

# MEAN GIRLS

**STUDY GUIDE**



Hi, newbies!

This book has everything you need to know about MEAN GIRLS.

And also some very flattering photos of me (you're welcome).

That's the nicest thing you've ever said.

I'd swipe right.



# WELCOME TO GIRL WORLD

Cady Heron may have grown up on an African savanna, but nothing prepared her for the wild and vicious ways of her strange new home: suburban Illinois. How will this naïve newbie rise to the top of the popularity pecking order? By taking on The Plastics, a trio of lionized frenemies led by the charming but ruthless Regina George. But when Cady devises a plan to end Regina's reign, she learns the hard way that you can't cross a Queen Bee without getting stung.



# WHO'S WHO



**CADY HERON**

The new kid in town. After growing up in rural Africa, Cady is unprepared for an American high school. Like, she's never even tried Starbucks chai. Clever, kind and great at math, Cady struggles to fit in at her new school. Though she quickly becomes friends with outcasts Janis and Damian, she soon falls prey to the charms of a notoriously popular clique, The Plastics, and learns the hard way that being popular isn't always pretty.

Janis is an artistic rebel who stands up for what she believes in. Along with her best friend Damian, she spills the tea to Cady on the do's and don'ts of surviving high school. She's kind of like a tour guide... except with way cooler hair. Janis was once friends with Regina George, the leader of The Plastics, until Regina spread malicious and devastating rumors about her. Now, she'd rather be herself than fit in with any crowd.

**JANIS SARKISIAN**



**DAMIAN HUBBARD**

A great friend and an even better tap dancer, Damian is unapologetically himself. He and Janis are Cady's first friends at school. Damian boldly (and hilariously) confronts a variety of challenging issues: bullying, self-identity and, of course, how to stop yourself from sending way too many texts to the cute boy in your drama club. Like Janis, Damian thinks Regina is not to be trusted, but he also admires her power and poise.

Regina is the leader of her school's most powerful and popular clique: The Plastics. Charming, cool and calculating, she's the girl everyone wants to be... or at least sit with. When Cady shows up, Regina shocks everyone by inviting her to hang out with The Plastics. But Cady soon learns that if you spend time with a Queen Bee, sooner or later, you're gonna get stung.

**REGINA GEORGE**

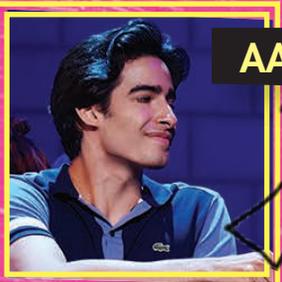


**GRETCHEN WIENERS**

Gretchen knows everyone's secrets... and she's not afraid to share them. She finds out the hot gossip and reports back to Regina, faster than the speed of a big, yellow school bus. Gretchen is smart, loyal and such a good friend. At least, she hopes you think so. Though popular in her own right, she is insecure and afraid of losing her position as Regina's #2. Her current goal is to make *fetch* happen.

Although not the sharpest Louboutin in the closet, Karen is adorable, fun and, arguably, the nicest member of The Plastics. Her talents include finding great Halloween costumes and being able to have entire conversations via emoji. While Karen always supports her friends, she doesn't appreciate when they put her down. Like that time Regina told her she couldn't wear a vest.

**KAREN SMITH**



**AARON SAMUELS**

Aaron is a friendly senior who sits in front of Cady in Calculus. Cady is immediately smitten by his good looks, charm and ability to find "x." Unfortunately, he is also Regina's ex, and totally off-limits.

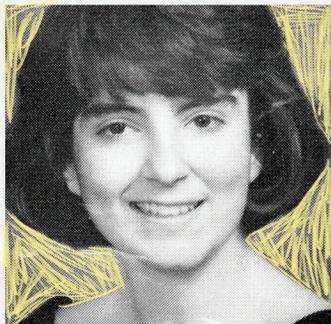
**KEVIN GNAPOOR**

Rapping and math... name a more iconic duo. Kevin Gnapoor (AKA "Kevin G.") is a Mathlete who doubles as North Shore High's most enthusiastic rapper. After seeing Cady's talent for calculus, he invites her to join the Mathletes. Other students might make fun of his crew, but Kevin G. knows he's got mad schquillz.



# THE CREATORS OF MEAN GIRLS

Tina Fey

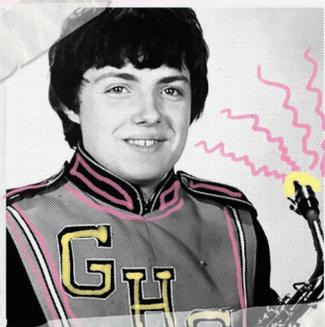


How do you take a movie that people know by heart and make something new out of it? Can you take established characters and open them up to go deeper? And what about phones, y'all?! What are we gonna do about phones?!

These were just some of the questions we faced when we set out to adapt *Mean Girls* for Broadway. To avoid panic and paralysis, we started by focusing on what we knew for sure.

We knew that the desire to “fit in” was universal, and the mistakes we make just to “fit in” are a painful part of growing up.

Jeff Richmond



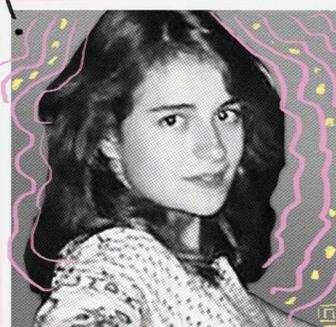
We saw that our culture had actually gotten meaner since the movie came out in 2004, and that “calling someone stupid doesn’t make you any smarter” could be a valuable reminder to more people than just young girls.

We knew that our story was about human behavior, and that social media was just a new (albeit nuclear 🌩️) weapon in that battle.

The jokes had to be smart, because teenagers are smart.

The music had to be as diverse as the characters themselves. A Damian song could never sound like a Janis song or a Regina song, because those characters wouldn’t be caught dead copying each other.

Nell Benjamin

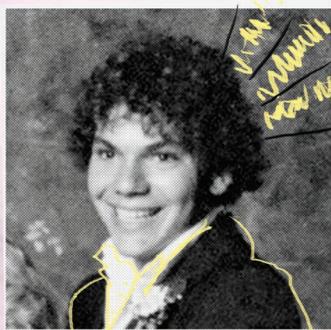


We knew that Cady had to make bad choices, and that Mrs. George was just trying her best, and that Gretchen Wieners was the most emotionally complex character since Chekhov’s Masha Kulygina. (JK, guys, JK! 😊 But she does have a lot going on.)

And, most importantly, we knew it had to be FUN and funny, with a lot of good 🧑🏻🧑🏻🧑🏻🧑🏻🧑🏻.

With the help of our incredibly dedicated actors, musicians, designers, stage crew, some very smart out-of-town audiences in Washington, D.C. — and with Rosalind Wiseman’s book “Queen Bees and Wannabes” always in our backpacks — we eventually finished what we set out to do. Everyone said it would take five years. But it actually only took us five years.

Casey Nicholaw



*Mean Girls* opened on April 8, 2018 at the August Wilson Theatre in New York City. 🚗🚗🚗 Regina George would tell us not to care what anyone else thinks, but it has been thrilling for us to watch audiences enjoy the show and respond to Rosalind Wiseman’s original message that drama may happen but “dignity is not negotiable.”

With Love,  
The *Mean Girls* Creative Team

To find out more about the creative team, visit [meangirlsontour.com](http://meangirlsontour.com).

# MEAN IS A CHOICE

Sometimes mean is what you are.  
Mean is easier than nice.  
And though mean can take you far,  
maybe this will make you think twice.

(Excerpt from the song "A Cautionary Tale" from MEAN GIRLS Musical)

Being mean, like being kind, is a choice. Whether we choose one over the other is often motivated by our unique set of circumstances, such as the social situation, setting, and our emotions. Why, at different times, do we choose to be mean?

- In small groups of 3 – 5, make a list of different motivations people might have for being mean. Feel free to use examples from real life (or from MEAN GIRLS).
- Make a second list of motivations for being kind.
- Which motivations feel stronger and why?
- Choose one person to share your lists with the class.



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# DID YOU KNOW?



## HOW U.S. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SPEND THEIR TIME EACH WEEK

| ACTIVITY   | WEEKDAY   | WEEKEND    |
|--|-----------|------------|
|  SLEEPING   | 8.6 HOURS | 10.9 HOURS |
|  EDUCATION  | 6.8 HOURS | 1.1 HOURS  |
|  MEDIA      | 2.3 HOURS | 4.3 HOURS  |
|  LEISURE    | 1.4 HOURS | 1.9 HOURS  |
|  EATING    | 1.0 HOUR  | 1.1 HOURS  |
|  SPORTS   | 0.7 HOURS | 0.9 HOURS  |
|  GROOMING | 0.9 HOURS | 0.9 HOURS  |
|  WORKING  | 0.5 HOURS | 0.8 HOURS  |
|  OTHER    | 1.8 HOURS | 2.1 HOURS  |

Office of Adolescent Health. (2018, July 17). A Day in the Life. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/day-in-the-life/index.html#all>

If you think about it, everyone has the same amount of time each day.

1440 minutes

We counted. LOL JK we made Cady do the math.



24 hours

86,400 seconds



## LESSONS FROM THE PINK SIDE



Below is a condensed list from Teen Vogue's online article, "10 Important Lessons from MEAN GIRLS in Honor of October 3rd." These lessons are drawn from the plot and characters of MEAN GIRLS. They encourage us to be mindful and give advice on how to be a kinder friend and more confident person.

In the article, each lesson includes an explanation with examples that help further clarify the meaning. For instance:

**You are who you hang out with.** Have you heard the proverb, "Show me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are"? It often holds true, and in MEAN GIRLS, it was completely relevant. Although Cady didn't expect meanness to come so naturally to her, she started to resemble The Plastics after spending a lot of time with them. Be careful the next time you choose your friends... even if it is for a social experiment.

Additional lessons from the article are included below:

1. Don't judge a book by its cover.
2. With confidence, you can rock just about anything.
3. Don't dumb yourself down for a guy (or anyone else, for that matter).
4. When the going gets tough, get creative.
5. Rumors aren't fun; and the truth always comes out eventually.
6. Trash-talking someone else won't make you any better.
7. "Don't let the haters stop you from doing your thang."
8. Apologize when you know you're wrong.

Matta, M. (2015, October 3). "10 Important Lessons from MEAN GIRLS in Honor of October 3rd."

Retrieved from <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/october-3rd-mean-girls-day>

- As a class, read these additional lessons and write an explanation for 5 of them by using what you learned at MEAN GIRLS Musical. (Note: If you didn't attend a performance of the musical, pull associated and applicable information from the movie.)
- In groups of 3, select one of the remaining 3 statements and write your own explanation using examples from MEAN GIRLS or provide 1-3 real-life examples.
- Volunteers from the class can share their writing by reading it out loud.

# LEAD LIKE A BOSS



This activity comes from the Girls' Education team at the Student Leadership Network. To learn more and find out how you can get involved, visit <https://www.studentleadershipnetwork.org/>.

In response to seeing the musical *MEAN GIRLS*, you have the opportunity to respond to the show with a small creative project! Have fun with this project and think of it as an extension of your theater experience. You may work on your own, or pair up with a classmate to complete the project.

## OPTION 1

Rewrite your "Mean Girl" Moment. Think back on a moment when you were less than kind and describe it. Now, rewrite that event from your life in a way that you would if you had a do-over.

## OPTION 2

Imagine that you've been hired to write *MEAN GIRLS II: THE SEQUEL*. Write the first scene as you imagine the story beginning.

## OPTION 3

Choose a character from *MEAN GIRLS* and create a project for art, theater, or poetry class from their perspective.

## OPTION 4

What might the harmful effects of the "Burn Book" look like in the age of social media? Compare and contrast the different ways the "Burn Book" situation might damage friend relationships before and during the age of social media.

## OPTION 5

Select a character from *MEAN GIRLS* that you identify as having leadership qualities. How does this character exhibit and use their qualities to lead? Do they use their leadership for positive or negative outcomes?

For ANY of these options, you may write your responses in prose, or you may get even more creative: write a play, a poem, a song, or create a drawing or a collage... choose the medium that suits you best. Be prepared to present your creative work! Have fun!



A SCENE FROM THE MUSICAL

MEAN GIRLS

MS. NORBURY

Umm, everyone close your eyes.

Okay, uh, raise your hand if you've ever had a girl say something bad about you behind your back.

Open your eyes.

Now close your eyes again and this time, raise your hand if you've ever talked about a friend behind her back.

Open your eyes.

How 'bout that. Maybe we should take a quick break from being "victims in this situation" and take responsibility for our own actions.

Everybody take a piece of paper. Line up over here. Let's go. We're going to write out some apologies to people we've hurt in our lives.

'Cause one thing I know for sure, guys, is that calling someone ugly doesn't make you better looking. Calling someone stupid won't make you any smarter. And we have to stop beating each other up over every little thing.



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Janis! How could you say such a thing?

I would eat a piece of cardboard if it was covered in cheese.

It's not gross - it's commitment.

Raise your hand if you think regular fries are better than cheese fries.

Someone had to.

Gross! 😞



# FIND YOUR KIND

Ditch the MEAN. It's FREE to be KIND! Check out KIND CAMPAIGN!

In February 2009, while attending Pepperdine University, Lauren Paul and Molly Thompson joined forces. Having both been affected by female bullying throughout their youth, the young women decided to create change by giving females a platform to speak out about this universal experience. What began as an idea for a documentary about girl-against-girl bullying, ultimately became Kind Campaign, a multi-platform movement that has transformed hundreds of thousands of lives, friendships, classrooms, and communities around the world.



**KIND CAMPAIGN IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT BRINGS AWARENESS AND HEALING TO THE NEGATIVE AND LASTING EFFECTS OF GIRL-AGAINST-GIRL BULLYING THROUGH THEIR GLOBAL MOVEMENT, DOCUMENTARY FILM, IN-SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES AND EDUCATIONAL CURRICULA.**

The issue of girl-against-girl bullying that MEAN GIRLS addresses is something that Kind Campaign takes very seriously. While this issue has previously been viewed as a universal rite of passage for girls, Kind Campaign recognizes that girl world can and should be a kinder, safer, and more supportive place. Kind Campaign creates real change in schools and communities around the globe with their life-changing Kind Campaign Assemblies and Kind Clubs by creating a safe space for girls to connect, come together and break down the walls and cliques that are often up in school hallways (similar to what Ms. Norbury did in the scene on pg. 9).

At every Kind Campaign assembly, the girls participate in various life-changing activities. You can participate in them too by going to [www.kindcampaign.com](http://www.kindcampaign.com)!

1. Kind Pledge: **UNITE IN KIND**. Take a pledge to create change within your own life, school hallways and community. By taking the Kind Pledge, YOU pledge to unite in kindness in an effort to end female bullying.
2. Kind Apology: **A TRUE APOLOGY IS TRANSFORMATIVE**. Have you ever wanted to apologize to someone? Now is your chance! We have seen the Kind Apology transform friendships and mend conflicts all over the world. This simple action step creates real and lasting change. We highly encourage you to share your apology with the person you are writing it to. It will not only be a healing experience for the person receiving the apology, but for yourself as well.
3. Kind Card: **BE KIND. IT FEELS BETTER**. Write a Kind Card and let someone know why you appreciate them! A few simple kind words can completely change someone's day, and ultimately their life.
4. The Truth Wall: **WE ALL HAVE A STORY**. Sharing your story can be a healing experience, and can also serve as a way to remind others that they are not alone.

Kind Campaign has witnessed these activities change and even save lives. To book an assembly, participate in these interactive activities, and find out more about Kind Campaign follow along on social @kindcampaign and at [www.kindcampaign.com](http://www.kindcampaign.com).



# THANK YOU FOR SITTING WITH US!

And now, we leave you with this heartwarming moment from our kind (and kinda nerdy) heroine Cady:

CADY

Wow. Um, I think people voted for me 'cause they think I pushed someone in front of a bus. Which is terrible.

When I first moved here, I wanted everyone to like me so bad... I kind of lost myself in the process... We all do that, I think. We think we have to change ourselves to be good enough. But looking at you guys from up here... I wish you could see it. You're awesome.

PLASTIC DON'T SHINE.  
GLITTER DON'T SHINE,  
RHINESTONES DON'T SHINE  
THE WAY YOU DO.

YOU ARE SO REAL.  
YOU ARE SO RARE.  
I SEE YOU THERE—  
I SEE YOU.

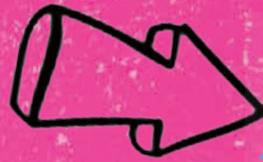
I SEE STARS.  
SO MANY STARS TONIGHT.  
YOU COULD MAKE DIAMONDS DULL.  
YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL.

I SEE STARS.  
YOU SHINE AS BRIGHT AS DAY.  
I WILL LOOK OUT FOR YOU.  
WE'LL LIGHT EACH OTHER'S WAY.  
YOU'RE ALL STARS.

(Excerpt from the song "I See Stars" from MEAN GIRLS Musical)



And so, the moral of our story is thus:  
Calling someone stupid won't make  
you any smarter.



And even the people you don't  
like at all are still people.

You're welcome.



**MEAN  
GIRLS**