

Spotlight Studios Auditions – Proof

Thank you for auditioning for the Spotlight Performing Arts production of *Proof*. We really appreciate your time and talent! Please be patient as we assemble the cast list. We will send an email if you are to be offered a part. Please understand that we have a limited number of parts to fill. Depending on audition turn-out, not everyone who auditions will be cast. We hope this doesn't deter you from audition for future shows and we thank you for your understanding.

If you have questions, please call Director John Barthelmes at 585-305-4767 or email him at johnb@SpotlightArts.com.

Rehearsals

All rehearsals take place at Spotlight Studios for the Performing Arts (3 Railroad Street in Fairport). Not all cast members will be called to every rehearsal. A detailed rehearsal schedule will be emailed to the cast.

Performances

Two performances are to be held: At the Spotlight Studios in Fairport, 3 Railroad Street in Fairport
Friday March 8 at 7:00 PM
Saturday March 9 at 7:00 PM

Catherine has inherited her late father's mathematical brilliance, but she is haunted by the fear that she might also share his debilitating mental illness. She has spent years caring for her now-deceased father, and upon his death, she feels left alone to pick up the pieces of her life without him. Caught between a new-found connection with Hal, one of her father's former students, and the reappearance of her sister, Claire, Catherine finds both her world and her mind growing increasingly unstable. Then Hal discovers a groundbreaking proof among the 103 notebooks Catherine's father left behind, and Catherine is forced to further question how much of her father's genius or madness will she inherit. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, David Auburn's *Proof* is a passionate, intelligent story about fathers and daughters, the nature of genius, and the power of love.

Catherine – (F, 25). A college dropout, she has spent several years at home caring for her mentally ill father. Their relationship, although sometimes antagonistic on the surface, was sustained by strong mutual affection. Although she is a highly intelligent woman, she has no direction in life. Catherine is worried that she may inherit her father's illness, and the signs of mental instability are already there.

Robert (M, 50-60s) was a famous mathematician who has just died of a heart attack in his fifties. He is already dead when the play begins, but he appears in the first scene in Catherine's imagination and returns in two later scenes, which flash back to earlier years. Robert was a mathematical genius. When he was in his early twenties, he made major contributions to game theory, algebraic geometry, and nonlinear operator theory. While he was still in his twenties, Robert was afflicted by a serious mental illness, which dogged the remainder of his life. He became so incapacitated that his daughter Catherine had to stay at home to care for him. Robert had a deep affection for Catherine.

Claire (F, late 20s-early 30s) is Catherine's twenty-nine-year-old efficient, practical, and successful sister. Unlike Catherine, she has inherited none of her father's erratic genius. Instead, she has made a career in New York as a currency analyst. Claire and Catherine have never gotten along well. Claire feels responsible for Catherine's welfare and wants her to move to New York, but Catherine resents what she sees as Claire's interference in her life

Hal (M, 28) is a twenty-eight-year-old mathematician who teaches at the University of Chicago. He also plays drums in a rock band made up of mathematicians. Hal is a former student of Robert's, whom he admires immensely, not only for the brilliance of his achievements in mathematics but because Robert helped him through a bad patch in his doctoral studies. Hal first met Catherine briefly four years earlier, and when he meets her again, he tries to make friends with her, and quickly becomes romantically involved with her.

Audition Scene 1 - Catherine and Hal

CATHERINE: It's okay. (Uncomfortable beat.) I'm sorry about yesterday. I wasn't helpful. About the work you're doing. Take as long as you need upstairs.

HAL: You were fine. I was pushy.

CATHERINE: I was awful.

HAL: No. My timing was terrible. Anyway, you're probably right.

CATHERINE: What?

HAL: About it being junk.

CATHERINE: Yes.

HAL: I read through a lot of stuff today, just skimming. Except for the book I stole -

CATHERINE: Oh, God, I'm sorry about that.

HAL: No, you were right. It was my fault.

CATHERINE: No.

HAL: The point is, that book - I'm starting to think it's the only lucid one, really. And there's no math in it.

CATHERINE: No.

HAL: I mean, I'll keep reading, but if I don't find anything in a couple of days...

CATHERINE: Back to the drums.

HAL: Yeah.

CATHERINE: And your own research.

HAL: Such as it is.

CATHERINE: What's wrong with it?

HAL: It sucks, basically.

CATHERINE: Harold.

HAL: My papers get turned down. For the right reasons - my stuff is trivial. The big ideas aren't there.

CATHERINE: It's not about big ideas. It's work. You've got to chip away at a problem.

HAL: That's not what your dad did.

CATHERINE: I think it was, in a way. He'd attack a question from the side, from some weird angle, sneak up on it, grind away at it. He was slogging. He was just so much faster than anyone else that from the outside it looked magical.

Audition Scene 2 - Claire and Catherine

CLAIRE: I'd still like you to come to New York.

CATHERINE: Yes. In January.

CLAIRE: I'd like you to move to New York.

CATHERINE: Move?

CLAIRE: Would you think about it? For me? You could stay with me and Mitch at first. There's plenty of room. Then you could get your own place. I've already scouted some apartments for you, really cute places.

CATHERINE: What would I do in New York?

CLAIRE: What are you doing here?

CATHERINE: I live here.

CLAIRE: You could do whatever you want. You could work, you could go to school.

CATHERINE: I don't know, Claire. This is pretty major.

CLAIRE: I realize that.

CATHERINE: I know you mean well. I'm just not sure what I want to do. I mean to be honest you were right yesterday. I do feel a little confused. I'm tired. It's been a pretty weird couple of years. I think I'd like to take some time to figure things out.

CLAIRE: You could do that in New York.

CATHERINE: And I could do it here.

CLAIRE: But it would be much easier for me to get you set up in an apartment in New York, and -

CATHERINE: I don't need an apartment, I'll stay in the house.

CLAIRE: We're selling the house. (Beat.)

CATHERINE: What?

CLAIRE: We - I'm selling it.

CATHERINE: WHEN?

CLAIRE: I'm hoping to do the paperwork this week. I know it seems sudden.

CATHERINE: No one was here looking at the place, who are you selling it to?

CLAIRE: The University. They've wanted the block for years.

CATHERINE: I LIVE HERE.

CLAIRE: Honey, now that Dad's gone it doesn't make sense. It's in bad shape. It costs a fortune to hear. It's time to let it go. Mitch agrees, it's a very smart move. We're lucky, we have a great offer -

CATHERINE: Where am I supposed to live?

CLAIRE: Come to New York.

CATHERINE: I can't believe this.

CLAIRE: It'll be so good. You deserve a change. This would be a whole new adventure for you.

CATHERINE: Why are you doing this?

CLAIRE: I want to help.

CATHERINE: By kicking me out of my house?

CLAIRE: It was my house too.

Audition Scene 3 - Catherine and Hal

CATHERINE: No! You can't take it.

HAL: I'm not "taking" it.

CATHERINE: This is what you wanted.

HAL: Oh come on, Jesus.

CATHERINE: You don't waste any time, do you? No hesitation. You can't wait to show them your brilliant discovery.

HAL: I'm trying to determine what this is.

CATHERINE: I'm telling you what it is.

HAL: You don't know!

CATHERINE: I WROTE it.

HAL: IT'S YOUR FATHER'S HANDWRITING. (Beat. Pained.) At least it looks an awful lot like the writing in the other books. Maybe your writing looks exactly like his, I don't know.

CATHERINE: (Softly) It does look like his. I didn't show this to anyone else. I could have. I wanted you to be the first to see it. I didn't know I wanted that until last night. It's ME. I trusted you.

HAL: I know.

CATHERINE: Was I wrong?

HAL: No. I -

CATHERINE: I should have known she wouldn't believe me but why don't you?

HAL: This is one of his notebooks. The exact same kind he used.

CATHERINE: I told you. I just used one of his blank books. There were extras.

HAL: There aren't any extra books in the study.

CATHERINE: There where when I started writing the proof. I bought them for him. He used the rest up later.

HAL: And the writing.

CATHERINE: You want to test the handwriting?

HAL: No. It doesn't matter. He could have dictated it to you, for Chrissake. It still doesn't make sense.

CATHERINE: Why not?

HAL: I'm a mathematician.

CATHERINE: Yes.

HAL: I know how hard it would be to come up with something like this. I mean it's impossible. You'd have to

be... you'd have to be your dad, basically. Your dad at the peak of his powers.

CATHERINE: I'm a mathematician too.

HAL: Not like your dad.

CATHERINE: Oh he's the only one who could have done this?

HAL: The only one I know.

CATHERINE: Are you sure?

HAL: Your father was the most -

CATHERINE: Just because you and the rest of the geeks worshipped him doesn't mean he wrote this proof, Hal!

HAL: He was the best. My generation hasn't produced anything like him. He revolutionized the field twice before he was twenty-two. I'm sorry, Catherine, but you took some classes at Northwestern for a few months.

CATHERINE: My education wasn't at Northwestern. It was living in this house for twenty-five years.

HAL: Even so, it doesn't matter. This is too advanced. I don't even understand most of it.

CATHERINE: You think it's too advanced.

HAL: Yes.

CATHERINE: It's too advanced for YOU.

HAL: You could not have done this work.

CATHERINE: But what if I did?

HAL: Well what if?

CATHERINE: It would be a real disaster for you, wouldn't it? And for the other geeks who barely finished their Ph.Ds, who are marking time doing lame research, bragging about the conferences they go to - WOW - playing in an awful band, and whining that they're intellectually past it at twenty-eight, BECAUSE THEY ARE.

Audition Scene 4 - Catherine and Robert

CATHERINE: How old were you? When it started.

ROBERT: Mid-twenties. Twenty-three, four. (Beat.) Is that what you're worried about?

CATHERINE: I've thought about it.

ROBERT: Just getting a year older means nothing, Catherine.

CATHERINE: It's not just getting older.

ROBERT: It's me. (Beat.)

CATHERINE: I've thought about it.

ROBERT: Really?

CATHERINE: How could I not?

ROBERT: Well if that's why you're worried you're not keeping up with the medical literature. There are all kinds of factors. It's not simply something you inherit. Just because I went bughouse doesn't mean you will.

CATHERINE: Dad...

ROBERT: Listen to me. Life changes fast in your early twenties and it shakes you up. You're feeling down. It's been a bad week. You've had a lousy couple years, no one knows that better than me. But you're gonna be okay.

CATHERINE: Yeah?

ROBERT: Yes. I promise you. Push yourself. Don't read so many magazines. Sit down and get the machinery going and I swear to God you'll feel fine. The simple fact that we can talk about this together is a good sign.

CATHERINE: A good sign?

ROBERT: Yes!

CATHERINE: How could it be a good sign?

ROBERT: Because! Crazy people don't sit around wondering if they're nuts.

CATHERINE: They don't?

ROBERT: Of course not. They've got better things to do. Take it from me. A very good sign that you're crazy is an inability to ask the question, "Am I crazy?"

CATHERINE: Even if the answer is yes?

ROBERT: Crazy people don't ask. You see?

CATHERINE: Right.

ROBERT: You see? You've just gotta think these things through. Now come on, what do you say? Let's call it a night, you go up, get some sleep, and then in the morning you can -

CATHERINE: Wait. No.

ROBERT: What's the matter?

CATHERINE: It doesn't work.

ROBERT: Why not?

CATHERINE: It doesn't make sense.

ROBERT: Where's the problem?

CATHERINE: The problem is you are crazy!

ROBERT: What difference does that make?

CATHERINE: You admitted - You just told me that you are.

ROBERT: So?

CATHERINE: You said a crazy person would never admit that.

ROBERT: Yeah, but it's... oh. I see.

CATHERINE: So?

ROBERT: It's a point.

CATHERINE: So how can you admit it?

ROBERT: Well. Because I'm also dead. (Beat.) Aren't I?

CATHERINE: You died a week ago.

Audition Scene 5 - Robert and Catherine

ROBERT: This is all a done deal? You're in.

CATHERINE: Yes.

ROBERT: You're sure.

CATHERINE: Yes.

ROBERT: Who pays for it?

CATHERINE: They're giving me a free ride, Dad. They've been great.

ROBERT: On tuition, sure. What about food, books, clothes, gas, meals out - do you plan to have a social life?

CATHERINE: I don't know.

ROBERT: You gotta pay your own way on dates, at least the early dates, say the first three, otherwise they expect something.

CATHERINE: The money will be fine. Claire's gonna help out.

ROBERT: When did you talk to Claire?

CATHERINE: I don't know, a couple weeks ago.

ROBERT: You talk to her before you talk to me?

CATHERINE: There were a lot of details to work out. She was great, she offered to take care of all the expenses.

ROBERT: That's a big step. A different city -

CATHERINE: It's not even a long-distance phone call.

ROBERT: It's a huge place. They're serious up there. I mean serious. Yeah the football's a disaster but the math guys don't kid around. You haven't been in school. You sure you're ready? You can get buried up there.

CATHERINE: I'll be all right.

ROBERT: You're way behind.

CATHERINE: I know.

ROBERT: A year, at least.

CATHERINE: Thank you, I KNOW. Look, I don't know if this is a good idea. I don't know if I can handle the work. I don't know if I can handle any of it.

ROBERT: For Chrissake, Catherine, you should have talked to me.

CATHERINE: Dad. Listen. If you ever... if for any reason it ever turned out that you needed me here full time again -

ROBERT: I WON'T. That's not [*what I'm talking about*] -

CATHERINE: I can always take a semester off, or -

ROBERT: No. Stop it. I just - the end of the MONTH? Why didn't you say something before?

CATHERINE: Dad, come on. It took a while to set this up, and until recently, until very recently, you weren't -

ROBERT: You just said yourself I've been fine.

CATHERINE: Yes, but I didn't know - I hoped, but I didn't know, no one knew this would last. I told myself to wait until I was sure about you. That you were feeling okay again. Consistently okay.

ROBERT: So I'm to take this conversation as a vote of confidence? I'm honored.

CATHERINE: Take it however you want. I believed you'd get better.

ROBERT: Well thank you very much.

CATHERINE: Don't thank me, I had to. I was living with you.

ROBERT: All right, that's enough, Catherine. Let's stay on the subject.

CATHERINE: This is the subject. There were LIBRARY BOOKS stacked up to the ceiling upstairs, do you remember that? You were trying to decode MESSAGES -

ROBERT: The freaking books are gone, I took them back myself. Why do you bring that garbage up.