

# How To 'Trap' A Mimic

2

Nick Lorance



A "Her TV" Novel



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# How To Trap a Mimic 2

**By Nick Lorance**

We were in the news the next day. The same tabloid that had made the offer had this huge blow-up of a photo with what looked like Hannah using a urinal.

## **FIRST TRAP CAUGHT IN THE ACT!!**

It wasn't until later that we heard the whole story, long after the contest was over. What we got from the tabloid was that someone had photographed her using a urinal in one of the men's rooms here. From the local and national news, we knew that she had slammed them with an eight-figure lawsuit for slander.

Tammy was facing off against Joyce O'Hara; as the rest of us kept practicing our own moves, we watched them and the guys, Patrick Bellisle and Peter Parker. Two of Dana's costumes would be seen. She'd made a suit like Paula Abdul wore in the video, and Tammy was going to perform Opposites Attract. Joyce was going to do Heartbreaker, which, oddly enough, came from one of the Anime soundtracks I had used, because it was a song on the AD Police Files, just like What a Fool I Am which I would perform if I reached the second stage. She asked Dana to turn out a costume, but Dana just altered one she had made already, and after telling Joyce, gave it to her as a gift.

Finally came the performance day. Tammy talked about how the song had been the first one she ever learned, and she had busted her hump learning the tap routine, because she had never tap danced before this competition. Joyce asked me to sit in, and we explained the provenance of the show; a post apocalyptic world where robots were designed not only for labor or combat, but to also replace human prostitutes and waitresses. Unlike my song, Heartbreaker had been a fill-in, whereas mine was linked to the first episode, the Phantom Lady.

Again the competition was fierce. When Patrick won he threw his arms around Peter. Like Toby, Peter would stay almost to the last; he played keyboard and could do great back-up.

Tammy went first. Like Tina, she had used the original video to build on. An animator superimposed the cat from the original video on Toby, who had learned the song to do the duet vocals. They didn't have the entire set, so no couch or rooftop, but on the screen behind them the scenes where the set changed did show it with her instead of Paula Abdul. When they reached the tap dance sequence, they threw themselves into it with Tammy and

Toby in front, Tammy and the cartoon cat behind them. Then it ended. As the audience applauded, Tammy hugged Toby, then Toby took a bow and faded back.

Joyce had asked my band to stand in for the back-up band from the video with Patrick, who played a mean guitar as the second. She gave a great performance, and the vote was close; only two votes separated winner from loser. Joyce hugged Tammy and left. She broke down backstage and we all did what we could to cheer her up. Unlike those who went before her, she hadn't been asked to do back-up. But we all promised that if we needed keyboard or a singer, we'd ask her to come back.

We were all dog tired. Try doing anything for 20 days straight. As comedienne Rita Rudner said commenting about a friend going through thirty odd hours of labor, "I don't even want to something that feel good for that long."

Ryan, Morgan, and Tina had become our extended family, and we decided to hit the bar for a nightcap before hitting the sack. We were talking about the next week. Both Morgan and I were a bit worried because it was our turn in the barrel next. Tina excused herself to go to the bathroom. We were still talking when we heard her scream. I was on my feet running even before the Barricade pair.

Tina was crumpled in a corner with a large man standing over her. Her dress had been ripped down one side, exposing a small breast. The guy heard me slam the door open, and turned. He smirked and came at me. I had an instant of the sight before I saw red. Tina was like a crystal vase, beautiful and delicate. As Mom would have said, she wouldn't say shit if she had a mouthful.

And this *bastard* had done this?

He got close, taking a swipe at my breast. Of course, if he pinched it or ripped my clothes, I'd be outed big time. But that didn't matter. Three years of Aikido came to the rescue. As his hand came close enough, I grabbed it and pulled with my left, spinning on my left heel. My right arm cocked back as I let him go, and I smashed my elbow into his back, slamming him into the door as someone outside trying to enter slammed it into him.

He turned, snarling, and came at me again. I did a variation of the first move; this time I caught it with my right, pivoting with my left hand behind his elbow. In Aikido, the 'gentle' martial art, it isn't brute strength that wins, because your opponent will use your energy against you. Master Kuze, our instructor, had been, as they said in an episode of M\*A\*S\*H, "Sixty years older than God" yet he routinely threw everyone else in the dojo around when they forgot that simple thing.

I admit I did put some of my own into it. As the door slammed open and Connie charged in, she saw him slam into the wall headfirst, then slide down it, unconscious. She looked at the scene as I ran to Tina, and she simply shook her head. "And we're protecting you?"

There were bright lights, and Connie turned. "Turn that fucking camera off unless you want it as a suppository!"

An ambulance showed up to take him away. I'd dislocated both his shoulder and elbow and he was severely concussed. I got Tina out after she refused a ride to the hospital and put a large brandy in front of her. Ryan took off his suit jacket and put it around her. "That was amazing," she whispered, looking at me.

"Well, to tell you the truth, it wasn't that good. When our school had a competition in our senior year, I came in fourth. Dana—" I jerked a thumb at her, "-took first." She

just looked at me, crying, and we all took her up to her room.

The attack was too much for her fragile spirit. She withdrew from the contest the next day.

## **Well something good came of it...**

We were depressed that Tina had been brutalized. I was furious that she wouldn't even get a chance to strut her stuff with the next round. Especially after we had worked with her on the song she had chosen; Shiawase no Iro, 'Color of Happiness' by Yoko Ishida from Ah My Goddess, Season Two. Tammy felt even worse. With Tina gone, she had been catapulted to the third round without even trying.

The film crew that had been intending to ask me about the next week had been so polite that I agreed to a talk after breakfast the next morning. It was preempted when Connie asked exactly what I had done and they filmed that instead. Since I didn't want anyone wondering why I was throwing our security guards around, we adjourned to one of the closed-off rooms. Todd and the camera crew followed.

I explained the move, a simple bypass maneuver where you use their energy to open the distance. She asked why I hadn't checked Tina then; more for the audience, she knew better, as I did. "My Master told me only fools or idiots in movies who really don't get hurt forget they have an opponent. He was on my dance card until he left, or was down and out.

"Then when he came back I used an elbow throw. Here, let me," she stood as if moving forward, arms out. "Grab the wrist, second hand on the elbow, and a little push. I pushed a little harder than I had intended. He

pissed me off hurting her like that. Master Kuze says if you get angry, your enemy has won half of the bout.”

“Kuze?” Todd asked. “What’s his first name?”

“Takeo, I think.”

He was excited. He put his hand about where his stomach was. “About so tall? Sixty years older than God?”

“That describes him.”

Todd laughed. “Son of a bitch! I studied under him in Junior High School. Back when I was small.”

The camera man had never had a better straight line. He moved around us, and I looked like a junior high school student confronting her father as I blurted, “When you were *small*?”

Todd blushed. “In junior high I was only this big.” He put his hand down to show about five feet tall; still larger than I was in junior high.

He asked me for the master’s number. I gave it before realizing that Master Kuze would remember a *boy* in his class.

Half an hour later, Master Kuze arrived. He accepted Todd’s bow regally, then looked at me as Todd told him I was his old student ‘Taylor.’ He looked at me as I bowed, and expected to be outed in the next second.

“Yes.” He breathed. “One of my better students in these last years.”

Todd had me demonstrate, using Connie’s eager assistance, what I had done. I know it looked surprising for a 5’8” tall woman to be throwing one who was 6’7” but without her interference, I did.

The master looked at the camera man. “Size is not important.” I giggled because he sounded like Yoda. “Know-



ing when to apply force is." He turned. You three," his hand swept over the hulking guards and myself. "Attack me."

We came at him all together. With just me, you'd expect him to be road pizza. But on the tapes later it looked as if each of us had agreed to let him throw us. I came down on my back, dazed, and he knelt over me. "You favor your right side too much, young man," he whispered before standing away.

That night I came back to the room, ready for bed. As I entered the small sitting room, I heard male moaning, with an occasional "Oh yes!" The lights were down, and unthinking, I flicked them up. Mike was on the couch, head lolled back toward the door with the furniture hiding his partner. His eyes snapped open in shock, then I was stunned when *Connie's* head came into view. What was happening was obvious, but sometimes when I get embarrassed, I get defensive.

"Christ, Mike, didn't you ever listen to my Mom? None of that here, do it in the bedroom!"

I flung open the door even as Mike shouted, "No!" to find Chris curled up... with *Todd*.

I looked around. I was so embarrassed I couldn't speak. I made a motion like locking my lips, turned, and left the apartment. I went down to the bar and had a stiff drink. A short while later, I felt someone sitting beside me. "Bourbon, double. Christ, I need it."

I looked at Dana, who looked shaken. "God, Dana, what happened to you?"

She looked at me defensively. "I was just going to go to bed! Then there was Mike. With *Connie*."

She nodded, looking as stunned as I must have felt. "And I did what your mom would have done by telling them to take it to the bedroom but it was occupied."

"By Chris and Todd," I completed her sentence.

She nodded. "The fact you burst in on them makes the last thing Todd said make sense." I arched an eyebrow. "He asked if we'd been twins separated at birth or something." We sat there in silence. "How long do you think we should give them?"

I finished my drink, and put out my arm. "They have those couches in the contest break room. I'd suggest we use them and leave them alone for the night."

The next morning, I saw four looks of utter innocence when I came into the buffet. I got my usual, walked over, and poured a coffee. Mike and Chris had a deer-in-the-headlights look as I sat down primly. I sipped, then said, "Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play?"

"I can explain," Mike began.

"Don't." I waved at the tables around us, some filled with guests, others with those of us contestants that remained. "Let's leave it one of life's little mysteries."

Dana entered, looking bedraggled. I felt sorry for her, I know how much she likes her sleep, and that couch had been uncomfortable. She got her coffee, no breakfast, then came over to sit down. Suddenly she blurted, "Nothing happened! Not a fucking. Thing. Happened. Right?"

Todd looked at Connie who was standing across the table from us. She had her back to me, and I could see her shoulders jerking. "Separated at birth. Just like I told you." Connie just nodded.

## Last of the first round eliminations

Performance day. I won't bother to go through every time a guy got defeated from here on because while they were there and they were friendly, they weren't 'friends' like Ryan was. When it came time for Morgan, she had chosen I'm Gonna Get you Good by Shania Twain. We did back-up, or rather the band did because I was doing back-up vocal. She blew her competitor, Melissa Kale, away, outpointing her by almost two-to-one. None of them were staying, so they left, and we got down to my competition.

I was facing off against Jesse O'Neal, and whoever won, we were both being asked to do back-up vocals. She did Lover Girl by Tina Marie. Frankly, I felt I was seriously fucked. Let's face it, she was awesome. She had brought her own band rather than borrowing us. Her being able to do her own guitar riffs made me feel inadequate. Her band and her had been asked to do back-ups later.

I was in the dressing room, half-dressed as we had planned for what came next. Then as I took some deep breaths, I heard my own voice.

"The series Bubblegum Crisis owes a lot to the movie Blade Runner; there are even references, such as Priss, the lead singer of the band that does the song I am doing being named after the Replicant in Blade Runner. It was marketed here for over ten years only in Japanese with subtitles. But it became a cult classic even with that, and they finally released it in English."

They were showing the two videos for the song, the English animated version with Lou Bonnevie as the singer, and the Japanese live version, Konya Wa Hurricane with Oomori Kinuko singing. "That live video was

actually released before the TV show aired in Japan, with a trailer attached to it as a promo.

“What I did was try to match them together. For example, in the Japanese language version, you just watch these feet go up a flight of stairs and onto stage. But in the animation, you see Priss getting dressed. So we took both costumes and joined them. Instead of a red bustier and hip-hugger skirt, Dana made a minidress with a red top and black bottom, but kept the belt from the live action version.” I laughed. “After all, Priss is better built than I am.”

I was having trouble breathing. Morgan came in, scaring the shit out of me. She asked me if I was all right. I nodded but I felt like a bobble head doll. I had left the dress unzipped with the belt off; as the music began, Morgan zipped me up, and held the belt as I buckled it on. Then I walked down that Hall to Hell.

I paused at the door. I was going to die of a heart attack, I just knew it; fall over dead right there. But I pushed the door open, walking through the band to stand in my place. We had problems with reverb from the mike if I switched it on too soon. The man in charge of audio merely told me to switch it on when I needed it, so I slid it into the stand as I stood, staring back at the flat screens. As I walked up, all I had seen was the parquet floor. I didn't even see the bottom row of seats. Facing the back, I saw the silhouettes of the performers. On the musical cue, I spun, flipping on the mike as the floods behind us died, and I was facing the audience.

[did you know] On the stormy highway  
[did you dream] You were spinning in the lonely night  
[did you lie] Elusive dreams, memories of yesterday.  
[did you know] Visualizing illusions

[did you dream] Was my way of life

[did you lie] The howling wind strips them all away  
[no, no, no, my heart]."

I couldn't see anyone! All I saw was spots glaring into my eyes as I sang. God, did the others go through this? I was sure the entire audience had stepped out for drinks, and I was singing to an empty house. Panic gripped me as I continued singing.

"Tonight a hurricane

Feel the hurricane

Spending this lonely night loving you [loving you]

Tonight a hurricane

Touch me hurricane

Show me your love with your touch.

Burning touch."

Was there anyone even listening? Later, seeing the shots of my performance, at first I looked like Hannah had. This is just a vacation, hoe hum. But in those same videos, I saw myself buckling down. I might be doing this only as yet another rehearsal, but by God I would sing the fucking song!

"Tonight a hurricane

Touch me hurricane

Show me your love with your touch.

Burning touch.

Give me touch.

Burning touch."

The song ended and I was standing there, the mike in my hand straight up over my head as the spots died. The house lights smoothly came up. Hundreds of eyes were

on me, and I wanted to run, screaming. Then the applause began, and we took our bows.

Jesse came up and I clasped her hand desperately. The announcer came up behind us. "Alright. Vote now."

I didn't look. I didn't want to know if I'd scored worse than Hannah had against Tina. Jesse just smiled but she looked to the side, and her face fell. I looked, finally.

I had scored only six points more than her. I was shocked, and the video shows me standing there, mouth open like a freshly caught fish as Jesse hugged me. Then we were hugging each other, jumping up and down.

We headed into the backstage area, and the instant we were out of sight I hugged her so tight, I thought I might break something.

The videos show us both terrified that we had lost before we even knew the scores. Both of us had friends present, but we still clung to each other in the afterglow of the moment. She told me that she had been blinded by the spots too. Like me, she had believed that she was in an empty room, performing for no one.

## **Demands and Christmas Carols**

Our first day off in three weeks, I awoke to Ryan pounding on the door. We had intended to sleep in, but the world, it seemed, had other plans.

"Where's the Go-To girl!" he almost screamed. Without thinking, I pointed him at Dana's room, and trudged back toward my bedroom. There was screaming and some smashing as she chased him out, threatening to kill him. She really hated getting up early.

Me? I went back to bed.

As we sat down to brunch, Tammy was venting. She felt betrayed by Tina's flight, and I understood how she felt. It was one thing to face your opponent and win or lose. Quite another to just be told "You go to the semi-finals" with no effort.

Conrad heard about our bitching, and when he asked us, Tammy rounded on him. "It's not fair, dammit! I was getting all psyched up to face Tina and she runs away?"

"Well, we can't force her to perform--"

"Fuck that! This is a contest, we are supposed to face our opponents! If I were to win, how could I face myself in the next round saying 'oh she just gave it to me?' What if something happened to Morgan or Taylor? Am I supposed to go to the finals without proving my worth?"

"What would you suggest, Tammy?" he asked.

"Make our confrontation moot. We have enough videos of Tina's song. When it comes time, show one of them, then have me face what she was supposed to do. Then let the audience decide."

"So if she wins, either Taylor or Morgan faces just that?"

"No! She's out, that's a fact. What we do is set up a fund. Have the audience vote not with numbers but money. You can contact Tina so you can ask her what cause she favors. I'll support the local animal shelters. They can pledge money to support those causes. While Tina isn't here to compete, the people watching can see who would have won if we *had* competed."

But before that, we had Ryan's slow song. He intended to do I Want To Know What Love is, by Foreigner. Dana listened to his request for a choir. She had been jokingly called the 'Go To Girl' since she found a bagpiper for Tina.

Don't ask.

On the elimination day, I was spooning ambrosia into a little cup when I heard, "Why, Taylor! As I live and breathe!"

I turned. It was Mr. Enchev, the choir director at our school for over twenty years before we arrived. He was short, chubby, with an obvious hairpiece.

"Hello, sir!" I replied. Behind him, I could see Dana smirking.

"My students always need examples. Remember the hymn you once sang A capella?"

"Which one, sir?"

"Oh Holy Night?"

My mind was working frantically. By the time he had met me, I was already a baritone. Oh Holy Night was a *Soprano* solo. His smile faltered.

"Come on. Mrs. Lewis thought it was good enough for her, do I get to hear it?"

Dana mouthed "*He knows*" at me. Then it clicked. Remember, friends since grade school? Mrs. Lewis had been my junior high school choir teacher. She would have remembered me singing it!

"Yes, sir. I do. I was just surprised you asked, it has been a long time."

"Well, you know how I am. I want to hear it again so these kids know how to do it right! So blow my doors off!" He pointed at four girls and made them sit. Then he stripped off his toupee. He had been a fun teacher back then, and I saw he hadn't changed. I had heard when I first arrived that he was a humorless man before I met him, which had to have been a lie. I think he was in his sixties now, and he had been balding since he was in his



mid-thirties. He wore a toupee and years before I had met him, he had decided to have fun with the kids teasing him. If you want an example of his sense of humor, listen to Spike Jones, the band leader from the Forties, best known for directing his orchestra with a Colt Buntline special and firing off blanks as punctuation.

Whenever he took off that hairpiece, he expected you to put everything into your projection.

“Oh holy night,  
the stars are brightly shining  
it is the night of our dear savior’s birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
til he appeared and the soul felt it’s worth  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices  
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn-”

When it’s sung by a chorus, that is where the entire choir sings back up. He spun, raising his hands, then as if planned, everyone he had brought joined in. A good choir knows when to start singing, and they had probably learned this arrangement with the man now directing.

“Fall on your knees  
Oh hear the angels’ voices  
Oh night divine  
Oh night when Christ was born  
Oh night  
Oh holy night  
Oh night divine!”

Then he turned around, gave me a one-armed hug, and I ended up signing autographs. The camera crews not only filmed that, but the reactions on the casino floor

about 50 feet away, where people turned and paused at their gaming, or gathered around to record it with digital cameras or cell phones

That night Ryan duplicated the video of I Want to Know What Love Is. So you had the band setting up during the first part; then in the middle, the members of the choir in not only that class, but others, getting ready. Finally, as he was singing, the choir was led out, facing him, and without being directed, sang the replies. Martin Forbes who did *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald* only lost by eight points.

So it was that the first elimination for the first semifinal had Tammy walking out. She told the audience what had happened, then issued her challenge. The videos gave us Tina doing Everything. After the applause died, Tammy sang her own offering, Evergreen, also by Barbra Streisand. Before the applause died, Conrad reported that Tina wanted any money donated to go to AIDS research.

But that wasn't the end of it. Anyone who had paid attention to Tammy and which songs had been chosen would have known who had made both famous, and someone told *her*. So while Tammy was still on stage listening to Tina's rendition, someone said, "She *is* good!" I turned and there she was, Miss Funny Girl herself. She motioned for us to be quiet as we listened.

"Pretty good? But how good is this other kid?" she asked.

"They are both fine singers, Ma'am. But I wish Tina had stayed," I replied.

Tammy finished her number and Barbra took out a checkbook. "Well, come on, people. Who gets the money?"

"Split it." We looked at Mike. "Both are good causes."

She smiled, wrote, then ripped off the check to write again. Tammy came through the door to find the woman handing her a check on-camera. "For the animals." Then she handed Mike one for AIDS research.

Both were for a quarter-million dollars.

The announcer informed the audience that Tina had edged Tammy out, and at Tammy's request the funds were held open until the end of the competition. It was a good thing they had. The news of her actions was leaked by someone to the press, along with Miss Streisand handing over the checks (Though at the star's request, the amount was never mentioned), That brought a flood of letters and checks from all over the country; by the time we began the next cycle, the amounts had grown to almost a million dollars each, and were still growing.

## **Tragedy strikes again**

As we began the next cycle, I had to face the fact that I was in love, or at least serious lust, with Morgan. I had found myself having trouble talking to her from the start, blushing like a goddamned traffic light when she leaned close enough to smell; I could have picked out the perfume she wore in a blind test of a thousand women. The worst was that after this next round, one of us would have lost, and I didn't want to beat her. I didn't want to be the one that made her cry.

She was doing Bring Me To Life by Evanescence for the next stage, and I found myself watching her rehearsing. It was sung (and co-written) by Amy Lee with Paul McCoy of 12 Stones doing the male lead. Instead of going for the video of Lee in a nightgown, she had instead gone to the Daredevil screenplay; after all, she lifted weights, she worked out. She looked *good*. If you saw her and Jennifer Garner who played Elektra in the movie

side-by-side from behind, you would have been hard-pressed to tell them apart. Morgan could have been her double on stage.

As we counted down on Thursday, I crept in to watch her final rehearsal. Patrick was there for the lead male vocal, as were my own band members doing back-up. Dana had gone all out at making a copy of the costume from the movie. Mike had offered to go out and buy her some Sai Swords, but Morgan had merely opened a case, and drawn out her own.

I had watched her in practice, and if she could have recorded the song and just done the kata in silence, she could have matched the movie performance. After some discussion, that was what she did on screen. The hotel had rigged all of the sandbags used in the video in a slightly darkened room, and she flowed through them like a beautiful homicidal Valkyrie. Since the scene in the movie only used about half of the song, she had extended her kata. The full video with her voice in the background became a favorite on YouTube before the year was out.

She began onstage as the scene did, kneeling with arms outstretched. Since the first part of the song was hers, she stayed in it effortlessly as she sang, uncurling to stand defiant. When the male portions were being sung, she gave an acrobatic performance combined with fight scene that flowed before the band smoothly. As the song ended, she was back into the same position she had started in.

“That was wonderful,” I shouted.

She looked up, waving. “Really?”

“I wish I was as flexible as you are. That standing aerial somersault was just, just... amazing.”