

INT. HOMEROOM CLASSROOM - DAY

Far from the popular kids, Becca sits at an available spot in front of a dark boy with a furrowed brow, MARIUS PATIL, who's engaged in a Sudoku.

Becca glances behind her and notices Marius' schedule.

BECCA  
(to Marius)  
Wow, you're in Calculus.

Marius remains focused on his work as he speaks with stilted, monotone speech.

MARIUS  
Yes.

BECCA  
I thought that was a class for Seniors.

MARIUS  
The class is for anyone who has completed Trigonometry.

BECCA  
That's great. I'm in Second Year Algebra.

Becca peeks at his schedule again.

BECCA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to pry.  
Never mind.

Becca turns away for a beat then faces Marius again.

BECCA (CONT'D)  
It's just -- I just noticed Special Ed on your schedule. But you're so smart.

MARIUS  
It's not Special Ed. I go to Speech and Language Therapy.

BECCA  
But you talk fine.

MARIUS  
(eyes still downward)  
I lack appropriate social skills.  
(MORE)

MARIUS (CONT'D)

Specifically I have Aspergers, a mild form of Autism. My goal is to achieve more appropriate social interaction within the classroom environment and other social settings.

BECCA

I have social goals this year too.

Becca hesitates.

BECCA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Mine is to become more popular.

Marius' eyes meet Becca's for a sec.

MARIUS

That seems like a difficult but achievable goal.

BECCA

Really, you think so?

MARIUS

Yes. I've analyzed it. Last year, Stephen James' popularity increased fifteen percent after becoming student council President. Kandi Krystal had an unprecedented forty percent increase in popularity.

Kandi licks a lollipop nearby. She looks super-slutty in her low-cut tank top.

MARIUS (CONT'D)

I never figured out why.

All the guys around Kandi stare as she sucks on the pop.

MARIUS (CONT'D)

But I do know that Juli Wallis became fully thirty percent more popular right after making the Pepsters Squad.

BECCA

Wow. Amazing. I ran for Vice President last year. That didn't go so well.

FLASHBACK - INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

Becca stands on stage at a podium, with a large paper bumble bee announcing "Bee For Me!" pinned to her blouse. She confidently gives a speech, but we hear:

BECCA (V.O.)  
I was in the middle of my speech.  
When I noticed...

BILLY BANKOWSKI, a small-framed opponent, waits nearby with a ventriloquist dummy in his lap. He and his dummy have matching suits. The dummy holds a "Go Billy!" pennant.

BECCA (V.O.)  
Billy Bankowski's ventriloquist  
dummy. It really freaked me out. I  
kind of froze.

Becca's a deer in the headlights.

From Becca's POV, an audience of students gawks at her, as if they're witnessing a train wreck.

Becca runs off-stage.

END FLASHBACK.

## INT. HOMEROOM CLASSROOM - DAY

Becca and Marius are where we left them.

MARIUS  
A fear of an object falsely  
representing a sentient being is  
known as "automatonophobia."

BECCA  
Well in any case, I didn't get  
elected. But cheerleading, I never  
thought of that...

MARIUS  
Unfortunately, the odds of making  
the Pepsters squad are weighed  
quite heavily against you,  
statistically speaking.