

THE AESOP PROJECT

Cheer Squad

after Aesop's fable "The Two Crabs"

by Jeff Goode
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CAST – 3 cheerleaders

Anne
Tracy
Diana

(Lights up on: ANNE and TRACY, two cheerleaders, practicing. Their school crest is a cheerful crab.)

ANNE & TRACY

Gimme an A!
Gimme an E!
Gimme an S-O-P!
Put 'em all together and what's that spell?
AESOP! AESOP!! YAAAAY!!!!

(They bounce around a bit for good measure. TRACY is very peppy. ANNE abruptly stops practicing.)

ANNE

Okay, that's great. But keep your arms straight on the poms and on the turn, lead with your right foot not the left.

TRACY

But you led with your left.

ANNE

Okay, look. You're new here so I'm going to pretend you didn't just try to tell me how to do a routine I've been doing since you were, like, a freshman. I know what I did. I don't need you to tell me. There's different ways to do it.

TRACY

But I thought—

ANNE

It's okay, I'm not mad. It's just, it's not cool to correct other people on their routine. It makes you look like a know-it-all diva. And not in a good way.

TRACY

But I didn't—

ANNE

And it's pronounced "Eeesop". Not "Aaysop".

TRACY

Oh, I thought it was "Aaysop".

ANNE

That doesn't even sound right.

TRACY

I thought both were correct.

ANNE

No, it's "Eesop".

TRACY

Because Mr. Doukas says "Aaysop".

(Silence. ANNE just glares.)

TRACY

And he's the history teacher.

(Silence. ANNE just glares.)

TRACY

And he's Greek.

ANNE

Okay, look, it doesn't matter how it's pronounced, because it's not polite to make fun of the way other people say things. If you're gonna act like a diva, maybe you just shouldn't be on cheer squad.

TRACY

Sorry.

ANNE

It's okay, you'll catch on. Just follow my lead and do what I do and you'll be perfect. Okay?

TRACY

Okay—

ANNE

(suddenly shouting offstage) Jennifer, no!! You're doing it all wrong!! Do it like I told you!

(ANNE rushes out.)

(DIANA, who has been lurking, suddenly comes over.)

DIANA

What was that all about?

TRACY *(startled)*

Huh? Oh, hi.

DIANA

What did you say to set her off like that?

TRACY

Nothing.

DIANA

Oh, come on. I saw you talking to her. Is it a secret? You can tell me.

TRACY

It was nothing.

DIANA

Was it really nothing? Or did she tell you to tell me it was nothing—but really it's something?

TRACY

It was really nothing.

DIANA

I knew it! Okay, look, I know you're new here. But this is cheer squad. We're a team. We're like sisters.

TRACY

Right.

DIANA

Only we're nice to each other.

TRACY

Okay.

DIANA

So we don't keep secrets. And we don't gossip. If she said something about me behind my back and made you promise not to tell anyone, then you have to tell me.

TRACY

It wasn't anything. Honest. She was just correcting me on my cheers.

DIANA

Oh my G! She really did that? You must think she's a total diva.

TRACY

No.

DIANA

It's okay, if you do. That's what everybody says about her.

TRACY

They do?

DIANA

Everybody. You know what else they say?

TRACY

What? What do they say?

DIANA

Well, aren't you nosy? I bet if I tell you, it'll be all over cheer squad by tomorrow.

TRACY

No, it won't.

DIANA

You'll keep it a secret?

TRACY

Yes, I promise! I mean, no, I won't keep it a secret, but I won't—! Ooh, I don't know what's the right answer.

DIANA

Look, it's okay, I'm not mad. It's just, it's not cool to keep secrets from the rest of the squad. It makes you look like you're not a team player.

TRACY

I'm a team player.

DIANA

Like you're a backstabber.

TRACY

I'm not a backstabber.

DIANA

All right, I don't believe you, but I'm gonna let it slide this time, since it's your first time. But from now on, no secrets.

TRACY

No secrets.

DIANA

And no gossip.

TRACY

You got it.

DIANA

Like sisters.

TRACY

Who like each other.

DIANA

We're a team. So there's no alliances.

TRACY

Isn't that what a team is? An alliance?

DIANA

There's no secret alliances!

TRACY

Okay.

DIANA

(threatening) Or else.

TRACY

Or else what?

DIANA

Like I'm going to tell you.

TRACY

(confused) Right.

DIANA

Look, just follow my lead and you'll be fine.

TRACY

Gotcha.

DIANA

Uh oh, here she comes. We didn't have this conversation.

TRACY

But—

(ANNE enters.)

ANNE

What's going on here? What are you two talking about?

DIANA

Nothing.

ANNE

(threatening) Tracy?

TRACY

Nothing!

ANNE

Did she tell you not to tell me?

TRACY

No!

DIANA

(blurts) You think you know everything, but you don't!!

ANNE

Says who?

DIANA

(to TRACY) What's your name again?

TRACY

Tracy.

DIANA
Tracy says.

TRACY
No, I didn't.

ANNE
Liar!

DIANA
Wow, you are a liar. We just talked about it.

ANNE
You were talking about me behind my back?

TRACY
Not on purpose.

DIANA
(shaking her head) Such a liar.

ANNE
We have a zero tolerance for gossip in cheer squad.

DIANA
And lying.

ANNE
And lying!

DIANA
And bossing people around.

ANNE
Was she doing that, too?

DIANA
She seems like the type.

TRACY
What?!

ANNE

Look, Tracy, cheer squad is about trust. When you're doing a front flip off a human pyramid into a cradle catch, you've got to know that the other cheer-members have your back.

DIANA

Or your front if it's a back flip.

ANNE

If we can't count on you not to be a backstabbing...

DIANA

Gossipy...

ANNE

Know-it-all...

DIANA

Diva snitch...

ANNE

Well, then I don't know why we let you on the team in the first place.

DIANA

Except that the school makes us. We have to take everybody.

ANNE

We're not mad.

DIANA

We're really not.

ANNE

But you just have to stop trying to do everything your way, and follow our lead until you get the hang of it. Okay? Is that so hard?

TRACY

No, I guess, I understand. I wouldn't want to be all those terrible things you just accused me of. But if you give me a second chance, I promise I'll always try to follow your example.

ANNE & DIANA

Good.

TRACY

That is... Assuming you know how to set one. *(suddenly shouting offstage)* Jennifer!
No! That's not how it's done! *(exiting)* Later, Divas.

(TRACY walks out.)

(ANNE and DIANA are flabbergasted.)

ANNE

(Pause.) Did she just call us—?

DIANA

I like her.

(End of Play.)