

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

With Teacher/Parent Guide in the back

**ME** **2**  
Could You  
Live With  
A Lie?

A short play by **Joanna H. Kraus**



Newport, Maine

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## **Me2**

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*The premiere was produced and toured by the Noorda Theatre Center for Children & Youth, Utah Valley University in April, 2017 co-directed by John Newman and Heidi Mendez Harrison.*

*The cast was as follows:*

**EMILY WILSON** — Lisa Thurman

**ANDREW LEE** — Tyler Botill

**MADISON SUMMERFIELD** — Megan Olsen

**AUNT JENNY** — Amanda Hobbs

**ED SUMMERFIELD** — Shane Nuttall

## **CHARACTERS**

**EMILY WILSON** — An eighth grader. A serious student. Honest

**DREW (ANDREW) LEE** — An eighth grader. A math whiz. Likes to help people

**MADISON SUMMERFIELD** — An eighth grader. Full of fun. Manipulative

**AUNT JENNY** — Emily's aunt. A real estate agent. Loving and practical. 40

**ED SUMMERFIELD** — Madison's father. A no-nonsense accountant. 50

**Me2** by Joanna Kraus 3F 2M Playing Time: 45 minutes. Simple setting. Contemporary costumes. Two girls, raised in opposite parts of the country, accidentally meet in an upscale California mall. Madison and Emily, both eighth graders, realize that not only do they look exactly alike and have the same birthday, but they have too many similarities for it to be pure coincidence. Drew, Madison's friend, insists that they *must* be twins. Overriding Madison's father's objections, they pursue an answer and are thrilled to discover that, yes, they are identical twins, who were separated at birth. They vow to be friends forever and plan to visit over spring break. But there is one significant difference between them. Emily is in an Honors Math class and Madison is barely getting by. Madison's crucial city-wide high school placement test is imminent, and she's desperate. Madison pressures Emily to take the math section in her place arguing, "No one can tell us apart." Emily calls it cheating. Madison calls her "Selfish," and Emily storms out. When Drew sees Emily crying he confronts Madison and is shocked by the situation. "Could you live with that lie?" he asks Madison. "Do you want to lose your twin, your one and only sister?" Ashamed, Madison apologizes to her twin, followed by a hint of reconciliation. An ideal play for High School competitions and festivals.

**Order #3189**

**Joanna H. Kraus** is an award-winning playwright of twenty Theatre for Young Audiences produced/published plays, among them *The Ice Wolf* (Dramatic Publishing) and *Remember My Name* (Samuel French) both produced off-off Broadway. Picture books include *Tall Boy's Journey* (Carolrhoda/Lerner), *A Night of Tamales and Roses* (Shenanigan Books) *Blue Toboggan* (Mascot Books), *Bravo, Benny* (Mirror Publishing), and *Oh Little Ham of Buffalo, a Korean Adoption Memoir* done with her son, Tim. (Mirror Publishing.) She's written numerous media articles and for the past two decades reviewed children's books for the Bay Area News Group. Kraus is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), the California Writers Club, the Dramatists Guild and is Professor Emerita of Theatre and former Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Arts for Children program at the College at Brockport State University of New York. She's a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, holds an M.A. from UCLA and an Ed.D. from Columbia University. Originally from Portland, Maine she now lives in the San Francisco Bay area. Visit her website: [www.joannakraus.com](http://www.joannakraus.com)

## **PRODUCTION NOTE:**

EMILY and MADISON should definitely look alike. But there's no need for them to be identical twins. If they are visually similar, the audience can easily accept the illusion. The twin's attire mentioned in the script is merely a suggestion. What matters is that their clothes match, so they look exactly alike.

Sets can be minimal. A garden bench and a cluster of potted palms (to hide behind) for the mall patio, and a few pieces of living room furniture.

**SCENE ONE**

*SETTING: a garden courtyard at an upscale mall in California. Late December.*

*AT RISE: EMILY, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, is sitting on a patio bench, reading. After a few seconds she stretches, happily lifts her face to the sunshine, then resumes reading, engrossed. DREW enters behind her.*

**DREW:** *(calls)* Hi.

*(EMILY continues reading. DREW is louder.)*

Hello.

*(Lightly punches her shoulder.)*

M???

**EMILY:** *(startled, jumps up.)* What the—

**DREW:** Don't be mad. I had to help dad unload crates of Myer lemons and winter melons that were delivered to the store. Then he asked me to help set up a holiday display. Looks nice. Come see it.

**EMILY:** Are you talking to me?

**DREW:** Aw, don't be like that. You're the one who's usually late.

**EMILY:** Late? I'm never late. I think people should be punctual. It's a sign of respect.

**DREW:** Ouch! I'm not going to argue with you. Not today. Not on your birthday.

**EMILY:** *(Startled.)* How did you know that?

**DREW:** *(Teases.)* Twitter. Facebook. TV news.

*(Note: update to current social media.)*

**EMILY:** Look, this isn't funny. I think it's time for you to go.

**DREW:** Okay. C'mon.

**EMILY:** *(Removes his hand.)* No. **You're** going. **I'm** staying.

**DREW:** But...I'm...It's a ...Oh, heck. It's supposed to be a surprise party. For you.

**EMILY:** A surprise. Oh-h-h-h. Now I get it. But you shouldn't go around punching strangers.

**DREW:** Strangers. M, what are you talking about? We're---

**EMILY:** I know. You must be part of my "never met California family." This morning my aunt said, "Meet here." Then she gave me birthday money and told me to have fun at the mall sale while she finished up with a client. And that she had a nice surprise for me.

*(Stands up and models)*

So, does this look okay for a California party?

**DREW:** Yes.

**EMILY:** Yes? That's all? Just yes?

**DREW:** Do you want the truth?

**EMILY:** You should always be honest. So, is it all wrong?

**DREW:** No, M. You look fantastic. But any mirror in the mall could tell you that.

**EMILY:** *(With a big smile.)* Thanks.

*(DREW takes a flash drive from his pocket.)*

Is that for the party? The one I'm not supposed to know about?

**DREW:** Actually, it's your birthday present. I went to I-Tunes and downloaded some songs.

*(Note: These are not real names.)*

There's Venus Lights doing "Star Bright" and "Way to Go, Girl" and Terecita singing "All You Can Be" and Top Dogs doing "Only One."

**EMILY:** Those are some of my favorites. I wondered why Aunt Jenny kept asking me what popular music I liked. Did she give you a list?

**DREW:** *(Confused.)* No.

*(Hands her birthday card.)*

I wrote all the song titles inside your birthday card.

**EMILY:** This is so cool.

*(Opens card. Reads aloud.)*

Dear Madison...

*(Stops short.)*

Who's Madison?

**DREW:** I know I usually call you "M", but I thought since it's a special occasion I should use your full name.

*(MADISON enters unseen by them. DREW gives EMILY a quick hug.)*

Happy Birthday, M.

**EMILY:** But there's some mistake. "Em" is for Emily. Who's Madison?

**DREW:** Who's Aunt Jenny?

**MADISON:** *(X to them)* WHO IS SHE???

*(Dumbfound they stare at each other in disbelief.)*

**ALL:** WHO ARE YOU??

**MADISON:** You look like me.

**EMILY:** You look like me.

**MADISON:** Is this some kind of trick?

*(to DREW)*

And why, may I ask, were you hugging **her**?

**EMILY:** I'm Emily Wilson

**MADISON:** I'm Madison Summerfield.

**DREW:** I'm Andrew Lee.

*(GIRLS glare at him.)*

And I think I'm in BIG trouble.

**MADISON:** *(Circling EMILY)* You're wearing my favorite color.

**EMILY:** It's mine too.

*(THEY study each other. MADISON touches EMILY'S face.)*

**MADISON:** You've got the same tiny mark under your eye. Only mine's on the right and yours is on the left.

**EMILY:** It's like looking in a mirror.

*(To DREW)*

You thought I was Madison, didn't you?

**DREW:** Heck, you look just like her.

**EMILY:** *(Handing it to her.)* Madison, this birthday present was for you. But, guess what, I love the same songs too.

**MADISON:** Do you think.....maybe we're related. Somehow.

**EMILY:** I never heard of you before.

**MADISON:** Maybe we're clones. Like science-fiction. Where do you live?

**EMILY:** Upstate New York.

**DREW:** How come you're in California.

**EMILY:** I'm visiting my aunt. Winter break. It's my first time in California. But ever since I got here it's been weird. Strangers smiling at me, waving hello. When I told my aunt, she laughed and said, "People here are friendly, honey, not formal like the Northeast."

**MADISON:** I bet people thought you were me. Last night one of my friends texted me and said why didn't you say hello to me at the Cineplex. But she didn't believe me when I told her I wasn't there.

**EMILY:** But I was. With Aunt Jenny. I read somewhere that everyone has a double in the world. Maybe you're my double.

**DREW:** Or .... maybe...maybe ....a twin?

**MADISON:** **What?** What did you just say?

**DREW:** A twin. You look the same. You sound the same. You walk the same. If you weren't wearing different clothes, I couldn't tell you apart. You like the same music, you have the same favorite color. And ...you have the same birthday.

**MADISON:** We do? Today?

**EMILY:** *(Nods.)* Yes.

**MADISON:** Fourteen?

**EMILY:** *(Nods.)* Right again. I can't believe this is happening.

**MADISON:** *(Notices dangling earrings.)* Emily, you're wearing the same earrings I have.

**DREW:** *(To EMILY)* That's why I was sure you were Madison.

**EMILY:** But I just bought these.

**MADISON:** See, we like the same things.

*(Holding up present.)*

Like Terecita singing "All You Can Be."

**EMILY:** Madison, I'm sorry. I really thought the present was for me. I thought Aunt Jenny had told Drew what to get for me.

**DREW:** Emily, until five minutes ago I never heard of Aunt Jenny.

**MADISON:** *(Excited.)* Maybe there was a terrible fight, a family feud, and that's how we got split up.

**EMILY:** Madison, we can't be twins. I'm adopted.

**MADISON:** So am I.

**EMILY:** Really? When?

**MADISON:** When I was a few months old.

**EMILY:** I was adopted when I was a few days old... from a hospital. So we can't be twins. Could we?

**MADISON:** I think I was in a hospital for awhile, then foster care

*(Thinks.)*

Chicago... I think. Some place back east.

**EMILY:** Madison, where I come from, Chicago's out *west*. Try to remember. Did your parents ever tell you where you were born?

**MADISON:** It was a St. something.

**EMILY:** But I know my parents would never let sisters be separated. So we can't be twins.

**DREW:** Unless they didn't know.

**MADISON:** You mean like a mix-up at the hospital.

**DREW:** Madison, listen, if you two are really related, there's a way to find out.

**MADISON:** How?

**DREW:** DNA. Remember in science class. Mr. McCann talked about it.



**MADISON:** Oooo-h, great idea.

**DREW:** But your parents would probably have to agree.

**EMILY:** But maybe you really are my double, Madison, and in a million to one chance, we met. A crazy coincidence.

**MADISON:** More like we were fated to meet. It gives me the shivers. Emily, you have to come have lunch with us. This is the most unusual birthday present I ever had!

**EMILY:** I'd like to. I want to. But I have to wait here for Aunt Jenny,  
(To DREW)  
Anyway, don't you two have some special plans?

**MADISON:** Do we?

**DREW:** Emily, the party was supposed to be a surprise.

**MADISON:** A party? For me? Awesome.

**DREW:** M, you have to act surprised. I promised I wouldn't tell.

**MADISON:** Emily, now you **have** to come. In fact we can have some fun. I'll go in first. Then you'll appear. TA DA!

**EMILY:** I can't. If I'm not here, Aunt Jenny will worry.

**MADISON:** Maybe your aunt knows stuff our parents won't tell us. So, we have to prove we're the same. They'll have to agree to a DNA test, then. Emily, do you like to dance?

**EMILY:** Do I? Ever since I was three.

**MADISON:** I didn't start 'til I was five.

**DREW:** But she hasn't stopped since.

**MADISON:** So, if it's a party for me, there'll definitely be dancing. I can't wait until my friends see you. They won't believe it. I still don't. How long will you be here?

**EMILY:** For the week.  
(Relishing.)

No ice and snow. No shoveling. All this sunshine. And now meeting you. But Sunday I still have to fly back. School.

**MADISON:** What if you didn't? What if you stayed here until Tuesday? Wouldn't it be wild to swap places? Like next Monday. Nothing ever happens the first day back.

**EMILY:** At my school next Monday I have to present a geometry theorem in my AP math class.

**MADISON:** AP math. I'm barely squeaking through.

**DREW:** I still don't know how you ever passed third grade.

**MADISON:** 'Cause I memorized the times table. I'm good at memorizing. I was the lead in our 7<sup>th</sup> grade

play.

**DREW:** And she was wonderful.

*(MADISON beams.)*

**EMILY:** I wish I could have seen you. I've never acted. Never even gone to a play.

**MADISON:** We have to fix that! You can't spend all your time doing those dumb fractions and percentages.

**DREW:** They're not dumb.

**MADISON:** Drew's trying to help me. He's a math whiz.

**EMILY:** And ...a .good friend?

*(A look between MADISON and DREW.)*

**MADISON:** *(With a grin.)* Ummm. So forget about switching schools. But we'll text each other. I have a zillion questions.

**EMILY:** There may not be answers.

**MADISON:** There have to be. And we have to find out *how* to do that DNA test.

**EMILY:** Slow down. What if we're not related.

**MADISON:** But we're alike. Sisters under the skin. I've always wanted a sister.

**EMILY:** So have I.

**MADISON:** See? I even pretended I had one. Sometimes I'd set an extra place at the table. The doctor told my parents that a lot of kids have imaginary playmates and they grow out of it. But it wasn't that. I was sure somehow...somewhere... I had a sister.

**DREW:** Maybe you do.

**MADISON:** So, I'm not giving up. Now that we've met. I mean, what's stronger than sisters?

**DREW:** Twins. I read that twins know each other's thoughts, finish sentences, and if one has a toothache the other feels it too.

**MADISON:** Maybe your parents know something.

**EMILY:** They never said so.

**MADISON:** Well they wouldn't, would they, if it's confidential. Or maybe your aunt knows something. Call her. Ask her.

**EMILY:** She's with a client.

**MADISON:** But this is vital. Maybe it's a mystery and we'll solve it. Together.

**EMILY:** Madison, thank you for inviting me to your party, but I can't just leave. Not when my aunt said to wait here.

**DREW:** Emily, didn't you say she had a surprise for you?

*(Stares intently.)*

Heck, I can't tell you two apart.

**MADISON:** It's easy. She's Me One.

**EMILY:** And she's Me Two.

**DREW:** Or the other way around.

**MADISON:** Emily, It's **not just my** birthday. It's our birthday. Our 14<sup>th</sup> birthday So, text your aunt and find out how soon she'll be here. We'll wait.

**EMILY:** What should I say?

**MADISON:** Say....

*(Grins.)*

**Have I got a surprise for you!!**

*LIGHTS: fade on scene. End of Scene 1*

## SCENE TWO:

*SCENE: 15 minutes later*

*AT RISE: THEY are in an excited huddle.*

**EMILY:** *(Putting phone away.)* She'll be here in a minute. So when she comes, let's all yell, "Surprise!"

**MADISON:** No. Wait, I have a better idea.

*(to EMILY)*

Let me be you. See if she notices. You and Drew stay over there behind the palm tree,

*(Gestures to cluster of potted palm trees.)*

where she can't see you.

**EMILY:** But she's my aunt. She'll know.

**DREW:** Maybe not.

**MADISON:** Let's find out.

**JENNY:** *(Calls, offstage.)* E-M-I-L-Y.

**MADISON:** Quick. Hide.

*(THEY do. JENNY enters with briefcase. Jenny X to MADISON [thinking she's EMILY] and hugs*

*her.)*

**JENNY:** Sorry I took so long. All those details. Part-time real estate agent is a joke. It's more like time and a half. They had dozens of questions. But finally we finished. So, hello, birthday girl.

*(Stands back to look.)*

I love what you bought.

**MADISON:** Oh, this. Ummm.

**JENNY:** Now, what was so urgent? Did you put something on hold and need more money? Or do you need my two cents of advice? Oh, by the way, Frances called.

**MADISON:** Frances?

**JENNY:** Your mother. She wanted to wish you a happy birthday and asked if everything was all right. I said, "Yes." Is it?

**MADISON:** Sure.

**JENNY:** So please call her later and tell her yourself. Now, where's this big surprise. I don't see anything unusual.

**MADISON:** Nothing? Nothing at all?

**JENNY:** *(Sits down on bench and pats the seat beside so her "niece" will sit down too.)* You're not in some kind of trouble are you?

**MADISON:** No... not really.

**JENNY:** What does that mean? Honey, whatever it is, you can tell me.

**MADISON:** First, you have to close your eyes.

**JENNY:** Why?

**MADISON:** Just do it. Please.

*(JENNY does.)*

**MADISON:** *(Beckons to DREW and EMILY.)* Okay, everyone. SHOWTIME.

*(THEY come out from their hiding place and jostle positions with a few nudges, giggles and smiles of anticipation.)*

**JENNY:** How long do I have to keep my eyes closed?

**MADISON:** You can open them now.

*(When JENNY does, she stares astonished, speechless. Finally, she touches EMILY's face.)*

**JENNY:** You're real? That's not some sort of digital computerized mask?

*(EMILY shakes her head, no.)*

But you're wearing her clothes. I'm confused. You look ....exactly like my niece.

**EMILY:** I **am** your niece.

**JENNY:** *(To MADISON)* Then who are you?

**MADISON:** Madison Summerfield.

**JENNY:** *(To ANDREW)* And who are you?

**DREW:** Andrew Lee. I go to school with Madison. I made the same mistake.. They look so much alike.

**EMILY:** We're wondering if Madison could be my double? The one people say exists somewhere in the world. And this is the one chance in a million that we actually met.

**MADISON:** Or if we're sisters.

**DREW:** Or... twins.

**JENNY:** This can't be happening.

**MADISON:** But it is.

**DREW:** The facts add up.

**EMILY:** Aunt Jenny, Do you know anything about my adoption? Anything at all?

**JENNY:** Honey, that was ages ago.

**EMILY:** Think. Please. Think back.

**JENNY:** All I remember is that my brother called me out of the blue to say I was an aunt now and my new niece's name was Emily. But the baby was crying so loud I could hardly hear.

**EMILY:** You mean I was crying.

**JENNY:** Yes, you. That plus a poor long-distance connection made it a short conversation. When I finally had a chance to visit, months later, my brother didn't give me much information.

**EMILY:** Do you at least know where I was born?

**JENNY:** That I do know. A small hospital outside of Chicago.

**MADISON:** Which one?

**JENNY:** Funny, I do remember that. St. Jerome's. He's the patron saint of orphans, and I thought that was an odd coincidence.

**MADISON:** I think....that may be the same place I was born. But I'll have to check with my parents.

**EMILY:** How did they adopt me?

**JENNY:** I remember my brother telling me that there was lots of confusion and chaos at the hospital. He said when they heard that there might a sibling, they tried to follow-up. But all they got was the run around, told to contact the agency, which insisted there was no twin available.

**MADISON:** But I'm here.

**EMILY:** Look at us, Aunt Jenny. Look at us.

**JENNY:** I am.

**MADISON:** Can't we check?

**EMILY:** There must be birth records someplace.

**JENNY:** Emily, you have a wonderful family, parents who love you, and I'm sure, you do too, Madison. Why dig up the past?

**MADISON:** Because we want to find out if we're twins.

**EMILY:** And who my real mother was.

**JENNY:** You mean your biological mother. Your real mother is waiting for a phone call from you, so she can wish you happy birthday!

**MADISON:** We want to know if there were two of us. Born at the same time.

**EMILY:** From the same mother.

**DREW:** I thought a DNA test could prove if they were twins or not.

**MADISON:** And if we are twins, then how come we were separated.

**EMILY:** If she's my sister, I don't want to lose her.

**MADISON:** Me either. Not when I just found her.

**JENNY:** Stop. I've told you all I know. Don't look for trouble.

**MADISON:** When you saw me you thought I was Emily.

**JENNY:** True.

**DREW:** And you didn't see any difference.

**JENNY:** No. No, it's uncanny.

**DREW:** Doesn't that prove something?

**JENNY:** Emily, your parents will never believe this. I can't. I still don't know who to hug.

**EMILY and MADISON:** BOTH OF US!

**EMILY:** Will you help, Aunt Jenny?

**JENNY:** Do what?

**EMILY:** Find out what happened. What really happened.

**JENNY:** Why would an agency lie?

**MADISON:** But we're here. Both of us.

**EMILY:** In front of you.

**JENNY:** Healthy and beautiful. Though I could be biased.

*(Hugs THEM.)*

And when I hug you, you both seem the same. The same bone structure, the same bodies.

*(THEY smile.)*

The same smile. Amazing. Absolutely amazing. First, you both need to talk to your parents.

**DREW:** I can take a picture with my smart phone and send it to each of them.

**MADISON:** That would work.

**JENNY:** Better warn them first. And make sure they're sitting down. Second, we need to do some homework .

**MADISON:** Homework?

**JENNY:** On DNA tests. How to do them, reliability, what they cost.

*(GIRLS hug her. DREW takes fast photo with smart phone.)*

**DREW:** *(Smiles.)* And third, we need to get to the surprise birthday party. We're late.

**MADISON:** All of us. Let's all go.

**EMILY:** Could we? For a little while, Aunt Jenny?

**JENNY:** How can I say no? And it will give me some time to think.

**MADISON:** And time for us ...

**EMILY and MADISON:** To CELEBRATE!

*End of scene 2*

### SCENE THREE

*SCENE: The Summerfield living room room.*

*AT RISE: MADISON and her father, ED SUMMERFIELD are in a heated discussion.*

**MADISON:** Why didn't you tell me?

**ED:** Tell you what? Something overheard – a long time ago.

**MADISON:** But what did you hear? What exactly?

**ED:** I wish you'd be as persistent in your math as you are about this.

**MADISON:** Dad, I may have a twin. Emily Wilson. And I want to prove it. So tell me what you know.  
From the beginning.

**ED:** *(with a sigh.)* You better sit down, Madison.

*(She does.)*

Even at six months you were scrawny, but finally you were in the low normal range. So the agency called for us to come and get you.

**MADISON:** I know that much.

**ED:** But you don't know this part. We never told you. Just as we finished signing papers a young adoption worker passed by the door, glanced in at us and said, "Strange how the other twin was healthy from the start." She was talking to someone in Spanish, but your mother understood and ran after them asking, "Was there a twin?" One of them nodded, and then both women fled. When we confronted the supervisor she finally admitted that, yes, there had been a twin adopted six months earlier.

**MADISON:** Didn't you ask **who**? Who adopted her?

**ED:** They refused to divulge that information.

**MADISON:** Didn't you at least ask why we were separated?

**ED:** We did. Apparently you'd been sickly and underweight. No one was sure of the final outcome. Your twin was healthy and there was a couple waiting. But the agency stressed you'd both be better off apart and it would be detrimental to your well-being to pursue this any further. And right now I'm inclined to think they were right.

**MADISON:** Why? Because I want to know for certain if I have a sister.

**ED:** Madison, it doesn't change anything.

**MADISON:** It changes **everything**.

**ED:** It was their firm belief, Madison, based on the current scientific research that the two of you would better off raised independently.

**MADISON:** That's crazy.

**ED:** No, it's not. That way you'd form your own personalities. You wouldn't be competing with one another all the time. And you'd each have a chance to become part of your new families.

**MADISON:** That may be the party line, but I don't agree. Didn't you and Mom ask questions about the birth mother? Like how old she was? Where she was from? What did she look like?

**ED:** All that information is considered confidential.

**MADISON:** For how long?

**ED:** Until you're an adult. And then all you can get is medical information. Those are the rules.

**MADISON:** That sucks.

**ED:** Don't use that kind of language.

**MADISON:** You mean I can't ever find my real mother?



**ED:** You mean your birth mother. You can put in a request to meet her when you're older. But, Madison, she may not want to be found. Don't romanticize the situation.

**MADISON:** I can't believe that you gave up so easily.

**ED:** Your mother and I decided that we didn't want you to spend your life searching for a "maybe" sister.

**MADISON:** She's not a "maybe." I saw her. I met her. We sent you a picture.

**ED:** There's a strong resemblance I admit. But you can't tell much from a smart phone snapshot. It's all improbable.

*13 more pages of script to the end*

*5 page study guide included*