I Had the Craziest Dream

By
7B's at Taft Junior High School, *Washington, D. C.*
and
Mrs. Faith F. Novinger, *Teacher of Mathematics*

Announcer: (Off stage) The name of our play is .....

The pianist plays "The Craziest Dream," by Harry Warren.

Announcer: Yes, that's it. That is the name of our play. The characters are:

Our Hero: John Jones (walks across stage in front of curtain to this is "The Craziest Dream").

Pupils: Bob, John, Sue, Katherine, and George.

Teacher

Navy Recruiting Officer (Carries placard.)

Parachute Riggers

Aircraft Armorer

Mapmaker

Weatherman

Grocer

Banker

Scene I

Loud Speaker: Ah, the scene is a school room. A Math class is about to begin. See if you can find our hero John Jones. (John and Bob walk on to the stage.) Bob is carrying some text books.

John: Slave, carrying all those books.

Bob: Didn't you do your homework?

John: Heck no, I'll have plenty of time after I get to class. (John takes the last seat in the row and barricades himself behind funny books.)

Teacher: John, you may start reading the answers to your homework.

John: (stands, dropping funny books) I haven't done it yet.

Teacher: Why didn't you do it, John?

John: Oh heck, I hate Math! What good is Math to you when you grow up?

Teacher: John, don't you know that Math is used in almost every kind of work there is? It's used by weather bureau forecasters, architects, gunners, mapmakers, airplane pilots, navigators, stenographers, factory workers, storekeepers, bookkeepers, and many others. Today we will review, naming and measuring angles. Will you name this angle, Sue?

Sue: It is a right angle; it has 90°.

Teacher: (holds up obtuse angle) John.

John: Scalene.

Teacher: No, Katherine.

Katherine: Obtuse. It has more than 90° in it.

Teacher: (points to triangle on the board) Bob, you will measure the angle at A.

Bob: I place the arrow of the protractor at the vertex of the angle A. It is 90°.

Teacher: Write down angle A equal to 90°. George, Measure angle B.

George: It is 30°. Write angle B equal to 30°.

Teacher: Mary, measure angle C.

Mary: Angle C equals 60°.

Teacher: Susan, find the sum of the three angles.

Susan: The sum of the angles in this triangle equals 180°.

Teacher: Draw any triangle for yourself. Measure the angles and find the sum. See if it is equal to 180°, too. I want you to pass this triangle and rectangle around, and find the difference between them.

Bob: The triangle is rigid, the rectangle collapses. But we could brace it.

Teacher: Then what would you have?

Bob: Two rigid triangles. (In the meantime John has gone to sleep.) (Bell rings.)

Teacher: Class excused. (Class leaves. John sleeps on.)

Dim lights.

Loud Speaker: John is asleep. Here is what he is dreaming.

John: Mrs. Simmons thinks I am no good, that I don't know my mathematics. I wonder if that's true, what that teacher

said, or is she saying that just to make me do my Math. I wonder. I am 15. I'll quit school, get a job, and make 40 a week. I'll show her up. Math! Who needs to know the stuffy old stuff anyway? Bah!

The following enter stage from right and form a line: *Navy Recruiting Officer, Parachute Rigger, Aircraft Armorer, Mapmaker, Weatherman, Grocer, and Banker.*

Navy Recruiting Officer steps forward. (Spot each interview between John and Officer, etc.)

John: Mr. Navy Recruiting Officer, I am a fine young man, healthy, and I want a job piloting airplanes. When do I begin?

Navy Recruiting Officer: Do you know your Math? Can you read a protractor accurately? Do you realize that a 2° mistake on a 700 mile journey means that an airplane will be 24.5 miles from its ship and you cannot even see your ship that far away in hazy weather? A misplaced decimal point might leave the plane out of the maneuvers entirely. No, you will not do for us. You cannot do your protractor work.

John: Mr. Parachute Rigger, I'd like to rig up parachutes. I always did like to see those hemispheres floating earthward like toadstools.

Mr. Parachute Rigger: Men's lives depend on these parachutes. We have to pick out men well trained in the fundamentals of mathematics. To be a good parachute rigger you have to know Algebra, be able, to solve equations and formulas. You have to know the figures of Geometry. You have to know circular measure. Do you know these things?

John: I haven't had Algebra yet, I'm only in the seventh grade.

Parachute Rigger: You don't qualify for a parachute rigger; you don't know your Math.

John: Mr. Aircraft Armorer, I'd like to inspect, adjust, and repair armament equipment, machine guns, cameras and bomb racks. Will you give me a job?

Armorer: You look all right, but do you know it's not so easy to inspect the armor of a plane? You must know trigonometry, mechanical drawing, and blue print reading. Did you learn these things in high school?

John: You make it sound hard. I was never one to waste my time on Math.

Armorer: Too bad, sir, we cannot waste our time with you. You don't know your Math.

John: Mr. Machinist, I want to be the man behind the man behind the guns. I want to be a machinist.

Machinist: Do you know your Math? Do you always put the decimal point in the right place? Can you measure with precision to the thousandths of an inch? One hair is .003 of an inch, and some parts won't fit if they are not accurate to one thousandth of an inch. Can you use a slide rule? Can you use a micrometer?

John: Ouch! not decimals. They're terrible.

Machinist: I can't use you in this war.

John: Mr. Mapmaker, may I work for you?

Mapmaker: Can you draw?

John: I can draw funnies. (*Aside.* I've read them enough.) Can't I draw maps for the Navy pilots?

Mapmaker: Were you careful and accurate in your scale drawings at school?

John: I was sort of good.

Mapmaker: Sort of isn't good enough, for our army and navy. They are the best in the world, and we must give them perfect maps. I can't use you.

John: Please, Mr. Weatherman, I'd like to learn to use your funny instruments. I want to be the man who tells the airplane pilots the weather conditions.

Weatherman: Do you know your solids, similar figures, and angles? Can you measure degrees?

John: Not yet, sir. I was supposed to be learning that, when I started this dream.

Weatherman: Come back when you have learned it.

John: Mr. Grocer, my name is John Jones and I'd like to have a job.

Grocer: How is your Math?

John: Not so good. You see I never liked it much.

Grocer: You never liked it much? Do you know how Math is used in the grocery business?

John: Why, no, sir.

Grocer: You must add the sales slips accurately. You must be able to make change correctly. You must be able to check invoices and figure per cent of profit. No, I fear you cannot have this job.

John: Mr. Banker, let me work for you.

Banker: Can you do Math? Did you take bookkeeping? Can you add, subtract, and do percentage?

John: No.

Banker: I cannot use you.

Cut off spot.

Choral speaking: You cannot add accurately. You cannot subtract exactly. You cannot multiply, divide or measure. We cannot use the man who doesn't know his Math.

(Repeat faster tempo and higher 3 times. Shake hands at John and close in on him.)

John: (hysterically) Mrs. Simmons, Mrs. Simmons, Oh, Mrs. Simmons! I want you to teach me Math! Please teach me Math. You just gotta teach me Math!

Lights. Enter teacher.

Teacher: Why, John, I'll gladly teach you Math. I'll teach you to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. I'll teach you to measure lines by inches, feet, yards, miles, by centimeters and meters. I'll teach you to measure by pounds and ounces, by degrees and minutes. But John, I can only teach. You, and you alone, can learn as much as you are willing to study hard to get.

John: I'll do it. I'll learn to add, multiply, divide, and subtract. I'll learn to measure in feet, yards, ounces, pounds, degrees and minutes.

Teacher: And then John there is High School, Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry.

John: I'll do it.

Loud speaker: John learns his tables. He learns to add accurately. He can measure by yards, by degrees, and minutes. He is super. In fact he is a super mathematician.

Curtain.

Scene II

Loud Speaker: Time later. This is an airplane factory. Mr. Old Hand is talking to Mr. New Hand.

Old Hand: We are building this bomber for Ace John Jones.

New Hand: Yeow! John Jones? Did you know he went to the same school I did? He was a couple of years ahead of me. We called him super, because he was a super mathematician. He really did study hard.

Old Hand: Super, super mathematician, super ace, nine planes last week. This plane will be ready for him next week. Here is the model of the plane. Notice how rigid the planes are made by using triangles in steel construction work.

New Hand: That sounds like Math to me. My Math teacher taught me about rigid triangles in the seventh grade.

Old Hand: Then to make it even more rigid, we weld the struts to the beams with three holes, because that forms a triangle, too.

New Hand: Let's get the job done.

Old Hand: Here is the blue print. The scale is 1 inch to a foot. If you are a good mechanic on this part of the work you will be promoted to working on the engines.

New Hand: I would like that. I'll do my best to help win this war. (Show riveting.)

New Hand: It is nice to know that putting 3 rivets in a triangle makes the planes stronger.

Curtain.

Scene III

Loud Speaker: We are now at a secret airplane field. Here comes our hero. The bomber is already well used. (John gets in plane, attired in coat and goggles. The navigator and gunner get in too.)

John: Today we are flying Jimmie Doolittle to a secret destination. On the return trip we will drop two 1000 pound

busters on ammunition plants. Gunner, have you checked and double checked your ammunition?

Gunner: Right, Capt. Jones.

John: Navigator, we will be flying above the clouds. I'll depend on you to get us there.

Navigator: Aye, aye, Sir.

Loud Speaker: We are off! It is now 15 minutes later.

John: Come in, navigator.

Navigator: We are now at 60° latitude, 40° longitude, heading 80°, air speed 200 knots an hour. The wind is 30 knots an hour from 340°. My scale drawing shows the ground speed is 208 knots and our true course is 88°.

John: We are over enemy territory.

Navigator: Altitude 10,000 feet. All is well.

John: We have passed the enemy. General Doolittle will land at latitude 35°, longitude 100°.

Loud Speaker: Our Ace is on the way home to the airport. His bombs have been dropped. The bomber goes in for a perfect landing.