



CORONATION

by Peter Fenton

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This play contains teenage pettiness, references to teen-oriented media, and light innuendo. Recommended for ages 10+

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
DAN PARK	The Chaos Goblin	17	M
MARIA WOLCOTT	The Perky Artist	17	F
MRS. LOWRY	The Guidance Counselor	40s	F
JANELLE BORDEAUX	The Bubbly Cheerleader	18	F
CANDICE DAVENPORT	The Ambitious President	17	F
BRYAN McGRATH	The Golden Boy	18	M
MISS/(MR.) ROGERS	English Teacher	20s	Any
MR./(MS.) HAWKINS	A/V Teacher	30s	Any
SEÑORA/(SR.) BLEVINS	Spanish Teacher	30s	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 16-18)
6. BRYAN/MR. HAWKINS/TYLER (M, playing 16-18 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 queen and coming full circle as a high school teacher yourself. May your authentic love shine through to every student--the world could use more Maria Wolcotts.

Forever thank you to Producer Lisa Reiser and Newtown Arts Company in Bucks County, PA, for workshoping this play, and to Director Mary 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 if 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, an 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 MARIA is presented as no demographically different from CANDICE, JANELLE, 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 "Eiffel 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 Joe's would be an easy substitution in the USA.

If you 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!"

SCENE 1.

Chamber Stone High School, a public high school in a well-off Philadelphia suburb in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. October 4, 2024. The set is incredibly simple: at one side of the stage is a pair of comfortable-enough chairs and an end table that represents the 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 Dragons; 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 jaded 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

I know. I know.

MRS. LOWRY

Unless you plan to hurt somebody, anything you share does not leave 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 a flashback. English teacher fresh out of undergrad, MISS ROGERS (20s), enters. Dan rises.

DAN

Yeah, girl's like four years older than me. Look at her.

MISS ROGERS

Good morning, class. I'm Miss Rogers. I graduated from West Chester five minutes ago and I'm ready to change the world, one child at a time.

Dan glances aside.

DAN

Sure.

So anyway, I'm a senior now. I'm not taking crap from anyone at this school anymore. That includes my teachers. I needed to size this girl up.

He starts fake-hyperventilating.

MISS ROGERS

Daniel. What's wrong?

DAN

Where's my paper? Everyone else got theirs back--

MISS ROGERS

Oh--oh my goodness. Didn't I? I--

DAN

Did you lose my paper, Miss Rogers?

Miss Rogers actually hyperventilates. Dan flashes a smirk.

MISS ROGERS

Hang on! I'm gonna find it, and then we're gonna make it right, OK--?

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 opened my 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 got lit a teacher. That's not why I called you in.

DAN
Yeah. I know.

MRS. LOWRY
I watched your video. You gonna tell me a story or what?

DAN
In the interest of--um--is there any detention or suspension on the line here, or...?

MRS. LOWRY
I'm not that interested in seeing you get punished. I see what you did there--

DAN
Allegedly.

MRS. LOWRY
What you allegedly did there. I'm impressed.

DAN
Is 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.

MRS. LOWRY
Why don't we start at the beginning?

DAN
The year was 2012--

MRS. LOWRY
Oh--no need to go back that far--

DAN
The year was 2012.

MRS. LOWRY
Dan, what does this have to do with--?

DAN
The year was 2012, Christine. It was my first day of kindergarten. Um. All I wanted was a friend. And there she was--

*Lights change to indicate a flashback--
further back in the past. A perky
nonconformist, MARIA (17), enters. She
taps Dan on the shoulder.*

MARIA
Danny Park, right?

Dan rises.

DAN
Oh--yeah. Hi.

MARIA
I just moved here from Virginia. Your mom's name and picture was on a sign right in front of my house. "Kathy Park"--

DAN
How did you--? You can read?!

MARIA
You look just like her.

DAN
Do you wanna finger paint with me?

MARIA
As a matter of fact, I am the best at finger painting.

DAN
Not sure you know who you're messing with.

MARIA
I'm Maria.

Dan.
DAN

I know.
MARIA

Lights return to present day. Maria remains in the scene as a fragment of Dan's imagination.

MRS. LOWRY
Maria is a sweet girl, I do really like her.

MARIA
You're probably thinking he had a crush on me--

MRS. LOWRY
I'm making zero judgments--

DAN
I don't think I did. But when you're in kindergarten, the only thing that matters is "who the heck is gonna finger paint with me?" And I never had to ask that again.

MARIA
Danny and I are best friends--

DAN
"Best?"

MARIA
Danny and I are best friends.

DAN
See--the thing about Maria. That's always been exactly who she is. Nobody but herself.

MARIA
It's one of my best qualities.

DAN
Yeah. That's cute in elementary school. But then puberty hits you like a truck. By eighth grade, you're always looking over your shoulder. Trying to see who's looking. Who's laughing. And before you know it, you start senior year and you've worked so hard to get from scrawny nerd to--well, I'm still a nerd. Never gonna be like Bryan McGrath or anything... but I'm a nerd with a little power now. And someone like Maria... isn't the kind of person you--

MARIA
Danny.

Dan looks into Maria's eyes.

DAN

So this is the story of how I did a bad thing.
For a very good person.

CUT TO BLACK.

Mrs. Lowry and Dan exit. A school bell rings.

SCENE 2.

The Hallway at Chamber Stone High School. September 2024.

LIGHTS UP ON:

Maria is at her locker. Dan enters. He keeps his distance.

MARIA

Good morning, Danny!

DAN

What's up, Wolcott?

MARIA

It was super dead on my shift last night, so I got a chance to bust out my pastels!

*She shows off her latest art piece.
It's actually quite good.*

DAN

Oh--you're still doing that.

MARIA

I am! What do you think?

DAN

It's great.

MARIA

Thanks! You been making anything? I'd love to see it.

DAN

Yeah, I don't really do that anymore.

MARIA

Oh--you wanna borrow my pastels?

DAN

Maybe sometime.

MARIA

Just let me know when!

DAN

Hey, you do the calc homework yet? What was it?

MARIA

103, 1 through 41, every other odd.

DAN

Cool. Thanks.

MARIA

My pleasure!!

She exits. Student council president CANDICE (17) enters with an armful of posters and a sealed envelope labeled "CONFIDENTIAL". Candice is all honors classes, no chill. She hangs posters on lockers, in a hyper-fixated trance.

DAN

Hello--

CANDICE

Oh--hey. I'm in a bit of a rush here.

DAN

Mind if I help?

CANDICE

I've got Bryan, so I'm all set. We've got a system here.

Impossibly perfect jock/honors student (think Captain America) BRYAN (18) enters. Dan can barely hide his contempt for the guy.

DAN

Of course. What up?

BRYAN

I'm good! Just some quality time on student council business. Got an away game at Eastern Bucks later. Maybe I'll take this one on a proper date. How are you, dude?

DAN

Same as I've always been, Bryan.

Bryan hangs some more posters. Dan pulls one off.

CANDICE

Do you mind?

DAN

"Cast your vote for homecoming queen". Already time, huh

CANDICE

We're going on the announcements to unveil the ten outstanding female role models the committee of faculty and staff has determined independently for the privilege of being nominated for homecoming queen.

She hands Dan the envelope.

DAN

Think you're on this list?

BRYAN

I'd bet money on it.

CANDICE

Well, the Homecoming Queen should be a young woman of exceptional intellect and character. Not some basic bimbo.

The sweet, conventionally attractive (think Legally Blonde) JANELLE (18) enters. She sees a poster.

JANELLE

Oh my god! It's nomination day!!

CANDICE

Anyway. They gave student council the prime slot--they put us right after they say what's for lunch, before the moment of silence. I pulled some strings.

DAN

Your email was very clear that's where you wanted it.

CANDICE

Oh--yeah. Duh. Thanks?

DAN

Don't mention it.

BRYAN

See you in chem, man!

DAN

Can't wait.

CANDICE

Your poster-hanging skills are impressive.

BRYAN

What can I say? I am one impressive guy.

He flashes a grin--his shiny white teeth may audibly glisten. Dan rolls his eyes.

Candice and Bryan exit. Dan realizes he's still holding the envelope.

DAN

You--your envelo--

(Looks at the "CONFIDENTIAL" label.)

Homecoming nominees, huh...?

A devilish grin spreads on his face. Mrs. Lowry enters, cuing a switch in lighting.

MRS. LOWRY

Dan! You didn't.

DAN

Do what?

MRS. LOWRY

You opened the envelope and--

DAN

I have no idea what you're talking about. Ten outstanding female role models were chosen independently by a committee of faculty and staff for the privilege of being nominated for homecoming queen. Plus, my handwriting's terrible.

MRS. LOWRY

Dan.

DAN

Christine.

As I was saying: I took the envelope--which was sealed--

MRS. LOWRY

You're too much.

She exits. Lights return to normal.

JANELLE

Did you see it's nomination day?! I totally forgot. I should've dressed up.

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 actress.

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 nun who says "a clown".

DAN

I remember. I was running lights.

JANELLE

Oh! Yeah. Duh.

MRS. LOWRY (OFF STAGE)

All students please report to homeroom.

JANELLE

Hey, should we get to the studio?

DAN

Guess we are supposed to be there, huh.

A school bell rings. Candice enters.

CANDICE

Oh! Oh my goodness--has anyone seen my--?

Dan holds up the envelope.

CANDICE

Thank god.

DAN

Don't 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 later.

SPOTLIGHT APPEARS ON:

Janelle stands at center stage. In this light, she looks especially like a beauty queen. Magnetic energy, piercing shiny eyes, a radiant smile. A consummate professional on camera.

JANELLE

Good morning, Chamber Stone. I'm Janelle Bordeaux. Today is Tuesday, September 10th, 2024.

Dan enters, wearing a headset and carrying his calculus textbook.

DAN

Run the lower third.

He opens the textbook and flips to the answers at the back of the book and copies them down, not looking up.

JANELLE

Lunch today will be pizza sticks. There is no Hot Combo.

DAN

OK, let it play out.

(Into his mic--still not looking up.)

Switch to Camera B.

JANELLE

And now for a special message from Student Council.

Candice enters with Bryan. She carries the envelope.

CANDICE

Good morning, Janelle. Good morning, Chamber Stone.

BRYAN

Beautiful day in Bucks County!

JANELLE

It is!

CANDICE

This is your student council president, Candice Davenport.

BRYAN

And I'm your treasurer, Bryan McGrath.

DAN

(Eyeroll.)

Bryan.

He turns down Bryan's microphone, silencing him in the middle of his sentence.

BRYAN

The Homecoming Dance is an institution at Chamber Stone High School and with it comes the coronation--(of the Homecoming Queen.)

From offstage, the A/V Teacher is heard asking, "Something going on with Bryan's mic?"

DAN

Oh--uh. No idea, Hawk. Let me just--think I fixed it!

He turns Bryan's sound back up.

BRYAN (CONTINUED)

--one exceptional female role model to represent the Class of 2025.

Maria enters, watching from homeroom.

CANDICE

Your Queen will be selected from the court of ten proposed by an independent committee of Chamber Stone faculty and staff.

JANELLE

I've been waiting for this since freshman year.

CANDICE

I'm sure you have.

JANELLE

What are you waiting for?! Open it!

BRYAN

Pleasure's all mine. Ladies.

He tears open the envelope, freezing halfway through. All freeze except Dan. The lights change as he narrates.

DAN

Something you gotta understand: I don't give a crap about any of this. I was literally copying answers from the back of my calc book. But when I heard that envelope slice open, I felt a shift in the air. The whole world was about to change. For a little chaos goblin like me, this was Christmas morning.

Lights change back to normal as Bryan opens the envelope. All unfreeze.

BRYAN

"Your Class of 2025 Homecoming Court: Nicole Beckett. Janelle Bordeaux."

JANELLE

(Squealing.)

Oh my gosh!! You shouldn't have!

CANDICE

I didn't.

She snatches the list from Bryan.

CANDICE

"Kendra Cline. Candice Davenport."

BRYAN

That's my president!

CANDICE

"Emily Hodges. Sabrina Johnson. Kendall Murphy. Allison Stauber. Kristy Tsui."

JANELLE

You only said nine names.

Action freezes again. Lights change to indicate a brief sidebar from Dan.

DAN

Listen, Janelle. Nicole. Emily. It's the entire cheer squad. Their boyfriends would all shove me in a locker given the chance, but they're nice, pretty girls. Of course they were getting nominated. Class President Candice, she's gorgeous, she's going to Princeton--no surprise. But truly not a single person was ready for the last name on the list.

Action resumes, lights return to normal. Candice stammers.

JANELLE

Don't tell me someone put my name twice!

Bryan looks over Candice's shoulder.

BRYAN

Maria Wolcott!

CANDICE

Maria Wolcott.

JANELLE

Maria Wolcott?

MARIA

(Pleasantly surprised.)

Maria Wolcott.

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

DAN

That sweet, sweet name. Maria Wolcott. I was thinking about all these wonderful female role models. And the golden boy. And me. When you look like me, 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 Queen 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-scale Battle Royale!

JANELLE

No, 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! Wouldn't that be fun?

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 blood 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.

JANELLE (IN THE DARK)

And now for a moment of silence.

A school bell rings. Dan, Janelle, and Candice exit. Maria crosses to the guidance counselor's office.

SCENE 4.

MARIA (IN THE DARK)

This has to be a mistake, right?

LIGHTS UP ON:

The Guidance Counselor's Office, the next day in September. Maria sits opposite Mrs. Lowry.

MRS. LOWRY

I truly have no idea.
Sorry I don't have any real insight for you.

MARIA

That's OK.

MRS. LOWRY

How are you feeling about it?

MARIA

Oh, it's super cool! But I think I'm gonna turn it down. Is there a way I can do that?

MRS. LOWRY

I'm sure you could, but why?

MARIA

It's never gonna mean anything to me. Plus, I have no shot. These other girls, they're gorgeous, they have so many friends. I mean, people like me OK. But they just leave me alone.

MRS. LOWRY

I'm surprised you don't have many friends.

MARIA

Don't get me wrong! I've got my brothers and sister, people at work and--oh! Danny Park's my best friend since kindergarten.

MRS. LOWRY

Oh, I know Dan. Keep that boy in line, will ya?

MARIA

I would if I could.

MRS. LOWRY

You want my advice?

MARIA

Of course!

MRS. LOWRY

Accept the nomination for the honor that it is. Don't even think about winning--just use this as a chance to put yourself out there. I'd hate to see you stay in the corner just 'cause it's comfortable there.

MARIA

Thanks. But I'll push back on one little thing: when I decide to play a game, I always try to win!

MRS. LOWRY

I'd hope so!

She exits. Candice enters in the hallway. Maria crosses to her.

MARIA

Good morning, Candice! Congrats!!

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 times a day until October 4th!

MARIA

(Content, casual.)

Yeah, I'm not doing that.

CANDICE

Well, you can.

MARIA

I probably won't.

CANDICE

But everyone votes for Homecoming Queen.

MARIA

I actually never have. Plus, I'm technically nominated this year.

Candice very suddenly remembers Maria was nominated.

CANDICE

Yes! Congratulations!! Oh, wow. Yeah.

MARIA (CONTINUED)

Wouldn't that be against the rules?

CANDICE

That's respectable of you, but no. There's nothing in the rules saying--

MARIA

Cool. I still probably won't. It's sweet that someone nominated me.

CANDICE

It is. 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.

I totally agree! MARIA

Good luck, Maria. CANDICE

You too! MARIA

Candice exits. Janelle enters with an armful of posters.

Good morning, Janelle! MARIA

Hey girl! Um--? JANELLE

Maria. MARIA

Oh! You're Maria Wolcott! JANELLE

I am. MARIA

Omigosh, you're a real person! JANELLE

I've lived on your street since I was five. MARIA

None of the cheer girls knew who you were. JANELLE

We're also in Spanish-- MARIA

I was stalking all over the socials trying to find you yesterday. JANELLE

I only have Instagram for my art, actually. MARIA

Your boyfriend must be so proud. JANELLE

Oh, I'm not dating. Not even sure I like boys that much. MARIA

SAMPLE ONLY - DO NOT COPY

JANELLE

Good for you, girl!
I see Candice is already hanging posters. God, that's so annoying, I wanted to be the first.

She puts a poster next to Candice's, which simply reads "JANELLE".

JANELLE

Have a great day!

MARIA

You too!!

Janelle exits. Dan enters, grinning.

DAN

There she is! Woman of the hour!

MARIA

Good morning, Danny!

DAN

How ya doing, your majesty?

MARIA

(With a laugh.)

I think I'm gonna be sick. This was some kind of joke, wasn't it? There's no way I'm really nominated.

DAN

No, no. You are an incredible female role model recognized by an independent committee of--

MARIA

Cut it out. I'm thinking about turning it down. There's no way anyone would vote for me.

A beat.

MARIA

Is there?

DAN

Who's to say?!

MARIA

Good question.

DAN

Look at these posters.
"Brains. Ambition. Grace." "Janelle." They want this so bad. It's just a piece of plastic. We've all seen *Mean Girls*.

MARIA

I haven't, actually.

DAN

You tell me for a second you can't stand toe-to-toe with these girls? You're exactly the kind of girl who should be the Homecoming Queen. You're my best friend. You're like - you're a bonafide ray of sunshine. You work the cash register at Chick-fil-A, so if the shoe fits--

MARIA

Do you really mean all that?

DAN

Of course. It's true.

Lights change abruptly as Mrs. Lowry enters. Maria freezes.

MRS. LOWRY

Was it a lie?

DAN

She does work the cash register at Chick-fil-A.

MRS. LOWRY

Dan.

DAN

Christine.

MRS. LOWRY

I already know you're a gifted liar, but then again, you say you've been friends since kindergarten--

DAN

None of that was a lie.

MRS. LOWRY

I believe you. But I can sense you're not at peace with it. Do you wanna take a second and unpack that?

Dan shoots Mrs. Lowry a dissonant grin and a thumbs up.

DAN

Nope!

Mrs. Lowry exits. Lights return to normal. Maria throws her arms around Dan.

MARIA

That's the sweetest thing anyone's ever said! I don't know what I did to deserve a friend like you. Feel like I just won the whole thing!

DAN

Oh, but you absolutely could win the whole thing. Let me be your champion.

A beat.

MARIA

OK! Let's do it!!

DAN

Let's have a look at your Instagram. What is it again?

MARIA

Oh--are you not following? Here, let me just--

She takes Dan's phone and pulls up her account. She taps the screen.

MARIA

"Follow back" and--boom!

DAN

Pleasure to be your twenty-third.

MARIA

Twenty-three more than zero!

DAN

We've got some work to do. When's your study hall?

MARIA

Fifth period.

DAN

Cool. Sign out. Meet me at the Studio.

MARIA

Oh, that's when you have study hall?

DAN

Don't worry about it.

CUT TO BLACK.

A school bell rings.