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University: A New Generation

By

JON JORY

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University: A New Generation

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SETTING: Each scene should have only absolutely necessary furniture. Scene changes are choreographed in sight. Can be done on a bare stage. Rolling doors can provide necessary entrances.

PRODUCTION NOTE: *The Genesis of Thought* may be omitted. Profanity may be changed throughout as needed.

University: A New Generation

Arrival

(JEAN, a young woman, stands on a university campus, arms extended, face to the sky.)

JEAN. I love this campus! *(She spins like a helicopter, does a couple of dance steps and then shouts.)* Yes, oh yes!

(Another young woman, PINK, sprints on.)

PINK. Are you all right?

JEAN. Oops, sorry. Really sorry.

PINK. What happened?

JEAN. OK, I'm embarrassed.

PINK. But you're all right?

JEAN. I kind of think I'm pretty sensational.

PINK. I thought you were like attacked or something.

JEAN. No. Just kind of first-day euphoric.

PINK. OK, now I'm embarrassed. I didn't mean to come off like a Marvel comic.

JEAN. Thanks for worrying, really. I got turned down by a couple of places. So I'm ...

PINK. Nice to see somebody celebrate.

JEAN. I'm Jean.

PINK. Pink. Pink like the color.

JEAN. Right. Didn't catch it.

PINK. Short for Pinkerton. You were on the massively boring campus tour earlier, right?

JEAN. Could have used an edit. But hey, impressive how the group leaders walked backwards when they toured you.

PINK. I have a friend who saw one of them fall in the fountain backwards.

JEAN. Be a nice regular feature. Are you excited?

PINK. In my case, it's more like being shanghaied.

JEAN. You mean like ...

PINK. Like the British Navy would grab people off the street, knock 'em on the head, and they'd wake up at sea on a Man o' War.

JEAN. You didn't want to?

PINK. I was going to walk the Inca Trail in Peru.

JEAN. Wow.

PINK. Not in my father's plans. He had me forcibly taken off a plane in a wild rumpus where I severely messed up a stewardess' hair and spit on a businessman. I got the full treatment though; I was taken off by Air Marshalls. I get his point though; he had saved for years to send me. Fate had its way.

JEAN. I guess you were meant to be here.

PINK. Meant to be here is a good way to put it. You?

JEAN. I'm from North Dakota.

PINK. So that's really a place, I thought they made it up?

JEAN. Yeah, it's a place. My dad's a flax farmer.

PINK. Oooo flax. What's flax?

JEAN. They use it in textiles. Pretty blue flowers though. I got involved with this guy, dropped out of high school for two years. Had a baby. Worked in the world's worst convenient store. Then my dad won the lottery pretty big. I went back to school and here I am.

PINK. What happened to the guy?

JEAN. He's serving time.

PINK. What kind of baby?

JEAN. Girl. Louellen Jean Practice.

PINK. Your last name is Practice?

JEAN. Practice. My mother is taking care of Louellen.

(A guy, KLON, enters. Skateboarder. He has blood running down his arm.)

KLON. Excuse me.

PINK. Whoa. What happened?

KLON. Little skateboard wipeout in the wrong place. Look, ummm, it's a puncture, maybe bleeding a little much, y'know? You have anything we could kinda tourniquet it up, y'know?

PINK. I got a bike cord. *(She hustles to get it from her backpack.)*

KLON *(to JEAN who is obviously upset)*. Don't freak. A couple stitches, I'll be good.

JEAN. I'm so sorry.

KLON. It's way stupid for you to be sorry.

PINK. Here. Lemme do it.

(He holds out his arm. PINK tourniquets it.)

KLON. OK, that hurts.

JEAN. Needs to be tight. Little more. OK, yeah, that gets it for the moment.

KLON. Perfect, man.

JEAN *(offers her scarf)*. Here. Clean up so you don't scare people.

KLON. This is way too nice.

JEAN. Please. *(She starts wiping off the blood.)*

PINK. She's from North Dakota, everybody is bloody there.

JEAN. That's maybe a little better.

KLON. Nah. This is aced out. You guys rock. I'm Klon, short for something you don't need to know.

PINK. Pink. The infirmary is straight down.

JEAN. Jean.

KLON. Sorry to bleed on you. Hey, I owe you guys a couple beers. You know where Slam is?

PINK. Who doesn't?

KLON. I bartend. I'm shaking there Thursday through Saturday. Drop by. *(To JEAN.)* They do down beer in Dakota, right?

JEAN. Seven nights a week.

KLON. OK then. *(Kisses PINK on the cheek.)* Thanks for the wrap. Seriously. *(He takes off.)*

PINK. Well, there's your first bloody college conquest.

JEAN. He kissed you.

PINK. Like I was his mother. Friday at Slam? Straight down Corbin. Ten or so?

JEAN. Sure.

PINK. How often do you talk to your kid?

JEAN. Every night.

PINK. Say hello for me. *(She kisses JEAN on the lips.)* Now that's how he should have kissed me. *(She exits.)*

JEAN *(alone)*. Well Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore.

(Two young men, ACTIVISTS #1-2 enter from opposite sides. They give flyers with flair.)

ACTIVIST #1. Hey.

JEAN. Hey.

ACTIVIST #2 (*from behind her*). Hey.

JEAN (*turning*). Hey.

ACTIVIST #1. Hey.

(She turns. ACTIVIST #1 slaps a flyer in her hand.)

ACTIVIST #1 (*cont'd*). Campus Republicans.

(ACTIVIST #2 taps her shoulder. She turns, he gives his flyer.)

ACTIVIST #2. Democrats. Meeting at nine.

ACTIVIST #1. Meeting at eight.

(ACTIVIST #3, a girl, appears.)

ACTIVIST #3. Vegetarians. (*Gives JEAN a flyer.*) Save the animals.

(ACTIVISTS #1-3 exit as ACTIVISTS #4-6 enter. Two are women, one is a man.)

ACTIVIST #4. Anarchists. (*Flyer.*) We don't have meetings.

ACTIVIST #5. Libertarians. (*Flyer.*) Do whatever.

ACTIVIST #6. Green Party. (*Flyer.*) Save the planet at ten.

(ACTIVISTS #4-6 exit. PLACARD LADY races on with a placard on a stick. It says, "Don't do anything.")

PLACARD LADY. Benign neglect. Meeting at dawn.

(PLACARD LADY hands JEAN the sign and races off. JEAN is confused, holding the sign. A GUY comes on.)

GUY. Don't do anything?! Are you crazy?

JEAN. No, I ...

GUY. Existentialism teaches us that we are defined only by what we do, not what we think. An education is to get ready to do. (*Grabs sign.*) Pull yourself together, girl.

(GUY races off. A GIRL races on.)

GIRL. Meet me here at eleven.

JEAN. Why?

GIRL. Illegal substances.

(GIRL races off. FOOTBALL PLAYER races on.)

FOOTBALL PLAYER. You think I'm a dumb jock, right? Wouldn't give me a second look, right? You intellectuals are guilty of muscular prejudice; just because I'm ripped, I'm wrong? Just because my body is my temple and the NFL sent three scouts in one day to offer me untold moolah, you don't think I understand moral equivalence, game theory, plate tectonics, statistical mechanics, heliocentrism, multiverse theory, electrical robotics? (*Goes down on one knee.*) Love me. I need reassurance. I need to be needed. I need you to massage my temples.

JEAN. But ...

FOOTBALL PLAYER (*stands up*). Meet me at one at the campus planetarium. It will be tumultuous, rumbustious, hot and steamy. (*Rushes off.*) Don't hate me because I'm beautiful! (*He's gone.*)

JEAN. And it's only day one.

(An old woman, PROFESSOR, has entered with a walker. She stops in front of JEAN.)

PROFESSOR. I am Professor Schlittschuhlaufenzwimmer.

What precisely is the Socratic Method?

JEAN. I'm afraid I don't know.

PROFESSOR (*exiting*). Then screw off.

(*An ANGEL enters.*)

ANGEL. Hello.

JEAN. Hello.

ANGEL. I am your guardian angel, Jean. You need no longer fear.

JEAN. I'm fine actually.

ANGEL (*gently smiling*). Ah, but you're not Jean, you are, in fact, a perfect tumult of insecurities. Will I fit in? Can I do the work, will I find a roommate who will clean up in the kitchen, am I worthy of love, will I be prepared for the real world, what will I do about a hundred and thirty thousand in student debt, do I need a root canal?

JEAN. Do I?

ANGEL. Yes, Jean, you do. But all will be well. I'll do it tonight with my angelic cordless drill, but you will need to wash the blood out of your pillowcase.

JEAN. That's horrible.

ANGEL. All will be well. I will guard your every step here at this second-rate university. Don't forget to floss. (*Exits.*)

JEAN. Conceivably, I'm getting too much into my head.

(*GIRLS #1-3 rush on.*)

GIRL #1. Could you possibly help us?

GIRL #2. We're really in a bind.

GIRL #3. We are actually, no kidding around, begging you.

GIRL #1. Please.

JEAN. What's up?

GIRL #2. We are taking this class in Greek literature.

GIRL #3. From Sophocles to Margarita Karapanou.

GIRL #1. Really hard.

GIRL #3. Kind of death on toast.

GIRL #2. And we were assigned to do this Greek chorus thing

...

GIRL #3. From *The Bacchae*.

GIRL #2. Whatever that is.

GIRL #1. And there are four of us.

GIRL #2. But one of us is kind of creepy and drugged out.

GIRL #3. And she is never in class, so we've never done it
out loud ...

GIRL #1. And we have to do it in fifteen minutes ...

GIRL #3. And we are literally blowing a fuse.

GIRL #2. Kapow!

GIRL #1. So would you do it once so we can get the four
voice thing?

JEAN. I guess.

GIRL #3. Fabulous (*Hands her a paperback.*) Right here on
page 124.

GIRL #1. We have to like stand in a group.

(They drag JEAN over.)

GIRL #1 (*cont'd*). OK, OK, everybody ready?

GIRL #2. Ready to roll.

GIRL #1. On three. One, two, three.

(They are memorized. JEAN reads from the paperback. They are pretty terrific.)

ALL. My love is in the mountains

Limp upon the ground he

Sinks. The revel races,

Vested in his fawn skin, he

Hunts the goat and kills it ...

Ecstasy, the raw

Flesh ... And to mountains

Of Phrygia, of Lydia

He rushes. He is Dionysus!

(It crescendos. A tiny pause and then the three rush off.)

GIRL #1. Bye.

GIRL #2. Wish us luck.

GIRL #3. You're super duper!

(JEAN stands looking after them. She laughs and shakes her head.)

JEAN. I fucking love it here.

(Blackout.)

The Class

(A teacher's office. A desk, two chairs. The TEACHER reads a graphic novel. A knock at the door.)

TEACHER. Ummm, just a minute please. *(Puts novel down. Knock is repeated.)* Hold on a sec. *(Starts putting on shoes. Knock.)* Kindly hold your rampaging horses. *(Knock. With one shoe in hand, he opens the door.)* Enough knocking.

ELLEN. Uh-oh.

TEACHER. Uh-oh what?

ELLEN. Maybe a little irritable.

TEACHER. Maybe a little precipitous.

ELLEN. Wow.

TEACHER. I'm not sure wow qualifies as a word.

ELLEN. It's in the Oxford dictionary. Cashew?

TEACHER. Thanks.

ELLEN. Remember when you used the word "hagiography" in class?

TEACHER. I don't really.

ELLEN. What exactly does it mean?

TEACHER. Hagiography?

ELLEN. Hagiography.

TEACHER. From the Greek, "Hagio," ummm, the uh first meaning as opposed to ... ummm.

ELLEN. Wow.

TEACHER. Elizabeth, please stop saying ...

ELLEN. I'm not Elizabeth.

TEACHER. Terribly sorry.

ELLEN. No prob. *(A pause.)*

TEACHER. I'm afraid I'll have to ask your name.

ELLEN. You don't know who I am?

TEACHER. Actually, I know perfectly well who you are,
I've just misplaced your name.

ELLEN. I've been in two of your acting classes.

TEACHER. You have.

ELLEN. And then we had an affair. (*A moment.*) Joking.

TEACHER. What is your name?

ELLEN. You got the first letter right.

TEACHER. Please.

ELLEN. Ellen.

TEACHER (*slapping forehead*). Right. I knew that.

ELLEN. But that's not my name.

TEACHER. What?

ELLEN. Joking. (*Points at herself.*) Ellen. I usually slouched
in the first row wearing jeans and an off the shoulder blouse.

TEACHER. Yes.

ELLEN. You remember my blouse?

TEACHER. How can I help you?

ELLEN. You're holding a shoe.

TEACHER. Yes.

ELLEN. Is it a hobby?

TEACHER. Ellen, what can I do for you this morning?

ELLEN. We didn't really have an affair.

TEACHER. Correct.

ELLEN. These are your office hours, right?

TEACHER. Yes, they are.

ELLEN. May I sit down?

TEACHER. Terribly sorry. Of course you can.

ELLEN. Everything looks so ... Guatemalan.