



CHAPTER 1 A new start

Rachel Berry was standing outside Principal Figgins' office. McKinley High School wasn't the kind of school where students wanted to be different – and Rachel *was* different. She dreamed of being a famous singer. She was sure she could make it happen, and she had a plan. 'My freshman year here was terrible,' she thought, 'but sophomore is going to be better.' She walked into the Principal's office.

'Yes, Rachel,' Principal Figgins said. 'What is it?'

It wasn't Rachel's first visit to his office.

Rachel was small with beautiful long hair – and she always worked hard to get what she wanted.

'What does she want now?'

Principal Figgins thought.

'Principal Figgins, you know I love music and performing. There isn't much for students like me at McKinley High.'

'Yes, well, there's no money for that. There's nothing I can do,' Principal Figgins answered.



'There is!' Rachel said. 'I'd like to do the morning news.' Every morning, Mrs Applethorne read the school news over the loudspeakers. Rachel thought she could do it much better. It was almost like being on the radio!

'Everyone will hear my wonderful voice,' she thought. 'Lots of famous people started on radio.'

'OK,' Principal Figgins said. 'You can try for two weeks.'

Ten minutes later, Rachel was standing by the microphone. She was really excited. 'Good morning, McKinley High. This is Rachel Berry with the news. I'd like to start with a song, *Good Morning*, from the film *Singin' in the Rain**.' As Rachel sang she thought about the other students. 'Maybe they're already talking about how talented I am!' she thought. Then she quickly read out the news. 'I hope everyone is coming to the *Fall in Love with Music* show this Friday. Also, voting starts today for this year's homecoming king and queen. We'll find out the winners at the homecoming dance next Friday night.'

Rachel continued, 'I'd like to finish by giving Rachel Berry's Gold Star of the Week award. This is for someone who's done something special for McKinley High. This week I'd like to give it to ... myself. I hope I've made everyone's morning a bit happier. See you tomorrow,' she finished. 'I've done it!' she thought. 'Soon everyone in the school will know me.'

Rachel felt like a new person as she left for class, but no one looked at her. 'Did no one hear my wonderful performance?' she thought.

Then she saw Coach Sylvester. 'Giving a gold star to yourself? You know the other students will hate you for that!' Coach Sylvester said.

* *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) is a popular American film, famous for its wonderful songs and dances.

'What?' Rachel said, surprised, but Coach Sylvester was walking away. Most students were frightened of the coach. She was a hard person. She was coach to the Cheerios, McKinley High's cheerleading team. The Cheerios was one of the best cheerleader groups in America.

'Here's a gold star for you,' someone said. Then a group of football jocks pushed past her and Rachel's schoolbooks fell to the floor. The footballers laughed and walked away. Getting pushed about was nothing new. The jocks were always doing it to the less popular kids.

'Things are going to change,' Rachel thought. 'The first weeks back at school are always really important at McKinley High, and I'm going to be at the centre of it all.'



It was lunchtime and the school café was busy. The popular kids – the Cheerios, the jocks, the beautiful and the rich kids – sat at the best tables by the windows. As usual, the jocks were throwing food around. A few of the Cheerios were talking about practice. In the middle of the room, some of the other kids watched the jocks and Cheerios. They wanted to be like them. The Glee kids – Tina Cohen-Chang, Kurt Hummel, Mercedes Jones and Artie Abrams – sat in the darkest corner.

'No way!' Mercedes said. 'People have to pay the Cheerios to vote for homecoming!' Tina and Kurt turned to look. Quinn Fabray and her two friends, Santana and Brittany, were sitting at a table under a sign:

**VOTE FOR HOMCOMING KING AND QUEEN
\$1 A VOTE!**

Lots of students were waiting to pay. Mercedes didn't like people telling her what to do.

'Are you g-g-going to go over there?' Tina asked. She hated fights. Tina was pretty. Her long hair was black with a piece of bright blue colour in it, and she always wore black clothes.

'No ... they won't listen to me,' Mercedes said.

Then Rachel walked up to the voting table. 'Two things,' she said. 'Homecoming has an "e" in it.'

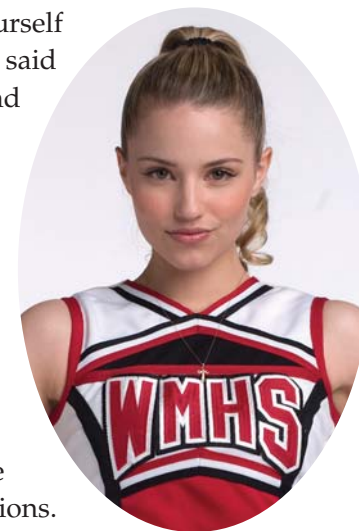
Quinn couldn't believe it. Why was a loser like Rachel talking to her like that?

'The second, and worst thing,' Rachel continued, 'is that people have to pay to vote. It's unfair!'

'Maybe you could buy yourself enough votes to win,' Quinn said angrily, 'but you clearly spend all your money on those terrible clothes. Somehow, you look like a child and a grandmother at the same time!'

Rachel opened her mouth to speak, but she couldn't think of anything clever to say. Kurt walked over to the table. Kurt loved clothes – he always wore the coolest fashions. He thought Rachel's clothes *were* terrible, but he was tired of Quinn and her bossy friends. He put \$50 on the table. 'I'd like fifty votes for queen, please.'

'Who for? *You?!*' Quinn said, and everyone in the café laughed.



Kurt walked away. Rachel took his money and ran after him.

'You didn't have to do that!' she said, holding his money out to him. 'You know, my two dads had problems like that when they were at high school.'

'You have two dads?' Kurt said, surprised.

'They're great,' Rachel said. 'Will Kurt say anything about being gay?' she thought.

Instead, Kurt said, 'I heard you sing this morning. Why don't you come to Glee Club? We meet in the music room after school. We could use some more talent.'

'Maybe ... I'll think about it,' Rachel said.

'Maybe see you later,' Kurt answered.



Back in the café, people were voting again. Quinn got up on the table to correct the sign.

'It looks good,' Finn Hudson smiled at her.

Quinn looked at Finn. She knew most of the girls in the school liked him. 'He can be my boyfriend,' Quinn decided.

'Help me down,' she smiled. Finn lifted her down.

Finn was the best-looking guy in the school, and the star of the football team.

'We could be homecoming king and queen,' Quinn thought. Then she saw Finn's best friend, Puck, on the other side of the room. Puck was trouble, but he was really hot. Quinn couldn't stop looking at him. Puck saw her looking and smiled.

'Puck is not the kind of boyfriend I need,' Quinn thought. She turned to Finn and touched his arm. 'Will you come to Celibacy Club with me tomorrow? Maybe we could go out after.'

'Yeah, I'd like that,' Finn said. 'Celibacy Club sounds boring,' he thought, 'but it means I can be with Quinn.' He liked the feel of her hand on his arm.



In the music room, Glee Club was practising. It wasn't going well. With only four people, the big music room felt empty and unfriendly. They all had great voices, but they needed something more.

'We don't have much time,' Tina said. 'The Fall in Love with Music show is on Friday. Everyone will be watching us!'

'Let's try again,' said Mercedes. She was the star of the group and she didn't want people to laugh at them.

They were singing when Rachel arrived. 'Artie, you were singing too low, Kurt you were too high. You,' Rachel pointed at Tina, 'have to open your mouth more. And Mercedes-'

'Who do you think you are?' Mercedes said angrily.

'I've decided to join Glee Club,' Rachel answered. 'I've had singing lessons for years, I can help you.'

'I asked her,' Kurt said quietly. 'Glee Club is dead unless we can save it. We all heard Rachel sing this morning and she was brilliant – annoying, but brilliant.'

'What?' Mercedes was hurt.

'Mercedes, you're a-a-awesome,' Tina stammered. 'But we need someone who can make us *all* better.'

Mercedes knew they were right. 'OK. She can stay. For now.'

'We'll have to practise every day after school until the show,' Rachel continued. 'It's not going to be easy.'

Mercedes looked at her. 'This is going to be an adventure,' she thought.