

UNCERTAINTY THEORY

A one-act drama with music by
Maura Campbell

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Senior Girls:

ZONDI

SAMANTHA

AMALIE, a French exchange student.

GRETA, a German exchange student.

NATALIE

COLLEEN

The Senior Boys:

ANDREW

BEN

CHARLIE

BUDDY

MATT

THE BAND

Ensemble Characters:

MR. CHANNING, the principal.

ANNOUNCEMENT, a voiceover.

SPEAKER, a voiceover.

NICOLE, a graduate.*

JOSEPH, a graduate.

BRADY, a graduate

AMANDA, a graduate.

JAKE, a graduate.

ASHER, a graduate.

SAMUEL, a graduate.

DIANA, a graduate.

MAXWELL, a graduate.

A YOUNGER GIRL

FIRST GIRL

SECOND GIRL

*Graduates may double as band members.

SETTING

A high school girls' bathroom and auditorium; a boys' bathroom in the second half.

TIME

Graduation day.

NOTE

There are three songs, all parodies. The hip hop and rock songs should be musically invented by performers. The graduation song should be a cappella in 3/4 time.

SCENE 1

(A hip hop band tunes up behind a screen.)

BAND: MIXING IT UP MY CUP RUNNETH OVER IT'S A
CLOWN'S GRIN WAKING ME UP AS I
CONTEMPLATE MY FATE AFTER SCHOOL
GETS OUT, I'M NO FOOL LIKE IN
SHAKESPEARE CAUSE HE WAS
SMART IN ART AND MAYBE EVEN SCIENCE
I DON'T BUY IT WHAT THEY TELL ME
THIS IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE
REST OF MY LIFE MAYBE THE
REST AIN'T COMING MAYBE THE TEST IS THE
FIRST VERSE OF THE UNIVERSE MANY
WORLDS SPINNING YOU OBSERVE AN
EVENT WHO'S TO KNOW THE OLD ADAGE
WALK A MILE IN YOUR SHOES NO ONE
CAN IT'S THE LAW ASK EINSTEIN HE WAS
INCLINED TO QUESTION DID I MENTION HEISENBERG
TALKING 'BOUT PARTICLES POINT OF LIGHT
CATCH A WAVE GET ON IT CATCH TWO OR TWO—
TWENTY DON'T COUNT WE LEARNED IN SCHOOL
MANY WORLDS MANY WORLDS MANY WORLDS...

(Lights down on the band. In the dark:)

ZONDI: You should outline them first. Here... No, open.

SAM: Like this?

ZONDI: Wider... Now like that—

(Lights come up slowly. ZONDI is showing SAM how to hold her mouth for lip liner. Their backs are to the audience. They are in front of a wall to floor mirror in the girls' bathroom at their high school. They are dressed in graduation gowns.)

I haven't filled your lips in yet! Now hold still!

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SAM: (*Mouth wide open:*) I'm just going to wash it off.

ZONDI: Now for the gloss—

SAM: Great, red *and* shiny.

ZONDI: There. Look.

SAM: How am I going to make a speech? My lips will be stuck together. (*Panicked:*) My notes!

ZONDI: They're in your backpack. I saw you put it in there.

SAM: I am so nervous!

ZONDI: Your fault for being the most brilliant kid in the class.

SAM: I'm taking this off.

ZONDI: You're not going to make it as a lawyer if you can't handle cosmetics! Okay, now pucker up. Perfect! Buddy won't be able to resist you.

SAM: We broke up.

ZONDI: What?

SAM: I told you!

ZONDI: I thought you were waiting until the end of the summer?

SAM: It'll be harder then. Why does everything have to be so hard?

ZONDI: You've got to learn to lighten up. Look at Andrew. Nothing bothers him.

(AMALIE enters. She is wearing her gown. It is enormous.)

AMALIE: In my country we call this a parachute.

(Sam and Zondi try not to laugh.)

Next week I go home and this is how you will remember me.

SAM: Humiliation is one of the hallmarks of an American graduation. We want you to have the full effect. Somebody's got to have some pins.

ZONDI: Stand over here. Pull that back. Tighter... What about a belt?

SAM: I'll wear it.

AMALIE: It's okay.

SAM: Take it off. Come on.

AMALIE: Why don't we wear it together?

SAM: Cause I'm marching with Andrew.

AMALIE: Andrew!

SAM: Now what?

AMALIE: He was still in bed when I left. He's a kooky, that guy.

ZONDI: A kooky? Listen, Amalie, living with Andrew is like living on another planet.

SAM: Literally!

AMALIE: I'm going to miss him.

(She starts to cry.)

ZONDI: Now, now, you're going to get us all going. We can't cry until after graduation.

AMALIE: You are going to visit me?

ZONDI: It's already set. My junior year in college.

AMALIE: That's so far away!

(Sam puts on Amalie's gown.)

SAM: How do I look?

(COLLEEN and NATALIE enter; they are wearing very high heels with some difficulty.)

COLLEEN: It is so hot! The janitors can't get the air on in the auditorium... What the—

(Natalie and Colleen look at Sam. Beat.)

You going to hide Andrew in that thing?

SAM: Very funny. Got any pins?

COLLEEN: You'll be behind a podium. For the most part.

SAM: Don't remind me!

NATALIE: I don't know what you're complaining about. Black completely washes me out. I'm a spring. I should be wearing periwinkle.

ZONDI: What am I?

NATALIE: Definitely a winter. You look great in black.

ZONDI: What about Sam?

NATALIE: Either spring or autumn. She could go either way. Of course, some colors suit everybody.

(She holds out her left hand.)

Like the color bling.

ZONDI: She's got a diamond!

(The girls all scream and run to look at it.)

ZONDI/AMALIE/SAM: It's beautiful!...When did you get it?...How many carats is the diamond?...You're crazy!...Do your parents know?

NATALIE: Matt gave it to me last night! He's shipping out in two weeks.

SAM: Are you getting married before he goes?

NATALIE: Are you kidding? My parents would kill me! They can't even know about the ring.

AMALIE: I'm going to miss Charlie!

(Now the attention is on Amalie.)

These long distance things never work!

(A GIRL sticks her head in the bathroom.)

GIRL: Five minutes!

NATALIE/COLLEEN/AMALIE/ZONDI: *(Variously)* Crap—hand me that—

NATALIE: I want you all to be my bridesmaids! We're thinking next summer when he has leave. Don't tell anyone.

ZONDI/AMALIE/SAM/COLLEEN:

No...never...promise...okay...

(The girls fix hair, last minute makeup applications, etc. Sam finds a towel and attempts to wipe off the lipstick. ANDREW leans over a bathroom stall. He has on his graduation cap, but no gown. He takes a picture of the girls.)

ANDREW: Say cheese!

THE GIRLS: God, Andrew, etc.

NATALIE: How did you get in here?

ANDREW: Window.

AMALIE: If you're going to take a picture, at least let us pose!

(The girls pose. Andrew snaps a picture.)

SAM: How about one of Andrew.

ANDREW: And you. You and me.

(Sam stands next to Andrew. They put their arms around each other. Amalie takes the picture of them. Andrew doesn't let Sam go right away.)

AMALIE: *Fromage!*

ANDREW/SAM: *Fromage!*

(The girls all start to exit.)

ANDREW: One little thing!

(They turn to him.)

I'm actually here on a mission.

(He jumps over the stall wall.)

Little delay, I'm afraid. Due to unexpected developments in the parking lot.

ZONDI: What are you talking about?

ANDREW: Have a look.

(Zondi goes in the stall, stands on the toilet and looks out the window.)

ZONDI: Oh, my God! There's cops everywhere!

(Everyone crowds inside the stall to get a good look.)

Colleen, that's your dad!

COLLEEN: Is he in handcuffs?

AMALIE: No – but he's getting in the police car –

ZONDI: That looks like Brendan's dad!

(All the girls run out of the bathroom. Andrew remains. He checks himself out in the mirror – does a series of poses – practices the graduation march.)

ANDREW: Da, da da da, da...da...

(Sam reenters.)

SAM: They won't let anyone leave the building.

ANDREW: I know. Nobody can get in, either.

SAM: Hence the window?

ANDREW: Hence the window. I'm not staying out there in that heat.

(Two more bodies come through the window. We hear the thumps as they land on the floor. BEN and CHARLIE emerge, also dressed in gowns. Charlie immediately goes to Amalie.)

BEN: Colleen's dad got arrested!

CHARLIE: No, he didn't. That was her mom.

(Sam's cell phone rings.)

SAM: Hi – in the bathroom!...Oh, my –

ANDREW: What?

SAM: It's Colleen – I'll be right there –

(She hangs up.)

There was a bomb threat!

CHARLIE: Colleen's mom brought a bomb to school?

SAM: No! God!

(Sam runs out.)

ANDREW: Soap. Do you guys see this? The girls actually have soap in the dispenser.

(They wash their hands.)

BUDDY (OFF): Anybody home?

CHARLIE: Get in here!

(BUDDY enters through the window, also wearing a gown.)

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BUDDY: Mr. Spencer got arrested.

BEN: He brought a bomb, too?

BUDDY: What are you talking about? He was drunk and hit Colleen's mother.

ANDREW: No!

BUDDY: Swear.

BEN: Did you see it?

BUDDY: Practically! I mean, I heard it. He just kind of bumped her, I think.

CHARLIE: How do you know he was drunk?

BUDDY: Well, I don't know. I just figured because of the way he was staggering around.

(Natalie reenters.)

NATALIE: Do you guys even care about what is happening out here! This is supposed to be our graduation day! Colleen is a wreck!

(The door opens, bumping Natalie. It is Colleen, followed by Sam, Zondi and Amalie. Colleen is in tears.)

COLLEEN: I'm not going back out there!

AMALIE: It's all right.

(A KNOCK at the door. Sam goes to it.)

SAM: Yes?

MR. CHANNING: *(The principal.)* Sam? This is Mr. Channing. Is Colleen in there?

SAM: Yes.

MR. CHANNING: Can you ask her to come outside?

(Colleen shakes her head "no.")

SAM: She'll be right out.

COLLEEN: I don't want this day to be happening!

AMALIE: Come on, I'll go with you.

NATALIE: We'll all go.

COLLEEN: No, it's – I'll be all right.

(She exits. Three or four cell phones go off at once.)

NATALIE/AMALIE/ZONDI/CHARLIE: *(Variously:)* Hello – yeah – what – wow – no, I'm not – you're kidding – when? – Mr. Spencer? – Colleen's with Mr. Channing – I'll call you back – etc.

(They hang up.)

ALL THE KIDS: Now they're saying Mr. Spencer brought the bomb – it was only an accident in the parking lot – they're rescheduling graduation for tomorrow – my mother was in the parking lot when it happened – why do you think there was an ambulance – I always thought Mr. Spencer was weird and he's always talking about the Manhattan Project – it can't be tomorrow, tomorrow's the annual baseball game – I just want my stupid diploma – well, sorry about Colleen –

(Colleen reenters. Everyone is quiet.)

COLLEEN: It's okay. My mother's okay. She and my dad hit Mr. Spencer but they didn't run over him. He fell in front of their car; they think he had a heart attack!

BEN: Is he dead?

COLLEEN: The ambulance is coming. Poor old guy!

(Andrew opens his gown. Several snacks and drinks are pinned to the inside.)

ANDREW: A little fortification!

(Everybody moves in on him.)

ANNOUNCEMENT (V.O.): Would Andrew Conley please report to the main office? Andrew Conley?

(Everyone moves away. His robe is now devoid of snacks.)

ANDREW: Ah. My fan club awaits.

(He is slow to move. But then with a decisive motion, he goes back into the stall and starts to climb out the window.)

SAM: Andrew! What are you doing?

NATALIE/AMALIE/ZONDI/COLLEEN: Come on, god, didn't you hear that, etc.

ANDREW: I—

(Andrew falls from the toilet. Sam and Zondi run to him. His graduation hat falls on the floor. Zondi picks it up and moves it out of the way.)

ZONDI: *(To Ben and Charlie:)* Has he been drinking?

BEN: No! He was fine when we picked him up.

ANDREW: Ah, ye of little faith. I get these spells. Alien invasion. 1999. *I was just a wee bairn when they came for me.* You were there, Sam! Don't you remember?

SAM: *(To Natalie:)* Go get Mr. Channing.

(Natalie exits.)

What is it, Andy?

ANDREW: Where's Amalie?

(Amalie comes over.)

Let me feel your head.

AMALIE: What?

(Andrew passes his hand over her head without touching it.)

ANDREW: I thought so. She's one of us, Sam. *(To the others)* It's an alien thing. And now — *(Trying to remain sensible)* I'm going to sing you a song.

SAM: *(Gently:)* You can't sing.

ANDREW: Oh, but I can! The alien chip. It's going off. Snap crackle pop! And I'll sing — and you — you will stop taking life so seriously.

SAM: I wouldn't have to if you would yourself! Just a little!

ANDREW: *Raggedy Sam and Raggedy Andy, she's got brains and he's got candy.*

SAM: Nothing changes.

ANDREW: That's where you're wrong! Change — is — afoot! *(Beat.)* Okay, I'm off.

(He gets to his feet — more steady now. He kisses Sam.)

Sorry, Buddy, had to do it.

(Andrew goes back in the stall.)

SAM: Where are you going?

ANDREW: Not certain. Uncertain. Uncertain certainty. Certain uncertainty.

(He is halfway out the window.)

I'll see you later, Sam. Or maybe an hour ago I'll see you. Mix it up and throw it. You know the stars aren't just points of light, they make a constellation.

SAM: Stay here!

ANDREW: Point of light, Sam, if you see it, it's already moved away.

(Andrew is gone.)

ANNOUNCER (V.O.): Sorry for the delay, folks. Would seniors please report to the auditorium at this time...seniors please report to the auditorium...

(One by one they start to exit the bathroom. Buddy stops Sam.)

BUDDY: Hey.

SAM: Hey, what?

(Buddy tries to kiss her.)

Stop that! We're breaking up, remember?

BUDDY: After graduation. That's not for two more hours.

(They exit. Andrew's cap and Sam's backpack are still on the floor. Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(Andrew stands in a narrow point of light. He looks up. Music – maybe something from 2001 A Space Odyssey or Star Trek. It gets brighter and brighter and brighter until it blinds him. There is a thunderclap and explosion of light, then dark.)

ANDREW: Holy crap! Sam!

(Lights come up. Several of the graduating students and some underclassmen are poised to sing a song. A conductor stands in front of them, raises her hand, and they begin to sing in 3/4 time, a cappella.)

GIRLS/BOYS: TODAY'S THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE,

IT'S A DAY, IT'S A FIRST, IT'S THE REST OF YOUR LIFE,
IF YOU WANDER AWAY WE WILL FIND YOU AND SAY,
HAVE A DAY, HAVE A FIRST, HAVE A WONDERFUL
WONDERFUL, REST OF YOUR LIFE.

TOMORROW WILL KEEP YOU FROM LIVING TODAY
IT'S A HOPE, IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A LIFETIME AWAY,
IF YOU LIVE IN TOMORROW YOU WON'T SEE TODAY,
HAVE A DAY, HAVE A FIRST, HAVE A WONDERFUL,
WONDERFUL REST OF YOUR LIFE!

YESTERDAY CAME AND IT FLOATED AWAY,
IT'S A DREAM, IT'S A ROSE, BUT IT'S STILL NOT TODAY,
IF YESTERDAY CALLS YOU THEN JUST TURN AWAY,
HAVE A DAY, HAVE A FIRST, HAVE A WONDERFUL,
WONDERFUL REST OF YOUR LIFE!

(Lights down on the chorus.)

MR. CHANNING (V.O.): And now the student speaker for the Class of 2---, valedictorian Samantha Elizabeth Stern.

(Sam enters and walks up to the podium.)

SAM: Mr. Channing, honored guests, families and friends, and members of the Class of 2---. (*Long beat.*) I left my speech in the bathroom. Lucky for me, I read it several times. Okay, maybe a hundred times. And the essence of it was planning. Mr. Spencer used to tell us that if we fail to plan we plan to fail. And planning and failing are two things that I— (*Long beat.*) When I came here in the third grade, I knew that I would one day, if I was lucky enough, stand up here with all of you— (*Long beat.*) Certainly the future is unfinished. But we can be certain as we leave these halls—hallways—that certain things are certain...I was remembering a conversation I had a long time ago—no, it wasn't a conversation, it was an experience. And it was important to the—message I want to give today. On this hallowed day. I can't recall it exactly now but it was the crux of what I— (*Long beat.*) I want to congratulate my fellow classmates and hope to see you all at the alumni dinner tonight. Where we will all be alumni. That is, the seniors. And a few others. Thank you.

(Lights down on Samantha. Lights up and now several actors representing the principal and GRADUATION GUESTS stand with their backs to the audience stage left.)

(Seniors enter from the right as their names are called and they acknowledge the audience—MUFFLED APPLAUSE on a recording. The lines may be pre-recorded or live, but pre-recording will probably give a stronger effect of inner dialogue. Before they exit, each takes a diploma. The SPEAKER announces the name on a loudspeaker. Preferably, a moving spotlight follows them across the stage.)

SPEAKER: Nicole Ann Adair!

NICOLE: I take the diploma and sit down. No. I take the diploma and wait until the next row comes up. No. I take the diploma and go backstage. No.

SPEAKER: Joseph Zachariah Elwine!

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JOSEPH: That's *Alvine*, nitwit! I am so out of this place!

SPEAKER: Brady Stephen Atkinson!

BRADY: *Lord, I was born a ramblin' man, trying to make a livin' and doing the best I can...*

SPEAKER: Charles Oscar Arden!

CHARLIE: Look, it's just for the summer. I've saved up some money – I'm going to France and you can't stop me!

SPEAKER: Amanda June Bell!

(Amanda stops for a photo op.)

AMANDA: Where are they? Oh! Get my good side! Now my bad side! Okay! That'll look good on the mantel!

SPEAKER: Thomas James Billingsly!

(Thomas emerges, mimics Amanda, and exits.)

Jake Grant Bradley!

JAKE: Skylar, now covered in the skin of the beast Albatroscis, hunkered down in the mud, unaware that it was infested with meter long slug-like creatures who could flay the skin of a man with one slurp of their tongues...

SPEAKER: Benjamin Logan Campbell!

BEN: So, Zondi, you want a ride to the party tonight? What do you say I pick you up around six? Yes, I have been working out, thanks for asking!

SPEAKER: Asher Richard Cohen!

ASHER: I'm going to rule the world! My genius will one day be acknowledged and they *will* bow down to me!

SPEAKER: Samuel William Cunningham!

SAMUEL: *We came into the world*

*we uncurled and hurled the life the hope
for more than our parents...*

SPEAKER: Diana Rose Darien!

DIANA: You are not going to cry. You are not. You spent an hour on your makeup and it's a hundred degrees in here. You are not.

SPEAKER: Natalie Brooke DiAngelo!

NATALIE: (*Balancing in her high heels:*) HERE COMES THE BRIDE, ALL DRESSED IN WHITE...

SPEAKER: Colleen Sariah Desautels!

COLLEEN: (*Tearfully:*) I am never going to take you for granted again, ever! I love you Mom and Dad! I love you!

SPEAKER: Matthew John Eaton!

MATTHEW: Ten steps across the stage, twenty-one to my seat, a hundred and thirty-eight to the lobby, (*As he is accepting his diploma*) I don't know you, don't touch my hand...

SPEAKER: Zondi Elena French!

ZONDI: Has anyone noticed that it's a hundred and twelve degrees in here? And that Maxwell Franklin Giardano stinks?

SPEAKER: Maxwell Franklin Giardano!

MAXWELL: I think she was looking at me. Like really looking at me. I *knew* she liked me. I knew it!

SPEAKER: Amalie Susette Leblanc!

AMALIE: *...and I am so happy that I had a chance to live in this country and make so many friends, I will never forget...*

SPEAKER: Andrew Franklin Harris... (*Beat.*) Andrew Franklin Harris... (*Two beats.*) Andrew Franklin Harris?

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