Principal for the Day (an Abbott Elementary Spec Script)

written by

Lindsay Decker

Address Phone E-mail

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

GREGORY EDDIE is writing the homework assignment on the board. DANIEL HARRIS (7) gets up and starts to dance while Gregory looks away. The class laughs. Gregory hears this but continues to write on the board.

GREGORY Daniel, how about you take a seat?

DANIEL

Well if you say so...

Daniel grabs a chair and walks out the door. The class laughs. Gregory looks at the camera with a blank stare.

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

AVA COLEMAN is sitting in her office. She has feet and her newly painted toenails on top of the desk.

AVA This job is too much sometimes. I need a break from all this hard work I've been doing. Do you know how hard it is to paint the pinky toenail perfect on the first try? I think I just need a day off tomorrow.

Ava puts her feet down and reaches down to grab a sparkly pink hat. The hat says "child labor". She starts to pull out pieces of paper with students nicknames on them. She picks up a piece of paper and reads it aloud.

> AVA (CONT'D) "Kid with hot uncle"

Ava looks at the camera.

AVA (CONT'D) This kid's uncle is a fine piece of meat and is the only reason I could never be a vegetarian, but this kid is annoying so that's a no from me.

Ava throws the piece of paper on the ground. She picks another one out of the hat

AVA (CONT'D) "Winey McTiny" Ava laughs and throws the piece of paper on the ground. She picks up another one.

AVA (CONT'D) "Mr. Johnson"

Ava looks confused.

AVA (CONT'D) I can't remember if this one is for the kid who wants to be Mr. Johnson or Mr. Johnson himself. Either way its a nope.

Ava picks another name

AVA (CONT'D) "Dapper Dan"

Ava looks up at the camera and smiles

AVA TALKING HEAD

AVA (CONT'D) Yes, this kid is perfect. He always has something snarky to say and I think he would make a good Ava for

think he would make a good Ava for the day.

Ava clicks the loud speaker on and starts to make an announcement to the school.

AVA (CONT'D) Attention Abbott Elementary I am here to announce the winner for the Principal of the day contest that I just decided will be tomorrow which has nothing to do with my hair appointment that is also tomorrow. Anyways, can I get a drum roll please?

Ava drums on the desk.

AVA (CONT'D) Dap- I mean Daniel Harris! (blandly) yay.

Ava clicks the loud speaker off.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Daniel gets up and stands on the desk. The rest of the class bows down to him. Gregory looks at the camera with a blank stare. Daniel gets down and runs out of the classroom. He runs back in to grab another chair and runs out again.

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Daniel runs into Ava's office. He throws the chair on the ground and clicks on the intercom.

DANIEL Attention students, as your new principal I declare tomorrow "Opposite Day". You're not welcome.

Ava smiles and nods in agreement.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. TEACHERS LOUNGE - MORNING

JANINE TEAGUES and JACOB HILL sit at a table looking at a new curriculum book. MELISSA SCHEMMENTI and BARBARA HOWARD sit at the table nearby. Jacob reads from the book.

JACOB "After every lesson lead the students through a breathing exercise that will enhance their memory."

JANINE

Meditation is an amazing practice that should more common, but how are we supposed to get six-yearolds to participate?

MELISSA

You just tell them what to do Janine. Do your kids no listen to you?

JANINE My kids listen. They listen so well. This should be easy.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE

My students listen so well and they respect me too. I mean they listen for the most part. They mostly listen. I mean we all have bad days where we don't want to listen, so why do we expect children to do the same? My kids listen, though.

INT. TEACHERS LOUNGE - DAY

MELISSA

My kids listen to everything I say. They will do so well with this new curriculum.

BARBARA I think my students are by far the best.

(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

They are little angels sent from the big man upstairs and they will be teaching the new curriculum sooner than your students will learn it.

MELISSA

You're delusional sometimes Barbara. My students are way better behaved than yours and I have two classes to teach.

BARBARA

I hear what goes on in your classroom from all the way down the hall, Melissa.

MELISSA

Just because you've been here since the dinosaurs roamed the Earth doesn't mean you know half of the stuff I do about keeping people quiet. I know stuff Barb.

BARBARA

Mhmm.

Gregory walks in and places his travel bottle in the fridge. Janine sees the bottle and smiles at him

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY

I've been feeling sick lately so Janine has decided she is going to put me on a new cleansing diet where I only drink these disgusting juice things that she makes. I have been having these horrible headaches because I have not eaten in four days but Janine seems really happy that she's "helping" me. Ava has tried slipping me some chicken sandwiches but I'm afraid she'll try lacing it with Viagra.

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Ava sits back in her desk chair and takes a deep breath.

AVA Today is going to be so easy. I'm just going to make the kid do all my work for me. That's why I created the "principal for the day" thing.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The students all enter the building. They all are wearing their shirts inside out and the shoes on the wrong feet. The teachers are all waiting outside their classrooms to greet the students.

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Daniel enters Ava's office wearing a suit and holding a briefcase. Ava is still sitting at her desk.

DANIEL

Good morning Ava. Lovely weather we are having today.

AVA Uh Ava?? It's Principal Coleman to you.

DANIEL No, you're not the principal, I am.

AVA

Fair enough.

DANIEL What's on the agenda today, Ava?

AVA

Well, it's Opposite Day. Why aren't you all messed up like the rest of the kids?

DANIEL

Ava, I am a professional. I am not into juvenile activities.

AVA You need to loosen up child. You're no fun.

DANIEL This is a serious job Ava, there is no time for childish games.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The room is dim and Gregory is standing in the front of the classroom. The word "Meditation" is written on the board. The students sit at their desks looking straight up at the ceiling.

GREGORY Okay guys I want everyone to go over to the carpet and we are going to go through a practice meditation.

The kids all stay in their seats. The room is silent and all you can hear is Gregory's stomach growl.

GREGORY (CONT'D) Let's all sit down on the carpet so we can practice what we just learned.

The students get up and stand on top of their desks. Gregory stares into the camera.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Daniel and Ava are walking down the hallway.

DANIEL So what is the first thing you do?

AVA

I usually check on every classroom to see which class looks the more bored. Me and Mr. Johnson have a bet going on to see who is the most boring teacher and Miss Teagues is in the lead by a lot.

DANIEL Isn't that a little unprofessional?

AVA Shut up before I make sure you're put into Miss. Teagues' class next year.

Daniel does the zipping the lips and throwing away the key thing.

Ava brings Daniel over to Janine's classroom and they look to see how bored the students are.

INT. JANINE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Janine is playing some "zen" music for the class while she writes math problems on the board. While she is turned away the entire class turns around in their chairs to face the back wall. Janine turns around and notices.

JANINE

Haha you guys are so silly! I think that you will learn better by facing the front so why don't we all turn around.

The class stays looking the other way. They start to laugh.

JANINE (CONT'D) Alright! Let's quiet down!

The students all start making as much noise as possible.

JANINE (CONT'D) Shhh! Guys I can't even hear the zen music anymore!

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE I think this new curriculum is stupid! Why do children need to meditate? (with rhythm) Who needs Zen, if they can't even count to ten?

Janine poses like she is a rapper.

JANINE (CONT'D) I came up with that myself. I think it could go far.

Janine laughs.

JANINE (CONT'D) Do you think that if I say that to the school board they will scrap the whole trial run?

INT. JACOB'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Jacob sits on a table at the front of the classroom.

You know, if you truly want to be the opposite, you have to be opposite of the opposite, because that would be truly the opposite. One opposite would just be incomplete

Camera pans to show the students sitting on the ground and using their chairs as new desks while facing away from each other.

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - DAY

Melissa looks stressed out. The class is running around in circles.

MELISSA You guys better find inner peace before I break someone's leg!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ava and Daniel are walking down the hallway. Ava is laughing.

AVA You know what?

DANIEL

What?

AVA You are not as bad as I thought.

Daniel looks confused.

DANIEL What do you mean? We haven't done any work yet.

Ava pats Daniel on the head and walks back towards her office.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Janine enters the class room with a travel bottle and places it on Gregory's desk.

JANINE How's the diet going?

GREGORY

It's great! Um I feel.. I feel amazing.

JANINE

That's awesome! I'm so glad to hear that. I made you some more for the rest of the day. I will definitely stock up so you have some for the weekend. Do you think I should stock up tonight or tomorrow night? I could also do it Friday morning before school because. It is really not that hard to make.

Gregory looks at Janine with a fake smile.

GREGORY Whatever works for you!

Gregory looks down at the bottle.

GREGORY (CONT'D) I just can't wait to drink this!

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Daniel is on the phone with someone. Ava walks in and he hangs up the phone.

AVA Haha! Phones are fun to play with! Who were you pretending to talk to?

DANIEL

Ava, why do you assume I would participate in the childish act of pretending. I was speaking to the real superintendent because I wanted to ask him what are some of the duties a principal has to do in a day since all you seem to be doing is just messing around and making fun of people. He seemed very interesting to hear that I was the principal today.

Ava looks nervous and looks into the camera. She walks towards Daniel.

AVA (laughs) Kids these days have such vivid imaginations.

Ava picks the phone up and calls the superintendent back.

AVA TALKING HEAD

AVA (CONT'D) This kid sucks.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TEACHERS LOUNGE - DAY

Janine, Melissa, Barbara, and Jacob are all in the teachers lounge having lunch.

JANINE My students are really taking this opposite day seriously. I have never seen them so passionate about anything before. If only they were this passionate about multiplication.

JACOB

My students have been sitting on the floor the entire day. I thought that they wouldn't participate because they are much older than your student but (sigh) boy was I wrong.

Barbara chuckles

BARBARA

Meanwhile my students are doing yoga poses better than olympians.

JACOB I don't think Yoga is an olympic sport. I don't know if it's even classified as a-

MELISSA

(to Barbara) How are you even getting your kids to listen to you?? It's opposite day and if you tell them to go outside for recess they just sit there staring at you like they have no soul.

Janine is looking at something on her phone.

JANINE (reading) Yoga is only considered a sport when it is performed in a competition. (normal) So there is no Yoga in th-

BARBARA

I reminded all of the students when they walked into my classroom this morning that it was in fact Opposite Day so now in their minds it is not Opposite Day anymore.

JACOB

Those are some smart Kinderga-

MELISSA I don't believe you Barbara.

JANINE Yeah those kids are really advanced if they understood that double opposi-

MELISSA They are 5 and 6 years old.

JANINE Hey has anyone seen Gregor-

The bell rings for the end of lunch.

MELISSA TALKING HEAD

MELISSA

Barbara's students are smart but not THAT smart. I didn't understand double opposites until I was 14 and my uncle told me that he didn't not love me. That's how I knew he really cared.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Gregory sits alone in his classroom.

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY

I've decided that I am going to spend every lunch period in this classroom for the rest of my career here at Abbott. I don't have the guts to tell Janine that this diet is making things worse.

Gregory rubs his temple.

GREGORY (CONT'D) I don't think I have ever had such a bad headache before. Maybe I should do some...

Gregory looks through the curriculum book and points to one spot.

GREGORY (CONT'D) zen quiet time when the kids get back. That sounds amazing.

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Daniel sits at Ava's desk and is finishing up writing an email. Ava walks in.

AVA What are you doing?

DANIEL (annoyed)

What does it look like I'm doing?

AVA You need to loosen up. You're no fun Daniel.

DANIEL Uhh its Principal Harris to you, Ava.

AVA Yeah (laughs) I am not calling you that.

Daniel gives Ava a weird look.

AVA (CONT'D) Come on child, we have people to mess with.

Daniel doesn't move and continues typing on the computer.

DANIEL Don't we have work to do? Is this all you do as the principal of this school?

AVA I will give you 10 homework passes if you shut up and come along. Daniel gets up from his seat and walks out the door with Ava.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

MR. JOHNSON TALKING HEAD

MR. JOHNSON I really like the new Ava! She's said she was going to give me a raise.

A group of children walk backwards down the hallway. Mr. Johnson looks into the camera, drops the mop he was holding and joins in with them.

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - DAY

Melissa grows more and more frustrated with her uncooperative class. She looks around the room. The students are dancing to Cardi B and not listening to Melissa at all.

> MELISSA (yelling) Everyone sit down now!

STUDENT 1 Now, that's not very "zen" of you Mrs. Schemmenti.

Melissa bursts out of the room and down the hallway.

INT. BARBARA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Barbara sits at her desk reading a book. Her students run around the room and are causing a mess. They are all yelling.

Melissa bursts into the room and sees a chaotic mess of 5year-olds.

> BARBARA Mrs. Schemmenti! (laughs nervously) What are you doing here?

Melissa looks around and scoffs.

MELISSA (quiet but mad) You LIAR!

Melissa shakes her head.

MELISSA (CONT'D) Is this your definition of well behaved because if it is then my students are freaking angels.

BARBARA

Sometimes you just have to let kids be kids and have fun. Plus, I get to catch up on my reading. Women of the Word and that's God's word!

MELISSA

Liar!

Melissa starts to leave the room. Barbara looks nervous and calls after her.

BARBARA Mrs. Schemmenti!

INT. JANINE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Janine reads to her better behaved students. Ava and Daniel walk into the classroom.

AVA

Janine.

Ava gestures for Janine to come.

JANINE

(to the students) Okay when I get back I want to know what you think is going to happen next, okay?

Janine goes over to Ava.

AVA Your mom just died. I'm so sorry

JANINE

What?!

Janine begins to cry. Ava starts feeling uncomfortable.

AVA (beat) SIKE! I got you. Your mother's like totally fine or something.

Janine wipes her tears. Daniel just stands there with a disgusted look towards Ava on his face.

AVA (CONT'D) Yeah she's like totally fine. Maybe. I really don't know actually.

Janine just looks into the camera with tears in her eyes

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - LATER

Gregory is having a free period in his room. He has his head down on his desk and a bottle of ibuprofen next to him. Janine enters.

> JANINE Hey sleepy head! How are you feeling?

GREGORY I'm okay just a little headache.

JANINE Oh no! Maybe we should try another recipe.

Gregory lifts his head up.

GREGORY

Yeah about th-

Janine bursts into tears. Gregory gets up from his desk to comfort her.

GREGORY (CONT'D) Oh my goodness! What's wrong

JANINE

Ava thought it would be funny to prank me and it made me upset and now I just want to get my mind off of it but now I keep thinking about how the scenario will happen one day and I just can't imagine it.

Janine starts to cry more.

GREGORY What did she do?

Janine tries to explain to Gregory what Ava said but it is incoherent.

GREGORY (CONT'D) Oh! Well, I'm sorry Janine. It's going to be okay.

Janine stops crying a little bit and lets out a fake laugh.

JANINE Anyway, Uh well, I hope you feel better! I'll look up some new recipes.

GREGORY

Yes! Yes I would love that.

Gregory smiles awkwardly. Janine leaves. Ava enters and Daniel is waiting in the hallway. Daniel is listening to the conversation

> AVA Are you really never going to tell her how awful this diet is?

> > GREGORY

I'm fine.

AVA (seductively) I know you are.

Gregory rolls his eyes.

AVA (CONT'D)

Well let me know if you don't feel well enough to stay and want to leave early. Dapper Dan is working me to death and I wouldn't mind subbing for you while he fills out the paperwork that was due 2 weeks ago.

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY

I am going to tell Janine that I don't want to continue this diet. I was going to tell her but then she started crying and I just couldn't. I guess I'll be on this diet for a little longer. The students do Yoga. Jacob tries to teach them how to do it but he looks terrible and does not demonstrate very well. DENISE (one of his students) gets hurt.

DENISE

OW! OW! OW! OWW! My ankle.

Jacob falls over when he tries to get up fast to help.

JACOB Denise! Are you okay? Oh goodness let's get you to the nurse.

Jacob helps Denise up.

JACOB (CONT'D) Okay that's it guys we are going back to regular class now. Everyone go back to their seats I will be right back.

None of the students move back to their seats.

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Ava and Daniel walk into the office.

DANIEL

Is Mr. Eddie okay?

AVA Yeah he's fine he just needs to grow some b-... guts.

DANIEL You know what, Ava?

AVA

What?

DANIEL

I feel like Abbott could reach its full potential if it wasn't lacking adequate leadership. I think you need to do better.

Ava looks confused.

AVA I only understood half of what you said, but thank you. INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

The school gathers for an assembly. Melissa and Barbara stand next to each other but are not happy about it. Jacob looks angry and is talking to Janine. Gregory looks miserable. Daniel and Ava stand on the stage behind a microphone.

> DANIEL Ava, I can't reach that. Can you fix it for me.

Ava twists the microphone stand and makes it taller.

DANIEL (CONT'D) You're so immature.

Daniel grabs the mic and greets the room.

DANIEL (CONT'D) Hi Students and Faculty! I am your Principal today!

The students in Gregory's class cheer very loudly. Gregory looks miserable.

DANIEL (CONT'D) Thank you, Thank you! Make some noise now!

All of the student go quiet and have bubbles in their mouths. Melissa chuckles under her breath and Barbara hears it.

> BARBARA What is so funny?

MELISSA This kid would be able to control your classroom way better than you.

BARBARA Oh come on! You're being childish.

MELISSA

CHILDISH?!

The gym starts irrupting into chatter. Ava walks off the stage. Jacob and Janine come up to her.

JACOB (Yelling) We are ending the new curriculum now! I will not stand by it! It's unethical!

Janine nods in agreement.

Gregory looks green and runs to the garbage can. He vomits. The Assembly is pure chaos. Daniel is standing on the stage looking very stressed.

> DANIEL I need a drink.

He grabs a Capri-sun, pokes a hole in it and downs it like a shot.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. AVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Ava enters and sees Daniel sitting at her desk. He is flipping through some paper work.

AVA There you are! You didn't want to watch the puppet show about drug addiction?

Daniel glares at her. He signs some papers and grabs another stack of paperwork.

AVA (CONT'D) Whatcha doing?

DANIEL

Don't distract me I'm almost done with all the paperwork and emails. You know it's really unprofessional to use your work email for personal matters.

AVA TALKING HEAD

AVA

This kid is making me look really bad. He emailed some concerned parents back with helpful suggestions that I now have to follow through with and it's just so much work that I didn't sign up for.

END OF TALKING HEAD

AVA (CONT'D)

I think you've done enough work for today. Why don't you take the rest of the day off and go back to class.

DANIEL

You just got an email from "anyaneeze@hotmail.com" saying that she has a big package just for you and she wants to know when and where you want her package. She also saying something about "teabaging" but I'm not sure. Ava gets Daniel out of the chair.

AVA

I think that it is time you go back to being a kid. You were way cooler that way. How do I say this... you're fired. Get recked kid.

Daniel walks out of the office with a sad look on his face. The computer screen shows that Ava is going to reply to the sex ad.

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - DAY

The students are reading their books upside down at their desks. Melissa sits at her desk. Barbara enters.

BARBARA Hi Mrs. Schemmenti! Can I talk to you outside?

Melissa scoffs and gets up. She walks with attitude towards Barbara.

MELISSA

What?

BARBARA

I am sorry Melissa. I don't like to fib but I didn't want to seem like a bad teacher.

MELISSA

Who on earth thinks you're a bad teacher?

BARBARA

I've been here for 20 years. I am not the spring chicken I once was. It is hard to keep up with kids sometimes and they were just too out of hand today. I just let them do whatever.

MELISSA

Barbara besides me obviously, you are the best teacher at this school. There is a reason you've been here for 20 years.

BARBARA

Thanks Melissa.

MELISSA

(sternly) Don't you ever lie to me again. I will find out.

BARBARA You sound like me now.

BARBARA TALKING HEAD

BARBARA (CONT'D) I know I'm a great teacher and I don't believe any of what I just told Melissa. I just did not feel like yelling at children all day. Opposite Day was fun for them, so why should I ruin it?

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Daniel walks into the classroom. The class stands up and salutes him.

DANIEL Woah woah settle down guys, I'm retired. You can chill now.

The students start to get excited and riled up.

DANIEL (CONT'D) Oh and Opposite Day is over. It's getting kinda boring.

The students nod in agreement and sit down.

GREGORY Welcome back Daniel we were just going over the Crown Chakra. We are doing silent discussion because my crown chakra is pounding.

DANIEL Oh, Principal Coleman said thats over and we don't have to learn the fake stuff anymore.

GREGORY Sounds good to me.

Gregory erases the board and puts on a movie for the kids to watch.

Janine is on her free period now. She and Jacob are sitting in her classroom. They are individually shredding every page of the curriculum packet. Gregory walks in.

> JANINE Hey Gregory! How's it going?

Gregory gives Jacob a look.

JACOB

I'm going to go... uh... walk my goldfish or something.

Janine and Gregory have confused looks on their faces. Jacob leaves.

GREGORY

Hey can I talk to you about the whole diet thing?

JANINE

Yes, of course. I was actually about to come ask you if you would like to see if adding some ginger powder into the drinks would be something you're interested in. It has a lot of health benefits and it-

GREGORY

Janine.

JANINE Oh yes sorry, go on.

GREGORY

I really appreciate how much you care and the effort you put into trying to get me to be more healthy and feel better, but I really don't think this diet is for me. I actually feel worse and I think it's counterproductive.

JANINE

Oh! Well, that's fine! Uh, yeah, no it was silly anyway. I just want you to feel better.

GREGORY

I appreciate that. I think I will feel better when I start eating normally again.

JANINE

Totally. I mean you can also still incorporate ginger into your diet by taking a shot of it in the morning. It really can help your digestive system.

GREGORY You know what, I'll maybe think about it.

JANINE

Really!?

GREGORY maybe!

Yeah, maybe!

JANINE That's awesome!

There is awkward tension between the two of them.

GREGORY I'm going to go back to my class.

JANINE Yeah! You should do that, they are probably causing a riot (quieter) or something.

Gregory smiles and walks away.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE (CONT'D) I'm glad he told me. I really am. I don't feel rejected at all. I think this is great.

Janine smiles awkwardly at the camera.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Gregory enters the classroom. The students are all gathered around his desk.

GREGORY Hey guys why are we all out of our seats?

The kids move a little to reveal 21 handmade cards on his desk.

STUDENT 2 We heard that you aren't feeling good Mr. Eddie.

STUDENT 3 Yeah! So we made you get-well-soon cards.

Gregory can't help but smile.

GREGORY Guys! That's so nice of you! Thank you all so much.

DANIEL Do you feel better now Mr. Eddie?

GREGORY So much better.

A student named TYLER walks up to Gregory. He gives him some Hershey's chocolate.

TYLER When my mom tells me that I give her headaches and that she wants nothing to do with me, chocolate always makes her feel better.

Gregory looks at the camera.

INT. AVA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Ava is on a call with the SUPERINTENDENT on speaker phone.

SUPERINTENDENT (O.S) I have had many calls from parents yesterday.

AVA I can explain.

SUPERINTENDENT (O.S) They told me that you made them feel seen and heard. (MORE) SUPERINTENDENT (O.S) (CONT'D) You offered them support and cleared up any worries they had about Abbott.

Ava looks shocked.

SUPERINTENDENT (O.S) (CONT'D) Great work yesterday Ava. I can see a huge difference when you apply yourself and you make connections with these kids.

AVA Thank you! I really try.

SUPERINTENDENT (O.S)

Keep it up.

The call ends. Ava takes her shoes off and starts painting her toenails on the desk again.

THE END