TEMPORAL

A full-length play

By Britton Buttrill

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Rise on LEX’s apartment. A one bedroom. A rock star’s apartment. It’s empty.

Then:

MONICA barges in followed by LEX. MONICA is 16, and the kind of girl who hides her perceptiveness and intelligence behind Cosmopolitan magazines and Victoria’s Secret catalogues. LEX, her brother is 25 and the lead singer of a hardcore punk band. His demeanor and attire reflects this.

MONICA
I’m fine!

LEX
Um, no. You’re not.

MONICA
I didn’t even hit my head or anything! My teacher was just overreacting. That’s all.

LEX
Have you been taking your medicine?

MONICA
Yes! I’ve been taking my medicine. Do you think I’m an idiot?

LEX
I didn’t say that. I’m just saying, that I’m worried about you. That’s all.

MONICA
You’re acting like I just decided to have one. Like, I just said to myself... “This would be a really great icebreaker my first week of school.” Christ. I can just hear them now.

LEX
Dude, it’s gonna be cool. High school’s a bitch, but they’ll get to know you at Decatur. For like, who you really are.

MONICA
Yeah, as “Seizure Sally.”
LEX

That’s not true.

MONICA

Yeah, it is. You don’t know fuck about it.

LEX

Dude, don’t get pissed just cause I like, care about your shit.

MONICA

Do you?

LEX

Yeah. I fucking do.

Pause.

MONICA defiantly lights a cigarette. She blows the smoke in LEX’s face.

MONICA

You bailed on me, Lex.

LEX

Fuck, Monica. You think I don’t know that?

MONICA

If you actually gave a shit, you wouldn’t’ve bailed.

LEX

I had my own shit! Okay? You think it was easy getting cut off cause I wanted to actually pursue my music? But I did it, and I’m doing it.

MONICA

Just cause you got cut off from money doesn’t mean you got cut off from me.

LEX

I’m sorry.

MONICA

It’s a little late for that.

LEX

No. It’s not. I don’t believe that. It’s not too late.
MONICA
You think just cause you’re like forced to take care of me now that it’s all gonna be fine? I mean, would it have even mattered if Nanna hadn’t died? Would you have even called me? Visited me? Anything like that?

LEX
Yeah, I mean... As soon as....

MONICA
As soon as what?

LEX
As I soon as I got it together. You know, got the band signed. Got a record deal. Epitaph and Victory, you know they’ve got their eye on us.... So then... You know, then... then I would’ve.

MONICA
That’s bullshit and you know it.

LEX
Does that even matter now?

MONICA
Yeah. It does.

LEX
Why?

MONICA
Cause you think you can take care of me, but you can’t. And you think you like, know me. And you don’t.

LEX
Yeah, I do.

MONICA
You know eleven year old me. You know me when you used to baby-sit me and I played with fucking dolls. But you don’t know anything about me now.

LEX
Yeah, well. I wanna.

MONICA
Look... I needed you. And you bailed right after I got diagnosed. You bailed because of that.
LEX

That's not true.

MONICA

You couldn’t handle it.

LEX

Did you forget when I punched that freshman in the face for making fun of that grand mal you had? I handled it best I knew how.

Pause.

MONICA

...Maybe I needed more of that. I needed you to have my back.

LEX

And I’m fucking sorry! What the hell else can I do?

Pause.

MONICA

I don’t know.

Beat.

LEX goes and gets another bottle of whiskey. He starts to drink it. MONICA gives him a disapproving look.

LEX

Five o’clock somewhere.

Pause.

MONICA

Can I have one?

LEX

I thought you didn’t.

MONICA

I said one.

LEX


LEX takes out a glass and gives MONICA a whiskey. She smokes and sips it.
I shouldn’t’ve blown up. I’m sorry.

I deserved it.

Yeah... Well...

Pause.

Does it hit you sometimes? Mom and Dad?

Yeah, man. It does.

Me too. Like, I thought I’d be over it or something... But, every once in awhile it just like, comes back, you know?

Yeah. I know.

Fuckin’ Dad, right?

Fuck him, right?

Yeah, man. Yeah.

Like, what grown man drinks that much and decides to fucking drive?

Pause.

Dad.

LEX puts his arm around her. An intimate moment.

Shit’ll get better.
MONICA

You think?

*Beat. Instead of responding, he simply puts his arm around MONICA.*

LEX continues drinking. He notices MONICA’s flute case.

LEX

Still taking lessons?

MONICA

I mean, I was.

LEX

Gonna join orchestra?

MONICA

Maybe.

LEX

I remember you were really good, Miss Vivaldi.

MONICA

How about Miss Debussy?

LEX

Okay. Miss Debussy. I mean, we at least got a few things in common, you know?

MONICA

Well, I don’t know how you’re into that like, hardcore screamo stuff.

LEX

There’s technique to it actually.

MONICA

Oh, really?

LEX

Yeah, the screams are called “false chords”, and you gotta train your voice or else you’ll totally fuck up your vocal chords.

MONICA

*Right.*

LEX goes to the wall and takes down one of his guitars. He sits beside her.
LEX
Get your flute.

MONICA
Huh?

LEX
Seriously. I wanna hear you play.

MONICA
Dude, no.

LEX
C’mon. Please.

MONICA removes her flute and puts the cigarette out. LEX takes another swig from the bottle.

LEX
Play me something.

MONICA
I dunno what to play.

LEX
Whatever you’re best at.

MONICA
Okay. Well... This is Debussy’s Syrnx.

LEX drinks, listening for a moment.

Then:

LEX begins to strum his electric guitar, and soon finds a rhythm with her, and the two of them play an instrumental together. It’s a rock rendition of Debussy. They find a stopping point.

LEX takes a drink.

A quiet moment.

Lights.
The stage transforms into a plane of cyberspace. On one side of the stage, MONICA is by her computer. On the other side of the stage sits TREY, also 16 and a fan of hardcore music. Girls’ jeans, a band t-shirt, dyed hair. He’s the kind of searching kid who’s read The Catcher in the Rye over and over again and thinks Holden Caulfield really gets him.

The lights shift and the stage becomes an instant message conversation. MONICA becomes STARLIGHT_KITTEN and TREY becomes SCREAMO_16. The two behave normally on their sides of the stage.

An instant message conversation is projected behind them. The projection and their conversation happen in tandem, and they speak exactly as if they are in an AIM conversation.

The world is now dreamlike, separate, surreal.

SCREAMO_16

U kno Richard Ramirez?

STARLIGHT_KITTEN

Um, no.

SCREAMO_16

He was like this
Serial killer back n the 80s.
Like killed ppl n a bunch of shit.
Fuckin’ crazy dude. Killed like 15 or 20 ppl.
Called him the Nightstalker.

STARLIGHT_KITTEN

U r bein creepy.

SCREAMO_16

See, told u, u wouldn’t wanna listen.
No. Tell me.

He wasn’t regular cause he killed like, fuckin’
Like raped n murdered ppl. Drew like all these Satanic symbols on their walls n shit.

That’s terrifying.

Yah. I kno. Makes you feel like there’s totally no hope. Like, you don’t even wanna think that ppl can do that shit. But.
See here’s the thing,
Thing is that that’s not really what scares me.

U r weird.

Just listen. Lyke. Thing is I saw him on this documentary bout serial killers, right? When he was a little kid.
N they said that it he got diagnosed w/ epilepsy when he waz just 13.

O God.

Yah. N that’s when all the shit started. When he went from this sweet kid to like, killing people. Happened after he started having his first seizures.

A pause. MONICA says nothing.

U
There?

Yah.

Sry. Didn’t mean to like... Freak u out.

It just not that.
Extreme.
Ok?
Feels like it.

Beat.

I wanna see u.

Cam?

Yah.

Ok.

TREY looks in the mirror, fixing his hair.
MONICA does the same. The two of them turn on their webcams. They approach each other, and interact as if separated by an invisible wall.

Hey.

Hey...

Well, now I know you’re not some sweaty old guy who isn’t allowed within a hundred feat of a school.

Hah. Yeah. Well. You’re definitely the hottest epileptic I’ve ever seen.... Even though I haven’t met a whole lot of epileptics...

Yeah, well... When I have seizures I flip my hair back and forth like I’m in a shampoo commercial. Just. Like. This.

I like you, Trey.
I really like you too.

End.