

# THE EDUCATION OF JANET O'MALLEY

## By Christopher Sacco and Alan Haehnel

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## CHARACTERS

Doubling, tripling, and gender changes are also possible. The original production of this play was performed with 11 actors.

Jackie: brainy student

Denise: air-headed student

Janet: disillusioned student, main character

Student in gym class

Coach Lubushco: gym coach

Jailbird Rocko: hardened criminal

Cop 1: jail attendant

Cop 2: jail attendant

Regis: Regis Philbin

Cop: traffic cop

Alice: Senator's girlfriend

Senator: pompous legislator

Secretary: fed-up employee of Senator

Guard 1: Senator's security guard

Guard 2: Senator's security guard

Tony Drummond: Host of "Brain Stompers"

Contestant 1: Contestant on "Brain Stompers"

Contestant 2: Contestant on "Brain Stompers"

General: Stuffy military type

Corporal: Same as General

Lieutenant: "Aw-shucks" military type

Original Cast List for "The Education of Janet O'Malley"

The initial production of this play occurred on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003,  
directed by Alan Haehnel

Jackie ..... Sarah Studer  
Denise ..... Liz Luce  
Janet..... Holly Conrad  
Coach Lubushco .... Chris Sacco  
Jailbird Rocko..... Dan Hanscom  
Cop 1 ..... Amanda Farrell  
Cop 2..... Cory Townsend  
Regis ..... Chris Sacco  
Cop..... Nick Wood  
Alice..... Cass Johndrow  
Senator..... Brian North  
Secretary ..... Sarah Studer  
Guard 1 ..... Amanda Farrell  
Guard 2 ..... Cory Townsend  
Host..... Nate Swasey  
Contestant 1 ..... Cass Johndrow  
Contestant 2 ..... Liz Luce  
General..... Nick Wood  
Corporal..... Dan Hanscom  
Lieutenant..... Brian North

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"The Education of Janet O'Malley" is designed to be versatile. Since much of the play takes place as a dream, reality can be suspended so that actors can become various characters with the change of a hat or with no costume changes at all. Similarly, the set can be elaborate or can be simply two chairs. During each dream sequence, any actors not directly involved in the scene can create an appropriate background. In the original production, during the jail scene the other actors were lying in their "cells" in various positions; one played a harmonica. During the "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" sequence, the actors became the studio audience. As the policeman talked to Janet in the next scene, various cast members "drove by" in pantomimed cars. The secretary walked back and forth in the senator scene, handing out and receiving papers from people on the sides of the stage. "Brain Stompers" had some actors playing the contestants' buzzers and some playing the studio audience. In the final scene, when the world is threatened with nuclear disaster, actors without lines became an elaborate ticking version of the bomb that Janet and the officers are trying to de-activate.

## PROPS LIST

Ball  
Clipboard  
Pencils  
Tests  
Paper

## THE EDUCATION OF JANET O'MALLEY

by  
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and  
Alan Haehnel

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**(Open stage. JANET, JACKIE and DENISE, 3 teen-aged girls, enter.)**

JACKIE: ...So the astrophysicist says, “Yes, but where is my *other* shoe!”

DENISE: **(laughs uproariously, then pauses)** I'm not sure I get it.

JACKIE: Figures. Maybe I should just stick to knock-knock jokes with you.

DENISE: Oh! I love knock-knock jokes. I know a million of them!

JACKIE: Why am I not surprised?

DENISE: Do you want to hear one? Knock-knock.

JACKIE: I've heard that one.

DENISE: But you didn't even say, “Who's there?”

JACKIE: Trust me, I've heard it. **(JANET sighs heavily.)** Janet, what's the matter?

JANET: Ah...never mind.

JACKIE: Hey, are we not confidantes? Pals? Remember when I couldn't decide on which calculator to use on my physics exam? You helped me with that very difficult decision.

DENISE: And the time I got my hand stuck in my locker, you guys stayed by my side till they came with the blowtorch.

JANET: Yeah. You still got that scar?

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DENISE: Sure do. It kind of looks like that guy who won Survivor. See, near my vein—that sort of looks like his nose? I wonder if I can get into some sort of record book with this. It's really, really neat, don't you think?

JACKIE: Anyway, Janet, what is the matter?

JANET: It's just school. It's driving me crazy! It's useless.

DENISE: What are you talking about. I think school is neat. Whoopee!

**(SHE twirls.)**

JACKIE: As much as I hate to, I have to agree with Dippy here and say that school is not useless. What do you have to do?

JANET: Okay, this morning I had to come in early to do my fruit fly experiment in biology. That was at like 7 a.m., in the morning! I don't see a point. Half my flies are dead anyway.

DENISE: I once had a fly fly down my throat. Ha! Fly fly. Buzz!

JACKIE: Scintillating, Denise. **(to JANET)** Continue.

JANET: Then I sit through biology class, barely able to keep my eyes open. And do you know what we are learning about? Seaweed. Or as they call it in geeky teacher land, algae.

JACKIE: I find algae fascinating.

DENISE: I find algae in the ocean.

JACKIE: Stick to knock-knock jokes, Denise.

JANET: So, then it's time for math. For 45 minutes, I get to learn about the algebraic equation. Rise over run, point and slope, x axis, y axis. It takes me half the class just to figure out what they're saying. What is wrong with these teachers?

DENISE: Well, they say those who can't learn, teach.

JANET: Yeah, I guess. After math, it's history. Sometimes history is okay, but now we're learning about ancient civilizations like China dynasties and Roman whatchamacallits. And there's always reading homework, every night. I think I'm losing my mind.

DENISE: *What* mind? **(SHE laughs.)**

JACKIE: Knock-knock jokes only. I'm going to get a restraining order forbidding you to come within ten feet of any other type of humor.

DENISE: "I'm rubber, you're glue..."

JACKIE: Stop now before I call the authorities.

JANET: What else? Oh, English. We're reading Shakespeare. I really have no idea what's going on with that. I try to understand, but with those thees and thous he uses, I just can't do it. Like I said, it's all useless!

JACKIE: Don't you think that is a bit extreme, Janet?

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JANET: No. My father is a plumber. I am going to be a plumber. I happen to like plumbing. Fruit flies and algebra and “wherefore art thou, Oh, Romeo” have nothing to do with plumbing! I will never need this stuff again, ever!

DENISE: Absolutely.

JANET: I'm thinking of having this put on my tombstone: “Janet O'Malley: Died a rich plumber. Never needed any of the things she learned in school; so there to all the people who said she would. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!”

JACKIE: I don't think you are taking full advantage of your schooling, Janet. One never really knows how knowledge may be applied.

DENISE: (**after counting on fingers**) I think that gravestone saying is too long.

JACKIE: On the other hand, knowledge is entirely wasted on some.

JANET: Thank goodness for gym, at least. The one place where I can go and not have to think and learn. Just good old-fashioned fun. The way a lot more of school should be.

**(The gym teacher, Coach LOBUSHCO, enters with his clipboard.)**

LOBUSHCO: Well, nice to see you ladies at least showed up. Too bad you missed the two-lap warm-up walk with the rest of your class. It's brisk out there today. Builds character to walk in this weather. (**Several other students enter, ad libbing about how cold it is outside.**) All right, pipe down, people; have a seat. As you all know, today is test day.

JANET: A test?

LOBUSHCO: That's right. Now listen: All other tests have lead up to this one, team. So go get your pencils and I want to see you work your tails off on this thing. Pride. It's all about pride. If you don't have pride, you don't have nothing, in my book. So go out there, and knock a few of those answers into the bleachers, and show them what this high school is made of.

JANET: We're taking a test in gym? With paper?

LOBUSHCO: Yes. We are having a government-issued test to give gym class some educational value. Lousy bureaucrats. They made me throw out my climbing rope, too. I loved that rope.

**(Coach LOBUSHCO starts handing out the tests.)**

JANET: I can't believe we're having a test today. In gym.

DENISE: I know. I forgot, too.

JACKIE: I did, as well. Fortunately, I happened to re-read this material this morning.

DENISE: Why?

JACKIE: For fun.

LOBUSHCO: All right, now, quit your yacking and get cracking, ladies.

***(JANET sits there, still in shock, and looks over her test.)***

JANET: I have absolutely no idea what this is. Ah, coach? What is all this stuff?

LOBUSHCO: What do you mean?

JANET: Endomorph, mesomorph, ectomorph? First of all, when did we learn this? And second, why do I need to know this? It's pointless.

***(The other students finish their tests quickly and run to hand them in.)***

STUDENT 1: First one done!

STUDENT 2: I was done before you!

STUDENT 3: I found a typo, coach.

STUDENT 4: So what are we supposed to do now?

LOBUSHCO: All right, all right, ya runts. Dodgeball for everyone who's finished! And I don't want to see any mercy today, like we had last week. If you got a shot, I say take it. Play ball. ***(chuckles, to JANET)***  
The kids love the dodgeball. Now, what were you saying?

STUDENT 5: Hey, coach, where's the ball?

STUDENT 6: I've got it! I've got it!

STUDENT 7: Give it here!

***(The students begin to make a lot of noise as they tussle for the ball.)***

JANET: ***(trying to talk over the shouting)*** Why do I need to know this stuff?

LOBUSHCO: What do you need?

JANET: ***(even louder)*** WHY - DO - I - NEED - TO - KNOW - THIS - STUFF? I WANT TO BE A PLUMBER!!!

LOBUSHCO: I can't hear you..... hey, hey, watch what you're doing over there!

***(A ball comes from the side and beans JANET in the head. SHE falls to the floor. Everyone begins to twirl around in slow motion, making strange noises to indicate that JANET is dreaming. At one point, JANET sits up and grabs a passing student.)***

JANET: What are you doing?

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STUDENT 8: I'm twirling and making this funny sound to transition into a dream sequence. What are you doing?

JANET: I...nothing.

***(SHE passes out again. When SHE wakes back up, the stage is cleared but for two chairs. Jailbird ROCKO, played by one of the students, is sitting in one of them, looking down at JANET.)***

JANET: Where...where am I?

JAILBIRD ROCKO: It's about time you woke up. I thought you might sleep through the whole thing. Now, the way I see it, the best time to do this is in two minutes, when the guard is on his break.

JANET: Do what? Who are you?

ROCKO: Always a kidder, ain't ya, O'Malley? Now, I already picked the lock of our cell door when nobody was looking, so...

JANET: Cell door? I'm in jail? This can't be happening.

ROCKO: Listen, get serious, all right. This ain't the time for jokes, got me? You got me?

JANET: Yeah, okay, I get you.

ROCKO: I've planned this break down to the last detail, so you better cooperate.

JANET: This can't be happening, this can't be happening, this can't...

ROCKO: Pipe down! I didn't go through ten years of planning just so some jabbermouth could screw it up for me.

JANET: Sorry.

ROCKO: It's cool, little lady. Just watch what you do. ***(They creep out towards the side of the stage.)*** Okay, my sources tell me these three doors in front of us lead to three pipes. Now we each take a door and escape. After that we run and never look back.

JANET: Sounds easy enough. I know a lot about pipes. I'm going to be a plumber.

ROCKO: That's great. Glad to hear it. I'm going to open up a day care center myself, once I get out of here. Okay, what body type are you?

JANET: What body what?

ROCKO: Body type. Each of the pipes fit a specific body type. The first pipe is endomorph, second pipe is ectomorph, and the last in mesomorph. So which one are you, endo, ecto, or meso?

JANET: Uh, uh, uh...

ROCKO: It's not that hard. Didn't you learn anything in school? ***(sighs)*** And I thought you said you knew about pipes. Fine, you keep watch while I escape. I hope you enjoy your next twenty years in the joint.

JANET: But...!

***(JAILBIRD ROCKO crawls out as JANET watches. Two prison cops enter from the other side of the stage.)***

COP 1: So he says, "Yeah, but where's my other shoe!"

COP 2: I've heard it before. Oh my gosh! Look. It's the O'Malley girl. I told you we had to watch that one more closely.

COP 1: Get her!

JANET: Wait! I... ***(Just as the cops grab JANET, the dream sequence begins again—all of the students come in, swirling and spinning. JANET grabs STUDENT 8.)*** What are you doing?

STUDENT 8: Another dream transition. Check out this funky noise.

***(HE makes another strange sound and swirls away. By the end of the transition, JANET is seated across from Regis. Someone holds an "applause" sign for the audience.)***

REGIS: Hello, and welcome back. I hope you enjoyed those fabulous words from our sponsors. I'm Regis Philbin and we're here with Janet O'Malley the plumber. She's one question away from one million dollars. This girl is dynamite! How ya doin', kid?

JANET: I'm fine, I guess. Wasn't I just in jail?

REGIS: I don't know, and frankly, I don't care. Now, you have done extremely well so far considering that the last fourteen questions have been about pipes, wrenches, water leaks, and cleaning agents.

JANET: Well, as you said, I am a plumber. Just like my dad was.

REGIS: I'm telling you, this girl is dynamite! What a fireball! Listen, if you ever want to get into the daytime talk show racket, I can get rid of Kelly Ripa faster than a Kathie Lee Gifford CD gets put into the discount bin at K-Mart.

JANET: I'll keep that in mind, thanks.

REGIS: Okay, Janet. One more question, and you still have your Phone a Friend Lifeline. Ready?

JANET: Ready as I'll ever be.

REGIS: Okay, here we go. For one million dollars. "Which of the following forms of algae is found on the Western coast of Australia?" Is it...

- A) Cyanophyta
- B) Rhodophyta
- C) Phaeophyta
- or D) Chlorophyta

JANET: You're kidding.

REGIS: I don't kid about one million smackers, Janet the Plumber.

JANET: I think I'm going to need that Lifeline.

REGIS: Who are you going to call?

JANET: I'm going to call my friend, Jackie.

REGIS: Okay, our friends at AT&T will call up your friend.

**(Ringing sound. DENISE steps out to the edge of the stage as SHE answers the phone.)**

DENISE: Hello?

REGIS: Hello, this is Regis Philbin from Who Wants to be a Millionaire.  
How are you?

DENISE: **(over the loud noise in the background)** Waitaminute,  
WHAT! No, I'm on the phone. I'm sorry, who is this?

REGIS: This is Regis Philbin and I'm here with your friend Janet, and  
she's one question away from one million dollars.

DENISE: OH, MY GOODNESS! Hey, Earl. EARL! Janet's on that  
millionaire show.

REGIS: Yes, yes, it's very good. Now, Janet, you'll have thirty seconds  
and they start now.

JANET: Denise? Where's Jackie?

DENISE: Me and Earl are house-sitting while Jackie goes on her second  
honeymoon. But I can answer your question. Go ahead, shoot.

JANET: Ah, okay. Which...

DENISE: Wait a second, let me put this on the TV. Where's that  
remote? EARL! Where'd you put the remote? Oh, well. Hey, how'd  
you get on this show, anyway? 'Cause I try, but I can never get  
through on the phone. Wow! Now, does Regis look older in person?  
'Cause my cousin once went to New York and thought she saw him  
getting into a cab, but it turned out to be this really old woman...

REGIS: All right! Time's up. Janet, if you win the million, I think the first  
thing you should buy is a new set of friends. **(laughs)** I'm just teasing.  
So do you have an answer?

JANET: Well, I was born in Michigan so I'll go with C.

REGIS: C, huh? Is that your final answer?

JANET: Why? Is it wrong?

REGIS: No, no. It's just that I have to ask it.

JANET: Okay, fine. I switch my answer to D and that's my final answer.

REGIS: I'm sorry, but that's wrong! Didn't you learn anything in biology?  
Get out, ya bum! She's a bum. But, not me. You love me, America.  
You need me. You can't get enough of me. I'M REGIS PHILBIN!

**(Scene change. STUDENT 8 twirls near JANET, who looks befuddled.)**

STUDENT 8: Know what I'm doing now?

JANET: It looks like another dreamy scene change.

STUDENT 8: (*slapping her on the back*) Now you're getting it. Check out this one.

**(HE makes another strange noise and twirls away. By the end of the scene change, JANET is seated as if driving a car. A COP approaches her "window.")**

COP: How's everything going, ma'am?

JANET: Besides losing at that Millionaire game, I'm fine, officer.

COP: Do you know why I pulled you over?

JANET: I have no idea.

COP: You ran that stop sign three blocks back.

JANET: Okay. Why don't you give me a ticket, and I'll be on my way. (*to herself*) Where ever that is.

COP: That's just like you kids today. Thinking that driving is a right, not a privilege. You don't care what the rules of the road are or why there are rules at all. You probably never paid attention in school when you were supposed to be learning about this sort of thing. Oh, no! "I'll get by on my looks." You kids. You just cruise around in your little cars not caring about anything.

JANET: I'm sorry?

COP: I bet you don't even know what Latin term road comes from.

JANET: I'm afraid you would win that bet, Officer.

COP: Huh. You also have a tail light out. That's another \$55.00. The answer was *strata*, by the way. Maybe you know who the earliest road builders were?

JANET: What is this all about?

COP: Tire pressure seems low. That's another \$25.00. And it was the Romans.

JANET: Wait, wait. Give me a chance.

COP: Fine. When did the US get the first paved roads?

JANET: 1956.

COP: Sweet heaven, I just don't.... No, it was not 1956. It was in the 1780's. Seat belt is a little twisted. Boy, is that gonna cost you.

JANET: Wait a minute. I don't think you can do this, can you?

COP: I can do whatever I want to ensure the safety of the other drivers by making sure ignorant-of-the-road-and-its-history scumbags like you are off the street.

JANET: Yeah, but is the point of these questions.... Hey, I am not a scumbag.

COP: Your mirrors aren't really lined up. I'm just gonna make the ticket an even thousand. You think about this the next time you decide to run a stop sign. And maybe you should brush up on your history a bit, huh?

**(Scene change. STUDENT 8 comes to JANET and makes a new sound in her ear.)**

JANET: I know, I know, a scene change. Leave me alone.

STUDENT 8: Hey, I'm an artist at this stuff.

**(HE makes the noise again as HE twirls away. For the new scene, JANET is seated next to ALICE.)**

JANET: **(mumbling to herself)** A thousand dollars? I don't have that kind of money.

ALICE: I knew that's what you were after. You don't love him as I do. You just want his money. I know your type all too well.

JANET: My type? Are you talking about the mesomorph thing?

ALICE: No. I'm talking about how you woo a man, then kill him in his sleep, and take all his money.

JANET: You must have me confused with someone else.

ALICE: I'm going to win this thing, so help me. And it shouldn't be too hard, what with your looks and all.

JANET: Excuse me?

ALICE: You, madam, are ugly.

JANET: That does it. I have no idea what's going on, but if this is some sort of a competition, you are going down, lady!

**(The SENATOR enters.)**

SENATOR: Er, uh, all right ladies. For a long time, I have been dating both of you. I had hoped to keep you two apart, but it seems as though my secretary is very underqualified when it comes to my appointment book.

SECRETARY: **(walks across stage)** I said I was sorry. Now drop it, Senator.

SENATOR: Now the time has come for me to choose one of you as my wife. But seeing as how both of you are very special to me, this will be the most difficult choice I have had to make in my life.

SECRETARY: That's easy to say when the only competition is the decision whether or not to super-size.

SENATOR: Why haven't I fired you yet?

SECRETARY: Because you'd miss me too much.

SENATOR: **(back to JANET and ALICE)** As I was saying, one of you will become my wife and...

ALICE: And I think I would be the better choice.

JANET: Hey, I have a lot to offer too, you know. Plus, if the sink leaks, we won't have to call anyone.

ALICE: How pedestrian.

JANET: Did I say anything about walking? Did I? Yeesh, pay attention.

SENATOR: Okay, okay. Now I need a wife who will be able to prepare all the state dinners. Every month I throw a party and invite all my closest friends. You will need to order an exact number of Cornish game hens because storage is a problem. Shipping is included with the price of the hens, but the boxes will be extra. The cost is \$1.25 per three hens purchased. If you purchase more than 25 hens, the boxes are free, but shipping becomes \$6.25 per 5 hens. However, the price of 8 hens is \$9.58 plus \$3.00 per box as well as the \$4.78 shipping on each bird. Tax is not included in these prices. I will need to know what the best deal is, for I am a very cheap man. Can you do this?

ALICE: Absolutely!

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