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*To all my beloved actors,  
Who can never seem to find  
Page 60 in their script...  
Even when they've found page 61 and 59.*

## Cast of Characters

KATE

KEITH

## Author's Notes

### *On Names*

With the exception of the part of "Kate," all names should be changed to whatever is true for the theatre community performing *Math for Actors*.

Hence "Keith" should be the actual name of the actor;

"Cass" should be changed to the name of a crew member: a stage manager, props mistress or even the director;

"Ryan" should be changed to an older lead actor: perhaps a legend that left the troupe, or someone who needs their ego deflated;

"Burger" should be "Keith's" theatrical rival...or perhaps "Kate's" actual significant other!

Basically, all references to other actors/crew members should be altered to whatever will make a given audience laugh on any particular night: such as the names of people in the audience, the names of school teachers, etc. Just have fun (but be kind).

### *On Givens*

The cast and crew are also invited to make slight alterations to the script.

For example, a recent theatrical crisis that everyone's still talking about may be included in "Keith's" rant about how long it takes to say a soliloquy.

If the actors are older, "SAT's" may be changed to "GRE's" or some other appropriate test.

The proscenium arch's dimensions should be accurate to the stage. Or, if there is no proscenium arch, change this to the dimensions of the stage area.

The plays that are referenced by name (with the exception of *Macbeth*) might be changed to match other or even upcoming plays in the troupe's season. And so on.

Finally, the mathematical givens about the actors should be adjusted to fit the performers. In this case, "Keith" may want to calculate exactly how old he is (if he's still a plausible student) when he tells "Kate" his age at the end of the play. Both "Kate" and "Keith" should reference their actual heights. And yes, the angle of inclination should be recalculated. (And you thought there'd be no math!)

OF COURSE, you can also do the script just as written.

### *On Staging*

Although the majority of the play can be done with two people sitting at a table, movement is always a plus. Some suggestions from the original production have been retained in the stage directions to spark other ideas.

The theatrical troupe may also want to keep an eye on the pacing and rhythm of the play. Although in read-through and rehearsal, the lines may fly fast and furious between "Kate" and "Keith," the play will not be understood by the audience if recited quickly. Strangely enough, this piece seems to be best served if the energy of the actors is quick and intense, but the actual pace of the lines is deliberate.

### **Acknowledgments**

*Math for Actors* premiered on July 22, 2009 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Hudson, Massachusetts. It was produced by Gaudete Academy with the following cast and crew:

KATE.....Brianna McGrath  
KEITH.....Keith Caram  
Director..... Emily C. A. Snyder



*Math for Actors*, produced by Gaudete Academy in Hudson, Massachusetts (2009). Photo: John L. Snyder

# MATH FOR ACTORS

by Emily C. A. Snyder

*(KATE, a math tutor, is discovered sitting on-stage, a pile of books on a table beside her, an empty seat beside that. She nervously taps at the books. Checks her watch. Taps again. Stands and paces. Checks her watch. Takes a deep breath, closes her eyes, and counts:)*

**KATE.** 1,197. 1,198. 1,199. 1,199 and a half. 1,199 and three-quarters? 1,199 and nine-tenths! 1,000 and... *(She checks her watch.)* Twenty minutes. *Every time.*

*(KATE gathers up her books and things, just as KEITH bounds in, still dressed in some outrageous costume and make-up from play practice. Tights may factor in. Books and papers fly out of his half-open backpack as he rushes up to her, shouting and singing:)*

**KEITH.** I'm here, I'm here, I'm here, I'm here, I'm here! *IIIIIIII* I'm here!

*(KEITH ends in a dramatic pose and grins innocently.)*

**KATE.** Don't you dare dimple. I'm angry! Do you know how late you are?

**KEITH.** Rehearsal ran late.

**KATE.** Rehearsal always runs late.

**KEITH.** It's tech week!

**KATE.** It's five days 'til finals, nine days 'til SATs, the twelfth time you've rescheduled and...you're twenty minutes late!

**KEITH.** ...I'm thirty minutes late...

*(During this next section, KEITH may disappear behind a curtain or a blackboard, occasionally sticking his head out over it to react to something KATE says. On key lines, bits of Keith's costume may be flung out or carelessly draped over the board.)*

**KATE.** You know, I had really hoped, I had *really* hoped that you had changed. Everyone told me not to take you on as your math tutor, you know. Everyone said, "Kate, don't you take him on! Just because he's charming and handsome and debonair, don't be fooled into thinking a common...*thespian*...cares a bit about math!"

Take on an artist, they said. An artist will just draw at you. Take on an English major. They'll understand iambic pentameter. Take on an historian! The Norman Invasion of 1066! The War of 1812! It's a walk in the park with a History major. *Anyone* but a theatre person.

But I said, “No, I’ve known Keith since we were kids. And, sure, he used to smile at me...uh, the *girls* and get them to do his math homework, but did you see him in last year’s play? He’s so grown up! He’ll do the work.”

But *no*. You haven’t changed a bit. I’m so sick of all you actors with your *excuses* and your *drama* and your *feelings* and your—what are you doing?

(KEITH *suddenly emerges from his hiding spot and flings off the top half of his costume.*)

KEITH. I’m...changing. Isn’t that what you wanted?

KATE. (*Covering her face:*) ...pleasechangeback, pleasechangeback, pleasechangeback...

KEITH. This costume isn’t exactly *comfortable*.

KATE. ...twenty minutes late, comes in and strips! Why did I agree to tutor him...?

(KEITH *pulls on a T-shirt, perhaps one from a show, and saunters up behind KATE, making her jump. He should remain half in costume. Tights, for example, should be visible.*)

KEITH. Thirty minutes late.

KATE. Excuse me?

(KEITH *begins to rummage through Kate’s bag. He finds a mirror and inspects his make-up.*)

KEITH. I’m thirty minutes late.

KATE. But, um, *Keith*...it’s twenty after nine. Which means you’re *twenty* minutes late.

KEITH. Yeah. That’s what I said. Thirty minutes. Do you have any baby wipes?

(KATE *snatches the whole bag from him.*)

KATE. Do I have any...? Do I look old enough to have a baby?

KEITH. I don’t know. Have you ever tried?

KATE. (*Primly:*) What time was our meeting?

KEITH. Nine o’clock.

KATE. And what time is it now?

KEITH. (*Reading from Kate’s watch:*) Niiiiiiiiine...twenty-three.

KATE. So how late are you?

KEITH. Not a single baby wipe? This lipstick really isn't my color.

(KATE whips out a baby wipe from her bag and plays keep away with KEITH.)

KATE. Not 'til you answer.

KEITH. Fine. It's nine *twenty-three*?

KATE. *Twenty-four*, now.

KEITH. Then I'm...uh...carry the two...round to the nearest decimal point...take the square root...

(KEITH swipes the baby wipe from KATE and proceeds to luxuriously take off the worst of his make-up.)

KEITH. I am...*thirty-four* minutes late!

KATE. *Thirty-four*? I...! How can you be so *dense*?

KEITH. I am not dense. I'm lithe and becoming.

(KEITH licks his finger and "sizzles" his derriere.)

KATE. You're an idiot.

KEITH. I am *not* an idiot, Kate. And I'm not wrong, either. What time were we supposed to meet?

KATE. Nine p.m.

KEITH. And what time was I supposed to *be* here?

KATE. Nine p.m.!

KEITH. Wrong! Call time is always ten minutes before rehearsal. Hence, ten to nine, plus (*Checking Kate's watch:*) twenty-five minutes makes me a whopping thirty-five minutes late. I am not an idiot.

KATE. No. You're just stupid.

KEITH. N-no I'm not! You take that back.

KATE. What are we? Five?

KEITH. I don't know! *You're* the math wiz.

KATE. Yeah, and you're the...the...the *thespian*!

KEITH. Thespian and proud of it. Now take it back. Say I'm not stupid.

(KATE gets right in KEITH's face. It's rather serious now.)

KATE. You're stupid. You're more than stupid. You are *incapable* of being taught. You're thoughtless and childish and arrogant. And you are only good at one, worthless thing. You will *never* amount to anything.

(With a final shove, KATE saunters away from KEITH, leaving him quiet and alone. She begins to gather up her things...and then really looks at him.)

KATE. Are you...crying?

KEITH. ...no.

KATE. I didn't mean to make you cry.

(KATE tries to go up to KEITH, but he pushes past her.)

KEITH. I'm not crying.

(KEITH gives a loooong shuddering sob. A beat, then:)

KATE. You *are* crying!

KEITH. Of *course* I'm crying. I'm an actor! I have emotions!

KATE. I didn't mean to upset you.

KEITH. Yeah? Well, you *did*! And now my *mascara's* running!

KATE. I have another baby wipe...

KEITH. I don't want your *baby wipe*! It's just—

(KEITH throws himself melodramatically into the chair and starts sniveling his way through his speech.)

KEITH. It's just that *everything's* so hard right now—and my grades are falling all the way to a D *minus* and it's Hell Week and I'm running on three hours of sleep...from *three days ago*.

(KEITH leaps to his feet to display his half-costume.)

And! I *still* can't get my quick change down to one minute because...do you see what I am wearing??!?!)

(Continuing, KEITH acts out his woes.)

And I forgot to eat—and then I threw up. And half the cast has (*Like a zombie*:) walking pneumonia...including the half of the cast I have to kiss. REPEATEDLY. And people think: "Oh, it's so *easy* to be an actor!" But it *isn't*!

(KEITH returns to his chair, draping himself over it.)

And all I wanted was some *help* to bring my math grades up. And now you're making fun of me calling me *names* and now I'm *hurt* and...*can't* we just do some math without all the name-calling?

(KEITH is absolutely wailing now, stomping his feet and flailing. At a total loss, KATE fusses about him, looking for a tissue. She pulls out various objects: calculators, rulers, etc., until she finds a handful of graphing paper and thrusts it at him.)

KATE. I'm—I'm so sorry! I didn't mean—I—look, here's a—um...use this!

(KEITH, still indecipherably moaning, crawls his way to her, grabs the paper, and recovering instantly says:)

KEITH. Oh. Thank you.

(KEITH blows his nose. Loudly.)

KATE. You were acting?

KEITH. I am the best.

KATE. That was the last of my graph paper!

KEITH. Oh. (KEITH holds it out to KATE.) Do you want it back?

KATE. No, I—no. Thanks anyway. Let's get started, shall we? (She sits.) Now that we're twenty-nine...

KEITH. (He sits.) Thirty-nine.

KATE. Minutes late.

KEITH. Please. I doubt you have anything better to do.

(Luxuriously, KEITH puts his feet on the table.)

KATE. As a matter of fact, I do. I have a date.

KEITH. You have a date?

KATE. I do. In thirty-one—

KEITH. Twenty-one.

KATE. *Minutes.* So, let's just take out your homework and we'll take a look at how you—

(KATE takes out KEITH's backpack and looks through it. Quickly, KEITH says:)

KEITH. What kind of a date?

KATE. Just a date.

KEITH. Like Christmas? That's a date.

KATE. *Like.a.date.* Where's your math homework?

KEITH. I...um...I—

(KEITH throws himself weeping on his backpack.)

KEITH. It's just so difficult! And my *tiny brain*...! It's just so hard and—

KATE. You didn't do your math homework.

KEITH. (*Very serious:*) Oh, I *did* my math homework. It's just that...

KATE. Mmmm-hm. The dog ate it?

**KEITH.** There are a lot of things that you can eat that are not made out of food.

*(KATE grabs Keith's bag from him and goes through it.)*

**KATE.** Never mind. I'll find it myself.

**KEITH.** No! No, you really don't want to dive in there.

**KATE.** Ha! Afraid I'll find your hidden cache of sequins?

**KEITH.** Absolutely! My bag's just *crawling* with sequins. *Glitter* sequins! *Feathered* glitter sequins with little Bob Fosse hatssssssssssssss!

*(KEITH strikes a very Fosse move, drawing KATE's attention. Seeing his chance, he pounces for his bag.)*

**KEITH.** Now give it back!

*(But at the last second, KATE pulls out a folded piece of paper. Her name should be written largely on it. Perhaps decorated with hearts, etc.)*

**KATE.** Ah-ha! Your homework. And here I thought you hadn't done it. *(She claps.)* Very well acted, sir. Very well acted.

**KEITH.** That's not my homework. I'm a total slacker. I didn't do it. Now give it back.

**KATE.** Is this my name on it?

**KEITH.** No, it's my...my *girlfriend's* name.

**KATE.** Riiiiight, Mr. Jazz Hands. I know you. You don't *have* a girlfriend.

**KEITH.** No, you're right. I don't.

*(KEITH steals the paper from KATE.)*

**KEITH.** But it's not my homework, either.

**KATE.** All right, all right.

*(KEITH grows quiet for a moment, looking at the letter.)*

**KEITH.** I...hate math. I hate these stupid appointments. I hate *you*. I hate your stupid boyfriend. What's his name?

**KATE.** His parents didn't give him one.

**KEITH.** I hate his parents! I hate these stupid *numbers*. I hate...*math*.

**KATE.** Hate math?

**KEITH.** Yeah! What good is it? What do you really need to know beyond simple addition and subtraction and how much to tip at res-

taurants? What good is it in the real world? 5xy times 3 squared pi? What good is that? It's all just...useless.

**KATE.** *Useless?*

*(KEITH looks up, shocked silent. As KATE rhapsodizes, KEITH is caught up in her soliloquy.)*

**KATE.** Math is everything! Math is perfection. The curve of every arc, the pattern of every flower, the notes of a song—all of it, math. Our very being, our molecules, our DNA—math. Why, do you know the complex calculations required to throw a ball? And yet, a *child* can do it. The stars dance in harmony to their mathematical patterns. (*Approaching KEITH:*) Why, every time you say a line—

**KEITH.** But soft!

**KATE.** Or climb a balcony—

*(KEITH throws his wrist melodramatically to his brow.)*

**KATE.** Or dance a tango—

*(With a passionate growl, KEITH grabs KATE and they execute a measure of Spanish dance, ending in a posed:)*

**BOTH:** Olé!

**KATE.** You're using math. The very beat of your heart—math.

*(Standing, KATE touches KEITH's chest. He gulps. In the next few lines, KATE places KEITH's arms around her: on her waist, holding her right hand, taking a step, ending close together.)*

**KATE.** Math is order. Math is beauty. Math is perfection.

**KEITH.** ...Ohhh.

*(They're both silent a moment, until with a cough, KATE disentangles herself to say:)*

**KATE.** You just don't understand it because it's never been put into terms that...you...understand.

**KEITH.** I understand a *lot* of things but...

**KATE.** What's the perimeter of your proscenium arch?

**KEITH.** What's a proscenium arch?

**KATE.** It's the frame around the theatre.

**KEITH.** Oh, I always wondered that.

**KATE.** It's 20 plus 20 plus 30. How many actors does it take to screw in a light bulb?

KEITH. None. That's the techie's job.

KATE. Fair enough. If you have three prop swords—

KEITH. I did not touch the props!

KATE. But if you have three prop swords—

KEITH. *I did not touch the props!*

KATE. And one of them breaks—

KEITH. I—

KEITH & KATE. ...did not touch the props.

KEITH. *Exactly.* And I certainly did not break the retractable daggers. No matter what Cass says.

KATE. Who's Cass?

KEITH. Uhm...*nobody!* Next question.

KATE. OK. What's the angle of inclination?

*(KEITH is momentarily pulled up short. His eye darts nervously to the note with Kate's name on it. He picks it up, holds it behind his back, and stammers:)*

KEITH. Oh, you, uh... It's a—um...it's—uh—I *know this!* Um...shoot. Line?

KATE. It's like this: if I'm 5'0" and you're 5'9", then the hypotenuse—

KEITH. God bless you.

KATE. Thank you. Then the hypotenuse—

KEITH. God bless you.

KATE. The hypotenuse—

KEITH. Do you need a tissue?

KATE. The *line* between your mouth and mine is on an angle.

*(KATE places her finger on KEITH's mouth, drawing him towards herself—her finger very firmly between them.)*

KATE. And so every time you go to kiss your amazing, bubonic Juliet, you calculate the angle of inclination. It's simple, really.

*(KATE pushes KEITH away with a single finger, and he falls back a pace, grinning and hugging himself.)*

KEITH. ...simple...

KATE. Yup. All you need is a few word problems that relate math to what you love most. Namely, the theatre.

KEITH. ...love...

KATE. The theatre. Fortunately for you, I've taken the liberty of writing up a few math problems that I think will help you. Keith? (*Snapping her fingers in his face:*) Keith?

KEITH. ...help...

KATE. Keith! Will you take a seat, please?

KEITH. (*Snapping to attention:*) Take a seat, thank you!

(KEITH sits abruptly, surprising KATE.)

KATE. Great. That's...that's really *efficient* of you. All right, now if you'd take out some paper and a pencil, please—

KEITH. Paper and pencil, thank you!

(KEITH produces the lipstick and the letter with Kate's name on it. Suddenly, KATE realizes her power.)

KATE. And...pat your head and rub your belly—please?

(KEITH does, glassy eyed.)

KATE. And cluck like a chicken...please?

(KEITH *buhgawks* rhythmically.)

KATE. Who's doing ballet? Please?

(KEITH gets to his feet and, still patting his head, rubbing his belly, and clucking like a chicken...he plies. Jetés. Arabesques. KATE loves it. But taking pity on him, says:)

KATE. Keith, you can stop now.

(He doesn't.)

KATE. Keith, you can stop now...please?

KEITH. I can stop now, thank you!

(KEITH stands to quivering attention.)

KATE. That is *so cool*.

(Suddenly, KEITH twitches and comes out of his trance.)

KEITH. Hey! Stop doing that! You know I've been trained to respond to anything that ends with the word—

KATE. (*Overlapping:*) Stop saying words now, PLEASE!

(Angrily, KEITH stands to attention.)

KEITH. STOP SAYING WORDS, THANK YOU.



KATE. Fine, it's a professional theatre!

KEITH. Oh. What's the play?

KATE. It doesn't matter.

KEITH. Thirty male actors is a *lot* of actors. Heck, *ten* is a lot. (*His eyes light up with a thought.*) Is it the Globe Theatre? Are they doing an all-male version of *Mackers*?

KATE. It really doesn't matter.

KEITH. 'Cause, y'know, I've always wondered what it'd be like if men played the three weird sisters, I mean the *witches* in...*you know*...

KATE. In *Macb*—

KEITH. Don't say it!

KATE. In the *Scottish Play*. You don't really believe in that, do you?

KEITH. You don't really believe in imaginary numbers, do you?

KATE. Fair enough! It's thirty props—

KEITH. *I did not touch the props!*

KATE. Thirty actresses!

KEITH. They prefer to be called *actors*.

KATE. Whatever! There are thirty of them. Agreed?

KEITH. Agreed.

KATE. No objections?

(KEITH saunters over to one side and winks at a female audience member.)

KEITH. Not a single one. Thirty female actors in a show. Sounds about right.

KATE. Oh, *thank* you so much.

KEITH. Not a problem.

KATE. Of the thirty women in the play, fifteen women are cast in starring roles. What percentage—

KEITH. (*Snorting:*) Pppph! OK, yeah. That's...really realistic of you—

KATE. All right. Of the thirty women in a play, *ten* women are cast in starring roles—

KEITH. Yeeeeeah. Not so much.

KATE. *Six* women?

KEITH. Closer...

**KATE.** *Three?*

**KEITH.** Bingo.

**KATE.** Really?

**KEITH.** Yup. One to kiss the guy, one to want the guy, and one to disapprove.

*(KEITH points, in turn, at two female audience members, and then finally KATE.)*

**KATE.** Funny.

**KEITH.** Hey, at least you got a role.

**KATE.** So. If *three* out of thirty women in a play are in starring roles, that leaves how many “actors,” shall we say, disappointed?

**KEITH.** How many of the *women* are disappointed?

*(Without thinking about it, KEITH grabs his chest on “women.” KATE gives him a withering glare. KEITH drops his arms.)*

**KATE.** Yup.

**KEITH.** Oh, that’s easy! All of them.

**KATE.** But three of the women are cast in starring roles!

**KEITH.** *(Pointing to himself:)* But *nobody’s* happy about it! So what’s the name of this guy you’re going on a date with?

**KATE.** That’s not important.

**KEITH.** Don’t you know it?

**KATE.** There are three women in starring roles. What percentage—

**KEITH.** Ten. Leaving how many women in the chorus?

**KATE.** Twenty-seven.

**KEITH.** Which is what percent of thirty?

**KATE.** Ninety.

**KEITH.** Very good! Let’s try another. On a scale of one to ten, six being the highest, would you say this fellow of yours is: One! Ugly beyond all reason. Or ten...no six... No! *(Pointing to himself:)* TEN: THE ESSENCE OF PERFECTION! Where would you rate this so-called date of yours?

**KATE.** I don’t know. I haven’t met him yet. Next question—

**KEITH.** “Haven’t met him,” huh? I think we can safely assume this fellow is ugly beyond all reason.

KATE. (*The lady doth protest:*) Looks don't matter much.

KEITH. Well, now I'm going to have to recalibrate to include negative settings!

KATE. If a platform is eight feet tall—

KEITH. I am afraid of heights.

KATE. You played Romeo!

KEITH. With a ground floor balcony! Now, riddle me this: presuming that this guy—it's not *Burger* is it?

KATE. (*Coughing nervously:*) If a platform is eight feet tall—

KEITH. Oh! It *is* Burger! I'm *so* gonna break his nose!

KATE. If a platform is eight feet tall...!

KEITH. Who set you up? Did you take a test? Are the two of you mathematically compatible?

KATE. As a matter of fact, we are.

KEITH. Ha!

KATE. Ha?

KEITH. Yeah. Everyone knows love isn't math, it's *chemistry*.

KATE. Chemistry?

KEITH. (*All smoothness:*) Yeah. Chemistry.

KATE. Let me guess. You're failing that, too.

KEITH. I am now.

KATE. Let's just stick to math.

KEITH. Gladly. A platform is eight feet tall. Romeo doesn't want to climb the balcony, because Romeo doesn't like heights, and he's afraid that he'll fall off and break his legs—

(*As KEITH rambles on, KATE retires to a corner of the stage, lost in thought, until she finally bursts out:*)

KATE. I didn't say I loved him.

KEITH. What?

KATE. Nothing. If a platform is eight feet tall, eight foot long and four foot wide, how many platforms can you fit on a—

KEITH. What do you mean you don't love him?

KATE. Uh...nothing!

(*KEITH smirks and starts walking towards KATE.*)

KATE. I was talking math. You're partly deaf. *Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!* Will you just forget it, please?

KEITH. (*Snapping to attention:*) Forget it, thank yooooou...*will you stop doing that?!*

KATE. Doing what?

KEITH. (*Twitching and spazzing:*) ...I don't remember...

KATE. (*Guiding KEITH to his seat:*) Let's just stick with some easy ones. An actor—

KEITH. Who?

KATE. Let me finish. OK?

KEITH. OK.

KATE. An *unknown* actor has a speech of fifteen lines. Each line takes twenty seconds to say.

KEITH. (*Scoffing:*) *Twenty seconds!* That's—

(KATE *stares* KEITH *down.*)

KATE. How long do you have for a quick change?

(*Silence.*)

KATE. Well?

KEITH. ...Can I speak now?...

KATE. You can speak now.

KEITH. Is it Burger?

KATE. It's not Burger!

KEITH. Fine. Fifteen lines at twenty seconds each? What's the play?

KATE. I don't care. It's *Macb*—

KEITH. *Don't say it!*

KATE. It's *Guys and Dolls*.

KEITH. Are there any speeches of fifteen lines in *Guys and Dolls*?

KATE. I don't know! It's *Cupid and Psyche*.

KEITH. Oh! I've heard good things about that.

KATE. Super. Fifteen lines, each line takes twenty seconds to say, how long do you have for a quick change, go. In *minutes*, mind you.

KEITH. Well, see, it's not that easy.

KATE. Yes, it is! Just use multiplication then divide by sixty!

**KEITH.** But it's *not* just multiplication—it's advanced calculus!

(KEITH jumps out of his seat, while KATE sinks into hers.)

**KEITH.** You've forgotten all the variables. For example: Is it opening night? Are nerves up? Is he rushing his lines? Is it Ryan's speech? Did he even bother memorizing? How much did the director cut? And how many were *my* lines.

Is it second weekend? Are we in a slump? What part am I playing? Am I in more than one role? How much of my costume am I changing? Do I have dressers? *Will they take my pants?!*

(Showing off his leg:) Are tights involved. Did somebody accidentally lock my costume in a closet?! And...do we have the key? You ask very complicated questions, Madame.

**KATE.** The answer should be five minutes! Three hundred seconds equals five minutes, Keith! Why can't it be simple?

**KEITH.** Because five minutes is a *slow* quick change. Besides! Who uses *five minutes* for a *fifteen line* soliloquy? It's *gotta* be Ryan saying it. He could milk a simple Shakespearean algebra problem for hours.

**KATE.** Shakespearean algebra?

**KEITH.** "Two B or not two B. *That* is the question!"

**KATE.** I *hate* English.

**KEITH.** "Whether 'tis nobler in the"—what?

**KATE.** English! I hate it! It's inconsistent. It's messy. It's *illogical*.

**KEITH.** Are you insulting my *art*?

**KATE.** Don't you *dare* cry! "To be or not to be." First of all, something either *is* or it *isn't*. You can't be *both* positive and negative existence. You can't have both positive two props and negative two props—

**KEITH.** You can if you break one of them....

**KATE.** You can't be one thing *and* be something else.

**KEITH.** Sure you can. I am all the time. Look at me right now: I'm half myself and half my character. Look at you! You're *pretending* to be Kate, frustrated math tutor. You *feel* like Kate, nervous first-dater.

(KEITH circles KATE, finally ending up face to face on her, perhaps lounging on the table. Certainly by the end of his speech, he's pulled her close to him, ready to kiss her.)

**KEITH.** And you *are* Kate, "Sweet Kate, bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst. But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom. There-

fore, Kate of my consolation, take this of me. And come on and kiss me, Kate!"

(KATE *slaps* KEITH.)

KATE. I would *never* date an actor.

KEITH. Then I'll pretend to be an accountant.

KATE. But that's just it! I don't want someone who acts, who pretends. I want someone solid. Real. Dependable. But for *you people*, everything depends!

(KEITH *sits dejectedly at the end of the table, unaware that KATE has picked up the letter with her name on it, as well as a marker. As she asks questions, KATE writes down the answers and desperately holds them up to KEITH.*)

KATE. A musical is two and a half hours long. How long is the musical?

KEITH. That depends. How long is the line to the bathroom?

KATE. Tickets are ten dollars each. How much are the tickets?

KEITH. That depends. (*To the audience:*) How many of you actually paid to get in here?

KATE. A sash is three feet long. How long is the sash?

KEITH. That depends! What color is it?

KATE. What *color* is it?

KEITH. Because if it's the green sash, then it's longer than three feet. But if it's the *red* sash, then—

KATE & KEITH. It depends!

(*Silence. Until KATE sees her name on the note.*)

KATE. What's in this letter?

KEITH. It depends.

KATE. Why is my name on it?

KEITH. That...depends.

KATE. Is it a love letter?

KEITH. That depends!

KATE. Is it a *poem*?

KEITH. That *depends...*

KATE. It *is* a poem!

(KEITH *just misses grabbing the letter from KATE.*)

**THIS PLAY IS  
NOT OVER!**

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