

LOVE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY HISTORY PAPER

By Kelly Meadows

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A Ten Minute Comedy Duet

By Kelly Meadows

SYNOPSIS: Calliope will do anything to get out of her history paper, but her teacher responds to every excuse by adding on more pages. Friends, family and faculty can't force her to crack a book and get started. How can she, when she has a boyfriend and love is more important? To make matters worse, the paper is on the history of algebra, which adds a whole new set of variables into the mix. A fun duo with lots of characterizations – and another great way to forget about that paper for awhile.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females)

CALLIOPE (f) In high school. *(38 lines)*

LUCINDA (f)..... Her friend, also in high school.
(37 lines)

CAST NOTE: Both play other characters as indicated in the script.

SETTING: While this play can be performed on a bare stage, it is set mainly at school, while discussions with her family are set at Calliope's house.

PROPS

- Cell Phone
- Textbooks

SOUND EFFECTS

- Cell phone ring tone

AUTHOR'S NOTE

You'll be playing characters of different ages and outlooks, with occasional quick changes. . The character names may be unusual to you, but not to these characters, so be sure to pronounce them confidently and consistently. Work to make your character changes and characterizations distinct both in voice and movement so the audience knows who you are playing at all times – and to show off your talents! Try to make the process of the actual character change part of your “routine.”

Do Not Copy

CALLIOPE: (*Pacing or doing some other frantic action.*) Lucinda, I need help. I need a topic for my history paper. (*Stops short.*) Nothing ever happens in history.

LUCINDA: (*Not taking her that seriously.*) I had eggs for breakfast. That's *my* history. Write about that.

CALLIOPE: It needs to be significant!

LUCINDA: I had a significant amount of eggs. Then I puked in gym class. It's all over social media. Not to mention the gym floor.

CALLIOPE: Whose brilliant idea is first hour gym? It's as bad as first hour algebra.

LUCINDA: At least you can just sit there in first hour algebra.

CALLIOPE: I *sleep* in first hour algebra. (*To audience, exasperated.*) We start school at 7:30 A.M. despite repeated scientific findings that teenagers need to sleep until nine.

LUCINDA: (*To audience.*) I think someone found those findings and then decided we should wake up at six in the morning anyway. Because life isn't hard enough.

CALLIOPE: (*Pulling LUCINDA back into the action.*) I still need a topic.

LUCINDA: How about the history of algebra? You can kill two birds with one stone.

CALLIOPE: I don't know what happened *yesterday* in algebra, let alone 500 years ago. (*Sees her teacher coming.*) Eeek, it's Mrs. Thornton! I better hide.

CALLIOPE runs off a few steps which can give LUCINDA a chance to approach her as MRS. THORNTON.

LUCINDA: (*As the history teacher, MRS. THORNTON, slowly walking around. CALLIOPE looks "caught".*) Calliope and Lucinda wasting time as usual. Don't you have a paper due, young lady?

CALLIOPE: Lucinda's helping me.

LUCINDA: (*As MRS. THORNTON.*) Lucinda's distracting you.

CALLIOPE: I call it "Procrastination Assistance." When I'm ready, I'm going full bore. (*Sassy.*) And speaking of full bore, Mrs. Thornton, don't you have a class to teach?

LUCINDA: (As MRS. THORNTON, becoming more and more annoyed with CALLIOPE'S sarcasm.) Just for that, Calliope, I'm adding a page to your paper.

CALLIOPE: (She's already in trouble so why not keep it up.) Just for that, Mrs. Thornton, I'm using bigger type.

LUCINDA: (As MRS. THORNTON.) Sounds like it's time for me to go on social media and tweet about big-mouth students.

CALLIOPE: Isn't that illegal? Are you my teacher or my tweetcher?

LUCINDA: (As MRS. THORNTON.) Whatever it takes to motivate you! (Grandiose.) I'll blog, I'll post, I'll text, unless...

CALLIOPE: (Interrupting.) Unless you get fired?

LUCINDA: (As MRS. THORNTON, finally asserting her authority.) Unless you do your paper. (Announcing the topic, victorious.) The history of Algebra from 1801 through 1917.

CALLIOPE: (Horried.) Algebra? And where did you get those dates from?

LUCINDA: (As MRS. THORNTON.) It's up to you to figure out their significance. If x is 1801, and y is 1917, find 1875. (With a smile.) Then it's up to me to find A, B, C, D... (Stern.) or F. (MRS. THORNTON walks away.)

CALLIOPE: (To audience.) Mrs. Thornton called my mother about my "attitude," and Mom had a talk about it with my grandma.

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA, while CALLIOPE tries to escape her.) Now your mother wants my advice! She used to call me old-fashioned. Now that I'm even more set in my ways, she finally thinks I know something.

CALLIOPE: (Turns back around, now as MOTHER.) Mom, I don't know how to make Calliope do her homework.

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA.) And I don't know why you named your daughter Calliope.

CALLIOPE: (As MOTHER.) We've had this conversation before. You threw a fit when I suggested Xylophonica Bombastola, so I went with Calliope Sousaphonia. [Accent 2nd syllable of Bombastola.]

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA.) Calliope Sousaphonia Burgundy de Nueva Orleans is no name for a child. [Accent the 2nd syllable of Burgundy, as in how the street name is pronounced in New Orleans.]

CALLIOPE: (As MOTHER.) She'll grow into it. When I didn't do my homework, what did you do?

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA.) I sent you to bed without supper.

CALLIOPE: (As MOTHER.) You were a horrible cook; it was a survival technique. (Smirky, as if GRANDMA never knew.) I just hid cookies under my bed.

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA.) I know.

CALLIOPE is shocked to find this out.

I stole them and you couldn't ask where they were without admitting you had them hidden.

CALLIOPE: (As MOTHER.) Mom, I'm finally asking you for advice. Don't throw my childhood in my face.

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA.) Let Calliope spend some time with me. I'll show you how it's done.

Calling, as MOTHER goes to get her.

Calliope!

CALLIOPE: (Returning crabby.) Grandma, what!

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA, sweetly.) Calliope Sousaphonia Burgundy de Nueva Orleans, come have coffee with Grandma. We need to have a talk about (Negative.) your mother.

CALLIOPE: Mom won't leave me alone. She won't let me watch TV until I do my homework.

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA.) And TV is important to you?

CALLIOPE: It wasn't until mom took it away.

LUCINDA: (As GRANDMA.) Well, what is important to you?

CALLIOPE: My boyfriend. (Proud.) Baron Josephus Oregonian Footballlicus.

LUCINDA: *(As GRANDMA, firm.)* Then no Baron Josephus until you do your paper. Not even thinking about him and smiling.

CALLIOPE: It's not fair. I have to research algebra to write a history paper!

LUCINDA: *(As GRANDMA, to CALLIOPE and to the audience.)* Children these days. *(Thinks back.)* Children 30 years ago while we're at it. The only generation of children worth a darn was mine, and we're too old to remember why. Now you're shipwrecked on the shore of Common Core. You can't add three plus two without having to take a bus from Missouri to California by way of New Hampshire. *(Really on a roll!)* In my day, three plus two was five. *(Throwing hands in the air in frustration, using a lot of body language.)* These days, it's seven, four, two, pick a number and everybody wins a trophy. In my day, history was English imperialism, French revolution, Italian unification and American union busting. Now it's worldview. In my day...

CALLIOPE: *(Interrupting.)* In your day, grandmothers baked pies and wore bonnets. Perhaps you can return to the pie and bonnet era with a chocolate cream on the windowsill. In the meantime, I've got a paper to write and you're wasting my time. *(Starts to walk away.)*

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