

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'se 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?

BARBARA

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...

BARBARA

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.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Why does Jacob need a smoke break
every two seconds?

JACOB

Switched to an herbal vape, but ok.

BARBARA

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

JANINE

Well, I'm different.

BARBARA

We'll see. Or, you'll 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
(flirty)
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

Ohhhhhhhh. 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
Equals four!

STUDENTS
(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 damn, 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)

(doing 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!

(applause)

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.

BARBARA

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.