

Stubble

By

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Cast of Characters

Kate: middle-school English teacher

Dan: middle-school English teacher

Scene

Klinger Middle School dance

Time

7pm

Lights up on a 7th grade school dance. "The Sweetest Thing" by U2 plays. Two adults stand by the punch bowl, a deliberate bit of distance between them. They pretend to be engrossed in chaperoning the children, smiling broadly, but they are clearly distracted by each other's presence. They bop awkwardly to the music. After a few moments, Kate breaks their silence.

KATE

So!

Dan immediately whips his head toward her and laughs boisterously.

Quick beat. Kate stares.

DAN

Oh. I'm sorry, I thought you said something funny.

KATE

Did I? I don't think I did! I don't usually say funny things, do I?

DAN

No no, you don't, I'm sorry. / How's the Thoreau lesson going, are the kids liking it?-

KATE

No, I'm sorry! I like that you assumed I was being funny. Oh, Thoreau's fantastic! Yeah, the kids love Walden, thanks for asking. How bout you, you still working on Dante's Inferno with your class?

DAN

Yes.

Beat.

That was strange what I did a moment ago, sorry about that ... I'm realizing now that someone told me a joke this morning, and it was still stuck in my head. That was why I laughed.

KATE

You had a joke stuck in your head? What was it? What was the joke? Can you tell me the joke? I'd love to hear the joke!

DAN

Suuuuure.... Yeah. Ok....

A beat as he racks his mind for a joke. She waits patiently, smiling.

DAN
Ok, great. Yes. So it starts with--

Kate laughs heartily. Quick beat. Dan stares.

KATE
Oh. You didn't tell it yet, did you. The joke.

DAN
No, not yet.

KATE
I just thought you--I guess I... I'm sorry. Please, go ahead, tell the joke!

DAN
Actually. I'd rather not now.

KATE
Oh please tell it!

DAN
No thank you.

KATE
But I'm sure it was going to be very funny!

DAN
You know, I feel like an ass and you're not helping!

Quick beat.
Shit, I said ass! Fuck, I said Shit! Motherf-

Quick beat.
My apologies.

Quick beat.
Would you like some punch? The kids sure do seem to be enjoying it.

KATE
Please.

He pours and hands her a cup.

KATE
Thanks Dan.

DAN
Sure thing Kate.

They smile and lock eyes for a moment, then quickly break their gaze. A beat while they bop to the music. Dan breaks the silence.

DAN

(referring to the punch)
Pink, huh?

KATE

(referring to the music)
You think? It sounds more like Bono to me. (note: she consistently pronounces this bow'-no, rhyming with SEW-no).

DAN

What?

KATE

Bono! I love U2.

Quick beat.

DAN

You do?

KATE

Yes. So much.

DAN

Wait. Did I say I loved you?

KATE

I'm sorry?

DAN

You just said you "loved me too."

KATE

Oh, no, no, no! I love U2! The band! Bono!

DAN

(rhyming with SEW-no as well)
Oh! Bono!!!!

Quick beat. They laugh uproariously, it gets uncomfortable quickly and subsides. They bop to the music in silence. Dan breaks the silence.

DAN

You were about to say something before. Wh-wh-what were you about to say before?

KATE

Before...?

DAN
Before the whole-

KATE
Oh yes! I have good news! You ready?

DAN
Sure.

KATE
Guess who is set to direct "The Sound of Music" here
this Spring?

DAN
You????

KATE
Me!!!

DAN
Ahhhhhh!!!!

KATE
Ahhhhhhh!!!!!!

*They leap into a hug, full bodies pressed
together, jumping up and down in a steady rhythm.*

DAN
Congratulations Kate!!!!

KATE
Thank you Dan!!!

DAN
A dream realized!!!

KATE
I'm so happy!!!

*They stop abruptly, realizing what they're doing.
They separate.*

DAN
Proud of you.

KATE
Thanks.

*Beat. They both stare off in opposite directions
looking like they wanna die, especially Dan. Dan
breaks their silence one more time.*

DAN

Will there be lederhosen?

KATE

Hm? What?

DAN

In the production. Will there be lederhosen? You can't do The Sound of Music without copious amounts of lederhosen!

KATE

Oh, well, I suppose that's up to Doris. She's in charge of costumes so-

DAN

Then we better tell Doris to get on it A-S-A-P! Where is she? Is she here? Because I'll tell her myself!! I'll tell her, she'd better import you the best lederhosen that Germany has to offer/ because that's what you deserve!

KATE

I think the play is set in Austria-

DAN

Fine! Australian lederhosen then. You deserve authenticity! And what's going on with casting?/ Who's playing Captain Von Trapp? He'd better be top notch!

KATE

Well, we're going to hold auditions next week- Dan, are you ok?

DAN

This is your directorial debut Kate! It has to be perfect! AS PERFECT AS YOU ARE! How's the set design coming along? Do we have hills yet? Those hills better be majestic, or somebody's gonna answer to me, I'll tell you that much. And I think the real question we should all be asking ourselves is WHO THE HELL IS GOING TO PLAY ROLFE??!!?

Beat. Dan is panting.

KATE

(concerned)

Dan? What's going on? And remind me who Rolfe is.

DAN

17-year old messenger boy. Sings with Liesel.

KATE

Right, thank you.

*Dan walks over to her and stands very close.
What are you doing?*

DAN

Let's cut the bullshit. It's been years. I fuckin' love you. It's a fact. So let's do this shit and let's do it now.

A long beat. Then another. Finally...

KATE

Get under the table.

DAN

What?

KATE

Get under the goddamn punch table before I take you in front of all these 7th graders.

DAN

Really?

KATE

Go!

*They scurry under the table and sit very close.
Dan immediately giggles and rocks back and forth
like a little kid.*

DAN

Oh man, we're gonna do it aren't we!

KATE

I think we are!

DAN

We're gonna do it under a table at a school dance!

KATE

Uh huh!

DAN

I feel like I'm twelve again.

Quick beat.
Came out wrong. Didn't do this at twelve. So you like me too? Is that what I'm gathering from all this?

KATE

Yes!

DAN

You "like-like" me?

KATE

I do! I like-like you!

DAN

SO EXCITED!

KATE

Me too!

DAN

Oh wow, I've never been this close to your face before.
You're GORGEOUS!

KATE

So are you! Hey, your beard hair is a slightly
different color than your head hair!

Tiniest beat.

DAN

Huh? What?

KATE

It's reddish!!!

DAN

(little defensive)

Yeah, well apparently the shaving cream I used when I
was a teenager carried carcinogens in it, and now my
chin and cheeks are forever tainted!

KATE

That's so bad ass, I love it!

DAN

Oh, OK, good! You have an eyebrow piercing?

KATE

(brightly)

Nope, it's a mole!

DAN

Oh.

Beat. Dan looks horrified.

KATE

Is that- a problem?

DAN

No, moles are... good.

KATE

Oh good, I think so too! Oh wow!

DAN

What?

KATE

Your neckbeard is fascinating!

DAN

My what?

KATE

All this stubble you have here. You shave your neck,
don't you!

DAN

No way!

KATE

Don't be embarrassed! Neckbeards are sexy. You know who
else had a neckbeard?

DAN

No.

KATE

Thoreau.

DAN

He did?

KATE

Yup! Check out his photo on Wikipedia sometime. That
shit went all the way down to his collarbones.

Kate starts nuzzling her face in his neck.

Mmmmm.... I wanna call you neckbeard. Can neckbeard be
the thing I call you that no one else calls you so that
when I call you it we always feel close to one another?

DAN

Well, I don't really love-

She tweaks his nipple.

DAN
Oooohlalala you're tweaking my nipple!

KATE
I am.

DAN
Well stop!

*He slaps her hand away like a little child. A long
beat. She stares at him.*
I don't like that. Being examined like that.

KATE
Who is examining you? I'm not examining you.

DAN
You are! What gives you the right to - to- to-

KATE
To what?

DAN
I do a-a-a-a LOT of work to-to-to-to.... hide things.
And then you just come in and say "Oh I see your
neckbeard! Let me call you neckbeard!"

KATE
I think it's sexy! I told you that!

DAN
I don't care what you think! I don't need you to
approve of me! I don't need to explain myself to you!
AND YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE A MOLE!

KATE
Dan, why are you acting like this? We were having fun.

DAN
I'm getting out from under here.

He moves to climb out.

KATE
(trying to hold him in place)
Please stay! I won't call you neckbeard. And we don't
have to do anything, let's just sit here a little while
longer, ok?

DAN
Get. Off!

*She lets go and he hits his head on the table,
hard. It hurts.*

Fuck. Ow.

KATE

(reaching to his head)
I'm sorry!

DAN

Don't!

KATE

Dan, can't we just-

He climbs out from under the table.

Kate waits a few moments then climbs out too.

They stand in silence, watching the kids.

KATE

Dan, can't we-

Silence.

Dan?

DAN

Would you like some punch? The kids sure do seem to be enjoying it.

KATE

No, I--

Beat.

Please.

He pours and hands her a cup.

KATE

(eyes welling)
Thanks Dan.

DAN

Sure thing Kate.

They stare straight ahead, watching the kids.

End of Play.