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# **Future, Here**

By

**JEREMY F. RICHTER**

**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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*Future, Here* was commissioned by the Performing Arts Conservatory at Notre Dame High School in Clarksburg, W.V. The play received its premier performance at the 2016 West Virginia Theatre Association Annual Conference held at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, W.V.

CAST:

ACTOR 1 .....Anthony Bankers-Beckett

ACTOR 2 ..... Taylor Steele

ACTOR 3 ..... Miranda Wolfe

ACTOR 4 ..... Alex Mazza

ACTOR 5 ..... Camille Mullins

PRODUCTION:

Director ..... Jason Young

The play was subsequently staged at regional and state festivals. At the West Virginia State Thespian Festival, *Future, Here* was named the “Chapter Select” production and represented the state of West Virginia at the International Thespian Festival in Lincoln, Neb.

# Future, Here

## CHARACTERS

ACTOR 1

ACTOR 2

ACTOR 3

ACTOR 4

ACTOR 5

## CHARACTER NOTES

The cast should use their actual names in the production, and please do not feel the need to use the same ratio of men to women from the original production. You should cast this play with strong, honest actors and not concern yourself with whether you have enough of a particular gender. In fact, every role can be played by an actor of any gender, race, sexual identity or ability. The author only requires that ACTOR 1's lines be given to a minority actor.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

In the original production, rather than use a functional countdown clock, the director “placed” the clock over the audience. The actors subsequently referred to the upper-rear wall of the house in the “clock moments” but made sure to never break the fourth wall. When the clock reached zero, they played a sound effect to indicate that time was up. So long as the clock has a presence in the production, feel free to use creative solutions. If using a functional clock, set the countdown time to coordinate with your production’s running time. The clock should hit zero when indicated in the script.

Productions may update the “current events/good news” headlines to keep the dialogue timely. Please note to drop only the headline in each line so as to keep the rhythm of the scene flowing. ACTOR 1’s line: “Man shot and killed while selling CDs in convenience store parking lot,” cannot be replaced or modified in any way.

An alternate ending is included at the end of the script. The alternate ending requires five additional actors. Producers may determine which ending to use.

# Future, Here

*(A countdown clock hangs above a meeting area and runs continually starting from 00:40:00. There are five chairs setup in a semicircle, perhaps there's a table, perhaps not. The furniture isn't important. One by one, five young adults—all eighteen years old—apprehensively file into the space. Each wears a faded backpack and clutches a semi-outdated smartphone. They alternate attention from their phones, the clock and each other. This is the last meeting/evening that they're guaranteed to spend together. A beat, then a pause, then silence.)*

ACTOR 1 *(without looking)*. What's left?

ACTOR 2. Look at it.

ACTOR 1. No.

*(Beat.)*

ACTOR 3 *(having looked at the clock)*. Thirty-six and change.

ACTOR 4. Man.

ACTOR 5. [ACTOR 3]!

ACTOR 2. *Look* at it.

ACTOR 3 *(in response to ACTOR 5)*. What?

ACTOR 4. Oh, man—

ACTOR 2. [ACTOR 1]—

ACTOR 1. No.

ACTOR 5. You shouldn't have told him.

ACTOR 2. Look at the clock.



ACTOR 3. I was just being helpful.

ACTOR 4. Guys, it's OK.

ACTOR 5 (to ACTOR 4). She *always* does this—

ACTOR 1. I'm not looking.

ACTOR 3. Does what?

ACTOR 4. Guys—

ACTOR 3. [ACTOR 5]—

ACTOR 4. C'mon.

ACTOR 3. Does what?!

ACTOR 2. It's just a clock—

ACTOR 5 (to ACTOR 3). Nothing.

ACTOR 1 (to ACTOR 2). I know.

ACTOR 2. Just numbers, running backwards.

ACTOR 3. No, [ACTOR 5], what?

ACTOR 1. To *zero*.

ACTOR 3. What do I *always* do?

ACTOR 4 (to ACTOR 3 and ACTOR 5). Would you two, please—

ACTOR 2 (to ACTOR 1). Well, yeah, but look at it, I mean—

ACTOR 5 (to ACTOR 3). *Help!*

ACTOR 2. What difference does it make?

ACTOR 5. You're always *helping!*

ACTOR 4. Stop it, please!

ACTOR 2. It's running regardless of whether you're looking at it.

ACTOR 3. *Helping?*

ACTOR 2. When we're asleep—

ACTOR 5. Yes!

ACTOR 2. When we're, I don't know, eating—

ACTOR 3. You're mad at me because—

ACTOR 5 (*overlapping*). I'm not mad—!

ACTOR 1. I know—

ACTOR 3. I'm helping?!

ACTOR 4 (*almost to himself*). We don't need this.

ACTOR 5. Yes!

ACTOR 2. We've seen this clock, *watched* this clock, for the last twelve years—

ACTOR 3. What difference does it make?!

ACTOR 4. Not the right time, not the right place.

ACTOR 1. I *know* we have.

ACTOR 5. Because you have to let—

ACTOR 4 (*correcting, choice of words*). [ACTOR 5], wait.

ACTOR 5. No, [ACTOR 4]!

ACTOR 4. Dang it.

ACTOR 5 (*continuing to ACTOR 3*). You have to let people, I don't know, figure things out for themselves!

ACTOR 2 (*still to ACTOR 1*). So, what's so different about looking at it today?

ACTOR 3. I told him the *time*.

ACTOR 1. Because—

ACTOR 5. When he's fully capable of *reading* it himself.

ACTOR 3 (*simultaneous with ACTOR 1*). He doesn't want to!

ACTOR 1 (*simultaneous with ACTOR 3*). I don't want to!

(*Pause.*)

ACTOR 4. Sheesh.

ACTOR 1. Listen, I know I've seen that clock at least a thousand times before. Hanging there, in the same spot, taunting us with its ... constant countdown.

ACTOR 2. [ACTOR 1]—

ACTOR 1. But not today? No more.

ACTOR 2. C'mon—

ACTOR 3. No, I get it. (*Beat.*) Unlike [ACTOR 5], I get it.

ACTOR 5. What's not to get?!

ACTOR 3. We meet here every day to share the latest news from our phones. Clip after clip of—

ACTOR 1 (*simultaneous with ACTOR 3*). Stuff!

ACTOR 3 (*simultaneous with ACTOR 1*). Crap!

ACTOR 1. It's overwhelming.

ACTOR 3. Yes!

ACTOR 1. And we don't get to choose it—

ACTOR 3. No! It's like—

ACTOR 1. Pushed—?

ACTOR 3 (*thinking of it, then better of it*). Crammed! *Pushed*, yes. Pushed to our phones by—

ACTOR 1. Society.

*(Perhaps the others begin to see their point.)*

ACTOR 1 (*cont'd*). It's like it's this prep, to just, I don't know, set us up—

ACTOR 4 (*confessing*). I don't feel ready.

ACTOR 3. And that's what we're nervous about—

ACTOR 2. You're unsure, that's understandable.

ACTOR 5. I'm not unsure.

ACTOR 1. Whatever, [ACTOR 5].

ACTOR 3. Really.

ACTOR 2. Listen, what if we adjusted our perspective ... a little.

ACTOR 3 (*passively toward ACTOR 5*). A lot.

ACTOR 5. Shut up.

ACTOR 4. Guys—

ACTOR 2. I mean, in spite of it all, things *could* work out OK.

(*Beat.*) Try to think about that for a second, [ACTOR 1].

(*Beat.*) [ACTOR 3]?

ACTOR 5. [ACTOR 2]'s right; You're unsure. So what?  
That's OK.

ACTOR 4. I mean, I am, too.

ACTOR 5. I guess I am a little nervous now that I think about it.

ACTOR 1. I'm sure.

ACTOR 5. No, I am.

ACTOR 3. [ACTOR 5], the only thing you're unsure about is  
whether or not there'll be talking ponies that fart rainbows  
outside of Future.

ACTOR 5. That's crass!

ACTOR 2. [ACTOR 3], c'mon.

ACTOR 4. That doesn't help.

ACTOR 5. Everyone knows that *unicorns* fart rainbows.

ACTOR 2. All right, sure, things might not be what we're  
expecting when we get out of here in—

ACTOR 3. Thirty-four and a half minutes.

ACTOR 1. Oh, man.

ACTOR 2. But how do we know what to expect?

ACTOR 5. And that's what I'm saying.

ACTOR 4. Right, I mean, what *should* we be expecting?  
Something bad?

ACTOR 5. Hey, what if it's good?

ACTOR 1. But what if it's not?

ACTOR 2. But what if it is?

ACTOR 3. But what if it's not?!

ACTOR 5. But what if it is?!

ACTOR 4. Wait, what if it's what ... I'm turned around on who's on what side, sorry.

ACTOR 2. The point is, guys, we leave here tonight—

ACTOR 1. At zero.

ACTOR 2. Yes, at zero, to some place new ... with new experiences, and people, and opportunities. And that's definitely very—

ACTOR 1. Scary.

ACTOR 3. Intimidating.

ACTOR 2. Yes, BUT! It's also exciting, isn't it?

ACTOR 5. It could be fun! We might end up somewhere exotic!

ACTOR 4. Like Kentucky!

*(Beat, slow pan from the group.)*

ACTOR 5 *(pulling out her phone)*. Look at the stories Society fed me today—"Teen wins free pizza for a year, gives it to homeless kids instead."

ACTOR 4 *(from his phone)*. "Women start free book-share program on their city's public transportation system."

ACTOR 5. "The giant panda is no longer on the endangered species list."

ACTOR 4. "College football player spots boy sitting alone at lunch and joins him."

ACTOR 2 *(joining in)*. Ooh, this is related: "Student designs 'Sit With Us' app that helps peers find lunch buddies."

ACTOR 4. I have that app!

ACTOR 3. [ACTOR 4], you eat with us every day.