

If You Were the Last Man on Earth

A short play

by Alex Coulombe

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

VINCE, a dying man

SARAH, a high-energy socialite

LESTER, a meticulous survivalist

SCENE 1

SARAH and LESTER stand over the body of a VINCE, a man bleeding out. They are attempting to put pressure on a puncture through his neck.

SARAH

Just keep calm Vince! We've got you.

(LESTER's watch beeps and he gets up and starts doing jumping jacks and squat thrusts. VINCE hyperventilates.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Lester!

LESTER

(in between jacks)

Just, ten, more.

SARAH

Lester get down here now!

(SARAH tries to get up to pull down LESTER, but the moment she leaves VINCE, he starts convulsing.)

God dammit Lester!

VINCE

(dying)

Sarah...

SARAH

Vince!

VINCE

Sarah... I want you to know... that I... always...

SARAH

Yes Vince?

VINCE

Thought of you as a friend.

(LESTER finishes his jumping jacks and dives over to VINCE, just as he falls still, dead. A long beat.)

LESTER

He was going to die anyway.

(SARAH bursts out crying.)

We have to keep moving.

SARAH

Can we bury him?

LESTER

We didn't bury the others.

SARAH

But he's the last... the last...

LESTER

Man? Person you cared about? We have to keep moving.

SARAH

What kind of person's last words are 'I always thought of you as a friend?'

LESTER

We have to keep moving.

SARAH

WHY CAN'T YOU JUST RELAX!? With you everything's always 'we have to keep moving', 'we have to follow *this* trail', 'we have to eat this precisely portioned protein pouch.'

(Beep beep.)

LESTER

(overlapping with above)

Eat this precisely portioned protein pouch.

(He hands her a pouch. She slaps it out of her hand. He's unphased and eats his.)

SARAH

What if I don't want a protein pouch! What if I want to eat some berries? Or a squirrel?

LESTER

Disease risk. Imprecise nutrition balance.

SARAH

What's your beeping schedule based on?

LESTER

The Fibonacci sequence.

SARAH

And why do we have to keep moving?

LESTER

You never know who might be following us.

SARAH

We haven't seen anyone for months.

LESTER

Yes.

SARAH

What if we're the last two people on earth?

LESTER

We're not the last two people on earth.

SARAH

You just have an answer for everything don't you.

LESTER

Yes.

SARAH

Hm.

LESTER

Why are you talking to me more than you've ever talked to me?

SARAH

I just... Lester. I do not get you. Hell, I don't know anything about you, and you've been a part of our group for years now. Where did you even live before robo-nuclear-zombie-blackout?

(Beep beep. LESTER starts performing yoga exercises. He hums while doing so.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

And... you're out. Great. And you wonder why I never spent time with you. Look, I get that your routine, your *schedule*, is... helpful to you. But this isn't a life. You know I have a predisposition to tension- that's a real diagnosis!- and you are so god damn serious all the time and I can't help but wonder what would happen if you had to relax for five minutes? I mean, would you explode, or maybe -

(Just as LESTER starts to balance into a headstand, an earthquake hits. It sounds surprisingly metallic. LESTER topples forward and SARAH falls on top of him. The earthquake ends and they spend a long moment staring at each other. Are they scared? Are they hurt?)

LESTER

That wasn't on my schedule.

(She bursts out laughing.)

SARAH

Yeeeeaaaaahhh! A sense of humor.

LESTER

I state facts.

SARAH

Can we talk for a little? You're so hard to get a read on and I think we could both use the connection time.

LESTER

(looking at watch)

Go.

SARAH

Great.

(Pause. SARAH opens her mouth several times but is unable to find the words. Then:)

SARAH (CONT'D)

How the hell could you abandon Vince to die!?

LESTER

It was time.

SARAH

You mean... 'beep beep' time?

LESTER

He was going to die anyway.

SARAH

But to abandon him... just to... *jumping jacks*?

LESTER

He was dead the moment he decided not to follow my trail.

SARAH

You're just mad he called you a robo-douche.

LESTER

I pay such comments little mind.

SARAH

Your trails are illogical and super windy.

LESTER

My trails are super logical and super precise.

SARAH

So you knew Vince was gonna fall off that rock?

LESTER

I knew my trail was the safest route forward. But you were right.

SARAH

About what?

LESTER

His dying words were... lame.

SARAH

Okay whatever. (sigh) I want to make this work, Les, I really do. I mean I'd be lying if I said I thought all fifteen of us were going to survive and die happily of old age. But I'd also be lying if I ever dreamed of a world where I was stuck with you as the last-

(Beep beep. LESTER pulls out a book and starts reading. Maybe Ulysses, or a Philip K Dick book, or Goodnight Moon.)

Oh come on! That's... that's so rude.

(A long pause. She goes and looks over LESTER's shoulder.)

That's not even a good book.

(She grumbles. Snaps fingers in front of him. Lies down. Sits up. Fidgets with a stick.)

You know what, fine! I can have my own schedule too. Guess what's up first? Beep beep!

(singing and jumping around)
No one's astute like Gaston! Plays the lute like Gaston! Then goes flopping around flexing glutes like Gaston! I use antlers to pop things that are inflating!

LESTER

Those aren't lyrics.

(She looks for a deeper response from LESTER. He's still perfectly focused on his book.)

SARAH

(still singing)

Pretty fly! A white guy! That Gaston... Beep beep!

(normal speaking)

Oh, I guess it's exercise time. Guess I'll pick up these rocks and throw them at each other.

(She picks up some rocks and throws them. Some come close to hitting LESTER but he doesn't even flinch.)

Boy I sure do love rocks. Pickin' em' up and... putting em' down. Woo. That sure did make me tired and... sweaty. Beep beep! Guess I better change these clothes. Doo doo ba bow bow...

(She starts to undress while making wah-wah guitar pedal sounds. It's flashy, but not particularly sexy. At least she's having fun with it. LESTER doesn't look at first, then: beep beep!)

LESTER

You have my attention.

SARAH

God dammit Lester!

LESTER

Please resume earlier conversation.

SARAH

(putting clothes back on)

No, you know what, I'm just going to go.

LESTER

Where will you go?

SARAH

(leaving)

Wherever I want. In whatever non-windy way I want.

LESTER

(suddenly caring)

Please. Sarah. You're not being rational-- Vince just died.

SARAH

(quickly)

Well like you said it was his fault, so whatever.

LESTER

I know you cared about him.

SARAH

Psh. You don't care.

LESTER

I did not care about him. I care that you cared about him.

SARAH

What does that even mean!?

LESTER

Even when our party was fifteen... you were the only one that mattered.

(Ominous pause.)

SARAH

Am I... the one?

LESTER

What?

SARAH

What?

LESTER

I should... read book more.

SARAH

No-- you can't, your thing beeped so that's over.

LESTER

Fair enough.

SARAH

Fuck.

LESTER

Do you have feelings for me?

SARAH

I don't even know where this is-- wait.

LESTER

Yes?

SARAH

So a minute ago. My little strip party thing. You know who I was imitating?

LESTER

Yes.

SARAH

It hasn't been a coincidence that you've undressed several times in viewing range of my tent flap, has it?

LESTER

Have you enjoyed my presentations?

SARAH

'Enjoy's not the right word. Why did you do that?

LESTER

To seduce, no, lure, no, impress you. My nonessential exercises are also intended to contribute. To said impressiveness.

(A long pause. He flexes and releases several times.)

SARAH

But you... you didn't... you never even talk to me.

LESTER

I apologize. If I knew that is what you required--

SARAH

No, it's... whatever.

LESTER

Beauty and the Beast is my favorite movie.

SARAH

Good effort. How do I say this Lester? Us... it's *never* gonna happen.

LESTER

(shutting down)

Ohhh.

SARAH

No no don't retreat inside your fucking little mind palace. Please. I... I do need you Lester.

LESTER

Need me?

SARAH

Just... not in a... yech. Can't we just be survival partners? You know? Buddies? Keep it all 'optimized' and efficient-like?

LESTER

You would like to take charge of scheduling duties?

SARAH

Sure! Whatever it takes. Just... don't leave me, and don't shut me out. I cannot go--

(Beep beep.)

LESTER

And that's the end of heartfelt conversation time.

SARAH

God DAMMIT Lester!

LESTER

It was a joke.

(Beat.)

SARAH

Okay that's pretty good... for you.

LESTER

Truly, Sarah, my schedule is unequivocally pragmatic- it reminds me how to survive. But it doesn't remind me what's important.

(He breaks the watch.)

SARAH

Why would you do that? That was the only way we could track time and the days of the week.

LESTER

My brain keeps perfect time and days of the week.

SARAH

Why did you need the watch then?

LESTER

To create an important-sounding noise whenever I was uncomfortable and wanted to do something different.

SARAH

Wow.

LESTER

Sorry.

SARAH

That explains the...

LESTER

Yeah...

SARAH

And the...

LESTER

Sorry.

SARAH

Not following the Fibonacci sequence?

LESTER

That doesn't even make sense.

(They chuckle.)

SARAH

Hm. So Les. Do we have to keep moving?

LESTER

We have to keep moving.

SARAH

And you're fine just being friends?

LESTER

Friends that continue to undress in front of each other?

SARAH

Not a chance.

LESTER

Oh well. I remain, Lord Friendzone.

SARAH

Wanna sing another Beauty and the Beast song with me?

(They start to mouth something from the film, but 'Steam-powered Giraffe' plays as the lights slowly fade and they move to exit. Suddenly, Vince awakens, not as a zombie, but as a robot.)

VINCE

(mechanically approaching
SARAH and LESTER)

Neoneoneoeneo.

LESTER

(karate pose)

Sarah watch out!

VINCE

(touching Lester)

Activate.

LESTER

(revealing himself as a true
robot)

Neoneoneoeneoeneo.

(They both attack Sarah as she screams and the lights fade.)

(Blackout.)