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Dramatic Publishing



Kamikaze Kate (and the sword of Captain Kuroda)

Comedy by
John Summons

Kamikaze Kate (and the sword of Captain Kuroda)

Comedy. By John Summons. *Cast: 2m., 4w.* Schoolgirl Kate thinks war is exciting and loves pretending she's a fighter pilot—until one day her grandfather gives her a gift of a Japanese samurai sword from World War II. This gift changes her life, as along with the sword comes the ghost of its owner, the Japanese soldier Captain Kuroda, who takes up residence under her bed. Through her adventure with the captain she learns that wartime experiences are not games and actually helps to reunite the captain with his wife and son who are living in Japan. With the aid of the captain, she also has fun pitting wits against her enemy, the school bully, Needletop. Although the issues of the play are serious, dealing as it does with themes of war, courage and cowardice, *Kamikaze Kate* is an enjoyable, colorful, larger-than-life theatrical romp. *Code: K23.*

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KAMIKAZE KATE

(and the Sword of Captain Kuroda)

by

John Summons



The Dramatic Publishing Company

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KAMIKAZE KATE (and the Sword of Captain Kuroda)

ISBN 0-87129-055-3

KAMIKAZE KATE

**A One Act Play
For Two Men and Four Women**

CHARACTERS

KATE a schoolgirl, about 13
CAPTAIN KURODA a Japanese soldier, early 30s
NEEDLE-TOP a punk student, also 13
MOTHER* of Kate, mid 30s
MISS FIG* Kate's teacher and aunty, late 30s
AUNT PEG* the postwoman, Kate's aunty, early 30s

***Can all be played by the same actress.**

SETTING:

Kate's bedroom, a school classroom, Needle-top's room.

KAMIKAZE KATE (and the Sword of Captain Kuroda)
was first performed at the Cleveland Street Intensive Language Centre on 8 August, 1988, with the following cast:

KATE Catherine Davison
CAPTAIN KURODA Kim Young Tae
NEEDLE-TOP Makki Makki
KATE'S MOTHER Lilly Rodriguez-Ajuria
MISS FIG Mary Liu
AUNT PEG Yi Li Xian

Directed and designed by John Summons

KAMIKAZE KATE

SCENE: *KATE's bedroom. The room has a single bed covered by a bedspread. There is also a small side table with drawer next to the bed, on which sits an alarm clock and KATE's pet geranium plant, Fred. Behind the bed is a screen.*

AT RISE: *KATE stands in front of her bed, dressed in her school uniform. She puts on a leather flying jacket, flying goggles and flying cap. She suddenly starts to wing her way about the room, pretending to be a plane, banking and rolling, looping and dive-bombing. As she flies she makes the appropriate engine sounds of the plane. Once in awhile, she gives out sharp burst of machine gun fire and drops the occasional bomb. Then suddenly KATE screams.*

KATE. Ahhh! I've been hit! But I'm gonna take you with me. Aircraft carrier ahead. Kamikaze Kate strikes again! (*KATE dive-bombs her bed which serves as the "aircraft carrier," and kamikazes into it, throwing her pillow high in the air and making the sounds of a terrible explosion. She rests a moment, panting, then stands, removing her goggles and headgear. She addresses the AUDIENCE directly.*) Jeez, I love war. Hi. In case you didn't know, I'm Kamikaze Kate, and this is my room. Let me tell you a few things about me. I live here with

me mum. Me dad's not here. He's dead. Me mum's all right, although she can be a bit of a dragon at times. Jeez, you oughta hear the way she roars.

(Suddenly KATE's MOTHER puts her head around the screen and bellows ferociously at KATE.)

MOTHER. Kate! What's that noise? I'm trying to sleep.

KATE *(bellowing like her MOTHER)*. Nothing!

MOTHER. Don't lie to me. *(KATE pokes her tongue out in defiance.)* Did you say something?

KATE. No.

MOTHER. Have you done your homework?

KATE. No.

MOTHER. You've got to help me later. *(Pulls her head back behind the screen.)*

KATE. Silly old hag.

(MOTHER bobs back again.)

MOTHER. What was that?

KATE. I lost my school bag.

MOTHER. Then find it! *(She retreats once more.)*

KATE. They say I take after her, but I don't see it. *(Pause.)* Anyway, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, I live here with me mum and Fred. This is Fred, *(Picking up the plant from the table.)* my pet geranium. I don't have any friends, but I don't care. You see, no one likes much the things I do. Most of the kids I know like music and pop stars and things like that. They don't like war, or not like me. War's great fun, really. Just have a look at these. *(KATE kneels down, puts her hand under the bedspread and drags a card-*

board box from under the bed. The box is full of war relics—spent shell cartridges, hats, helmets, etc. She holds up a helmet.) This is from the first world war. (She holds up a cartridge.) And this is from the second. I collect these things, or at least my grandpa gives them to me. He likes war, too. My grandpa was a pilot in the last world war. He flew all over the Pacific and even Japan. Now look at this. (She bends down again and reaches under the bed, this time removing a large samurai sword.) He only gave me this last night. It's my favourite. It also comes from the second world war. He bought it off an American soldier as a souvenir. It's a Japanese samurai sword. I'm going to take it to school tomorrow. My teacher says we've got to give a talk on something interesting.

(She removes the sword from its scabbard, then waves it about, swishing the air. As she does so, however, unbeknown to her, a Japanese SOLDIER, dressed in uniform, emerges from under her bed. He watches her a moment, his eyes wide with anger.)

SOLDIER (roaring). Give me! (KATE freezes.)

KATE. Who's there?

SOLDIER. You! Give me!

KATE (slowly turning to face him). Who?...Who?...Who are you?

SOLDIER. Give me, girl! Sword—me! (Frightened, she hands him the sword. The SOLDIER backs away and retires under the bed.)

KATE (suddenly yelling). Mum! Mum! Come, quick!

(MOTHER quickly steps out from behind screen and stands with her hands on her hips.)

MOTHER. Now what's going on?

KATE. A man, Mum. A man. Under the bed.

MOTHER. What?

KATE. There's a man under the bed.

MOTHER. A man?

KATE. That's what I said.

MOTHER. What's he doing under there?

KATE. I don't know.

MOTHER. Probably a burglar. Right—I'll take care of this. Steal my things, will ya? *(She rolls up her sleeves, spits on her hands and makes ready as if to fight. She pushes KATE behind her.)* Okay, you under there. Come out.

KATE. Mum, maybe we better call the police.

MOTHER. I can handle it. Right—come out, or I'll come down and get you.

KATE. Mum, he could be dangerous.

MOTHER. And so am I when my temper's up. Come out before I tear you limb from limb. *(She goes down on her knees and goes to lift the bedspread.)*

KATE. But Mum, he might know judo or karate.

MOTHER *(hesitating)*. Why do you say that?

KATE. He's a soldier. A Japanese soldier. Captain, I think, from the Second World War. I think we should call the police.

MOTHER *(getting up, fuming)*. And I think I should call a doctor, for you. *(She pulls KATE up on her tiptoes by the ear lobe.)* What do you mean scaring your poor weak mother? There I was in there having a snooze after a hard day at work, and you wake me up for this?

A Japanese soldier under your bed. (*She gives KATE's ear an extra tug.*) I'll give you Japanese soldier.

KATE. Ouch, Mum! But it's true, I saw him with my own eyes. Just take a look.

MOTHER. Still at it, eh? Trying to fool your worn-out mum. Ungrateful child.

KATE. But, Mum, you don't understand.

MOTHER. I understand all right. No consideration.

KATE. But, Mum.

MOTHER (*wound up*). Too busy playing war, that's your trouble. It's scrambled your brains. Well, it's got to stop.

(*She picks up the box of war relics.*) Out they go.

KATE. No!

MOTHER. I've made up my mind.

KATE. Please, Mum.

MOTHER. No. From now on you've got to act like a normal girl.

KATE. No, I don't want to. I'll throw a tantrum. (*She throws a very exaggerated one, all over the place. Meanwhile, MOTHER has turned her back on her and pretends to sob into her handkerchief.*)

MOTHER. Boo hoo. Boo hoo, hoo, hoo.

KATE. Mum?

MOTHER. Boo hoo, hoo, hoo. Is this all the thanks I get? After all I've done for you over all these years. Boo hoo. Boo hoo, hoo.

KATE. Mum, don't cry. (*MOTHER blows her nose loudly and continues sobbing.*) Please, Mum. Please? (*KATE goes down on her knees before her MOTHER.*) Look, Mum, I'll do anything you ask. Just don't throw away my things.

MOTHER (*abruptly stops crying, shrewdly*). Anything?

KATE (*kissing her MOTHER's feet*). Anything at all.

MOTHER. Then you're to do all the housework from now on.

KATE. All?

MOTHER. That's what I said. And cook tea every night.

KATE. Every night!

MOTHER. That's right. Well, what's it to be? (*KATE doesn't answer. MOTHER starts to walk off carrying the box of war relics.*)

KATE. Every second night? (*MOTHER stops. She concedes, now satisfied.*)

MOTHER. Deal. (*She offers KATE her hand to seal the agreement. KATE takes it and shakes it reluctantly.*)
Only, you cook tonight, and hurry up. I'm hungry.

KATE. Okay. I'll be there in a moment.

MOTHER. Now.

KATE. I have to tidy my room first.

MOTHER (*a little suspiciously*). All right.

(MOTHER returns behind the screen while KATE looks cautiously about the room for the SOLDIER. She then gets down on all fours and lifts the bedspread a little to peek under the bed. As she lifts it, however, the SOLDIER emerges on the other side of the bed, holding his sword. KATE, not knowing the SOLDIER has appeared, begins to crawl under the bed in search of him, while the SOLDIER comes over to her side and stands near her legs, which stick out from under the bed. Eventually KATE gives up her search and backs out from under the bed, her face coming into contact with the SOLDIER's boots. Her eyes then follow the boots up the SOLDIER's body to his face.)

KATE. What are you doing here? Who are you? (*The SOLDIER doesn't answer, but looks down at her*

sternly. Suddenly MOTHER calls from behind the screen.)

MOTHER. Kate! Kate!

KATE. Coming! *(To the SOLDIER.)* You're a ghost, aren't you? *(The SOLDIER doesn't answer. KATE gets to her feet and backs away from him.)* A ghost. I know you are.

MOTHER *(from behind the screen)*. Kate! I want my tea!

KATE *(backing away, excited)*. Captain Kuroda! *(She turns and runs quickly behind the screen.)*

SCENE TWO

SCENE: KATE's bedroom. KATE returns to the front of the screen and addresses the AUDIENCE.

KATE. Jeez, how lucky can you get? My very own real live ghost. I'm not scared of ghosts. I'm not scared of anything. Fighter pilots have no fear. *(Pause.)* Where is he, eh? He's probably frightened of me. *(Calling.)* Captain? Captain? *(To the AUDIENCE.)* Probably under the bed. *(She gets down on all fours to look.)* Captain? Captain Kuroda?

(Again, as KATE climbs under the bed, the CAPTAIN gets out from the other side, clutching his sword, and comes over to her. KATE continues to call out to him from under the bed. She finally gives up and backs out from under it.)

CAPTAIN *(as KATE emerges)*. You!

KATE (*jumping with a start*). Don't do that!

CAPTAIN. Picture.

KATE. What?

CAPTAIN. Give me.

KATE. I don't understand.

CAPTAIN (*forming a rectangle with his hands*). Picture.

KATE. What?

CAPTAIN (*impatiently*). Picture. Picture.

KATE. Eh? What picture?

CAPTAIN. Wife. My wife and son. Give me.

KATE. You mean the photo?

CAPTAIN. Picture! Picture!

KATE. A picture you take with a camera is called a photo.

CAPTAIN. Where?

KATE. I put it somewhere safe. (*He suddenly draws his sword and menaces KATE with it.*)

CAPTAIN. Give me!

KATE. All right, all right. Don't get your knickers in a knot.

CAPTAIN. Knic-kers? What "knic-kers"?

KATE. Knickers. You know, underpants.

CAPTAIN. Un-der-pants?

KATE. Forget it.

CAPTAIN (*again menacing her with the sword*). Picture!

KATE. No. Not until you put that away. (*He looks at her, puzzled.*) Sword—away.

CAPTAIN (*trying to intimidate her*). Picture! (*KATE folds her arms and turns her back on him defiantly.*)

KATE. No. (*The CAPTAIN moves around to the front of KATE, menacing her with the sword.*)

CAPTAIN. Give me. Now! (*Unimpressed, she again turns away from him defiantly. The CAPTAIN looks de-*

feated.) Please? (He puts his sword back in its scabbard.)

KATE (turning to face him). That's better. (KATE goes to her bedside table and opens the drawer. She removes a small wooden box. The box is locked.) It's in here.

CAPTAIN (impatiently). Give me.

KATE. In a moment. I've got to open it first. Now where did I put that key? (She rummages around in the drawer looking for a key. Finally she finds it.) Here it is. (She inserts the small key in the lock of the box and opens it. The CAPTAIN looks on anxiously, impatiently. KATE removes a small photograph from the box. She looks at it.) Your wife and son. They look happy.

CAPTAIN. Give me.

KATE. Not yet. First you've got to tell me some things about yourself. (The CAPTAIN suddenly snatches at her to grab her hand. KATE manages to get out of his reach. She quickly puts the photo back in the box.)

CAPTAIN. Give me!

KATE. "Give me, give me." Is that all you can say? You don't speak English very good.

CAPTAIN. Nihongo ga dekimasu ka?

KATE. Eh? What was that?

CAPTAIN. You speak Japanese?

KATE (taken aback). No, but my grandfather can. He can read and speak a little. How did you learn English?

CAPTAIN. I listen your grandfather. I live his house many year.

KATE. Anyway, if you let me ask you some questions, I might give you the photo. (The CAPTAIN grunts his consent reluctantly.) Your name—is it really Captain Kuroda? (The CAPTAIN nods and grunts.)

CAPTAIN. How you know my name?

KATE. Your name is on this letter. There's a letter in here, too. It's to your wife. *(She takes a letter out of the wooden box.)* Grandpa read it to me.

CAPTAIN. Your grandpa bad, bad man to read you my letter. Give me photo, letter, now.

KATE. Not until you answer some more of my questions. What are you doing here? *(The CAPTAIN shrugs.)* Come on, you must know why.

CAPTAIN. None your business. Keep ear out.

KATE. Eh?

CAPTAIN. Keep ear out my business.

KATE. Nose.

CAPTAIN. Nose, too. Keep ear and nose out my business.

KATE *(locking the wooden box)*. All right, if that's the way you want it. But you don't get these.

CAPTAIN. You bad, bad girl. My photo, my letter. Give me.

KATE. No.

CAPTAIN *(drawing his sword from its scabbard again)*. Okay, this time I kill you.

KATE. No.

CAPTAIN *(lifting the sword up)*. Chop off head. *(He roars. KATE suddenly grows fearful. She starts to run about the room with the CAPTAIN chasing her. He pursues her for awhile then KATE suddenly collapses onto her bed panting with exhaustion. The CAPTAIN also stops and hovers over her, his sword raised above his head in a threatening manner.)*

KATE. Mum! Mum! Come quick! *(At this the CAPTAIN seems nervous. He quickly gets down and disappears under the bed.)*

(MOTHER briskly enters with an opened box of chocolates in her hand. She chews on a chocolate.)

MOTHER. Again? What's it this time? It better not be any Japanese soldiers.

KATE. No, Mum. I feel sick.

MOTHER. You were all right a while ago.

KATE. It just came on me—all of a sudden like. In fact, I could've died if you hadn't come in. *(MOTHER quickly feels her forehead and roughly takes her pulse.)*

MOTHER. You're all right. Just trying to get out of the washing up.

KATE. No, Mum, really.

MOTHER *(raising KATE by the earlobe again)*. I know all your tricks. Okay, back in that kitchen.

KATE. But, Mum, I'm really crook, and if I die they'll lock you up—for working your sick child to death.

MOTHER. *Hmmm.*

KATE. Just give me half an hour. *(She coughs pathetically.)* I should be better by then.

MOTHER. Well, you just make sure you are. You've got some ironing to do as well, later.

KATE. Oh, Mum. *(MOTHER returns behind the screen. When she has gone KATE quickly removes the photo and letter from the wooden box and leans over the side of the bed, lifting the bedspread.)* Psst, you can come out now. She's gone.

(KATE then coolly lies back on the bed and waits for the CAPTAIN to come out from under it. He does so, his sword ready once more to threaten KATE. KATE, however, continues to lie there, confident, undisturbed,