

THE BARTON SERIES

THINKING ALONG WITH BARTON



BY

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(Ages 8 and over)

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THE MATHS OLYMPICS

Each year, there were several local competitions held between the now four schools in the surrounding area. Among these friendly rivalries was an annual sports competition, the knockout soccer games, a usually close and heated debating contest, a talented essay writing contest and then there was the mathematics competition. Few of these contests, though, held the prestige or were as keenly contested as the challenging mathematics competition.



The seventy-five minutes long competition was given the slang name of ‘The Mathsalympics’, by the local of the community and also by the students and their teachers alike. The correct name of, ‘The Local School’s Annual Mathematics Competition’, remained, but was mostly ignored except for the formal occasions. Everyone preferred the name, ‘Mathsalympics’ and most didn’t even know the correct name of the contest.

Barton’s school had not been the champion in this contest for several years. However, hope sprang strong that the trophy might be wrested from the rival champion school this year. The current champions had swept victory in this event for the last four consecutive years.

This year, the school’s representatives were Malaika, Barton, and Kwame. All three of them belonged to the same class at their school. This, in itself, was a local school record. It was after a few preliminary elimination exercises at

school, that these three emerged at the top and were considered worthy of representing their school. All four schools were to have three representatives. In the end, the mean mark of the school's three representatives would be taken, with the highest mean determining the champion school.

It was always a great honour to represent one's school in any event and especially one as prestigious as this, one which heralded such accolades.



The three close friends were rather proud of being chosen. Both Barton and Malaika would envision, arm in arm, the sweet fragrance of success and they delighted in the thought. However, the agony of defeat also danced teasingly before their eyes.

Kwame was calmer in his thoughts, remaining mostly pensive. None of the others, though, truly knew how Kwame felt. He spoke little of the competition. However, the plump one ate more and moved around less.

“I need to give extra feed to my brain, Barton,” he argued.

Barton together with Dane had, up to now, held Kwame to a strict diet and exercise routine. Barton could only laugh with his plump friend who did not see the matter as funny.

“Just until the competition ends,” warned Barton, as he hugged his close friend.

“Then I hope the competition is postponed indefinitely,” replied Kwame, munching on a cookie with a thick, vanilla-cream centre.

