

PRETTY SHREWD

Adapted from Shakespeare's
Taming of the Shrew

by Clive Duncan

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CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY:

Kate

Bianca - Kate's best friend and in love with Luke

Pete - Bianca's brother

Luke - Pete's best friend and in love with Bianca

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Scene 1 - Pete's Café

At the back of the acting area is a small counter with cups and plates. In front of the counter are two small café tables with chairs at each. A tall stool is next to the counter. There are chalk boards behind the counter with "Today's Specials" written on them. To one side is a coat stand. At the back is a large poster reading – One night only! Pete and Luke - stunning singing duo at Battersea Folk Club.

Bianca is behind the counter drying cups. Pete, with his guitar, and Luke sit at one of the tables, they sing "Wednesday Morning 3am" (Simon & Garfunkel). During the song Kate comes into the café and sits on the stool at the counter. Bianca serves her with a coffee.

Pete stops singing before the end of the song.

PETE: Too slow! Pick it up – (he clicks his fingers to the beat)...

LUKE: Ok, ok...

PETE: "Yet I know as I gaze at my young love beside me...."

LUKE: I was singing that.

PETE: No, you were singing (very slowly) – Yet-I- know-as –I-gaze-at- my- young -love...

BIANCA: Chill out, Pete – it's just a song.

PETE: Er, no! – This is the semi-final of the Folk Fest Competition.

LUKE: So, chill out, it's just a competition.

PETE: With a recording contract for the winners, plus £1000. And a lot of free advertising. This is the rest of our lives and you're telling me to chill out...

LUKE: I was joking. Bianca said – chill out it's only a song, so I said...

PETE: Luke – when you have to explain a joke, it's not that funny.

KATE: You were playing too fast, Pete.

There is a moment as Pete and Luke register what Kate has said.

PETE: I'm sorry?

Luke motions to Kate to stay out of it...

KATE: It's a gentle love song; Romeo is leaving Juliet – he's watching her as she sleeps. The way you're playing it sounds as if he can't wait to get away from her.

PETE: Is this a social visit, Kate, or will you be paying for that coffee?

BIANCA: Pete!

KATE: Only trying to help.

PETE: Do I look like I need help?

KATE/LUKE/BIANCA: Yes.

PETE: What I need is people to keep this (*points to his nose*) out of my business, and this (*points to his mouth*) shut – especially Miss Smartarse, there (*points to Kate*).

BIANCA: Don't be so rude!

PETE: Is she a paying customer?

Kate slaps money down on the counter top.

KATE: I am now.

PETE: (*pretending to be friendly*) I'm sorry but the café is now closed. (*He pours her coffee into a paper cup*). Perhaps you'd like this as a takeaway.

BIANCA: Come on through, Kate. We'll go upstairs to my room.

Kate goes behind the bar.

PETE: Hey! You're supposed to be minding the café.

BIANCA: You just closed it. See you later.

Bianca and Kate go.

LUKE: Why do you always give Kate a hard time?

PETE: Kate is a friend of my sister's – she's no friend of mine.

LUKE: Yeah, but you've got to admit – she's a bit of all right...

PETE: A bit of all right?

LUKE: You know – good looking, sexy, clever...

PETE: And doesn't she know it? I wish Bianca wouldn't hang around with her - she's a bad influence.

LUKE: If you had your way you'd lock Bianca in a cupboard.

PETE: I'm her brother – it's my job to protect her.

LUKE: She's young, she needs a bit of space.

PETE: She's seventeen, she's studying for her exams – what space does she need?

LUKE: What does any seventeen year old need – fun, friends ...boyfriends...

PETE: Over my dead body! Whilst she lives under my roof there will be no boys.

LUKE: So it's good that she spends time with Kate – it keeps her occupied.

PETE: Can we rehearse, please? The next stage of the competition is tonight and it's important...

LUKE: Recording contract, £1000, and a lot of free advertising - I know.

PETE: It's more than that; do you think I want to run a café for the rest of my life?

LUKE: I thought you liked running the café...

PETE: Grumpy customers, working all hours, doing the books when we're closed, the cleaning, preparing food for the next day – and then there's the fridge...

LUKE: The fridge?

PETE: Always breaking down.

LUKE: So get a new one.

PETE: Money...

LUKE: So that's why you want to win the competition – the thousand pounds – get a new fridge.

PETE: No! I want the recording contract. Wouldn't it be great if we could earn a living singing and playing? Making albums, playing concerts, playing on TV shows. That's why we've got to win tonight, so we can get to the final, and then - who knows...

LUKE: How long have we been playing together?

PETE: Four years.

LUKE: In all that time - have I ever let you down?

PETE: Er...

LUKE: ...often?

PETE: How many times is often?

LUKE: What I mean is – you can trust me.

PETE: (*Uncertain*) Yeah – I know.

LUKE: So, let's rehearse! You think it should be faster? Count me in...

PETE: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4...

Bianca runs in.

BIANCA: Pete! The refrigerator! All the ice cream is melting!

PETE: We have got to win that competition!

Pete hurries off. Bianca waits till he's gone and then rushes to Luke. They kiss.

BIANCA: I've missed you.

LUKE: I've missed you, too. (*Gently putting her down*) But we should be a little bit careful.

BIANCA: You don't love me anymore!

LUKE: Of course I do! It's just that Pete is in the other room.

Bianca throws her arms around Luke.

BIANCA: We should tell him.

Luke breaks away.

LUKE: You're mad!

BIANCA: You *don't* love me.

LUKE: You know what Pete's like.

BIANCA: His sister, his best friend – together. What could make him happier?

LUKE: A new fridge. Listen, if you'd just had the conversation I've had, you'd understand. "No boyfriends for Bianca whilst she's living under my roof".

BIANCA: This is 2013!

LUKE: Not in Pete's Café – we're back in the 'sixties – the fifteen sixties!

BIANCA: I don't like being secretive about it, sneaking off to a pub or the cinema so we can be together. I want to be open – and if Pete doesn't like it... well, what can he do?

Luke hugs her from behind.

LUKE: Ok, we'll tell him. But not today. We'll tell him once this singing competition is over – win or lose.

Pete returns, screwdriver in hand...

PETE: The fuse is blown...

Luke picks Bianca up and squeezes her.

LUKE: Heimlich manoeuvre!

Bianca plays along and starts to cough. Luke puts her down and slaps her on the back.

BIANCA: Something stuck. A sweet. Went down the wrong way!

PETE: Be careful – one disaster a day is enough for me. We've got some fuses, somewhere.

Pete puts the screwdriver on the counter top and disappears beneath it – Bianca takes the opportunity to kiss Luke. He tries to fight her off. Pete jumps up again...

PETE: Got one! Er...

BIANCA: Thanks so much – you saved my life.

LUKE: Ha! It was nothing – I'd have done the same for... for Pete!

PETE: Do you know anything about fuses? This is the third one I've changed this week.

Bianca is blowing kisses to Luke from behind Pete's back.

LUKE: It's for safety, when the fuse blows, the kisses are too strong...

PETE: Kisses?

LUKE: Current! Electrical current – the flow is too great, 'cos something in the fridge isn't right, so it... stop it! – Stops it... from working by blowing the fuse.

PETE: You don't know anything about fuses.

LUKE: Not much, no.

Pete sees Bianca.

PETE: What are you doing?

She changes the action to fanning herself.

BIANCA: Whew! Hot – all that coughing.

PETE: I hope this lasts longer than the last fuse did.

Pete goes. Bianca and Luke collapse in each other's arms with laughter.

BIANCA: Heimlich? Quick thinking.

LUKE: Have you got a death wish? If he catches us...

Pete is back.

PETE: Forgot the screwdriver...

Bianca pushes Luke into a waltz.

BIANCA: And right together, left together, right together...

PETE: What are you doing?

BIANCA: The waltz!

LUKE: The tango!

PETE: I mean why are you fooling about? There's a big puddle under the fridge, Bianca – get a mop and bucket. Luke – you could help too...

BIANCA: On my way!

LUKE: I'll tune the guitar...

Pete picks up the screwdriver and goes.

BIANCA: This is why we have to tell him.

LUKE: After the competition.

They kiss again. This kiss grows. Pete returns. He stops and watches them. After a moment.

PETE: You must think I am so stupid.

Bianca and Luke spring apart.

BIANCA: It's not what you think...

LUKE: I can explain...

PETE: I don't want to know. How long have you... has this...?

LUKE: Three months.

PETE: Behind my back? You've betrayed me!

LUKE: We fell in love, Pete, we didn't plan it.

PETE: With my baby sister.

BIANCA: I'm seventeen!

LUKE: We were going to tell you – we were waiting for right moment.

PETE: *(to Bianca)* And you don't mind, at your age, being called slag, slut, slapper by everyone who knows us?

Kate appears behind the counter

BIANCA: He's your best friend – if he's good enough for you, he's good enough for me.

PETE: Exactly – the first one who comes along. You can do better than Luke!

LUKE: Thanks!

KATE: When you bought your guitar, Pete, didn't you try out a few?

PETE: Try out a few? This is my sister we're talking about.

KATE: I was talking about Luke.

LUKE: Thanks!

PETE: And what has it got to do with you?

KATE: No more than it has to do with you. Bianca's nearly eighteen; she should be allowed to make her own mistakes in life, not have someone do it for her.

LUKE: Thanks.

PETE: I can't believe you could do this to me – either of you. Luke - my best friend. My sister! Well, best friend no more. Get out of here! I never want to see you again. Don't come here – you are barred from this café!

Pete picks up Luke's jacket and thrusts it at him.

LUKE: What about the competition? What about the recording contract, the new fridge....?

PETE: I could never sing with someone who could stab me in the back. Traitor! Out!

Luke storms off.

PETE: *(to Bianca)* As for you...

BIANCA: Go to my room?
PETE: I've got a fridge to fix – then we'll talk.
KATE: Who needs a fridge when you're around?
Pete goes. Bianca collapses at a table and cries.
KATE: Your brother, Bianca, is a male chauvinist pig!
BIANCA: What am I going to do? I'll never see Luke again.
KATE: Oh, I'm sure he'll be back.
Luke returns.
LUKE: Right! Where is he?
KATE: Told you.
LUKE: We'll sort this out – man to man!
BIANCA: No! You'll get hurt.
LUKE: Oh thanks.
KATE: Fighting won't help – it'll make matters worse.
LUKE: It'll make me feel better... What do you suggest?
KATE: We've got to persuade Pete to change his mind.
BIANCA: Oh, simple! Can a leopard change its spots?
KATE: Pete's a pussycat – not a leopard.
LUKE: You don't know him – once he's made his mind up about something...
BIANCA: And he has to be right. About everything. All the time.
LUKE: Even when he's wrong.
KATE: Poor thing – all men are the same. I'll soon sort him out.
BIANCA: Ha! You think you can get round Pete?
KATE: In four easy stages.
BIANCA: Oh? And they are?
KATE: Ok – step one: confuse him. To soften him up.
LUKE: Confuse Pete? How?
KATE: Tease him, infuriate him, frighten him, shock him. And then, step two:
surprise him.
BIANCA: What do you plan to do?
KATE: If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise. Next, step three: I'll make him
feel calm and relaxed, that everything is all right, that he's on top of the
world...
LUKE: Nice... And step four?
Kate claps her hands.
KATE: Squash him flat!
BIANCA: That sounds a bit harsh.
KATE: Do you want to be able to see Luke again? Ten pounds says I can do it.
LUKE: You're on! It'll be worth ten pounds to get Bianca back and if it
doesn't work, I'm ten quid up...
BIANCA: Thanks!

KATE: But you have to do what I tell you. Luke, go before Pete finds you here, it'll just make him worse. (*She pushes him out of the café*) Don't come back until we tell you to.

Luke pushes past Kate to give Bianca a farewell kiss. Kate prises them apart. Luke goes.

KATE: Go! Bianca – stay in your room, pretend you're unwell – I need time alone with Pete.

BIANCA: I'm supposed to be minding the café.

KATE: That's why I'm here.

Bianca goes. Kate tidies up the café and then sees Pete's guitar. She picks it up and strums a few chords. She plays and sings "Goodbye London" (Laura Marling). Through the song, Pete comes in to listen. When Kate "notices" Pete she stops.

KATE: Was I disturbing you?

PETE: I was looking for Bianca.

KATE: In her room. Although it might be best to leave her alone for a while – she's upset. I hope you don't mind me playing your guitar...

PETE: She should be upset – going out with Luke behind my back.

KATE: Better someone you know and trust than a total stranger.

PETE: That's not the point. Bianca and Luke did not tell me about... it... because they knew it was wrong. If it's wrong they shouldn't have been doing it.

KATE: A man of principle...

PETE: It's important to have values.

KATE: I agree; so long as you're honest and live by your principles...

PETE: I am – I do.

KATE: ...but are values worth it if they cost too much?

PETE: What do you mean?

KATE: You've lost your best friend, your sister and your chance in the Folk Fest competition. Expensive!

PETE: If you're not prepared to pay the price – your values are worthless...

KATE: We might be able to save something out of this...

PETE: Don't ask me to change my mind about Bianca and Luke.

KATE: I meant the competition...

PETE: But I can't go by myself. I've entered the competition as a duo, the judges would never accept it.

KATE: So you need a new partner.

PETE: The competition is tonight – is someone going to walk into the café who likes folk music and can sing?

KATE: Someone already has. (*she strums a chord*) Ta daa!

PETE: No! I can't sing with you.

KATE: Against your principles to sing with a girl?

PETE: But we're not... *he gestures flow between them...*

KATE: Were you and Luke? I'm offering to sing with you – not marriage. You just heard me and you thought I was pretty good; what else would tear you away from your melting fridge? So here's a chance not to lose out on the big time. Are you going to take it? What time is the competition and where?

PETE: Eight o'clock - in Birmingham.

KATE: Birmingham? That's miles away! I'll go and get ready. Ask Bianca my address – come and pick me up.

Kate is leaving.

PETE: Kate! We don't like each other – why would you do this?

KATE: Because I like winning!

She goes.

Scene 2 - Pete's Car

Two chairs make Pete's car. Pete is in the driving seat. He is restless and checks his watch...

PETE: Come on, come on, come on, we said five o'clock...

Pete gets out of the car as Kate appears. She is wearing a stunning mini skirt with a figure hugging top.

KATE: You're here - at last.

PETE: You're the one who's late!

KATE: How can I be late – I live here?

PETE: What are you wearing?

KATE: Is this your car? Will it make it all the way to Birmingham?

PETE: We're going to a folk singing festival – not a lap dancing club.

KATE: You like it, though - I can tell by the way you're admiring my legs.

PETE: I was not.....!!!

KATE: Now you're looking at my boobs. You'll find the brain is just behind the eyes.

PETE: If there is a brain.

KATE: I'll change – it'll only take me half an hour.

Kate starts to go.

PETE: Get in! We're late enough as it is.

They both get into the car. Pete starts the car.

KATE: Do you know the way, Peter?

PETE: It's Pete.

KATE: But I shall call you Peter. Like Peter the Great, or Peter the Rabbit, although you could never be as good as Saint Peter. "Pete" is short and sharp! But "Peter" is sweeter and neater. It's warm, like a heater and full, like a litre. That's why I shall call you Peter.

PETE: And I shall call you... dumb!

KATE: Oh, such a sharp wit. Don't cut yourself with it...

PETE: It's a long drive to Birmingham – can we not talk...

They drive. Pete looks at Kate's legs – she catches him out.

KATE: Can we have some music on?

She fiddles with the car radio.

PETE: It doesn't work.

They drive.

KATE: Brrr! Can we have the heating on?

She fiddles with the heating controls.

PETE: It doesn't work.

They drive. Pete looks at Kate's legs – she catches him out.

KATE: How about some intelligent conversation? Don't tell me – it doesn't work!

PETE: I'm driving – I need to focus on the road ahead...

KATE: So why do you keep staring at my legs?

PETE: I do not!

KATE: You do! Every time I do this...

She crosses her legs.

PETE: You're doing it on purpose to distract me.

KATE: So you are happy to look at me, but you don't want to talk to me.

PETE: I don't want to talk to you because I don't like you.

KATE: You like looking at my legs and they're me. When you were looking at my boobs – I could see what you were thinking...

PETE: Is this a suitable conversation?

KATE: What? Politics?

PETE: Talking about your... body is not political.

KATE: I was talking about you, as a typical representative of the male population. You look at me as an object not as a person. You don't want to mentally engage but you are ready to physically engage.

PETE: You want me to look at you – otherwise you wouldn't wear such revealing clothes.

KATE: Oh, I do. But just because I have a female form it doesn't mean that I don't have intelligence and a personality. But to be taken seriously I need to be wearing a sack, glasses and have short hair... like a man. That's political.

PETE: No, it's not. There's a time for everything. Dressing like that... (*he gestures to Kate*) is suitable for a nightclub or a party, not for a folk singing competition...

KATE: Says who? Men. Because you can only cope with one thing at a time – “I can't talk to you, I'm driving”. “I can't be serious with you because I can see your legs and I'm starting to dribble”. Women have been struggling for equality for over hundred years and we still haven't got it because men can only think of one thing when they see a woman.

PETE: Women have been equal with men for years.
KATE: So why are rock bands always male? Film directors? There's more male company executives, more male politicians than there are female. There are no women football managers, no women head of the armed forces...
PETE: The most powerful person in Europe is a woman!
KATE: And she wears trousers and short hair – like a man. Because she knows that if she dressed like a woman, men would treat her like an idiot. Where's the equality in that?
PETE: Men and women are different...
KATE: But equal in intelligence.
PETE: Men are naturally stronger.
KATE: Yet on the battlefield an army of women could beat an army of men...
PETE: Unlikely.
KATE: All we would have to do is flash these... (*she indicates her chest*) and you'd all have to stop to adjust your boxers...
A car horn sounds as Pete almost crashes...
KATE: Whoa! Watch the road!
PETE: See what you made me do?
KATE: You're driving and you blame me. That proves my point entirely!
PETE: Can we just... drive?
They drive.
KATE: Are we on the motorway?
PETE: The M6. Birmingham is fifty miles.
KATE: Can we stop at the next service station?
PETE: We'll be late for the gig.
KATE: It will only take a minute. Look! Services in one mile!
PETE: If we're late for the gig they won't let us play.
KATE: But I need to pee.
PETE: What?
KATE: Urinate. It's a biological function. Most people do it, don't you?
PETE: Why didn't you go before you got in the car?
KATE: Are we talking seconds, minutes or hours? I went before I left the house, but I thought it would be anti-social to pee in the street just before climbing into this old wreck.
PETE: So – you have a weak bladder?
KATE: It was fine before I drank the coffee at your place. Are we going to stop at the service station or not?
PETE: If we stop at the service station we'll be late for the gig. If we're late for the gig we won't be able to play - and this will be a wasted journey.
Kate finds a paper cup from under the seat.
KATE: Ok – don't stop.
PETE: Yeah? You'll be ok?
KATE: Yes. I'll use this.

PETE: What!?
KATE: Then we don't have to stop.
PETE: Service station! I'll stop, I'll stop! Ok?

Scene 3 - Motorway service station

Pete waits, hands in pockets, checking his watch constantly. Kate drifts on.

PETE: We are now, officially, in a hurry...
KATE: I'm starving, shall we have something to eat?
PETE: We have to leave – five minutes ago!
KATE: You don't expect me to sing on an empty stomach. And coffee – I need something to warm me up – your car is freezing.
PETE: You should have had dressed sensibly.
KATE: Look – there's a hamburger place – I'll find a table.
She starts to go but Pete grabs her.
PETE: We haven't got time!
KATE: I'm hungry and I need to eat. You go on without me. I'll hitch a ride back to London.
PETE: You're crazy! This side of the motorway is heading north. What if something happens to you?
KATE: Peter! You care about me – how sweet.
PETE: I don't care about you... it's just – I need someone to sing with at the competition!
KATE: So be nice to me – or you are on your own. Now, about that hamburger...
Kate is off again.
PETE: No! We'll get a takeaway. I'll drive - you eat.
KATE: Ok – let's get a takeaway.
PETE: You wait here. I'll get it.
Pete starts to go.
KATE: Hey! You don't know what I want.
PETE: A hamburger!
KATE: Just because I said there was a hamburger place doesn't mean...
PETE: So what do you want?
KATE: Good question – what shall I have...?
PETE: Are you doing this on purpose?
KATE: Being hungry?
PETE: Taking for ever...
KATE: If you'd stop interrupting me... Ok – this is what I want – a chicken and bacon burger – but with no bacon...
PETE: Isn't that a chicken burger?

KATE: Ah – but a chicken burger comes with mayonnaise, which I don't want,
but a chicken and bacon burger comes with ketchup, but I don't want the
bacon...

PETE: I shouldn't have asked...

KATE: Lettuce, but I don't want gherkins, tomatoes but forget the onions.
Medium fries with no salt but get some mayonnaise ...
A man wearing a Hi-viz jacket and cap strolls past.

KATE: A latte, no sugar, but a sprinkling of chocolate... wow! Look at that man
– nice jacket!

PETE: What? It's a hi-viz – he's a truck driver or something. Can we hurry
things up a bit?

KATE: I've forgotten what I ordered...

PETE: Chicken and bacon burger with ketchup no bacon, lettuce no gherkin,
tomato no onion, fries with mayonnaise but no salt, latte with chocolate
sprinkles no sugar...

KATE: Oh just get me a cheese sandwich and a cup of tea.
Pete goes off in frustration.

KATE: Stage one almost complete.
The man in the Hi-viz jacket passes again.

KATE: And that would help to complete it.
*She looks to where Pete has gone – then follows the man in the Hi-Viz jacket,
disappearing just as Pete gets back with a carrier bag of food. He goes to where
Kate was standing and realises she's gone. He spins around looking for her.*

PETE: Kate? Kate! Kate!
*He looks at his watch and then sinks to his knees. Kate returns carrying a large
bulky carrier bag.*

KATE: Come on! We'll be late for the competition.

Scene 4 - The Competition

*Pete is at a microphone tuning his guitar. A competition judge is taking his
details.*

JUDGE: You're lucky, five minutes later and you'd have been disqualified.

PETE: The journey has been very difficult.

JUDGE: What are you singing tonight?

PETE: *Wednesday Morning 3am* – Simon and Garfunkel.

JUDGE: Yes, you're a duo – Pete and Luke. Where is Luke?

PETE: In the ladies.

JUDGE: What's he doing in there?

PETE: He is a she – Kate. Tonight we are Pete and.. er.. Kate.

JUDGE: Right – well, I'll give you a couple of minutes and then I'll introduce
you.

The Judge goes. Pete finishes tuning his guitar and then looks nervously around for Kate. She appears wearing a very large Hi-Viz jacket.

PETE: What are you wearing!?

KATE: You were right – I was dressed for a party, not a folk festival.

PETE: And wearing a Hi-Viz jacket is suitable?

KATE: For a competition it is – we want to be highly visible...

PETE: Take it off!

KATE: If it goes, I go.

PETE: I wish I hadn't come.

KATE: But it's an adventure.

PETE: It's a nightmare! This is not how I do things. I like things to be organised...

KATE: You mean you like to control things.

PETE: You're doing this on purpose! You are deliberately ruining any chance of me winning this competition!

KATE: I'm only trying to help.

PETE: You've argued all the way here; you've embarrassed me with the clothes you wear, I have never felt so stressed in all my life. I can only think of one good thing...

KATE: What's that?

PETE: It can't get any worse!

KATE: Step one is complete!

The judge appears and heads towards the microphone.

KATE: Get ready for a surprise!

PETE: Oh no! It *can* get worse...

JUDGE: We've a delightful singing duo for you now – Kate and Peter...

PETE: It's Pete and Kate!

JUDGE: ...With a Rolling Stones song...

PETE: Aaaghhh!

KATE: I changed the song...

PETE: Nooooo!

JUDGE: Give it up for Kate and Pete and... Ruby Tuesday!

KATE: Play A minor...

Kate and Pete sing Ruby Tuesday (Rolling Stones)

Scene 5 - Pete's Café

Bianca comes into the café from the back. She carries a small suitcase which she puts on one of the tables. She pulls an envelope from her pocket and props it up against a coffee cup on the counter – it says "Pete" on it in big letters. She goes to the coat stand and begins to put her coat on.

Kate enters from outside.

KATE: Your brother is worse than I thought...

BIANCA: I wasn't expecting you back so soon.

KATE: (*Seeing the suitcase*) So I see. What are you doing?

BIANCA: If I can't see Luke then I'm not staying.

KATE: There's no need to go.

BIANCA: Pete's changed his mind!?

KATE: Not yet. But he will. We are just about to go into stage three...

Luke comes in from behind the counter.

LUKE: How did the competition go?

KATE: I'll tell you... aagh! What are you doing here!?

LUKE: I've come to get Bianca – we're running away.

Kate laughs.

KATE: Don't be ridiculous. Where to?

LUKE: Brighton.

KATE: This isn't Romeo and Juliet. You need to be patient – you can't just run away. I've got Pete eating out of the palm of my hand, just a little more time, I promise you, and he will have changed his mind. If you run away you'll soon get fed up with each other, you won't know anyone, you'll have no money. Do it my way and life can return to how it was – only better. Don't you want that?

They nod.

KATE: Right. Take the suitcase upstairs. Luke – get out of here. Pete's parked around the corner – he's bringing in the gear and will be here any mom(ent)....

Pete backs into the café carrying his guitar case in one hand, brief case in another. Luke dips below the café table. Kate snatches up the suitcase from the table, thrusts it at Bianca who, not knowing what to do with it, puts it back on the table.

PETE:(*turning around*) Ah, Bianca, I thought you'd be in bed, it's so late.
(*Seeing the suitcase*) Visitors?

BIANCA: Yes.

KATE: No!

BIANCA: Mrs McCann.

PETE: Mrs McCann? Who's Mrs McCann?

BIANCA: A customer.

PETE: This time of night?

BIANCA: She likes our coffee.

PETE: It must be keeping her awake. Where is... Mrs McCann?

BIANCA: In the ladies!

PETE: (*to Kate*) Have you told her about the competition?

KATE: Mrs McCann?

PETE: Bianca.

KATE: I thought you'd want to.

PETE: We won! We won the semi-final!!
BIANCA: Fantastic!
Luke jumps up to shout "hooray!" but bangs his head on the table. He ducks down again. Pete spins round.
PETE: Someone's knocking!
BIANCA: Mrs McCann!
KATE: In the ladies.
PETE: Do you think she's locked herself in?
KATE: I'll go and see. Pete – tell Bianca all about it. Everything! Every single wonderful moment!
Kate moves off to the "ladies"...
PETE: It was amazing, Bianca. Everyone loved us. We had a last minute change of plan – we thought we'd do *Ruby Tuesday*, instead.
Kate motions to Bianca to "keep him talking". She motions to Luke "come here". Luke, still under the table, moves towards Kate taking the table with him.
PETE: Well – it went down a storm. Some of the audience got to their feet at the end – to applaud... And when they made the announcement – "In first place – Pete and Kate.."
Without looking Pete puts his briefcase on the table which is no longer there – it drops to the floor. Kate grabs hold of Luke from under the table and propels him off into the "ladies".
PETE: ... it was the most amazing feeling. But it means we're in the final! This could be it, Bianca, this could be it!
BIANCA: It's a good thing you had Kate to help you out....
PETE: Kate? Oh.. yes – she helped a little bit....
Pete puts a hand out to lean on the table that is no longer there. He falls over. Kate points to the suitcase on the other table. Bianca throws it to her. Kate throws it into the "ladies" and then puts the table back. Bianca helps Pete to his feet. He tries to work out how he missed the table.
KATE: If I only helped a little bit, you won't need me at all at the finals.
PETE: I was joking... of course you helped....
KATE: You couldn't have done it without me...
PETE: Yes, you made us late, almost got us disqualified, dressed like a maniac and changed the song without telling me...
KATE: But we won! Let's celebrate! Open a bottle of something...
PETE: Shouldn't we be going to bed?
KATE: We hardly know each other! I don't even kiss on a first date...
PETE: No, no – I meant it's late – early start in the morning...
KATE: Ten minutes – then I'll go.
BIANCA: And Mrs McCann is still in the ladies...
Pete gives in and goes off behind the counter to find a bottle...
KATE: Quick! Get him out.

Bianca runs to the “ladies” – she returns dragging Luke by the hand... Pete returns with a bottle, Bianca pushes Luke back into the “ladies”. Kate sits at one of the tables. Pete pours wine.

KATE: You haven't asked me yet?

PETE: Asked you what?

KATE: Will I come with you to the finals.

PETE: Why shouldn't you?

KATE: You're the folk singer, not me. I just went tonight because I like winning. Really – it's Pete and Luke...

PETE: I don't want to talk about him.

KATE: You think the world revolves around you. It doesn't. It revolves around me! If you want me to help you win the final, you are going to have to ask me very nicely.

PETE: Don't be so ridiculous.

Kate gets up.

KATE: Good night, then. You needn't take me home. I'll see you around...

Kate is almost out of the door.

PETE: Kate! (*Reluctantly*) Will you sing in the final with me?

KATE: Did you say something?

PETE: Yes – Will you sing in the final with me? Please.

KATE: When is it?

PETE: You know when it is! It's in two days' time. Why are you doing this?

Kate starts to go.

PETE: Will you? I want you to. I do. Will you please sing with me, Kate?

KATE: No!

PETE: What!? Why not?

KATE: You're a terrible person. I've had a horrible time tonight. You've let me know constantly how much you hate me. You're rude to me, you treat me badly and I never want to see you again. Ever! (*Kate starts to “cry”*) I was trying to help you, that's all.

Pete does not know how to deal with a crying Kate. Kate “cries” all the more.

PETE: Er... don't cry...

She “cries” even more. Pete goes to her. He pats her on the shoulder to no effect. He awkwardly puts his arms around her and gives her a very stiff hug...

PETE: There, there...

Kate snuggles into him. Pete doesn't know how to respond and almost pulls away.

PETE: Er...

KATE: I really wanted you to win tonight, because I know how much it means to you...

PETE: It means everything to me.

KATE: And I always thought you were so kind; you've looked after Bianca ever since your parents died. You've sacrificed so much for her...

PETE: She's the only family I have.
KATE: But then today... you were mean to Bianca and horrible to me...
PETE: I'm... I'm sorry...
KATE: I wish you did like me.
Pete is beginning to enjoy the hug.
PETE: Do you?
KATE: I'd like someone to look after me the way you look after Bianca...
PETE: Kate... I really do want you to sing with me in the final... because I... I do like you... I like you very much...
KATE: Good – because I like you.
She looks at Pete – he kisses her. She kisses him back but then breaks away from him.
PETE: What's the matter?
KATE: So that's what you think of me – I'm a slag, a slut, a slapper...
PETE: I don't!
KATE: That's what you called Bianca because she kissed Luke.
PETE: This is different!
KATE: Why? Because it's you? Don't your principles apply to you? How can I fall for the first person that comes along, after what you said?
PETE: But – Kate...
KATE: I like you very much, Pete... but we mustn't see each other again... I don't think I can sing with you in the final.
Luke, wearing a dress, cardigan and head scarf borrowed from Bianca's suitcase, appears from the "ladies". He is pretending to be an old woman with a stoop and his head bowed. Bianca is guiding him by the arm. Kate is heading for the door.
BIANCA: Mrs McCann is just going home...
PETE: Stay!
BIANCA: But the café is closed.
PETE: Not Mrs McCann – Kate! I never know where I am with you – you say one thing but do another.
KATE: Exciting, isn't it?
PETE: Yes. Yes, it is. Very annoying, though.
KATE: Come on, Mrs McCann, we can walk together. Goodbye, Pete. It wouldn't be right, you and me. I am Bianca's best friend. I can't betray her...
PETE: Please don't do this to me...
KATE: These are your rules, Pete, not mine. Bye, Bianca.
PETE: Ok! I'm wrong! I've got it all wrong. I'm wrong, I'm wrong, I'm wrong!
BIANCA: What about?
PETE: Everything! About Kate. About you and Luke...
BIANCA: You mean you don't mind me and Luke being together?
PETE: *Beat* – No.

Bianca hugs Pete. Luke high fives Kate.

PETE: I see now how selfish I've been. Kate has made me see that. I was only trying to protect you, Bianca. I just wanted the best for you. But Luke's all right. He's a bit of an idiot at times, but he's nice enough. He can't sing very well, but he's the good looking member of the band. You could do a lot worse than Luke. But then you could do a lot better...

Luke is getting wound up by these insults, Kate calms him down. Pete gets his phone out.

PETE: Just to show you that I mean it - I'm going to phone him right now and tell him...

Luke panics – he starts to scrabble for his phone underneath his dress. Pete is pressing the dial button.

BIANCA: No!

KATE: No! He'll be fast asleep – tucked up in bed.

PETE: Ok, I'll tell him tomorrow.

He turns the phone off.

BIANCA: You're sure about this? You won't change your mind tomorrow?

PETE: No. Thanks to Kate; she's made me see sense.

Pete and Bianca hug. Luke gives Kate a £10 note. Pete looks at it.

KATE: For the coffee! Come on Mrs McCann, time you were going.

She tries to get Luke out of the café.

PETE: Kate... will you sing with me at the final?

Luke is about to say something, Kate stops him. She goes to Pete and kisses him.

Bianca goes to Luke and kisses him. Kate sees this and waves to them to stop.

Pete senses something going on and turns to look... Bianca kisses both of Luke's cheeks...

BIANCA: Good night, Mrs McCann – do come again....

Scene 6 - The Final

Pete and Luke set up guitar and music stand. Bianca and Kate drift on and watch them for a moment.

BIANCA: Ah – look at them! Friends again – sweet...

KATE: Like Bilbo and Balin...

BIANCA: It's wonderful that you and Pete are together. Me and Luke, you and Pete...

KATE: Like... Abba? Hey – don't get too excited – I'm doing this for you, not for Pete. We haven't got to stage four yet.

BIANCA: Yeah, but you like Pete, though...

KATE: He's nice enough, but you know what he's like.

BIANCA: He's changed – you changed him...

KATE: Ha! A leopard can't change its spots – remember?

BIANCA: He likes you, Kate. He really does.

KATE: Listen, Bianca, when the first flush of romance wears off – he'll be just like he always was.

BIANCA: But you should have seen him this morning – joking with the customers, singing in the café – he was happy. Because of you. He's serious, Kate.

KATE: I suppose he's telling everyone that I'm his girlfriend.

BIANCA: Aren't you?

KATE: I'm singing in this competition with him, that's all.

BIANCA: But you kissed him.

KATE: One kiss doth not a couple make!

BIANCA: Please don't do this – I don't want you to hurt him.

KATE: How much did he hurt you when he wanted you to stop seeing Luke? He says he was protecting you, but no one needs protection from Luke. Look at him.

BIANCA: Ok, but he's changed his mind about all that. He sees how selfish he's been. He's even grateful to you that you put him through what you did – your step one and step two. But he thinks that you and he are... If you don't like him, Kate, you should tell him.

KATE: If I do he'll just go back to how he always was; and he'll find a way to split you and Luke up .

BIANCA: Your plan worked, Kate. You won the bet. You don't have to keep going with it.

KATE: Ok – I'll tell him.

BIANCA: Oh, I get it. You want to hurt him, that's the game, isn't it? What is stage four? Squash him flat! You're going to do it because you can. Because it gives you some sort of power. You are going to lead him on and then just drop him. Pete might have hurt me, but he thought it was for the best. You're going to hurt Pete because you enjoy it!

Bianca runs off. Kate goes after her.

Luke tunes the guitar. Pete takes it off him. Luke looks lost.

LUKE: What are you singing tonight?

PETE: Bob Dylan – *All Along the Watchtower*.

LUKE: Classic folk – should be good. Have you rehearsed it – with Kate?

PETE: A bit. We could have done with more rehearsal time...

LUKE: Well, if you're stuck – just let me know...

PETE: Luke, I really want to sing with Kate tonight, because she helped me get this far and..

LUKE: I helped you get as far as the semi-final...

PETE: I know and I'm very grateful...

LUKE: And what happens after tonight? Will we still sing together? Are we still Pete and Luke – stunning singing duo?

PETE: Er...

LUKE: Oh, I see. It's going to be Pete and Kate from now on, isn't it?

PETE: It's not you, Luke, honest, it's me. I feel differently about things. We've been good together, but now I want more.

LUKE: And I'm not good enough for you...

PETE: No! It's not that. I want you to understand that if anyone's to blame here, it's me.

LUKE: Is this supposed to make me feel better? What has Kate got that I haven't?

PETE: I get to kiss Kate.

LUKE: And that's it? After four years together, touring the folk clubs of South West London, practising all those harmonies, learning all those songs, I'm tossed on one side because you can kiss Kate!

Kate returns by herself. Luke sees her.

LUKE: You're welcome to him!

Luke flounces off.

KATE: What's wrong with him?

PETE: I've upset him.

KATE: And I've upset Bianca.

PETE: It's because I'm singing with you tonight.

KATE: I don't want to come between you and Luke. Perhaps he should sing with you.

PETE: I want to sing with you every night.

KATE: I'm just in it for the competition.

PETE: Don't worry about Luke, he'll get over it. What happened with you the other night has been the best thing ever. Being with you is so exciting. I was stuck - but you freed me up. And the past couple of days - I couldn't wait for you to come round so we could rehearse. Each time someone came through the café door I hoped it would be you - and then when you did... I don't think I really knew what being happy was till now...

KATE: Pete - you're sounding like one of those stupid love songs, this is life. It's been two days - nothing has changed just because we kissed.

PETE: Now who's stuck? Though I do understand - it's pretty scary...

KATE: You just don't change do you? Everything is all or nothing with you. Everything has to be according to Pete.

PETE: No, it's not. It's just that I've got it all worked out, that's all.

KATE: *You've got it worked out?*

PETE: We win the competition tonight - we get into the recording studio, record an album and then do our first tour together. How romantic would that be?

KATE: Very - if that's what you want to do. I couldn't think of anything worse. Did you not think about discussing any of this? Why does everything have to be done your way?

PETE: That's the kettle calling the pot black!¹ When we went to Birmingham
you had to have it all your own way; stop here, get me this, get me that...

KATE: That was to give you a taste of your own medicine.

PETE: Why would I need that?

KATE: To cure you, of course.

PETE: Of what?

KATE: Of being a bore! Of being an overbearing idiot...

PETE: And am I cured?

KATE: Obviously not!

PETE: Then some doctor you are...

KATE: I won the bet, didn't I!? The plan worked!

PETE: What bet? What plan?

KATE: I didn't mean... I shouldn't have said...

PETE: This was part of a plan? The whole thing? The trip to Birmingham?
Everything?

KATE: Yes. Sorry.

PETE: Even the kiss?

KATE: That wasn't supposed to happen.

PETE: So... none of this is real. You were just pretending so you could win your
bet.

KATE: I was actually trying to help Bianca and Luke – the bet was just part of it.

PETE: I am an idiot.

KATE: No. You're not. I'm sorry...

PETE: I'm sorry, too – I thought that we... Perhaps I had better sing with Luke
tonight, after all.

KATE: Yes, of course – if that's what you want.

PETE: Yes. I'd better go and find him. We'll be on in a minute or two.
Pete turns to go but stops.

PETE: How much was the bet for?

KATE: Ten pounds.

Bianca enters.

PETE: Seen Luke?

BIANCA: He's at the bar.

Pete goes.

BIANCA: Is stage four complete? You've squashed him flat?

KATE: I think I'll go home.

BIANCA: Job done, then. I hope you enjoyed it.

KATE: I didn't intend to, Bianca, it just happened. No, I didn't enjoy it.

BIANCA: See you, then.

KATE: Yeah, see you.

¹ Kettle – black: Accusing someone of doing something that you do yourself.
Now often shortened to “Kettle, pot, black”.

Kate goes. Bianca sits down as Pete and Luke return. They head straight for the microphone – Pete picks up his guitar.

JUDGE VO: To start tonight's final we have the stunning singing duo – Pete and Luke. They are going to give us a Bob Dylan classic. Take it away Pete and Luke!

Luke's about to sing but Pete hesitates. He speaks into the microphone.

PETE: Sorry. I've changed my mind. About the song.

LUKE: What!

PETE: We are going to sing a different one. And I'm singing it tonight for Kate, because this is how I feel about her. It's called *How* by Regina Spektor.

LUKE: But I don't know it!

PETE: Just hum along...

Pete and Luke sing "How" (Regina Spektor.)

Scene 7 - Pete's Café

Bianca is behind the counter. Kate comes in to the café.

KATE: What's happened?

BIANCA: Nothing.

KATE: I got your text. You said you wanted to see me.

BIANCA: I do. I haven't seen you for over a week. What sort of friend are you?

KATE: I thought you didn't want to see me again.

BIANCA: Did I say that? Coffee?

Bianca pours two coffees which they take to one of the tables.

KATE: What happened at the competition?

BIANCA: We lost.

KATE: Poor Pete. He must be really upset – I know how much he really wanted to win. Still got the same old fridge then?

Pete's head pops up from below the counter listening with interest.

BIANCA: You're feeling sorry for Pete?

KATE: It's all my fault. I shouldn't have let Luke sing with him.

Luke's head pops up from below the counter – he doesn't like what he's hearing.

BIANCA: What's wrong with his singing?

KATE: Nothing, but he didn't know the words.

BIANCA: That's because Pete changed songs How did you know that?

KATE: I stayed to listen. I don't know which moved me most, the song, or that he changed song at the last moment, or that he sang it for me.

She turns around - Luke and Pete dip down beneath the counter.

KATE: Where is Pete?

BIANCA: Were you hoping he was in?

KATE: I would like to see him ... yes.

The heads come up from below the counter.

BIANCA: Why? Isn't he a horrible pig who can't change?

KATE: No. Not at all.

Luke hands over a ten pound note to Pete.

KATE: He was – probably still is at times...

Luke takes the ten pound note back.

KATE: But you were right, Bianca, he really has changed – a bit. But then all men are stupid at times. How is Luke?

Luke is about to say something, Pete clasps his hand over his mouth to keep him quiet.

BIANCA: Oh, you know Luke ... can't keep his mouth shut.

KATE: Is he still dressing up in women's clothing?

Pete lets Luke go and looks at him suspiciously.

BIANCA: Women's clothing?

KATE: Don't you remember - Mrs McCann! That was so funny, Pete never suspected', did he? His best friend stood behind him dressed up like an old lady...

Pete realises he's been had. He takes the ten pound note back and glowers at Luke...

BIANCA: Yes, that was funny. Ha! Pete still doesn't know anything about it.

KATE: You should tell him – he'd find it funny.

BIANCA: Yes – he would. If Pete was here – what would you say to him, Kate? *As Kate turns, they duck down again. She goes and sits on the stool in front of the counter.*

KATE: Oh... I would tell him that he was an idiot, a fool, an oaf, a thick-headed donkey brain who can't bear to be wrong and never listens...

Pete is up again, looking horrified. Luke comes up to take the ten pound note...

KATE: But that I was sorry that I hurt him. And that I was wrong.

Luke wants clarification – “wrong about what” – he doesn't know who should have the money.

BIANCA: Wrong about what? That he is a horrible man or... isn't...?

KATE: I was wrong when I said I didn't like him. I do like Pete – very, very much. I have missed him so much this week.

PETE: Kate.

Kate turns as Luke gives Pete the ten pound note back.

KATE: Is this a bet?

An awkward moment – they didn't mean for her to find out.

PETE: I'm afraid so.

BIANCA: Sorry.

LUKE: Yeah.

KATE: Did you win the ten pounds?

PETE: I won much more than that – I hope.

KATE: What was the bet?

LUKE: I bet ten pounds that you had given up on him...

PETE: And I bet that deep down... you loved me really. Because I really love you.

KATE: We've both won the bet.

PETE: And I'm glad I didn't win the competition. That night I lost two things – the competition and you. When I got home, Kate, I realised that it hurt more losing you... You were right, I needed step four to understand how much you meant. You're pretty shrewd, Kate.

Kate kisses Pete. Luke and Bianca whoop for joy but then get embarrassed as they run out of whoops and Kate and Pete are still kissing...

LUKE: Let's not overdo the kissing thing...

Bianca picks up her coffee cup.

BIANCA: A toast....!

They each pick up a cup and raise it...

BIANCA: To Kate and Pete!

PETE: To Bianca and Luke!

LUKE: To Pete and Luke – stunning singing duo!

They play and sing "Love me do" (The Beatles).

End