

# **BLANK SLATE**

## **By Katherine Dubois**

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**SYNOPSIS:** It's the beginning of summer vacation. When Adam suggests the best way to prepare for next year's teachers is to forget everything they learned this year (teachers love a blank slate), Kendra's magical spell goes awry and makes him forget *everything* he knows, from his name to how to tie his shoes. And now Chandler and Gabby, who don't even believe in magic, have to find a way to set things right.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**  
(2 MEN, 2 WOMEN)

ADAM (m)  
CHANDLER (m)  
GABBY (f)  
KENDRA (f)

**SETTING**

The schoolyard outside a high school or middle school.

**TIME**

The present.

**RUNNING TIME**

About 10 minutes.

**PRODUCTION NOTES**

The set can suggest a schoolyard, or the piece may be played on a bare stage. Personal props can include whatever the actors desire: backpacks, notebooks, etc. Adam's shoes should have laces rather than velcro. The "magic pebble" may be mimed if desired.

*The scene is the schoolyard outside a high school or middle school. From Offstage come cheers and shouts of "We're done!" "It's over!" and "Summer, here we come!" Enter ADAM and CHANDLER.*

**ADAM:** Woo-hoo, it's summer!

**CHANDLER:** No more school for ten weeks! Count 'em! One! Two! Three!

**ADAM:** Stop right there.

**CHANDLER:** What?

**ADAM:** Chandler. I'm surprised at you. Why are you doing anything that sounds like math on your summer vacation?

**CHANDLER:** You're right. What's the matter with me? You know what we should—

**ADAM:** Hold on a sec.

*HE stops, and with an elaborate gesture, pushes a button on his watch.*

**ADAM:** There. Now it's summer vacation.

**CHANDLER:** So what was that?

**ADAM:** That was me turning off my alarm, so I can sleep till one in the afternoon every morning. Nothing to do for ten weeks. Nothing to learn. I'm not going to acquire a single new piece of knowledge for ten weeks.

**CHANDLER:** Then you'd better stop using words like "acquire," Adam.

**ADAM:** You're right. And besides, it's not enough *not* to learn anything new. We've gotta get busy and forget everything we learned this year. I know. Test me.

**CHANDLER:** What?

**ADAM:** Test me. Ask me anything.

**CHANDLER:** What's the square root of 125?

**ADAM:** Three thousand.

**CHANDLER:** What's the capital of North Dakota?

**ADAM:** Chicago.

*Enter GABBY and KENDRA.*

**CHANDLER:** You test me.

**ADAM:** Who was President during the Vietnam War?

**CHANDLER:** Thomas Jefferson. What's opposite purple on a color wheel?

**ADAM:** Minnesota.

**GABBY:** What are you doing?

**CHANDLER:** Unlearning everything we learned this year in school.

**GABBY:** Why?

**ADAM:** Duh. Because it's summer vacation.

**GABBY:** Kendra, do you think there's anything sillier in the world than boys?

**KENDRA:** Huh?

**GABBY:** Adam and Chandler are trying to unlearn everything they worked so hard to learn in school this year. Now, what would be the point of that, unless you took some sort of perverse pride in being an ignoramus?

**KENDRA:** Are you sure they worked very hard, Gabby? Lots of boys don't.

**ADAM:** (*Loudly.*) Chandler, don't you hate it, the way girls talk about you as if you weren't even there?

**CHANDLER:** Yes, Adam, I find it highly annoying.

**ADAM:** It's as if they thought they were superior in some way, isn't it?

**CHANDLER:** Yes, Adam. That's the impression they give.

**KENDRA:** I'm not a fast learner. I had to work really hard to memorize all the uses for unicorn hair. I sure wouldn't want to unlearn that.

**GABBY:** (*To the BOYS.*) Don't you want to get into a good college? Don't you want a career someday? Education is important.

**CHANDLER:** Do you hear anything, Adam?

**ADAM:** I hear the wind in the treetops, Chandler. That is, unless it's the distant sound of the surf.

**CHANDLER:** Very distant, as we're a thousand miles or more from the ocean. That is, I suppose we are. I've forgotten everything I learned this year about geography.

**GABBY:** (*To KENDRA, with a shake of her head.*) Boys. Let's go, Kendra. I'm going to the library to get started on my summer reading.

*The BOYS roll their eyes and make faces.*

**ADAM:** Test me some more. I'm afraid I might still know something.

**CHANDLER:** What's the root of the word "polynomial"?

**ADAM:** Cat.

**CHANDLER:** What's the difference between a virus and a bacterium?

**ADAM:** They're both yellow.

**GABBY:** (To KENDRA.) Talk about ridiculous. No one with any brain at all would really want to start all over again each school year.

**ADAM:** Why not? This way we'll be a blank slate for our teachers in the fall.

**CHANDLER:** Teachers love a blank slate. They hate to think anyone before them might have taught you anything. That way they can take all the credit for themselves.

**GABBY:** You really don't think an education's important?

**ADAM:** We could get into a debate with you about the value or lack thereof of an education, but that would be too much like schoolwork.

**CHANDLER:** Adam, I'll fine you fifty cents if I hear you use the word "thereof" again between now and September 4<sup>th</sup>.

**KENDRA:** Actually, I think I know a way you actually could forget all that. Everything you've learned this year.

**ADAM:** Oh, yeah? What?

**KENDRA:** It's a spell I read about in one of my magic books.

*The BOYS make exaggerated efforts to keep a straight face.*

**KENDRA:** I'd need an object to enchant.

*SHE bends down and picks something up off the ground. SHE holds it in her upturned palm and makes swirling motions over it with her other hand.*

**KENDRA:** Incantarium obliviatum. Ooh, did you see that? It fizzled, or something. Like static electricity.

**CHANDLER:** Rocks don't conduct static electricity. At least, I don't think they do. But I can't be sure, because I don't know anything about static electricity. In fact, I've never heard of it.

**ADAM:** So now what happens?

**KENDRA:** Now, you take this pebble, hold it tight in your hand and say, "I wish I'll forget everything I know." Then spin around and around thirteen times, and the spell will take effect.

**ADAM:** (*Laughing.*) Hand it over.

*SHE drops it into ADAM'S hand.*

**ADAM:** This is hilarious.

**CHANDLER:** Try it, Adam. See what happens.

*ADAM holds out his arm, his fist clenched around the pebble.*

**ADAM:** I wish I'll forget everything I know.

*HE starts to spin, then spins faster and faster until he sits down heavily.*

**KENDRA:** The book said to turn around thirteen times.

**CHANDLER:** He must have forgotten how to count.

**GABBY:** Can we go to the library now?

**CHANDLER:** Wait, we have to see if it worked. Hey, Adam. What's the longest river in Africa?

**ADAM:** Who are you?

**CHANDLER:** Good one.

**GABBY:** Lame one, you mean.

**ADAM:** Where am I? What am I doing here?

**CHANDLER:** Okay, this *is* getting old. Whatta ya say we go to the game shop?

*ADAM holds his hands in front of his face and slowly wiggles his fingers.*

**ADAM:** Is there a name for these?

**CHANDLER:** Okay, Adam. It was funny for about five seconds. We could go home and play on my PS3.

**ADAM:** What's that?

**CHANDLER:** (*To the GIRLS.*) Maybe he made himself dizzy with all that spinning.

**GABBY:** Being dizzy doesn't make you forget what fingers are called.  
He's faking it.

**CHANDLER:** I don't know, Gabby. Look at his eyes.

*CHANDLER and KENDRA bend over ADAM and look at him closely.*

**KENDRA:** The last spell I tried from that book didn't work.

**CHANDLER:** Stand up, Adam.

**ADAM:** What's that?

**CHANDLER:** Come on. Up. On your feet.

*CHANDLER and KENDRA each take an arm and hoist ADAM to his feet.*

**ADAM:** What are you doing? I don't know you.

**CHANDLER:** Do you have a headache?

**ADAM:** What's that?

**CHANDLER:** It couldn't have been the pebble. That's ridiculous. I mean, there's no kind of spell anyone can put on a pebble that could make a person forget everything they know. Because—because that would be like actually admitting that magic exists. Maybe he's sick. Maybe I should take him home. What am I gonna tell his mom?

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