

IT'S THEIR BIG TEST

MR. JOHNSON

(HE shouts a final call to the class)

Remember: Don't forget to study. Next Friday is the big test!

The STUDENTS exit. All but MEI LI who has once again stayed behind to speak with MR. JOHNSON after class. Unaware SHE is there, HE begins to gather up his papers. MEI LI calls to him.

MEI LI

Mr. Johnson?

His thoughts on the test, HE cannot hear her. Instead, HE begins to lament his own test anxieties.

(up music: It's Their Big Test)

MR. JOHNSON

IT'S THEIR BIG TEST
OR IS IT MINE?
IT'S THEIR GREAT QUEST
OR IS IT MINE?
IT'S THEIR FAILURE OR SUCCESS
OR IS IT MINE?
PERHAPS THAT IS THE REASON WHY
I'M TREMBLING INSIDE

IT REALLY IS A STRANGE AND FUNNY FEELING
WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW QUITE EXACTLY WHAT TO DO
IT SEEMS AS IF YOUR HEAD IS SIMPLY REELING
AND YOU ARE STUCK LIKE GLUE

IT'S THEIR BIG TEST
OR IS IT MINE?
IT'S THEIR UNREST

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

OR IS IT MINE?
IT'S THEIR GAME OF CHESS
OR IS IT MINE?
PERHAPS THAT IS THE REASON WHY
I'M TREMBLING INSIDE

*His troubled lament soon turns
into a rallying cry as a growing
sense of determination overtakes
him.*

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

I'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
I'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
IT'S PASS OR FAIL
IT'S TOOTH AND NAIL
I'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST

I'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
ON THIS POINT I OBSESS
WHEN BELL IS RUNG
AND DAY IS DONE
I'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
(determined)
I've got to pass this test!

*Re-enter the STUDENTS with
textbooks in hand.*

STUDENTS

WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
IT'S PASS OR FAIL
IT'S TOOTH AND NAIL
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST

WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
ON THIS POINT WE OBSESS
WHEN BELL IS RUNG
AND DAY IS DONE
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST

MR. JOHNSON/STUDENTS

We've got to pass this test!

*MEI LI tries again to speak but
is drowned out by the fevered
pitch of MR. JOHNSON and the
STUDENTS.*

MEI LI

MR. JOHNSON/STUDENTS

MR. JOHNSON, HOW CAN I EVER TELL YOU?

WE'VE GOT TO
WE'VE GOT TO
WE'VE GOT TO
PASS THIS TEST

MR. JOHNSON, HOW COULD I EVEN DARE?

IT'S PASS OR FAIL
IT'S TOOTH AND NAIL
WE'VE GOT TO
PASS THIS TEST

MR. JOHNSON, DO YOU EVER NOTICE ME?

WE'VE GOT TO
WE'VE GOT TO
WE'VE GOT TO PASS
THIS TEST

MR. JOHNSON, DO YOU EVEN CARE?

WHEN BELL IS RUNG
AND DAY IS DONE
WE'VE GOT TO
PASS THIS TEST

MR. JOHNSON & STUDENTS (Continued)

We've got to pass this test!

*Unable to get through to MR.
JOHNSON, MEI LI explodes in
frustration.*

MEI LI

MR. JOHNSON
DO YOU KNOW I AM HERE?
MR. JOHNSON
OR DO YOU EVEN CARE?
OR AM I JUST ANOTHER STUDENT
SITTING IN THEIR CHAIR?
OH NO
MR. JOHNSON THAT'S NOT FAIR

MEI LI softens her tone.

MEI LI (Continued)

THE HOURS I'VE LONGED TO TELL YOU THE WORDS
THEY'RE NOT IN A TEXTBOOK AND NOTHING I'VE HEARD
IT'S ONLY A FEELING AND MAY SOUND ABSURD
I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU I LOVE YOU
I THINK I'LL TELL YOU I LOVE YOU TODAY
OH PLEASE MR. JOHNSON LOOK MY WAY

*MR. JOHNSON continues to turn a
deaf ear to MEI LI as HE and the
other STUDENTS remain fixated on
the test.*

MR. JOHNSON/STUDENTS

WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
IT'S PASS OR FAIL
IT'S TOOTH AND NAIL
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST

WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
ON THIS POINT WE OBSESS
WHEN BELL IS RUNG
AND DAY IS DONE
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST

MR. JOHNSON/STUDENTS (Continued)

(determined)

We've got to pass this test!

MEI LI tries again.

MEI LI

Mr. Johnson?

I WANT A MAN
A MAN WHO IS GOOD
A MAN WHO HAS HONOR
AND LIVES LIKE HE SHOULD

MEI LI (Continued)

I KNOW SUCH A MAN
HE'S THE ONE MAN FOR ME
OH PLEASE MR. JOHNSON
OH HEAR ME MR. JOHNSON
OH PLEASE
I GET DOWN ON MY KNEES

At these words, MEI LI sinks to her knees in despair. Although startled by this display, MR. JOHNSON is quick to react.

MR. JOHNSON

What? What's this? Now, come up from off of there, Mei Li.
That's not right.

HE pulls MEI LI up from the floor and stands her straight.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Now be sensible, Mei Li. Think about what you're saying. Can you imagine?

A TEACHER AND A STUDENT
STROLLING IN THE PARK
GOING TO THE MOVIES
MEETING AFTER DARK?

A TEACHER AND A STUDENT
HOLDING HANDS
AND MAKING SPARKS?
I THINK NOT MEI LI
I THINK NOT

A 1920's "yaka-hula-hicky-dula" type melody strikes up the band.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

I'M SORRY MEI LI
THIS THING COULD NEVER BE
A TEACHER-STUDENT FLING
WOULD NEVER DO

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

THINK ABOUT IT MEI LI
NOT EVEN A CUP OF TEA
OUTSIDE OF THE WALLS OF THE CLASSROOM AND THE HALLS
WOULD EVER DO

REALISTICALLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT'D BE CRAZY
IF WE DID THE WHICKY-WHACKY
AND THE HOOTCHIE-KOO?

COMMON SENSIBLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D MAKE "THE DAILY"
IF WE DID THE TOUCHY-FEELY
AND THE HOW'S BY YOU?

TO YEARN FOR YOUR INSTRUCTOR IT
WOULD NEVER EARN A LAUREATE
AND I'D NOT LIKE MY JOB TO QUIT
FROM SUCH A SCANDAL

FOR ME THE JOY IS TEACHING AND
I DON'T NEED A REPRIMAND
FROM THOSE WHO'VE BEEN SO GRAND
TO LEND A HANDLE

REALISTICALLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE CRAZY
IF WE DID THE WHICKY WHACKY
AND THE WHOOP-TI-DOO

COMMON SENSIBLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D MAKE "THE DAILY"
IF WE DID THE TOUCHY-FEELY
AND THE YOU KNOW WHO

OUR CHANCES'D BE SO USELESS THEN
OUR FACES SPREAD ON CNN
I'D HAVE TO QUIT MY JOB
AND MOVE TO KENYA

MEI LI

Kenya?

MR. JOHNSON

Could be.

MEI LI

(undaunted)

IF YOU CHOSE THAT FAR OFF PLACE
I WOULD SURELY BRING MY LACE
AND WE COULD FIND A PLACE
IN NAIROBI

*At this, MR. JOHNSON throws out
his arms in exasperation as the
STUDENTS begin to surround the
two in a Busby Berkeley inspired
dance number.*

STUDENTS

REALISTICALLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE CRAZY
IF YOU DID THE WHICKY WHACKY
AND THE HOOTCHIE-KOO
COMMON SENSIBLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D MAKE "THE DAILY"
IF YOU DID THE TOUCHY-FEELY
AND THE YOU KNOW WHO

*Caught in the swirl of the
movement, MR. JOHNSON and MEI LI
gaze into one another's eyes for
one fleeting moment. Quickly
though they are separated by the
exuberance of the budding
scholars all about them.*

STUDENTS (Continued)

REALISTICALLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT'D BE CRAZY
IF YOU DID THE WHICKY WHACKY
AND THE WHOOP-TI-DOO
COMMON SENSIBLY MEI LI
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D MAKE "THE DAILY"
IF YOU DID THE TOUCHY-FEELY
AND THE HOOTCHIE-KOO
AND THE WHOOP-TI-DO
AND THE YOU KNOW WHO
AND THE HOW'S BY YOU

*The dance over, MR. JOHNSON
stares ahead pensively as HE
reprises his original lament.*

MR. JOHNSON

IT'S THEIR BIG TEST
OR IS IT MINE
IT'S THEIR GREAT QUEST
OR IS IT MINE
IT'S THEIR FAILURE OR SUCCESS
OR IS IT MINE
PERHAPS THAT IS THE REASON WHY
I'M TREMBLING INSIDE

*The STUDENTS, however, unwilling
to end on this note rally MR.
JOHNSON for one final cheer.*

MR. JOHNSON & STUDENTS

(with building intensity)

WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
IT'S PASS OR FAIL
IT'S TOOTH AND NAIL
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST

WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST
ON THIS POINT WE OBSESS
WHEN BELL IS RUNG
AND DAY IS DONE
WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST

THEY give a great hurrah.

WE'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST!

(end song)