

OPTION # 1: Male or Female

MOST PARANOID from 'Most Likely To: The Senior Superlative Musical' by Michael Tester

SKYLER: A strange woman flies through your bedroom window and pours sugar down your throat until you clean your room ... Mary Poppins is scary. Another twisted tale in a tangled catalog, created by child psychologists to drum-up business. Just the other night, I was dreaming in Imax that I was taking my SATs, and sitting next to me was Harriet Potter ... long lost sister of Harry-Filling-in her multiple choice answers with a #02 wand. Suddenly my pencil breaks! Harriet—who looks like Daniel Radcliff in a weave, casts a spell—“Nostradamus!”—And just like that, a fresh new pencil magically appears in my hand, and- I have a new best friend! I finish my SATs before my extended time, walk up the aisle, gingerly place the exam on the desk and retire my magic pencil into the proctor’s “I Heart Hogwarts” coffee mug. And that’s when I noticed ... I just signed the passport to my future ... with a number three pencil. A number *three!* Curse you Harriet Potter and the prison of your own ambition! No sooner had I returned to my seat then an alarm went off accompanied by red flashing lights and the ominous whirl of Blackhawk helicopters. (*Voices a copter sound and then, as a SWAT officer :*) “Put down the pencil!” Then flying Dementors whisked me to a secret chamber where they place people who defy the warnings not to remove tags from pillowcases. My cellmate? None other than She-Who’s-Name-Cannot-Be-Mentioned Three Times: Scary Poppins?! “Who asked you to return?! I gasped between hits of my inhaler: “You and your dysfunctional kite flying, umbrella ... paragliding, penguin step-dancing. What is wrong with you, lady? Grow up! (*casting her out*) I unfriend you and Harriet!”

Then I woke ... to the gentle music of a breaking bus (*makes sound*) ... day dreaming of a new bedtime story. One without a tangerine bear in a crop-top, or a purple dinosaur professing his love for me, or a home invasion by Goldilocks ... or, or ... frogs that turn into princes who act like toads after you’ve kissed them! And I will rescue a princess (*or prince*) who is neither Frozen, nor accompanied by a mutant snowman. Preferably someone calm. Whose high pitched singing does not attract Angry Birds that carry the West Nile Virus. And we will live happily ever after. In a bomb-shelter. With our number two pencils sans lead. And deforesting. And we will not answer the door on Halloween. If friends can trick you, why give strangers the option?

OPTION # 2: Male or Female

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

“Play Well Your Part”

FEMALE OR MALE. My favorite memory of senior year was being cast as the lead in the senior musical *Fiddler on the Roof* ... That’s right—you’re looking at: The Roof. Which OK literally a supporting role, and no I was not cast as the roof because of my recent bout with shingles, ha ha ... I was born beaming! Thus I was born to play a beam.

First day of rehearsals I meet the rest of the set who, apparently, are unaccustomed to enthusiastic lumber.

“What is our motivation?!”

I try to inspire the set with a little impromptu scene study.

“What kind of roof should we be? Somebody Google ‘Thatched!’”

“There’s homework?” says a co-star, performing community service. (*For the play version, these lines can be divided between the rest of the “roof.”*)

“Well that’s a fine attitude,” I say, “if you were cast as a dancing fork in *Beauty and the Beast*, would you not draft a full character bio?”

“No, I would quit.”

(*Gasps.*)—“Have you forgotten your thespian pledge?!”

“Dude ... we’re playing a roof.”

“An actor as a roof, sounds crazy, no? But you might say every *one* of us is an actor on a roof—trying to keep the rain of rejection from extinguishing our passion! And *why* do we stay up there if it is so thankless? *That* I could tell you in *one word!* [If I had a line.] But: (*With Hand earnestly to heart. For the play version, the others are rallied to join hands as if in a pre-show “spirit circle.”*) ‘There are no small parts; only small set budgets, play well your part for there all hon-or lays. Break a beam.’ Now remember, we’ll be going out there scrap-wood, but we’ll be coming back a roof!”

ALMOST DRAMATIC

“The Mayor’s Wife”

FEMALE. Will someone please show me where is it written that if you’re not the typical “ingénue,” then you’re automatically the Mayor’s Wife? Hmm? I’ve been cast as the Mayor’s Wife in musicals that don’t even have a mayor. Or a town! Then last year the drama club stages *The Music Man*—where the Mayor’s Wife is a leading role—and what does our older-than-the-bard director, slash English, slash drama, slash driver’s ed teacher, Mr. Gruella cast me as? “Townsperson Number 13.” Thirteen, people! But this year? This year? There won’t be stages big enough! There won’t be lights bright enough! This year, the drama club is staging *Fiddler*, and I’m going to land the role of The Girl who gets The Boy! [Even if that boy is probably gay.]

It’s the day of the big tryouts; the auditorium is packed with the usual sycophants circling Gruella like he’s the friggin’ *Lion King*.

(Chants à la The Lion King.)

My name is called and I take to the stage as to the manner born! Breathing in that thespian aroma of a freshly shel-lacked stage, perfumed with the enduring mist of gray in a can.

“Tell us a little about yourself.”

Gruella booms over the God mic.

“Myself?”

“Who is ... ‘Cassie?’”

“Cassie? I have no idea”

It seems Gruella caught a local production of *A Chorus Line* and is now stuck in the 70s.

“What would you do if you could no longer be in the high-school musical?”

“I’d be in a *professional* musical.”

Is what I should have said, but all I could think of was:

“There’s always Color Guard?”

“In other words, you would throw crap up in the air and catch it?”

“Hopefully.”

“ ... Let’s just hear the song.”

I started to sweat. And think. Then think while sweating; I was multitasking: What if I don’t get cast because I fail at being myself? Who am I anyway, am I my résumé? Hello! I’m a teenager; you’re lucky I know who the Vice President is. By this point in the audition I am shvitzing like Old Deuteronomy and forget the words to my song. Who forgets the lyrics to “Matchmaker?” There are what, like three?

Next day, I brave the hallway of shame, passed the faux hugging and chutzpah to see the cast list right as it was posted ... “Rosie: Mother #12, and ... The Mayor’s Wife.”?! At least I’m moving up. But, ah, since when did Anatevka elect a mayor? I wanted to drop out then and there, rip that piece of paper off Gruella’s door and tear it to shreds like Patti Lupone does her reviews and sing “There’s Gotta be Something Better Than This!” (*Pause.*) But I’m a professional. If I am going play a mother— (*Literally swallows her pride.*)

again—I am going to play the mother of all mothers: Here she is world! Here she is, Gruella! Here's Rosie! My turn will come; for such is the magic of theatre that ingénues age into the chorus, while character actors *grace* into the leads. (*The actors can sing or speak show tune lyrics.*) So “Let it go, let it go!” “Take Me For What I Am!” 'Cause “I ... Am ... Changing!” And “You're Gonna Love ... ME!” [How do you like them eggrolls, Mr. Gruella?]

*****NOTE FROM MRS. LINDSAY: This piece is FULL of musical and theatre references! Be sure to look into them so you understand her character and can play the comedy accurately!*****

OPTION # 4: Male

“P.E. = Please Excuse”

MALE. Upon my guidance counselor’s edict, I spent the summer pondering my goals for senior year. On the top of my list: get out of gym. And the first day of school, I put my aim, into action:

(Blows whistle to assume the role of the COACH. For the play version, COACH can be played by another actor.)

“You!”

“Coach Rayon!”

“Suit up!”

“What are we? Astronauts?”

“Don’t be fresh”

“You’d rather I be stale?”

“Give me 10!”

“Got change for a 20?”

(Blows whistle and assumes a pushup plank position.)

Getting out of gym was going to be more challenging than anticipated.

(While cheating 10 pushups.)

What with P.E. being some sort of federal law now, and this year’s Dodgeball Championship on the line, the coach’s jockstrap was extra twisted.

(Blows whistle, jumps to his feet.)

I needed a game plan that did not include an actual game. Especially “Les dodging of ze ballz”—So I skip gym for a week. But then was sent to the nurse whom I told, “Oops, my bad, I thought P.E. stood for “please excuse.” *(Pause.)* It was worth a shot.

(Is hit by a dodgeball thrown from offstage.)

Ow! ... I needed a medical excuse! Nothing distasteful, just, you know, shocking enough to keep one out of gym?

“What’s wrong?” says the coach in a fleeting moment of empathy.”

“Coach Rayon, as honored as I would be to serve as guinea pig-slash-punching bag for your Olympic dodgeball team, it appears ... I have come down with a case of—my pancreas has shifted.

“Your esophagus? What the?! ... Go sit down. *(To himself.)* Poor kid.”

Four days later:

“You with the esophagus, the office wants a doctor’s note.”

A doctor’s note? Now I may not have been above making up a case of glacial esophagus, but I was not about to forge a medical license. I mean, I have my integrity. Religion! Ye olde religion trump card! I can’t believe I didn’t think of it sooner.

“You again—what’s it this time?”

“Coach Rayon, I am afraid that it has come to my attention that um, well ... gym, it’s against my religion.”

“And what religion would that be?”

[It had not occurred to me he’d ask! How inappropriate of him. So I just said:]

“Um, Amish ... I am ... a—Amish person?”

“Amish is not a religion; it’s a nationality.”

“That ... makes no sense.”

The coach sentenced me to the library to find proof. And that is where I spent my remaining days of gym, exercising my imagination, and flexing my creative muscles. Which was my goal all along.