



RARE BIRDS

BY ADAM
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DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

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*For Tish Dace and Mary Kay Fyda-Mar, two amazing women
who have contributed so much to American theater and to
whom I am forever grateful*

RARE BIRDS received its world premiere in New York City at the Theater at the 14th Street Y by the Red Fern Theatre Company (Melanie Moyer Williams, Executive Artistic Director) on March 23, 2017. It was directed by Scott Ebersold, the scenic design was by Andrew Mannion, the costume design was by Izzy Fields, the lighting design was by Derek Van Heel, the sound and projection design was by Andy Evan Cohen, the fight direction was by Joseph Travers, the assistant director was Tyler Spicer, Ron Lasko at Spin Cycle was the press representative, and the production stage manager was Jodi M. Witherell. The cast was as follows:

EVAN WILLS	Jake Glassman
MIKE MAKOWSKI	Dylan Guerra
DYLAN CORMER	George Colligan
JENNY MONROE	Joanna Fanizza
JANET WILLS	Tracey Gilbert
RALPH EMOND	Robert Buckwalter

RARE BIRDS was developed in the Dorothy Strelsin New American Writers Group at Primary Stages.

Special thanks to the Theater at the 14th Street Y: David Stallings, Associate Artistic Director; Joe Tucker, Program Coordinator, Kryssy Wright, Technical Director/Resident Designer.

Prior to the world premiere, a workshop production of RARE BIRDS was presented by Chance Theater (Oanh Nguyen, Artistic Director; Casey Long, Managing Director; Erika C. Miller, Development Director) in Anaheim, California, opening on August 4, 2016. It was directed by Travis K. Donnelly, the stage manager was Amanda Rountree, the dramaturg was Jocelyn L. Buckner, the producing associate/literary manager was Jennifer Ruckman, the technical director was Masako Tobaru, and the production manager was Bebe Herrera.

EVAN WILLS Andrew Guerrero
MIKE MAKOWSKI Alexander Walters
DYLAN CORMER David Christian Vera
JENNY MONROE Bailey Castle
JANET WILLS Karen O'Hanlon
RALPH EMOND James McHale

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHARACTERS

EVAN WILLS, 16, small for his age, eccentric

MIKE MAKOWSKI, 16, bigger than Evan

DYLAN CORMER, 16, bigger than Evan, troubled

JENNY MONROE, 17, popular but not unkind

JANET WILLS, Mid-to-late 30s, Evan's mother

RALPH EMOND, 40ish, Janet's boyfriend

MRS. GERARD (voice only)

TEENAGERS (voices only)

TIME

Now.

SETTING

Colchester, CT, a small town south of Hartford.

Most of the stage is taken up by Evan's room, center. Small plaster birds hang from his ceiling and sit on every available surface. A window downstage right. Far right is the door to his room. There is a small hall area where you can see if someone is outside his door.

Stage left is a public high school's hallway, complete with lockers. Stage right is a table at a casino restaurant. The restaurant must also become an area in the woods where kids hang out. A cooler, a couple of milk crates.

RARE BIRDS

ACT ONE

Prologue

In darkness, songbirds chirping, then the sound of two teenage boys arguing.

MIKE. *(Off.)* Let me see.

DYLAN. *(Off.)* Fuck off. It's mine.

MIKE. *(Off.)* You don't know what you're doing. Give it to me.

DYLAN. *(Off.)* No. I'm going to hit that one.

MIKE. *(Off.)* Which one?

DYLAN. *(Off.)* Right there.

MIKE. *(Off.)* No chance. Give it!

DYLAN. *(Off.)* Shut up! You'll scare it away.

A beat, then a gunshot. A bird falls from above into a spot, seemingly dead.

(Off.) Is it dead?

MIKE. *(Off.)* Someone's coming! Run!

DYLAN. *(Off.)* Fuck! Fuck. Fuck.

Sound of Mike and Dylan running loudly through the dead leaves.

The spotlight on the bird grows a little larger. Evan enters, binoculars around his neck. He sees the bird. Gingerly, he picks it up. He carries it away carefully.

EVAN. Okay. You're alive. Shh. You're okay. Don't move.

He looks off into distance where Dylan and Mike exited.
Assholes.

Scene 1

Evan's bedroom. Posters of birds on the walls taken from wildlife magazines. A couple half-built wooden birdhouses. Various plaster or ceramic statues of songbirds hang from the ceiling on fishing line and are perched on little shelves, over the dresser, on every available surface. Like something an old woman would collect, but this is the bedroom of a sixteen-year-old boy.

The bird is in a shoebox now with airholes and Evan is talking to it, trying to feed it from an eyedropper. In case we didn't notice before, we see Evan is wearing a T-shirt with a bird on it.

EVAN. You're okay. You're going to be okay.

JANET. (*Off.*) Evan!

EVAN. (*Hiding the box under the bed.*) Shh! Don't say anything. You're not here.

Janet enters, sees his back turned.

JANET. What are you doing?

EVAN. Nothing.

JANET. Did I hear a noise?

Evan turns.

EVAN. What noise?

JANET. Rustling.

EVAN. What are you talking about?

JANET. Why aren't you dressed?

EVAN. I am dressed.

JANET. Don't get wise.

EVAN. I'm wearing clothing, and it's a good thing too because you never knock.

JANET. It's my house. Get dressed. Into something appropriate.

EVAN. This is what I like to wear.

JANET. I'm not having this conversation. Not today.

EVAN. Okay, well, come back when you want to have this conversation. I'm here most of the time.

JANET. Put on a nice shirt without a bird on it. We're having company.

EVAN. *Company?*

JANET. Someone's coming over. And you can't look like that. I won't allow it.

EVAN. This is who I am though. Don't you want me to be who I am?

JANET. No. I want you to be a better version of who you are.

EVAN. That's fake. That's lying.

JANET. It's not lying to clean yourself up.

EVAN. I am clean.

JANET. Wear something nicer.

EVAN. But that's not who I am.

JANET. Today it is.

EVAN. I won't like him.

JANET. You don't know that.

EVAN. Why should I like him? Freud says—

JANET. No.

EVAN. No, but actually—

JANET. Freud is sex-obsessed and outdated and no one cares what he says.

EVAN. What's this one's name, again?

JANET. (*Begrudgingly.*) Ralph.

EVAN. That's a dumb name.

JANET. He's very smart.

EVAN. You said that about the last one.

JANET. No, I didn't.

EVAN. You did.

JANET. Evan, I would not have said that.

EVAN. You have blinders.

JANET. That's really mean.

EVAN. That's part of who I am. Don't make me meet him.

JANET. He wants to meet you.

EVAN. No he doesn't. Not really. He just says that so you'll like him. I have work to do. I'm busy. I don't have time for all this.

JANET. Whatever you have to do, you can do it later.

EVAN. He'll try to make me laugh at his dumb jokes or he'll "show an interest."

JANET. What's wrong with that?

EVAN. I just want to be left alone.

JANET. Sometimes that's not an option. We all have to do things sometimes we don't want to do.

EVAN. I'm going to try to avoid that in my life.

JANET. Yeah well, good luck with that.

EVAN. Thank you.

JANET. The longer you live the more things you have to do that you don't want to do.

EVAN. Well then it's a terrible system.

JANET. What?

EVAN. Life.

JANET. (*Suddenly upset.*) Don't talk like that. What do you mean? Do I have to worry about you?

EVAN. No.

JANET. Are you getting sad again?

EVAN. No.

JANET. I never should have let you stop therapy.

EVAN. It was stupid.

JANET. You make me worry.

EVAN. I'm fine. I'm fine!

JANET. Good. Then get changed.

EVAN. Seriously?

JANET. It's for your own good.

EVAN. In what way?

JANET. You need to get out, find new interests, do new things. I thought you were going to join one of those after-school clubs.

EVAN. Why did you think that?

JANET. Maybe yearbook or a prom committee? They still have those things?

EVAN. Why would I want to do that?

JANET. Make friends.

EVAN. Everyone in my school is an idiot.

JANET. Okay, but they're all you have. Tonight will be good practice. On talking to other people. On being civilized. On having discussions with people besides me.

EVAN. I don't like people.

JANET. Just get changed.

EVAN. I'll just embarrass you.

JANET. Don't say that

EVAN. I'll scare him away. Like all the others.

JANET. You didn't scare them away.

EVAN. Then where are they?

JANET. It wasn't you.

EVAN. Was it you?

JANET. ...

EVAN. You don't want me to meet him. You know you don't want me to.

JANET. It's been six months already. He wants to meet you.

EVAN. You know that's not true. I'll stay in here. I'll be quiet and you can go out to the dinner or the movies or to the casino or the mall or Norwich or whatever. I'm not here. I'm busy. I'm doing my homework and can't be disturbed. You'll know what to say. You're a

RARE BIRDS

by Adam Szymkowicz

4M, 2W

Sixteen-year-old Evan Wills is an avid bird watcher who wears colorful songbird shirts to school despite the constant antagonism it brings him. Evan's mother just wants Evan to be normal, and happy—and normal—and get along with her new boyfriend. While Evan summons the courage to talk to Jenny Monroe (whose locker is next to his), troubled bully Dylan has something darker in mind. After some stupid choices and unexpected results, Evan learns that the worst thing you can do in high school is admit you love something.

“RARE BIRDS proves that talent and skill can make an ‘issue’ piece a compelling work of art. ... What’s rare is Szymkowicz’s gift for naturalistic dialogue. ... After a sequence of smoothly escalating episodes of conflict and cruelty, gentle good humor mingles with nail-biting anxiety in the climactic sequence. We’re left shivering with angst, yet aware of the possibility that goodness can sometimes triumph. ... It’s a winner from start to finish.”

—**BlogCritics.org**

“RARE BIRDS may be about teenage bullying, but this play is anything but childish. ... [it] plumbs the depths of how cruel teenagers can be. ... RARE BIRDS is a story the world needs to hear.”

—**Charged.fm**

“[RARE BIRDS] is well written, with dark comedy, intense drama, and an intriguing plot arc. It sheds a harsh light on cyber-bullying... The main characters... are complex and believable, with deep inner lives. ... [RARE BIRDS] shares an important message through a heartfelt story that takes the audience on a memorable emotional journey.”

—**Theasy.com**

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DEFLOWERING WALDO
HEARTS LIKE FISTS
NERVE
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