Much Ado About Mathletes

A One-Act Play
by Rachel Bublitz

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DEDICATION

To Audrey and Jonah

SYNOPSIS

High school senior Kimberly is the founder and president of the school's undefeated all-girl math team. She expects nothing but the best from her mathletes, especially since it's her senior year and her last opportunity to compete and secure her legacy. Unfortunately, things don't always go as planned. One of their members is suddenly forced to sit out the rest of the season, so their first alternate — Monica H. — must step up and compete even though she longs desperately to join the drama club instead. A possible solution presents itself when Mr. Roberts tries to put Jared on the team, but the other girls aren't on board… after all, this was supposed to be an all-girls team. They debate, argue, and ponder (sometimes in Shakespearean-style verse), as they try to find a solution all of them can live with.

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

San Francisco State University, May 2014. Directed by Kathleen Lee.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 6 w)

KIMBERLY: F, 17-18. President of the math team. Smart, ambitious, ruthless.

LYDIA: F, 14-16. Vice President of the math team. Smart, ambitious, ruthless. Thinks she'll make a better president once Kimberly graduates.

HEATHER: F, 14-18. Cheerleader, popular, smart. Her mom made her join the team. Secretly loves the math team.

MONICA H.: F, 14-18. Smart, dramatic, funny, hates being on the math team, wants to be in the drama club instead, but stays because her best friends, Monica B. and Monica M., are on the math team.

MONICA B.: F, 14-18. Smart, shy, loves being on the math team. Has a huge crush on Jared.

MONICA M.: F, 14-18. Secretary of the math team. Smart and very dedicated to her best friends, Monica B. and Monica H.

MR. ROBERTS: M, 25-35. Math teacher at Taft High School. Temporary advisor for the math team while Mrs. Lake is on maternity leave.

JARED: M, 14-18. Athlete, popular, smart. Got caught pulling a prank and is punished by being forced to join the math team. Has a huge crush on Monica B.

SETTING

A class room at Taft High School.

TIME

Afternoon, after lunch. An elective period at school.

PROPS

Whistle
Roll call sheet
Test
Pencil
Red marker

Much Ado About Mathletes

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on a classroom. There are rows of desks and chairs, with one larger teacher's desk up stage. LYDIA is sitting behind the larger desk, wearing a whistle around her neck. Lydia speaks to her peers as if they are in the room.)

LYDIA: Come on, Monica H., you can do better than that! Again!... I don't care if you're an alternate, you need to know integers backwards and forwards! What if one of us gets sick? No, not me. I don't get sick. I *never* get sick. You can't get sick when you're in charge, and I plan on *always* being in charge.

(LYDIA laughs evilly. KIMBERLY enters. Lydia jumps out of the chair as if it had just caught fire, then freezes.)

KIMBERLY: *(To audience.)*
Who does she think she is? Queen Bee am I,
And she is just a kid! One day she may
Rule, as she sees fit. But today she'll cry
Tears if she does not keep her will at bay.

For I am in charge. I made this team, me!
And not until graduation will it
Be released. The old team denied entry
To the fresh girl I was: "No girls," they all spit.

An all-girl math team was born from that sad
Day. Before long we vanquished our male foes,
We were fierce, quick-witted, and iron-clad.
It is our turn now, to exclude the bros.

A nationally acclaimed mathlete team,
I built. All who try to take it, I ream.

(LYDIA unfreezes.)

KIMBERLY: *(Cont'd.)* Who were you talking to?

(KIMBERLY moves and takes the seat behind the teacher's desk. LYDIA moves to a different desk and sits down.)

LYDIA: I was just reciting prime numbers. 9,277—
KIMBERLY: 9,281—
LYDIA: 9,283—
KIMBERLY: 9,293—
LYDIA: 9,371!
KIMBERLY: You skipped 7.
LYDIA: No, I—
KIMBERLY: You better shape up; I'm not leaving *my* team, the team I built from scratch, the team that has taken home more titles than any of the *other* mathletes teams in the state, to some kid who can't even recite all the primes under 10,000. Get it together.

(MONICA H., MONICA B., and MONICA M. enter. They take seats next to one another. HEATHER enters and takes a seat. SFX: A bell rings. LYDIA jumps out of her chair.)

KIMBERLY: *(Cont'd.)* Lydia! Time for roll call!

(LYDIA blows her whistle.)

LYDIA: ROLL—
HEATHER: We're all here, can't we just start with the warm-up?
LYDIA: Don't talk to the president like that, *cheerleader*.
KIMBERLY: Routine is important here, just like in sports. We have to train our minds, and we do that with repetition. Trust me, I've never lost a championship.
HEATHER: But we only have like 20 minutes—
LYDIA: We get 26 minutes!
HEATHER: Exactly, that's not a lot of time. What if we mix things up? Start a new routine?
KIMBERLY: Heather, is it?
HEATHER: You know my name, Kimberly, we've been in the same class since second grade.

End of Freeview

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