

Two Days Before

A Play By

Emma Cariello

**THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:**

This play was inspired by my research into school shootings and, more specifically, the Columbine shooting of 1999. The two characters are based very heavily on Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris. I tried as best as I could to capture how kids really talk to each other. However, I purposefully kept it vague, so these two characters can be discussing whatever you want them to be discussing. Generally, though, the core remains the same. A big decision is being made, and one boy needs a little convincing. (*Spacing is playwright's own.*)

Characters

BOY ONE, 17 years old. Small, but not stocky. Almost malnourished. Wooden, hollow eyes.

Something slightly terrifying about him, slightly off-kilter.

BOY TWO, 18 years old. Monstrously tall and gawky. Long, stringy hair. Out of proportion, with large hands and joints. There's a repressed air about him, like something is bubbling under his surface but he's too afraid to show it or even speak of it.

### Setting

BOY TWO's basement, during his high school graduation party. June 2019.

Lights slowly fade in on BOY ONE and BOY TWO, alone. BOY TWO sits in an old armchair, hands resting on his knees. BOY ONE stands, arms crossed. With the fade in of lights, sound fades in also. Noises from upstairs; shuffling feet, muffled laughing and talking. The basement is incredibly cluttered, with random paraphernalia scattered everywhere; mounted deer heads, nerf gun boxes, a child's plastic bike, etc. The play begins in the middle of a conversation.

**BOY TWO:** ...Yeah, I just didn't think I'd make it this far. Like, I have no plan.

**BOY ONE:** We could always... y'know, do...

**BOY TWO:** (Interrupting) No, man (he says it laughingly, shaking his head) Don't be stupid.

**BOY ONE:** (Laughs along, putting his hands up in defense). Ok, but like...don't act like it was all my idea

(They fall into a familiar rhythm. Clearly this conversation has happened before).

**BOY TWO:** Totally was, but ok.

**BOY ONE:** Everything's going to shit anyway. Climate change and shit. Might as well just...

(Makes vague motion with his hands).

**BOY TWO:** (Humoring BOY ONE) Elaborate.

**BOY ONE:** Ok well. Would you rather be one of millions to die in a natural apocalypse, or would you rather go out with a bang?

**BOY TWO:** (Snorts) ‘Go out with a bang?’ Dude....

**BOY ONE:** I’m just saying! Why slip out quietly like you’re at a fucking movie theatre or something? This is *life*, man. This is the *world*. And we’re all gonna die anyway. It’s not like that’s a spoiler or something.

**BOY TWO:** Your dad’s like, a real big Trump supporter right?

(BOY ONE nods incredulously).

**BOY TWO:** And you believe in climate change?

**BOY ONE:** You’re really gonna change the subject like that, huh?

**BOY TWO:** (Shrugs. Not really humoring anymore. Genuinely into the conversation). If we did, I don’t think I *could*. Y’know?

**BOY ONE:** You could. For sure. I know you could.

**BOY TWO:** You don’t know me *that* well, man.

**BOY ONE:** I’ve known you my whole life, you don’t think I know what’s going on in your head? Or what you’re capable of? I know you’re angry.

**BOY TWO:** (That takes him off guard. He looks up at BOY ONE earnestly. After a pause) Yeah. I’m angry. Of course I’m angry. You’re angry, everyone’s fucking angry. (His anger is actually showing now).

**BOY ONE:** Yeah, get riled up! Four years of bullshit, fucking *abuse*, to just leave, graduate, marry some nobody, have two nobody kids and *die*? Is that what you want? (BOY TWO shakes his head rapidly, ready to cry) Well, you’re acting like that’s what you want...

**BOY TWO:** It’s *not*! It’s not what I want!

(Silence. Somebody drops something upstairs, and BOY TWO startles at the dull thump. That triggers him off, and he breaks into nearly silent tears, rubbing his face. BOY ONE watches him coldly).

**BOY ONE:** Are you with me?

(BOY TWO stares up at him. They stay in that tableau for a moment. Movement upstairs continues, conversations continue, and the world continues to spin. But not in this basement. BOY ONE and BOY TWO are stuck, making the biggest decision of their short lives).

**BOY TWO:** (Sudden intake of breath, breaking the suffocating stillness of the basement. Makes the audience wait a moment, his gears turning. Then, a slight flinch when he reaches his final decision in his mind). Yeah, uh-huh. Ok, man, yeah... (Barely coherent. Laughter comes out of his mouth, but he isn't smiling. He doesn't bother to wipe his face of tears).

(BOY ONE smiles, but there's nothing behind it. It's a hollow, dead smile. The two shake hands. Blackout).

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** *My name is Emma Cariello. I'm a college student working toward a degree in journalism. I love writing unsettling, weird, and sad things. I typically gravitate toward fiction short stories, but I love to review films in my spare time too. I hope you enjoy this and please let me know if the attachment opens! It's very short, but I prefer to keep things quick and make sure they pack a punch.*