

TWO-FACED: A TRAGEDY...SORT OF

By Sean Abley

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**TWO-FACED:
A TRAGEDY...SORT OF**

A One Act Comedy

By Sean Abley

SYNOPSIS: Mary Whatsername isn't popular or unpopular. She's just invisible. Now it's her senior year, and Mary is determined to make her mark on Generic High School in Your Town, USA. Through sheer force of will she manages to get on both the cheer squad and the Mathletes team. But trouble is just around the corner when she's expected to cheer on the Mathletes at the state DeMathalon. Using the conventions of broad comedy and Greek tragedy, TWO-FACED is the perfect comedy for schools looking for scripts with almost two-dozen great roles for girls. The length is also perfect for festivals and conventions.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 female, 4 male, 14 either, 1-30 extras/chorus possible)

- MARY WHATSERNAME (f).....Not popular, not unpopular, just unknown by almost everyone. Her cheerleader alias is PERSIMMON, and her Mathletes alias is ABACUS.
(138 lines)
- JANELLE (f) Mary's best (only) friend. Sort of semi-gothy. Happy with her social position, suspicious of any clique. *(48 lines)*
- NIKE (m/f)..... Captain of the cheer squad. A taskmaster. *(40 lines)*
- PYTHAGORA (m/f)..... Captain of the Mathletes. A taskmaster. Loves math, therefore loves logic, therefore hates mess and clutter.
(44 lines)
- WENDY (f)..... Aka Wendy White Belt because she wore a white belt once. Always a fashion disaster, trying to be a taste-maker, loves herself the way she is. *(17 lines)*

- CHANDLER WHATSERNAME(m) Mary's brother. A year older, already graduated. Was part of the popular crowd while in high school, now is the kind of guy who comes back to hang out at his old school. (14 lines)
- GARRETT BISHOP (m) Chandler's friend. A year older than Mary, already graduated. Was probably very popular when he was in high school. Not very nice or smart. The kind of guy who comes back to hang out at his old school. (20 lines)
- BAUMGARTNER (m) New student at Generic High School. Just a regular guy interested in Mary. (33 lines)
- ACHILLES (m) Baumgartner's friend. Has a bum heel. (7 lines)
- MELISSA SPLITZ (m/f) A member of the cheer squad. (Matthew if male.) (6 lines)
- FLIPPINGTON (m/f) A member of the cheer squad. (3 lines)
- ALGORITHMIA (m/f) A member of the Mathletes. (Algorithm if male.) (8 lines)
- CHORUS LEADER (m/f) (43 lines)
- OLD MAN RICKETS (m/f) Old, crotchety. (Lady if female) (2 lines)
- MISS WARREN (m/f) Librarian. (Mr. if male) (2 lines)
- DAVID (m/f) A victim. (Donna if female) (3 lines)
- REFEREE (m/f) Can be played by the Chorus Leader. (7 lines)
- WORKMAN ONE (m/f) (1 line)
- WORKMAN TWO (m/f) (1 line)
- MATH TEACHER (m/f) (3 lines)
- FRESHMAN NERD (m/f) (2 lines)

CHARACTERS WITH EXTRAS POSSIBILITIES:

- ONSTAGE CHORUS Includes all characters except MARY, plus as many additional EXTRA chorus members as desired. (44 lines)

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CHEERLEADERS (m/f)Any number, mixed female and male if desired. *(11 lines)*

MATHLETES (GENERIC HIGH). Any number, mixed female and male if desired. *(14 lines)*

MATHLETES (OPPOSING TEAM) From Wrong Side of the Tracks High School and Cross Town Rivalry High School. Equal in number to Generic High Mathletes. *(4 lines)*

SETTING: Generic High School in Your Town, USA

TIME: Present

DURATION: 40 Minutes

PRODUCTION NOTES

TWO-FACED: A TRAGEDY...SORT OF is a comedy disguised as a classical Greek tragedy. As such, the acting style should be broad, presentational, and in the case of the CHORUS LEADER, filled with self-importance. Most of the characters are archetypes, with very little subtext (with the possible exception of MARY.)

THE CHEERLEADERS AND THEIR CHEERS

The CHEERLEADERS' cheers and routines are left to the production's interpretation. The cheer lyrics are included here, but feel free to add to them, and craft amazing cheer/step routines where appropriate. Ideally, the CHEERLEADERS are a walking, talking, cheering, stepping unit that always move and speak like the many parts of a well-oiled machine. As a group, they should feel like a shark.

POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Feel free to change pop culture references and jokes to something more current or topical.

CHARACTER NOTES

CHORUS LEADER and CHORUS – If the CHORUS is largely made up of actors playing other characters, all members of the cast should be onstage as part of the CHORUS, stepping down into the scene as needed, then back up into the CHORUS, never leaving the stage. When indicated by CHORUS (ALL), the dialogue should be spoken by all chorus members (except those participating in the scene as their individual characters.) When dialogue is attributed to CHORUS, as many or as few voices may be included as desired, although the intent is that there are at least a handful of voices included on these lines. CHORUS MEMBER means just one person speaking. Feel free to orchestrate chorus dialogue as needed – sentences can be broken up between voices, different sentences can be spoken by different groups of chorus members, etc. However, when a line of dialogue is attributed to any version of CHORUS, the line(s) should be delivered from the CHORUS area of the stage – the CHORUS member(s) do *not* come down and enter the scene unless specifically directed to by the stage directions.

If there are enough CHORUS members who aren't playing other roles, they should stay onstage for the entire show. Actors playing other characters may enter and exit from offstage if needed, but the preferred effect is the actors step out of the CHORUS for their specific role, then back up into the CHORUS between scenes.

MARY is the only character to who does not enter and exit from the CHORUS. She enters and exits from offstage.

Actors may be double and triple cast. The intended impression of the show on the audience is one actor (MARY) in the center of a whirlwind of other actors who are constantly transforming around her.

COSTUMES

MARY'S onstage costume changes can happen either behind a movable screen, or with costume pieces added and removed as appropriate.

SET

The set should be a unit set with many levels, plus chairs/cubes that can be moved around the stage for different settings. The CHORUS should have their own area, preferably some form of risers, so everyone can be seen and enter/exit easily.

LIGHTS

Ideally, there should only be two blackouts during the show – when MARY is being torn apart, and the end. All other scene transitions should happen in the light, overlapping each other, to keep the pace of the show moving quickly.

PROP LIST

- Population signs
- Old paperback book
- Rolling dry-erase board/chalk board
- Markers/chalk
- Referee whistle
- Poster
- Roll of tape
- Umbrellas (multiple for chorus)
- iPod and headphones
- Laptop
- Notepad and pen
- Empty soda can
- Laundry bag full of clothes
- Giant textbook
- Bottles of water
- Cellphone
- “Mental Breakdown Monthly” magazine

PRODUCTION HISTORY

TWO-FACED: A TRAGEDY...SORT OF was commissioned by, and performed at Colonial Heights High School on November 16, 2012. The production was directed by Ruth Wareham, stage-managed by Joseph Meagher, assistant stage-managed by Jessica Ayscue. The cast was as follows:

CHORUS LEADER.....Erin Brannan
MARY WHATSHERNAME.....Elizabeth Gates
JANELLEKristen Malbone
NIKEJordan Baker
PYTHAGORAS.....Jeremiah Lucas
WENDY WHITEBELTJordyn Trull
BAUMGARTNER.....Joseph Bucy
ACHILLESSheldon Blanks
MELISSA SPLITZElyse Richey
FLIPPINGTON.....Emily Smith
ALGORITHMIAMelanie Hawkins
CHORUSXavier Apperwhite, Karrie Conner,
Kevin Figueroa, Alexandra Hsain,
Oliveia Popp, Casey Ridpath

NOTE: The original production used fewer roles than the final, published edition.

Dedicated to all the Wendy Whitebelts out there, wherever they may be.

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP. On a bare stage is CHORUS LEADER in a spotlight, with the CHORUS [made up of all the characters in the play except MARY, and as many additional voices as desired] behind him/her. They are all dressed in choral robes. The CHORUS LEADER speaks to the audience.

CHORUS LEADER: Welcome to Your Town, USA.

CHORUS: (Holding up signs with the numbers for the population.)
Population one hundred, sixty five thousand, three hundred and eighteen.

CHORUS LEADER: Oh, wait. Old Man Rickets, that old dude who always threatened to shoot anybody who trespassed on his lawn –

OLD MAN RICKETS enters from the CHORUS into a spotlight. He takes off his choral robe to reveal his costume.

OLD MAN RICKETS: I'll put one right between yer eyes!

CHORUS LEADER: -- just kicked the bucket from terminal crotchetyness.

OLD MAN RICKETS: I did? (Drops dead.)

CHORUS flips the population sign that read "18" so it now reads "17."
SFX: "Ding!"

CHORUS LEADER: How sad.

CHORUS: Is it?

CHORUS LEADER: There are a lot of sad stories in Your Town, USA. This is a Greek-ish sort of tragedy, after all. Some are sad, like Old Man Rickets. Some are ironic, like Miss Warren, the librarian –

MISS WARREN, taking off her choral robe to reveal her costume, steps out of the CHORUS into a spotlight. She is holding a very weathered paperback book.

MISS WARREN and CHORUS: (Finger over lips.) Shhhhh!

CHORUS LEADER: Who died after being exposed to a rare bacteria cultivated in a moist copy of "The Hunger Games."

MISS WARREN: (*Sniffing book.*) My goodness this smells musty –
(*Drops dead.*)

CHORUS LEADER: Some are unfortunate, like David –

DAVID, taking off his choral robe, steps out of the CHORUS and into a spotlight.

DAVID: (*Nervous.*) You're not going to kill me, are you?

CHORUS LEADER: Of course not. David accidentally swallowed a bug while jogging –

DAVID: Gross, but not the end of the world.

CHORUS LEADER: Which made him choke, stumble, and fall off a bridge onto a busy highway.

DAVID: You said you weren't going to kill me!

CHORUS LEADER: I'm not. But that SUV that's about to hit you will...

CHORUS: Look out!

DAVID runs away.

CHORUS LEADER: But the tale we're going to tell tonight isn't just sad, ironic, or unfortunate. It's all three of those things rolled up into a big ball of crazy. We present the story of Mary Whatsername.

CHORUS LEADER gestures to one side of the stage where a spotlight lights an empty space. MARY has entered from the other side of the stage, and stands in darkness.

MARY: Are you kidding me?

CHORUS: Sorry. My bad.

A spotlight comes up on MARY.

MARY: This is my story, and I can't even get the spotlight on me?

CHORUS LEADER: This is Mary, the most unnoticed girl in school. Our tale begins in the coliseum, where the masses have gathered to watch athletes engaged in a violent deathmatch – the DeMathalon!

LIGHTS UP FULL. The CHORUS takes off their robes [revealing their costumes underneath] and tosses them offstage with a cheer. The CHEERLEADERS leave the CHORUS and position themselves for cheering. The G.H.S. MATHLETES leave the CHORUS and position themselves at a rolling marker board. The OPPOSING MATHLETES position themselves at an opposing marker board. A REFEREE steps out.

CHEERLEADERS: (*Cheering.*) Two plus four plus six plus eight/ Your equations just won't equate! Your guidance counselor says 'Go drive a bus!' 'Cuz you can't do Calculus! Generic High! Generic High! G-g-g-g-generic High!

REFEREE: In this corner for the final round, the reigning champions, Generic High School!

Half the CHORUS cheers, while the rest jeer.

REFEREE: And in this corner, the challengers, Wrong Side of the Tracks High School!

The other half of the CHORUS cheers, while the rest jeer.

REFEREE: Mathletes, take your places!

PYTHAGORA steps up to the G.H.S. board. An OPPOSING MATHLETE steps up to their board.

REFEREE: Pens up!

PYTHAGORA and the OPPOSING MATHLETE ready their dry-erase markers. REFEREE blows his whistle.

REFEREE: What is the value of X?

The competition begins. The CHORUS cheers the teams on. Both Mathletes begin furiously writing out a complicated calculus equation. The CHEERLEADERS start stepping and cheering, starting out low and slow-paced, increasing their speed and volume gradually as the Mathletes battle it out. [This should play as a musical score for the scene, as if it were under a car chase or battle in a film.]

CHEERLEADERS: *(With increasing intensity.)* What. Is. X? What. Is. X? What. Is. X? *(Repeat.)*

An OPPOSING MATHLETE suddenly clutches her head in pain.

OPPOSING MATHLETE: *Aauugh! My cerebrum is locking! (Drops to the ground, convulsing.)*

OPPOSING MATHLETE CAPTAIN: *Push her to the side! (To Referee.)* Substitution!

REFEREE: *(Blows whistle, gestures for new Mathlete.)* Substitution on the field!

The OPPOSING MATHLETES roll their downed comrade off to the side. Another OPPOSING MATHLETE steps in and continues the equation. The CHEERLEADERS and the CHORUS continue until finally PYTHAGORA finishes the equation.

PYTHAGORA: $\sin^2 X + x^3 + C!$

REFEREE: *Correct! (Blows whistle.)* Game, set and match to Generic High School!

The CHEERLEADERS and CHORUS cheer and celebrate. After the noise dies down a bit, the two MATHLETE teams meet and shake hands.

OPPOSING MATHLETE CAPTAIN: Good match.

PYTHAGORA: Thanks. Sorry about your teammate's brain.

OPPOSING MATHLETE CAPTAIN: What? Oh, that. No worries.
We're a magnet school. Plenty more where that came from.

The OPPOSING MATHLETES exit. The CHEERLEADERS, including the captain NIKE, approach the MATHLETES with the precision of a drill team.

NIKE: Good match, Pythagora.

PYTHAGORA: Thanks, Nike.

NIKE: Looks like you guys will be going to state yet again.

PYTHAGORA: Was there ever a question?

NIKE: Uh huh. Anyway, good game. *(To the CHEERLEADERS.)*
Cheer squad! Formation!

The CHEERLEADERS immediately snap into formation.

NIKE: Locker room!

CHEERLEADERS: *(Synchronized trotting exit, cheering.)* We just
cheered your long division/We'll blow your mind with our precision!
Cheer squad! Ch-ch-ch-cheer squad!

MARY tries to say "Hello" to the CHEERLEADERS, who ignore her as they exit.

MARY: Hey, the cheerleaders! Those were some awesome math
cheers today! I can't believe you found a rhyme for 'calculus.'

PYTHAGORA: Come on, Mathletes. Time for a post game cool
down with some SAT practice tests and ginkgo biloba shots.
Prime number sound off!

MATHLETES: *(A la military drill chanting, as they march off.)* One!
Three! Five! Seven! Eleven! Etc.

MATHLETES exit. MARY tries to congratulate them, but they ignore her.

MARY: Hey Mathletes! Wow, that match sure was the value of X-
citing. Get it? The value of X...citing....

CHORUS LEADER: Enter Janelle –

JANELLE enters.

CHORUS: The best friend.

JANELLE: Hey, Mary!

CHORUS LEADER: They've been best friends since third grade.

CHORUS MEMBER: They've stuck together even when they were both in love with Tommy Decker in sixth grade.

JANELLE: Oh, geez...

CHORUS MEMBER: And through puberty and Janelle's horrible acne that made everyone call her "That's not delivery, it's Di-Janelle." (*ALT. "Pizzalicious."*)

JANELLE: (*Humiliated.*) Seriously?

CHORUS MEMBER: And when Janelle was totally humiliated when she forgot to put her shirt on after gym and went to biology in her sports bra –

JANELLE: Okay, that's enough!

CHORUS: –today.

JANELLE: Shut up!!

CHORUS: Hey Mary, wasn't that a killer DeMathalon?

MARY: I guess so...

JANELLE: Are you kidding? Did you see how Pythagora figured out the squaring function of X?

MARY: Yeah, thrilling. I can't believe they wouldn't even talk to me after the match. I've known Nike since grade school, and Pythagora sits right next to me in AP Pottery.

JANELLE: What do you care if they notice you or not? Some people are just part of the crowd, some people are on the cover of magazines. The trick is to just enjoy what you have.

MARY: I'm not even part of the crowd.

A STUDENT enters, crosses the stage and bumps into MARY.

STUDENT: Oh, sorry. I thought you were a doorway. (*Exits.*)

MARY: See?!

JANELLE: You're overreacting.

Two WORKMEN approach MARY.

WORKMAN ONE: Okay, let's take out these panes of glass and replace them with one large pane.

MARY: Excuse me!

WORKMAN TWO: Oh, sorry, miss. We thought you were a window.

WORKMEN exit.

JANELLE: Okay, I admit, that was kind of weird. But you've got your own thing going on.

MARY: What thing? Name one thing I've got going on.

JANELLE: Well, you've got... that... your... that thing you do...

MARY: Exactly. This is my senior year, and I'm not popular. I'm not unpopular. I'm just...not. Generic High School doesn't even know I exist.

JANELLE: Well I, for one, don't care what other people think or don't think about you. You're my best friend and that's all that matters.

WENDY WHITE BELT enters, proudly wearing some sort of fashion disaster. She strikes pose after pose, and walks down an imaginary catwalk, the entire time she's on stage. MUSIC: Wendy's theme music, something appropriate for a fashion nerd. NOTE: This could be sung by the CHORUS rather than played electronically if appropriate.

CHORUS LEADER: Enter Wendy White Belt.

CHORUS, MARY and JANELLE: Hello, Wendy White Belt.

WENDY: I know you're all jealous of my awesome style!

CHORUS MEMBER: Hey Wendy, is that part of the Reject Collection by Your Mom?

WENDY: You wish you were amazing enough to wear my fashions!

CHORUS MEMBER: Hey Wendy, I hear you actually dropped a stick of gum on the bathroom floor, picked it up and chewed it!

WENDY: There's no such thing as bad press!

CHORUS MEMBER: Hey Wendy, why are you so lame?

WENDY: Stop talking to that mirror.

CHORUS: Ooooh, burn!

WENDY crosses past MARY and JANELLE.

WENDY: Hi Mary. Hi Janelle. Sorry, can't stop to chat. I'm getting braces today. Not because I need them. Because I think they're awesome. *(Exits.)*

MUSIC: Wendy's theme music plays her out.

CHORUS MEMBER: Why do they call her 'Wendy White Belt'?

CHORUS MEMBER: Because she wore a white belt to school –

CHORUS: – once.

MARY: Wait, we call her 'Wendy White Belt' because she wore a white belt to school...once?

CHORUS LEADER: High school.

CHORUS: It ain't for the weak.

JANELLE: I do have to admit, her theme music is kinda cool.

MARY: Man, I would kill for the attention that girl gets.

JANELLE: So, wait, you just want attention? Good or bad?

MARY: It's senior year. I need to make a mark in this school. Once their eyes are on me, it won't matter why they looked.

CHORUS LEADER: Freeze!

MARY and JANELLE freeze in place. BAUMGARTNER and ACHILLES enter on the other side of the stage.

CHORUS LEADER: Split scene! Baumgartner –

CHORUS: The new kid at school.

CHORUS LEADER: – and his friend Achilles advance the plot in this way.

BAUMGARTNER: Whoa, Achilles, who is that?

ACHILLES: That's Janelle. She's okay in a sort of goth-plus-
"Twilight" sort of way.

BAUMGARTNER: No, not her. The other one.

ACHILLES: What other one? She's standing next to a wall.

(Realizes.) Oh, her? That's Mary Whatsername. Truly unremarkable in every way. You're new here, you'll find out.

BAUMGARTNER. I think she's awesome.

ACHILLES: Only if 'awesome' has a new definition, like 'sick' means cool. Let's go, man.

ACHILLES leads BAUMGARTNER out. BAUMGARTNER accidentally steps on ACHILLES heel.

ACHILLES: Ow! My heel!

BAUMGARTNER: Sorry!

They exit.

CHORUS LEADER: Cut back to—

MARY and JANELLE unfreeze.

MARY: Brrrr, it's cold in here. Did you just get a chill?

JANELLE: Yeah, weird.

MARY: Anyway, it's my senior year. I'm going to get those cheerleaders and those Mathletes to accept me into their bulletproof cliques if it kills me!

JANELLE: Mary, no offense, but you're not cheerleader or Mathlete material. There's no way you'll be able to get them to accept you.

MARY: You don't think I can do it?

JANELLE: The more important question is why would you want to?

STUDENT TWO and STUDENT THREE enter. One has a poster with "Go G.H.S. Mathletes! Take State!", the other a roll of tape.

STUDENT TWO: Where should we put these?

STUDENT THREE: Put one here on this blank wall.

They tape a poster to MARY's face, then exit.

MARY: (*Furious.*) That's it!

SFX: Thunder crack. Thunderstorm. Lightning strikes. MUSIC: Triumphant, possibly ominous, underscore plays during MARY's monologue. MARY is isolated in a spotlight. The CHORUS huddles under umbrellas.

MARY: I will no longer be treated like a wall, window, or other blank object! I will be noticed! I will be a member of both the cheerleaders and the Mathletes! I will make them notice me, and when they do, they will love me! Everyone will love me! I promise you - When I'm done, everyone will know Mary Whatsername!

SFX: Thunder crack, then MUSIC out, LIGHTS restore. MARY notices JANELLE is listening to music via her headphones.

JANELLE: OMG this new (*Current band or singer.*) track is off the hook. What were you saying?

MARY storms out with JANELLE close behind as LIGHT SHIFT to the CHORUS.

CHORUS LEADER: And with that, like a four-year-old learning to ride a bike on a hill that ends in a brick wall, our tragedy is set in motion. Now it's time to set up the love interest. Our tragic heroine is now at home in her bedroom.

The CHORUS sets up a bedroom. MARY enters and begins typing on her laptop.

CHORUS LEADER: She pours her heart out to her most trusted friend – her super secret, private, password-protected blog.

CHORUS MEMBER: (*Speaking what Mary is writing.*) “Dear super secret, private, password-protected blog, I’ve set a plan in motion that will guarantee everyone will finally see me. I will be noticed! First at Generic High School, then all over Your Town U.S.A., then the world! My star will burn so bright, people would go blind if they look directly at me! So I’ll sell them sunglasses to protect their eyes and they will thank me profusely! And if they don’t, planet Earth will rue the day, for I will destroy them all!!!! (*Maniacal laugh.*) AH HA HA HA HA!!

MARY: (*To CHORUS MEMBER.*) Hey! That’s not what I’m writing!

CHORUS MEMBER: Artistic license.

MARY: Ugh. Why couldn’t my story be a musical?

CHANDLER enters.

CHANDLER: Hey, Larry.

CHORUS LEADER: Enter the older brother –

CHORUS: Chandler Whatsername.

MARY: What are you doing home from college? And stop calling me boy’s names! You’re just lucky, nothing lame rhymes with ‘Chandler.’

CHANDLER: Whatever, Gary.

MARY: And get out of my room!

CHANDLER: You gonna make me, Jerry?

MARY: I don’t make genetic aberrations, I’m just related to one.

CHORUS: Burn!

CHANDLER: Your face is a genetic aberration.

CHORUS: Double burn!

MARY: So’s your mom.

CHANDLER: My mom is your mom, genius.

CHORUS: (*Game show losing sound.*) Wah-waaahhh.

MARY: Whatever, Losertron 3000. Get out!

CHORUS LEADER: Enter the love interest.

CHORUS: Garrett Bishop!

GARRETT enters. MUSIC: Garrett’s theme music, something appropriate for a heartthrob. MARY swoons.

GARRETT: Hey.

CHORUS MEMBER: *(Quoting an earlier entry on Mary's blog.)*

"Entry posted one year ago. Dear super secret, private password-protected blog, Garrett Bishop is not only a senior, but he's smoking hot enough to win, like "X-Factor" or something."

MARY: *(To CHORUS MEMBER.)* Shut up!

GARRETT: So are we gonna get out of here or what? I don't want to spend Spring Break in this dog kennel. Let's go hang out at the high school.

MARY: Ha ha, you're so funny! This is my room, silly! Hey, remember that one time last year when you were drinking that soda and you threw the can in the street and I was, like, 'Hey, you should be in the can throwing Olympics!?' I was totally just joking because they don't have can throwing in the Olympics, but you could totally be in the Olympics in, like, javelin or something.

GARRETT: Who are you?

CHANDLER: That's the dog that lives in this kennel. Let's get out of here. Later, Barry.

GARRETT: You call your dog 'Barry'?

CHANDLER and GARRETT exit.

MARY: He's awesome! *(Exits.)*

CHORUS LEADER: In order to implement her devious plan, our tragic heroine must gather all the information she can from the warrior clan.

CHORUS: You're a poet and don't even know it.

CHORUS LEADER: It's a Greek tragedy. What do you expect? *(Hears something.)* Hark!

CHORUS snaps their hands to their ears, as if hearing something in the distance.

CHORUS LEADER: The warriors approach!

The CHEERLEADERS enter, stepping and chanting. MARY spies on them from the side.

CHEERLEADERS: (*Chanting.*) You think you got what it takes to cheer? You don't. You think you'll make it to cheer squad this year? You won't. Step up, step up, step up if ya got the guts! Step back, step back, step back you must be nuts! Generic! High! School! Bring your A-game, don't act a fool! Cheer squad!

NIKE: Melissa Splitz, you were a quarter of a second late on that second verse! That's twice in the past six months!

MELISSA SPLITZ: Sorry, Nike! It won't happen again!

NIKE and the rest of the CHEERLEADERS back MELISSA SPLITZ into a corner.

NIKE: You bet it won't happen again! We don't like quarter steppers at Generic High.

MELISSA SPLITZ: I know!

NIKE: Do you? I'm not so sure. I think you need to do some cheer drills to really solidify the concept of "No failure" into your brain. Flippington!

FLIPPINGTON: Yes, ma'am!

NIKE: Give me a word for Melissa Splitz's cheer drills.

FLIPPINGTON: Orange!

CHEERLEADERS: Oooooohhhh....

NIKE: Ten cheers using 'orange' as the rhyme scheme. Go!

MELISSA SPLITZ: (*Cheering.*) Your fake tan looks way too orange—

LIGHTS SHIFT to MARY, cutting off MELISSA SPLITZ, who freezes along with all the other CHEERLEADERS. BAUMGARTNER is behind MARY.

BAUMGARTNER: Hey.

MARY: (*Startled.*) Geez! Don't sneak up on me like that!

BAUMGARTNER: I didn't really sneak. I kind of just walked.

MARY: (*Attention back toward the cheerleaders.*) Uh huh...

BAUMGARTNER: Why are you watching the cheerleaders?

MARY: Research.

BAUMGARTNER: You want to be on the cheer squad? That doesn't seem your speed.

MARY: I don't *want* to be on the cheer squad. I'm *going* to be on the cheer squad.

BAUMGARTNER: Huh. Well, it will be cool to be able to watch you up there when you make it.

MARY: Sure will. I gotta pay attention to this.

LIGHTS SHIFT so MELISSA SPLITZ and the CHEERLEADERS are now lit and unfrozen.

MELISSA SPLITZ: (*As if finishing a cheer.*) – your hinge! (*Drops to the ground, exhausted.*)

NIKE: And they say it's impossible to rhyme the word 'orange.' Good job, Splitz.

MELISSA SPLITZ: Thank you, ma'am.

NIKE: Back on your feet! Cheer squad, formation!

The CHEERLEADERS snap into formation.

NIKE: Cheer trot, double time, locker room!

The CHEERLEADERS fast trot off.

MARY: Very informative.

BAUMGARTNER: We should hang out some time. You know, when you're not so busy...spying.

CHORUS LEADER: (*Hears something.*) Hark!

CHORUS snaps their hands to their other ear.

CHORUS LEADER: The other warriors approach.

MARY: Gotta reposition!

MARY moves to a new hiding place, ignoring BAUMGARTNER, as the MATHLETES enter. Unlike the CHEERLEADERS, the MATHLETES move slowly, like a group of monks, chanting. SFX: Church bells pealing.

MATHLETES: (*Chanting.*) Sine...cosine...tangent...isosceles...tetrahe
dron...

PYTHAGORA: What is the value of 'X'?

MATHLETES: The value of 'X' is the value of 'X'.

PYTHAGORA: Correct.

The MATHLETES relax.

PYTHAGORA: Okay, beating Wrong Side of the Tracks High was a no brainer, literally. But we need to train even harder for state, because we're up against Cross Town Rivalry High. Those guys are smart, and they're sneaky. They'll carry the one and you won't even know it until after they've figured out the quotient.

ALGORITHMIA: Train harder? My brain already has more math in it than a calculator. You're pushing us too hard!

MATHLETES: (*Say the word.*) Gasp!

CHORUS LEADER: Oh, no she didn't!

CHORUS: (*Snaps fingers.*) She did.

PYTHAGORA: Too hard, Algorithmia? If Sir Isaac Newton, the Father of Calculus, had that attitude, we'd still be counting on our fingers!

ALGORITHMIA: I'm sorry. I'm just tired!

PYTHAGORA: Well, you're about to get even more tired. As punishment, you're going to factor out pi to the fiftieth decimal!

ALGORITHMIA: Fiftieth?! But that's --

MATHLETES: Do it!

PYTHAGORA: Go!

ALGORITHMIA: (*Concentrating.*) Three point one four one five nine-

LIGHTS SHIFT onto MARY and BAUMGARTNER only. The MATHLETES freeze in place.

BAUMGARTNER: Wow, harsh! I don't think I even know the first four digits of pi.

MARY: (*Taking notes, only half paying attention to Baumgartner.*) Fascinating.

BAUMGARTNER: But hey, we can't all be Mathletes, can we?

MARY: I can definitely be a Mathlete.

BAUMGARTNER: And that cheer squad. They're so athletic. Not sure I could handle that.

MARY: I could handle being a cheerleader.

BAUMGARTNER. Well, I bet whatever you do, you'll be good at it. (A beat.) Okay, well, I'm gonna get out of here. Good luck on...whatever it is you're up to. (Waits a moment, she doesn't answer, exits.)

LIGHTS SHIFT so the MATHLETES are now lit and unfrozen.

ALGORITHMIA: (Finishing her calculations, exhausted.) five...one...zero. (Clutches her head in pain.) Auggghhh...

PYTHAGORA: Let that be a lesson to you! Don't question my training methods. Now, that being said, I do think we should pamper our brains for a day, let them refresh before we get into hardcore training for state.

MATHLETE: I heard there's a great new spa for Mensa members called Brain Wash. They have a full brain massage and brain sea salt exfoliating scrub for only fifty bucks!

PYTHAGORA: Perfect. What is the value of X?

MATHLETES: The value of X is the value of X...

The MATHLETES get into formation and exit while chanting.

MATHLETES: (Chanting.) Sine...cosine...tangent...isosceles...tetrahedron...

MARY: Okay, now I'm ready! (Exits.)

CHORUS LEADER: Phase Two of the plan –

CHORUS: Infiltrate the enemy camp.

CHORUS LEADER: Fast forward three weeks later. Our tragic heroine has secretly collected data every day for the past three weeks. She now enters enemy territory.

CHEERLEADERS enter, chanting and stepping.

CHEERLEADERS: (Chanting and stepping.) We. Are. In. Sync. We. Are. In. Sync. We're not a boyband from the 90's! We're a cheer squad if you do or don't please. Generic! High! School!

MARY [as PERSIMMON] enters.

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) I'm here!

NIKE: And you are?

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) My name is Persimmon, and I'm here to audition for the cheer squad.

CHEERLEADERS and CHORUS: (*Burst out laughing, then immediately go silent when NIKE gives them the cut off signal.*)

NIKE: Audition? You don't audition for cheer squad. You're born into cheer squad. What makes you think you have what it takes?

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) Test me.

NIKE: Alright. Do a cheer, with moves, based on the next three subjects we give you.

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) Sure, I can do –

NIKE: Abraham Lincoln!

MARY: (As PERSIMMON. *Cheering and stepping.*) He scored high on his LSATs (*El-sats*)! Now he rocks stovepipe hats! Abe Lincoln! Hey hey! Abe Lincoln!

FLIPPINGTON: The Periodic Table of Elements!

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) Ten-point-eight-one don't want no sass! That's boron's relative atomic mass! Two, four, six, eight! You can't lift your atomic weight! You're inert gas, hey hey! Inert gas!

MELISSA SPLITZ: The novel "Crime and Punishment"!

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) Raskolnikov took an axe! Killed Alyona with forty whacks! Got sent to Siberia! Works in the prison cafeteria! Russian! CCCP! It's Russian!

CHEERLEADERS: Nice!

NIKE: Persimmon, your rhymes and moves are indeed super genius. So you're in –

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) Yes!

NIKE: – as a junior member. There's one very important task you have to complete before you become a full member of the cheer squad.

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) Another task?

NIKE: Yes. Every member of the cheer squad has to perform a loyalty task before becoming a full member.

MARY: (As PERSIMMON.) So what do I have to do?

NIKE: You'll know when the time comes.

CHEERLEADERS: *(Giggle behind their hands like Japanese schoolgirls.)*

NIKE: Cheer squad, formation!

The CHEERLEADERS, including MARY, snap into formation.

NIKE: Cheer trot, double time, locker room!

CHEERLEADERS trot off. MARY peels off her PERSIMMON costume and changes into her ABACUS costume on stage with the help of CHORUS members. BAUMGARTNER enters and talks to her as she changes.

MARY: It worked!

BAUMGARTNER: What worked?

MARY: *(Barely paying attention to him.)* Oh, nothing you'd be interested in.

BAUMGARTNER: Is that a cheer squad uniform? Did you get on the cheer squad?

MARY: Yeah, I did.

GARRETT enters. MUSIC: Garrett's theme music. MARY is instantly smitten, watching him as he walks by. GARRETT sees BAUMGARTNER.

MARY: That's Garrett's theme music!

GARRETT: *(To Baumgartner.)* Hey, buddy, do you know where there's a garbage can?

BAUMGARTNER: *(Looking around.)* Oh, well...

GARRETT: Never mind, got it. *(Tosses an empty soda can at Mary as if she's a garbage can.)* Thanks, man. *(Exits.)*

BAUMGARTNER: Oh, man, I'm so sorry about that!

MARY: *(Thrilled, holding can.)* He gave me a can!

CHORUS LEADER: Phase Two, Part Two.

MATHLETES enter, chanting and walking in formation. SFX: Church bells.

MATHLETES: (*Chanting.*) The square of two is four. The square of four is sixteen. The square of sixteen is two hundred fifty-six...

MARY [*as ABACUS*] moves over to the Mathletes. BAUMGARTNER exits.

BAUMGARTNER: Okay, well, have fun I guess...(*Exits.*)

MARY: (*As ABACUS.*) The value of X is the value of X.

MATHLETES stop dead in their tracks.

PYTHAGORA: That is correct! Who is this interloper?

MARY: (*As ABACUS.*) They call me...Abacus!

PYTHAGORA: Old school. I like that. But I don't like that you've entered the Mathitorium without permission. I could have you subtracted for that.

MARY: (*As ABACUS.*) I want to join the Mathletes, and I'm here to prove my value.

MATHLETES and CHORUS: (*Shocked whispers to each other.*) She's here to prove her value! She thinks she can add up! She so old school, she probably still does long division! Etc.

PYTHAGORA: Silence! What makes you think you have what it takes to be a Mathlete?

MARY: (*As ABACUS.*) Test me!

PYTHAGORA: Oh, you will be tested. Count on that. To become a Mathlete, you must create a story problem that can stump the Mathletes.

MARY: (*As ABACUS.*) Train A leaves New York City toward Cleveland at 3:15 P.M. on November 23rd, 2013 at a rate of one hundred twenty-five miles per hour. Given the distance between the two cities – four hundred sixty-one miles – which time and space travel device would guarantee arrival in one hour or less? Stargate, wormhole, or H.G. Wells's time machine?

PYTHAGORA: Impressive. You used scientific-based pop culture to augment a rudimentary story problem. You almost gave me a brain cramp. And that never happens because I'm...well, me. Congratulations, you've passed the first test. You're now a fractional member of the Generic High School Mathletes.

MARY: (As ABACUS.) Yes!

PYTHAGORA: To become a full integer, there is one last equation you must solve.

MARY: (As ABACUS.) What equation is that?

PYTHAGORA: You'll know when the time is right. (To the group.)
What is the value of X?

MATHLETES: The value of X is the value of X.

SFX: Church bells. The MATHLETES, including MARY, fall into formation and make their way off stage.

MATHLETES: (Chanting.) Isosceles...gradient...quotient...dodecahedron...

JANELLE enters. MARY breaks away from the MATHLETES as they exit. As she and JANELLE talk, MARY gets out of her Mathlete clothes and into her normal clothes, helped by the CHORUS.

JANELLE: OMG, what are you wearing?

MARY: Janelle! It worked! I got into both the cheer squad and the Mathletes! Okay, not fully into both. There's some sort of last task or equation or something I have to do for both teams. But I'm in!

JANELLE: You got on both teams? Wow, can't see how this could ever go horribly awry...

CHORUS LEADER: Our semi-tragic heroine, now a member of two warrior clans, must prove her worthiness to both.

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