

Cheater

(3 Guys)

CHARACTERS:

John: Friend of Kevin's who is concerned about cheating. Tries to convince Kevin that cheating is not the answer to his problems. Toward the end, he gets sucked into Kevin's way of thinking.

Kevin: Has a lot of pressure to excel. Thinks cheating is his only option to guarantee good grades, scholarship, etc.

Adam: Offers to help John study. Later tries to talk sense into John when he starts agreeing with Kevin about cheating.

SETTING:

In a classroom right before class starts. Chairs should be three across with Kevin on far left and Adam on far right. For first part, Adam is into his homework and doesn't really pay attention to what is going on between Kevin and John.

- 1 (KEVIN is writing answers on his hand and up his arm when JOHN
2 enters Stage Right and sits down beside KEVIN.)
3 JOHN: (In a loud stage whisper, like he's afraid they'll get caught.)
4 Kevin! Mr. Reynolds will be here any minute. What are you
5 doing?
6 KEVIN: I'm putting a little insurance into getting an A, that's
7 what I'm doing.
8 JOHN: Are you crazy? That's cheating.
9 KEVIN: Sure can't get anything past you, can I? No wonder
10 you've got a big four-point-oh GPA.
11 JOHN: Very funny. But Mr. Reynolds has eyes like a hawk. You
12 know that! If he catches you, it's an automatic zero.
13 KEVIN: Exactly. If I get caught. That's why I won't get caught.
14 JOHN: Yeah, 'cause it won't be obvious at all when you're
15 reading up and down your arm.
16 KEVIN: That's why I sat in the back. And look, (Pulls sleeve down
17 to cover arm) I'll only sneak a peek when I need to.
18 JOHN: Why risk it?
19 KEVIN: Why? I'll tell you why. I've got three killer tests this
20 week, I'm scheduled to work almost every night, and I'm
21 borderline B in this class as it is.
22 JOHN: So? One B won't kill you.
23 KEVIN: Says the perfect student.
24 JOHN: Well, I might not have ever gotten one, but I'm pretty
25 sure they're harmless. You can always bring it up next
26 semester.
27 KEVIN: I can't. That'll be too late. College applications are due
28 now. It won't matter what I make after this.
29 JOHN: One B is not going to keep you out of college. Well,
30 maybe Harvard.
31 KEVIN: My dad says straight A's are the only way I'm ever going
32 to get a scholarship. Anywhere. Even a state school.
33 Otherwise, I can kiss the chance of college good-bye.
34 JOHN: Maybe he's just saying that now ... to get you to work
35 hard.

1 KEVIN: No. He means it. Apparently he spent what little he had
 2 saved for my college on his motorcycle last year.
 3 JOHN: The Harley?
 4 KEVIN: That's the one. I guess his mid-life crisis was more
 5 important than my future.
 6 JOHN: Wow. That's rough. And a lot of pressure. *(Pause)* But is
 7 cheating the way you really want to do it?
 8 KEVIN: It's not that big a deal. Half the kids in these advanced
 9 classes cheat — it's the only way to survive. I barely get
 10 any sleep as it is.
 11 JOHN: What if you get caught? What will your dad say then?
 12 Don't you think he really cares more about your character
 13 than a stupid A?
 14 KEVIN: Yeah. You'd think so, wouldn't you? But all my dad cares
 15 about is the end result. Heck, he'd *buy* me an A if he
 16 could. *(Pauses and then laughs sarcastically.)* Well, maybe if
 17 he hadn't blown all the money on the motorcycle that he
 18 barely even rides. Honestly, I think he's scared of it.
 19 JOHN: Maybe he'll sell it and give you the money for college.
 20 KEVIN: Are you kidding? Apparently washing and waxing the
 21 stupid thing is almost as cool as riding it.
 22 JOHN: Come to think of it. I have seen him washing it a lot. But
 23 I've never seen him ride it. You really think he's afraid of it?
 24 That is so funny.
 25 KEVIN: Yeah, it's a real laugh a minute. I'll be laughing all the
 26 way *not* to college.
 27 JOHN: Sorry. I didn't mean it that way.
 28 KEVIN: I know. It's not your fault my dad doesn't care about my
 29 future.
 30 JOHN: Maybe he just wants you to earn it. I don't know what
 31 my parents would do if I didn't have a scholarship in the
 32 bag. I think they'd pay ... but who knows? Maybe they
 33 wouldn't.
 34 KEVIN: Yeah, right. The same parents that bought you a brand
 35 new pickup for your sixteenth birthday would definitely *not*

1 pay your way to college.
 2 JOHN: Well, you never know. *(Pause.)* And it wasn't brand new.
 3 It was a demo, remember? It had like five thousand miles
 4 on it or something.
 5 KEVIN: Oh, poor thing. I forgot they got you that *used* piece of
 6 crap. I think my car has ... hmmm ... over a hundred-fifty
 7 thousand miles on it. And it's missing two hubcaps, a
 8 muffler, and the air conditioner hasn't worked since the
 9 fifties. And don't forget the paint job! I've got more colors
 10 on my car than your girlfriend has highlights in her hair!
 11 JOHN: No need to get nasty, Kevin. I'm just trying to help.
 12 KEVIN: Sorry. Guess I'm a little touchy. A life with no future can
 13 do that to a person.
 14 JOHN: You don't have to be so dramatic. I'm sure there are
 15 other ways to get into college. You got any disabilities
 16 you're hiding?
 17 KEVIN: Does a freakishly long middle toe count?
 18 JOHN: *(Laughing)* Probably not. What else have you got?
 19 KEVIN: Think that's it.
 20 JOHN: What about multi-cultural? Where are you from?
 21 KEVIN: Uh, Indiana. Don't think I'll get anything for that.
 22 JOHN: No, stupid. Your family. Your heritage. Where are they
 23 from?
 24 KEVIN: Uh ... Indiana. John, I am not multi-cultural. Look at
 25 me. I'm as white as rice. I don't think you look at me and
 26 think, hmmm ... that guy's ethnic.
 27 JOHN: There's got to be something else. *(Thinking)* You're poor,
 28 aren't you? Maybe you can get a grant or something.
 29 KEVIN: *I'm* poor. My parents aren't. Schools look at that. They
 30 think just because your parents have money that they're
 31 going to give it to you. They don't think they're going to
 32 spend it on Harleys and Hawaiian vacations.
 33 JOHN: Hawaii? When?
 34 KEVIN: Right after graduation.
 35 JOHN: They're taking you to Hawaii for graduation and you

1 didn't even tell me?

2 KEVIN: No. You're not listening, John. *They* are going to Hawaii.

3 Not me. Them. I think it's their "woo hoo we got the last

4 one out of the house" vacation.

5 JOHN: Oh, that's terrible. My parents would never go on

6 vacation without me.

7 KEVIN: Your parents don't go to the grocery without you, John.

8 They're going to freak when you're at college.

9 JOHN: I know. My mom is already crying.

10 KEVIN: My mom is crying because there's still six months left.

11 I think she has a secret calendar where she's counting

12 down the days until I leave.

13 JOHN: She does not! Your mom is going to be just as torn up

14 as mine. She just doesn't show it.

15 KEVIN: Yeah. That's what it is. Keep telling yourself that.

16 JOHN: Well, at least your parents don't suffocate you the way

17 mine do. It can be annoying, you know?

18 KEVIN: No. I don't know. But whatever. We all have our own

19 little dramas, don't we? Now stop whining about your

20 obviously "pitiful" *(Air quotes)* life so I can finish the

21 "dreaded cheating." *(Air quotes)*

22 ADAM: *(Finally stops studying and talks to them.)* Hey guys. I

23 heard you talking —

24 KEVIN: Great. What're you going to do, turn me in?

25 ADAM: No. Of course not. I just wanted to tell you that I'm

26 really good at chemistry. I'd be happy to help you study.

27 JOHN: See, Kevin. There is another way.

28 KEVIN: Maybe if you can cram a whole night of studying into

29 five minutes *(Glances at watch)* because that's about how

30 long we've got until Mr. Reynolds comes in.

31 ADAM: I'll do what I can ... *(Starts pulling out notes.)*

32 KEVIN: Who are you kidding? We all know five minutes of

33 cramming isn't going to help me.

34 ADAM: Well, we won't know until we try.

35 KEVIN: Thanks, but I think I'll stick with what I've got.

1 JOHN: You really think those scribbled notes on your hand and

2 up your arm are going to help? *(Inspecting arm)* You can

3 barely even read them.

4 KEVIN: It's a code. And they sure can't hurt. I think I know the

5 gist of things. I just need a little help. It's crazy that Mr.

6 Reynolds expects us to memorize all this anyway.

7 JOHN: It *is* a lot.

8 KEVIN: And when am I really going to need this? I mean, this is

9 a complete waste of brain cells. I think he just likes to

10 torture us.

11 JOHN: He does seem a lot happier on quiz days, doesn't he?

12 KEVIN: Of course he does! He loves seeing us suffer. Squirming

13 in our seats like pigs going to slaughter.

14 JOHN: For real! And have you noticed that whenever he writes

15 this stuff on the board he always has a book or notes in his

16 hands? He sure doesn't have this stuff memorized!

17 KEVIN: That's what I'm saying! Why should we? He's the

18 teacher. If anyone should know this baloney, it's him. What

19 a hypocrite, expecting us to know this by heart!

20 JOHN: Yeah! Pure hypocrisy!

21 KEVIN: That's why we should band together. Revolt against the

22 injustice. Come on, John! Cheat! Cheat! Cheat! *(JOHN,*

23 *caught in the moment, begins writing on his arm.)*

24 ADAM: *(ADAM grabs JOHN's arm to stop him.)* What are you

25 doing?

26 JOHN: You heard Kevin! We have to band together! Fight the

27 hypocrisy!

28 ADAM: This is ridiculous and you know it. Please tell me you're

29 not really buying into this load of bull.

30 JOHN: Well ... it does make sense.

31 KEVIN: That's right, John. Stay strong! Down with hypocrisy!

32 Up with cheating! Free the students! Free the students!

33 JOHN: *(Starts chanting as if in a trance.)* Free the students! Free

34 the students!

35 ADAM: *(ADAM grabs him by the shoulders and starts shaking him.)*

- 1 John! Listen to me! This is just Kevin's way of justifying
2 what he's doing. Don't let him suck you into this.
3 JOHN: (*Dazedly*) But the students ...
4 ADAM: The students are fine, John. Trust me. (*He pulls him out*
5 *of his chair.*) Come on, let's get you to the bathroom so you
6 can wipe that off your arm before Mr. Reynolds comes in
7 and sees it.
8 JOHN: (*Still in a daze, looks down at his arm, as if thinking "how*
9 *did that get there?"*) ... my arm ... ?
10 ADAM: (*Leading JOHN off*) It's going to be alright ...
11 KEVIN: (*Calls after them.*) Free the students! Free the students!
12 Band together!

Shoplifter

(4 Girls)

CHARACTERS:

Tracy: Shoplifts a bottle of nail polish.

Alexis: Rough girl. Encourages Tracy; tells her shoplifting is no big deal.

Kelly: Really upset that Tracy shoplifted. Tries to get her to return the polish.

Gina: Tries to buy the polish for Tracy, but Tracy won't let her.

SETTING:

Gina, Kelly, Tracy, and Alexis are walking in together from Stage Right. They stop Center Stage when Tracy takes a bottle of nail polish out of her purse.