

VOTE FOR ME OR NOT AT ALL!

By Kelly Meadows

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VOTE FOR ME OR NOT AT ALL!

A Full Length Comedy

By Kelly Meadows

SYNOPSIS: A high stakes election! After all it's high school, where everything means more than it means anywhere else. Follow three students as they try to wrestle votes from the student body, no matter what it takes. Is anything too low, too dirty, too scandalous? Absolutely not, as these students learn how to slug it out just like any self-respecting political office-seeker. Lots of laughs, though occasionally some character and integrity intrude along the way – plus a surprise ending that will catch everyone off guard! A great comedy with a flexible cast...this play deserves your vote!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(8 females, 5-6 males, 3-6 either, 0-10 extras;
doubling possible gender flexible)*

THE STUDENT CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT:

KIM FELDMAN (f).....A studious student, who wants fair treatment for all. (93 lines)

MARIO ORTIZ (m).....The exact opposite, doesn't care about classwork nor equality. (61 lines)

ATHENA APHRODITE CLAYTON (f).....A goddess living among mortals, with instructions not to use her powers- good luck with that. (72 lines)

THE STUDENT RABBLE AND CONSTITUENCY:

SHILO GERRINGER (m)Kim's Boyfriend. (56 lines)

TAMARA (f)Mario's girlfriend, trying to force Kim out of the race. (88 lines)

CATHILDA (f)Mario's next girlfriend and Tamara's best friend. (52 lines)

COREY (m)A little bit wishy-washy, maybe. (37 lines)

TAYLOR (m/f)Another "follower". (31 lines)

SOPHIE STONEBRIDGE (f) Student debate orgaizer of election activities, yet not unbiased. (43 lines)

THOMPSON MAGUIRE (m) Wants to play football. (33 lines)

SCHOOL STAFF:

MRS. BONNIE OLDHAM (f) Faculty moderator. (49 lines)

MS. /MR. SHARPE (m/f) English/mythology teacher. (49 lines)

PRINCIPAL JOHNSON (m/f) School principal. (26 lines)

THE PARENTS:

MRS. ORTIZ (f) Mario's Mother. (52 lines)

MR. ORTIZ (m) Mario's Father, recently separated from Mrs. (15 lines)

JOOP CLAYTON (m) Athena's Father, an immortal Greek god. (37 lines)

SHEERA CLAYTON (f) Athena's Mother, immortal as well; they're married for 1000s of years. (32 lines)

THE FURIES:

TISIPHONE (m/f) Ti-SI'-pho-nee. (13 lines)

MEGAERA (m/f) Me-GARE'-a. (12 lines)

ALECTO (m/f) Accent second syllable. (13 lines)

EXTRAS (m/f) Optional; with many possibilities for appearing on stage. These can include students at the debates and election, students hanging out in the common areas, participating in class, and in MARIO'S "entourage." (Non-Speaking)

CAST NOTE: Two of the three Furies, can be doubled by SHEERA and/or MRS. ORTIZ. Or the FURIES can be extras until their scene. If need be due to casting issues, you can play the scene with two FURIES COREY or TAYLOR can double as MR. ORTIZ, or Mr. ORTIZ can also be an extra.

DURATION: 90 minutes.

TIME: Present day.

PROPS

- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ School books
- ☐ Students can have backpacks, snacks, other typical things students have
- ☐ Cups or glasses for drinks
- ☐ Campaign signs, flyers, posters
- ☐ Ballot box, pencils or pens, and paper ballots

SPECIAL EFFECTS

- ☐ Thunder and lightning in various degrees of intensity
- ☐ Farm animal sounds (*cows, sheep, horses, etc*)

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET: Many of the scenes take place in the “common area” at the school, which is a large space for events, or just for studying, snacking, having lunch and hanging out. This should be the major set of the play. Use your imagination when staging some scenes here, if you want to set them during lunch, for example, that can provide more opportunities for action or food fights, plus give extras a chance to be on stage with something to do.

Other scenes take places in MARIO’S house, ATHENA’S house, and a school conference room or office. These can be quickly set up with a couple chairs and tables, or played in front of the curtain. If no curtain they can be played in an area of the ‘common area.” Another set idea is a “concept set” where there is a general election theme, and the scenes are played in front of that.

Students can carry signs endorsing their candidate throughout the various scenes. Many scenes involve people speaking to a group, but make sure to avoid having people facing away from the audience. (*Nobody wants to come see a play where their kids aren’t facing front!*) You might be better off “cheating out” towards the audience, even if it doesn’t appear realistic, so they can take in more of the action. Also, as noted in the script, you are welcome to change Baymont High references to your own school if you like.

COSTUMES: As the play is set in present day, most characters can dress in “present day” outfits. The Furies at the end can have horrible makeup and hair, and wear frightful nasty stained smelly outfits – anything that would make the others want to avoid them. The CLAYTON family can dress a bit more upscale or have ostentatious “Greek God” outfits that they see nothing wrong with. MS.. ORTIZ would dress up. KIM would not be as fashion conscious as SOPHIE, TAMARA or CAHTILDA.

AUTHOR’S NOTE

Ms. Sharpe is referred to as such in the scripts, but can be Mr. Sharpe with minimal changes. If necessary, Mrs. Oldham can also be played by a male, making appropriate changes, with the first name Benton.

Mr. Ortiz is noted as having “international offices” in Canada; Canadian productions can change this to the U.S. if desired; then change Toronto to Detroit, Calgary to Denver, and Canadian Tire to Home Depot.

Here are some themes of the play: doing what’s right vs. what’s popular, believing in yourself and chasing your goals, appreciating the strengths in others that you might not have yourself, anti-bullying, plus it’s a comedy so make people laugh!

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: *In the common area at school, where there is a “presidential” debate taking place. KIM, MARIO and ATHENA are each at a podium, seated at a table, or somehow set apart. SOPHIE is nearby and MRS. OLDHAM, is situated where she can ask questions. In the student audience are COREY, TAYLOR, SHILO, TAMARA, CATHILDA, THOMPSON, plus any extras.*

SOPHIE: *(Enthusiastic, like a cheerleader.)* Are we ready?

Class: We’re ready!

SOPHIE: Baymont Grizzlies, are...we...ready!

Class: *(Ad libbing.)* Ready! Yep! We’re ready. Bring it on!

SOPHIE: Areee Weee Ready!

Class: Ready!

TAMARA: Get on with it already! We want the dirt! *(People agree.)*

SOPHIE: *(Still high level/high energy.)* As student moderator of Baymont High School Election, I say let the fireworks begin. I now present to you, Presidential Debate Number One! [use your school’s name throughout the play if you prefer.]

KIM: *(Again, these introductions should be enthusiastic.)* My name is Kim Feldman, and I’m running for class president.

MARIO: My name is Mario Ortiz, and I’m running for class president.

ATHENA: My name is Athena Aphrodite Clayton. Athena like the goddess, and...Aphrodite like the other goddess...and my special powers will enable me to wreak some amazing havoc as your class president for the coming semesters! *(Sound effect: thunderclap, with flashing lights, etc; the rest of the class is a bit frightened. She becomes more threatening.)* Vote for me or you’ll get a lot more of those.

MRS. OLDHAM: (*If seated, she rises for this speech.*) And for those of you who don't know me, I'm Mrs. Oldham, social science instructor and student political advisor. I'll be guiding our candidates – and their constituents – through this convoluted process we call high school elections. Now that our candidates have introduced themselves, I want to start off by asking them the simplest of questions. How are you qualified for this most important political position? The most important, other than prom queen, of course. Miss Feldman, we'll start with you.

KIM: I believe first and foremost that school is a place for education! When I'm class president, I'll make sure that all students are treated respectfully so they can learn without distraction. That nobody is bullied and that everyone has access to educational materials. That teachers and students alike can participate in a journey of learning that will encourage a lifetime of inquisition and introspection.

MARIO: (*Interrupting.*) Just what we need, another inquisition.

TAYLOR: (*From the audience, out of turn.*) Locker inspection is bad enough.

KIM: That's not what I meant and you know it. Some of us are actually here to learn.

ATHENA: (*Presenting KIM.*) Kim Feldman, the candidate that doesn't say what she means. If she's elected, who knows what she'll ever really be talking about.

MARIO: The lies, the corruption, the-

KIM: Seriously? I'm too busy to lie.

ATHENA: And perhaps too busy to be president of the class.

MRS. OLDHAM: Mario Ortiz, your thoughts.

MARIO: When I'm class president – and I will be the class president – I'm going to lobby for less homework and less detention. Grade inflation without degradation! And foreign language classes will henceforth be conducted entirely in English!

KIM: This is school. Without homework and detention, the entire edifice of education will crumble, Mario, like your GPA after week two.

MARIO: Excuse me, Miss Feldman, but if I remember correctly, you're the one who always copied homework and cheated on tests. (*To audience, wistful.*) Oh the things they wish we'd forget.

KIM: That was in the third grade!

MARIO: In third grade?

KIM: Yes, third grade.

MARIO: May I present Kim Feldman, cheating since the third grade.

The class cheers him on.

KIM: *(After they are quiet.)* May I present to you Mario Ortiz, who hasn't completed a homework assignment since he was 11 years old.

ATHENA: And may I present Kim Feldman and Mario Ortiz, who can't stop arguing with each other enough to see to the needs of the rest of class. So I suggest you vote for Athena Aphrodite Clayton. The goddess. Let the rites and mysteries begin.

MARIO: Or what, you'll disappear without a trace? That would be helpful.

ATHENA: No such luck. But I wouldn't insult a goddess, if I were you.

The students aren't impressed.

CATHILDA: You are so stupid!

ATHENA: If I were any of you. Maybe you missed the part of history where goddesses who are insulted take a horrible and eternal revenge.

MRS. OLDHAM: We call that mythology, Miss Clayton. Not history.

ATHENA: That's because you don't know any better, Mrs. Oldham. But you will...

MRS. OLDHAM: I think we're getting off track.

KIM: *(Proclaiming.)* We don't care who you vote for as long as you vote!

MARIO: Yes we do! Well maybe you don't. May I present, again, Kim Feldman, who doesn't really care if you vote for her or not. Who will take your votes and sell them to the cafeteria matron for an extra cup of hot chocolate.

KIM: I don't even like hot chocolate.

MARIO: Then you're not really fit to represent the class, are you? We all like hot chocolate.

COREY: *(A student listening to the debate, stands up.)* I don't. *(People nearby are embarrassed for him and pull him down, silently admonishing him.)* Okay, I do, then. I love it.

MARIO: You'd better, Corey! All the popular kids do.

KIM: Popular popular! I stand for tolerance and equality! Chocolate for everyone who wants it. For the rest of us, bread pudding drenched in a cinnamon honey glaze! I say vote! I ask for your vote. I implore your vote! I neeeeeed your vote!

ATHENA: I demand your vote! Vote for Athena...or don't vote at all!

KIM, MARIO and ATHENA: Vote for me, or don't vote at all!

Everyone: Vote for me, or don't vote at all!

SOPHIE: Order!

KIM, MARIO and ATHENA: Vote for me, or don't vote at all!

SOPHIE: I said order!

MRS. OLDHAM: You said order? Who even are you?

SOPHIE: *(Offended that MRS. OLDHAM doesn't know.)* I'm Sophie Stonebridge. *(Stepping out to take over.)* You should know that by now, Mrs. Oldham.

MRS. OLDHAM: I don't believe I've had you in class. You must be on the slow track.

SOPHIE: I am in your class, Mrs. Oldham, if you'd bother to pay attention. Just in the back row, where I can study unhindered by your constant hectoring and lecturing. As the student facilitator of this political debate, I think it's time to stop slinging insults and pave the way for some actual debating of the issues facing the students at Baymont High.

SOPHIE sees MRS. OLDHAM looking to her expectantly.

SOPHIE: Oh, right. I now present the faculty moderator, Mrs. Bonnie Oldham, also known as the social science instructor. *(A bit too sassy.)* Oh, and Ms. O, I won't have my assignment on international elevator etiquette done for tomorrow because I was preparing for this debate, but I'm sure you understand.

MRS. OLDHAM looks displeased.

SOPHIE: You do understand, don't you Mrs. Oldham? (*A little disheartened.*) Don't You?

MRS. OLDHAM: (*Approaches SOPHIE with condescending sympathy.*) I understand, Sophie.

SOPHIE is relieved for just a second.

MRS. OLDHAM: But please don't confuse understanding with approval. Even the football team knows to get my assignments turned in on time, if they want to play.

SOPHIE: But Mrs. Oldham! It's just an elevator!

CATHILDA: Sophie Stonebridge, goin' down!

TAMARA: She's taking that elevator down to the ground.

TAYLOR: Grades in the basement! You don't mess with Mrs. Oldham!

SOPHIE: Stop it! Like you're a paragon of learning. You know what's etiquette in an elevator? Don't talk and don't fart. All else is commentary.

Several students look like they are about to get in on this.

TAMARA: (*Starts a chant, the others join in.*) Flunk her! Flunk her!

SOPHIE starts to take cover.

MRS. OLDHAM: (*after a bit of this, she blows a whistle*) Quiet! Next person who talks cleans up the teacher's lounge. (*Everyone gets quiet.*) Thank you for that brilliant introduction, Sophie. Tamara, for starting that chant, you'll be staying late today. Very, very late!

TAMARA: That's not fair!

MRS. OLDHAM: It might give you time to catch up to the other students. Now, I suppose my qualifications for moderator go unchallenged, not to mention way back to my days as school debate champion, a title I held from 1851 through 1854. But can we say the same for our candidates? It appears to me that we'll have a choice between (*Pointing out or walking next to KIM, MARIO, and then ATHENA*) intelligence, popularity, and coercion. Does anyone have any questions for our three hopefuls? Corey, you look needy.

COREY: Yeah, will someone lobby for us to chew gum in class?

MARIO: I will! And carrot sticks, too!

MRS. OLDHAM: Any...intelligent questions?

TAYLOR raises hand.

MRS. OLDHAM: Taylor?

TAYLOR: I do. Do any of you realize that the high school class president really has no power? You can't do anything without permission. You can't legislate away homework. You can't force the cafeteria to serve tiramisu. What, exactly, are you going to change?

KIM starts to speak but is interrupted.

TAMARA: Your socks, Kim, that would be nice.

KIM: Schools, Tamara. Why don't you change schools?

MRS. OLDHAM: Listen to Miss Feldman, or you won't be casting an educated ballot!

KIM: I can work to make sure that each student is treated with respect by other students and by the faculty. Red socks, blue socks, or no socks.

TAYLOR: What if they don't deserve it? Some people are just undelicious, or don't wear socks.

KIM: That's what detention is for. Detention and suspension, while the rest of us have classroom comprehension.

TAYLOR: What, does detention put the delish back in the un?

KIM: You probably shouldn't vote until you familiarize yourself with the issues.

MARIO: I think Taylor is right. If a teacher doesn't treat me with respect, she should get detention. That would be a crowded classroom.

SOPHIE: I have a question. Would it be correct to infer that you're all running for president as a poor substitute for being on homecoming court? You're not popular enough to be elected homecoming king or queen. Nobody really likes any of you all that much. Well a few of you like a few of you, but you know what I mean. Politics – celebrity for the ugly.

COREY: *(With a quick hand-raise.)* Then it really isn't a popularity contest, since there isn't any popularity involved. *(Students congratulate him in his valuable insight.)*

MARIO: Wait a minute! I'm popular! Who's spreading the rumor that I'm not popular! I just announced my candidacy and people are lying about me!

ATHENA: After this election, I'll make sure you're not popular. It just takes a small dose of the truth.

KIM: I know I'm not popular, Corey. But as president, I'll be a lot more popular after this year is over. When things change for the better. When we can all walk the halls discussing and better yet, understanding A Midsummer Night's Dream, when we know what happened in east Africa in 1795, when we know...

MARIO: Oh, like school is about education! *(To everyone.)* Is that what you want? Education? You've come to the wrong place.

MRS. OLDHAM: Actually, Mario, you have. Repeatedly, for years.

SOPHIE: *(Somewhat offended.)* As student moderator, Mrs. Oldham, may I respectfully point out that you're being insulting towards our candidates?

MRS. OLDHAM: Not insulting, just observing. Now Athena Clayton, you are new here, and you seem to have an inflated sense of your relationship with the supernatural. What, with your more realistically limited powers, do you think you can accomplish as class president, especially since you're unfamiliar with the student body here at Baymont High? And your last school was where, may I ask?

ATHENA: *(Brimming with confidence.)* It was a palace in the heavens. Gold chairs, soft pillows, harps, flutes and access to all the Greek drama that is lost to humanity. A perfect learning environment. And as I already told you, my powers are unlimited. I can do what I please. And one thing an emerging young goddess doesn't like, Mrs. Oldham, is common people who scoff and sneer at an emerging young goddess. For instance, repeated use of the insulting term "mythology" in Ms. Sharpe's class really sets me off. As president, I'll demand worship and sacrifice, or I'll take a horrible revenge. I'll see to it that everyone flunks their test on the state constitution and therefore can't get their diploma. Limited power? I think not.

MRS. OLDHAM: Athena Clayton, what are you talking about?

ATHENA: You forget, Mrs. Oldham. You all forget.

THOMPSON: No one believes in goddesses anymore. Who needs goddesses when we have Kardashians? [or other current female celebrity.]

ATHENA: Just because someone believes something doesn't make it true, and just because they don't doesn't make it false.

TAYLOR: Ever since you've been here, you've made us all queasy. You don't want the presidency; you want a throne in the clouds. You'll only get votes if your mother stuffs the ballot box.

SFX: A loud thunderclap, flashing lights, and everyone runs for cover. Then have a short blackout and when lights are back up, ATHENA is on stage alone. If you can't blackout, ATHENA should wait until everyone exits; then walk around among the chairs, tossing books and notebooks to the floor.

ATHENA: Or, I might just win without my mother's help. *(Tosses one more, then exits, pleased with herself.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT START: *Shortly after the debate, KIM and SHILO are talking in the same space, collecting their books and papers. Other students or extras can come in also and pick up their stuff, which is all over the place.*

SHILO: *(Recovering.)* I don't know what she did but it was really weird. *(Opens a book, confused.)* Plus, all my textbooks are in Ancient Greek. Kim, look – as your boyfriend, I support you, but as a regular guy, I think Athena needs to win.

KIM: I really want this, Shilo. It means so much to me. Last year I lost on a technicality.

SHILO: You mean that you didn't get enough votes?

KIM: Technically, I didn't. They held the election during a flu epidemic and all my supporters were throwing up. I won the puke vote but there was no one around to count it.

SHILO: Be careful, Kim. What if it backfires? Athena's threatening vengeance and destruction, and Mario's slick. He's much more popular with the masses. The common people. The rabble. He's twice as popular as you are!

KIM: So that means... he has eight friends. He doesn't have the student body interest at heart. Gum chewing, less homework – this is a school, not a state fair.

SHILO: This is like a homecoming vote for the un-athletic. As one of your four loyal lonely friends, and again as your boyfriend, I want to save you from any heartache and pain that I don't cause you myself. If we're dating, I should have a monopoly on heartache and pain.

KIM: I can be athletic. I can do jumping jacks. I can do sit ups. At the same time. *(SHE starts and he stops her.)*

SHILO: D in gym. Just enjoy the challenge, and be prepared to lose. You've got this antiquated idea that school is for learning. You're so 1915.

KIM: I can't come back here if I lose.

SHILO: Where are you going?

KIM: An alternative school. A charter school.

SHILO: No, please!

KIM: Anywhere but here. *(Starts to walk away, dejected.)* I can't believe my own boyfriend isn't supporting me.

SHILO: *(Follows KIM.)* My brother ran for college senate saying he wanted equal access to beer. But he's only 18! The whole class has equal access in that they can't have it. It's just a line on your resume that no one will care about the minute you graduate.

KIM: I just want equal access to respect.

SHILO: And I respect your decision. But respectfully, I don't know if anyone else does.

KIM: With respect to Mario and Athena, I don't respect their chances, respectively.

SHILO: Respectfully speaking, you'd better respect them, respectfully.

KIM: Where did Athena come from? She's the new girl and she wants to lord it over us like a goddess. They just got a house down the street, moved in a few marble statues and here they are.

SHILO: Well, she did clear the stage.

KIM: I don't like her. I don't trust her.

SHILO: You can't be class president and not like people. That's disrespectful.

KIM: Okay, I like her. I don't like what she says, does, or what she stands for. Other than that, sure, I like her.

SHILO: Other than that, there is no other than that.

KIM: Fine. I'll do what every other candidate does. I'll lie. I'll cheat. I'll dig up so much dirt there's going to be a sinkhole on the football field. Just like Mario did about that test in third grade. You make one mistake and they wait for you to run for president and suddenly it's the only thing you've ever done in your life. Like oops, I accidentally started a war between six South American nations and suddenly that's all you're about.

TAMARA and CATHILDA enter. They have a motley "following" of TAYLOR, SOPHIE, COREY and some extras.

SOPHIE: I guess we need to get our books. *(Picks up a book.)* Never mind, it's Greek. *(Tosses it back down.)*

TAMARA: Perhaps. But we have some other business. *(To KIM.)* Look who's here.

KIM doesn't say anything, but we can see she's not looking forward to this. TAMARA is annoyingly condescending, also crowding KIM'S space, and enjoying every minute of it.

TAMARA: I said, look who's here. Uh, excuse me, Miss Feldman. Actually, excuse us both.

CATHILDA: *(Behaves the same way, the two of them play off each other with words and movements.)* May we have a moment of your time?

TAMARA: Because we don't want any more than that. If that.

CATHILDA: Who knew that time could be so slimy?

TAMARA: It's not your time we're worried about wasting, so much as our own, which is much more precious.

KIM: *(To SHILO, while trying to back away from the others.)* This respect thing is going to be harder than I thought. *(To the others.)* I'm not sure we've met, but I'm not sure that's bad.

TAMARA: We've been aware of each other, definitely aware, but meeting? Why bother? I'll keep this short and not so sweet. I'm Tamara, Mario's girlfriend.

CATHILDA: And I'm Cahtilda, I'm waiting.

SHILO: For what?

CATHILDA: For Mario to dump Tamara so I can date him instead. It's only a matter of time, since as you can see, she's not very nice.

KIM: (*Confused.*) And you're friends?

TAMARA: We're realistic. Once we graduate, I'm off to a career a major motion picture star. I'll leave Mario behind like a dog in a pound. Like a two-year-old who drops her cone on a park bench, leaving it to melt into a giant pool of sticky pistachio gush only to be sat on by an unsuspecting and incontinent grandfather.

CATHILDA: So I'm just letting her have her fun. But there's one thing we both agree on.

SHILO: I think Kim and I feel the same way. Actually, (*Indicated them both.*) there's two things we both agree on.

CATHILDA: We want Mario to be president of the student body. We feel it will be better for us.

OTHERS: (*Holding up VOTE FOR MARIO signs if available.*) Yeah! Vote Mario! (*etc*)

TAMARA: And we think you should drop out so he can win. Just in case you turn out to be mildly competitive.

OTHERS: Yeah! Vote Mario! (*etc*)

KIM: (*To the others.*) We heard you the first time.

CATHILDA: Athena doesn't stand a chance. She's the creepy new girl hair from 1200 BC. But you?

EVERYONE: (*At CATHILDA'S cue.*) Cheating since the third grade.

CATHILDA: It finally came out. You're not to be trusted after a lifetime of lies. And frankly, Kim Feldman, neither are we. If you know what I mean. So if I were you, I'd drop out gracefully.

TAYLOR: Very gracefully. Like a feather hitting the ground.

Everyone: Poof!

TAMARA: Or who knows what would happen?

Everyone: Poof!

CATHILDA: You might be pushed onto that same ice cream cone with the incontinent grandfather.

Everyone: Poof! (*They all turn together and exit.*)

SHILO: Who are they? This is a bigger school than we thought.

KIM: I think (*Shouting.*) we don't know them because we're taking advanced classes.

SHILO: They sound mean.

KIM: Mean, as in average, as in I don't mean to let them intimidate me out of running for class president. You don't get to be class president by being nice. But for now, we'll play their game.

SHILO: Great, more people we have to respect.

KIM: Only till I get in. Then... Suspension! Expulsion! Incarceration! Execution!

SHILO: I don't think you'll have that kind of power.

KIM: There is power in respect. And every student will get the respect they deserve. (*Gathers her things together as they prepare to exit.*) Every last one. Poof!

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT START: *Mario's house, MARIO with MRS. ORTIZ. This can be a small-set living room with a couple pieces of furniture, or even on a bare stage in front of a curtain. MARIO'S relationship with his mother shows a different side of him; he's more prone to being whiny and childish vs. his bravado with the students.*

MARIO: Mom, I can't let her win.

MRS. ORTIZ: Why? Who cares? What does class president even do?

MARIO: That's beside the point. It's winning that matters. Then, as class president, I'll decide what to do. Maybe I'll have a fight with the school board over free speech.

MRS. ORTIZ: You'll do no such thing. I'm your mother and I forbid you to speak freely. Look where it got your father.

MARIO: My father's the president of a multinational corporation.

MRS. ORTIZ: And he didn't get there by speaking his mind.

MARIO: Tamara and Cathilda are helping me. They're running-

MRS. ORTIZ: I don't want you associating with Tamara and Cathilda. I've heard about them plenty at the PTA meetings. How can you win the election when you're paling around with terrorists?

MARIO: They're just friends. Tamara's my girlfriend. Cathilda's my next girlfriend.

MRS. ORTIZ: That doesn't make sense.

MARIO: Yes it does. No girl can stand me for more than a few weeks at a time. They're going to help me make it to the top!

MRS. ORTIZ: I don't want to ask how.

MARIO: Neither do I.

MRS. ORTIZ: I don't think they're good for you. And I'm pretty lenient. Ever since your father left me to become president of Ortiz Enterprises, I've had to do it all myself.

MARIO: I'll have them over and you can see how nice they are. Everything you hear at the PTA, it's just rumor and speculation. And how come if dad's president of a multinational corporation, he's not sending us more money?

MRS. ORTIZ: He's got an office here and an office in Canada. They're very small offices. Actually it's just a post office box in Toronto. *(Thinks things over as MARIO looks pouty. They exchange glances and he tries to win her over with a sad look, which she recognizes as manipulative.)* Well, OK. I'm your mother and I want to support you in your aspirations. How's that? *(Now she gets over-enthusiastic.)* I'll help make posters. I'll help dig up dirt, throw the muck and the mud, spread lies and gossip, and destroy the opposition! *(He's frightened and he leaves, without her noticing, as she comes up to the front of the stage and continues her rant.)* I'll help you lie, cheat, and bully your way to top. I'll make sure that no one stands in the way of what my son wants, because what my son wants, my son gets! *(Really over the top.)* Now let's go kick some... *(Looks around, finally notices he's gone.)* Mario?

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT START: *Athena, at home with her parents, perhaps she's studying or playing on her phone, anything that shows she's distracted. A simple rearrangement of MARIO's house can indicate the different location. To indicate this is a household of immortals, perhaps adding some sequins or shiny material to the décor would spruce it up a bit.*

JOOP: Young lady.

SHEERA: Young lady!

They both stand there for a minute while she doesn't seem to notice.

ATHENA: *(Finally acts like she sees them.)* Who me?

JOOP: Yes you. Since you're the only young lady here.

SHEERA: Thanks.

JOOP: We're immortal, Sheera. You haven't been a young lady since long before the Trojan War, and even then you started a brouhaha because some kid named Paris said someone else was prettier than you were.

SHEERA: As you always remind me. Because that's what every woman wants to hear from her husband.

JOOP: Well...look who started a ten-year war over bad makeup.

SHEERA: Never one to let a girl forget she lost a beauty contest. Athena, once you get married, it's for a long long time. So you'll need to choose your husband a lot more wisely than I did.

JOOP: Sheera, let's have this fight another day.

SHEERA: When, in another thousand years? You always put off discussion.

JOOP: Because if I lose, I'll hear about it for all eternity. I can't take the chance. Now, we have a much more pressing issue. Young lady. I got a call from a Mrs. Oldham at school. What's this about a thunderclap at the debate today? And lightning. Indoors.

ATHENA: People were acting up. Doubting my powers, and doubting my sincerity in wanting to become class president. *(Proud of herself, putting her book or homework down.)* So a little demonstration set everyone straight.

SHEERA: We told you if you were going to school with the normal kids you had to act normal. We'll never learn how today's humans behave, and we'll never get back in their good graces, if you create a firestorm every time someone says something you don't like.

JOOP: None of this goddess stuff. No magic, no thunder, lightning, and no boys.

ATHENA: No boys?

SHEERA: Boys are fine, but they grow old and die.

ATHENA: I want people to worship me and sacrifice to me! You always talk about the old days and it seems like so much fun. *(Bitter.)* Now we're all mythology and superstition.

JOOP: That's why the gods became defunct. We didn't adjust. No one wants to so much as sacrifice a goat to us anymore. We're lucky if they cut into a cabbage and offer us the core.

ATHENA: I want to be class president so I can at least get a shred of the dignity due me as a goddess. I don't care if it's a cabbage or a kumquat, I'm going to teach my classmates about respect.

SHEERA: Athena, you will do no such thing! It's a different world we live in. *(Stern.)* No using your powers in school.

JOOP: Or I'll use powers you'll regret.

ATHENA: Maybe the mountains and the rivers are quaking in their boots, but not me. I'm a goddess and I'll do as I please! *(Gets ready to unleash her power.)*

JOOP: *(Physically holding her back.)* My powers are greater than yours. *(He lets go and she runs out of reach, then turns to face him.)*

ATHENA: Oh yeah, well watch this! *(Her small thunderclap is followed by JOOP'S much louder and longer thunderclap, which makes ATHENA cower.)*

SHEERA: Stop it, Joop! We get the point.

JOOP: My thunder claps your thunder every time. Now go to your room.

ATHENA: I'll create storms out the window. And then a plague of locusts. See how you like that!

JOOP: Athena! You don't want to get me angry!

SHEERA: Stop that, Joop. Last time you tried to discipline one of our children you created a mountain range in a very bad place. Trade was disrupted for centuries.

JOOP: All I wanted was a sheep.

ATHENA: What's so wrong with a sheep? You got sheep! You got goats, flowers, temples, ceremonies and even a playwriting contest. All I get is homework. What good is history going to do me in another millennium? It'll be long forgotten.

JOOP: Like Achilles and Agamemnon? Three thousand years later they're still the talk of tenth grade.

SHEERA: You're here to learn history, not make it. We're trying to fit in with society again, and slowly, slowly, get their trust back. We want worship because they want worship. We want to be loved! Until then, no sheep, no goats, and no thunderstorms.

ATHENA: But-

JOOP: You heard your mother. No thunderstorms.

ATHENA: *(Storms off.)* You never let me do anything!

JOOP: *(Throws up his hands in frustration.)* Athena! *(Walks away shaking his head.)*

SHEERA: *(Contemplative.)* I'd like a sheep. What's so wrong with a sheep?

ACT ONE, SCENE 5

AT START: *Back in the main hall, everyone is situated like they were in the opening scene.*

SOPHIE: Welcome back to the continuing series of Baymont High School Presidential Debates. I present to you our second debate, because in a debate, every second counts.

COREY: *(Calling from his seat.)* That doesn't make sense.

TAYLOR: I second that.

COREY: Second what, that every second counts or that it doesn't make sense?

TAYLOR: The second, obviously. I can't second a first.

SOPHIE: Well if it doesn't make sense, then your second doesn't count.

SHILO: You just said every second did. So now you don't make sense, Sophie. It wouldn't be the first time. Or the second.

Pause, now everyone's confused.

MRS. OLDHAM: *(Taking over.)* And I get a paycheck no matter what. In our second debate, we want to learn a bit more about our candidates. Your background, where you come from, and how you feel this will help you as student body president. Miss Feldman, we'll start with you.

KIM: My name is Kim Feldman.

TAMARA: Duh, whatever.

MRS. OLDHAM: Tamara, if you're not interested in hearing what our candidates have to say, you might prefer to spend some time in detention listening to a recorded version of our student handbook.

TAMARA: (*Foreboding.*) Oh, I'm interested. Very interested.

MRS. OLDHAM: You should be interested, since I believe we'll be seeing you here for years to come. Miss Feldman, please continue.

KIM: I've been in the district since kindergarten. I've grown up here, and over time I've always tried to stand up for what is right and fair. In order for us to achieve our greatest potential as students, we need to study in a safe environment free from...well free from Tamara and people like her!

TAMARA: Mrs. Oldham, she's bullying me! She's name-calling! Are you going to let that oversized octopus call me names?

KIM: I'm just telling the truth, as you all asked.

MRS. OLDHAM: Miss Feldman!

KIM: Isn't that what you want? The candidate who says what she thinks?

MRS. OLDHAM: That has no place in politics! The only time people want a candidate who says what they think is when they agree with it. You need to learn to answer a question without saying anything. I have several students who do that already. Mr. Ortiz, same question.

MARIO: I'm just like sort of popular and stuff, so I think I can win, and I think people will go along with what I want because they think I'm pretty cool and if they don't know me yet, they can figure it out. I'm going to try to get the teach to lay off so we can watch more TV, and I'm going to lobby for more classes like "Getting the Most out of your Seven-Eleven Purchase" and "How to win at Checkers." Also, my mom wants me to win, and you don't want to make her mad.

KIM: Wow you're a master at higher education. Those Slurpee's have turned your brain to bright blue.

MRS. OLDHAM: Miss Feldman, it's not your turn!

COREY: Yes, Miss Feldman.

CATHILDA: (*Whooping up the crowd.*) It's not your turn, Miss Feldman!

EVERYONE: (*Chanting.*) Not your turn! Not your turn!

MRS. OLDHAM: (*Blows whistle.*) Stop it! It's nobody's turn!

ATHENA: I can do thunder next time if that will help. Or rain down blood from the ceiling. It's pretty spectacular.

MRS. OLDHAM: That. Will. Not. Help.

ATHENA: How about distant, rolling threatening thunder.

SFX: Thunder and people start getting nervous and chattering.

MRS. OLDHAM: Quiet, or the field trip to the free range chicken farm is canceled.

A long pause as everyone settles down.

SOPHIE: *(Seriously.)* We'll do anything to go to the free range chicken farm.

THOMPSON: Anything to get us out of this coop.

KIM: I just wanted to say that it is my turn, I'm not letting go until I become CLASS PRESIDENT! So take your turn now, Mario Ortiz, while you still have one.

MRS. OLDHAM: Ambition. I like that in a student. Now, Athena. You're the new girl. People say you have no chance unless something magic happens. What have you to say for yourself?

ATHENA: I say that something magic will happen. My family and I come from Olympus.

SOPHIE: Olympus? Like the Greek Olympus? You know when they finally got to the top of Olympus, they found out that nobody was up there? Like so you're not from Olympus.

ATHENA: *(Trying to backtrack.)* I mean Olympia. Olympia, Washington. The state capital, which is where I get my ambition from. That's where we come from. The seat of state government. I know I'm the new girl, but I can bring new energy, new ideas and new thought to your rotten stale trickle-down caste system.

CATHILDA: Stupid!

MRS. OLDHAM: Young lady!

CATHILDA: Yes ma'am.

MRS. OLDHAM: No insults!

CATHILDA: Oh like I speak any other language.

TAYLOR: I like insults. I'm very fluent, you small-minded low-brow loser.

ATHENA: If I become president, while I understand goats and sheep are not, as you call it, en vogue, you can all sacrifice a cabbage to me once a week, Friday at noon. We'll all go home early and I'll promise that nothing bad will happen. Needs to be a red cabbage, but green will do if you're financially strapped. Brussels sprouts will not impress me.

MRS. OLDHAM: What does that mean?

ATHENA: Pretty much just what I said.

MRS. OLDHAM: There are a lot of threats going around this election. More threats than platforms. Some people are campaigning as if they can do anything without permission of the principal. But if I can't, you can't. And...I can't. Any questions for our candidates? Perhaps something along the lines of how they might instill school spirit, how they might make activities more inclusive, you know... normal things?

SOPHIE: Tamara, I see your hand raised.

TAMARA: Well, Sophie, speaking of threats. I do have a question for Miss Feldman. Given the tense nature of this election, and given that you were confronted with some hard-minded students not too long ago, aren't you afraid that something bad might happen if you don't drop out and concede?

KIM: Actually, I think something bad will happen if I do. Someone less qualified might win. I know I'm not perfect, but I do believe I'm best for the job.

TAMARA: I hear you were threatened to quit.

KIM: I've been threatened all my life to quit. But I don't. That's why I'll be class president, college class president, congresswoman, senator, and eventually president of the United States of America. And you'll be sitting home eating store-label cookies watching Laverne and Shirley reruns and worse yet, you'll think it's funny.

MRS. OLDHAM: (*Offended.*) Miss Feldman, that was uncalled for. My favorite episode is on tonight!

KIM: I don't hear threats. I hear challenges.

THOMPSON: I have a question...

MRS. OLDHAM: You...Thompson Maguire, you're usually pretty quiet, what's on your mind?

THOMPSON: To candidate Mr. Mario Ortiz.

MARIO: That's me! You have a question; I have an answer. My answer beats her answer any day of the week.

THOMPSON: I want to get on the football team and coach won't even let me try out. He gave the spot to a kid whose father donated money for team uniforms. As class president, would you step in?

MARIO: I'm going step in now to advise you to practice and get better, and maybe my dad will let coach put you on the team. He's very influential as the president of a multinational corporation and, as noted, the money behind the team uniforms. Perhaps if you help me get out the vote, something can be arranged. And perhaps if you helped me with the next six English papers.

THOMPSON: That's cheating. Plus I'd have to dumb down my style.

MARIO: If I pass you can use the papers too.

MRS. ORTIZ: Do I have to appoint a president from the magnet school? (*Sees SOPHIE has her hand raised.*) Yes, Sophie.

SOPHIE: I have a question, Mrs. Ortiz. My drama teacher keeps giving Tamara and Cathilda the biggest parts in the play. But I'm a better actress. And you seem to always be dating one or the other. I know you have no control over casting, but I'd like to know what you would do!

MARIO: I'd just enjoy the play. After all, it's my girlfriend up on stage.

ATHENA: (*Trying to create a scene.*) Self-interest before the people!

MARIO: My interest is your interest. So it's all the same!

SOPHIE: What about you, Kim? Oh, I mean... Miss Feldman?

KIM: We're based on a system of favoritism and threat making that I, as president, plan to fight against. I'll make sure auditions are fair and square. Plus I'll recommend Brooklyn Publishers plays like *Lotto Date* and *Pageant Perfect* where there are many fun and interesting roles, largely the same size.

CATHILDA: That's not fair!

KIM: But it is square, so we're half way there.

THOMPSON: I have the same question, different candidate. Miss Clayton, how would you get me a spot on the football team? Seeing as the Greeks place a high value on athletics.

ATHENA: I could get you on that team. Easily.

THOMPSON: How's that?

SFX: Thunderbolt! Lights to on and off. Everyone runs out or winds up on the floor except ATHENA.

ATHENA: Kind of like that. *(Looking around.)* Thompson. Thompson?

THOMPSON: *(Enters, a bit in shock.)* Could you try something a bit quieter?

ATHENA: You want results?

THOMPSON: *(Brushing himself off.)* I'm not sure.

ACT ONE, SCENE 6

AT RISE: *SHILO is doing homework and/or having a snack in the common area. CATHILDA and TAMARA approach him, again with their entourage: TAYLOR, COREY, SOPHIE and any extras. They crowd around him trying to intimidate, he looks up at them not terribly fearful.*

CATHILDA: Shilo. Shilo Gerringe. Hi low Shilo We want to know what you're going to do about it.

SHILO: About what? *(Holds up a book.)* France is going to lose the war...again. And so are you.

TAMARA: About your *(With disdain.)* girlfriend.

CATHILDA: She's stealing votes from Mario.

SHILO: No she isn't. She's winning on her own merits.

TAMARA: Merit? *(Laughs an evil laugh.)* We want to turn this back into a popularity contest. If Feldman wins, popularity won't matter anymore.

SHILO: You should like that.

COREY: *(Grabs the book.)* If I were you, I'd turn my attention to the war at hand.

SHILO: *(Grabs the book back.)* I am. France is going to lose, and so are you.

TAMARA: We're shilling for Mario.

SHILO: I wouldn't give you a farthing for your shilling.

CATHILDA: We know nobody's voting for Athena, so we're not worried about her. But Kim has an appeal. To the nerds. The geeks, the losers, and to the people who take school seriously.

TAYLOR: Both of them.

They all laugh.

SHILO: I'm not sure Mario could make a good class president.

TAMARA: He'll make a wonderful class president. He has the students' best interest at heart. And he has my heart as his best interest.

SHILO: If he can find a heart deep in the chasm of emptiness you call a soul, he deserves to win.

CATHILDA: If I didn't know any better, I'd say you've insulted me with everything you've said.

SHILO: And here I am wasting great insults on people who don't understand them. *(Reads.)* Oh France... poor, poor France...

TAMARA: I think Kim needs to reason to withdraw it gracefully, or...

SHILO: Or what?

CATHILDA: Or we'll do it for her. And it won't be very graceful.

SHILO: I can see that.

TAMARA: You know what your problem is? You're not afraid of us. That's your first, second, and fourth mistake.

SHILO: What's my third?

TAMARA: Oh... I don't know. But when I find out, I'll text. If I were you...

SHILO: Which you're not...

TAYLOR: If I were you I wouldn't take this lightly.

MARIO: *(Enters, and pushes through.)* So, you're talking to my political advice team, I see.

SHILO: No, they're talking to me. Though in a language I don't understand.

MARIO: That would be the language of winners.

SHILO: If you're so hot as president, why can't you win on your own? Like, you know, democratically?

MARIO: Democratically? (*Letting it all out, like the villain in a superhero movie.*) For years Kim Feldman has bested me. She gets better grades, she gets more awards, she gets scholarships, and she won the student literary contest over my five-page poetical epic. In 6th grade she had a bigger ant farm. In 7th grade she could play the violin one note higher. In 8th grade she beat me again in the poetry contest.

SHILO: You entered a limerick!

MARIO: (*Stands up on a chair and recites.*) There once was a girl
named Kim
Who thought over me she could win.
She tried really hard, but she couldn't go far
She just made a cacophonous din.

MARIO gets down while his friends applaud.

SHILO: This sounds long standing (*Kicks the chair.*) and deep seated.

MARIO: She's not going to get this election from me!

EVERYONE: VOTE FOR MARIO!

SHILO: Why don't you just study? That's what Kim does.

SOPHIE: That's why she doesn't have any friends. Look at us,
surrounded by friends!

COREY: France. Who cares about France? In another hundred years
there won't be any France.

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