

# THE TUTORS

BY ERICA LIPEZ



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

THE TUTORS  
Copyright © 2014, Erica Lipetz

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of THE TUTORS is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for THE TUTORS are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, LLC, 1325 Avenue of the Americas, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10019. Attn: Scott Chaloff.

**SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce THE TUTORS is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author. The following acknowledgment must appear on the title page in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

THE TUTORS was presented Off-Broadway by Second Stage Theatre  
(Carole Rothman, Artistic Director; Casey Reitz, Executive Director;  
Christopher Burney, Curator/Associate Artistic Director)  
at the McGinn/Cazale Theatre in New York City, opening on June 5, 2013.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS AND RECORDINGS**

For performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in these Plays, the permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained. Other songs, arrangements or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

*To my family*

THE TUTORS was presented Off-Broadway by Second Stage Theatre (Carole Rothman, Artistic Director; Casey Reitz, Executive Director; Christopher Burney, Curator/Associate Artistic Director) at the McGinn/Cazale Theatre in New York City, opening on June 5, 2013. It was directed by Thomas Kail; the set design was by Rachel Hauck; the costume design was by Jessica Jahn; the lighting design was by Betsy Adams; the sound design was by Jill BC Du Boff; and the production stage manager was Robert G. Mahon III. The cast was as follows:

KWAN.....Louis Ozawa Changchien  
JOE.....Matt Dellapina  
HEIDI .....Aubrey Dollar  
TOBY .....Keith Nobbs  
MILO .....Chris Perfetti

## **CHARACTERS**

TOBY, 25, a tutor. Often wears a tucked-in button-down shirt and tries to be good at his job.

HEIDI, 25, an online admissions essay editor. She edits up to 50 essays a week, which means a lot of time staring at a computer screen.

JOE, 25, a tutor. Not so good at his job.

MILO, 17, a student at a New York City prep school.

KWAN, 30, an attractive businessman from Hong Kong  
About to start business school at Columbia.  
(Note: All Kwans should be played by the same actor.)

## **PLACE**

New York City.

## **TIME**

2007.

## NOTES

The “ — ” at the end of a line is an indication of pace, a general rhythm to the dialogue, a suggestion (but not a command) to bring the next line in on the one before. It is not, however, an indication that there are more words to be spoken.

The “//” in the middle of a line indicates overlapping dialogue.

In Act Two, Scene 2, Toby and Milo have an online chat conversation. As noted, the online conversation should be spoken. How you choose to indicate that this is an online conversation should not slow down the pace of the conversation.

Heidi, Joe, and Toby’s apartment is described in detail at the top of Act One, Scene 2. It’s a three-bedroom apartment with a living room/kitchen. As described, you only see the doors of the bedrooms, until Heidi’s bedroom appears at the top of Act One, Scene 6. Some theaters will have spaces that allow for a room to appear, some will not. If Heidi’s room needs to be onstage from the start of the play, then you have to creatively solve the problem of Heidi and Kwan being onstage — and seen by the audience — for much of the play. It’s a solvable problem. You just have to be imaginative about how the character of Kwan appears and disappears and how Heidi can live onstage and not distract from the action of the play (when she is not in the scene). Just know that the play can support whatever choice you need to make depending on your production resources.

# THE TUTORS

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1

*The room of a teenage boy. The room is large but sparsely decorated. There's a flatscreen TV, new laptop, sound equipment, and a small pile of clothes. The room tries to be messy, but only as messy as a room can get between daily visits from a maid. Toby sits in a rolling chair, near a desk with an open computer. Milo sits next to him, wearing the remnants of a prep school uniform — open-collared shirt, untucked; belt at his feet; shoes off; playing with his tie. He looks anywhere but at the computer.*

TOBY. Start with a description of the scene. Lay out the land. Give them a sense of where you were when it happened. Milo, the fastest way to pull someone into your story, to make them interested in you, is through strong description. Don't bother prefacing the story with —

MILO. What's that?

TOBY. Prefacing?

MILO. Yeah.

TOBY. To preface.

MILO. Simpler, please.

TOBY. What do you think it means?

MILO. I don't know. That's why I asked.

TOBY. Think about the context.

MILO. The context is you used a word I don't know.

TOBY. Break it down.

MILO. Never mind. Just keep going.

TOBY. You can figure it out.

MILO. I said keep going.

TOBY. It means to introduce or begin with. Got it?

MILO. Whatever. (*Milo looks away.*)

TOBY. I know your room is super cool, I wish my room was this cool, but why don't you give me some focus. (*Milo stares at him.*)

Great. So, you don't need to preface the situation with a traditional introduction. We don't need "this was a turning point in my life," or "this led me to understand the importance of my education ..."

MILO. That's what they asked for.

TOBY. I know, but they don't want you to just regurgitate ... you know that word? (*Milo makes a vomiting sound.*) Right. It's not about regurgitating the prompt, it's about responding to it with creativity. So, launch right in. Put them in the situation. Make them feel what you felt.

MILO. It was a debate tournament.

TOBY. I know.

MILO. You don't feel anything at a debate tournament. You just think and talk and sound boring.

TOBY. Debates can be really exciting, impassioned.

MILO. It was only exciting when Tanya Sheffield got her period during the first round. It like gushed, which is weird, 'cause she's totally flat-chested, and I only thought fat girls bleed a lot —

TOBY. That's ... no ... why did you choose this debate to write about?

MILO. 'Cause all my other ideas were stupid.

TOBY. You need to write about something you like, otherwise it's going to be lackluster.

MILO. Just say bad. It's going to be bad.

TOBY. Tell me your ideas.

MILO. Tell me what's wrong with Joe.

TOBY. Huh?

MILO. Tutor Joe. My tutor, Joe. Bloodshot eyes, minty breath Joe.

TOBY. I told you, he's sick. Come on, let's talk about your ideas.

MILO. With what?

TOBY. Flu. Stomach bug thing.

MILO. Do you like him?

TOBY. He's a good tutor.

MILO. But, do you like him?



TOBY. Sure. He's my friend.

MILO. And he's your roommate.

TOBY. Um, yes, that's true. Did he mention that to you?

MILO. He doesn't like me.

TOBY. Not true. He had great things to say about you.

MILO. Gross, you guys like pillow talk about me?

TOBY. No. He told me about you when I agreed to cover today.

MILO. Isn't there like some tutor-tutee confidentiality agreement?

TOBY. No, tutors at the agency share information on each student. It's for your benefit. There's a file —

MILO. You guys take notes on me? You're not the fucking FBI.

TOBY. Milo, you've gone through five different tutors at the agency.

MILO. I've had Joe for like six months.

TOBY. Which is great. But it would be stupid for us not to compare notes. We're trying to help you.

MILO. Don't believe everything he writes.

TOBY. His evaluations are really encouraging. They show progress.

MILO. Then why did he bail on me today?

TOBY. He didn't bail. I told you, he got the flu.

MILO. Let me lay out a scene, Toby. Put you in the moment. Make you feel what I felt. Today. Three P.M. After school. Starbucks on Eighty-First and York. It's a big one, lots of room, easy to avoid people if you want. Me, a caramel Frappuccino and my computer. Suddenly, a familiar voice rings in my ears. Is that a cliché?

TOBY. You can probably do better.

MILO. Suddenly, an obnoxious man sound clangs in my listening body parts. Who could it be? Why, it's none other than my tutor, Joe. Anyway, I've got some manners, so I turned to say hello, but then I stopped. 'Cause Joe was in the middle of a sentence that went like this ... "I just can't take it today. That entitled prick of a kid hit my last nerve. A chainsaw couldn't get through a skull that thick." There was more. I took notes on my computer. You want to read it?

TOBY. He probably wasn't talking about you. *(Milo opens a file on his computer. He reads.)*

MILO. "Milo couldn't locate his dick if it didn't get hard every time I mention his mom." *(Pause.)*

TOBY. Sometimes people need days off. You're one of Joe's favorite students.

MILO. Only 'cause I let him smoke me up.

TOBY. What?

MILO. We get stoned. Then we do math.

TOBY. Milo, he wouldn't do that.

MILO. Can I write about that for my college essay?

TOBY. No. Are you serious about the smoking?

MILO. Yeah. He sold me some. (*Milo dives under his bed and pulls out a small bag of weed.*) Want to smoke?

TOBY. Milo, put that away.

MILO. It's not a big deal.

TOBY. It is a big deal. And you should delete that conversation.

MILO. Why? It's funny.

TOBY. 'Cause you could get Joe into a lot of trouble.

MILO. It's just the truth.

TOBY. Don't you ever say stuff you don't mean 'cause you need to? He was having a bad day. He was venting.

MILO. It's not my fault he's just a tutor.

TOBY. I know. But, that's not ... he's not just a tutor —

MILO. It's the only job he gets paid for.

TOBY. Yeah, but —

MILO. So your stupid website doesn't count.

TOBY. It's not ... You know about our website?

MILO. Yeah. I'm a member. I thought you'd know that. 'Cause you have like five members.

TOBY. Do you know what hyperbole means?

MILO. Sounds like one of the things I'm medicated for. Joinme2u.com is kind of a bad name. Maybe that's the problem.

TOBY. People like the name, actually.

MILO. Joinme2u sounds like you're trying to make conjoined internet twins. Joinme2u and your uterus or your lung or your heart. It makes me think of body parts.

TOBY. It's about making connections. Friendships. The name is pretty straightforward.

MILO. I know it's weird, but I'm just telling you what comes to mind when I hear it. You can't stop what your brain does when it first hears something.

TOBY. Point taken. Thank you for your free associative opinion.

MILO. You're welcome. But it's still not my fault that you guys are tutors.

TOBY. Milo, I like tutoring. Joe likes tutoring. We get to talk to interesting people and try to help them. But no, most people don't

# THE TUTORS

by Erica Lipez

4M, 1W

No one dreams of being a tutor: just ask Heidi, Toby, and Joe. While catering to the offspring of New York elite has forced them to confront the anticlimax of adulthood, these roommates are not ready to give up on their social networking startup — just yet. When Heidi's online editing begins to invade her subconscious and a student crosses the line, all three friends might be in over their heads. A funny, heartfelt look at day jobs versus dream jobs and the people we count on to remind us of the difference.

*"[A] keenly observed and compassionate new comedy-drama ... [The] work of a writer with a confident knack for bringing to life men and women whose flaws and virtues are complexly intertwined. Ms. Lipez is particularly insightful about the sometimes prickly nature of friendship, felt so keenly in the college and post-collegiate years."*

—The New York Times

*"Impressive ... Lipez raises compelling ideas and her dialogue is fast and sharp ... She's a promising voice."*

—The New York Daily News

*"[Lipez] shows a great deal of promise ... Lots of plays have been written about loneliness, but this is the first one that actually seemed accurate in its depiction of the struggle for connection among contemporary youths ... Lipez has an ear for natural-sounding dialogue and a knack for creating compelling characters."*

—TheaterMania.com

ISBN 978-0-8222-3022-9



DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

9 780822 230229