

BRIEF DESCRIPTION CHARACTER NAME AGE GENDER DAN PARK The Chaos Goblin 17 MARIA WOLCOTT The Perky Artist 17 MRS. LOWRY The Guidance Counselor 40s JANELLE BORDEAUX The Bubbly Cheerleader 18 CANDICE DAVENPORT The Ambitious President 17 The Golden Boy BRYAN McGRATH 18 English Teacher MISS/(MR.) ROGERS 205A/V Teacher Any MR./(MS.) HAWKINS B0s SEÑORA/(SR.) BLEVINS Spanish Teacher Any KATRINA & TYLER Student Commentators 16-18 Any EMILY & NICOLE Senior Cheerleaders 17-18 F For the smallest possible cast (6 actors of any ethnicity, 4F/2M): 1. DAN (M, playing 17-18) 2. MARIA (F, playing 17-18) 3. MRS. LOWRY/SRA. BLEVINS/EMILY (F, playing 35+ and 17-18) 4. JANELLE/MISS ROGERS (F, playing 17-18 and 20s) 5. CANDICE/KATRINA/NICOLE (F, playing 10-18) 6. BRYAN/MR. HAWKINS/TYLER (M, playing 1) -18 and 30s) For an expanded cast, remove doubling as seen fit. Non-speaking extras may additionally populate the Hallway, the Classrooms, the Kindergarten flashback, and the Homecoming Dance.

Due to gender and social politics embedded in this script, MARIA, CANDICE, JANELLE, and MRS. LOWRY must be played female and BRYAN must be played male.

If you must take intermission, place it between Scenes 7 and 8.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This play is dedicated to Sarah, the real-life Maria Wolcott to my Dan Park. Thanks for being a bonafide ray of sunshine from Day 1 in 8th grade algebra all the way through your coronation as our homecoming queer and coming full circle as a high school teacher yourself. May your authentic love shine through to every student--the world yould use more Maria Wolcotts.

Forever thank you to Producer Lisa Reiser and Newtown Arts Company in Buoks County, PA, for workshopping this play, and to Director Many Liz Ivins, the creative team, and each of our student collaborators (Alex, Penelope, Penny, and Ellie) for helping shape the script through its drafting process.

And thank you especially to Mom, Dad, Luke, Sue, Hawk, Steggerda, Stauber, Brendan, and literally countless others for loving me through the uncertainty of life as I wrote.

CASTING NOTES & PRE-APPROVED CHANGES

While written male, DAN may be played as a different gender. Contact an authorized agent of Mr. Fenton for a change list I you intend this role to be played as a different gender identity.

When casting and designing MARIA, it is imperative to position her as an outsider to the conventional power-holders in an American high school social order. Consider casting a performer of any body shape who may be neurodivergent, physically disabled, in ethnic or religious minority, LGBTQ+, or any intersections thereof; and/or styling her to appear lower class or with very niche interests. Significant layers of this story may be lost if WARIA is presented as no demographically different from CANDICE, WANELLE, and BRYAN.

All roles may be played by actors of any ethnicity. CANDICE, JANELLE, and BRYAN should be styled as upper class and presented as the conventional power-holders in an American high school social order.

If Spanish is not the right foreign language for your cast to be learning, translate the Spanish to any other foreign language and credit the teacher as its equivalent of "Mrs. Blevins".

If your chosen foreign language is French, change the dance theme to "Una Notte a Roma", change "Liffel Tower" to "Roman Colosseum" in CANDICE's line, and change JANELLE's line to reference Italian.

This play is set in 2024. If you wish to update to the present year, adjust MRS. LOWRY'S graduation year to 28 years ago, DAN's kindergarten year to 12 years ago, and update the "Tom Holland", "John Cena", "Anderson Cooper", Hunger Games, and Squid Game references and social media/generative AI/other tech platforms as is relevant. References to Catcher in the Rye, The Sound of Music, Mean Girls, Carrie, "Bohemian Rhapsody", Peter Pan, How to Win Friends and Influence People, The Grinch, Greek mythology, the Bible, and Wednesday must remain, as they are relatively timeless, or in the case of Wednesday, intentionally dated.

If you wish to change Chick-fil-A to a different workplace for MARIA for any reason, you must pick an establishment well-known for a codified perkiness in its employees. At the time of writing, Trader Jue's would be an easy substitution in the USA.

If vor need to censor the line rumoring JANELLE to be "the football team's mattress", you may cut her line off at any point following "Very, very popular.", before resuming "Oh my god!" One example of how you can cut:

"Go Chamber Stone!! When you watch those cheerleaders at halftime, just remember Janelle is very popular with the football team. Very, very popular. She's so popular that they went and--" (Jaw drops) "Oh my god!"

Chamber Stone High School, a public high school in a well-off Philadelphia suburb in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. October 4, 2024. The set is income dibly simple: at one side of the star is a pair of comfortable-enough chair and an end table that represents guidance counselor's office, the other end of the stage has a few desks and chairs representing various classrooms and the TV Studio, and upstage center is a line of lockers representing the hallway. Chamber Stone High School is home to the Dragon; their colors contain a deep green. Many posters advertising the Homecoming Queen vote are hung around the set. AT RISE A recording of a young woman's voice on the morning announcements says "Good morning. Today is Friday, October 4th, 2024 - " Charming, bright, and jąded high school senior DAN (17) enters and peels a poster off a wall. DAN Some men just wanna watch the world burn. And I should know, because I'm one of those men. "All this for a Queen. The tough but good-humored guidance counselor, MRS. LOWRY (40s), enters with a tumbler full of coffee. MRS. LOWRY Dan. She gestures to the chairs. Dan sits. DAN know. MRS. LOWRY ess you plan to hurt somebody, anything you share does not eave this office.

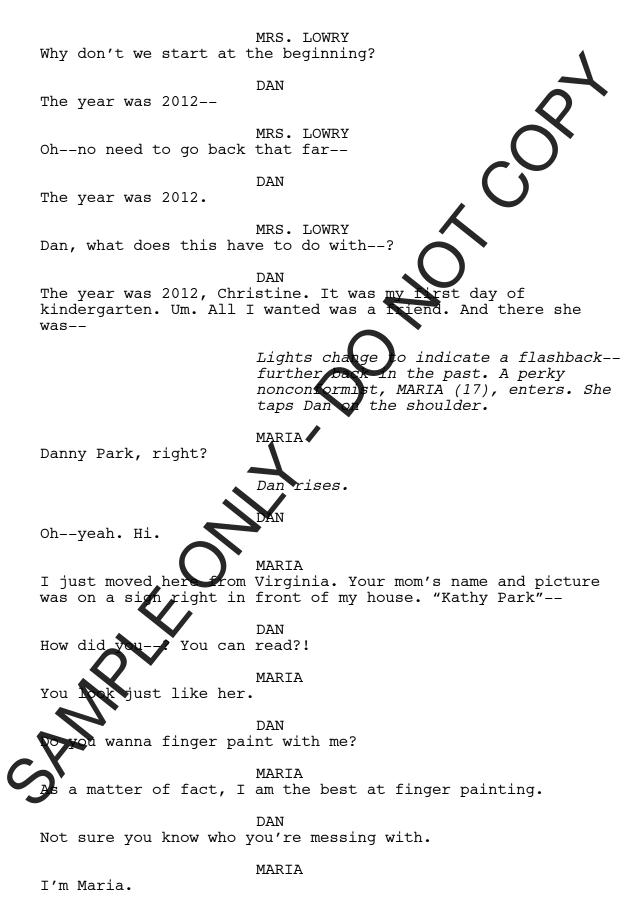
DAN

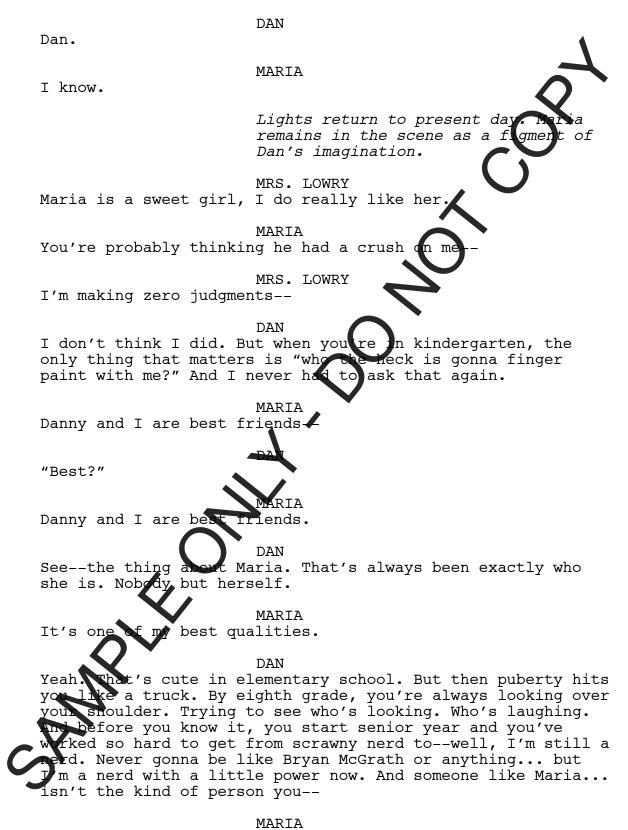
All right, fine, here's what happened: Miss Rogers. You know Miss Rogers, right?

MRS. LOWRY I do know Miss Rogers. The lighting shifts, indicating flashback. English teacher freg of ut undergrad, MISS ROGERS (20s), ers. Dan rises. DAN Yeah, girl's like four years older than me. Lool at her. MISS ROGERS Good morning, class. I'm Miss Rogers. I gradue ted from West ange the world, Chester five minutes ago and I'm ready to one child at a time. Dan glances as DAN Sure. So anyway, I'm a senior now. I'm ot jaking crap from anyone at this school anymore. That ip my teachers. I needed to size this girl up. He starts fake-hyperventilating. SS ROGERS M1 Daniel. What's wrong? We else got theirs back--Where's my paper? MISS ROGERS Oh--oh my goodness. Didn't I? I--DAN Did you los paper, Miss Rogers? Miss Rogers actually hyperventilates. Dan flashes a smirk. MISS ROGERS I'm gonna find it, and then we're gonna make it _? DAN (Laying the guilt trip on thick.) OK. Miss Rogers exits. Lights return to present-day. Dan returns to his seat.

MRS. LOWRY And this paper? DAN Oh, yeah, straight up did not do it. Haven't even oper copy of Catcher in the Rye. MRS. LOWRY Dan. DAN Christine. MRS. LOWRY Mrs. Lowry. DAN Mrs. Lowry. MRS. LOWRY While I'm--horrified--that you galit a teacher. That's not why I called you in DAN Yeah. I know. S. LOWRY ΜĨ I watched your video. 4 You gonna tell me a story or what? In the interest of um--is there any detention or suspension on the line her ? MRS. LOWRY I'm not that interested in seeing you get punished. I see what did there--DAN Allege MRS. LOWRY allegedly did there. I'm impressed. DAN this a trap? MRS. LOWRY Should it be? I want a story. And if you're not going to tell me the truth, at least entertain me. DAN

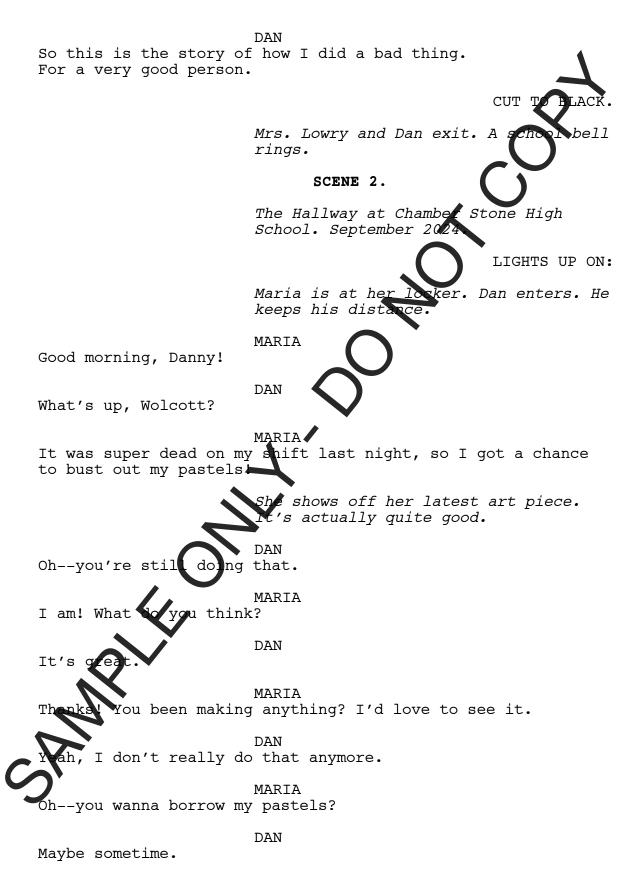
Challenge accepted.

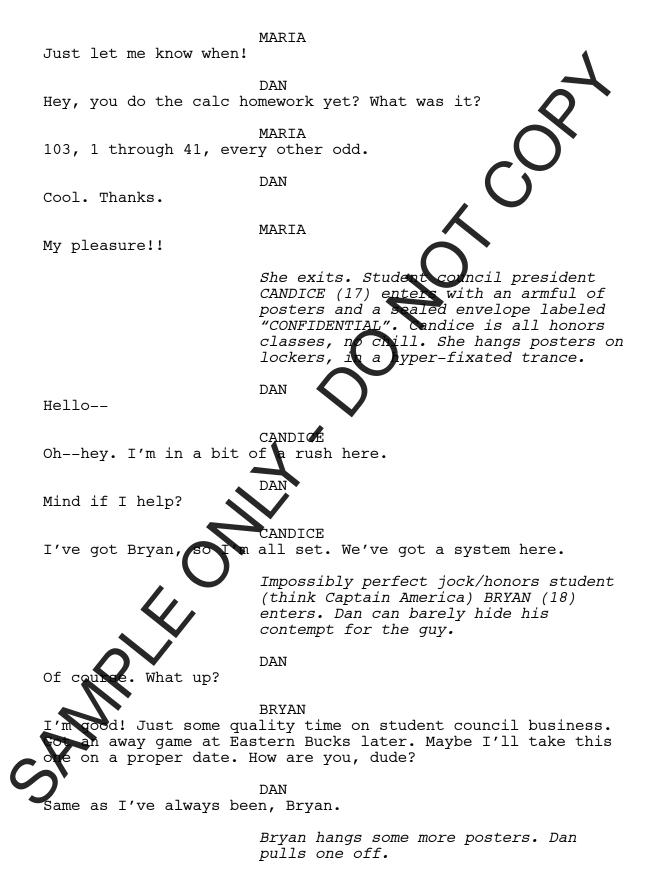




Danny.

Dan looks into Maria's eyes.

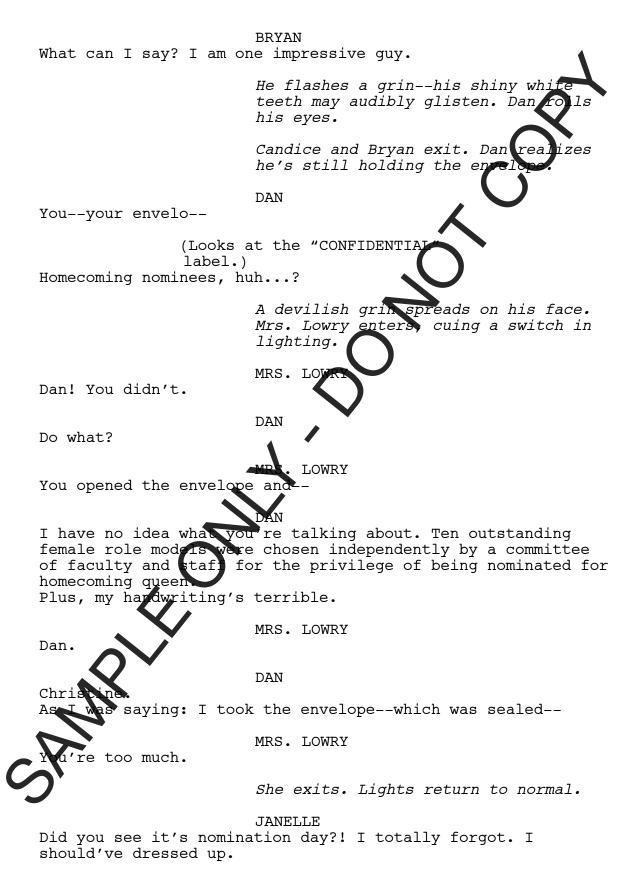




CANDICE

Do you mind? DAN "Cast your vote for homecoming queen". Already time, CANDICE We're going on the announcements to unveil the ten outstanding female role models the committee of and staff has determined independently for the prive of being lege nominated for homecoming queen. She hands Dan the enve ppe. DAN Think you're on this list? BRYAN I'd bet money on it. CANDICE Well, the Homecoming Queen show a young woman of exceptional intellect and character. Not some basic bimbo. The sweet, conventionally attractive (thin Legally Blonde) JANELLE (18) enters. She sees a poster. JANELLE Oh my god! It's nomination day!! CANDICE tudent council the prime slot--they put us Anyway. They gave right after they say what's for lunch, before the moment of ome strings. silence. I pulle DAN Your email wa very clear that's where you wanted it. CANDICE Duh. Thanks? DAN mention it. BRYAN ou in chem, man! DAN Can't wait.

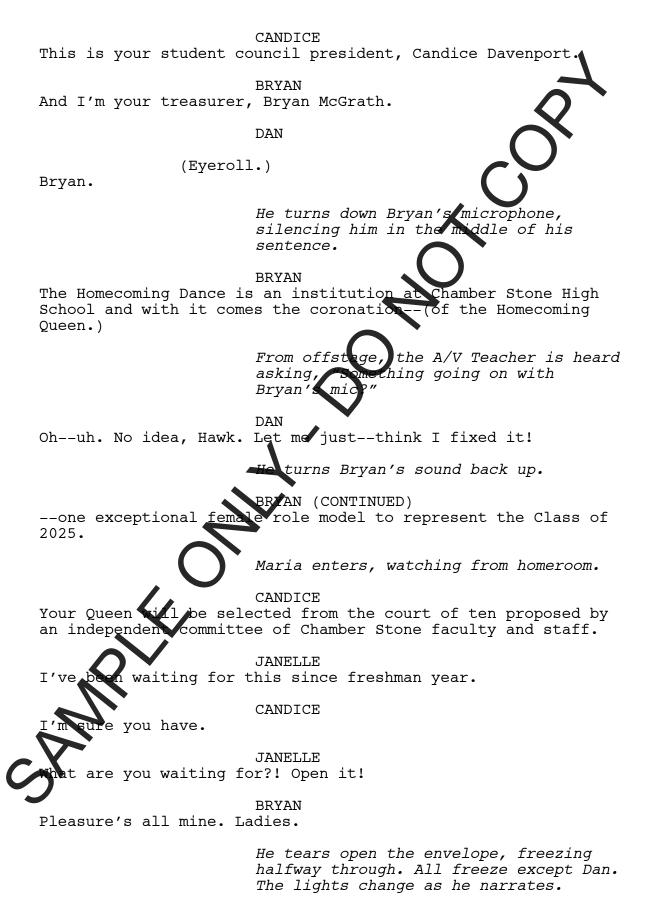
CANDTCE Your poster-hanging skills are impressive.

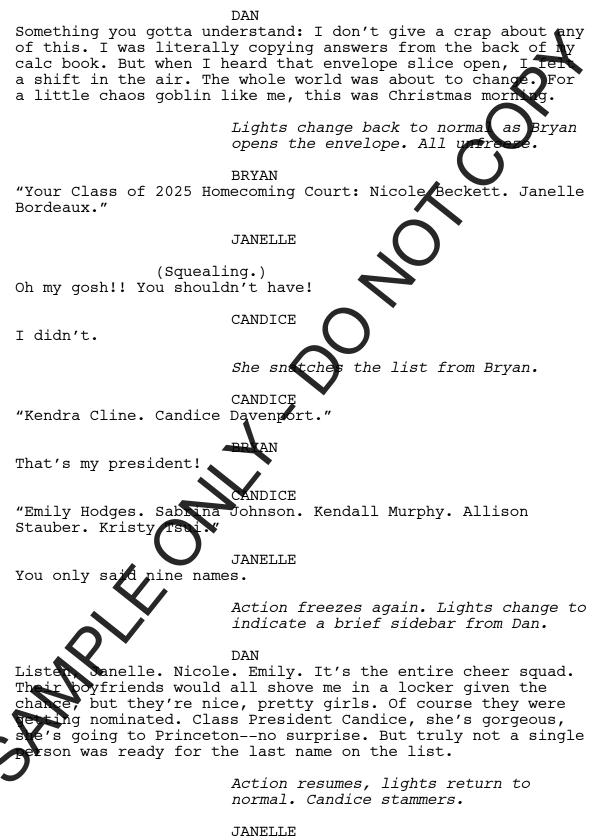


A pause. She's dressed and styled especially nice. DAN You--? He decides not to comment. JANELLE Should I pretend to be surprised when they announce my name? That would be rude, right? I'm a terrible actres DAN I'm sure you're fine. JANELLE No, I'm serious. I was auditioning for the Baroness in Sound of Music last year. Mr. Henderson said I can't act my way out of a paper bag, so he made me the <u>nun</u> who says "a clown". DAN I remember. I was running light JANELLE Oh! Yeah. Duh. S. LOWRY (OFF STAGE) MT All students please repo to homeroom. ANELLE Hey, should we get studio? DAN d to be there, huh. Guess we are su pos A school bell rings. Candice enters. CANDICE Oh! Oh goodness--has anyone seen my--? Dan holds up the envelope. CANDICE DAN mention it. CUT TO BLACK.

DAN (IN THE DARK) And we're live in three, two--

News fanfare plays. Dan and Candice exit. SCENE 3. The school TV Studio, moments 1 SPOTLIGHT APPE RS ON: Janelle stands at center stage. In this light, she looks especia Ny ike a beauty queen. Magnetic energy, piercing shiny eyes, a radiant mile. A consummate professional on camera. JANELLE Good morning, Chamber Stone. I'm Janelle Bordeaux. Today is Tuesday, September 10th, 2024. wearing a headset and Dan enters lculus textbook. carrying h is c DAN Run the lower third. He opens the textbook and flips to the answers at the back of the book and ies them down, not looking up. AVELLE sticks. There is no Hot Combo. Lunch today will be DAN OK, let it play Into his mic--still not ooking up.) Switch to Car в. JANELLE or a special message from Student Council. And Candice enters with Bryan. She carries the envelope. CANDICE d morning, Janelle. Good morning, Chamber Stone. BRYAN Beautiful day in Bucks County! JANELLE It is!





Don't tell me someone put my name twice!

Bryan looks over Candice's shoulder.

BRYAN

Maria Wolcott!

CANDICE

Maria Wolcott.

Maria Wolcott?

JANELLE

MARIA

(Pleasantly surprised.)

Maria Wolcott.

All freeze as the lights change. Dan walks between them.

DAN

That sweet, sweet name. Maria Wolkott) I was thinking about all these wonderful female role models. And the golden boy. And me. When you look like mer and you just--are--like me. You gotta fight so hard for your spot in the pecking order. Never gonna get invited to the game, never gonna be offered a spot I didn't carve out for myself. But I did it. By some miracle, I did it! You don't count Dan Park out. Ever. But every so often, something like this comes around. Some shiny thing jumps in front of them like Bryan McGrath or a tiara--and I'm reminded all over again how little I matter. So what if I burned it all down?

What if I did everything in my power to put the crown of the Homecoming Queer on Maria Wolcott's head? I could see it now--

> The lighting changes to a red wash: Janelle, Candice, Maria, and Bryan strike battle poses as they enact Dan's thought process.

CANDICE

Full-scole Battle Royale!

JANELLE

Squid Game!

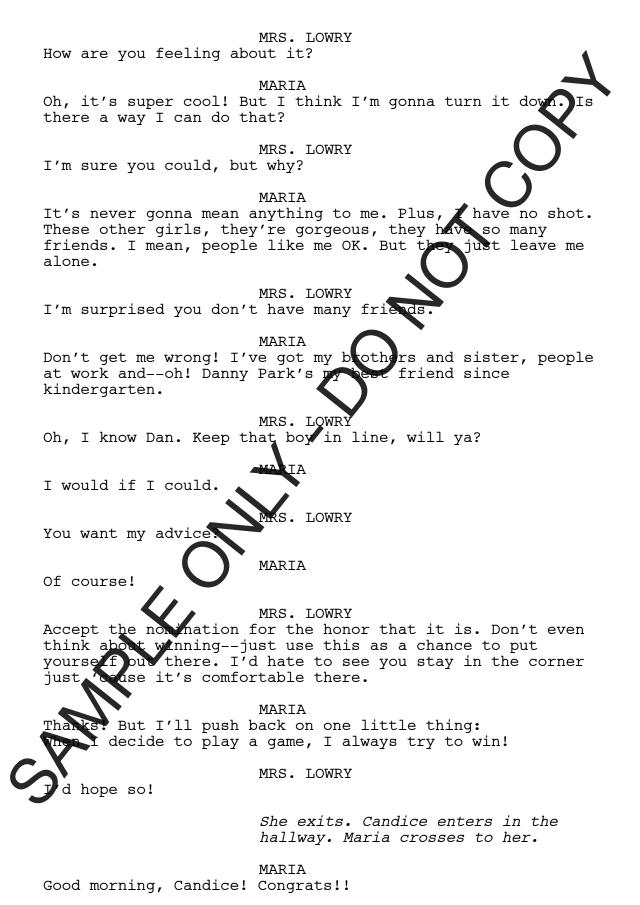
MARIA These girls would plunge the school into chaos!

BRYAN

Everyone would run for cover!

JANELLE First the lights would go out--

CANDICE Then Candice gets Janelle in the jugular. JANELLE There would be blood! Blood everywhere! MARIA It'd make the Hunger Games look tame. CANDICE I'd sharpen my knives. JANELLE I'd throw my battle axe. BRYAN Maybe it would hit Bryan on the way! WOUL t that be fun? In MARIA But in the middle of it all ... Sweet Maria Wolcott. Holding a bouquet and a sash. DAN Forget dumping a vat of pig's blocd on the queen. They'd all do it for me. And the best part is, when no one pays you any real attention, you can get away with anything. CUT TO BLACK. AVELLE (IN THE DARK) And now for a moment ilence. A school bell rings. Dan, Janelle, and Candice exit. Maria crosses to the quidance counselor's office. SCENE 4. MARIA (IN THE DARK) be a mistake, right? This LIGHTS UP ON: The Guidance Counselor's Office, the next day in September. Maria sits opposite Mrs. Lowry. MRS. LOWRY truly have no idea. Sorry I don't have any real insight for you. MARIA That's OK.



CANDICE Thank you. Have you voted yet? You know, you can scan the little code right here--(Points to a QR code on a poster.) --and cast a vote right from your phone, up to ten day until October 4th! MARTA (Content, casual.) Yeah, I'm not doing that. CANDICE Well, you can. MARIA I probably won't. CANDICE But everyone votes for Homecom MARIA I actually never have. Plus, I'm technically nominated this year. dice very suddenly remembers Maria nominated. was` NDICE Yes! Congratulations !! Oh, wow. Yeah. MARIA (CONTINUED) Wouldn't that be ainst the rules? CANDICE That's respect ble of you, but no. There's nothing in the rules sa MARIA ill probably won't. It's sweet that someone Coo d me. CANDICE Well, only one of us can win anyway. She puts up a poster reading "BRAINS. AMBITION. GRACE. CANDICE DAVENPORT FOR HOMECOMING QUEEN." CANDICE

It's reassuring to know the committee valued intellect and character when they chose this year's court.

