HARRITY ELEMENTARY

"Pilot"

Written by
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INT. JANINE’S CLASSROOM – DAY

JANINE (late 20s, Black, ball of optimistic energy, quirky, bookish, ready to take on the world) is mid-lesson sitting with some 2ND GRADERS at their desks.

JANINE
Nina! Wonderful sentence structure.
   (reading)
   “My favorite movie is Toy Story and
   my favorite character is Woody.”
   (then, to Nina)
   Me too. Well, I’m a Buzz girl. I
   like his ambition. BEYOND infinity?
   He dreams big.

Janine moves to another student, BRITTANY.

JANINE (CONT’D)
And Brittany- “My favorite movie is
“American Gangster and my favorite
character is Frank Lucas?” Ok,
excellent performance by Denzel,
but a little too colorful for the
movie wall. What about... Moana?

BRITTANY
Ok. I like Moana!

JANINE
Okay! And I will be having a third
talk with your mom about what
you’re watching at home!

Janine takes the papers to her desk. A student, SHAWN, yells.

SHAWN
Ow. Ms. Beeman, Andrew hit me!

JANINE
Andrew, apologize! I’m gonna count
to three! One, two, three...four...

ANDREW shows no signs of apologizing. Janine keeps counting.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE (CONT’D)
I’m Janine Beeman. Been teaching
second grade here at Harrity for
two years. As a product of the
Philadelphia school system, I’m
proud to say I survived, and can
now teach here today!
INT. JANINE’S CLASSROOM - DAY

TWO KIDS are sharing singular desks while learning a lesson. Janine holds up a HISTORY BOOK and shows the last page which reads: “CURRENT U.S PRESIDENT: GEORGE BUSH.”

JANINE
Now, kids, there have been three presidents since this one. Old book. Here are the others!

Janine flips the page to show where she has printed out photos of BARACK OBAMA, DONALD TRUMP, and JOE BIDEN.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE (CONT’D)
The main problem in this district is, yeah, no money. The city says there isn’t any, but they’re building a new half-billion-dollar Eagles’ stadium down the street.

ANGLE ON: B-roll of the huge stadium being built.

JANINE (O.S.) (CONT’D)
...Seems like they have the money. We just make do. The staff here is amazing.

- Shot of MELISSA PETERSON’s (50s, very South Philly Italian, tough mob-wife energy) class. The classroom is well controlled. She teaches from the board.

JANINE (CONT’D)
They’re incredible teachers.

- Shot of BARBARA WATSON’s (50s, Black, motherly, confident, suffers no fools but is soft on the inside) class. She’s reading to her kindergarten class.

JANINE (CONT’D)
I look up to them all.

- Shot of the chaotic classroom of MS. SCHWARTZ (20’s, white, in over her head). Kids run and scream. Ms. Schwartz panics at her desk.

MS. SCHWARTZ
Sit... down!

A globe is thrown at her from the back of the classroom.

JANINE TALKING HEAD
JANINE
Well, I look up to the older teachers. We younger teachers—still getting the hang of it!

- Shot of child setting a trashcan on fire. JACOB HILL (20s, white, painfully woke, a performative liberal cool nerd type) puts it out with a fire extinguisher.

JANINE (CONT’D)
If we don’t wind up leaving.

- Shot of younger TEACHER holding a box of her belongings walking out the front door. She turns and gives a middle finger to camera.

JANINE (CONT’D)
Look—this school is rough, but I became a teacher to make sure students come out alive, and that ultimately means doing whatever I can to make this school a better place for these kids. And after learning a lot in my first year, subbing out therapy for axe-throwing...

INT. AXE-THROWING STUDIO - DAY

Janine throws an axe straight on the bullseye. She turns and gives a thumbs up to the camera.

AS WE WERE

JANINE
I finally feel on top of things.

Suddenly, Janine hears a whizzing sound in the background. We see a CHILD with his back turned toward Janine.

JANINE (CONT’D)
Jamar, what are you doing?!

JAMAR
The toilets don’t work!

JANINE
And the rug was plan B?!

END COLD OPEN
ACT ONE

INT. JANINE’S CLASSROOM – DAY

Janine is rolling up the soiled carpet. Meanwhile, her students are occupied dancing to a video of ‘Baby Shark’.

STUDENT 1
Janine, why are you putting the rug away?

JANINE
Erica, I told you to call me Ms. Beeman. Ok? I’m an adult, though, we’re the same height. And we can’t use this one anymore. There’s a little too much pee on it. Even before Jamar did that.

STUDENT 2
Where will we sit for story time? And morning lesson?

JANINE
...I’ll figure something out.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE (CONT’D)
Losing the rug is a huge “L.” Big deal. For primary classes, the rug is like a calm island among a wild sea. An oasis for the kids. Which I now realize is the opposite of an island. Okay, it’s either land in water or water in land. Let’s just say it's like Xanax. It's a big Xanax you can sit on.

Janine’s kids start to run wild as Barbara enters.

BARBARA
Janine, turn that down. I’m trying to teach my kindergarteners the letter C, and they’re distracted with that song. It’s like “Back That Azz Up” for kids.

JANINE
Sorry, Ms. Watson- hey guys, sit down! This is not playtime. I’m counting! One, two...
The kids and continue to run wild. Barbara clears her throat.

BARBARA
And I’m not counting. SIT... DOWN.

The kids all find their seats immediately.

JANINE
You’re so good at that, Barbara. Can’t wait to get there! Who’s watching your class, by the way?

BARBARA
No one. They’re in a single-file line in the hallway.

Janine peeks out to see Barbara’s students.

STUDENTS
Good morning, Ms. Beeman.

Janine waves in awe. Barbara walks out, ready to take her kids back to class, but Janine keeps talking.

JANINE
Incredible. You know, you remind me so much of my favorite teacher from 3rd grade, Ms. Elliot. Good with kids, well-dressed, a wizard with a glue gun...

BARBARA
Well, that’s sweet, Janine. Very nice. Thank you–

JANINE.
I wanted to be just like her. I was like... obsessed with her, actually. In my report card note, she wrote “A bit clingy. Needs friends her own age.” She was a hoot. Anyway, Did you get my email about getting together after work to get drinks tonight?

BARBARA
No... uh, must’ve gone to spam.

JANINE
So weird how those do that with you and no one else.

Barbara glances at the camera.
INT. TEACHER’S LOUNGE - MOMENTS LATER

Janine walks in. Jacob is sitting at a table on his phone.

JACOB
Janine! So, update... I quote tweeted that Senator’s tweet with “Tweet this next to your hooker?” and Rachel Maddow liked it, so I basically work for MSNBC now-

JANINE
Jacob, I told you, if I cared about Twitter I’d have one.

JACOB
Yeah... but... Rachel Maddow!

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE
I’d say my closest friend here is Jacob. And that’s really only because we came in together last year with twenty other teachers. We’re two of the three left. So, trauma bonding, I guess?

JACOB TALKING HEAD

JACOB
What’s this for again? Oh, not HBO? I’m sure it’ll still be good. I’m Jacob Hill. I teach history but live in the present. Subscriber to Shaun King’s email list-

AS WE WERE

Janine stands at the table with Jacob, Pop-Tart in hand.

JANINE
Hey, you into cheesesteaks from the corner store for lunch? I’ve been craving uncleaned-grill meat.

JACOB
No, not there. The guy behind the counter there calls me “white boy.”

JANINE
Well, you’re the only one for miles so. It’s like a term of endearment.
JACOB
No, because then everyone in the store laughs. Even the cat behind the counter kind of snickers.

JANINE
Then, why not just ask him to stop?

JACOB
I can’t! It’d be wrong. There’s an entire chapter in ‘White Fragility’ on this. Robin DiAngelo says—

JANINE
(seeing Melissa)
Melissa, could you tell Ta-Nehisi Quotes here that “white boy” is a term of endearment from the corner store people?

MELISSA
For Zach Ertz, yeah. But for him, it’s an insult.

Jacob scoffs. Melissa laughs then clocks the camera.

MELISSA TALKING HEAD

MELISSA (CONT’D)
Ehh... Melissa... Peterson. Second-grade teacher. You Italian? No. You from South? Oh. You’re guys working with cops, you gotta tell me...

AS WE WERE
Barbara walks into the lounge and heads for the coffee.

BARBARA
Morning everyone.

JANINE
Morning again, Barbara! Would you like to join us for lunch? We’re thinking cheesesteaks, but whatever you want is good too.

BARBARA
What I want... is to have my coffee in peace right now.
JANINE
Alright! Then I will circle back later! Guys, I need a new rug for my room. Mine is officially done.

JACOB
Ooh, same. I shook mine out and then all the asthma kids had to go to the nurse’s office.

MELISSA
Mine is sprouting mushrooms but making for a good science lesson.

JANINE
Wait, if we all need new rugs, what if we just push to get some using school budget?

The teachers shrug in agreement. Barbara less so.

AVA COLEMAN (mid-40s, Black, aloof, loud, tone-deaf, always wants to be center of attention) enters wearing an “Eagles Stadium 2021 Sweatshirt” and a large hat.

AVA
What it do, baby-boos! What do y’all think of the little film crew I brought in?

MELISSA
Distracting. Makes our jobs harder.

AVA
But exciting! We’ll be on tv!

BARBARA
...Because they’re covering underfunded, poorly managed public schools in America.

AVA
No press is bad press, Barb. Just look at Mel Gibson. Still thriving! ‘Daddy’s Home Two’ was hilarious!

Ava laughs. The teachers all look at Ava disgusted.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE
Ava has a unique take on her job.

MELISSA TALKING HEAD
MELISSA
She’s bad at her job. What’s unique
is that she’s bad at her job.

Ava shows the doc crew her TikTok account “principalmoves”
with videos of her line dancing.

AVA
I’m one of the oldest people on the
platform. Ain’t that cool?

She then attempts to get a WORKING TEACHER to dance with her.

MELISSA TALKING HEAD

MELISSA
Just bad.

Ms. Schwartz enters the room, frazzled, and walks right up to
Ava.

MS. SCHWARTZ
Ava, can I talk to you? I need an
aide. I’m outnumbered, the kids are
crazy... One of them told me to
“mind my six” this morning. I don’t
know what that means! I need help.

AVA
Calm down! They’re just kids.
Besides, aides cost money. And we
don’t have that. Do you want to
split your salary up and give it to
someone else? No? Didn’t think so.

JANINE
Well, if we can’t afford aides, is
it possible we could afford new
rugs? Might help with student
behavior! Clean classrooms lead to
clean... behavior? I think-

AVA
All I’m hearing is new, new, new...
need, need, need. But Barbara, one
of the best and most senior
teachers here, never complains.
Barbara, what is your secret?

BARBARA
Knowing there isn’t much you can do
to help, Ava.
AVA
So understanding. Be like Ms. Watson, people!

Ava gives a smile to camera and leaves. Ms. Schwartz sighs.

MS. SCHWARTZ
But... I’m not Ms. Watson.

BELL RINGS. Teachers head out. Janine comforts Ms. Schwartz.

JANINE
Try some counting exercises, Tina! It works for me. Somewhere, between one and forty, the kids calm down.

MS. SCHWARTZ
Okay. Any tips for when they bite you and call you the B-word?

MELISSA
A kid bit me once and locked on. I stared him right in the eyes and said ‘harder.’ Establish dominance early.

Ms. Schwartz runs out of the room. Barbara and Melissa laugh.

JANINE
You know, a little support might help make things happen, ladies!

BARBARA
Baby, my support was going to do about as much as that Target bra you got on: little to nothing.

Janine self-consciously crosses her arms.

JANINE
It’s not impossible to get stuff! Melissa asked for new toy registers for her classroom and got them.

MELISSA
Those aren’t toys. They’re real.

JANINE
Really? Then how’d you get ‘em?

MELISSA
I know a guy who worked a Walmart demolition. I got a guy for everything. You need rebar?
BARRBARA
Melissa’s resourceful. Capable.
They can’t teach that at UPenn.

JANINE
While I’m honored you remembered my
Alma Mater, Barbara, I feel the
younger teachers are capable...

BARRBARA
Really? Then why is Ms. Schwartz’s
hair falling out?

Barbara picks up a chunk of hair that fell where Ms. Schwartz
was standing. Janine gags.

BARRBARA (CONT’D)
Why does Jacob need a smoke break
every two seconds?

JACOB
Switched to an herbal vape, but ok.

BARRBARA
And why can’t any of you make it
past two years? More turnovers than
a bakery.

JANINE
Well, I’m different.

BARRBARA
We’ll see. Or, you’lI crack. Like
the rest of em’ do.

This sticks with Janine. Barbara and Melissa exit. Janine,
Jacob, and Ms. Schwartz remain.

JACOB
Ouch. I think we should still try
for rugs. I believe that when
people are unjustly oppressed they
shouldn’t let others set rules...

JANINE
Jacob... what did I say about
quoting Malcolm X unnecessarily?

JACOB
You told to me stop.

JANINE (CONT’D)
I told you to stop.
INT. JANINE'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE
I respect Ms. Watson, but she’s wrong on this. And, look, I know the newbie track record here isn’t great, but at the end of the day, we’re passionate and capable of doing this job.

A ten-year-old student, MYA, bursts into the room.

MYA
Janine! Ms. Schwartz kicked Rajon in the head and everyone is in the hallway going crazy! Come look!

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Janine runs out to see students crowded around a hurt RAJON, and Ms. Schwartz, who holds her ankle. Barbara breaks it up.

JANINE
What on earth happened?

MS. SCHWARTZ
He hit me first!!!

RAJON
Liar!

MS. SCHWARTZ
Oh, you little-

As the feud continues, Janine looks at Barbara, embarrassed.

BARBARA
I wonder if she tried counting?

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Janine is ushering students back into their classrooms, giving a worried look to camera. The other teachers are helping, but also visibly concerned.

JACOB/MELISSA/BARBARA TALKING HEADS

JACOB
You do NOT hit a kid. It’s like the one thing you don’t do.

BARBARA
You can yell at them...

MELISSA
(stern)
Threaten them.

JACOB
Warn them about juvenile detention.

BARBARA
Closest I’ve come was maybe, a lil’ pinch. But a kick? Whew, chile.

MELISSA
Threaten their parents.

JACOB
...You just don’t kick a kid.

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Janine anxiously approaches the teachers.

JANINE
Look, maybe this wouldn’t have happened if she had an aide.

BARBARA
This happened because Ms. Schwartz was bad at her job and went UFC on an eight-year-old.

Janine is discouraged by that response as Ava appears.
AVA
OK! So. Not good! Ms. Schwartz was out of line, and clearly not fit to handle her class.

MELISSA
You hired her-

AVA
So, I have done the right thing, which was to fire her immediately. Then, I realized it was only nine A.M, so I hired a sub. In the meantime, Mr. Johnson is watching her class. I-

JANINE
Wait... Mr. Johnson, the janitor?

CUT TO:

INT. MS. SCHWARTZ’S CLASSROOM – DAY

MR. JOHNSON (70s, tired-looking) writes the word “COLLATERAL LOAN” on the board. The children just stare.

BACK TO:

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY – DAY

JACOB
I think we should maybe alert the school district of this. I mean, a child was harmed.

AVA
Aht-Aht! I handled this! No need for them to know a kid was “harmed” on my watch- the school’s watch.

Janine looks at the camera.

JANINE
It’s not handled. There’s a 70-year-old custodian who voted for Kanye teaching social studies. We need help! I know there’s no money but-

AVA
Ok, fine, alright?. Look, I’ll make a small emergency budget request to the school district.

(MORE)
AVA (CONT'D)
We’ll use it to get aides or whatever else we need. Ok, happy now?

Jacob nudges Janine. Janine realizes the opportunity.

JANINE
I have an idea for something else we need! How ‘bout-

AVA
Sure, sure, sure. Just email me the request.
(to camera)
Another day of principal life! I believe the children are the fu-tur-rah...

Janine crosses to Barbara.

JANINE
Look at that! Ask and receive.

BARBARA
And it only took one of you injuring a child. Congrats.

JANINE
(quick)
The why doesn’t matter.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE (CONT’D)
Finally, a real chance to get something nice for this school! And send an email? I don’t want to brag, but in college, I won the Women’s Socialist Club’s ‘Email of the Month’ award twice. Both emails were to the dean about recognizing us as a club. Second one worked.

INT. ADMINISTRATOR’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Teachers are between classes as GREGORY WRIGHT (20s, Black, handsome, a little self-serious and has a little trouble connecting with his emotions) walks in holding a briefcase.

GREGORY
Hello, I’m looking for Ms. Coleman.
AVA
(florty)
Well, hello.

GREGORY
I’m Gregory Wright. The sub for...
(looks at paperwork)
the teacher who punted a student?

AVA
Oh, you’re the sub! Forgive me, I
thought one of my colleagues here
hired a stripper for me, as a joke.

GREGORY
O...kay?

AVA
Everyone, meet Gregory! He’ll be
taking over for Ms. Schwartz for
the foreseeable future-

GREGORY
For the day.

AVA
Right!
(whispers to Melissa)
I’d like to see his ruler.

Melissa scoffs.

BARBARA
Very nice to meet you, young man.

MELISSA
Nice to meet you, Ryan.

GREGORY
It’s Gregory.

MELISSA
We’ll see how long you’ll be here
then I’ll remember your name, Tim.

Jacob approaches out of nowhere, arms wide open for a hug.

JACOB
My dude!

Gregory rejects the hug, shakes Jacob’s hands instead.
JACOB (CONT’D)
Keepin’ it profesh’ I like it! I’m Jacob. Always great to see another male teacher. Not many of us! Now, I’ll have someone to talk sports with! You into women’s tennis?
(smugly, to camera)
Or as I call it: regular tennis?

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY
I came to Philly from Baltimore at the start of the school year. I interviewed to be the principal of this school, actually. Was pretty sure I was a shoo-in but apparently there was someone better?

CUT TO:

INT. AVA’S OFFICE - DAY

AVA
I go to the same church as the superintendent... Caught him cheating on his wife with the deaconess... I needed a job!

INT. JANINE’S CLASSROOM – DAY

Janine is typing up an email titled: “IS YOUR SCHOOL SICK? TRY PRESCRIPTION RUGS!” Her students watch an educational movie. Suddenly, they all yell “EW.” Janine looks up to see that a student, BRIA, vomited at her desk.

JANINE
Bria, What happened?!

BRIA
I threw up.

JANINE
Got that. Let’s get you cleaned up.

INT. BATHROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Janine, holding Bria’s hand, goes to push the bathroom door open. At the same time, the door swings out from the opposite direction and a frantic, wet Gregory exits with a child’s pants in his hands. Janine screams:
JANINE
Ah!! Random man! Child pants!

GREGORY
What? Oh, no-

JANINE
Security!

GREGORY
No! I’m Gregory! Look, I’m a sub for Ms. Schwartz!

JANINE.
Oh! Okay... That’s still not explaining the pants! Security!

GREGORY
Stop! Look, one of my kids had to go to the bathroom, so I brought him. But then he accidentally “went” on himself.

JANINE
Ohhhhhhh. Hence the pants! Ok.

GREGORY
Yes. And if that wasn’t bad enough he tried to flush the toilet and it shot water back up into the air!

JANINE
Oh, no one told you about reversy-toilet! I’m sorry. Which student... (looks into stall)
Antoine. Ok, don’t worry.

Janine takes her scarf off of her neck, looking like she’s getting ready to handle the situation.

JANINE (CONT’D)
Antoine was in my class last year. Pretty sure I have some spare clothes left over for him...
Antoine, I’m coming in!

GREGORY
Ok. Thank you.

JANINE
Could you just... watch her...
Gregory, repulsed by the vomit, holds Bria’s hand. Janine goes into the bathroom. When she comes out, Antoine is wrapped in the scarf.

JANINE (CONT’D)
I’ll take him back to my class and then have him go back to you, ok?

GREGORY
Ok. Wait... what’s your name?

JANINE
Oh! Silly me. I’m Janine.

The two go to shake hands.

JANINE (CONT’D)
Oh. Oops.
(looks at her hand)
There’s... pee.

GREGORY
(looks at his hand)
Yeah, vomit.

JANINE
(laughs)
Make a wish!

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY
That was disgusting. But she seems nice. Like a bathroom Superwoman.

INT. BARBARA’S CLASSROOM – DAY 2

Janine walks into Barbara’s classroom excitedly.

JANINE
Mrs. Watson! Question for you-

BARBARA
STUDENTS
Equals four! (unanimously)
Equals four.

Janine realizes she interrupted a lesson. She calms down.

JANINE
Sorry! I just want to get your expert eye on my email to Ava-
BARBARA
Janine, we’re not getting rugs.

JANINE
Ms. Watson, I know you love to rain on parades, that’s your thing, but have some faith! Ava literally said she’ll get us whatever we need.

BARBARA
You think you’re the first person to try to get things? You think we like sitting on nasty rugs and smelling dead mice in the walls?

JANINE
So that’s what that smell is!

BARBARA
I’ve been working in the Philadelphia School district for twenty years. Harrity for fifteen. Ava’s just the latest in a long line of principals who do nothing but make things worse. So take all that Disney princess energy and use it to do your job.

JANINE
This is me doing the job! I think the job means trying to make things better. It means putting pressure on our leaders to help us.

BARBARA
And I think the job is working with what you got so you don’t get let down.

The loudspeaker “DING” goes off, followed by Ava’s voice:

AVA (O.S.
(belches)
Ugh... that hoagie came back up...
Oh darn, am I on? Good morning, teachers. Please bring your students to the yard for a special announcement about some much-needed improvements to the school that I made happen!

JANINE
Ah! Ah! You hear that?! Optimism wins again.

(MORE)
JANINE (CONT'D)
(ding Ms. Watson impression)
Thank you, Janine!
(back to Janine’s regular voice)
Oh, no problem Ms. Watson! I was just doing my job. I won't even say I told you so.
(back as Ms. Watson)
But you DID tell me so! You know, I guess you are very smart and capable and maybe I could learn some things from you, Janine.

Barbara stares at Janine who continues her one-act play.

EXT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Teachers and students stand outside in jackets shivering.

JACOB
We couldn’t have done this in the Gym? My ‘Members Only’ jacket is meant for moving, not being still.

Ava appears from around the corner of the building.

AVA
Over here!

The teachers begrudgingly lug their students toward Ava.

AVA (CONT'D)
The district was so moved by my plea that they approved an emergency budget and sent us the money right away!
(appplause)
I thought “We’ll get the aides, get the rugs, but then I thought- we need something immediate!”

JANINE
Wait-

AVA
I always feel better right away when I get my hair done. Thus, I do better work, like I’m doing currently. The Eagles are getting a new stadium, and that will help them play better inside of it-
JANINE
No, it won’t.

GREGORY
Stadium can’t make them the Chiefs.

AVA
Fix the outside...
(points to hair)
Inside takes care of itself.

Ava points upward to the front of the building. A huge plastic sheet falls over the old Harrity Elementary sign. It reads “Willard R. Harrity Elementary” in green and white lettering. There is a photo of Ava leaning on the letters.

JANINE
A... plastic sign? How’d you even get this printed up so fast?

AVA
My cousin, Michael, is a sign-maker! He’s real fast and gave me a rush deal. Thank God we got three-thousand dollars from the district because I had to use all of it.

JANINE
You used all the money... on this?!

BARBARA
(to Janine, laughing)
Wanna do your little skit again?

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Janine, Gregory, and Jacob walk their kids back to class.

JANINE
I can’t believe this! She spent all the money on theatrics! I thought this type of workplace betrayal only came from white ladies!

JACOB
Maybe Barbara and Melissa are right. We just need to do the job-

JANINE
No, they can’t be right, ok? Ava is the problem here. Not us! Where’s your Malcolm X energy?!

GREGORY
I just got here, but she’s right. This school needs order.
(MORE)
GREGORY (CONT'D)
You’re never gonna get that with a principal like this:

Gregory shows a TikTok of Ava doing the Renegade dance.

JANINE
...Wait, maybe she doesn’t have to be principal.

INT. JANINE'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Janine types an email on her computer furiously.

JANINE (O.S.)
I’m going to email the superintendent about this and everything that Ava’s done today! She should lose her job! Ava can’t win here, because then, Barbara’s right. And if she’s right, then what does that say about me? I’m not taking two L’s today. Actually, it’d be three L’s because I got a parking ticket this morning.

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Barbara and Melissa head out for lunch.

MELISSA
I’m going to Wawa. Hey, you want a pack of Christmas sprinkle Tastykakes? I know they’re seasonal, but I know a guy.

BARBARA
No, chile. Thank you. I’m going to go get myself a salad from Mickey D’s. I’m eating healthy.

Janine approaches the two from down the hallway.

JANINE
Hey, wait up! I’m going out to get lunch, too!

MELISSA
Where ya going for lunch pipsqueak, a bird feeder?

BARBARA
Figured you’d be working on your next miracle from Saint Ava.
JANINE
Ha-ha. No, don’t think I’ll need anything from Ava ever again.

BARBARA
...And what does that mean?

JANINE
Well, I emailed the superintendent and told him about how horrible Ava is. No way she doesn’t get fired.

Melissa and Barbara stop in their tracks.

MELISSA
Oh, for the love of God!

JANINE
What?

BARBARA
Janine. The superintendent doesn’t even see our emails, because he has them bounced back to the person in charge of wherever the email came from...

JANINE
Wait... person in charge... that means it went back to-

The “DING” of the loudspeaker sound goes off. Ava again:

AVA (O.S)
(stern)
Teachers. It has come to my attention that some of you, one of you, think it’s ok to go over my head. I think we need to learn about trust.

Janine, Melissa, and Barbara slowly turn to see Ava in her office, staring at them, holding a microphone.

AVA (CONT’D)
So, over your lunch break—this lunch break—, which I know you all love so much, we will be having a “trust workshop.” Where we learn how to respect each other, Harrity Elementary, and the chain of command. It’s going to be FUN.

Janine gives a worried look to camera.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

INT. TEACHER’S LOUNGE – DAY

Janine, Barbara, Melissa, Jacob, Gregory, and more staff sit in a semi-circle. Ava sits in the middle.

AVA
Thank you all for agreeing to be here, mandatorily. We’re at a crossroads. This is a crisis.

JANINE
No, a crisis is eating the cafeteria pizza for lunch.
(takes a bite)
This just is yesterday’s burgers mashed up and cut into triangles!
Ugh. Wait, Jacob did you go to the corner store?

JACOB
(eating sandwich)
Yeah, the verbal harassment is worth it. I think it might even make it taste better.

GREGORY
Uh... why are we here?

AVA
Well, chocolate drop, I happened to learn that one of the people here doesn’t respect me. But, it’s not about me. If you don’t respect me... how can you respect this school?
(then, off teachers’
confused looks)
You can’t... mathematically impossible...

JACOB
Who doesn’t respect you... I mean... the school, Ava?

AVA
You know, I don’t think that’s important, Mr. Neil. We’re going to make this a group matter, so as not to single anyone out.
GREGORY
That’s nice.

AVA
Let’s do some trust exercises where we say whatever we need to say out loud to each other no matter how critical. Let’s start with Janine.

Janine gives a horrified look to camera.

GREGORY
Wait, so she’ll get to say stuff about other people?

AVA
No, Hershey Kiss, we’re going to say things to her. You’re new... let me give you an example. Janine?

JANINE
(sighs)
...Yes.

AVA
You’re over-energetic and annoying.

The teacher’s scoff in shock.

AVA (CONT’D)
No! It’s not bad! We’re sharing with the goal of making us all better. Constructive. See, Gregory?

GREGORY
Yup, got it. No need to-

AVA
Why don’t you try? Try on Janine.

GREGORY
I really don’t want to do that.

AVA
You’re right. Should be someone who knows her better. Barbara? Jacob?

BARBARA
Absolutely not!

JACOB
Her hair is... I mean absolutely not!
MELISSA
Ava, no one’s gonna do this to anyone. I’d make someone cry or punch one of you in the face.

AVA
It doesn’t have to be rude! That’s what I’m saying! I’ll prove it. I prepared for this. Come in, Sheena!

An eight-year-old student, SHEENA, comes into the room.

JANINE
Ava! That’s my student! She should be at lunch!

SHEENA
I am kinda hungry.

AVA
Sheena, remember what we talked about? What’s a thing you wish was different about Ms. Beeman?

Sheena looks shyly around the room. Mr. Johnson, the janitor, who has been standing in the background all along speaks up.

MR. JOHNSON
She got some big feet.

Janine stands up.

JANINE
Ok, That’s enough. Everyone, I am the person who “disrespected” Ava. I emailed the superintendent to tell him that Ava spent the school’s money on a sign. I’m sorry, Ava. I’m sorry everyone missed lunch. Especially Sheena. But, I did it because I care about kids in this school, that shouldn’t be a bad thing...

Janine sadly storms out of the room. Everyone is quiet.

AVA
(to group, sotto)
...Not a compelling speaker. Charisma vacuum.

Barbara stares at Ava, shakes her head, and stands up.
BARBARA
You know what, Ava. Janine’s a lot of things. Naive, overbearing-

AVA
Ooh, let me call her back in for this-

BARBARA
But... she’s also right. Wanting to actually help these kids shouldn’t be a bad thing. I’ve worked in this school district so long, I... might’ve forgotten that.

Barbara walks out. Melissa and the others get up too.

BARBARA (CONT’D)
And where is everyone going?

JACOB To check on Janine!
MELISSA To lunch... check on Janine.

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Janine stands outside the door of her classroom peering through the small glass window. Barbara and the other teachers walk up to her.

BARBARA
Janine, ignore Ava. And big feet are a sign of fertility-

JANINE
Every lunch period, Barbara.

Janine points through the small window. Barbara walks up to her. We see a small boy, JAMAL, sleeping on the floor.

JANINE (CONT’D)
Every single one, Jamal comes and naps on the rug. He comes from a rough home-

BARBARA
Yeah, he was in my class. Mom’s got a lot of kids. Dad’s not around. When he is, the parents fight.

JANINE
Right, right. So he doesn’t get much sleep. Used to fall asleep during morning lesson.

(MORE)
JANINE (CONT’D)
So, I told him if he stays up, he can take a nap during lunch. I tell him to sleep at his desk, but he says the rug’s softer. Softer than his bed at home.

Barbara’s look softens to Janine.

JANINE (CONT’D)
I don’t care whether you think I’m good at this anymore. I care about whether or not I can make change. At Harrity. Where it’s needed most.

BARBARA
Janine, teachers at a school like Harrity have to do be able to do it all. We’re admin. We’re therapists. We’re social workers. We’re second parents. Sometimes, first. Why? Sure as hell not the pay.

The teachers ad-lib agreements ending with Janine:

JANINE
My bathroom and kitchen are basically one room.

MELISSA
We do this because we’re supposed to. It’s a calling. You answered.

JANINE
Wow, I don’t know what to say.

JACOB
I believe it was brother Cornel West who–

JANINE
Don’t.

BARBARA
I suggest we put our money together and get Janine a rug. What ya’ll think?

JANINE
No! You guys can’t do that. You don’t have it. I know because I have the same salary as you all and my account’s in overdraft thanks to that pesky Netflix payment. There has to be another way.
BARRBARA
Well, the school’s not giving you
money, and you won’t take ours.
What, you gonna steal a rug?

JANINE
Not me... but I know a guy who
knows a guy.

Janine turns to Melissa.

MELISSA
Let me see what I can do.

EXT. EAGLES STADIUM BUILD - DAY

The teachers stand outside of a loading dock at the stadium.
A SHADY MAN comes out of a side door with a rolled-up mat. He
hands it to Janine.

SHADY MAN
Alright, here ya go.

JANINE
Perfect, thank you so much!

Janine unrolls it to see that it’s a huge Eagles logo rug.

SHADY MAN
Swiped that from the VIP suites.
I’ll just tell them it got lost-

A second CONSTRUCTION WORKER comes out from the loading dock.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER
What the hell is going on here?

Everyone freezes. They don’t know what to say. Janine steps
forward.

JANINE
Sir, I’m a teacher named Janine.

MELISSA
(through gritted teeth)
Don’t use your name.

JANINE
I’m not going to lie. We’re
stealing a rug from you. When I was
a kid, school was my ocean to other
worlds. I was a ship. And teachers
were my rudders.

(MORE)
JANINE (CONT'D)
Without them, I don’t know where
I’d be right now. So we’re just
trying to be good rudders. It’s
hard to explain, but these rugs are
islands-

CONSTRUCTION WORKER
You’re bad at giving speeches, but
I get it. A teacher changed my
life, too. Take it. Hell, take a
couple.

The teachers all smile excitedly and take rugs as Melissa
grabs something off the truck.

JACOB
Hey, mad props, my fellow!

CONSTRUCTION WORKER
Thanks, white boy.

JACOB
...Even the white guys now?

INT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – DAY
The teachers all walk through the hallway with their new
rugs.

BARBARA
Ha-ha! These are nice. Thank you,
Melissa. And... thank you, Janine.

JANINE
You’re welcome. Feels good!

MELISSA
To finally get something you asked
for in this hell-hole?

JANINE
No... to finally feel like a
teacher.

MELISSA
Wait till ya realize you’ll never
own a home. You’ll be over the
moon.

Melissa, Barbara, and Jacob walk off leaving Janine and
Gregory.
JANINE
Hey! Sorry we didn’t get to hang more today. I... had to rob a construction worker.

GREGORY
No problem, it was nice to watch a teacher work. Made me see how rewarding this job can be. But if the police come asking me about these rugs I’m snitching.

JANINE
Well, thank you. And look, I know you said you’re a sub, but I hope you stay. For the kids, I mean. They don’t need any more turnovers.

GREGORY
Right. I’ll stick around. For the kids.

JANINE
Good. And maybe we can get lunch next week!

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY
I can put up with the bodily fluids a little longer. At least until next week.

INT. JANINE’S CLASSROOM – DAY

Janine lays out her new rug onto the floor. Her kids sit on it and she reads them a story.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE
Today, was hard. Not my hardest day here, though. Last year, I wore squeaky sneakers. The kids called me “Fart Feet.” I cried in the supply closet. But today made me better, I think. Better at this job. I learned teachers really are the only ones that can make change.

- Janine is watching a YouTube tutorial on her knees trying to fix the reversy-toilet.
JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE (CONT’D)
Money would still be nice, though.

INT. JANINE’S CLASSROOM – MOMENTS LATER

As Janine is packing up to leave, Ava walks into her room.

JANINE
Oh. Ava... I’m sorry about earlier-

AVA
(angry)
Janine.
(then, happy)
Thank you so much for this limited edition Eagles’ Swoop Jockstrap!

JANINE
Oh... I didn’t...

AVA
Don’t be coy! It’s not cute!
Really, my least favorite thing about you! And that’s saying something. Barbara and Melissa told me how all of you left that meeting to get me this to apologize for being vicious backstabbers!

Behind Ava at the door, Melissa and Barbara walk by. Barbara gives Janine a wink.

BARBARA AND MELISSA TALKING HEAD

MELISSA
Swiped that from off the truck when the construction workers weren’t looking. Told her Jalen Hurts wore it in a game.

BARBARA
Another key to making it in this job- learn to make your incompetent boss feel special. Janine will get the hang of that, too.

END OF ACT THREE
TAG

EXT. HARRITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Mr. Johnson films Ava doing a line-dancing TikTok.

MR. JOHNSON TALKING HEAD

MR. JOHNSON
She don’t know this, but I go viral
every week on my own page:
MrCLEANphilly. Follow me.

- Shot of Mr. Johnson break dancing in the school hallway on
his TikTok page. GRITTY enters. This is a sponsored video.