

SKIP INTRO

John Yunker

www.johnyunker.com

CHARACTERS (2M/F)

- SHEL
- MAX

TIME: Now.

SETTING: TV room. Characters are seated next to each other on a sofa or love seat.

PRODUCTION NOTE: Hand-held signs, designed to resemble digital buttons, such as one would see on Netflix, will be displayed adjacent to the characters (visible to both audience and actors) as indicated when they use the remote control.

SCENE 1

(Two people seated on a couch facing the TV/audience. SHEL has the remote. MAX holds a beer, just out of SHEL's view.)

MAX

Is this what I think it is?

SHEL

Yep. A new season.

MAX

I can't believe it. Since when?

SHEL

Since tonight.

MAX

How many episodes?

SHEL

Eight.

MAX

Only eight? Whatever happened to the good old days of 20-episode seasons?

SHEL

Just be grateful it's not a limited series.

MAX

True.

SHEL

I can't wait to see if Chloe and Danny finally hook up.

(A SKIP INTRO button/sign appears behind the characters.)

MAX

Skip intro.

Excuse me? SHEL

See? The button on the screen. MAX

Yeah. SHEL

Click it. MAX

But I like the intro. SHEL

We've seen it before. For the past three seasons. MAX

It's hard to hear the music with your talking. SHEL

Waste of time. MAX
(mumbles)
(SHEL presses the remote)

You paused the intro? SHEL

You clearly have a lot to get off your chest. So out with it. What's the big hurry? SHEL

Maybe I just don't see the point of sitting here and watching the same credits, hearing the same song, watching the same bouncy title when we could just get on with the show. MAX

But you're missing the point. This is about relaxing, not rushing. About spending time together. Sometimes I think the secret to happiness is not getting so attached to time. SHEL

If that's the case, why do you think they invented the SKIP button to begin with? That little button is the greatest invention to come out of streaming MAX

television. First we got rid of commercials, then we got rid of those tedious intros.

SHEL

Now if we could just get rid of those tedious television shows.

MAX

Nobody lies on their deathbed wishing they had seen one more intro.

SHEL

(SHEL punches the remote, and the SKIP INTRO button disappears. She hands the remote to MAX.)

Happy now?

(Then notices the beer in MAX's hands.)

Is that your second beer?

MAX

No.

SHEL

It's not your first, I know that much.

MAX

What does it matter? The show's starting.

SHEL

We're only a minute into the program and you're already on your ... don't tell me that's your third.

MAX

Can we please just focus on the show? It's hard to hear the dialogue with your talking.

SHEL

It is. Your third.

MAX

No.

(SKIP ARGUMENT button appears.)

Your *fourth* beer? Oh my God. We need to have a serious discussion about your drinking...

(MAX punches the remote, and the SKIP ARGUMENT button disappears. Just as he begins to enjoy the silence, SHEL stretches and yawns.)

SHEL

Good night.

MAX

Good night? What about the show?

SHEL

You mean shows?

MAX

How many did we watch?

SHEL

Four.

MAX

Oh. I must have skipped too far ahead.

SHEL

What are you talking about?

(SKIP EXPOSITION button appears.)

MAX

The button. The skip button. Like that one there. I created it.

SHEL

You created the skip button?

MAX

I extended it. That's what computer programmers do. We hack things, try to make them better. So the other day I ported the Netflix code onto my server.

(SKIP WHATEVER IT IS HE'S TALKING ABOUT button appears next to the previous button.)

Figured I'd use a combination of React and Redux, with MongoDB on the backend—

(SHEL takes the remote from MAX and presses twice. MAX stops talking.)

SHEL

Wow, that really works.

MAX

A bit too well. I'm still ironing out the bugs.

SHEL

Can I skip work tomorrow?

MAX

I don't think that's a good idea.

SHEL

Why not?

MAX

I've never tried to skip ahead that far.

(SKIP WORK WEEK button appears. SHEL wastes no time tapping the remote.)

SHEL

Damn, nothing happened.

MAX

Check your phone.

SHEL

(staring at phone)

Oh my. It's...

MAX

Friday evening?

SHEL

Wow. I knew you were good at computers and all, but this, this is...

MAX

I figured if we had the power to skip an intro, why not apply that technology to life? Skip all those unpleasant, time-wasting realities.

SHEL
Wait, does that mean ... ?
(SKIP SISTER'S WEDDING button appears and SHEL enthusiastically jabs the remote.)

SHEL
What can I skip next?

MAX
It's not a game. What if you were to skip something you wish you hadn't?
(SKIP LAUNDRY button appears.)

MAX
On second thought.
(MAX reaches for the remote and presses a button. Then SKIP DENTIST appears.)

SHEL
I'll take this one.
(SHEL takes the remote back and taps it. Then SKIP GYM appears.)
And while I'm at it.
(SHEL taps it. Then SKIP TAX SEASON appears.)

MAX
(as SHEL taps the remote)
You might want to slow down.
(Then SKIP COVID appears, and SHEL quickly taps.)

SHEL
But look — we just skipped the entire pandemic!

MAX
And what if that's not the only thing we skipped?

SHEL
(looking at phone)
Oh, no. Oh god no. My mom. I didn't know she...

MAX
What is it?

(SKIP FUNERAL appears. SHEL pushes the remote.)

MAX

I'm sorry.

SHEL

I wasn't there for her. I should have been there for her.

(SKIP MOURNING appears. She pushes the remote, then begins shaking it.)

SHEL

It's not working. It's not working.

MAX

Like I said, I'm still ironing out the bugs. Maybe some things need a bit more time.

SHEL

(slumps in her seat)

What do I do now? I feel so, so lost all of a sudden. Like I'm a stranger, disconnected. From everything.

MAX

(gently takes the remote)

We could go back to watching television. Look, here's a new documentary, on gun violence in the US.

SHEL

Lovely. Where's the "skip show" button when I need it?

MAX

More than 17 million guns were sold last year alone? I didn't realize.

SHEL

And forty percent of American households own a gun?

(They look at each other and then back at the TV. Now visible is a button reading: SKIP COUNTRY.)

MAX

(taps the remote)

Now, this is nice. Miles of empty beaches.

SHEL

Millions of gun-free homes.

MAX

I don't know why we didn't move to Australia sooner.

SHEL

Maybe the secret to happiness is not getting too attached to your country.
Look, a kangaroo!

MAX

And there's a wombat.

SHEL

What's that? Past the trees?

MAX

I believe that's a sulphur-crested cockatoo.

SHEL

Not that. The smoke.

MAX

Looks like a bushfire. A rather large one.

SHEL

Headed towards us.

MAX

Perhaps we should head back home.

*(SKIP CLIMATE CHANGE appears,
and Max holds up the remote, poised
to press the button.)*

SHEL

Into a different type of natural disaster? I'm not sure we can skip this.

MAX

You thinking what I'm thinking?

(SKIP EARTH appears.)

You want to do the honors, or shall I?

(MAX taps the remote twice, and they are thrust back into their seats as if flying at great speed.)

SHEL

Who's flying this thing? Elon Musk?

MAX

It's on autopilot.

SHEL

Even worse. Bad things always happen on autopilot.

MAX

We'll be fine. He's actually waiting up there for us.

SHEL

He is?

MAX

Didn't you see his tweet? Planning some big announcement about how he's going to rule over the planet. Something about bitcoin and tunnels and renaming it from Mars to Planet Musk...

(SKIP MUSK button appears and SHEL reaches for the remote and pushes it.)

SHEL

The whole point of this was to escape all those annoying people back on earth.

MAX

We're running out of planets to skip.

SHEL

Maybe *that's* the secret to happiness. Letting go. Looking out at the stars.

(MAX is silent.)

Or, we could see what's on Netflix.

MAX

Now we're talking.

SHEL

Oh, look, a new season already. Time does fly.

MAX

How many episodes?

SHEL

Only four.

MAX

Figures.

SHEL

Skip intro?

*(SHEL hands MAX the remote. SKIP
ENDING appears. MAX points the
remote at the audience and pushes
the button.)*

END OF PLAY