

# THESE ALTERED DAYS

© 2004 by Steven A Lyons  
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980 Middlefield Road • Berkeley • CA • 94708  
510-704-8855 • [salyons@playcafe.org](mailto:salyons@playcafe.org)

## **THESE ALTERED DAYS**

**Characters:**  
The Older - Male, 40's  
The Younger - Male, 20's.  
The Child - Male, 4 - 6 years old. Non-speaking part.

### **Synopsis:**

Michael, twenty years old, returns home to his apartment to discover that a version of himself from twenty years in the future has moved in. The forty year old Michael confronts the twenty year old Michael about his alcoholism. In turn, the twenty year old challenges the forty year old to regain the spark that drove him to pursue his passion, photography. Boiling beneath the surface is an unspeakable tragedy that the older Michael is desperately trying to correct.

### **Set and Prop Requirements:**

Single living room/kitchen set with two trick props: a refrigerator with a back that opens, and snow that falls from the sky. Other props include a dog, (perhaps a live puppy) and black and white photos on the wall (taken from scenes in the play). The rest of the prop/set requirements are standard. Lighting plays an important part near the end of the play, perhaps using a scrim. Sound requirements are minimal.

Directors are encouraged to enhance the dream landscape of this play.

### **Running Time:**

Slightly over an hour. Single continuous scene, no intermission.

Setting: Living room/kitchen area. A front door is seen, with a mail slot in it. The room is in disarray. Tattered couch. Bags and boxes stacked against a wall. Hole in the sheet rock, made by hitting the wall. Four or five music boxes spread around apartment. These music boxes must all play the same tune. Photos, many black and white, are on walls. These photos may reflect scenes that take place in the play.

On rise: THE OLDER is on stage somewhere, probably asleep under a pile of blankets on the couch. THE CHILD is also somewhere on stage, unseen.

THE YOUNGER (O.S.)

I can't believe it.

I Can Not believe it.

(YOUNGER enters but not thru door.)

My God. What happened to my place? VANDALIZED.

Great . . . . yep . . . great.

DAMN IT.

I CAN NOT BELIEVE IT!

(YOUNGER walks around room, disgusted)

What kind of . . . nut . . .

(notices a photo on the wall)

wrecks your house and then hangs black and white. limited edition, palladium prints on your walls.

(removes photo from wall, sits, admiring photo)

This guy is good.

My cameras!

(Runs to closet.)

*(Inside closet)* Where are my cameras!

(exiting closet)

I'm calling the police.

(Notices other things that are out of whack)

These people are totally . . .

What else . . .

Jesus, I CAN NOT BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING!

(Mail slot in front door opens and mail is dropped through. THE OLDER stirs, gets up, ambles to the front door and gathers up the mail, ignoring YOUNGER.)

What the hell . . .  
What are you doing?

(THE OLDER goes over to the stack of boxes and bags, searches around for the correct bag, throws the mail in, unopened. Returns to where he had been.)

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

(THE YOUNGER grabs a knife from the kitchen. Raises it to strike.)

I'm warning you . . .  
Get out of my house.

THE OLDER

This is an apartment.

THE YOUNGER

Get out of my house!

THE OLDER

This is my apartment.

THE YOUNGER

You stole my cameras.

THE OLDER

Impossible.

THE YOUNGER

I'm giving you to the count of ten.

(OLDER curls up to go back to sleep)

You are out of your mind.

THE OLDER

No. I am out of your mind. Or perhaps, you are out of my --

THE YOUNGER

SHUT UP!

THE OLDER

Look at me.

(pause)

Well . . .

THE YOUNGER

Well, what?

THE OLDER

Look around your apartment.

THE YOUNGER

I've looked.

THE OLDER

Not enough.

THE YOUNGER

I'm counting to ten.

THE OLDER

Good, then I'll take it from eleven to twenty, then it's back to you.  
Okay go.

THE YOUNGER

You're dead man.

THE OLDER

I should be so lucky.

THE YOUNGER

(THE YOUNGER plunges the knife  
into the couch.)

SHUT UP!

THE OLDER

Look around.

THE YOUNGER

I've looked. Now I'm calling the police.

(THE YOUNGER goes for the  
phone, notices calendar on the wall.  
THE OLDER goes to the kitchen to  
fix a drink for the younger.)

Get out of my kitchen.

THE OLDER

My kitchen.

THE YOUNGER

This is too weird. What did you do with my calendar?

THE OLDER

Yours was out of date.

Won't you sit down?

THE YOUNGER

(OLDER hands drink to YOUNGER,  
who doesn't sit.)

Who are you, man?

THE OLDER

Wanna guess?

THE YOUNGER

(pause) You give me the creeps. How did you get in here?

THE OLDER

Used my key. How did you get in?

THE YOUNGER

I . . . I don't remember.

(THE YOUNGER looks around a bit  
more. THE OLDER watches him.)

THE OLDER

By the way, you want to call the police, here's the phone book.

THE YOUNGER

You sure are cocky.

(YOUNGER stares at phone book.)

THE OLDER

Something the matter?

THE YOUNGER

You are messin' with me, man.

THE OLDER

Well, you know what they say.

THE YOUNGER

(no reply)

THE OLDER

Aren't you going to look up the number?

THE YOUNGER

What do they say?

THE OLDER

What rhymes with reason?

THE YOUNGER

My father use to say that.

THE OLDER

So did mine.

THE YOUNGER

(pause) What did you do with my phone book?

THE OLDER  
Probably threw it out along with your calendar.

THE YOUNGER  
(no reply)

THE OLDER  
So what's up with you these days?

THE YOUNGER  
(no reply)

THE OLDER  
Like your drink? I fixed it just the way you like it.

THE YOUNGER  
(no reply)

THE OLDER  
I upset you?

THE YOUNGER  
Yes.

THE OLDER  
Good.

THE YOUNGER  
Who are you, man?

THE OLDER  
(no reply)

THE YOUNGER  
You're crazy aren't you?

THE OLDER  
I think you know exactly who I am.

THE YOUNGER  
(*pause*) You look like my dad.

THE OLDER  
So I've been told.  
So what were you up to before dropping in on me?

THE YOUNGER  
Having a nightmare apparently.

THE OLDER  
(no reply)

THE YOUNGER  
I don't remember.

THE OLDER

Out partying?

THE YOUNGER

Yes! Yes, I was celebrating!

THE OLDER

I bet.

THE YOUNGER

Landslide victory for Reagan.

THE OLDER

What! You never--

THE YOUNGER

This is the final nail in the coffin of the right wing.

THE OLDER

Oh yes, now I --

THE YOUNGER

Best thing that ever happened to the country. The election of Reagan is the --

OLDER / YOUNGER

*(together)* catalyst that will ignite the left.

THE OLDER

Right. So is this the first time or second time?

*(THE YOUNGER spews his drink)*

First. . . . Sorry.

THE YOUNGER

*(sputtering)* What!

THE OLDER

I'm really sorry, I shouldn't--

THE YOUNGER

Second time! Reagan gets re-elected?!? Is that what you're saying?

*(YOUNGER sloshes down drink.)*

THE OLDER

Don't worry. There's nothing Reagan can do to you that you aren't better at doing to yourself.

THE YOUNGER

Get out.

THE OLDER

Okay, fine. Hey, that's what I've been trying to do for years.

(prepares to leave)

Listen, there's a frozen dinner in the fridge. Here are the keys. Had the locks changed about ten times since you were here. Dental appointment scheduled for next Thursday. You're workin' swing shift tonight. Don't forget.

(OLDER exits.

The YOUNGER walks around apartment, inspecting things)

THE YOUNGER

What a nut case.

Shoo-ee, you had me goin' there for a minute, you really did.

(THE OLDER reenters)

What are you doing back here?

THE OLDER

I have no where to go.

THE YOUNGER

Then you've arrived.

THE OLDER

I don't think this will work. You and I can't just switch places.

THE YOUNGER

Look, you want me to believe that you're, like, the Ghost of Christmas Future, right?

THE OLDER

Right.

THE YOUNGER

So you are me, only in the future.

THE OLDER

Correct.

THE YOUNGER

That doesn't make much sense, does it?

THE OLDER

At night, as you admire a starlit sky, you are admiring light that was created long before you were born. That doesn't make sense either, but it is true.

THE YOUNGER

Well, if you are me, it is easy enough to prove. You wouldn't mind answering a few questions?

THE OLDER

Ask away. That's what we did last time.

THE YOUNGER

Last time?

THE OLDER

Last time we got together like this.

THE YOUNGER

We have never gotten together like this.

THE OLDER

We have, but you were a few years older.

THE YOUNGER

So, in your past, you have spoken to me in my future?

THE OLDER

Now that one is a bit more confusing, I admit.

THE YOUNGER

I think we can clear this all up. I'm just going to ask a few questions.

THE OLDER

(OLDER lits up a cigarette)

Ask away.

(YOUNGER stares at cigarette,  
aghast)

THE YOUNGER

What are you doing?

THE OLDER

(pause) Smokin'.

THE YOUNGER

No, I don't mean "What are you doing" I mean "What *the hell* are you doing."

THE OLDER

(no reply)

THE YOUNGER

When did you take that up? Do you ever read the side of the box, smart guy?

(OLDER slowly looks at the side of  
the cigarette box, sets box back  
down.)

Well . . .

THE OLDER

(*pause*) They don't have that anymore.

THE YOUNGER

What!

THE OLDER

They took that off. Congress abolished the office of the Surgeon General.

THE YOUNGER

Oh brother. Okay, so I'm going to ask you a few questions.

THE OLDER

(indicates "ask away.")

THE YOUNGER

(YOUNGER grabs music box)

Who gave me this?

THE OLDER

Your mother.

THE YOUNGER

Ha! Sorry, wrong answer, Bub. If you are who you are pretending to be, you would have known that the right answer is "Aunt Clara."

THE OLDER

Aunt Clara is your mother.

THE YOUNGER

That doesn't make much sense, does it?

THE OLDER

What rhymes with reason?

THE YOUNGER

When Dad said that, it use to really irritate me. It's even more irritating coming from you.

THE OLDER

*(no reply)*

THE YOUNGER

Okay, I'll give you one more chance.

(YOUNGER gets the knife he had earlier)

Name my favorite thing in the whole world?

THE OLDER

Gin & tonic with a twist of lime.

THE YOUNGER

No that's not what I mean.

THE OLDER

Cocoa.

THE YOUNGER

No, no, I mean before. You know, as a kid.

THE OLDER

Oh.

THE YOUNGER

And it is not lime, it's lemon.

THE OLDER

Have you tried it with a twist of lime?

THE YOUNGER

Yeah, I didn't like it.

THE OLDER

That will change, it's what you use all the time now.

THE YOUNGER

Okay, okay. Look, what was my favorite thing in the whole world as a kid.

THE OLDER

This a test?

THE YOUNGER

Yeah, this is a test.