

Janis and the Big BAD World

By Catherine Weingarten

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CHARACTERS

Janis- 18, female, college freshman, very smart and earnest, ready to take life by its horns!

Percy-19, male, college sophomore, a perky and happy fellow!

Blue- 19, female, college sophomore, goth, unnecessarily competitive and aggressive, 5 time winner of Tennessee Williams Christmas Diva competition"

Narrator- 40s, storyteller, slick and charismatic. Narrator plays all small characters listed below:

Small roles played by Narrator:

Rodalph-40, male, improv performer, intense energy.

Reenie-30, female, Green Meadows guidance counselor, really friendly and physically pleasing.

Ron-57, male, acting coach, sloppy, a bit intense.

Fro-Yo Worker- 16, gawky, stalker potential.

SETTING

N.Y.C

TIME

Fall to Winter

Pre-Episode: Meet JANIS!!!!

(It is early fall. We are outside of "Green Meadows University" in the center of N.Y.C. JANIS has a big NYC tour guide book and looks lost. PERCY approaches. NARRATOR emerges with a sign that says "Pre-episode episode: Meet Janis!!!!!!!!!!".)

NARRATOR

Hi everyone! And thanks so much for coming to "Janis and the Big BADDDDDDD World." This is a very important play because it will teach one how to behave in scary situations and how to be EMPOWERED, specifically GIRLS, so I really hope most of the audience here is female, if your male, feel free to leave because I am not sure this show will be of any significance to you.

Ugh it's actually personally frustrating to me, some people think theater is a casual thing, like hey girl, let's make-out and see a play about Bambi. WELL NO! I am here to tell you this play means business! We are going to learn some serious lessons. So please get ready and please note that the emergency exits are currently not working.

Let's start with a prologue, a prologue to introduce everyone's favorite good girl Janis. Janis is our central character and really the sweetest, prettiest, kindest, smartest, perfectest girl in the entire world. She is the girl you wish you were or the girl you wish you dated but she would never have you because you're a LOSER! Sorry...that might have been a tad bit aggressive...I just care so much for Janis and this play is very hard on me at points. But I'm getting ahead of myself. So this prologue will serve the purpose of understanding just how full of life Janis is and just how much potential she has in her life.

PERCY

Hi! Are you lost? I'm Percy!

NARRATOR

Oh, I forgot to mention, this is Percy, Janis's soon to be male friend. He is very smart but is a city boy and therefore cannot be easily trusted.

JANIS

Oh, hello! I'm Janis.

PERCY

Well as I said before, I'm Percy. Are you lost? You really don't have to be scared to admit it. Everyone gets lost sometimes.

JANIS

Ha ok you got me, I'm completely lost. You see I'm from this random farm town in Pennsylvania and I've never really been to a city, at least for longer than a few hours.

PERCY

Well where are you trying to get to.

JANIS

Well you see sir, I'm um a freshman at this school called "Green Meadows?" They said it was in a mysterious area called the "Lower East Side."

PERCY

Well turn around Janis, I think you'll be surprised!

(JANIS turns around and sees a big sign that says "Green Meadows University.")

NARRATOR

And Janis turned around and there it was...the college of her dreams. And she smiled so wide she thought her face would explode with glee!

JANIS

Oh WOW! I'm here! All by myself.

PERCY

You did it JANIS!

JANIS

There was this underground railroad type object and I rode it for about an hour in one direction and then an hour in another direction but it led me somewhere! It led me here!

PERCY

Never seen a real college before, I take it?

JANIS

Well there's this farm near my house that sometimes people take college classes in, but it's very informal because sometimes sheep will run on your lap like while you're studying, which I think sounds quite a bit distracting.

PERCY

You sure talk a lot Janis.

JANIS

Oh god please stop me, I'm sorry.

PERCY

Ha it's ok. It's cute.

JANIS

Hahaha uhhh.

PERCY

Well...

JANIS

You don't have to um stay with me like I don't need directions anymore...clearly ☺

PERCY

Well I um am also a student here, Janis. A sophomore actually. Don't think you're the only smart one around.

JANIS

Oh, well I'm sorry then. Stay, of course!

PERCY

Ok!

JANIS

Where are you um from, by the way? Ha forget to um ask that earlier.

PERCY

From here actually.

JANIS

Oh, wow! I didn't know people grew up here.

PERCY

Well they um do.

JANIS

Golly WOW, I can't believe I'm at a real college! like I'm a real adults, like a real person.

PERCY

I know, sort of surreal right?

JANIS

Very surreal! Sorry this might sound a bit weird..but can I hug you? Just want to do something to celebrate this utterly perfect moment.

PERCY

Haha of course.

(JANIS hugs PERCY.)

Ha well thanks Janis. Here me carry your bags for you.

JANIS

Oh great!!

(PERCY grabs JANIS's bags then starts running away.)

JANIS

Omigodddd!!!!

(PERCY comes back.)

JANIS

AHHH why did you do that!?!?!

PERCY

Cities are a dangerous place Janis, gotta be careful who you trust.

NARRATOR

Those words uttered from Percy's lips could not be more true. But did Janis listen, does anyone ever listen, I THINK NOT!

JANIS

Wait are you the devil or something...? Cause I read in the bible they sometimes come to life randomly.

PERCY

No Janis, I'm not the devil. That was a joke! I'm a real live dude, just was messin wit' your head. You just can't be that trusting here with people.

JANIS

Oh. Well um ok, thanks for the lesson. I should really be going. I can um take my own bags.

(JANIS turns to leave with her bags in hand.)

JANIS

Bye!

PERCY

Janis, I just want to say something.

JANIS

Huh??

PERCY

I think we're gonna be friends Janis. And I think it's gonna be awesome!

(NARRATOR comes onstage.)

NARRATOR

And from that day Percy and Janis became the closest of friends. They went to movies together, hugged and overall experienced some of life's most treasured moments together. And if everything kept going like this, it would all be great, but it DIDN'T, it didn't, because Janis started feeling things that would cause her whole life to come SHATTERING down before HER! Things like desireee, fear, wanting to perform on the stage (a man's domain) and real need for a man's touch. JANIS was about to experience the real city! (the city nobody finds on those pretty OVER-PRICED post-cards.)

("Note: This following action goes on during the narrator's speech above. Freeze frame: PERCY and JANIS stare at each other in joy. Pop music come on and we see how PERCY and JANIS become better friends: we see PERCY picking up JANIS's pencil, them hugging, JANIS studying and PERCY throwing food at her, JANIS crying.)

Episode 1: Janis's big decision!/FRO-YO TIME!

(The week of Christmas. PERCY and JANIS are sitting at a table in a cute holiday fro-yo shop eating egg nog fro yo. NARRATOR is the ice-cream worker in the background and his hat reads "Episode 1 Janis's big decision!/FRO-YO TIME!")

NARRATOR

Hey guys! It is now around Christmas time, which is the time of good cheer, but not if you're a young woman in the city of DREAMS. Since getting to the city, JANIS has ALREADY developed a slight semi unconscious crush on her male friend Percy and she also have developed a strange new plan that we learn about soon. In this scene I will play a humble fro-yo worker and note I will also play random other characters when needed.

PERCY

This fro-yo's really good! Yum-yummm!(in my tum)

FRO-YO WORKER

Thank yee!

JANIS

Haha ummm. You're welcome.

PERCY

Ahh what a great day this is.

JANIS

Ha yeah, I love this place. So sad it's only open for the week of Christmas.

PERCY

Why is that sad Janis? That means we get to wait ALL the YEAR long for it. Ahh the egg nog is so good, like real eggs in your mouth but like in a good way.

JANIS

Hey how's your seminar in abstract feminist grammar going?

PERCY

Ugh I'm like the only male in the class though and the teacher keeps saying I'm the patriarchy and like crying...at me.

JANIS

I'm sure she'll see past your gender and see your passion for misspelled WORDS!

PERCY

Ha who knows.

JANIS

Wait have You ever tried the Christmas tree flavored froyo?...BLEHHHHH...right???

PERCY

Umm yeah...eee...Ugh, it SUCK!

FRO-YO WORKER

You guys suck!

JANIS (*acknowledging FRO-YO WORKER's comment*)

Huhh?????

PERCY (*whispering*)

Like there were leaves in it and stuff, like too intense for me. Like who actually wants a Christmas tree in their mouth?

JANIS

Haha not JANIS!

PERCY (*touching her shoulder*)

Haha you are so silly.

JANIS

Ha you are! Wow you touched my shoulder.

FRO-YO WORKER

Note: this was the first time a male touched Janis's shoulder cause he wanted to and it brought about a very intense chemical reaction. I personally think women shouldn't be touched on the shoulder in such a way till they are at least 28. Sorry, but I digress, I am now a humble fro yo worker and not the Narrator. But I do have to mention, this next speech Janis makes is very important.

JANIS

Is that um fro yo worker talking to us.

PERCY

I don't think so.

JANIS

Oh. Ok. Hey Percy, I have to um tell you something?

PERCY

Uh-huh?

JANIS

You know how I auditioned for the the annual Tennessee Williams Christmas Diva competition and it went really badly but I got in and then told them I wouldn't do it?

PERCY

Yeah, you tell me every week how you're not gunna do it?

JANIS

Well I um, I changed my mind. I want to do it. I want to be part of people's Christmas evening, I want to compete...on the stage.

PERCY

Wow, Janis, are you serious?

JANIS

Yeah, um I think I am. I think I am Percy. Oh god, can I finish the rest of your fro-yo I'm starting to feel a little faint and I need coldness on ma face.

PERCY

Go for it!

(JANIS binges on PERCY's fro-yo.)

Are you ok Janis though?

JANIS

Yes, yes, everything's fine.

PERCY

Well what made you change your mind? Just like the audition was really hard for you, Janis, with you like practically passing out. I just don't get like why would you wanna do that again?

JANIS

I just do ok!

PERCY

Like we all know you have an indistinguishable passion for Tennessee Williams. You don't need to prove that to anyone.

JANIS

STELLAAA!!!!

PERCY

Yes, yes, shhhh it'll be ok. Now I just am curious what would make you wanna go on the stage again?

JANIS

I dunno Percy nothing and yet EVERYTHING! I just really care for Tennessee Williams and his oeuvre and I'm not gonna let some STUPID mild stage fright get in my way...cause that's not the JANIS I know...Right, am I right or am I righter?

PERCY

I'm not sure it was Mild, Janis? You practically had a SEIZURE in public? Remember the fire truck came? You had to go to real therapy for a whole WEEK after? Just like, as your friend, I don't know if I can let you do this.

JANIS

You can't tell me what to do, I'm in advanced literature: Tennessee Williams hookups seminar.

PERCY

You know my freshman year I tried to go to a chess club meeting and someone threw chess pieces in my mouth and it hurt my throat. And you know what I did then?-

JANIS

Go back the next day with a new haircut?

PERCY

No Janis, I never came back. Cause that's called living!

JANIS

Well I disagree I disagree I disagree. I'm gunna try and I'm gunna do it Percer-

PERCY

-don't-call-me-that- You know I hate when people say my name like it, it does not honor the true y at the end, it curdles the whole meaning!

JANIS

OOPSY! My bad!

PERCY

And Janis, I hate to remind you, but the pageant is like the end of this week! How could you even get everything together by that time?

JANIS

I don't care...I'm GUNNA Do it PERCY...I'm gunna do it all on my own

and you're gunna be sorry and you're gunna get front row seats and see me bring new meaning to Tennessee Williams passionate cannon of love and dreams and American connections. Goodbye PERCER!

PERCY

Ahhh don't call me thattt.

FRO-YO WORKER

Want any more ice cream? We're having a special on Christmas tree? 5 cups for a hay penny!

JANIS

No, no and NO! Percer, You can pay the bill! See ya at the Tennessee Williams Christmas Diva talent show...where I'll be OWNING IT!

(JANIS runs out crying. PERCY looks confused.)

Episode 2: JANIS Tries to get Help(not in the therapy way)!

(JANIS's room. JANIS is on her laptop looking for a coach. NARRATOR comes onstage with a book called "Janis tries to get help (not in a therapy way.)

NARRATOR

Hello everyone and welcome back. So since the awkward fro yo incident Janis has decided that she definitely wants to try for the pageant and explore different parts of herself in order to become the true Janis she truthfully is. She is currently searching on google for the perfect acting coach to try to help to not have a panic attack on stage.

(JANIS picks up her cell and calls a number. RON answers. He is on the other side of the stage; they both face out.)

NARRATOR

Janis finally finds the number and against her greater judgment rings the number up without even having sent one email of correspondence exchange. One email!

JANIS

Uh hello, is this Ron?

RON

Yessiree, you calling to get your tree pruned or for actin'
coachin'?

END OF SAMPLE