

EIGHT MINUTES, TWENTY SECONDS

A short drama by
Brooklyn Durs

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

SKY, high school graduate; can't wait to leave for college; a true free spirit.

LUCAS, also a high school graduate; has been best friends with Sky since birth; knows everything about the solar system.

NOTE

The "/" symbol signifies an overlap in dialogue between characters.

(July 2002. Mackinaw City, Michigan. Population 700. It is the middle of the night. LUCAS and SKY are laying on the ground looking up at the stars. They shouldn't talk for a while. Sky is entranced with her surroundings.)

SKY: There is a solar system.
And stars. Bunch of stars.
Planets too.
Uranus.
And the Milky Way.
Like we are just a speck of sand
compared to this whole galaxy.

(Lucas doesn't reply.)

Did you know that if the sun blew up,
We would have eight minutes and twenty seconds
Before we exploded?
Because it takes eight minutes and twenty seconds
For light to travel from the sun to the Earth.
Eight minutes.
What would you do? In your last eight minutes to live?

(Lucas doesn't respond.)

I think I would do something I've never done before.
Like sing in public
Or jump on a trampoline
Or dance in the rain.
I would want to do something exhilarating.

(Sky stops talking and just stares at the stars like she is mesmerized.)

(Lucas points to the sky:)

LUCAS: Scorpius.

SKY: Where?

LUCAS: (*Still pointing:*) There.

(*Sky notices the constellation.*)

It can only be seen in the summer. It's one of the constellations in the zodiac.

It's supposed to look like a scorpion.

SKY: (*Tilts her head.*) Looks like a shoe.

LUCAS: Yeah well.

(*Traces the constellation with his finger.*)

That part is like his tail.

And the top part is his body.

SKY: Oh okay

(*Doesn't really see it. Points to another constellation:*)

What's that one?

LUCAS: Um.

I think it's Circinus.

Or Norma.

One of those two.

SKY: Yeah?

(*It's quiet for a second.*)

LUCAS: I think I would go outside

And lay on the grass

And look up at the stars.

(*Sky is confused.*)

For the last eight minutes of my life.

SKY: Oh.

Yeah?

That sounds amazing.

(*It's quiet.*)

(Sky gets off the ground and reaches for Lucas's hand.)

Dance with me.

(Now Lucas is confused.)

I know it's not raining
and the world isn't gonna end soon.

Well...

But dance with me.

Under the stars.

Under Uranus.

LUCAS: Scientifically

We are not under Uranus.

It's the seventh planet from the sun

And the average surface temperature

Is minus 370ish degrees.

Meaning that the temperature

And distance from the sun

/ Are too extreme for humans —

SKY: Okay Bill Nye the Science Guy.

LUCAS: *Atmospheric Evolution on Inhabited and Lifeless Worlds*
by David C. Catling.

The most life-changing book about

LUCAS: Planets within our
solar system.

Providing a view of
planetary atmospheres
and their evolution.

Yeah.

SKY: Planets within our
solar system.

Providing a view of
planetary atmospheres
and their evolution.

SKY: You talk about that stupid book so much
I feel like I've read it.

(They laugh.)

Now stop trying to steer away, mister.
Dance with me.

(She reaches her hand out to Lucas.)

(He takes it.)

(They waltz.)

(Lucas isn't that good.)

(Sky starts humming something sorta recognizable – maybe "The Night We Met" by Lord Huron.)

(After a few eight counts they stop dancing.)

(And face each other.)

LUCAS: I love you.

(Sky lets go of Lucas.)

(She lays down on the ground again.)

(Lucas follows after a minute.)

SKY: It's so beautiful.

I am so happy, Lucas,
That I'm here with you.
I wouldn't change
This night for anything.

(Lucas doesn't reply.)

Listen.

It's so quiet.

I think I can hear the highway
All the way across town.

(Lucas doesn't answer.)

I can't wait until I leave, Lucas.
I can't wait until I'm far away
From this place.

I hate it.
I hate the town.
I hate the people.
I hate everything about it.
I just want to get away.

LUCAS: (*Points to the sky:*) Hercules.
The one that looks like a headless guy.

SKY: Yeah?

LUCAS: Yeah.
It's one of the largest constellations.
The myth goes that because
He was one of the greatest heroes
Of Greece, he was placed in the stars.

SKY: Wow.

LUCAS: Yeah.
Um.
Sky?

SKY: Mhm?

LUCAS: Remember when I wanted to be an astronaut?

SKY: Oh my god [gosh] yes!
For kindergarten career day
Or whatever
You dressed up in a
Freaking space suit
Like you were
Neil Armstrong or something.

LUCAS: Yeah!

...

Who were you?
I mean what was your career?

SKY: Um.

I don't know.

Probably like a teacher.

LUCAS: No no

Because you wore a costume.

And you and your mom worked on it

For months.

And your job was so insane and weird

That Ms. Campbell told you she'd never seen

Anyone dress up as that career in her twenty-something years
of teaching.

SKY: How do you remember that?

LUCAS: I don't know.

But

What were you?

SKY: A stripper.

LUCAS: I'm being serious.

SKY: So am I.

LUCAS: No.

You were

You were

Nevermind.

(They look at the stars.)

SKY: Well I remember when

You had the fattest crush on

Sandy Hawkins

LUCAS: / It wasn't that big of a crush.

SKY: And for Valentine's Day like

In 6th grade

You wrote her that six-page poem

LUCAS: / It was only a few paragraphs.

SKY: And you asked Ms. What's-Her-Face

If you could read it in front of the whole class.

And you did.

And when you finished,

Sandy Hawkins stood up

Walked right to you

And kissed you straight on the lips in front of everyone.

LUCAS: It wasn't really good.

The kiss.

It wasn't that good.

Plus Sandy Hawkins smells like a wet fish.

I don't know why I liked her in middle school.

SKY: Yeah.

...

I was a fitness instructor.

For career day.

I wore my mom's bodysuit from the 80s.

And I learned a whole aerobics routine.

LUCAS: Why?

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