

ABBOTT ELEMENTARY

"THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE"

Written by

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Spec Script

Based on

Quinta Brunson's Original ABC Comedy

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EXT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Kindergarteners through Second graders all enter their respective busses led by Barbara, Melissa, and other teachers. GREGORY, JANINE, and JACOB stand around watching their students file in.

JANINE

Oh field trips, I remember when I went on those at this age. Like a little vacation away from school...but educational and your teacher is there.

JACOB

You know, it's a shame I can't go with you to The Franklin Institute. And you know I love history.

Gregory looks into the camera like "here we go."

JACOB (CONT'D)

Benjamin Franklin wrote the article "An Observation concerning the increase of mankind where he makes disturbing comments about swarthy Germans, swarthy being darker toned-

GREGORY

Yep. Yep. Yep.

Jacob does that thing where he becomes curious.

JACOB

Hey, don't you teach 1st Graders as of right now?

GREGORY

Yes.

JACOB

Aren't those *your* students?

GREGORY

Ah, yep.

JACOB

Then, why aren't you going?

GREGORY

Because, Jacob, I've been to the Franklin Institute. I'd rather take this time to grade, reflect-

JANINE

We've all been at some point in our lives! But imagine going and watching little people learn about the human heart, electricity, and more science!

TYLEN, a student of Gregory's, tugs at his pants.

TYLEN

Mr. Eddie, why aren't you coming with us?

GREGORY

Uh, because I have some other work to do.

TYLEN

Who's gonna watch us?

GREGORY

Well, your chaperones and-

AVA walks onto the scene in a lush mink coat.

AVA

Hey, Sexy Chocolate.

Tylen looks confused. Janine grabs his ears.

JANINE

Ava!

AVA

What?

She notices Tylen.

AVA (CONT'D)

Get on the bus.

TYLEN

You hate us Mr. Eddie!

Gregory glances into the camera. Tylen runs onto his designated bus.

JACOB

Where are you going?

AVA

On the trip I facilitated.

Janine and Jacob stare at Ava.

AVA (CONT'D)
 What? Gregory asked me to watch his class, and I left Mr. Johnson in charge.

Janine looks at Gregory with confusion. Gregory averts his eyes.

JANINE
 Mr. Johnson?

JACOB
 Maybe we should have had an administrator or the receptionist looking after your office?

Two kids get into a shoving fight outside of a bus. Kids on the busses start to instigate and egg them on.

JANINE
 Oh, Lord.

Janine, Gregory, and Jacob spring to action.

AVA
 Worldstar!

Barbara throws a dicey look at Ava. Melissa comes through too.

JANINE
 Okay, you two, break it up!

The two students are Gregory's, RICO and ALLEN.

GREGORY
 Rico? Allen? Oh, now you're both gonna come spend the day with me.

RICO
 Mr. Eddie?

ALLEN
 No field trip?

GREGORY
 Nope. Come on.

Gregory leads the two inside. Barbara and Melissa come to Janine.

BARBARA
 Mr. Eddie is not joining us?

MELISSA
Who's looking after his students.

Janine turns her eyes to Ava.

ON AVA

Ava stands there texting nonchalantly.

BARBARA
Sweet Baby Jesus.

MELISSA
Calling it, losing another student
on her watch.

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Gregory slips MR. JOHNSON a \$50 bill.

MR. JOHNSON
Don't matter to me at all, my
brother.

Jacob watches as this exchange occurs. He scoffs, grabbing the attention of Gregory. Mr. Johnson slips away.

JACOB
Care to tell me what wager you
placed?

GREGORY
It wasn't a wager. I told him I'd
run the school today.

Jacob's face brightens up.

JACOB
Ol Principal for a day, huh?

GREGORY
Yes, since Ava's not here I thought
I'd see Abbott's operations go the
right way.

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY
I'm not being petty. Okay, maybe a
bit petty, but I know I'm qualified
for this job. I think today will go
smoothly without Ava here.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
Do I have your silence?

JACOB
Mum's the word. Unless...

Gregory frowns to the camera.

GREGORY
Unless?

JACOB
I play your Administrator for the
day?

GREGORY
As long as you're less "Jacoby."

Jacob does a little spin.

JACOB
Wait what?

EXT. THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE - DAY

Students walk up the grand stairs of The Franklin Institute.

INT. THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE - CONTINUOUS

Ava walks in with sunglasses on trailing behind Gregory's
class. Janine catches Ava in a mood.

JANINE
Uh, Ava? Please, actually, watch
the class. We're teamed up together
and I don't know if I could watch a
combined 40 students by myself.

AVA
Don't you do that already?

Janine gives an off look to Ava, then the camera. Ava struts
off.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE
Honestly, the system is at fault,
but I happily and proudly maintain
my larger than normal class size.

Melissa and Barbara approach Janine.

MELISSA
Watch him.

She points to KENNY.

BARBARA
We don't want a repeat of last
year.

JANINE

Oh, no, me and Kenny already talked. He's not going to do any disappearing acts. You should watch your classes too.

Janine looks over at EZRA (20, looking like The Migos featuring Lil Uzi Vert). He is teasing his nephew, KING.

MELISSA

We're veterans. We got this.

BARBARA

Besides, I paired with Melissa to show my class exemplary Second Graders.

BARBARA/ MELISSA TALKING HEADS

BARBARA

To be honest, I didn't want to be paired with Ava. Rather, Mr. Eddie be present with his class than her. In here, we might not just lose a student...or two.

MELISSA

Barb and I just get it. Besides we lowkey live for the dramatics.

She laughs.

JANINE

Well, we're going to the Heart First...

Janine's phone buzzes.

INSERT: CALLER ID: MOM

Janine frantically picks up the phone. She walks off to the side.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Class, stay right there.

(on phone)

Hello? Mom?

Radio silence.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Mom?

The call ends.

Janine looks at her phone with concern.

AVA
Janine! Hello? We hitting the heart
first or what? Sheesh, you slower
than usual, girl.

Janine looks into the camera.

INT. THE GIANT HEART - THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE - CONTINUOUS

Janine holds two of her students hands, MALIA and TRENT as they walk through the **Human Heart**.

MALIA
Miss Teagues, this heart is huge.

JANINE
Yea, Malia it is.

MALIA
Just like yours.

JANINE
Aw.

Janine grins to the camera.

TRENT
Can the heart explode?

Beat.

JANINE
Uh, I think so? Let's not think
about that.

TRENT
Can we break a heart?

INT./ EXT. THE GIANT HEART - THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE - SAME

Ava stands outside of the Giant Heart texting. She groans. WILLIAM, our little dancing man, disrupts her.

WILLIAM
Miss Ava, can we-

AVA
 Uh, Save the Last Dance Jr., don't
 you see I'm busy?

Janine approaches from behind.

JANINE
 Ava? What's going on?

AVA
 Nothing, I got some business to
 handle.

Ava gets on the phone. She walks off.

JANINE
 Come William. Let's join the
 others.

A CHAPERONE, by the name of GRACE (60s, graceful and stoic)
 suddenly appears next to Janine.

GRACE
 That's that principal I been
 hearing about. I thought we were
 getting the tall handsome teacher.

JANINE
 Me too.
 (startled)
 Oh, you're a chaperone?

GRACE
 Grace, nice to meet you. I'm
 Kelendria's grandmother.

JANINE
 Oh, Gregory has spoken highly of
 her. Nice to meet you, I'm Janine
 Teagues. Could you help round up
 the class so we stay together.

Grace pulls out a WHISTLE. She blows a sharp sound. The
 students round themselves around Janine and Grace.

Janine looks into the camera impressed.

KELENDRIA
 Attention!

Janine's even more impressed.

GRACE
 Kelendria informed the class.
 Grandmama don't play.

INT. ELECTRICITY EXHIBIT - THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE -
 CONTINUOUS

Barbara stands presently in the middle of the exhibit,
 overseeing her children learning. Ezra comes in on his phone,
 loud, bugging out, and disruptive.

EZRA
 Girl, get off my phone with that-

Barbara swivels her head and grunts. With fire in her eyes,
 he hangs up the call.

She holds her hands out. Ezra daps her up.

Barbara looks in shock.

BARBARA
 The phone, young man.

He gives her the phone.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Now, you know I expect better from
 you. When I taught you, you were an
 exceptional student and we don't
 bring distractions on field trips.

BARBARA TALKING HEAD

BARBARA
 Ezra Smith, from West Philadelphia.
 He was my student 16 years ago. We
 don't always know what our students
 can become.

EZRA
 Sorry, Miss Howard.

BARBARA
Missus.

EZRA
 Oh y'all still together?

Melissa interjects, she was listening the whole time.

MELISSA

Hey, punk, I mean kid, go gather the kids we're going to the next exhibit. Can you do that?

Melissa eyeballs him up and down. He returns the same look.

Melissa lunges at him. He flinches.

BARBARA

Can you believe that?

MELISSA

He never made up out of Philly. Sad reality for some kids nowadays.

BARBARA

We look at those cute bright faces and they come back and look at them. What has this world come to?

MELISSA

Hey, hey. It's not us, it's the world. We do our best.

They both nod their heads.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Gregory sits at Ava's desk, looking out of place.

GREGORY

Okay...okay...

GREGORY TALKING HEAD

GREGORY

Because Ava runs this school like a club on the South Side, it's kinda hard to figure out what exactly needs to be done in here. I got this. You know when you go to school for this, they teach you all the tasks a principal does. So, let's take a look at this budget.

Gregory types into the computer and starts organizing files.

KNOCK-KNOCK.

Jacob slides in.

JACOB
 Hey, this looks very your speed.
 Can you see yourself running Abbott
 one day?

GREGORY
 Oh, yeah- I mean, I'm very much
 happy being a Teacher for now.

JACOB
 I get it. But the power?

GREGORY
 It's not about power, Jacob. It's
 about overseeing the operations of
 students, faculty, and the safety
 and education of the children.

JACOB
 Sounds very principally.

GREGORY
 Shouldn't you be in class?

JACOB
 I'm your "administrator" aren't I,
 for a day.

CHERYL, the receptionist walks in.

CHERYL
 No the hell you ain't.

Jacob leans out of the way.

GREGORY
 Hello, Cheryl.

CHERYL
 Mr. Eddie, a parent called
 complaining about their student
 getting bullied and she's
 requesting to meet with you.

GREGORY
 Uh, okay, when is she coming-

CHERYL
 Now.

An ANGRY MOTHER (late 30s, giving a young Maxine Shaw) walks
 in.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Mrs. Wright, he's right here.

MRS. WRIGHT
Why's my baby getting bullied under
your supervision- I'm sorry am I at
the right school? I thought the
principal was a woman?

JACOB
Well-

GREGORY
Well, actually I'm the acting-
principal for a day.

Mrs. Wright looks Gregory up and down.

MRS. WRIGHT
Okay, Mr. Principal.

She sits down.

GREGORY
You're a Mrs. Wright, right?

MRS. WRIGHT
Right.

Gregory deadpan stares into the camera.

JACOB
I'm gonna go.

INT. PENDULUM SWINGING - THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE - DAY

The swinging pendulum knocks over some chess pieces.

INT. YOUR BRAIN EXHIBIT - CONTINUOUS

Janine texts her mother a barrage of texts. Ava returns.

AVA
Whoever your texting ain't gonna
pick up.

JANINE
Seems like it.

Ava notices Janine's temperament.

AVA
Uh, now you and I got a little
history now, but I don't like this
less bubbly, less annoying Janine.
(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)

In fact it's annoying me that
you're not annoying.

Janine walks past Ava.

JANINE

Okay kids, I want you to think
about why we went from The Heart to
the Brain?

Kenny raises his hand.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Kenny.

KENNY

Because...I don't know.

JANINE

Okay class, I want you to THINK
about it. Our next exhibit is The
Amazing Machine!

Another student, OKORI, shoots his hand straight up.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Okori.

OKORI

Miss Teagues this place is boring.

The other students laugh.

JANINE

Cory, you're just not opening your
mind.

TRENT

Can we bust open the brain?

JANINE

Trent, remind me to call your
father later.

OKORI

Miss Teagues, maybe you aren't
opening your mind, my sister.

Janine throws Okori a "excuse me" look.

OKORI (CONT'D)

My mama and daddy said that
everybody on the dollar bills are
racist.

The kids all nod and agree.

JANINE
Well, they're not wrong.

AVA
Yeah, let's talk about that.

GRACE
Let's not.

Ava looks to Grace beside her.

AVA
Who are you?

GRACE
Take off those sunglasses before I
snatch them and that weave off your
head.

She says all this while looking ahead. Ava slowly takes off her shades.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Melissa and Barbara lead their classes uniformly down the hall to the next exhibit.

Ezra tugs at his nephew, KING's baby locs, bothering King. Barbara comes and slaps Ezra's hand away.

Barbara takes King away and gently leads him to the front.

BARBARA
So help me God!

MELISSA
God called me in. Whatever you need
I got it. Been looking to get
active, my cousin Otto skimmed me a
Peloton and I'm feeling great.

Barbara finds some resolve.

BARBARA
Watch the group.

MELISSA
Got it.
(to kids)
Come on kids. We're going to see
the train.

Barbara falls behind to Ezra.

BARBARA
Mr. Smith, let's have a chat, shall
we?

EZRA
I guess.

BARBARA
You what?

EZRA
I mean, yes ma'am.

Barbara gestures to the benches; they both sit down.

BARBARA
How have you been, Mr. Smith?

EZRA
I mean, I'm aight, how about you?

BARBARA
Oh, you don't want to know about me
and my feelings, especially right
now, in this instant.

Barbara flashes a fiery smile.

EZRA
Life. Life's been hard Mrs. Howard.
Like 5 years ago, my sister got
pregnant and that's how King came
into our lives. The daddy just
vanished and so I was responsible
for being a father figure to him.

BARBARA
Mhmm.

EZRA
Then what you heard was me on the
phone with this jawn, we not doing
so good. She might be having my
baby, I don't know and between
getting my mixtape off the ground
and these Forex Trading classes I'm
teaching...it's been rough.

BARBARA
I don't have any idea what Forex
is.

EZRA
It's sort of like trading and
profiting off the exchange of
foreign currencies. It's sort of
like stocks-

BARBARA
Look, whatever it is, you go on
proudly about whatever little scam
you're running. I want to talk
decorum.

EZRA
Decorum?

BARBARA

In an esteemed institution where students, tourists, and patrons of the great city of Philadelphia come to learn, you can't behave so uncouth.

EZRA

You using some big words, Mrs. Howard.

BARBARA

Out-of-pocket. This isn't Bar 50 or Noto wherever you all hang out. Now I don't know what home life is like for King, but I do know he is a good student, he doesn't deserve you picking on him. The world will do that enough. When he's with me, he's my responsibility, and he is safe. You understand me?

Ezra nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Good. Now let's go see the train.

INT. THE TRAIN FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Melissa watches as the kids all run in and out of the train.

MELISSA

You know kids, this train used to move years ago.

PHARJAH

Ms. Schemmenti, why doesn't it move anymore?

MELISSA

Because they like to take away nice things.

Barbara enters the scene, with Ezra straggling behind.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

How goes it?

BARBARA

We came to an understanding.

Ezra taps Barbara on the shoulder.

EZRA
Can I have my phone back.

Barbara smiles.

BARBARA
No.

EZRA
Please, Mrs. Howard, I want to make
a Tiktok with King.

Barbara gives in.

BARBARA
Just a Tiktok.

She hands him his phone.

EZRA
Thanks.

TIKTOK VIDEO

Ezra films the kids running and jumping in and out of the train.

GROUP OF KIDS
Period! Period ahhh period. Oouu
the train, I love the train!

The kids laugh and start dancing.

EZRA
This finna go viral.

Barbara reaches out her hand. He gives her the phone.

INT. MUSSER DEMONSTRATION THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Ava, Janine, and Grace sit in the back as the kids sit in the front watching the demonstration of fire blowing up a balloon.

Trent's eyes widen with pure amazement. SASHA, a student next to him, stares at him with concern.

SASHA
You need help.

Ava taps Janine's shoulders.

AVA
Check this out.

Janine leans in and sees a meme about her.

JANINE
Where'd you get that?

AVA
I made it. I'm gonna caption it,
"When you overdraft your account
and rent is due," or something
stupid like that. I'm posting you
on Lipstick Alley.

JANINE
Uh, delete that. My accounts don't
overdraft, anymore.

AVA
No, for real though, you good?

JANINE
I'm alright. Hey, what was up
earlier? You stepped away for quite
a long time. Almost thought you
ditched us.

AVA
I really should have. Sensitive
stuff.

Ava looks away.

JANINE
Oh. Oh!

Janine knows. Ava nods.

JANINE (CONT'D)
You want to talk about it?

AVA
Not really. Half the reason I made
room for this trip was to honor
her. She used to scrounge up those
senior citizen discounts and take
me here.

JANINE
Well, if you ever wanna talk-

AVA
I said no!

The kids turn around to Ava and Janine.

GRACE
Keep it down, he about to make a
cloud.

Ava storms off.

INT. JACOB'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Jacob sits at his desk grading papers.

JACOB
Ah well, I'm not good at being an
administrator anyway.

A student, JAMAR, raises his hand.

JAMAR
Mr. Hill, can you not talk to
yourself while we're watching a
movie?

Jacob looks into the camera perplexed.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Johnson lies back in the chair with his feet up. While
the kids are watching *Judas and The Black Messiah* on a
bootleg website.

GROUP OF KIDS
I AM A REVOLUTIONARY! I AM A
REVOLUTIONARY! I AM A
REVOLUTIONARY!

Mr. Johnson raises his fist, eyes still closed. Two students,
Rico and Allen sneak out of the classroom.

INT. ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Coming through the front door is Superintendent Collins.

COLLINS
Hello, Cheryl.

CHERYL
Mhmm.

He gives her a look.

COLLINS
Where's Ava?

CHERYL
Out.

COLLINS
What do you mean?

Gregory runs into the frame. Greeting Principal Collins.
Cheryl points as she's finishing her Sudoku puzzle.

COLLINS (CONT'D)
Mr. Eddie, what is going on here?

GREGORY
Sir. I'm filling in for Ava as she
is supervising a field trip.

COLLINS
Supervising? The only thing she can
supervise is that ego of hers.

Gregory slightly smirks.

GREGORY
Come with me. Walk with me.

Superintendent Collins and Gregory go on walk.

INT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Superintendent Collins looks at the schoolwork display on a
bulletin board outside of Jacob's class.

COLLINS
3rd Graders are performing at
exceptional levels.

GREGORY
Yes. They are, you can thank the
Mr. Hill and the other teachers at
Abbott for that.

COLLINS
Let's cut to the chase-

Rico and Allen run down the hall past Gregory and Collins.
Collins turns and misses them.

COLLINS (CONT'D)
What was that?

GREGORY
Oh, nothing. Can you give me a
second.

INT. JACOB'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gregory enters Jacob's class. Jacob's face lights up.

JACOB
Principal Eddie, how can I help
you?

GREGORY
Two students, Rico and Allen are
running amok in the school. Can you
get them and bring them to the
front office?

JACOB
My captain.

Jacob salutes.

GREGORY
Superintendent Collins is here.

JACOB
Whoa what?

GREGORY
Be quick and be sneaky.

JACOB
I got you. I'll be your
administrator!

Jacob places his hand on Greg's shoulder.

GREGORY
Thank you.

Gregory pats Jacob on his shoulder. He leaves the classroom.

Jacob opens his drawer and pulls out a pair of nice running
shows.

JACOB TALKING HEAD

JACOB
I'd like to think Greg and I have
grown on each other.
(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)
 Oh, and these Air Zoom Pegasus 38s
 will have any man flying. No one
 will see me coming.

INT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gregory re-enters.

GREGORY
 Sorry, about that, had to get a
 message to Mr. Hill.

Out of the second door, Jacob sneaks out and trips over his
 laces.

He grunts; then slides behind a trashcan. Superintendent
 Collins turns around.

COLLINS
 Abbott has a lot of miscellaneous
 sounds, do we need to call pest
 control?

GREGORY
 No, sir.

Greg turns around and Jacob flashes a 'thumbs up.'

JACOB TALKING HEAD

JACOB
 Almost saw me coming.

INT. CAFETERIA - THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE - DAY

The children all sit at the tables eating their packed
 lunches. Some students buy lunch and return to their seats.
 Barbara and Melissa sit together with Janine and Grace.

BARBARA
 Sister Grace Rowland, it's always a
 pleasure.

GRACE
 Sister Howard, God is good.

BARBARA
 Chicken is good. God is great.

They share a laugh.

GRACE
Indeed. How's Gerald?

BARBARA
He's still my Superman.

Melissa leans into Janine.

MELISSA
What's going on with Ava?

Janine looks over to Ava sitting alone texting on her phone over a salad.

JANINE
I don't know.

Melissa senses something's up.

MELISSA
What's up with you?

JANINE
Oh, it's nothing.

MELISSA
Don't give me that, we been through too much together to hide things. Well, I can't tell you too much either because of legal reasons, but you get what I mean.

JANINE
Just some trouble at home.

Barbara chimes in.

BARBARA
Is that rapper back in your life, Janine?

Janine nods.

JANINE
No, Tariq is still off doing F.A.D.E shows and touring. It's nothing. I promise.

She fakes a smile. Janine excuses herself from the table and goes to Ava.

Ava looks up and rolls her eyes at Janine.

AVA

What?

JANINE

Truth time?

AVA

(groans)

You know you're about as annoying
as Rob was to Blac Chyna.

JANINE

Rob is a good guy!

AVA

Girl, what is it?

JANINE

My mom called. My relationship with
her was a bit rocky. She was always
busy.

AVA

Can't relate. My grandma she is my
everything, but watching her slip
away...I just don't know.

Ava watches Janine look away, watching a Chaperone and her
kid.

JANINE

It could have been that simple.

AVA

You know, I'm starting to clock
something here. You stay trying
hard for these kids because your
mom didn't try hard with you.

JANINE

I mean-

AVA

And there is nothing wrong with
that.

Janine's facial expression changes to surprise.

JANINE

Wow, I don't know what to say

AVA

Say less. Besides, I meant what I said last year and all years to come. The teachers at Abbott are the best, because you make do with what you got.

JANINE

And you're pretty amazing too, Ava.

Ava flips her hair.

AVA

Pssh. I know.

JANINE

Thank you.

AVA

Listen, I was feeling a bit bummed so I wanted to take this field trip with y'all not only for science reasons or whatever, but because my grandma and I used to come here and then we'd fall asleep watching the Syfy channel. Sometimes she'd even let me watch Star Trek with her. So, I'm really mourning right now.

JANINE

So, in your struggle, you became selfless?

AVA

Give or take, but I'm still a material girl. I have a lifestyle to maintain.

Ava and Janine laugh.

Barbara, Melissa, and Grace stare at them laughing together.

BARBARA/MELISSA/ GRACE TALKING HEADS

BARBARA

Ava and Janine, laughing?

MELISSA

Together?

BARBARA

Something's up.

MELISSA

Being that I'm nosey, I'm gonna go find out.

GRACE

I don't know what you all are doing with a camera crew and how *you* are allowed in here, but I don't wanna know.

Ezra comes up to Barbara and Melissa.

EZRA

Have any of y'all seen King?

BARBARA

Weren't you sitting with him?

MELISSA

Not again and on our watch?

Melissa pounds the table.

JANINE

What's going on?

Ava and Janine come to the table.

AVA

There better not be a child missing? We gonna need a Dog Coupler.

Barbara glares at Ava.

AVA (CONT'D)

What? It can hold up to several dogs- I mean kids.

JANINE

That's besides the point. We need a plan of action. Ava, you and Ms. Grace take care of our kids and head to the planetarium. I mean it *watch them*. Melissa take your groups to there too. Ezra, Barbara, and I will split up and find King.

Everyone stands there.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Got it?

EVERYONE
Yes./Got it./Yup.

Everyone splits up.

JANINE
We're not losing another student on
my watch.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Jacob chases after Rico and Allen. He is zooming down the halls.

RICO
You can't catch us.

ALLEN
Split up!

They go down separate halls Rico to the right and Allen to the left. Jacob stops in his tracks and goes after Allen first.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Superintendent Collins sits at Ava's desk, while Greg sits in front.

COLLINS
You know you have the grit, the heart that Abbott needs to run like a well-oiled machine. So it begs the question, why did you help Ava during the conference?

GREGORY
I think the most important thing, right now, is that with my experience subbing and this year being a Teacher at Abbott. I can surely say I'm on the right track to being principal one day. We here at Abbott, no matter the flaws, we work together. So, we weren't going to let our principal fail, no matter how extra she is.

Superintendent Collins nods.

COLLINS
You'll definitely make an exceptional principal someday, Mr. Eddie. I stand by that.

INT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jacob corners Allen.

JACOB
(raises voice)
Enough!

Allen stops in his tracks.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Come with me.

Jacob holds onto Allen's collar.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sounds of gunshots are heard on the projector in the classroom. Jacob initially ducks, then rushes into the classroom.

He turns off the movie. The kids groan and boo at him.

JACOB
Now, I know Chairman Fred Hampton's story is inspirational, but Judas and the Black Messiah? For 1st graders, really?

MR. JOHNSON
It shut them up and now you got them all riled up again.

AMIR stands on the desk.

AMIR
The white man is oppressing us!

They all point at Jacob. Jacob looks at Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson shrugs.

JACOB
I'm an ally.

Jacob turns the light on- Rico is sitting in the back with his head down.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Rico?

Jacob let's Allen go.

ALLEN
My people, I am free.

The class claps.

JACOB
(to Mr. Johnson)
How did you get Rico?

MR. JOHNSON
Heard running down the halls. Used
some martial arts to bag him.

Jacob looks at Mr. Johnson up and down.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Don't you size me up. Back in the
80s I worked briefly onset with
Taimak and the Last Dragon. Picked
up some moves from there.

MR. JOHNSON TALKING HEAD

MR. JOHNSON
You should have seen me in my day,
I used to pull off the moves on
suckers that tried me. It was right
after 1984 and I needed to protect
myself from the government.

Mr. Johnson tilts his head.

INT. THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Janine runs into some restrooms.

JANINE
Excuse me! King? King?

INT. PLANETARIUM - CONTINUOUS

The students file in and sit on benches stand around.
Melissa, Ava, and Grace start taking headcount.

INT. THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Barbara walks the hallways looking for King.

INT. THE GIANT HEART - CONTINUOUS

Janine runs through the Giant Heart vigilant.

JANINE
King? King?

INT. THE TRAIN FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Janine looks around the train. A SECURITY GUARD comes over.

SECURITY GUARD
Ma'am, can I help you?

JANINE
Uh, no, I'm good. Just playing hide-
n-seek with a student.

SECURITY GUARD
(radios)
Call in a student is missing. Block
all exits.

JANINE
Thank you.

SECURITY GUARD
You didn't have to lie.

The Security Guard walks off.

INT. THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Janine runs up the spiral stairs. We hear commotion.

EZRA
Yo! Get off me. Get off me, yo. You
violating my rights.

Barbara enters the scene, ready for action. TWO OFFICERS are holding back Ezra.

BARBARA
Unhand him.

Janine, exasperating, comes in behind them.

JANINE
Uh, officers, he's with us.

OFFICER #1
We got note of a missing kid.

EZRA
That missing kid is my nephew.

OFFICER #2
Why were you walking around
suspicious?

EZRA
Looking for my nephew? You're
kidding me!

BARBARA
Officers it's all a big
misunderstanding.

Janine feels someone grab their hand. It's King!

JANINE
King!

Ezra turns around.

EZRA
King, lil buddy!

King grips Janine's hand harder.

Melissa comes in behind Barbara.

MELISSA
Hey!

The two officers look at Melissa.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
Aren't you Antonuccio? Lil Michael
Antonuccio?

OFFICER #1
Yeah, what about it?

MELISSA
Schemmenti. Of the South Philly
Schemmenti's.

The Officer lets Ezra go.

OFFICER #1
We're out of here.

BARBARA
(to Melissa)
Thank you.

Barbara rushes over to King. Ezra follows.

Ezra roughly grabs King by his shoulders.

JANINE

Hey!

BARBARA

Ezra! Let. Him. Go.

Ezra lets go.

JANINE

You can't do that to him. He's your family, and no matter what you shouldn't hurt your family.

King hugs Barbara.

BARBARA

There, there now. It's okay.

(to Ezra)

Young man, to the Planetarium now.

Ezra walks with Melissa to the Planetarium. Melissa slaps the back of his head.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Miss Teagues, I'm even more impressed. I'm proud of you.

Janine smiles at Barbara.

JANINE TALKING HEAD

JANINE

Hearing Barbara say that, means a lot even after the first few times she's said it.

INT. PLANETARIUM - CONTINUOUS

The ceiling shows the entire solar system. The Sun, moon, stars and all planets in the Milky Way Galaxy are present in astounding hi-def projections.

The kids look up in wonder and amazement.

BARBARA

Mr. Smith.

King is holding her hand.

EZRA

Hey little guy. I'm so sorry for what I did today...what I've been doing. What I did was a big no-no. I took out my frustrations on you and as family that ain't right.

King nods.

KING

I forgive you.

EZRA

Bring it in.

They hug. Ezra lifts up King and gives him some kisses on his cheek.

KING

Do better.

EZRA

I will.

King palms Ezra's cheek. He puts King down; King goes to join his class.

BARBARA

You know, Mr. Smith. I understand your story. I was more concerned for King, as he's my student. But you were too. I understand now it's unfair that as a young man you had to take on this much responsibility so early in your life. And, I am sorry that you were left to figure it out.

Ezra is almost brought to tears. Barbara looks up to the ceiling. The vast solar system is on display.

EZRA

Thanks.

BARBARA

You see life always has a way of coming together. Like the solar system, the inner mechanisms of a body or device. Everything has its place and its purpose. You may not know it yet, but you being in King's life will make a difference when comes his time.

(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You'll see why you had the tenacity to be the male role-model for him. I think it's quite commendable. You didn't have to do that, but that's what a stand-up man does.

Ezra wipes away his tears.

Janine and Ava sit on the bench looking at the solar system.

AVA

Another thing that has been bothering me is Superintendent Collins, being that he's been out to get me since last school year. He's made it his mission to spin the block.

JANINE

What? Unexpected drop-ins?

AVA

Well, duh, they can do that. But He's been hitting Abbott more.

JANINE

Well?

AVA

I'm just afraid I'll lose this job and I'm starting to like this groove. I think I'm good at it. I might even want to be superintendent one day. You know, get even more power.

JANINE

I don't think it's about that.

AVA

So, that Abbott can have more resources for whenever Greg becomes principal.

JANINE

Greg?

AVA

Yeah, Janine, keep up. He studied to be a principal and he'd probably make a good one. With his sexy posture and tall disposition.

Ava shivers a little.

JANINE
Yeah, he does have excellent posture.

Janine thinks over Gregory.

AVA
But anyways, I just have to keep doing my thing. My way.

JANINE
That's right. And we at Abbott, we got you.

Ava turns to Janine and smiles.

AVA AND JANINE TALKING HEADS

AVA
Can y'all strike our sentimental moments out?

JANINE
I think Ava and I will grow closer next year. First it was The Abbott Stepper, then saving her job, and now The Franklin Institutes. We're 3 for 3.

AVA
No seriously, she's gonna get even more annoyingly in my face like we friend friends. We work friends.

INT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLYARD - DAY

The busses load in. Kids file into the school, tired from a long day of learning.

INT. ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gregory and Jacob stand in front of Ava's office talking. Ava enters.

AVA
What are you two doing here.
(to Gregory)
Well, I know why you're here. You missed me?

Gregory looks into the camera, uncomfortably.

GREGORY
Well, we were waiting for Mr.
Johnson.

AVA
Oh, he's making his rounds
cleaning. Everything went well
today?

JACOB
You knew what happened?

AVA
No? I wasn't here, duh. Are you
always oblivious?

Jacob turns around and walks away chuckling.

AVA (CONT'D)
Well, it's just us.

GREGORY
I'm out.

AVA
Wait, Daddy, take me with you.

INT. JANINE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Gregory walks past Janine's classroom, Janine is sitting at
her desk.

She reads a text from her mom.

Mom: False Alarm. I'm okay. I hope you're doing well.

KNOCK-KNOCK.

GREGORY
Hey! Welcome back.

JANINE
Hey.

They stand there looking at each other.

GREGORY
Wanna go get some dinner?

JANINE
That'd be lovely, Mr. Eddie.

Janine grabs her bag.

INT. ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Janine and Greg walk down the hall.

GREGORY
How was the trip today?

JANINE
Enlightening.

GREGORY
(Mocking Jacob)
Like Benjamin Franklin himself.

JANINE
Solid Jacob impression.

Melissa and Barbara are in front of them heading out of the door.

MELISSA
Can you believe on our watch, a kid
got lost?

BARBARA
Even more, Janine went full Teacher
Terminator and handled that
situation.

MELISSA
She's growing up, that kid.

Barbara and Melissa smile.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ava picks up a note left on her desk.

COLLINS (V.O.)
 Ava, I don't know what you're doing
 at Abbott to make it run so
 well...but keep doing it. Mr. Eddie
 was a perfect choice as stand-in
 principal. Somehow, your teachers
 care about you.

- Gregory organizing Ava's desk; Janine and Ava stepping;
 Gregory and Janine supporting Ava's presentation.

COLLINS (V.O.)
 Somehow the school is not falling
 apart...much. I may not like your
 actions, but I can respect what you
 stand for.

- Mr. Johnson fixing random things; Barbara and Melissa
 bringing treats to their classes.

COLLINS (V.O.)
 I'll stop the check-ins, you just
 keep proving to me and most
 importantly yourself, that you
 deserve this job. P.S. I love the
 Franklin Institute.

Ava crumples up the paper.

MR. JOHNSON
 Trash.

Ava free throws it into the can.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 Nice.

She smirks.