

Time Lapse

By

Noah Hougland

Cast of Characters

Jeremy: Male, 16  
Vivian: Female, Mid-40s  
Grace: Female, 16  
Joey: Male, 16  
Teacher: Middle-aged (can be played by same actress as Vivian)

Scene

A suburban living room, and other locations

Time

Present Day

*Lights up on a small living room, an intimate space with book lined walls and plentiful seating. VIVIAN, a middle-aged woman with a distinguished air about her, sits on one of the couches next to a reading lamp, intently studying a thick book.*

*A grandfather clock is loudly ticking in the corner. Vivian looks up from her book, checks her wrist watch, then compares it to the grandfather clock. She does not look pleased.*

*The front door opens, and JEREMY, an average-looking 16 year old boy, attempts to sneak in unnoticed.*

VIVIAN

Do you have any idea what time it is?

*Jeremy freezes. He hasn't even managed to close the door.*

JEREMY

Sure, mom. It's...  
(checks watch)  
Almost 10.

VIVIAN

And what have we repeatedly told you is your curfew on school nights?

JEREMY

Nine...

VIVIAN

So why exactly am I seeing you come home now?

JEREMY

Mom, it's not what it looks like.

VIVIAN

Really? Why don't you tell me what it looks like?

JEREMY

Like I'm coming home after curfew.

VIVIAN

Oh good! Then we're in agreement.

JEREMY

No mom, really I swear.

VIVIAN

Oh you swear? Well that's good to know. I'm glad that you have a lot of devotion to the lame excuse you're about to give me.

*The grandfather clock begins to CHIME.*

JEREMY

(turning toward the door)  
I'm not kidding, just let me show you.

VIVIAN

Jeremy, I am not in the mood to play any -

*Jeremy snaps his finger. Time stops. The clock is no longer ticking, Vivian is no longer speaking. The world is frozen.*

*Jeremy turns to the audience.*

JEREMY

So I recently realized I could stop time. Needless to say, this was a pretty awesome discovery.

*He walks downstage, away from Vivian, and the lights dim around him, concealing the living room in darkness.*

JEREMY

And totally unexpected. I mean it's not like I was sitting around squinting my eyes, trying to stop time. It kind of happened by accident.

*A school bell RINGS. JOEY and GRACE, both 16, enter from opposite sides of the stage. Joey places a chair behind Jeremy and one next to it, which he sits in. Grace puts a chair on the other side of Jeremy and also sits.*

JOEY

Hey bud.

JEREMY

Hey. 'Sup?

GRACE

Hi Jeremy.

JEREMY

Oh. Hi Grace. How was your weekend?

GRACE

It was good. Didn't see you at Melanie's party on Friday.

JEREMY

Yeah, I know...

(sits)

I was booked solid that night. I totally forgot about that one.

JOEY

Sure you were...

JEREMY

Cram it.

TEACHER (O.S.)

Alright class, take your seats please. I hope you all had a nice weekend and managed to finish your reading for today.

*The students smile and nod.*

TEACHER (O.S.)

Well good, because we're going to start off with a pop quiz. Pass these back, please.

*The students all groan. Joey stands up, collects a stack of papers from offstage, passes them out to Grace and Jeremy, then sits down.*

JEREMY

Aw crap. Not good.

*While Grace and Joey dive into their quizzes, Jeremy looks completely lost. He obviously doesn't know any of the answers.*

JEREMY

Come on, come on. THINK.

*The TICKING of the classroom clock begins to slowly get louder and louder. The SCRATCHING of other students' pens begins to permeate the room. Jeremy is getting uncomfortable.*

TEACHER (O.S.)

One minute left.

JEREMY

Come on, think of something. Think think think think think.

*He hangs his head in frustration.*

TEACHER (O.S.)  
OK - time is up.

JEREMY  
NO!

*He shoots up from his chair, and everyone around him freezes. The clock is no longer ticking, and the scratching is gone.*

JEREMY  
What the...

*He walks to Joey and waves his hand in front of Joey's face. Nothing.*

JEREMY  
(to audience)  
I was worried at first. I was afraid that I was going crazy or something. But then I realized,  
(holds up his quiz sheet)  
this could come in handy.

*He walks behind Joey and starts copying answers on to his quiz. He then walks over to Grace and double checks his answers.*

JEREMY  
Obviously, this was going to make doing my homework a lot simpler.

*He finishes writing his answers and starts to head back to his desk, but stops short.*

JEREMY  
And there might also be some... added benefits.

*He leans over and tries to sneak a peek down Grace's blouse, then quickly stops himself.*

JEREMY  
But more about that later. For now, it was time to get an A in class.

*He sits down contently and waits for things to start up again. Nothing happens.*

JEREMY  
Provided I can figure this part out...

*He tries a variety of motions to get things moving: squinting, clapping his hands, yelling "Start!", etc. Finally, out of desperation, he snaps his finger.*

*The clock begins to TICK again, papers begin to RUSTLE behind him. Joey stands up and starts collecting papers.*

JEREMY

Sweeeet.

*The bell RINGS. Blackout.*

*The lights come up on Joey and Jeremy, talking in what could be a hallway.*

JEREMY

I'm telling you, time STOPPED. I got up, walked around, finished my quiz. It was awesome.

JOEY

Could you go back in time?

JEREMY

I don't think so, I think I just paused everything.

JOEY

Well that's lame.

JEREMY

Hey! I didn't see you stopping time to cheat on YOUR quiz!

JOEY

That's 'cause I didn't NEED to stop time. I did my homework!

JEREMY

So what? It helped me out today, and I'll use it to do something more exciting tomorrow!

JOEY

I hope so - cheating on quizzes is pretty lame.

JEREMY

You're pretty lame.

JOEY

Whatever. I bet I could think of a dozen better things to do than that lameness.

GRACE

To do with what?

*Grace has wandered into their conversation,  
unbeknownst to the boys.*

JOEY

*(under his breath to Jeremy)*

Well she gives me some ideas...

*Jeremy elbows Joey, hard.*

JEREMY

Oh, nothing. Just a new study trick I heard about.

GRACE

Oh yeah, what?

JOEY

Jeremy can stop time.

JEREMY

Dude!

JOEY

Dude!

JEREMY

What the heck?

JOEY

Really man, you should be sharing this.

GRACE

For real?

JEREMY

Well...

JOEY

Yes, for real.

JEREMY

Well I don't...

JOEY

Yeah, you do.

GRACE

That's cool.

JEREMY

(thrown for a loop)  
Huh? You think that's cool?

GRACE

Sure. Why not?

*The bell RINGS.*

GRACE

Wanna show me?

JEREMY

What, now?

GRACE

Why not? You can make me not late to class.

JEREMY

Well I...

GRACE

You can do it, right?

JEREMY

I - I...

GRACE

Hmmm... Well I gotta go. I guess I'll take a rain check, then.

*She starts to leave, touching Jeremy's shoulder on the way out.*

GRACE

You let me know when you're ready.

*She exits.*

JEREMY

Uh. Sure. I'll let you... know...

JOEY

(shaking head)  
SO lame.

*Joey exits.*

JEREMY

(to audience)  
Clearly, I needed to practice.

*The lights dim around him.*

JEREMY

It took about a week, but got a pretty good system down. Snap my finger, time stops. Snap it again, everything starts up again. The only person who notices is me. Say I needed a break in gym class? SNAP - two minute breather. The person in front of me is about to get the last order of tater tots? SNAP - looks like they're already on my tray. I forgot to take the trash out before my folks got home? SNAP - I can grab it while they wait on the porch. It's pretty useful. I got so good at it, I thought it was time to show Grace what I could do.

*The lights raise as Grace walks by, not noticing Jeremy. He runs after her.*

JEREMY

Hey, Grace! Hold up!

*She stops and turns, smiling when she sees him.*

GRACE

Hey Jeremy, how's time travel going for you?

JEREMY

It's fine. Good. I was, I was thinking I could show you something now, if you're still interested.

*A horn HONKS offstage, and the sound of students heading home after school starts to build. She looks off, toward the sound, then back to Jeremy.*

GRACE

I'm kinda in a rush, J. Can it wait?

JEREMY

It'll only take a second, less than a second. I promise.

GRACE

(sighs)

OK. One second.

JEREMY

Piece of cake.

(he holds up his empty hands)

Now, pay very close attention.

GRACE

I'm all yours.

*He SNAPS his finger, and Grace locks in place. The crowd noise disappears. He waits a moment to make*

*sure she's frozen, then dashes offstage. He promptly returns holding a single red rose. He positions himself in front of her, takes a deep breath, and holds up the rose. SNAP - the crowd noise is back and she unfreezes.*

GRACE

What the...? How did you...?

JEREMY

Pretty neat, huh?

GRACE

That was AMAZING. How did you do it?

JEREMY

I told you. I stopped time.

GRACE

Can you show me?

JEREMY

I just did...

GRACE

Can you SHOW me? Can you do it with me?

JEREMY

Well, I don't know...

GRACE

Come on, all you have to do is like, hold onto me when you do it, right? Isn't that how it works in movies?

JEREMY

I haven't really tried...

GRACE

Let's try it now. Come on.  
(she grabs his hand)  
Let's stop time.

JEREMY

I...

*She smiles at him in anticipation.*

JEREMY

OK. Let's do it.

*He pulls her close and raises his free hand. SNAP - the crowd noise is gone. He looks around, excited, smiling, then back at Grace, her hand still locked around his. She is frozen.*

JEREMY

Crap.

(to audience)

This was definitely not what I was hoping for. I mean, come on - this is supposed to be fun, but what fun is it if I'm doing it by myself? There's only so much you can do alone...

*He looks in Grace's eyes, sighs, then reluctantly snaps his finger. The crowd noise returns, Grace begins to look around expectantly.*

GRACE

Did it work? What happened?

JEREMY

Grace... OK, you got me. I was making it up.

GRACE

Oh really?

JEREMY

Yeah, I... I was just trying to impress you, so I made this up.

GRACE

Why would you do that?

JEREMY

Well, I was hoping you might want to go out with me. You know, if you have the time.

GRACE

(smiles, coyly)

Hmmm... Well, let me check my schedule...

*Lights out.*

*Full lights up on the living room, Vivian still frozen and Jeremy facing the audience.*

JEREMY

So that's where I am. I have this amazing power, and I just don't feel right using it. Grace and I had a great time tonight without me needing any tricks, so I've decided that I'm not going to abuse this power I discovered.

*Jeremy walks into the home, exiting on the side opposite the front door.*

JEREMY

Cutting corners is nice, but I don't need it to succeed.

*He re-enters, carrying a frozen dog with a leash attached to its collar. He carries it out the front door, then returns empty handed.*

JEREMY

Of course, now that I've figured this out, there's no point in getting in trouble right away.

*He turns to the door and snaps his finger. The clock resumes CHIMING.*

VIVIAN

- games!

JEREMY

No games, mom, I swear! I've been home for an hour - I was just out walking Buster.

*He points out the front door and the dog emphatically BARKS.*

VIVIAN

Oh. I'm sorry. I just assumed...

JEREMY

I get it, it's OK. I'm sorry I didn't see you before I left.

VIVIAN

Well OK then. Make sure you finish your homework.

*Vivian turns away, still very confused, and exits.*

JEREMY

Night mom.

(to audience)

Don't worry. I'll stop doing it after I finish my homework.

*He SNAPS his finger one more time. BLACKOUT.*