

NURSERY
a one-act play by Julia Jarcho

(EXCERPT)

NURSERY was originally produced by Young Playwrights Inc. for the 2001 Young Playwrights Festival, at the Cherry Lane Theater in New York City. It was directed by Brett W. Reynolds.

Characters:

JENNY is 16.

JOHN is 18.

SUSAN is their mother.

TODD is 16.

OREN PETERS is 16.

Scene 4. SUSAN is setting the table for dinner and JOHN is on the couch watching television.

SUSAN

Where's your sister?

JOHN

I don't know. Probably in her room.

SUSAN
(calling off)

Jenny! Dinner!

(JENNY enters, looking dazed. JOHN gets up and goes to sit down at the table. JENNY sits down. SUSAN sits down and serves out the food.)

SUSAN

How was school?

JENNY

What?

SUSAN

How was school?

JENNY

Fine. (Beat.) How was your day?

SUSAN

Okay. I didn't get much work done.

JENNY

I'm sorry.

SUSAN

I took a nap.

JENNY

That's good.

SUSAN

What were you doing? Homework?

JENNY

I was—I was reading the newspaper.

SUSAN

Anything interesting?

JENNY
(to audience)

When I saw the paper—there was a photograph on the front, and, it was like being—I can't even—it was painful, it was the most exquisite pain, because there was this—boy—I wanted to scratch him out of the paper just to have the matter under my fingernails. (To SUSAN:) What?

SUSAN

Was there anything interesting in the paper?

JENNY

You know. (Beat.) There was a boy in West Virginia... (Pause.)

SUSAN

Yeah?

JENNY
(to audience)

I didn't even see the headline at first. I was just looking at the picture. Even in the newspaper picture you could see his face was full of bones shining under the skin. I knew him from that. Then I looked at the headline. (To SUSAN:) He shot some kids at his school.

SUSAN

Jesus.

JENNY

Yeah.

SUSAN

So sad.

JENNY

Sad....

SUSAN

Don't you think?

JENNY

I think...(to audience:) all those bones. I mean of course he was... (to SUSAN:) What?

SUSAN

Forget it.

JENNY

No, what? I'm sorry.

(Pause. JENNY serves herself some salad and begins to eat it.)

Salad's good.

SUSAN

I got the mixed greens from downstairs.

JENNY

Yeah?

SUSAN

I'm getting to really like them.

(JOHN drops his fork and stands up. He goes back to the couch and turns on the television.)

It's a good mixture. Different textures. Different colors.

JENNY
(to audience)

It was—a relief. Because imagine if he had been a spelling bee champion? Or just a kid on the bus?

SUSAN

And they wash it for you, which is nice. Washing lettuce is a pain in the ass.

JENNY
(to audience)

He's given himself over to this so completely. And now he won't fit into things.

SUSAN
(standing up, taking her plate to the kitchen)

Your father always insisted that I wash the lettuce.

JENNY
(to audience)

He's gone too far. Think about how far.

SUSAN

Of course you have to. You don't want to eat all the chemicals.

JENNY
(to audience)

Oren Peters, now, will never go back. But he's nearby. He's very close.

(End of scene.)