



Sample Pages from A Recipe of Me

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A RECIPE OF ME

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Kate Kilpatrick



A Recipe of Me

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Characters

3M+7W + 9 Any Gender

Siblings

LEAH

TYLER

DANIELLE

Cousins

DORRIE

FRANKIE

Relatives

RALPH

BARBARA

ELIZABETH

ELLIOTT

LUCY

Ensemble of Nine

Characters in this play are currently identified as male or female. Directors are welcome to assign any gender (binary or non-binary) to any character and modify pronouns accordingly.

Setting

The kitchen at Grandma Lucy and Grandpa Elliott's house. The kids' table. The set can be very minimalistic. The original production used five chairs and a card table.

About the Play

This play is the product of a beautiful intergenerational project titled *Come to the Table*. In October 2018, in partnership with Orlando Repertory Theatre, Avalon Middle School, and Encore at Avalon Assisted Living and Memory Care Facility in Orlando, Florida, middle school students interviewed senior residents about their treasured family recipes and food traditions. Over the course of several visits, new friendships and memories were cultivated and the transcripts from those encounters inspired this story.

A Recipe of Me is a love story to that experience and the celebrations of traditions – new and old – that brought us together. This play would not have been possible without any of the vibrant people involved, but most especially Emily Freeman, Krista Traver, and Fabiana Diaz.

May this story continue to encourage many shared meals and stories!

Text Note

For Tyler, Danielle, and Leah’s “Recipe of Me”, feel free to change out the ingredients to things that feel more relevant to current trends.

Costuming

The contemporary characters (Leah, Tyler, Danielle, Dorrie, Frankie) were in nicer holiday-appropriate clothing, as if going to a Thanksgiving dinner. Everyone else was dressed in gray and black clothing; characters that played family recipe members within the ensemble wore clothing more suggestive of the time period, such as long skirts, suspenders and button-down shirts, ties, cardigans, etc. This allowed them to blend into the ensemble in other scenes but look appropriate while delivering their “recipe of me” monologue.

Original Production

A Recipe of Me premiered (as *Come to the Table*) on January 29, 2019 at the Orlando REP in Orlando, Florida with the following cast:

Leah: Bella Dabolish

Tyler: Jackson Smith

Danielle: Elizabeth Zeller

Dorrie: Olivia Vargas

Frankie: Abby Belachew

Elizabeth: Kat Lesinski

Barbara: Leia Cadiz

Elliott: Henry Mack

Ralph: Joe Gino

Grandma Lucy: Sammy Jay

Ensemble: Addie Alsip, Nicole Diaz, Sophie Ferrara, Sasha Kahn, Maya Kelly, Perrin Knowlton, Gianna Raninga, Jolie Rivera, Makayla Winchester

The lights come up on the ENSEMBLE and FAMILY MEMBERS, staggered across the stage. Each person is holding a recipe card.

ENSEMBLE: (*in unison*) A Recipe of Me.

BARBARA: Two cups of red, ripe strawberries, freshly picked.

RALPH: Three pints of dedication.

ELLIOTT: Two debate team VIP awards.

ELIZABETH: One crisp, clean pair of ballet slippers.

BARBARA: A jar of glowing fireflies, caught in our backyard.

ELIZABETH: A basket of springtime tulips.

RALPH: One knee brace.

ELLIOTT: An honest day's work.

ENSEMBLE: (*In unison*) Directions.

ELLIOTT: Mix all ingredients together in a big bowl.

BARBARA: Place outside on a sunny afternoon to rise.

RALPH: When the bowl gets too heavy to carry, that's when you know it's ready.

ELLIOTT: Bring inside, give another good stir, and then pour into a pair of soft, flannel pajamas.

BARBARA: Let rest overnight, and then give it a good shake in the morning.

ELIZABETH: Send it to school first thing.

ENSEMBLE: (*in unison*) Serve with a smile.

TYLER, LEAH, DANIELLE enter, staggering their placement downstage.

LEAH, DANIELLE, and TYLER: (*in unison*) A Recipe of Me.

TYLER: Two cups of binge-watching Netflix.

LEAH: One venti mocha chip Frappuccino.

DANIELLE: Half a cup of sour gummi worms.

LEAH: Four perfect selfies.

TYLER: One beat up pair of Converse.

DANIELLE: Two contact lenses.

TYLER: One Nintendo switch controller. NO – TWO Nintendo switch controllers.

DANIELLE: One hand-me-down iPhone.

LEAH: Three different shades of tinted lip balm.

DANIELLE: The perfect pair of leggings.

LEAH: One basketball.

TYLER: Four slices of hot, greasy, pepperoni pizza.

LEAH: Five weeks of summer camp.

DANIELLE: Three consecutive straight-A report cards.

TYLER: One rare Spider-Man comic book, mint condition.

DANIELLE: Directions.

LEAH: Divide into three separate spaces.

TYLER: Set in front of any kind of screen – iPhone, tablet, TV...

DANIELLE: *(interrupting)* Or a book.

LEAH: Do NOT disturb.

TYLER: End of directions.

The lights come up on a kitchen table and chairs, decorated for Thanksgiving. The rest of the set can be very minimalistic – simply suggestive of a kitchen. TYLER and DANIELLE walk into the kitchen. It is Thanksgiving Day, and they are dressed nicely. LEAH enters behind them, stopping in the doorway with her arms firmly crossed.

TYLER: The kids' table...where dreams go to die.

LEAH: I'm offended. This is embarrassing. I'm in middle school.

TYLER: We're not particularly thrilled about it, either.

LEAH: And they took our PHONES AWAY?!

TYLER: *(resigned)* It's a dictatorship.

LEAH: It's MISERABLE. Why do adults always get to do whatever they want and we get banished to the stuffy, smelly kitchen to suffocate?

TYLER: (to DANIELLE) We're in for a long afternoon.

LEAH: What difference does it make to Aunt Sarah if we sit at the adult table? Or Uncle Ralph? All he does is sit in front of the TV watching football until he falls asleep. It's not like we'd be disruptive if I could just have my phone and sit on the couch.

TYLER: Yeah, but like, football is his thing. You know he gets upset when you talk during the game.

DANIELLE: We don't want to reenact last Thanksgiving, do we?

LEAH: (*sarcastically*) No, god forbid anyone make noise or disrupt his train of post-turkey farts.

TYLER: Do you really want to sit with the adults, anyway? Shirley never stops humming. Grandpa never stops talking about politics. And Grandma Lucy will make you eat until you feel like you're going to explode.

LEAH: At least it would be entertaining. There's nothing to do in here.

DANIELLE: That's not true; Dad gave us a deck of cards, remember?

LEAH slumps into one of the kitchen chairs.

LEAH: When do Dorrie and Frankie get here?

TYLER: I don't know. Mom said they were on their way a while ago. They should be here soon.

DANIELLE: Do you think Dorrie gets to sit at the grown-up table this year?

TYLER: Why would she?

DANIELLE: I don't know. She's the oldest of us.

LEAH: She's older than me by like, two months.

DANIELLE: Yeah, but she's still a whole grade above you.

LEAH: Don't remind me.

A bored pause.

LEAH: I'm starving.

TYLER: There are nuts on the table.

LEAH: I don't want nuts. I want a bowl of mashed potatoes that I can drown myself in.

TYLER: You mean if there's any left after Uncle Dave gets to them. You know what he says: "The Thanksgiving table is like an airplane, you have to serve yourself before assisting others."

LEAH: It's not even funny.

DANIELLE: I want some of grandma's stuffing. And her green bean casserole. And her sweet potato casserole!

TYLER: Mmmmm, sweet potato casserole. With pecans and marshmallows...so many marshmallows.

DANIELLE: They're way better when grandma does it. Mom always seems to mess it up.

TYLER: Doesn't Mom use the same recipe?

DANIELLE: Maybe. I don't know. It's...different.

TYLER: (*agreeing*) Yeah, less crispy on the outside.

LEAH: Well I'm not waiting two more hours to eat while you guys sit here and talk about food. I'm starving. I'd even eat pineapple pizza, that's how hungry I am.

TYLER: Don't knock it 'til you've tried it.

LEAH stands up and begins to rifle through the cupboards. She lets out a groan of frustration upon realizing they are, unfortunately, bare.

LEAH: Where is all the food?! There's nothing in here but an old bottle of ketchup and a stupid ugly container. (*displays a shabby, aged box*)

DANIELLE: Wait! That's not a stupid ugly container!

LEAH: Danielle, have you SEEN this thing?

DANIELLE: Leah, that's Grandma's secret family recipe box!

TYLER: That??

DANIELLE: Yeah! Where she keeps all the recipes that she won't share with anyone.

TYLER: Like the recipe for sweet potato casserole??

DANIELLE: Probably! I saw her using it last year when we were making Christmas cookies. There were some really old cards in there.

She wouldn't let me see any of the recipes, though. She said not until I was older and responsible enough to protect the family secrets.

LEAH: Well...I'm older.

DANIELLE: I don't think that's what she meant, Leah.

TYLER: How do you know? Who died and made you keeper of the family recipes?

LEAH: It doesn't matter anyway. It's locked.

DANIELLE: I'm sure there's a good reason why she doesn't want to share whatever's in there.

LEAH: Tyler, you know what this means, right?

TYLER: What?

LEAH: We have to break into this bad boy.

TYLER: NOW you're talking!

DANIELLE: Don't!

LEAH: Find me a hammer.

DANIELLE: Grandma would be so mad at us.

LEAH: What if it just fell out of my hand and dropped all the way to the floor and simply happened to spring right open?

DANIELLE: Leah, don't.

TYLER: (*sensing DANIELLE's genuine distress*) How about we play it safe and try to pick the lock instead?

TYLER runs over to a junk drawer and begins rifling through it.

DANIELLE: Grandma has it locked for a reason.

TYLER: We're not gonna hurt anyone, we just want to see what's so special about some dumb recipes.

DANIELLE: They're not dumb.

TYLER: So then why can't we see them?

DANIELLE: Because they're not ours to see!

TYLER: There's nothing in here to pick a lock with.

LEAH: Alright, back to Plan A; find me a hammer!

DANIELLE: WAIT! What about a compromise?

LEAH: What do you mean?

DANIELLE: (*hesitantly*) I know where Grandma keeps the key.

LEAH: What?

TYLER: Well then why didn't you say so?

DANIELLE: Because I don't think you should go through the recipe box at all. But I guess using the key is less terrible than smashing it with a hammer.

LEAH: Deal. Where's the key?

DANIELLE: (*resigned*) In the spice cabinet, in the back underneath the empty salt container.

A beat. LEAH heads toward the spice cabinet and roots around.

TYLER: How do you know that?

DANIELLE: I watched her putting it away last time.

LEAH: Aha! Got it!

LEAH triumphantly holds the key in the air and runs back to the recipe box on the table.

LEAH: The moment of truth.

TYLER and DANIELLE come to either side of her. She looks at them both, hands on the recipe box, then unlocks it. Slowly, anticipation building, she opens the recipe box. A beat. LEAH's face falls with disappointment.

LEAH: It's just a bunch of old index cards.

DANIELLE: What were you expecting, a hologram?

LEAH: Okay, I'm bored again.

DANIELLE: (*taking the recipe box gently*) How can you be bored? There are so many secrets in this box!

LEAH: I don't care about family recipes. I was just excited to smash that thing with a hammer.

TYLER: (*calling her out*) I don't know, Leah, you seemed kind of excited about opening it for a minute.

DANIELLE carefully thumbs through the recipes.

DANIELLE: Marty's Chicken Noodle Soup...Diane's famous macaroni and cheese...Aunt April's Favorite Irish scones...huh.

TYLER: What?

DANIELLE: All these recipes have someone's name on them. Like they belonged to someone.

TYLER: Let me see.

DANIELLE hands him a few cards.

DANIELLE: Shirley's Banana Bread.

TYLER: Hoppy's Southwestern hash browns.

DANIELLE: Ralph's Favorite Ginger Snaps.

LEAH: Wait, like Uncle Ralph?

DANIELLE: I think so.

TYLER: What does that note in the corner say? In the blue ink?

DANIELLE: (*looking closely*) "Made for Ralphie's football game, October 20, 1984."

TYLER: Did Uncle Ralph play football?

DANIELLE: I guess so?

LEAH: Huh. I don't think I ever knew that.

The scene pauses as RALPH enters and stands onstage, along with several members of the ENSEMBLE. As he speaks, the ENSEMBLE is creating various tableaux and pantomimes of the story he is telling.

RALPH: A Recipe of Ralph, 1987. One signed Bill Kenney football. Twelve hours a week of football practice. Three pints of dedication. One knee brace. A dozen bloody noses. Two mouth guards, in rotation. One junior varsity jacket. Directions: try out for the school team year after year after year. Pray every season to make it onto the field. FINALLY make it. Put blood, sweat, and tears into every game and every practice. Start to listen for rumblings of a football scholarship somewhere down

the line. Throw the winning pass at the homecoming game, to the cheers of every student and parent in the stands. Immediately get slammed to the ground, reeling with a massive concussion. Spend two days in the hospital. Watch the rest of your football career disappear.

RALPH and ENSEMBLE exit.

TYLER: I...I didn't know.

LEAH: Me neither.

DANIELLE: I guess that explains why he watches so much football. He must really miss playing.

There is a moment of contemplation. TYLER starts rifling through the recipe box again.

TYLER: These two are paper-clipped together.

LEAH takes the cards from him and removes the paper clip.

LEAH: *(reading one card)* Barbara's Classic Barbecue Ribs. *(reading the other card)* Elizabeth's Classic Barbecue Ribs.

DANIELLE: Who are they?

LEAH: Wait, Grandma Lucy's sisters! Barbara and Betsy!

LEAH: *(looking at the card)* Ha! Look.

She shows TYLER and DANIELLE the recipe cards.

LEAH: They're labeled "Trouble Number 1" and "Trouble Number 2."

TYLER: Are the recipes different?

BARBARA and ELIZABETH walk onstage and stand apart from one another. Members of the ENSEMBLE follow. They try to create images along with the story but are constantly being interrupted by BARBARA and ELIZABETH'S disruptions.

BARBARA: A recipe of Barbara, 1959.

ELIZABETH: *(overlapping BARBARA)* A recipe of Elizabeth, 1959.

They exchange a polite glance and a forced smile.

BARBARA: One shiny pair of tap shoes.

ELIZABETH: (*overlapping slightly, almost as if they started at the same time*) One crisp, clean pair of ballet slippers.

Another glare, and a pause. ELIZABETH gestures to BARBARA to go first.

BARBARA: One shiny pair of tap shoes.

ELIZABETH: (*overlapping slightly again. It is now obvious she is doing it on purpose to annoy BARBARA.*) One crisp, clean pair of ballet slippers.

Both attempting to maintain their composure.

BARBARA: (*quickly*) One shiny pair of tap shoes.

ELIZABETH: (*overlapping, quickly*) One crisp, clean pair of ballet slippers.

BARBARA: WOMAN, can you NOT SEE that I'm trying to talk?

ELIZABETH enjoys this; it's just the rise she was hoping to get out of BARBARA.

BARBARA: For crying out loud, Betsy, let me get a dang word in.

ELIZABETH: Sorry. (*she's not*)

BARBARA tries to regain her composure. She looks to ELIZABETH, who mimes zipping her mouth shut. Skeptically, BARBARA begins.

BARBARA: One...shiny...pair of tap shoes.

ELIZABETH: One crisp, clean pair of ballet slippers.

BARBARA: A big jar of glowing fireflies, caught in our backyard.

ELIZABETH: Two smooth knitting needles handed down to me from my Great-Aunt Mabel.

BARBARA: Nuh uh, you got them from Jane Robinson at school.

ELIZABETH: No ma'am, I got my crochet hook from Jane Robinson at school but my knitting needles were handed down from Great-Aunt Mabel.

BARBARA: Fine. You're wrong, but fine.

ELIZABETH: Stick to your own recipe.

BARBARA: (*ignoring her*) Two cups of strawberries, freshly picked.

ELIZABETH: A basket of springtime tulips.

BARBARA: You never even liked tulips.

ELIZABETH: What are you talking about? They have always been my favorite.

BARBARA: What about when you pitched that hissy fit at your birthday party when Ma bought yellow tulips for the decorations?

ELIZABETH: Well I just didn't think they were right for that occasion. And by the way, I'm glad to see that you enjoyed those freshly picked strawberries that I picked all by myself with no help from you because you were always too worried about getting your fingernails dirty.

BARBARA: I did too, help!

ELIZABETH: Name one time!

At this point, BARBARA and ELIZABETH begin bickering on top of one another, neither one agreeing to let the argument go.

BARBARA: *(over ELIZABETH)* You never care about anything I do, and whenever I would actually volunteer to help, you'd never let me because you were soooo caught up in your own little world that you couldn't even stop for one minute to let someone else help you, you stubborn mule!

ELIZABETH: *(over BARBARA)* You always got away with so much because you were younger and Mama and Daddy never made you do any of the hard work for some reason and I worked my tail off making sure that everything that needed to be done got done while you were off traipsing around like a darn fool!

They pause, staring at each other. A beat. BARBARA turns back to the audience, smiling.

BARBARA: One cup of patience.

ELIZABETH: Directions.

BARBARA: Proceed with caution.

ELIZABETH: Practice deep breathing.

BARBARA: When the time seems right...apologize for being kind of snippy.

ELIZABETH: Accept apology and...maybe apologize in return for overreacting.

BARBARA: Thank you. Apology accepted.

ELIZABETH: And then maybe, while you're at it, apologize for borrowing a dress without permission and accidentally spilling a chocolate milkshake down the front of it.

ELIZABETH'S words sink in, and BARBARA becomes enraged.

BARBARA: ELIZABETH, YOU ROTTEN, EVIL, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING...

BARBARA chases ELIZABETH offstage. Confused and resigned, the ENSEMBLE members exit, too.

LEAH: Um...

DANIELLE: Wow.

TYLER: No wonder Grandma Lucy always says she feels lucky she had all boys.

LEAH: (to DANIELLE) I mean, we fight, but not like that.

TYLER: Well...sometimes you fight like that.

DANIELLE and LEAH exchange a sheepish look. DORRIE and FRANKIE walk into the kitchen.

FRANKIE: You fight like what?

LEAH: Oh thank god, more people.

DORRIE: Yep, banished to the kitchen and the kid's table, AGAIN.

TYLER: Welcome, we've been waiting for you.

DORRIE: No way, is that grandma's recipe box?!

TYLER: Yeah.

DORRIE: She let you into it?

DANIELLE shoots a look to TYLER and LEAH, who look a little sheepish.

LEAH: Welllll...

TYLER: We kind of...let ourselves into it.

A beat.

DORRIE: She's going to disown you.

LEAH: (*starting to feel a little guilty*) It's not that bad, it's just a bunch of recipes.

DORRIE: You realize that if she walks in here and sees you with it, you're all dead, right?

TYLER: Well it's too late now.

DANIELLE: You should see some of the recipes we're finding.

A beat. FRANKIE is interested, despite her better judgement.

FRANKIE: Like what?

DANIELLE hands FRANKIE a stack of recipe cards. She begins to flip through them.

FRANKIE: Look at all these notes. Are they all Grandma's?

DANIELLE: I think so. They all look like her handwriting.

FRANKIE: Some of them have so many notes you can't even see the recipe.

DORRIE: (*taking one and looking at it*) Chocolate Chip Cheesecake: Melanie's Birthday 1995, 1996, 1999, and 2001.

FRANKIE: Look at this one: Elliott's Hamburger Casserole.

TYLER: Grandma's made that for us before!

FRANKIE: Awww, look, it has little hearts at the top.

DANIELLE: What does the note say?

FRANKIE: "Election Day comfort food, 1980."

TYLER: What does that mean?

ELLIOTT enters as the others pause, followed by members of the ENSEMBLE who create tableaux and pantomime the story ELLIOTT is sharing.

ELLIOTT: A Recipe of Elliott, 1960. An honest day's work. Six cups of willpower. Four consecutive runs – and wins – for student council president. Two debate team VIP awards. One 4.05 GPA. Six semesters in the National Honor Society. Directions: Combine all ingredients and set on fire. Carry that fire while sneaking into protests and marching for causes you believe in. Make a pact to protect those who need protecting, and to speak up for those who can't speak for themselves, even though you're young

and people don't take you seriously. Run for public office. Try to change the world one vote at a time. Use your voice. Have compassion. Serve your fellow man.

ELLIOTT and ENSEMBLE exit.

TYLER: Woah.

FRANKIE: Did you know Grandpa ran for office?

Everyone shakes their head.

FRANKIE: I guess he talks about politics a lot because it used to be really important to him.

LEAH: I think it still is really important to him.

DORRIE: Frankie, do you remember when he got super invested in your school election?

FRANKIE: (to DANIELLE) He wanted me to run for treasurer, but I didn't want to. I did it only because it seemed important to him. He wanted to be my legal representation.

DANIELLE: Did you win?

FRANKIE: Nope. I self-sabotaged my campaign by tearing down all my own posters. I can't handle that kind of responsibility.

DORRIE: (referring to the recipe card) Do you think Grandpa won his election?

TYLER: Knowing Grandpa, I think he did.

LEAH: You'd think someone would have mentioned it at some point.

TYLER: We should ask him. After dinner.

LEAH: Yeah. Good idea.

DANIELLE: Look! Dorrie, Frankie, you guys are in here, too!

DANIELLE hands them a small stack of cards.

FRANKIE: Ooh, my favorite oatmeal chocolate chip cookies!

DORRIE: "Dorrie's Rainbow Egg Salad." I remember this! This was from one Easter a long time ago when we made egg salad with dyed eggs and the whole thing looked like a tie-dyed mess.

FRANKIE: (to DORRIE) She has a whole bunch of recipes with our names on them.

DORRIE: Remember the 4th of July she made these mini red-white-and-blue fruit pizzas?

FRANKIE: Yes! And these Creamsicle Popsicles for your birthday?

DORRIE: I guess Grandma kind of likes us, huh? To keep all these recipes?

FRANKIE: Yeah. Yeah, I guess she does.

TYLER, DANIELLE, AND LEAH pause while FRANKIE and DORRIE step forward. Several ENSEMBLE members enter, helping to tell their story.

DORRIE: A Recipe of Dorrie.

FRANKIE: A Recipe of Frankie.

DORRIE: One violin.

FRANKIE: Two French bulldogs, Satchmo and Gus.

DORRIE: One tablespoon of hot sauce.

FRANKIE: A set of watercolor paints.

DORRIE: Another tablespoon of hot sauce.

FRANKIE: Way too many hours of watching the Food Network.

DORRIE: Three carne asada tacos with extra cilantro.

FRANKIE: A handful of bobby pins.

DORRIE: One more tablespoon of hot sauce, for good luck.

FRANKIE and DORRIE: One sister –

FRANKIE: Who can sometimes get on my nerves.

DORRIE: Who can sometimes drive me up a wall.

FRANKIE and DORRIE: But really is my best friend.

FRANKIE: Directions.

DORRIE: Simmer all ingredients on low heat, probably while stuck in the backseat of a mini-van driving cross-country visiting national parks.

FRANKIE: Take away all cell phones and tablets and replace with board games and family time every Thursday night.



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