

## **Bedtime Story for My (future) Daughter**

By Caity-Shea Violette

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This play was inspired by the idea of building a better world for the next generation. As a storyteller, I'm always fascinated by how we will explain the world we are fighting to change to the children who are just entering it. As a person who doesn't (and may never) have children, I wanted to write from a place of deep care and advocacy for future generations that extends beyond the borders of immediate family.

### **CHARACTERS:**

STORYTELLER, any ethnicity, any gender identity, age 25–35.

CHORUS, 2-5 performers of any ethnicity, gender identity, and age. They silently perform the story.

### ***NOTE:***

- Ideally, this piece is performed with a CHORUS of 2-5 performers, but can also be a solo show by assigning all of the lines to STORYTELLER.
- CHORUS members should wear neutral matching clothing to direct our attention to the story they're performing until they speak at the end. Though they should use one consistent storytelling technique, they can use shadow puppetry, simple props, or interpretive dance to physically tell the story. Any objects used should look homemade and their performance should be engaging for young audiences.

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*STORYTELLER enters carrying a large but simple storybook. They speak to the audience as if they were STORYTELLER's daughter, as if they were reading her a bedtime story.*

### **STORYTELLER:**

Long before you were born the earth was a place of clay and dust, water and stone, sky and stars.

*The CHORUS enters and acts out the story like a pop-up traveling children's theatre. It is our window into the pages of the book.*

### **STORYTELLER:**

Life sprung from the soil and soon the whole planet was dotted with people, plants, and animals.

Though they were made of the same water and warmth, each was uniquely shaped by the soil they grew in.

The people discovered the strength of their hands and the speed of their feet.  
They heard their voices and created language to connect, to celebrate, to remember. When they grew hungry and cold, they made tools to build homes and learned how to grow their own food.

One discovery led to the next: new resources, new inventions, new values.  
They built buildings so tall they could scrape the sky,  
Machines stronger and faster than any living thing,  
Cities that outshined the stars.

Hunger turned to ambition and the more they ate, the hungrier they became.  
Food was not enough, they wanted the earth itself.  
They dug and drilled and mined.  
The ground became brittle, the air thickened, the water turned to rust.

Their eyes remained fixed forward, always looking ahead, until they finally forgot how to look up at the sky.  
Without anyone to see them, the stars grew weak.  
One by one, they fell from the sky and scattered across the earth.  
They lay in the dirt and rubble, floating on the ocean – waiting to be found.

As the people dug and drilled and mined,  
the pieces of the broken sky glimmered in the dust,  
catching the eye of one person, then another, and another,  
until thousands of these fractured glowing crystals were being discovered every day across the globe.

People slipped them in pockets  
and tied them on strings that they wore around their necks  
and one by one they remembered the sound of their voice.

Finally able to see the world around them,  
They got busy doing the work that needed to be done.

They protested and legislated and organized movements.  
To protect the planet.  
To fight for our home.  
One day the stars disappeared from their pockets and chains.

They searched for them high and low, but found nothing.  
Then they remembered how to look up and saw the night sky once again freckled with light.

*STORYTELLER closes the book and turns to the audience. The CHORUS follows, all speaking the same love letter.*

**STORYTELLER:**

My sweet girl.

**CHORUS 1:**

You were born into crisp air and clear water.

**CHORUS 2:**

In a hospital I wasn't afraid would bankrupt us.

**CHORUS 3:**

We spent the first few months of your life welcoming you into the world every day—

**CHORUS 4:**

—without fear of losing our jobs.

**STORYTELLER:**

I am so lucky to bear witness to your life.

**CHORUS 1:**

You will grow in rich soil. Fed with nutrients from a planet healing.

**CHORUS 2:**

You will understand the history of the land you live on and fight to restore justice for the people it was taken from.

**CHORUS 3:**

You will fall asleep in a world where the current existential threats to our existence—

**CHORUS 4:**

—feel as distant to you as a bedtime story.

**STORYTELLER:**

I don't know when I will meet you, or if you will even be my daughter when I do.

**CHORUS 1:**

Maybe I will only know you for a second.

**CHORUS 2:**

Passing by as you play in a tree-lined park.

**CHORUS 3:**

Or waiting for the bullet train from New York to DC.

**CHORUS 4:**

Maybe you will never know who I am.

**STORYTELLER:**

I am just one of many people who must come together to fight for your future.

**CHORUS 1:**

A future you will make brighter and better than I ever could.

**CHORUS 2:**

A future you will use to fight for someone else's.

**STORYTELLER:**

Whoever you may be and wherever you end up, this is my wish:

**CHORUS 3:**

May you never forget to look up.

**CHORUS 4:**

And may you always see stars when you do.

*Lights fade onstage as stars are illuminated above us.*

**CAITY-SHEA VIOLETTE** is a US-based playwright whose work explores breaking cycles and learning how to belong to yourself. She's a winner of the Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award, The Clauder Competition, Samuel French OOB Festival, Gary Garrison National Ten-Minute Play Award, and Susan Glaspell Playwriting Festival National Award. Theatres presenting her work include Portland Stage Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, the Kennedy Center, and Boston Playwrights Theatre. She holds an MFA in Playwriting from Boston University.