

BLOCK THAT KICK!

By Kelly Meadows

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BLOCK THAT KICK!

A Full Length Comedy

By Kelly Meadows

SYNOPSIS: Why would you want to be a cheerleader? To get a date? To get revenge? What about just to be on the squad? No, it couldn't be that. When the school puts out a call for new recruits, the girls at Blackberry High vie for the three open spots, while the boys in the film class use the auditions as an opportunity to make a documentary. What nobody's prepared for is how the filming captures the good, the bad, but especially the ugly. Plus, we got an inside look at the poor girls who got kicked off the squad – can they put their shattered lives back together? In this comedy, even football takes a backseat to cheerleading as they all prepare to Block That Kick!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11-12 female, 5-6 male, 2 either, 0-10 extras)

BUFFY (f).....	Head cheerleader, a rather snooty snooty difficult-to-like young lady. (100 lines)
MATTY (f)	Her sidekick, could also use a lesson or two in being pleasant. (68 lines)
CALLIE (f)	A studious student with latent dreams of cheerleading. (72 lines)
MIRANDA (f)	Her best friend, with the same problem. (58 lines)
TARA (f).....	Wants to be a cheerleader but can neither cheer nor lead. (51 lines)
TARA'S MOM (f)	A very important woman, just ask her! (32 lines)
TARA'S DAD (m).....	Not nearly as important. (20 lines)
MRS. LOUD (f)	The cheerleading coach. (87 lines)

MRS. GAFFER (m/f).....	The film teacher. (23 lines)
BRANT (m)	On the football team, but also likes making movies. (51 lines)
GRANT (m)	His teammate in football and film. (31 lines)
BRYAN (m).....	A film student. (52 lines)
ROXY (f)	A cheerleading candidate. (20 lines)
JASMINE (f).....	A cheerleading candidate. (19 lines)
SKYLER (m)	The football team's quarterback, his own biggest fan. (36 lines)
BARBIE (f).....	Kicked off the squad for bad grades. (23 lines)
LONNIE (f).....	Kicked off for supporting the other team. (19 lines)
JANAYA (f).....	Kicked off for dating the wrong guy! (Pronounce this name by accenting the second syllable.)(31 lines)
SHONNI (m).....	The wrong guy she's dating. (14 lines)
PRINCIPAL (m/f).....	Makes the rules, and enjoys it just a tad too much. (12 lines)

EXTRAS: (*Optional*) Have your school's cheerleaders or some "extras" do some choreographed routines during any longer scene changes.

DOUBLING OPTIONS:

- TARA'S MOM can be doubled by ROXY, JASMINE, BARBIE, LONNIE, JANAYA or PRINCIPAL.
- TARA'S DAD can be doubled by SHONNI or PRINCIPAL.

SETTING: Blackberry High School, located anywhere other than Kansas.

SETS INCLUDE:

- A lobby, snack area, or other area of school where students hang out.
- Either an outdoor field or a gymnasium area where auditions are held.
- A room in TARA's house, a small set.
- Other areas and offices which can be small sets, on a bare stage, or in front of a curtain. As not a lot of furniture is going to be needed, set changes can be quick and easy.

COSTUMES: Present day, so no special costuming is needed. If the scene calls for it, some students should be in cheerleading outfits or football uniforms. Each character's personality is a pretty good indication of the kind of outfit they would be wearing.

PROPS:

- ☐ School books & general supplies that high school students carry around.
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Paper flyers
- ☐ A camera and equipment that a film crew would use, or just a camera if nothing else is available.
- ☐ Whistle (optional)
- ☐ Cell phone (optional)

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: *CALLIE and MIRANDA are hanging out at school in the lobby or other student hangout area. If desired, some extras can be walking by or also hanging out doing their own thing for all the scenes in this location. Also, at the director's discretion, a few girls in cheerleading uniforms can go by before the dialogue begins, practicing cheers that annoy CALLIE and MIRANDA, who from the looks of things are more "brainiacs" than "sports-minded."*

CALLIE: *(Flipping through a big textbook.)* I can't believe we have all this homework! Why us?

MIRANDA: *(Going through a stack of books and notebooks.)* Everyone has all this homework. We're just the only ones who do it.

CALLIE: *(Holding up one book in particular.)* I'm tired of studying Isaac Newton. It just doesn't pull any weight with me. *(She lets the book drop and says without much interest.)* So that's what he's famous for.

MIRANDA: I wish I was on one of those high school TV shows. Like on Disney. They never study. *(A little sarcastic.)* They just date. *(Sees BUFFY and MATTY coming, but they are still offstage. She's still sarcastic, so the audience will know immediately conflict is brewing.)* Oh look, our favorite girls are coming our way!

CALLIE: Shh! Let's listen and pretend we're not. We'll catch up on all the gossip.

BUFFY and MATTY enter, they're the quintessential "popular girls that nobody likes" and very involved in cheerleading. They act like they don't see CALLIE and MIRANDA, yet most of their conversation is indirectly aimed at them.

BUFFY: *(Excited.)* I just can't wait for the big game. Go Blackberry High!

MATTY: I'm going to try out my new routine! I bet nobody can touch this one!

She does a cheerleading move that she is exceptionally proud of; CALLIE and MIRANDA act like they're not watching but they are anyway, and not impressed

BUFFY: And my new rhyme, *(Does a cheerleading routine while she recites.)*

Every year it's just the same, your team never wins the game.

MATTY: That is so awesomely original!

MATTY and BUFFY: *(They drop any books they have and do it together.)*

Every year it's just the same, your team never wins the game.

BUFFY: *("Notices" CALLIE and MIRANDA and announces them with a sneer.)* Look, Matty, it's Callie and Miranda. *(Condescending.)* The study twins. *(To them.)* Too bad you can't jump, I'm sure you'd love to be on the squad. Oh well. *(With a fake laugh.)* Ohhhhhh well!

MATTY: I guess I'll be dating the star players. Again. *(Sigh.)* And again, and again. And you won't. Them's the perks. *(Goes up to MIRANDA and closes her book.)* Hate to spoil it, but the apple falls in the end.

MIRANDA: We can only hope.

MATTY and BUFFY: *(They scoop up their books and laugh at the others as they exit, still cheering.)*

Every year it's just the same, your team never wins the game!

CALLIE: *(Looking after them for a while and says with a combination of wishful thinking and aggravation.)* Somewhere, there has to be a school without girls like that.

MIRANDA: They think they're better than everyone else.

CALLIE: *(Singing in rhythm.)* Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah... I wouldn't even *want* to be a cheerleader if it means spending every afternoon with *them*.

MIRANDA: It'd be like hanging out with the drama club. Deee-vaaaas!

CALLIE: And it gets better. Here comes Mrs. Loud, the cheerleading coach. Jump jump jump... Frankly I hope I'm *not* that peppy when I get to be her age.

MIRANDA: This is certainly turning into an abusive afternoon.

MIRANDA and CALLIE: *(Friendly, but a little sarcastic as they silently agree to talk in unison.)* Hi Mrs. Loud!

MRS. LOUD: *(Perks up.)* Oh, Callie and Miranda, just the girls I wanted to see!

MIRANDA: Why, you mean you haven't got in your quota of bullying for the day?

MRS. LOUD: *(Overjoyed.)* We are having tryouts!

CALLIE: Oh? I thought the squad was decided.

MRS. LOUD: It was. But, Barbie got kicked off for bad grades, and Lonnie got kicked off because she really didn't want them to block that kick. And Janaya got kicked off because... *(Doesn't want to continue.)* well, let's just leave it at that. So we've got some spots open, and I want to encourage all the girls in the school to try out.

CALLIE: All the girls in the school?

MRS. LOUD: *(Big smile and upbeat attitude.)* You never know where hidden talent lies.

MIRANDA: *(Disgruntled.)* I know where I'd like it to lie.

MRS. LOUD: *(Singsongy, handing them a flyer.)* I'll see you at tryouts!

MIRANDA: *(Imitating her tone.)* I hope not!

MRS. LOUD: *(Still singsongy.)* After school, tomorrow. *(The girls aren't interested, but MRS. LOUD knows just what to say.)* Buffy and Matty think you don't have what it takes. *(Sadly.)* Perhaps they're right. Perhaps some girls prefer to graduate with no memories. *(Exit.)*

MIRANDA and CALLIE exchange grumpy glances

MIRANDA: *(Disgusted.)* Cheerleading tryouts?

CALLIE: *(As well, disgusted.)* Seriously, cheerleading tryouts?

They look at each other and suddenly get excited.

MIRANDA: Seriously! Cheerleading tryouts!

MIRANDA and CALLIE: *(They jump up, facing each other as if they're in some Disney show.)* Cheerleading tryouts!
Every year it's just the same, your team never wins the game.

BLOCK THAT KICK!

They grab their supplies and exit, excited.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE: *BRANT and GRANT are football players but they are also taking a class in video. They are on campus discussing the upcoming season. If desired, they can toss around a football, throwing it a couple times before the dialogue starts.*

GRANT: I can't wait for the new cheerleaders! These tryouts are the biggest thing going!

BRANT: I wish I could pick 'em; *(Trying to be cool.)* I play better when the cheerleaders are hot. *(Laughs at his joke.)*

GRANT: You're doofy.

BRANT: Seriously, bro. Put a hot cheerleader in the end zone and we'll go ten and "oh!" Man, I'm funny.

GRANT: *(Not impressed.)* You're a shallow, shallow boy.

BRANT: That's why we're friends. *(They high five.)* Man, we're funny.

GRANT: Dateless, but funny.

BUFFY: *(Walks by with MATTY.)* Wow there's nothing I hate more than cheerleading for ugly football players. *(Waves her hand, or a book, right in front of BRANT's face and passes on.)* But at least they wear a helmet. Block that kick? It's more like block that face. *(BUFFY and MATTY share a laugh, BUFFY goes back to the guys.)* Guess I won't be cheering for you, Grant and Brant.

MATTY: Oh, I know. *(Goes by BRANT, then GRANT and taps them as she calls their names.)* Brant. Grant. Rhyming football players. Save your chauvinism for someone who cares.

MATTY and BUFFY giggle and start walking away.

BRANT: *(Doesn't know what to say, and gets pouty.)* Well... you're gross too! *(They exit, he follows them to the edge of the stage and shouts off stage.)* I said you're gross too! *(To himself.)* Guess you're too gross to care.

MRS. LOUD: (*Enters from the opposite direction and tries to break it up.*) It sounds like we're putting too much emphasis on what's on the outside and not enough on what's on the inside.

BRANT: Well, we're in high school, ya know! These are the best years of our lives! (*Contemplates.*) Which is really, really sad.

MRS. LOUD: (*Excited, says loudly.*) Cheerleading tryouts, tomorrow afternoon.

BUFFY and MATTY re-enter, upbeat.

MATTY: Can we watch?

BUFFY: We want to make fun of the girls who can't cheer.

MATTY: (*Makes the letters I and E with her fingers, then an inclusive arm gesture.*) i.e. everybody!

GRANT: (*Makes a pyramid with his arms on top of his head.*) Let's make a pyramid and pull one out from the bottom.

MRS. LOUD: (*Admonishing.*) Grant, that's not correct procedure.

GRANT: I know. But it'd be girls falling all over me! (*Thinks it's funny.*)

BRANT: (*This line is important, as it sets the stage for a lot of what's to come!*) We're not only football players, we're journalism and film students. We're going to document the season from the players' perspective. (*Aggravated, in BUFFY's direction.*) And how the cheerleaders are no help whatsoever!

GRANT: You have yet to inspire us to score a point, Buffy.

BUFFY: (*Walks up to GRANT, then bends towards him as if she wouldn't dream of getting any closer.*) You know the good thing about me telling you to shut up, Grant, from your perspective, is that it means I'm actually talking to you. Don't get used to it. (*Turns away from him, then to MRS. LOUD, with a change of attitude.*) MRS. LOUD, can we watch the tryouts?

MRS. LOUD: Not only do I want you to watch, I want you and Matty to help me judge!

BUFFY: We're great at judging. We judge every girl who walks by us all the time. They call us the Supreme Court!

MRS. LOUD: If enough girls are better than you, you might just find yourself on the bench. Get it. Supreme Court... bench...

BLOCK THAT KICK!

MATTY: I thought cheerleading was a permanent appointment. Just like Ruth Bader-Ginsburg.

BUFFY: My great-grandma did cheerleading until she was 92. Then she fell off a pyramid and the team hasn't won since. (*Divulging to the audience, like a big secret.*) She put a curse on them on her way down.

A whole group of girls (Not in cheerleading uniform.) enter to audition. This can include CALLIE, MIRANDA, ROXY, JASMINE, TARA and any EXTRAS.

ALL THE GIRLS: (*Shouting.*) Block that kick! Block that kick! (*A few times.*)

MRS. LOUD: (*Excited, but apprehensive.*) Okay, here we go!

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT RISE: *TARA is a student with no athletic talent who wants to be on the squad. She is in her house somewhere looking over the flyer about the tryouts. This can be a simple set, or just in front of a curtain.*

TARA: (*Reading the flyer with a big smile on her face.*) They say I have no talent, but what do "they" know? (*Proud and loud, like she's in a movie.*) I am a cheerleading original! (*Starts to do a routine.*)

Yay team! Yay team!

Hold that line! Hold that line!

Block that... (*Stops to think.*) block that...

well, whatever it is, block it. (*Excited.*) I'm going to be a cheerleader!

MOM: (*Enters.*) Calm down, Tara, it's not that big a deal. (*MOM is very success oriented, with a narrow definition of success. She would most likely be dressed upscale and conservative.*)

TARA: Mom, stop it. You know it's been my dream!

MOM: Since you were eight and you saw that silly cheerleading movie with Rihanna in it. Why don't you dream about doing some homework? It might get done ... in *my* dreams, anyway.

TARA: After cheerleading, I'm on to *American Idol*. I'm taking the easy way to stardom.

MOM: Is that even on anymore?

TARA: If I heard it right, you didn't go to the prom, you didn't play sports, you didn't cheerlead, and you didn't date until you were a junior in college. So you might be the wrong source of inspiration for a young talent like me.

MOM: (*Way too immature for her age at this point.*) I got straight A's, went to law school, married your very successful father, and by the way I'm our state's Attorney General. (*Grabs TARA'S flyer.*) So I wouldn't talk about who's made it and who hasn't.

She starts to exit, but TARA calls her back.

TARA: Hey, mom... if I don't win, maybe you can sue! (*MOM exits, TARA starts to cheer.*) Block that... block that... (*Calls off stage.*) Mom, what comes after "block that?" (*Under her breath.*) Like you'd know.

MOM: (*Enters just in the door.*) Kick.

TARA: No it's not.

MOM: It's kick or it's point. One of the two. There's nothing else to block. (*Hands TARA back the flyer.*) Except useless ambition. (*Exit.*)

TARA: (*Thinks it over.*) Block that point, block that kick... (*Sits down and pouts.*) Who knew cheerleading was so complicated?

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT RISE: *This scene can have the same setting as scene one, it can be in the gym or football field setting that will be scene five, or it can be on a bare stage in front of a curtain. Lights up with BRYAN on stage.*

BLOCK THAT KICK!

BRYAN: (*BRYAN is not a football player, but he is a video student who wants to make it big in TV. Hence, he tries to act like he's already made it as a reporter. He speaks to audience.*) My name is Bryan Grisbaugh, and you're watching *Whatever Happened to School Spirit: A Documentary by Bryan Grisbaugh*. Cheerleading has changed over the years. It used to be girls saying:

TARA: (*Enters and cheers with pom poms while bounding quickly across the stage.*) Block that kick! Block that kick! (*She's at the other end of the stage, and excited.*) Whew! I finally figured it out!

BRYAN: (*Still to audience.*) But that's not good enough anymore!

TARA: (*Overreacting.*) It's not? I just spent all night on it!

BRYAN: Our team hasn't blocked a kick in 46 games and counting.

TARA: (*Thinks for a short while, then puts a pom pom in the air.*) Wait till next year!

BRYAN: (*As a concerned journalist who enjoys being negative, he takes the pom poms away and lets them fall sadly to the ground.*) For seniors, there is no next year. There's college, job, marriage, ungrateful children, retirement, dementia and death. So this is the only chance they have. The only thing that can smooth over our declining and decrepit football program is great cheerleading! More than blocking kicks and holding the line, it's...

TARA: Scoring?

BRYAN: Our team hasn't scored since Gerald Ford was president. So to compensate, our cheerleaders need to be more athletic than our football players! Pyramids, circles, squares, trapezoids.... not just slogans, but... shapes!

TARA: (*Takes the pom poms back and freestyles a cheer.*) Sun that's high up in the sky, throw that ball and let it fly, if the pigskin lands just right, we'll celebrate our win tonight..

BRYAN: (*Doesn't like the poem.*) It's not Shakespeare, but...

TARA: (*Insistent.*) We don't need Shakespeare. Nobody cheers in iambic pentameter.

BRYAN: Now, let me introduce you to the Grisbaugh investigative team...

BRANT and GRANT make a grand entrance, a little bit dressed up [perhaps white shirts and black ties], and they slide in on either side of BRYAN.

BRANT: Grant and I are going to document the competition... behind the scenes.

GRANT: We're going to join forces and film the cheerleading tryouts as a documentary for our video class.

BRYAN: Three heads are better than one!

GRANT: This face deserves a screen!

BRANT: And as a running back, I want to use my brain before the concussions render it inoperable.

TARA: I wanna be on TV, too. *(Does something acrobatic, but badly.)* Document me!

BRYAN: Maybe one day. *(Tries to ignore TARA, and he gathers BRANT and GRANT together and brings them up front.)* Brant and Grant from the Blackberry High Ravens will match up their soft-hitting tackles with my hard hitting reports! Right here on...

BRYAN, GRANT and BRANT: *(All striking the same pose.)* Blackberry TV!

MRS. LOUD: *(Stomping in!)* I won't stand for it. You can't put my girls on TV!

MRS. GAFFER: *(Following her.)* Mrs. Loud! Are you going to stand in the way of my teaching technique?

MRS. LOUD: *(Confrontational, her name isn't MRS. LOUD for nothing.)* Yes I am, Mrs. Gaffer. You will not run your video class at the expense of my students.

SHE gets in front of MRS. GAFFER and snaps her fingers, then BUFFY and MATTY enter on cue. If there are extras, they can cheer along as well.

Watch this!

BUFFY and MATTY: Block that film! Block that film! Block that film!

MATTY: Documentary?

BUFFY: *(Gets in front of BRYAN.)* We're making a Block-u-mentary!

MRS. GAFFER: I was hoping that if we video this, that the cheerleaders and players would be on their best behavior. Right? *(Hands BRYAN a camera to start filming. SHE makes a motion like she's closing the clapboard at a filming, and backs out of the way of the camera.)* Best behavior, take one!

BLOCK THAT KICK!

MATTY: Of course! *(Has other plans.)* Of course... *(To video.)* See, uh... Callie, Miranda and Tara, they think they're going to make the team. But Buffy and I don't really want them. They're uncoordinated and they have the manners of cave-women. If Mrs. Loud can't be persuaded peacefully...

BUFFY: We're going find some other ways to influence her decision.

CALLIE and MIRANDA enter, cheering.

CALLIE and MIRANDA: Shock it, block it, you can't stop it!
Blackberry High will always top it!

MIRANDA: *(To the camera.)* We're going to make the team and be in the front row. *(Gets in front of BUFFY and MATTY.)* Matty and Buffy who?

BUFFY: *(Gets back out in front.)* You don't even *like* cheerleading.

CALLIE: And, I don't like you. So it'll be worth it.

BUFFY: That's a really stupid thing to say to the captain of the cheerleading squad when you're auditioning for an *(Looks into CALLIE's head.)* empty space.

BRYAN: This is good already.

BRANT and GRANT team up in front of the stage to stand in front of CALLIE and BUFFY, who continue to pantomime an argument.

GRANT: *(As an announcer, into the camera.)* The going is already tough, and the tryouts have yet to begin. Could it be that there's some not-so-hidden animosity between the cheerleaders and the candidates?

BRANT: Or could it be that they're just playing it up for reality TV?

GRANT: The mind of a teenage girl. A labyrinth of complexity, where emotion and reason never meet!

They pull apart and motion to show BUFFY and CALLIE going at it.

BUFFY: You don't seem to understand. I don't want you on the team. Perhaps I *am* spoiled and bratty, but I'm very adept to getting my way. You know the pop star everyone loves to hate because she's uber-talented and uber-bratty all at the same time? That's me. I'm a big fish in a small pond and you're a minnow in the Pacific.

CALLIE: (*Defensive yet combative.*) What's your problem with me? Just spit it out. Spit it out like that mac and cheese from the cafeteria.

BUFFY: (*Catty and really has no answer.*) I don't really have a *problem*, Callie. Let's just say...you're not my genre. So, uh... think twice.

CALLIE: You can make fun of me for studying the laws of gravity, but I'll know plenty when it comes to pulling you down. Buffy, in this case, *you* are the vampire, and I'm going to slay you. (*Turns away from BUFFY.*)

BRANT: That's awesome. This is some grade A footage!

CALLIE: (*On a roll, and excited to be on camera.*) I used to be wimpy, but somehow knowing I'm on film has tuned me into a barracuda. (*To the video.*) If she's going to be that bratty mega-star, I'll be the judge that's going to lock her up.

BRANT: (*As an interviewer.*) What do you think she means, you're not her genre?

CALLIE: I'm Ludwig van Beethoven to her Justin van Bieber. I'm Jean-Paul van Sartre to her Deepak van Chopra. I'm Carl van Jung to her Dear van Abby. Oh, and I'm an A student to her C+. I'm better than her in every van-way, and she can't van-stand it. So... block that kick? I'll block a lot more than that.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5

AT RISE: *At cheerleading tryouts. This can be set outside, in a gymnasium, etc. Extras can be here as well, female extras can be practicing for the tryouts. The contestants are jumping around, chatting, etc. Male extras can be students who are just watching and reacting to the goings on. Two students, ROXY and JASMINE, are discussing a routine. MRS. LOUD is checking names on a clipboard. BRANT, GRANT, and BRYAN are on hand to watch and film. MRS. GAFFER is there to supervise the filming.*

ROXY: *(Stops practicing for a minute.)* What was it again... block that line, hold that kick?

JASMINE: *(Correcting her.)* Block that kick, hold that line!

ROXY: *(Doesn't believe her.)* No it's not, Jasmine, you're wrong.

JASMINE: I'm right, Roxy.

ROXY: *(Escalating it.)* I don't care how right you are, you're still wrong.

JASMINE: Yeah like you're the queen of my self-image.

ROXY: If I say you're wrong, then you're wrong!

JASMINE: OK, you're right then. Maybe there's a puck involved. Whatever.

ROXY: You're not wrong after all! Best friends forever! *(Hops away.)*

JASMINE: *(Shaking her head and moving away.)* You are so wrong!

MRS. LOUD: *(Blows whistle, claps hands, etc. to get attention.)*

Okay everyone, your attention please. *(Nobody cares.)* I said your attention please. If I have to tell you one more time you're not going to like it.

ALL: All right, what?

MRS. LOUD: Everyone be quiet and listen to me!

JASMINE: Wow they don't call you Mrs. Loud for nothing.

MRS. LOUD: It gets worse from here. Now, if there's anyone here who doesn't want to pay attention, I suggest you go audition for the drama department, because from what I hear, no one pays attention to their theater director and who can blame them?

SKYLER: *(Enters, very cocky and full of himself, so he'll brush past people if he thinks they're in his way.)* Mrs. Loud I have an announcement I'd like to make.

MRS. LOUD: (*Knows him too well.*) You always do, Skyler, You always do.

SKYLER: (*Addressing everyone in his kingdom.*) I'm the quarterback of the football team and homecoming king shoo-in, so I think my words carry weight.

MRS. LOUD: If only your English teacher felt the same way.

SKYLER: (*Goes up to the guys filming.*) Brant, Grant, Bryan, you might want to film this. I'll wait. (*He waits until they set up to get him on camera.*) It will be very insightful and impactful. Munch on that, Mrs. Loud. As you know... Is my close-up ready? As you know, I'm the most sought after young man in the school. But still, I have no date for the homecoming dance, and my ascension as homecoming king is looking like a very lonely ride indeed. You may wonder, with all the accolades I've received, none of which are academic, why I even care about such a thing. But it's not that. It's for the school's own good, as how bad it would look if, I, Skyler James, would attend the dance without a date. Therefore, I hereby announce that I'm going take as my date the top scorer in the audition competition! The quarterback and the cheerleader, homecoming king and queen! Call it a consolidation of power!!

BUFFY: But that's not fair! I'm already chosen!

SKYLER: I know. We're not going together and I think you remember why.

BUFFY: If you take Tara, Callie, or Miranda, I'll... I'll...

MIRANDA: Oh, I'm out. That's not a prize, it's a punishment.

CALLIE: We're going to win, if nothing else, because it means Buffy loses.

MIRANDA: Why do you care if Buffy loses?

CALLIE: (*To the film.*) Because, she's a loser, and she should lose. I didn't care until five minutes ago when she insinuated herself between me – and success.

BUFFY: If Skyler takes anyone to the dance other than me, I'd hate to be in her shoes that night.

SKYLER: You're a poor sport.

BUFFY: Perhaps, but our cheerleading crew won state. You haven't won a since we *became* a state. So I wonder who the real loser is.

MRS. GAFFER: Students! Work together. This is not a reality show!

BRYAN: It is now... (*Announcing.*) Reality TV, where nice girls suddenly turn to...

ROXY: (*Combative.*) Turn to what? To *what*, Bryan?

BRYAN: Whatever you're being right now. I'm not sure there's even a word for it, but that's what they turn to. And, it goes viral.

ROXY: I'm gonna punch that thing!

GRANT: Watch yourself, Roxy, this high school has a no tolerance violence policy.

ROXY: It needs a no tolerance video policy, And a no tolerance Buffy and Matty policy. If it had those policies in place, all our violence and bullying issues would fall by the wayside.

BRYAN: Wow, you just kicked viral into super-viral. I like you. Wanna go out?

ROXY: No! (*Big, into the camera.*) You're disgusting, creepy, and you make my skin break out into ugly pustules.

BRYAN: Well, that's not going viral.

MATTY: (*Taking control of the situation.*) I think we need to speak in our defense.

BUFFY: Yeah, I think we do. We're much better at being offensive, but we can go defensive just this once.

BRYAN: Okay, defend away.

MATTY: (*Big fake smile.*) We don't see ourselves being judgmental so much as helpful.

BUFFY: If you're wearing an outfit that doesn't match...

MATTY: Or simply one we don't like..

BUFFY: Our constructive criticism will help you fit in.

MATTY: If we don't like your taste in music.

BUFFY: We figure no one else likes it either, so it's our job to remind you to TURN IT OFF.

MATTY: If you're dating a boy I like... or even a boy I *might* like but I'm not sure about yet...

BUFFY: That's just inexcusable, and then... we get mean.

MATTY: Really mean.

BUFFY: We're just nice girls trying to help everyone out. Nice, yet so misunderstood.

MRS. LOUD: *(Blowing a whistle or clapping her hands.)* Okay, nice girls, nice guys, and the rest of you too... let's do it! First of all, this is a friendly competition! If you're planning to make fun of anyone or put anyone down, you can leave right now. *(Some extras can walk off stage at this point.)* That's what I thought. First, we're going to have some warm-ups. If you can't pass the warm-ups, you can go home.

CALLIE: That kind of defeats the purpose of warm-ups!

MRS. LOUD: We have a big game coming up and I don't have time for backtalk.

MATTY: Yeah, so be quiet, Callie.

MRS. LOUD: Did you hear me, Matty?

MATTY: You mean us too? I thought we were exempt.

MRS. LOUD: Sorry Matty. I forgot your family was influential. Be quiet, Callie!

CALLIE: Can we just start?

GRANT: I thought boys were aggressive, but this is pure uncharted territory.

BUFFY: And you'd better not try to cross that border.

MRS. LOUD: For those of you who don't know me, I'm Mrs. Loud, the cheerleading coach. And I'll be deciding, with the help of our lead cheerleaders, who's going to fill the void left by Barbie, Lonnie, and Janaya. Now, jumping jacks, everyone!

MIRANDA: I haven't done a jumping jack since second grade.

Everyone stands around bewildered. MIRANDA does one questioning jumping jack, but no one else does, so she stops.

MRS. LOUD: *(Living up to her name, looking at them all with disbelief.)* This does not smell like teen spirit. It smells like lazy girl soup. *(Commanding.)* Jumping jacks, everyone, now! *(They all try it, and MRS. LOUD goes around to various people to comment.)* Too fast, too slow, perfect! Awful! *(To JASMINE.)* Sorry, your nose doesn't match.

JASMINE: Doesn't match what?

MRS. LOUD: It doesn't blend with the other girls.

JASMINE: You're a buzzkill. I don't think that's a prerequisite to being a cheerleader.

MRS. LOUD: *(With pride.)* It is at Rayburn High.

JASMINE: This isn't Rayburn High. It's Blackberry High.

MRS. LOUD: Oh, sorry. I graduated from Rayburn High. 35 years ago. At Rayburn, you could lose by a nose. Now, Miranda, that is neither jumping nor a jack. *(Disappointed.)* I don't think any of these girls are going to make it.

BUFFY: Let them through the first round, I want to see what happens.

MATTY: Except for Tara, what's up with her?

MRS. LOUD: She can't jump.

BUFFY: She can't chant either.

TARA: *(Still confused, walking off, lost in her own world.)* Was it block that kick, or kick that block, or... *(Turns back around.)* Mrs. Loud, what are we blocking, and do I need to say it and jump at the same time?

MRS. LOUD: No, because no one wants to see it! Just sit down, Tara.

TARA: But I want to be a cheerleader!

MRS. LOUD: I'm sorry, but not everyone can be a cheerleader.

TARA: I know. Cheerleading is for the popular girls.

BUFFY: Looks like you won't be going out with Skyler!

TARA: Oh, I will. My mother is more influential than anyone around her has any inkling.

SKYLER: Everyone wants to go out with me! It's like picking candy out of the grocery aisle.

BUFFY: That must be why you can't get a date, Skyler. You and Tara are both in the same boat, but for different reasons. You should go out with each other, and sail that boat wayyyy out into the Antarctic Ocean.

TARA: This is no Antarctic ocean.

BUFFY: That's what I mean.

TARA: You mean what?

BUFFY: *(Caught because her insult didn't work.)* You should go somewhere that doesn't exist.

TARA: No, you didn't mean that. You're trying to cover up your epic geographical fail.

BUFFY: Well you're a failure as a cheerleader.

BUFFY and MATTY: Two four six eight, you will never get a date!
Eight six four two, we're on the squad and... *(They keep jumping.)*
and... and...

MATTY: *(Still jumping.)* What rhymes with two?

TARA: You, as in "8 6 4 2, no one wants to cheer with you!" Wow,
whatever happened to civilization?

SKYLER: I'm sorry Tara, I guess you're out of the running. *(Loud, walking around.)* Who wants to be homecoming queen? Hoof it, girls!

MRS. LOUD: Skyler!

SKYLER: It's an incentive program. Winner takes all. All...
(Indicating himself.) this! *(He starts to brag on camera.)* Got my good side? Oh that's right, they're both good. Sit down, and let's talk more about my good qualities, shall we? My modesty, my humility in the face of my own greatness....

MRS. GAFFER: *(Pulling SKYLER away.)* Did I just watch some soon to be deleted footage? I thought so.

MRS. LOUD: *(Shakes her head and walks away.)* OK, I'm going to show you some simple steps and see how well you can learn them. Arms out, then up, then kick. *(SHE stands in front of the girls facing front, and they line up behind her so that everyone is facing front. SHE repeats it a few times and demonstrates. They girls start to follow her, TARA can't get it. After a short while MRS. LOUD turns around to see how everyone is doing.)* Come on Tara, we'll give you one more chance. Arms out, then up, then kick. *(MRS. LOUD does this a few times, TARA tries and falls over. The others don't do very well either.)* OK, just one thing at a time *(TARA is up. Ready to try again.)* Arms out. *(They do.)* Then up *(They do.)* Then kick. *(TARA tries, but falls over again.)* Maybe we need a smaller squad this year.

ACT ONE, SCENE 6

AT RISE: Same setting; BRANT is interviewing SKYLER while BRYAN and GRANT are filming. Others, such as MATTY and BUFFY are also present to watch and participate.

BRANT: *(Being a reporter and narrating for the camera.)* We have several students on hand to give their take on the cheerleading tryouts here at Blackberry High. Can they pull it off, or is a Ravens victory the stuff of... Never More? But what's a game of football without cheerleaders? Skyler, what do you think of the tryouts so far?

SKYLER: I just hope the hottest girls get picked!

GRANT: *(Breaking in.)* Not that we applaud such things, we simply acknowledge reality and pass it on.

SKYLER: Sometimes it comes down to talent, but I don't really care about that in a cheerleader. That's what football players are for. Talent.

BRANT: That must explain our 0-42 record over the last few years, while the cheerleading squad is a regional powerhouse.

SKYLER: It could have been worse.

BRANT: How, exactly?

SKYLER: It just could have been!

BRANT: Why don't you explain to Blackberry High School what, exactly could be worse than losing 42 games in a row.

SKYLER: *(Confused.)* 43? 44? 45? Forty-

Before he can finish, MATTY interrupts him.

MATTY: If Callie and Miranda think they're going to be on the cheerleading squad, they have another thing coming.

GRANT: And what would that be?

MATTY: *(Has no idea.)* Just, another thing.

GRANT: *(Still looking for clarification.)* Well, what thing do they have coming now, and what will the next thing be?

MATTY: You're really stupid.

GRANT: I'm asking you to clarify your threats for our documentary.

BRYAN: *(Strong!)* We're asking tough questions!

BUFFY: No, you're not, you're trying to make us look stupid.

BRYAN: *(Amused.)* We're not trying that hard.

MATTY: Oh, we know what stupid looks like.

GRANT: Now everybody does.

MATTY and BUFFY get angry and chase him off stage.

CALLIE: (*Cautiously approaches BRANT.*) I wanted to say something.

BRANT: What's that?

CALLIE: That... this means everything to me, and if I don't make the squad, I'm going to hold Matty and Buffy personally responsible, and if they think they're going to get away with keeping me out they have another thing coming.

BRANT: And what would that thing be?

MIRANDA: You'll just have to stay tuned, won't you? We have a lot of things coming that they're not going to like.

BRANT: Can you just tell me now, my battery is running low.

MIRANDA: Everyone here has that problem. We're all like the nine-volt in a smoke detector the day before Halloween. But in cheerleading, no one can hear you beep.

CALLIE and MIRANDA walk off in a huff.

ACT ONE, SCENE 7

AT RISE: *TARA'S parents are meeting with MRS. LOUD; this can be on the field, in a small office, or on a bare stage in front of the curtain.*

MOM: (*As a big time lawyer, she does a lot of posturing.*) Mrs. Loud, Robert and I got some really bad news from our daughter.

DAD: (*He doesn't know what to say most of the time.*) Really bad.

MRS. LOUD: If it's about-

MOM: (*As a lawyer in a court battle.*) I think you know what it's about.

DAD: (*Trying to be tough like MOM but not doing a very good job of it.*) You know exactly what it's about.

MOM: You cut her from the cheerleading squad.

DAD: (*Now exaggerating, grotesquely.*) Cut like a melon. Sliced down the middle with seeds and goo dripping off your bloody knife.

MRS. LOUD: I didn't cut her from the squad. I told her she wasn't ready to join the squad.

DAD: Like a melon, squished and dripping in the proverbial aisle three.

MRS. LOUD: I'm very sorry, but your daughter doesn't have the requisite talent ...

DAD: With goo, dripping off the knife...

MOM: You try explaining that to a daughter who dreams of nothing but cheerleading.

MRS. LOUD: Then perhaps she needs some new dreams. Like...
(*Great idea!*) sitting at home alone reading the entire Harry Potter collection.

DAD: Like a cantaloupe. Like an orange. Like a-

MOM: That's enough, Robert.

DAD: Tara is inconsolable. Once a melon is cut, it starts to rot.

TARA, off somewhere else, cries loudly. This can be offstage, or lights can be up on her alone.

MOM: See what we have to listen to? I'm going to record that and play it over the school intercom.

MRS. LOUD: Sometimes children need to learn to deal with disappointment.

MOM: And sometimes, children *don't*. (*Harsh.*) You're going to put her on the team, or you'll have another thing coming!

MRS. LOUD: I have quite a lot coming already, so one more thing probably won't make a difference.

DAD: Another thing! And you're not going to like it!

MRS. LOUD: I'm sorry, but every school has standards for its cheerleading squad.

MOM: You don't have any for your football team. What, exactly are they going to cheer about? Tara will be perfect. She's as competent as your quarterback. And, she wants to date him.

MRS. LOUD: No one else does. What a strange school this is.

MOM: I'm going to tell Tara you've changed your mind.

MRS. LOUD: But I haven't.

MOM: (*Insistent.*) I'm going to tell her you've changed your mind. Then you can deal with it from here.

DAD: Like an apple!

MOM: Robert! Stop slicing fruit.

DAD: Like a rock!

MOM: *(As she leads him out, MRS. LOUD tries to act like none of this ever happened.)* That's Bob Seger, Robert. We don't listen to Bob Seger in our house.

Of course, a short section from a Bob Seger song could be a perfect fit for scene change music.

ACT ONE, SCENE 8

AT RISE: *This on-campus scene can be set simply or just played on a bare part of the stage, in front of a curtain, etc.*

MRS. GAFFER: *(Enters briskly and calls them on stage.)* Brant! Grant! Bryan!

BRANT, GRANT and BRYAN: *(They enter haphazardly.)* Yes, Mrs. Gaffer!

MRS. GAFFER: I need you to change your scope, your direction, your theme, and your outlook.

BRYAN: But Mrs. Gaffer, that's everything!

BRANT: *(Upset.)* That's the whole project.

MRS. GAFFER: I'll grant you that, Brant, but you're turning everyone involved into...

GRANT: *(Interrupts her, proud.)* Not turning, Mrs. Gaffer. *(With arms spread wide.)* Exposing.

MRS. GAFFER: You'll make me look bad. You'll make the whole school look bad. You'll look back on this, years from now, and...

BRYAN: *(No he won't.)* Years from now I don't think any of this will matter.

MRS. GAFFER: That depends on if we still have Facebook. In my day, you signed the yearbook and buried it in a hope chest. Now, everything matters, forever.

BRYAN: Well, we were going to change our tune a bit.

BRANT: We're going to interview the other girls.

GRANT: The girls that got kicked off the team. We want to make this an in-depth documentary, not just a fluff piece about who can, or can't, block what.

BRYAN: *(Sees she is unmoved.)* Please?

MRS. GAFFER: (*Grudgingly.*) Well, Okay. But I get to approve the final product.

BRANT: We won't let you down, Mrs. Gaffer. But if we do, we'll make sure it looks like it's all your fault.

They run off, MRS. GAFFER exits the other way, shaking her head.

ACT ONE, SCENE 9

AT RISE: *BARBIE, LONNIE, and JANAYA are sitting together on a bench, glum. They can be holding pom poms or other cheerleading accessories and looking at them sadly.*

BRYAN: Here we are, with Barbie, Lonnie, and Janaya.

GRANT: (*Going to each one, and as he does, they each cry out in turn.*) Barbie, Lonnie, and Janaya.

BRANT: While other girls are busy jumping, blocking, and chanting, these girls are moping, whining, and making excuses. (*Kneeling down to them and talking to the camera.*) Let's see exactly what these excuses are.

BARBIE: (*Looking away from the camera.*) I don't want to talk about it.

BRANT: (*Too sweet.*) I think you do.

BARBIE: (*Now right into BRANT's face.*) I said I don't want to talk about it!

BRANT: Don't tell me. Tell the camera.

BARBIE: (*Dramatic.*) What part of "I don't want to talk about it" don't you understand?

BRANT: I think... it's the "don't" part. Now, Barbie, tell us what happened.

LONNIE: Tell 'em, Barbie. It's like the country song: (*She can sing it if she knows the tune.*) it's not what you did, it's what you *didn't* do.

BRANT: What didn't you do, Barbie?

BARBIE: (*Like a loser on a reality show, milking it for all it's worth.*)

Study. I practiced cheerleading instead. I forgot that the point of school was to study. I felt like I was on a TV show, where no one did any homework or ever went to class. I thought the world was a pastiche of extracurricular activities and social wrangling. But I forgot that for something to be *extracurricular*, there had to be some curriculum to begin with.

GRANT: So, in other words...

BARBIE: I'm on academic probation and I can't do anything extra until I get my grades up.

GRANT: And when do you think that will happen?

BARBIE: Maybe when I'm 35...

GRANT: Your parents must be very proud.

BARBIE: They're in prison.

GRANT: Lonnie, how about you? What exactly took you from a top spot on the cheerleading squad to a lowly place on the bench. To a has been. To a can't be. To a-

LONNIE: (*Very peaceful.*) If you don't shut up, I'm going to throw that camera in the river.

BRYAN: The river's 40 miles from here.

LONNIE: I can drive.

BRYAN: What's your story? Just treat the camera as your psychiatrist.

LONNIE: I was realistic. The Blackberries can't win. They can't pass, they can't catch, they can't punt, they can't run. And I think there's a jock itch problem that no one wants to admit. I was wasting my cheers. It's like a classical violinist recording disco. So I started cheering for the other teams. I was a winner. Everyone could block, pass, punt, kick, score, and I was happy again!

BRYAN: Isn't that treason?

LONNIE: Mrs. Loud thought so. She said I was consorting with the enemy.

BRYAN: That's kind of harsh.

LONNIE: She caught me with the girls from Blueberry High at a malt shop. I showed them our cheerleading playbook. I was... a traitor. I deserved it. On the upside, me and Barbie have a study group and we're acing it.

BRYAN: (*Correcting her grammar.*) That's Barbie and I.

LONNIE: What is?

BRYAN: The study group. Barbie and I.

LONNIE: (*Confused.*) No, you're not in it.

BRYAN: (*Gives up.*) Ne-ver mind.

BRANT: (*Moving along.*) Let's move to... Janaya. Tell us, young lady, what's your scandal?

JANAYA: (*Proud.*) I, Janaya Tobias, am the first lady of scandal. I'm proud of what I did. It should be etched into the cheerleader hall of fame. In the annals of Blackberry High! People will remember! Everyone should know!

BRANT: What did you do?

JANAYA: Oh, like I'm going to tell you.

BARBIE: We were there.

JANAYA: You could have stood with me. But you refused. You were an Ismene to my Antigone.

BARBIE: What, follow you and get kicked off the squad?

JANAYA: Well didn't you?

BARBIE: I'm only on probation. Give me a couple A's and I'm reinstated. You, however, are out on your pigskin.

JANAYA: I beg your pardon!

BRANT: Pigskin is another name for football.

JANAYA: (*Combative.*) I doubt that.

BRANT: Really, it is.

LONNIE: (*To JANAYA.*) You should learn something about football.

BARBIE: But you didn't, did you?

LONNIE: Only the ignorant think they know everything.

JANAYA: That would make you both geniuses.

BRYAN: Can we cut to the chase?

LONNIE: Chase... exactly. She chased after a boy that Matty liked. And Matty *didn't* like that.

JANAYA: So they fabricated a story.

BRYAN: What was the story?

JANAYA: A fabrication. That's what it was. But since Matty said it, it took wing. Like a sparrow. Small, but pooping on everyone's lawns until they drive it away with repellent. So, I'm off the squad. Whoever takes my place is basically buying someone's foreclosed home. The good news is... I'm still going out with Shonni, and without cheerleading to get in the way, I have more time for romance. *(Spooky smile.)* So, you tell me who the loser is.

GRANT: *(To the guys.)* Oh, this is deep. Too deep. We need to talk to Matty.

ACT ONE, SCENE 10

AT RISE: *At the field or gym. As GRANT, BRANT, and BRYAN approach, MATTY is doing a routine and chanting and doesn't notice them.*

MATTY: Cheerleaders will go to state, boys will never win a game! I decide who's on the squad, better yet I say who's not!

BRYAN: *(Talks while she is cheering.)* Uh... Matty? Matty?

MATTY: *(Not noticing him.)* Football is a stupid sport, the boys on our team all have warts. *(She can start her cheer over again if necessary.)*

BRYAN: *(Very loud.)* Matty!

MATTY: *(She stops, startled, then jumps around.)* What? I'm practicing.

BRYAN: That doesn't sound like a school sanctioned cheer.

MATTY: I'm freestyling. Are you going to film me? *(Turns one way or other.)* This side, please. Oh never mind, they're both good.

BRANT: We had a talk with some of your victims.

MATTY: *(Sarcastic.)* A talk. How uplifting and fulfilling. *(Starts to walk away, and BRANT follows her with a recorder.)*

BRANT: You might want to see this.

BRANT plays the film in a small device. BARBIE, LONNIE and JANAYA are back on the bench reprising their lines. MATTY listens and watches with dismay. She also tries to disturb the girls by waving in their face, for example, but since they're "on film" they don't notice her.

BRYAN: *(He runs over to the bench to interview them, everyone should play this scene as close to how they did the first time.)* Can we cut to the chase?

LONNIE: Chase... exactly. Chase. Chased after a boy that Matty liked. And Matty didn't like that.

JANAYA: So they fabricated a story.

BRYAN: What was the story?

JANAYA: A fabrication. But since Matty said it, it took wing. Like an owl. Like an eagle. Like a sparrow. Small, but pooping on everyone's lawns until they drive it away with repellent. *(MATTY is disgusted by this thought.)* So, I'm off the squad.

MATTY: *(To JANAYA, who doesn't "hear".)* Good!

JANAYA: Whoever takes my place is basically buying someone's foreclosed home. The good news is... I'm still going out with Shonni, and without cheerleading to get in the way, I have more time for romance. *(Spooky smile.)* So, you tell me who the loser is.

GRANT turns off the video, a quick blackout and when lights come up the three girls are gone. If there aren't lights, BRYAN can motion to them to exit. When lights come up, the three guys are looking to MATTY for an explanation

MATTY: *(Not sure what to say.)* Lies. All lies.

SHONNI enters, a bit full of himself, with JANAYA on his arm.

SHONNI: Oh, maybe not, Matty. *(Indicating himself and JANAYA.)* Does *this* look like a lie?

MATTY: Shonni! What are you doing here? I told you never to darken my door again. Especially with her!

SHONNI: *(Matter of fact.)* There's no door here.

MATTY: My proverbial door. *(Gets in front of SHONNI, then proceeds to pantomime a door in front of her.)* This door. Don't darken it. *(Pretends to close it.)*

BRANT: *(To MATTY, as an investigative journalist. He pretends to open the door she just closed, and walk through it. Then he pantomimes pulling it shut behind him.)* We think another girl liked him and you had her punted off the squad.

SHONNI: *(To MATTY.)* Janaya. She likes me. You like me.

(Smiling, to everyone.) A lot of girls like me.

MATTY: A lot of girls are ignorant.

SHONNI: But *you* liked me most of all.

MATTY: So? Color me ignorant.

BRANT: So Matty, you admit you had Janaya kicked off the team because you two were competing for the same guy.

JANAYA: There was no competition. I won.

SHONNI: And now that she's off the squad, we have more time to be together.

BRYAN: Matty, it sounds like you're using your, uh... influence to squelch another girl's dream.

MATTY: She didn't put the team first. She put herself first. And if anyone's going to put themselves first, it's going to be me.

JANAYA: So putting the team first means you and Buffy always get your way.

BUFFY: *(Enters, having overheard, and walks into the action by separating SHONNI and JANAYA.)* Yes, Janaya. *(She's very confident and brusque and all business.)* We always get our way, and speaking of our way, you're both in it, *(Pushes her way through people.)* so if you would please move, we'll get back to practicing. *(Bumps into something she can't see.)* Who put this door here?

SHONNI: Long story. But if *you* would please move, we'll get back to... *(With a big smile.)* dating... *(To MATTY, knocking.)* Nice door.

BUFFY and MATTY: *(They do a routine while trying to intimidate everyone else by jumping too close to them.)*

Next time you get in my way, you will live to rue the day!

Next time that you start a fight you will live to rue the night.

Next time-

JANAYA: *(Stopping MATTY by putting hands on her shoulders as she comes down from a jump and keeping her still [this will take some practice!].) Hold it! (Stopping BUFFY the same way.) Hold it! (Quietly threatening and they are shocked someone dared to stop them.) There isn't going to be a next time.*

Exits sternly with SHONNI.

BRANT: *(Looks at footage.) I'm lovin' it!*

MATTY: I don't love what you're lovin'!

BRANT: Hmm... do I sense a leak? A movie trailer? A sneak leak preview?

MATTY: You better not! Or you'll have another thing coming!

BRANT: And what will that be? *(She doesn't know what to say, and her and BUFFY storm out.) That's what I thought.*

ACT ONE, SCENE 11

AT RISE: *MRS. LOUD, MRS. GAFFER, BUFFY and MATTY are having a discussion. This can be on the set where the tryouts are being held, or in front of a curtain or smaller playing area.*

MRS. LOUD: Matty, Buffy, we have reports about you.

BUFFY: Like someone would dare!

MATTY: *(Happy to hear the news!)* Reports, like we're the best dressed with impeccable taste in music. *(She sings a couple lines from a popular song with a short dance step.)*

MRS. GAFFER: *(Stops her.)* No, no reports like that, ever.

MRS. LOUD: We have reports that you're trying to bully some girls against trying out for cheerleading.

MATTY: We're not bullying.

BUFFY: We're just being influential.

MRS. LOUD: You need to pull it back.

MRS. GAFFER: We have you on film.

BUFFY: You have everyone on film, so time will bear out that we're right.

SKYLER: *(Runs on, doing a cheer himself.)*

No nerdy cheerleaders. No nerdy cheerleaders!

BUFFY: You need to get *that* on film.

MRS. GAFFER: (*Grabs SKYLER to stop him.*) Skyler? We don't have nerdy girls in this school.

SKYLER: Yeah ya do.

MRS. GAFFER: We have people of diverse appearance who do not deserve judging.

SKYLER: (*He just won't give up.*) Or, as we call it, nerdy.

MRS. GAFFER: Like you're a pantheon of stunningly handsome movie stars all rolled into one.

SKYLER: Handsome is my middle name, and Stunningly is my first.

BUFFY: You'll notice he's still dateless for homecoming!

SKYLER: Stop it. You're being hurtful. (*Exits.*)

MRS. LOUD: Be that as it may... if any of you continue to harass girls trying out, I'll be forced to kick you off the squad. Much as I would hate that, and as much as everyone else would really relish it if I did, you would give me no choice!

MATTY: You already have no choice. My mother is on the board of education.

BUFFY: And we're all bored of education!

BUFFY and MATTY high five!

MATTY: If you kick me off the cheerleading squad, my mother is going to take science out of every school in Kansas!

MRS. LOUD: We're not in Kansas.

MATTY: (*Stops short.*) We're not?

MRS. LOUD: Nope.

MATTY: Well either way, she'll make your life a living heck.

MRS. LOUD: Like you don't already.

BUFFY: Brant is doctoring us on film to make us look bad!

MRS. GAFFER: He doesn't know how. Brant is not a doctor of doctoring.

BUFFY: But you said we could judge the cheerleaders!

MRS. LOUD: I said you can *help* me decide, based on their abilities. Not judge their clothing, their taste in music, or whether the boy you wanted to date goes out with one of them.

SHONNI and JANAYA sashay across the stage.

JANAYA: You mean like this, Mrs. Loud?

SHONNI: I think she means like this! Not that we're rubbing it in...

JANAYA: But we're rubbing it in. *(They exit.)*

MATTY: Stop it. You're being hurtful. *(Runs off in a tizzy.)*

MRS. GAFFER: *(Mainly to the audience.)* But, it's true, according to the documentary. Once this movie comes out, we'll see who the kind students are. Who the considerate students are. Who the good students are. And those students will stand up and shout *(Grand.)* "I am the one percent!"

ACT ONE, SCENE 12

AT RISE: *On the field. Start the scene with BRANT, GRANT and BRYAN filming SKYLER.*

BRANT: *(Narrating, and showing off SKYLER.)* Skyler James, the football team's quarterback. Accused of judging girls solely by their looks. How do you plead?

SKYLER: I don't have to plead. I get what I want. And since I said I'd date the top ranking new cheerleader, I'm expecting my wants taken into consideration. That's all. Be nerdy on your own time.

GRANT: You're giving football players a bad name. You're making us sound shallow and inconsiderate.

BRANT: *(As a reporter coming up with big news.)* Perhaps we're all a bunch of shallow high school boys who don't appreciate girls for what's on the inside. *(Arm around GRANT like they're on TV.)* But Grant and I have resolved to be accepting and inclusive!

SKYLER: I've seen what's on the inside. *(Pretends to shiver.)* It's cold. So, I'm making do with the outside. *(Really annoying.)* It's hot. Any girl would consider herself lucky to spend an evening next to the future homecoming king!

BRYAN: While you're on film, why not answer a question that has some relevance. Like how come your team hasn't completed a pass. Scored a touchdown. Kicked a field goal?

SKYLER: *(Doesn't want to answer.)* I'm sorry, I'm not allowed to discuss the playbook.

BRYAN: Try reading it sometime, and we might actually win.
(*Notices people offstage.*) Look what's coming next!

Enter TARA, CALLIE, MIRANDA, JASMINE, ROXY, MATTY, BUFFY, doing a cheer. Can use extras as needed; they can do this cheer as they enter or they can enter, line up, and then perform.

ALL THE GIRLS: You can pick an orange! You can pick an apple
You can stomp a grape, and a pumpkin you can trample
You can squish a squash, and it comes out in the wash
But you better be wary, because you can't squash the Berry!
(*A final jump.*) Goooooooooooooooo Ravens!

BRYAN: So, Skyler, there's your choice.

SKYLER: I don't have to make a choice. The choice will be made for me. I just sit back and have a girl delivered to my door.

TARA: (*Approached SKYLER, this takes a lot of guts.*) I really like you Skyler. Even if I don't win.

SKYLER: (*Treating her like "just another groupie."*) Winning is a condition of dating. I don't go out with losers. (*Starts to turn away from her until.*)

TARA: (*Now she has nothing to lose, so she lets him have it.*) That's too bad. You impose conditions on others you can't meet yourself. I see what's behind this false and annoying bravado. (*Trying, but failing, to be romantic.*) And I'm the only one with enough patience to look past it.

SKYLER: (*Offended!*) My bravado is not false!

TARA: (*Aggravated.*) You're afraid of rejection. I've been rejected and lived to tell, so I realize I can live through whatever anyone can throw at me. Speaking of throwing, you're afraid of *anyone* who can throw a ball, since they'll take your place on the team.

SKYLER: If you want to go out with me, you'd better start cheering like your life depends on it.

TARA: (*Sees it realistically.*) It's not my life. It's just a date. (*Gives up for now.*) Never mind, I'm just going to lock myself in a room with Jane Austen. (*She moves away from him, disappointed.*)

MRS. LOUD: (*Enters, blows whistle or finds some other way of getting everyone's attention.*) I have great news for you girls. All of you here have made it into the next round of audition!

ROXY: That's awesome!

JASMINE: Cheerleading here we come!

MRS. LOUD: Not so fast. You still have to pass the judging. Which would be me.

MATTY: *(Jumping into place next to MRS. LOUD.)* And me

BUFFY: *(Jumping into place on the other side.)* And me.

MRS. LOUD: Buffy and Matty have agreed to judge on skill, not on popularity

BUFFY: Where we come from, popularity *is* a skill.

MRS. LOUD: The final decision is mine. But, in the vein of teaching people responsibility, they're going to help.

ROXY: We should have the whole school vote, like "Cheerleading Idol!"

MRS. LOUD: Great idea Roxy! You can audition in front of the whole student body!

ROXY: *(Quickly decides against it.)* Eeewww, never mind.

BUFFY: *(Snotty.)* So instead, you'll submit to our jurisdiction.

CALLIE: You make it sound so serious.

BUFFY: I know. But I want to be a lawyer so I need to practice big words.

CALLIE: I have some for you. They all center around what you are! *(Happily.)* Hmm. Where shall I begin? Thankfully my cell phone has a thesaurus. *(If desired, she pulls out a phone.)*

BUFFY: *(Sweet, but threateningly so.)* I don't see this as submission to my jurisdiction. *(Tries to grab the phone and CALLIE tries to keep it away from her.)*

MRS. LOUD: *(Gets in between them.)* Girls! Stop it!

CALLIE and BUFFY: *(Together.)* She started it!

MRS. LOUD: If you make the team you'll have to learn to get along. And you'll all have to get used to the fact that some of you are dating Skyler and some of you *lucky* girls... aren't.

BRANT: And we'll be right here to film from the painful start to the painful finish!

MRS. LOUD: *(Big.)* Why not? It can only get worse!

ALL THE GIRLS: Goooooooo Ravens!

If desired, bring on the school cheerleaders for a short routine to end the act.

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