

YELLOW MARROW

TEN-MINUTE PLAY

By Paul Rust

Copyright © MMIV by Paul Rust
All Rights Reserved

Heuer Publishing LLC, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The writing of plays is a means of livelihood. Unlawful use of a playwright's work deprives the creator of his or her rightful income. The playwright is compensated on the full purchase price and the right of performance can only be secured through purchase of at least three (3) copies of this work. PERFORMANCES ARE LIMITED TO ONE VENUE FOR ONE YEAR FROM DATE OF PURCHASE.

The possession of this script without direct purchase from the publisher confers no right or license to produce this work publicly or in private, for gain or charity. On all programs and advertising this notice must appear: "Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC of Cedar Rapids, Iowa."

This dramatic work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

The right of performance is not transferable and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second hand from a third party. All rights including, but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, broadcast, recitation, lecturing, tabloid, publication, and reading are reserved.

COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.

PUBLISHED BY

HEUER PUBLISHING LLC

**P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

YELLOW MARROW
By Paul Rust

SYNOPSIS: Travis and Brian, two teen males, compose their joint suicide letter.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BRIAN Teenage boy
TRAVIS Teenage boy

PROPS

Table
Two chairs
Letter
Pen
Envelope
Plastic Wal-Mart bag
Two razorblades

SET DESIGN

Minimalistic. Table is center stage.

TRAVIS: (*In the darkness.*) Start it off with, “Dear shitters of the world...”

LIGHTS UP on TRAVIS and BRIAN, two teenage boys. They are dressed in Goth-like clothes: black t-shirts, black jeans. BRIAN sits at a table, taking dictation with pen and paper. TRAVIS stands over BRIAN.

BRIAN: “Dear *shitters* of the world?”

TRAVIS: Yeah. What’s the problem?

BRIAN: I don’t know. It’s a little...it’s a little brash, isn’t it?

TRAVIS: Of course, it’s brash. That’s the whole point. That way, when we people read it, they’re like, “Woah, these guys...were brash.”

BRIAN: I guess - -

TRAVIS: (*Interrupting.*) And by saying, “Dear shitters,” we’re implicating the readers as shitters. So when they read it, they’re like, “Woah. I had no idea how much of a shitter I was.” It’s brilliant.

BRIAN: Can’t we just use another word? Like — “jerks”? “Dear *jerks* of the world”?

TRAVIS: “Dear jerks of the world”? Christ. We might as well be saying, “Dear old so-and-so’s of the world.” We’re sticking with “shitters.”

BRIAN: But I don’t even think shitter’s a word.

TRAVIS: Just write it down, will ya?

BRIAN: Fine. (*Writing aloud.*) “Dear shitters of the world...” (*Beat.*) Now what?

TRAVIS: (*Dictating.*) Fuck you and your fuckin’ rules and your fuckin’ laws and your fuckin’ - -

BRIAN: Woah, woah, woah. Travis, settle down.

TRAVIS: Am I talking too fast?

BRIAN: No. (*Beat.*) You sure you want to start off the letter like this?

TRAVIS: It’s an attention-grabber, Brian. Remember speech class? You gotta start things off with a bang. Like a single word or a statistic. Like, uh, “Hello, my name is Travis. Ninety-five percent of all infants have...uh, shot heroin” or some shit like that.

BRIAN: But all that profanity? People are just going to get turned off and quit reading.

TRAVIS: Do you honestly think they’d set something like this down?

BRIAN: ...No. I suppose not.

TRAVIS: Then we’ll continue. (*Pause.*) Where was I?

BRIAN: (*Reading what's been written.*) "Fuck you and your fuckin' rules and your fuckin' laws."

TRAVIS: (*In awe.*) Damn, that's good. Alright... (*Resuming dictation.*) Fuck your schools. Fuck your homes. Fuck your SUVs. And fuck your...uh, fuck your whole fuckin' way of life, dude. Wait a minute. Scratch "dude."

BRIAN: Already did. (*Adding to the letter, writing aloud.*) For we are *not* your favorite sons. We are *not* your star pupils. We are *not* - -

TRAVIS: What're you doing?

BRIAN: Writing the letter.

TRAVIS: What's this "we are not" bullshit?

BRIAN: Just adding my own flair.

TRAVIS: Were you gonna run this flair past me?

BRIAN: Look, it's both our letter, Travis.

TRAVIS: Exactly. So you should ask my opinion on what to write.

BRIAN: Okay then. Do you approve of, "We are not your favorite sons"?

TRAVIS: (*Begrudgingly.*) ...It's pretty cool.

BRIAN: Then I'll continue. (*Resumes writing aloud.*) Therefore, as your forgotten children, you shall not...uh, you shall not...miss us...you shall not miss us - -

TRAVIS: (*Suggesting.*) Now that we've totally slit our wrists.

BRIAN: ...Uh, I don't - -

TRAVIS: What's the matter with that? It's direct. It's simple.

BRIAN: It's just that...it sort of ruins the poetry.

TRAVIS: Poetry? None of those words rhymed.

BRIAN: I just mean that...okay. (*Pause.*) How about we say..."therefore, as your forgotten children, you shall not miss us...in our absence"?

TRAVIS: Whatever.

BRIAN: (*Jots it down, looks over letter.*) I suppose we should sign it. (*Hands the pen to TRAVIS.*)

TRAVIS: (*Pauses for a moment, leans across table to sign name.*) Travis Daniels. (*Hands pen back to BRIAN, sits down at table.*)

BRIAN: (*Signing name.*) Brian Armstrong.

BRIAN folds the letter, puts it in an envelope, and seals it. They sit at the table, staring at the envelope in silence.

TRAVIS: ...Who do you think will come to our funeral? (*BRIAN shrugs.*) You think our class will?

BRIAN: I don't know. Probably not.

TRAVIS: They all went to James Forester's funeral.

BRIAN: Yeah, but he died of leukemia. It's different.

TRAVIS: ...Yeah, I guess you're right. *(Pause.)* Do you think Steve Hansen will come?

BRIAN: Why do you care if Steve Hansen comes?

TRAVIS: Because...uh, I want him to know that it's pricks like him that, uh, you know, drove us to do this. So everybody can see him cry. See what a pussy he is.

BRIAN: I don't think he'd cry. I don't even think he'll be there.

TRAVIS: Should we put his name in the letter? Add something like, "And just so you know, it's pricks like Steve Hansen that made us do this."

BRIAN: Nah. The envelope's all sealed. Forget it.

TRAVIS: ...How many people do you think will be there? You know, like in total? *(BRIAN shrugs; pause.)* How many do you think will cry? *(BRIAN shrugs; pause.)*

BRIAN: We should probably get to this. Before we forget.

TRAVIS: ...You got the razorblades?

BRIAN: ...I left them in the kitchen.

BRIAN exits. TRAVIS remains at the table. To kill time and nervous energy, he picks up the envelope and examines it, holding it up to the light. BRIAN re-enters with a plastic Wal-Mart bag. BRIAN takes a seat on the floor and nods to TRAVIS. He walks over and sits beside BRIAN on the floor.

TRAVIS: Did anybody at Wal-Mart say anything?

BRIAN: *(Pulling out a package of razorblades from the bag.)* About what?

TRAVIS: About you buying razorblades.

BRIAN: *(Opening package.)* Nobody cared. *(Puts hand out to TRAVIS—with two razorblades resting on his palm.)* Take one.

TRAVIS takes a razorblade. Without looking at one another, BRIAN and TRAVIS position themselves on their knees—left arms outstretched across their thighs and razorblades held firmly to their wrists.

TRAVIS: How do you wanna do this?

BRIAN: Count to three?

TRAVIS: ...Like, "one, two, three, go" or "on three"?

BRIAN: One, two, three, go.

TRAVIS: Sounds good. *(Pause.)* You ready?

BRIAN: ...Yeah, I'm ready.

TRAVIS/BRIAN: (*Simultaneously.*) One...two...

TRAVIS: (*Interrupting.*) Could we...?

BRIAN: What?

TRAVIS: Could we maybe count to three...before counting to three?

BRIAN: Like count to three twice?

TRAVIS: Yeah. Is that cool?

BRIAN: I guess.

TRAVIS: Alright. Thanks.

BRIAN: We'll try again.

TRAVIS/BRIAN: (*Simultaneously.*) One. Two. Three. Go. (*Pause.*)
One...two...

TRAVIS: (*Interrupting.*) Wait, wait, wait.

BRIAN: (*Frustrated.*) What?

TRAVIS: How about I slit your wrist and you slit mine?

BRIAN: No, Travis.

TRAVIS: Why not?

BRIAN: Because that'd be homicide. Not suicide.

TRAVIS: Oh, yeah. Right.

BRIAN: Again...one, two, three, go.

TRAVIS/BRIAN: (*Simultaneously.*) One...two...three...

TRAVIS: (*Interrupting.*) Are you sure you want to do this?

BRIAN: Well, you obviously don't.

TRAVIS: No, I do, I do. It's just that...I'm having my doubts.

BRIAN: But we planned this, Travis.

TRAVIS: I know.

BRIAN: We talked about this for weeks.

TRAVIS: I know, I know.

BRIAN: It was going to be our wake-up call to everyone, remember?
The school. The city. Our parents. Everyone.

TRAVIS: I understand.

BRIAN: We made a promise.

TRAVIS: Well, people can...people can back out of a promise.

BRIAN: No, they can't, Travis. That's what a "promise" is all about.
It's about *not* backing out.

TRAVIS: But I - -

BRIAN: But what? I've kept every promise I made with you. (*Beat.*)
Remember when I promised that I'd help you steal your brother's
Playboys?

TRAVIS: We were nine years old.

BRIAN: But it was a promise, Travis. It was a promise I kept.

TRAVIS: But that's differ - -

BRIAN: And even though, right beforehand, I got scared and wanted to back out, I stuck with it because I knew I had made a promise to you. And in the end, who helped you steal those Playboys.

TRAVIS: You did.

BRIAN: And you let you stash them in their grandma's basement?

TRAVIS: You did.

BRIAN: And when their grandma found them, who lied and said that, "They must have been there when she bought the house"?

TRAVIS: ...You did.

BRIAN: Right. I did. Because I knew I had made a promise with my friend. My best friend. *(Beat.)* So, you gonna keep your promise or not?

TRAVIS: ...I'll keep it.

BRIAN: Good. Then we'll try it again. One, two, three, go.

TRAVIS/BRIAN: *(Simultaneously.)* One...two...three...

TRAVIS: *(Interrupting.)* Why though?

BRIAN: Why, what?!

TRAVIS: Why do we have to do this?

BRIAN: Because both of us know what a fuckin' shitty world this is, Travis. We both know that not a single soul in this entire town would care if either of us were dead. And we know there isn't one thing in this whole wide world that gives us a reason to live.

TRAVIS: ...Pizza.

BRIAN: What?

TRAVIS: There's pizza. That's reason to live. Pizza.

BRIAN: I'm not enduring a lifetime of misery for Godfather's, Travis.

TRAVIS: Okay, alright. What about, uh...? Laser-tag! You get to hold a cool gun and jump around and - -

BRIAN: Travis. If you think pizza and laser-tag are good enough reasons to live, then maybe you *should* be considering suicide. *(Beat.)* Now, are we gonna do this or not?

Long pause.

TRAVIS: ...Me?

BRIAN: What?

TRAVIS: Me. That's your reason to live. Me.

BRIAN drops his head and exhales. Beat. He looks back up at TRAVIS and in anger, throws his razorblade across the stage and exits. TRAVIS takes the razorblade away from his wrist. A moment passes. BRIAN re-enters, timidly, behind TRAVIS.

BRIAN: When I was at Wal-Mart, a lady at the register asked me how you were doing.

TRAVIS: (*Without turning around to face BRIAN.*) What'd you say?

BRIAN: ... "He's having a hard time."

TRAVIS smiles. BRIAN does too. LIGHTS DOWN.

THE END

DO NOT COPY