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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **KATE AND ISABEL**

by  
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**Music adapted**  
by  
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**Dramatic Publishing**  
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(KATE AND ISABEL)

*Cover photo: The Metawhateverphor Theatre Production  
1/2r: Maria Rinaldi as KATE; Yvonne Woolrich-Teague as ISABEL  
Photo by Michael Doenges. Cover design by Susan Carle*

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# KATE AND ISABEL

A One-Act Play  
For Two Women

## CHARACTERS

**KATE** . . . . . a contemporary American actress; 29 years old; attractive, perhaps even beautiful. She is ambitious, energetic and extremely self-absorbed. She is also terrified she isn't going to "make it" in theater in spite of having the lead role of Catherine of Aragon in an important production of Shakespeare's **HENRY VIII**.

**ISABEL** . . . the Catholic Monarch, Queen of Spain during the expulsion of the Jews and Moors, the Inquisition and the explorations of Columbus. At the time of the play, she has lived 53 years. She is tough, resourceful, unsentimental, fearless and accustomed to wielding power. One of her daughters is Catherine of Aragon.

**PLACE:** A rehearsal hall in Greenwich Village, New York.

**TIME:** Late afternoon of Halloween; this year.

Running times:

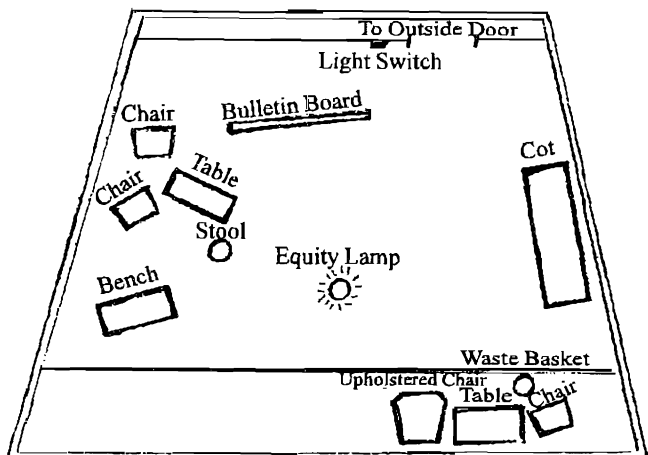
Full version—One hour.

With optional cut (pp. 24-27)—About 45 minutes.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

An early version of *KATE AND ISABEL* won the 1992 Metawhateverphor New Play Contest and was presented at St. Mark's Studio Theater in New York. It was given Honorable Mention in the Deep South Writers Columbus Quincentennial Contest and was a finalist in the Over Fifty Competition of Playformers of New York. Later versions had public readings by the Jane Doe Theater Ensemble in Seattle and by PLAYWORKS at Holden Village, Washington.

Floor Plan for  
*Kate and Isabel*



## PRODUCTION NOTES

Both Kate and Isabel are totally consumed by dedication to their current objectives: Kate to succeeding in the role of Catherine of Aragon in **HENRY VIII**; Isabel to assisting the historical Catherine of Aragon. And each woman has a myopic sense of the importance of her own cultural milieu: for Kate, the New York theater world; for Isabel, medieval Christian Europe. In the course of the play, each woman becomes passionately interested in the other because she believes that her *own* success is dependent on what she can get from the other. Each woman uses every tool available to her to get what she wants: smarts, coercion, intimidation, manipulation, aggression and, only if she ever deems it absolutely necessary, calculated charm.

### SETTING:

A big, movable bulletin board stands UR of center. On it, clearly visible to the audience, is a large rehearsal schedule for Clifford Brell's Production of **HENRY VIII** by William Shakespeare. Bold, legible markings on the schedule include: October 30—**IN THEATER**; November 5—**PREVIEWS START**; November 11—**OPENING!** There are also renderings of **HENRY VIII** costume designs (all contemporary and non-traditional except for the one for Catherine of Aragon, which is authentic Tudor period and very elegant). There is a sketch of a minimalist set for **HENRY VIII**. A floor plan for the **HENRY VIII** set is outlined in masking tape on the floor.

Upstage far right, are a small table, two unmatched straight chairs, a stool. DR is a bench; L: a cot. DL, off the "acting area," there's a table. R of it is an upholstered chair (for the director); L of it, a straight chair (for the stage manager) and a waste basket. On the table is an off-white telephone (practi-

cal), a box of tissues, pencils, telephone message pads, paper cups.

#### COSTUMES:

Both characters wear what appear to be real clothes. KATE's are practical and worn, but not shabby; she wears them with some flair. She wears a coat, scarf, gloves and boots; a large beret with her hair tucked up into it; heavy leggings; a long, loose sweatshirt (with a pocket) over a leotard top. For her rehearsal clothes, she has a long, heavy skirt (with a pocket); shoes with a medium heel and strap; a muslin version of a Tudor cap.

ISABEL wears historical clothes appropriate for the Spanish Court of the early 1500s. Avoid "period costume" look: no synthetic fabric, no zipper up the back, no velcro. She wears a full length dark cloak with a deep hood over an austere elegant gown, a cap and boots. She has a dagger in a sheath attached to her dress belt.

#### ACCENT:

ISABEL's accent—and the accent KATE adopts for her Shakespeare passages—is what we would consider a clear, contemporary Latin American accent from, perhaps, Ecuador. It does not incorporate the Castilian lisp, which developed after ISABEL's death.

#### ETC.:

ISABEL is, in Dante's phrase, a "shade" and has no reflection and, to be absolutely correct, no shadow. Also she has no weight—and knows it—so she never touches KATE and she never permits KATE to touch her.

The "Start-of-Acting" and "End-of-Acting" exercises are unique, broad gestures. Both start with arms held straight out



directly in front of the face, palms open. In the “Start” exercise, the hands then inscribe full circles, come back together and then move to either side—like a curtain opening. In the “End” exercise, the hands inscribe half circles and then come together—like a curtain closing.

#### MUSIC:

There are two pieces of music in the play, both of which are presumably being used in the production of Shakespeare’s HENRY VIII for which KATE is rehearsing. The Waverly Consort recording 1492—MUSIC FROM THE AGE OF DISCOVERY (Angel Records/CDC 7 54506 2) is a good source for both pieces.

On what is referred to in *KATE AND ISABEL* as cassette #1 is an excerpt of 15th Century church music. It has a brief instrumental introduction (which KATE initially mistakes for the start of cassette #2). On cassette #1, the introduction is followed immediately by a short choral segment which stops abruptly.

Cassette #1 can be made by using the Waverly Consort recording selection #16 as follows:

“Introduction: Kyrie I - Organetto, viols, sacbut” the final :05 (five seconds) only;

Followed by “Kyrie eleison - Christe eleison - Kyrie eleison - Voices, organetto, sacbut” the first :19 only.

(This fragment is interrupted briefly by KATE’s action of stopping and then restarting cassette #1.)

On *KATE AND ISABEL*’s cassette #2 is an instrumental version of “Viva el gran Rey Don Fernando,” a piece written in 1492 to celebrate the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs. (This piece is sometimes attributed to Carlo Verardi.)

This piece is the music for the dance KATE has to learn for HENRY VIII. Because both KATE and ISABEL speak while this music is playing, it is essential that this is an instrumental version with no choral sections.

Cassette #2 can be made by using the Waverly Consort recording selection #2 as follows:

“Viva el gran Rey Don Fernando (on the Fall of Granada, 1492)” the brief introductory phrase with percussion only, :03;

Followed immediately by the middle section of the Waverly Consort “Viva el gran Rey Fernando” arrangement using only instruments, :45.

The complete :48 percussion + instrumental version of “Viva el gran Rey Don Fernando” is played once and, after a :09 pause, repeated three times, plus once more for KATE’s final speech and solo dance.

#### DANCE:

The dance is done in time to the music, in the style of the lively, multi-rhythm Italian dances of the late 1400s. The following directions are for the basic dance as ISABEL first presents it. KATE is facing ISABEL for the initial instructions, so KATE must reverse directions and adjust accordingly. Further adjustments and refinements should be made as the dance is repeated.

#### Percussion introduction, 4 beats.

The opening stance is taken and held: feet together; arms slightly in front of and away from the body; palms open.

#### Section I

1st measure - ISABEL: Paso primo

Left foot steps left; right foot follows.

2nd measure - ISABEL: y segundo;  
Left foot steps left; right foot follows.

3rd measure - ISABEL: Otro más y  
Left foot steps left; right foot follows.

4th measure - ISABEL: esperar.  
Hold position.

5th measure - ISABEL: Dar la vuelta  
Turn in place with left arm held over head; stop.

6th measure - ISABEL: y parar.  
Raise right arm not quite as high as left; hold position.

Section II (not divided into measures)

ISABEL: Dar paseo;

4 fast steps circling toward downstage.

ISABEL: Dar paseo;

4 fast steps circling toward R.

ISABEL: Y volver.

Turn with both arms held over head; face front; take position with right arm over head, left arm out to side; hold position.

Section III

1st measure - ISABEL: Point--point--  
Left foot points left; left foot points left.

2nd measure - ISABEL: back-side front;  
Left foot steps in back of right leg;

right foot points right;  
right foot steps in front of left leg.

3rd measure - ISABEL: Point - point -  
Right foot points right; right foot points right.

4th measure - ISABEL: back side front hold.  
Right foot steps in back of left leg;  
left foot points left;  
left foot steps in front of right leg;  
hold position.

#### Section IV

1st measure - ISABEL: Point - point -  
Left foot points left; left foot points left.

2nd measure - ISABEL: back-side front;  
Left foot steps in back of right leg;  
right foot points right;  
right foot steps in front of left leg.

3rd measure - ISABEL: Point - point -  
Right foot points right; right foot points right.

4th measure - ISABEL: back side front hold.  
Right foot steps in back of left leg;  
left foot points left;  
left foot steps in front of right leg;  
hold position.

Section V (not divided into measures)

ISABEL: Walk two-three-four;

4 fast steps circling toward upstage.

ISABEL: Walk two-three-four;

4 fast steps circling toward center stage;

ISABEL: Turn—bow.

Turn with arms held open and out to sides;  
face front; deep curtsy.

End of Dance

## **PROPERTY LIST:**

### **On Stage**

**On the back wall: a light switch**

**On the floor: outline of HENRY VIII floor plan**

**Bulletin board with:**

**Production schedule for HENRY VIII**

**Renderings of costume designs for same**

**Sketch of set for same**

**Small table**

**3 Straight chairs**

**Stool**

**Bench**

**Upholstered chair**

**Stage Manager's table with:**

**Telephone (practical), off-white**

**Box of tissues**

**Telephone message pads; pencils**

**Paper cups**

**Waste basket**

**Cot**

**Equity safety lamp**

**Personal**

**For KATE:**

Thermos

Umbrella

Copy of printed instructions for 15th C. dance (in coat pocket)

2 Cassettes (#1 in coat pocket; #2 in tote)

Large tote with:

Notebook

Script of HENRY VIII

Make-up

Subway tokens

Hair brush

Apartment keys

Bills

Rehearsal skirt with:

Rehearsal cap in pocket

Rehearsal shoes

Cassette player

Wallet

**For ISABEL:**

Dagger and sheath

## KATE AND ISABEL

**SETTING:** *Before the play starts, the audience sees a space where rehearsals have been taking place. (See Production Notes for detailed description of set.) A lit EQUITY SAFETY LAMP stands C. As if from outside, the audience hears the SOUNDS of the Greenwich Village Halloween parade: bands, noise makers, whistling, bursts of applause and laughter, occasional sirens. HOUSE LIGHTS DIM. BLACKOUT—except for EQUITY SAFETY LAMP.*

*During the blackout, the TELEPHONE rings. It's a harsh, insistent buzz that sounds five times and cuts off in the middle of the sixth buzz—just as, offstage UL a door opens from the outside, letting in a blast of PARADE noise. The door closes.*

*KATE enters from UL. She is carrying a large tote bag, an umbrella and a thermos. She is anxious, agitated, and cold and also wrought up from battling through the chaos caused by the Halloween parade. She's heard the phone and dashes to catch it—but misses the call. KATE plunks the thermos on the floor near the table DL. She starts to put her tote on the upholstered chair, but changes her mind and dumps it on the cot instead. She stuffs her gloves into her coat pockets as she crosses to the phone. She glances at her wrist watch and is alarmed to see how late it is. She realizes she doesn't know the number she is about*



*to dial. She returns to the cot and rummages in her tote. She finds her notebook and hurries to the phone. Reading from her notebook, she dials. Someone answers quickly. (While KATE is on the phone, she frantically takes off her coat and scarf; drops them on the straight chair; they fall on the floor.)*

KATE. Mike, please...Mike—Michael—Michael Cardozo—the stage manager for the HENRY THE EIGHTH Company... Kate—I'm in the cast—Henry the Eighth's wife, Catherine of Aragon. May I *please* speak to Mike!...Mike! It's Kate...Did you just call me here at the old rehearsal space?...I know I have to learn the dance; that's why I'm here...I *know* I'm late, Mike. I couldn't get through because of the Halloween parade...(Suddenly devastated by something Mike has said.) Clifford? Why is Clifford coming here? He isn't coming to fire me is he?...“Just to see the dance”—Right!

*(KATE doubles over with an excruciating stomach cramp; hangs up the phone. She stumbles through the following sequence clutching her stomach in pain. She goes to U wall; turns on a WORK LIGHT. She crosses to the cot searches for something in her tote, finds it in her coat pocket: a piece of paper. She crosses C and, following instructions on the paper, starts to do a dance step. The EQUITY SAFETY LAMP is in her way. She stuffs the instructions into her sleeve and moves the lamp to DR, switches it OFF. KATE tries the dance step again, is angrily dissatisfied. She goes to the cot, scrambles through her tote, finally empties the contents on the cot. She finds what she's looking for: a cassette player, which she puts on the floor DC. Now she has to find cassette #1, locates it in her other*

*coat pocket. She still has stomach cramps. KATE puts cassette #1 into the player and starts it. She pulls out the paper, takes a position R of C. MUSIC starts with a short instrumental introduction. KATE holds her position.*

*ISABEL appears U, unseen by KATE and barely visible to the audience because ISABEL is in shadow and hides her face almost completely in her dark hood. ISABEL reacts with amazement to the music. She is unable to reconcile the sound and its apparent source in the cassette player. She takes off her hood to hear better. MUSIC changes to a segment of choral church music. KATE is furious; she has put on the wrong cassette. The piece she wants is all instrumental dance music. She crosses to the player and stops the MUSIC abruptly with the pause button. KATE is about to eject the cassette, when ISABEL claps her hands loudly in an authoritative manner. KATE wheels around terrified.)*

ISABEL. ¡Qué siga la música!

KATE. WHAT?

ISABEL. Otra vez

KATE. Who are you?

ISABEL. ¡LA MÚSICA! ¡Haz la música!

KATE. How'd you get in here? (ISABEL pulls a dagger from the folds of her cloak; crosses D, threatening KATE.)

ISABEL. Make música.

KATE (petrified). Jesus! (KATE pulls back to R, indicating that ISABEL should take the cassette player.) TAKE IT!

ISABEL. You make choir to sing in little black box. (KATE suddenly comprehends what ISABEL wants. KATE very cautiously crosses to the cassette player and crouches by it. As ISABEL watches, intently, KATE pushes the pause

*button. MUSIC: There are a few bars more of singing and then the music stops abruptly. After a slight pause.) More música!*

KATE (*very frightened*). That's all there is. (*ISABEL switches dagger to her left hand, crosses herself as KATE warily hits the stop button.*)

ISABEL. ¡Ay! God create many wonders: put spirit in body, angels on pin—(*Correcting herself.*)—angels on head of pin, put choir in little black box. (*KATE is starting to stand but ISABEL switches her dagger to her right hand and raises it again. KATE crouches down fast.*) What is name of town?

KATE. Ummm—New York.

ISABEL. Near Old York.

KATE. Sure.

ISABEL. England—good! But London is long ride from York. What is name of church? (*Indicates room.*) I must know name of church to give thanks for safe arrival.

KATE (*coming up with name of a theater, a street and church fairly near where they are*). How about—Saint Mark's?

ISABEL. Is Saint Mark MARTYR—beheaded in Rome? Saint Mark EVANGELIST—first bishop of Alexandria? Saint Mark TEACHER—stabbed to death by iron pens of students?

KATE. That last one.

ISABEL. Ah! Is community of scholars! Is monastery. Where is altar? Sacristy? All in little black box—like choir?

KATE. I don't know. (*Still terrified, but getting an idea.*) Let me call someone who does know. (*ISABEL stands back as if to let KATE yell but continues to display dagger threateningly. KATE rises and crosses cautiously to the phone; dials 911. ISABEL crosses toward phone and studies it.*)

ISABEL. Is little white box! How you "call" to person in little white box?

KATE (*indicating receiver*). Talk here—listen here.

ISABEL. Who you "call"?

KATE. A monk—a smart monk. Someone is answering. (*ISABEL—still brandishing the dagger—takes the phone; puts the receiver in the general vicinity of her ear.*)

ISABEL. I hear smart monk. (*Listens carefully; repeats with great consternation the message she has received.*) Monk say, "All lines occupied! Await instructions." (*ISABEL drops receiver over her shoulder.*) Infidels attack monastery! Where is your weapon?

KATE (*uncertain how to respond*). I don't really have one.

ISABEL (*handing her own dagger and sheath to KATE and speaking indignantly*). How you defend yourself—you must have weapon! Moors! Here in England—Moors!!! (*KATE takes the dagger and sheath carefully; seems to recognize them. ISABEL hears a voice on the phone. She pulls the receiver around under her arm, holds it in vicinity of her ear, answers by holding it near her mouth.*) *Yo la Reina, en el Monasterio de San Marco el Maestro...* (*ISABEL has been interrupted by person on other end of the line. ISABEL drops the receiver over her shoulder again.*) I forget! I must to say in the English: "I am Queen. I am in Monastery of Saint Mark Teacher." So now monk go for "Spanish-speaking Operator."

KATE. What are you the queen of?

ISABEL. *Yo la reina...* (*Correcting herself.*) I am Queen of Castile and of Aragón, of León, of Granada, of Toledo, de Sevilla, de Córdoba, de Valencia, de Sicilia y de las Islas Canarias. (*ISABEL indicates that KATE should kneel, which KATE does, dipping her head in a brief nod.*) Condesa de Barcelona, Señora de Vizcaya y Duquesa de Athe-

nas. (*Pause. KATE dips her head again.*) Condesa de Rosellón, Condesa de Cerdanya, y Marquesa de Oristán. (*KATE bows her head once more, then looks up at ISABEL.*)

KATE (*beginning to understand something*). You're being Isabella, aren't you?

ISABEL. Isabel.

KATE. Of Ferdinand and Isabella!

ISABEL (*as if explaining to a child*). Of *Fernando* and *Isabel*. The Catholic Monarchs—so designated by Alexander, Pope in Rome, in grateful recognition of our extraordinary services to Apostolic Church: our subjugation of Moorish infidels, our purification of our domains from Jewish heresy, our deliverance of natives of newfound Indies.

KATE (*examining dagger and putting two and two together*). And this is your dagger.

ISABEL (*paraphrasing traditional Spanish phrase of "my-house-is-your-house"*). "My dagger is your dagger."

KATE (*standing*). You gave one just like it to Catherine of Aragon, didn't you? To your daughter—just before she went to England to get married?

ISABEL. I give dagger to all my daughters when they marry.

KATE. Why are you here?

ISABEL. To help this daughter, Catherine! But first I must defend in battle this Monastery. I come without army; I do not know terrain... (*ISABEL is interrupted by a new voice on the phone; she puts the receiver in vicinity of her ear; listens; nods; moves receiver to near her mouth.*) *Yo la Reina de Castilla y de Aragón, de León, de Granada, de Toledo, de Sevilla y de Córdoba...*

KATE (*it's all clear to her*). Now I get it! (*KATE puts the dagger into pocket of her sweatshirt.*) Clifford sent you!