

STACY McANULTY

THE

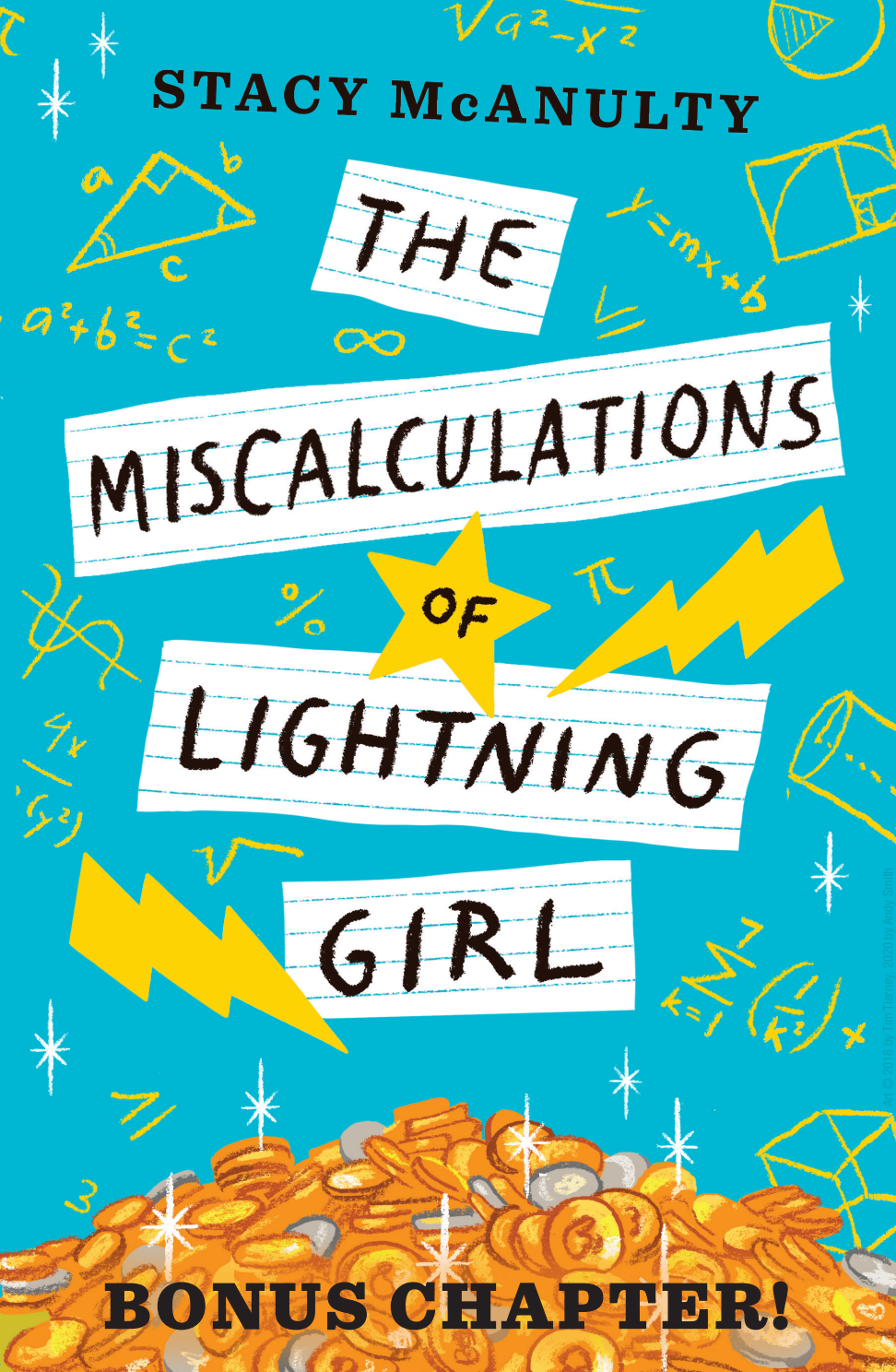
MISCALCULATIONS

OF

LIGHTNING

GIRL

BONUS CHAPTER!



THE

MISCALCULATIONS

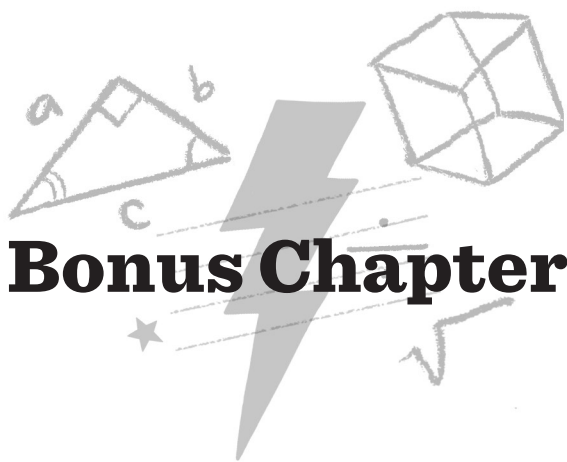
OF

LIGHTNING

GIRL

Miscalculations of Lightning Girl Bonus Chapter text © 2020 by Stacy McAnulty
Art © 2018 by Jim Tierney

KEEP READING FOR A BONUS CHAPTER FROM
THE MISCALCULATIONS OF LIGHTNING GIRL...



Bonus Chapter

Mr. Stoker puts down a blue dry-erase marker. He's done reviewing last night's math homework. Well, the homework the other 22 kids in the class were assigned. I get special assignments—some statistics but mostly calculus. I always do the regular math homework for fun, too.

“We’re going to do a small project today,” he tells us. “Take out some paper. You can work in small groups or alone.”

At the beginning of the school year, I would have selected the “alone” option. Today, there’s no doubt who my partners will be. Windy looks over her shoulder and

gives Levi and me a thumbs-up. I nod my agreement. Levi doesn't move, but we know he'll join us.

Mr. Stoker sits on his stool. "Did you all hear about the two boys in New York who were given over 5 million dollars by a tech billionaire and challenged to spend it within a month?" A few students say yes, but I don't.

I raise my hand, and Mr. Stoker points in my direction. "You said over 5 million. How much, exactly?"

"I thought you might ask that." He looks at a paper in his lap. "\$5,368,709.12. Lucy, want to take a stab at the reason for the amount?"

My brain was crunching numbers before he even finished the question. I divide \$5,368,709.12 by 2, and by 2 again, and by 2 again, and keep going until I reach the solution. A penny.

"It's a penny doubled for a month!" I answer, unable to hide my excitement. "Start with 1 cent on the first day and double it. You get 2 cents on the second day, 4 cents on the third day, 8 cents on the fourth day. You keep going—keep doubling—for 30 days, and you have \$5,368,709.12."

"No way!" Carter yells from the back of the class.

"Do you really doubt Lucy?" Windy asks. Comments like this used to embarrass me. Now I laugh.

This gives Mr. Stoker the opportunity he seems to have been waiting for. "Let's do the math."

The class is instructed to write out the calculations. Calculators are allowed, but of course, I don't use those. What takes me seconds to do in my head requires a little over 5 minutes for everyone else to finish.

"Now that you are believers," Mr. Stoker says as he walks to the front of the room, "on to the fun part of the assignment. Let's imagine that you have been given this money and you need to spend it all today. What would you buy?"

"A mansion."

"A speed boat."

"The Carolina Panthers."

The answers come from every direction.

Mr. Stoker holds up his hands for quiet. "All good ideas. But there are some rules. You can't buy property or vehicles. You can't give away the money, and you can't buy stocks or other investments. That's enough rules for now."

"I'd buy the new Nintendo system," Carter says.

"And how much does that cost?" Mr. Stoker asks.

"About \$400."

Mr. Stoker writes a quick subtraction problem on the whiteboard. "Looks like you still have \$5,368,309.12 left, and you have to spend all the money."

"I'd buy 1,000 Nintendos," someone offers.

"Now you're talking. That's \$400,000." Mr. Stoker

tells us to get to work creating our ultimate shopping list. He lets us use laptops to look up prices and offers extra credit for the most creative responses.

Windy turns around to face Levi and me. She has her notebook open, ready to write down our list. I get up and pull my chair closer. Then I sit, stand, sit, stand, and finally sit. I don't need paper. I'll keep the totals in my head.

"How do you want to spend the money?" Windy asks. "I think we should donate to girls' education in developing countries. With 5 million dollars, they could build a really nice school."

"You can't buy property," Levi says. "Mr. Stoker just told us that."

"We're not buying the school. We're just donating." Windy doesn't write anything yet. I know she's waiting for me to end their disagreement. It's just how our friendship works.

"Isn't donating the same as giving away the money?" I ask.

"Yes!" Levi says. "And if we were going to donate any money, it should go to Pet Hut."

"True." Windy taps her pencil noisily on the desk. "Pet Hut needs a bigger play area and more room for dog kennels."

"But we can't donate, so moving on." Levi moves his

hand in a rotating motion like a wheel spinning. “Let’s finish this assignment, or I’m sure Mr. Stoker will make it homework. If someone gave me all that cash, I’d buy a new camera and some killer lenses.”

“How much is that?” Windy asks, pencil poised to write.

“The high-quality stuff, like professionals use?” He checks a website. “Um, this camera is \$6,500, and I’d spend another \$10,000 on lenses.” He shrugs.

“Wow, that’s a lot,” I say. “But not nearly enough. To spend all the money, you’d have to buy 325 sets of cameras and lenses, and you’d still have \$6,209.12 left.”

“I don’t want 325 cameras; 1 is plenty.”

“I’ll take 1. Put me down for a photography bundle, Windy.” I catch Levi’s eye, and he smiles. “You can give me lessons.”

“I want a cool camera, too.” Windy writes down our first imaginary purchases. “Ya know what else I want? Another trip to the Rocky Mountain Lodge. Just the 3 of us. And probably my mom because we can’t actually go alone.”

“No!” I say. “That’s an awful idea. I’m never going back there.”

“Careful,” Levi whispers to me like he’s issuing some kind of warning.

“We’ll go for your birthday, Lucy.” Windy snaps her

fingers like she just had a brilliant idea. “February 13. That’s only a few weeks away.”

“This is pretend money,” I remind her. “And we have to spend it today.”

“We’ll have so much fun,” Windy continues, and I start to get nervous. I don’t think she’s talking about our math assignment anymore.

“Windy, what’s going on?” I ask.

“I told her it was a bad idea.” Levi shakes his head and then points at Windy. “And you’re terrible at keeping secrets.”

“I know.” She smiles proudly. “Since I accidentally let it slip anyway . . . we’re taking you to the Rocky Mountain Lodge for your birthday! It’s going to be so much better than last time. I can’t wait.”

Windy’s excitement starts to rub off on me. I didn’t enjoy my first trip there. (I hated it.) But maybe I should give it another chance. It’s not really about the place; it’s about the people—the friends.

“Can we finish the assignment, please?” Levi taps the paper in front of Windy. “I don’t want homework.”

“Okay, okay.” Windy chews on her lip for a moment as she thinks. “I’d buy an electronic microscope—better than the ones we have in the science lab— a soft-serve ice cream machine, some cool sunglasses, and a new laptop.”

Levi looks up the prices of the items on Windy's wish list. And I tell them how many we'd need to buy of each to spend the rest of our imaginary money.

"You'll need 912 MacBooks, 25 FBI-lab-quality microscopes, 3 soft-serve machines, and 1,000 pairs of Gucci sunglasses. Along with our new camera equipment."

"Cool. We're done." Levi leans back in his chair and dramatically wipes invisible dust from his hands.

"Wait." Windy points the pencil at me. "Lucy, you didn't add anything to the list. What do you want?"

"I don't know." I can't buy Nana a house or a new car. That's against the rules. "Maybe a bowling ball for my grandmother and some toys for Pi."

"With over \$5 million, I bet you could adopt Pi," Windy says. "Get a huge apartment that allows dogs and all the food and stuff Pi needs."

"No property," Levi reminds Windy.

She sighs and rolls her eyes. "You could rent the apartment. That's not buying property."

I wouldn't take Pi from Mr. Stoker, and I don't think Mr. Stoker would give up Pi, even for \$10 million. He loves that dog. When we walk into class each morning, Mr. Stoker has a new slide on the whiteboard with the caption, TODAY'S PI SPECIAL IS ... We've seen pictures of Pi sleeping on the couch, riding in the car, and eating

homework—I'm pretty sure that 1 was staged. Mr. Stoker and his wife adore Pi, but I also think he does the daily dog pictures for me. So I know my dog is okay for now.

“Just a few more minutes,” Mr. Stoker says. “If you don't finish in class, you can complete it for homework.”

“I knew he'd say that,” Levi mumbles.

“Don't worry. We're done.” Windy picks up our paper and waves it in Levi's face. They're like brother and sister, annoying each other, but always there for each other, too.

We all return to our desks. Mr. Stoker tells us that we'll share our spending wish lists tomorrow.

Windy raises her hand. “Mr. Stoker, how did the boys in New York—who actually got 5 million dollars—how did they spend the money?”

The bell rings.

“That's a long story.” Mr. Stoker raises his voice to be heard over the end-of-class commotion. “You'll have to read about it.”

How would you spend
5 MILLION DOLLARS
in 30 days?



To find out more, click here.

