JOEL

You know?

JJ

...yes.

JOEL

And how do you know that?

JJ

I just do.

JOEL

Who are you!?

JJ

I'm Joel!

JOEL

BUT WHO ARE YOU REALLY? Who the hell are you? Can you please tell me that? And how do you know that my name is Joel? And that I'm 20. And how do you know that girl over there? If you know that girl over there.

JJ

I do!

JOEL

Are you some sort of stalker?

JJ

No!

JOEL

THEN TELL ME WHO YOU ARE!

JJ

I'M YOUR SON!

A tense silence.

Then, suddenly, JOEL bursts into laughter.

JOEL

Do you think I'm an asshole? Do you I'll believe that?
You're my son?

JJ

I am.

JOEL

What, are you in high school? You're barely younger than me!

JJ

I know.

JOEL

So it's impossible that you could be my son.
You being my son, is the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

Pause.

JJ

...

...

I'm from the future.

JOEL

Oh my god. You've topped it. That's the stupidest th –
Seriously. I don't know who you are and how you know all of these things but you can stop this now.

A brief silence. Beat.

JOEL (*cont'd*)

You're being serious.

JJ

I am from the future Joel.

JOEL

You are from the future.

JJ

Yes.

JOEL

And you are my son.

I am supposed to believe that you are my son. From the FUTURE.

You want me to believe that I named my son after MYSELF.

JJ

It's true.

JOEL

That's pretentious.

JJ

Tell me about it.

(Beat)

Look, I can prove it.

JOEL

Go ahead.

(Almost under his breath:)

I can't believe I'm entertaining this...

JJ

I knew your favorite soda.

JOEL

That proves nothing.

JJ

You were born on May 11th. I was born on May 22nd. You loved how similar our birthdays were.

JOEL

You can still be a stalker.

JJ

You carry around a 2 dollar bill that your dad – my grandpa – gave you when you were a kid.

Pause.

JJ

He folded it into an origami heart and signed it.

JOEL

(Spooked:)

I never take it out of my wallet...

JJ

Never... until you signed it and gave it to me.

*JJ hands his 2 dollar bill to JOEL.
A long silence.*

JOEL takes his out of his wallet.

JOEL

What the fuck...

JJ

I know this is strange to you...

JOEL

Is it not to you?

JJ

A little bit but not as much. They've invented time travel where I'm from... clearly.

Silence.

JOEL

Why are you here?

JJ

This is going to sound crazy...

JOEL

Yeah? Try me.

SARAH returns from the bathroom. For the first time, JOEL is too distracted to pay attention to SARAH.

SARAH

Oh, looks like my order is ready. You mind watching my table for just another second?

JOEL

Please. Take your time.

SARAH

Do you need anything up there? It's on me.

JOEL

No. Thank you, though. That's very nice of you.

SARAH

(Playfully flirting:)

Suit yourself...

SARAH and JOEL laugh a little together as she leaves for her order.

JJ

I came here... to stop you.

JOEL

To stop me from what?

JJ

To stop you from talking to Sarah.

JOEL

Who's Sarah?

JJ

(Gesturing to the line:)

She's Sarah. She's my mom.

JOEL

She's your mom?

JJ nods his head.

JOEL *(cont'd)*

(Suggestively:)

She's your mom...

JJ

Don't be gross.

JOEL

So why are you trying to stop me from talking to her if she's going to become your mom?

JJ

Look... I'm... I don't know how I'm supposed to say this...

...

...

You're going to hurt her.

You two are going to know each other, love each other, and then marry each other.

But... I don't know what or why it will happen but you will change.

You will change and you will hurt her and ruin her life.

JOEL

This is ridiculous.

JJ

It's not –

JOEL

This is a joke!

JJ

This is not a joke!

Trust me. I wish it were. It is not.

You two meet each other for the first time today and I came here to stop anything from happening between you two so you cannot ruin her.

I've already seen it happen and I want to stop it.

JOEL

You can't do this. You can't change history. This isn't going to work.

JJ

I don't know if it will work but all I can do is try.

JOEL

Say this does work – POOF – you're probably gone! You won't exist.

JJ

...

... I know...

And I'm ok with that.

I've seen what you can do to her and I can't let that happen. She is my mother. I love her too much.

(A brief silence)

I came here today because I know that this is the day and the place where you two first meet. You are a regular here. It's her first time coming. She just transferred here and doesn't know where else to get coffee so she thought she'd give this place a shot. She decided to put her book down before she ordered to make sure she could sit next to the cute boy she saw as she walked

in. After ordering she asks him to watch her stuff as she goes to the bathroom, when she returns, the cute boy is now choking on his sandwich with nothing to drink –

JOEL
(Realizing:)

The soda...

JJ
I knew it was your favorite. That's why it's mine too.

So she calls for help and gets him water to help him swallow... You're embarrassed but she thinks it was all adorable. She sits with you for the rest of the day...

I heard that story time and time again when I was younger – before *you* changed and then changed her...

Sarah *is* a good person.

My mother is a good person.

You are going to hurt her.

And when you hurt her you will change her. I love her. You did too.

You said it yourself. Protect the good people... right Dad?

Silence.

Beat.

Pause.

JOEL stands up and exits.

SARAH returns. She looks for JOEL and is disappointed he's gone. She sees JJ.

SARAH
Hello.

JJ
Hello.

SARAH
Are you having a good day?

JJ
(Earnestly:)
I don't know...

SARAH gives JJ a sympathetic smile as she turns to her food.

JJ disappears.

SARAH
(Turning back to JJ:)

Well I hope it gets...

(Seeing JJ is gone:)

Better...

FIN.