

## Transcript of Hurwitz's Song: A Mathematician's Progress

(To the tune of "When I Was a Lad" from Gilbert & Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore)

When I was a kid and went to school  
Arithmetic was taught by rote and rule.  
I did long division and I took cube root,  
At the rule of three I was especially astute.

Chorus: At the rule of three he was especially astute.

I was so astute at the rule of three  
That now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus: He was so astute at the rule of three  
That now he is the holder of a Ph.D.

In algebra later I learnt nice words,  
Like "transpose", "cancel" and "remove the surds",  
"Divide both sides by z or y",  
That either might be zero didn't make me shy.

Chorus:

I cared so little if zero equalled z  
That now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

In geometry too I made my mark,  
My classmates thought me a regular shark.  
I memorized theorems through and through,  
Originals I never was required to do.

Chorus:

Originals useless seemed to be,  
So now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

In college, of course, I played my part,  
I majored in math from the very first start.  
It didn't much matter if I knew the stuff,  
I only had to manage a successful bluff.

Chorus:

I managed to bluff so successfully  
That now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

In college, of course, I played my part,  
It majored in math from the very first start.  
It didn't much matter if I knew the stuff,  
I only had to manage a successful bluff.

Chorus:

I managed to bluff so successfully  
That now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

My graduate studies I took in stride.  
If I couldn't prove a theorem I let it slide.  
With grades of C I was quite content,  
But now and then I got a B by accident.

Chorus:

So frequently by accident I got a B  
That now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

They had a silly rule that a thesis was required  
So I sought a kind professor whose assistance I desired.  
He said "Do this" and he said "Do that"  
And he had my thesis finished up in two months flat.

Chorus:

It was not a brilliant thesis but it didn't have to be,  
So now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

I still had to pass my oral exam;  
My only preparation was to cram, cram, cram.  
The profs all said I made a very bad show,  
But I knew as much at present as I ever would know.

Chorus:

To get me off their hands they give me a degree,  
So now I am the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

So math students all, both far and near,  
If you wish to seek an academic life career;  
If you don't want to teach in secondary school,  
Be careful to be guided by this golden rule.

Chorus:

Don't ever try to show originality,  
And you each may be the holder of a Ph.D.

Chorus

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