

Exit Stage Riley

a farce by  
Deanna Strasse

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### **Synopsis**

The Tammy Awards.

Every drama student dreams of attending but to win a Tammy Award is the ultimate goal.

The coveted GOAT Acting Award comes with a full scholarship and eternal glory. All eyes are on the elusive and charismatic Riley Thane to win for her one-woman show *Thane's the Thing*.

The less-than-impressive Durschnitt High School Drama Club is also taking a trip to Madison in order to attend the awards and the club's treasurer, the devastatingly shy Janet has a big secret: she is secretly Riley Thane. To accept the GOAT Award would mean her college career is set, but it also risks exposing her true identity. Add to the mix an aspiring playwright, desperate to meet Riley, a couple of senior divas, two drama coaches battling it out for domination, and more! Can Janet and her cohorts keep her secret safe? Find out in this over-the-top farcical romp.

### **Characters**

\* **Janet**, she/her/hers, about 17, incredibly shy but has a big secret

\* **Tabi**, she/her/hers, 15-18, Janet's best friend who has no problem speaking her mind

\* **Olivia**, she/her/hers, 17-18, the president of the Durschnitt Drama Club, self-absorbed

\* **Daniel**, he/him/his, 14-18, the vice president of the Durschnitt Drama Club, devoted to Olivia

\* **Ms Arie**, she/her/hers, 20s-60s, the quirky drama director at Durschnitt High School

\* **Mr. Beau**, he/him/his, 20s-60s, the drama director at Washington Middle School, Arie's arch nemesis

\* **Bre**, she/her/hers, 19-20, a former GOAT winner who is the face of the Tammy Awards

\* **Alex**, they/them/theirs, 14-18, a member of the Durschnitt Drama Troupe

\* **Chester**, he/him/his, 13, a young playwright who is utterly obsessed with Riley

\* **Hotel employee**, they/them/theirs, 15-19, bored out of their mind and tired of these darn theatre kids

*There is also a small ensemble of other theatre students, composed of at least four actors.*

*Note: The roles of Alex, the hotel employee, and the student ensemble can be played by a performer of any gender or gender identity. The script has provided these characters with they/them/their pronouns but the producing theatre may adjust pronouns as needed to better reflect the cast.*

**Production History**

*Exit Stage Riley* was commissioned for The Box Theatre Co. in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. It received its world premiere in September 2023. Lauren Heinen and Allison Chicorel directed and the cast included:

Janet.....Maddie Gosa  
 Tabi.....Addie Washburn  
 Ms. Arie.....Alannah McGlocklin  
 Mr. Beau.....Lucas Miller  
 Olivia.....Adeline Bergholz-Gleason  
 Chester.....Ryan Stepanski  
 Daniel.....Max Huber  
 Bre.....Kayla Malzahn  
 Alex.....Julia Baginski  
 Hotel Employee...Calder Williams

This one is dedicated to

*Allison Chicorel*

"A teacher affects eternity; they can never tell where their  
influence stops."

-Henry B. Adams

**PROLOGUE**

*Lights up on an empty stage. Suddenly, several students enter in a very dramatic manner. While they aren't singing, everything about their demeanor and movement feels like a musical number.*

**STUDENT 1**

Have you heard?

**STUDENT 2**

Yes, I've heard!

**STUDENT 1**

Is it time?

**STUDENT 2**

Almost!

**STUDENT 3**

I simply can't wait!

**STUDENT 4**

What? What is it? It's almost time for what?!

**ALL STUDENTS**

They're going to announce the nominations!

**STUDENT 4**

Nominations? For what?

**ALL STUDENTS**

For the Tammy Awards!

*(Bre enters and addresses the audience.)*

**BRE**

Ah, yes. It's that magical time of year. Where the theatre students seem just a bit more preoccupied and passionate than usual. The only thing that even comes close to this level of excitement is that trip to a local diner following your final performance. But even that isn't the same. That evening is filled with nostalgia for the good times, hope for the future, and a poor waiter who is being asked to cut the check seventeen ways. Today is a different kind of excitement. It's heavier...dare I say, darker. Today is the day that the Tammy Nominations are announced.

*(At the mere sounds of the word "Tammy", the students begin to chant "Tammy" and walk around in an almost trance-like state. As Bre begins to address the audience again, the chanting dies down.)*

**BRE (CONT'D)**

The Tammy Awards are the oldest and most accredited Educational Theatre Awards Program. Once a year, following the end of the theatrical season, we recognize and honor our state's public, private, and home school theatre departments.

*(The other students come forward, joining in the explanation with Bre.)*

**STUDENT 1**

The Tammy Awards recognize a variety of categories including Best Actress in a Leading Role, Best Choreography, Best Lighting Design, Best Dramaturgical Work, Best Ensemble, and so much more.

**STUDENT 2**

We hold our annual ceremony every year in Madison as a fun and communal way to celebrate the great artists of tomorrow.

**BRE**

I'm Bre Rossmiller, student chair-person of The Tammy Awards and it is my great honor to announce this years' nominees! Unlike some other, more restrictive, theatre award ceremonies, the Tammy Awards are geared towards all students in K through 12th grade.

**STUDENT 3**

Just last year, the highly coveted "Best Revival of a Musical" honor was awarded to Little Learners Early Development School for their incredible production of *Hair*.

**STUDENT 4**

While all of the awards are special and meaningful, the main event continues to be the GOAT Award. That's right! The Greatest-of-All-Time Award!

*(The other students dance in, showing off a trophy that is, of course, shaped like a goat. Bre holds it high and the other students admire it with an almost insane love.)*

**STUDENT 4 (CONT'D)**

The winner of this highly coveted honor has shown themselves to be the best of the best this past season. They stood out from the crowd in awe-inspiring and jaw-dropping ways. We were unable to look away from them.

**STUDENT 1**

Talent and drive of that degree demands recognition. It also demands a full ride scholarship so that this superstar can continue to break ground and inspire us. Specifically, this award goes to a student in their final year of school or about to start their final year, ready for college and ready to continue their theatrical studies.

**BRE**

As a former GOAT Award recipient, I can personally attest to the impact that this honor - nay, this privilege! - bestows. To get the evening started, we will begin with this year's four GOAT Award nominees. In no particular order...

**STUDENT 1**

from Green Bay High School, Spencer Johnson for his performance as Heathcliffe in *Wuthering Heights*!

**STUDENT 2**

from Cudahy High School, Nancy Polowitz for her performance as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*!

**STUDENT 3**

from Madison East High School, Robin Dober in their directorial debut of *Rumors*!

**STUDENT 4:**

and from "Homeschooled" Riley Thane for her one-woman show *Thane's the Thing*!

**BRE**

This is truly a spectacular group of artists and while it is an honor just to be nominated, as the name implies...there can only be one Greatest-of-All-Time. As a former GOAT Award recipient, I can tell you that personally. Now, we'll move on to our next category: Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Play.

*(The focus shifts. In the background Janet emerges. Janet has mousy brown hair, wears thick glasses, and exudes things like "fear" and "anxiety". Bre continues to talk and the students continue to hang on her every word, but time slows down for Janet who looks absolutely terrified. She grabs her inhaler and takes a puff as the lights go down.)*

**ACT 1, SCENE 1**

*Several students (including Tabi and Alex) stand across an otherwise barren stage. They all wear silly hats that cover their eyes. Tabi is the last to speak and attempts to recite some lines of Shakespeare while Olivia, Daniel, and others heckle her from offstage.*

**TABI**

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution-

**OLIVIA**

*(Off)*

Boo!



**DANIEL**

*(Off)*  
You're not funny!

*(The heckling clearly makes Tabi angry, but she tries her best to push through.)*

**TABI**

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought-

**STUDENT 1**

*(Off)*  
You call that acting? You wouldn't know acting if it slapped you in the face!

**TABI**

*(Quickly)*  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.-Soft you now-

**STUDENT 1**

*(Off)*  
Get off the stage!

**OLIVIA**

*(Mocking Tabi, off)*  
"Oooh! Look at me! I'm Tabi, and I think I'm an actor!"

**DANIEL**

*(Off)*  
You're a disgrace!

**TABI**

The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd!  
*(Done with the lines)*  
There! I did it! Are we done?

**OLIVIA**

*(Off)*  
I say when we're done, rookie!

*(Whispers are heard.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

Oh. Okay. We're done.

*(The stage lights go out and fluresant lights flicker on, revealing several chairs in a semicircle, as well as an ornate throne-like chair behind a table. A group of junior and senior actors including Janet, Olivia, and Daniel enter. Along with them comes Ms Arie, their drama advisor.)*

*Some of the students guide the pledges towards chairs but keep them standing and blind-folded. Oliva stands before the throne-like chair and addresses the pledges.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

Pledges, you may now sit.

*(The "pledges" all sit. It's a little awkward as they still can't see and are uncoordinated.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

You have passed your initiation, and, thus, you are now officially varsity members of the Durchschnitt High School Drama Club. With this honor comes great responsibility. We expect great things from you. As Neil Simon once said, "Act well your part. There all the honor lies."

**TABI**

Neil Simon didn't say that-

**OLIVIA**

Silence! You may now remove your hats!

*(The pledges do so and the upperclassmen applaud. Arie is crying a little. Daniel passes her a tissue.)*

**ARIE**

Oh, thank you, Daniel. Forgive me. I always get a little weepy at these initiation ceremonies. I remember when you were all freshmen and now look at you.

*(Cries some more)*

Servants of Dionysus, this is a momentous moment for you. This is your first real step towards greatness. This morning, you were just students, but now...you are artists. The future of the theatre depends on you. As Olivia so astutely put it: we expect great things from you. I remember my initiation like it was yesterday. I performed twenty lines from King Lear and Erik Julian told me that I couldn't act my way out of a wet paper bag. He was joking, of course. Ahhh, the heckling process! I'm sorry you all had to go through that, but don't you feel stronger now that you've come out the other end? You're all so brave. Oh, I'm sorry, Olivia. I'm rambling!

**OLIVIA**

I'm used to it, Ms Arie.

**TABI**

So...what? Is there cake now or something?

**DANIEL**

Tabi! Shush!

**OLIVIA**

Thank you, Daniel. Now that our pledges are full-fledged members, it's time for their first official varsity members meeting. We hold meetings twice a month, and all members are required to join.

*(The upperclassmen all take their seats. Olivia (obviously) sits on the throne.)*

**TABI**

You have meetings twice a month? You couldn't have told us that before?

**DANIEL**

Of course not! Everything that we do as the varsity theatre members is secret.

*(Olivia bangs a gavel on the table.)*

**OLIVIA**

I, Olivia Hayword, president, call this meeting to order. In attendance is, of course, Ms. Arie, our advisor, our vice president, Daniel Roma, and our secretary, Janet Straid. Janet? Janet?

*(Janet stands in the back, taking notes on her pad feverishly. She didn't even notice Olivia calling her name.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

Janet!

*(Janet looks up and is startled to see everyone is looking at her.)*

**JANET**

Oh. Right.

*(She takes her seat behind the table and continues to take notes.)*

**OLIVIA**

And...Janet Straid, our secretary. We have a lot to cover today, people, so let's begin.

**TABI**

And then we'll have cake?

**OLIVIA**

Tabi, you're new so you don't know how things work around here so I'll be lenient with you this time. However, you need to learn that you can't just talk whenever you want to. I, the president, have to acknowledge you. Understand?

**TABI**

But there will be cake, right? I was promised cake.

**OLIVIA**

Tabi, I don't acknowledge you. You can't speak. I acknowledge my vice president, Daniel, who will now remind us of our last meeting's minutes. Daniel, I acknowledge you.

*(Olivia sits and Daniel rises.)*

**ALEX**

Shouldn't the secretary go over the minutes?

**JANET**

Uh-

**DANIEL**

Janet doesn't want to talk. Anyway, thank you, Olivia. I acknowledge you acknowledging me. At our last meeting held on Tuesday, April 25th from approximately 3pm until 5:45pm, we began our time together with acknowledging who all was in attendance which was, of course, our president Olivia, myself, Ms Arie, Janet, Marion, Bobby, Tristen-

**TABI**

Seriously? You're just going to name off everyone who was there?

**OLIVIA**

I don't acknowledge you.

**ARIE**

You can skip ahead a bit, Daniel. We do have a lot of important things to cover today.

**DANIEL**

Very well. Following attendance, Olivia welcomed us and turned the floor over to me where I reviewed the minutes from our previous meeting held on Tuesday, April 11th from approximately-

*(Tabi lets out a dramatic groan.)*

**OLIVIA**

Tabi, I swear to goodness if you don't-

**ARIE**

Olivia. Calm voice. We don't want another *On Golden Pond* episode, do we?

**OLIVIA**

Ms Arie, thank you for your concern, but I assure you that I can handle myself.

*(She clearly can't handle herself.)*

All I am asking is that TABI handle herself! Do you think you can do that, Tabi? Do you?

*(Everything is very tense for a second and then, for the first time, Janet speaks...)*

**JANET**

If I may, uh, Daniel - if it's not too much trouble - I acknowledge that Olivia hasn't acknowledged me, but for time's sake...perhaps the most important thing covered at the last meeting was that we agreed on next season.

*(A beat)*

I'm just saying.

*(She goes back to her notebook.)*

**ARIE**

An excellent idea, Janet. Thank you for that.

**DANIEL**

Yes. A very excellent idea. After a significant amount of debate, we are happy to announce next year's show lineup. Our season starts off with *Charley's Aunt*, followed by *Guys and Dolls*, and we go out with a bang with...*Phantom of the Opera*.

*(Everyone gasps.)*

**DANIEL (CONT'D)**

The play. Not the musical.

*(Everyone sighs in disappointment.)*

**ARIE**

This script is so good! I think it's better than the musical!

*(Daniel sits and Olivia rises.)*

**OLIVIA**

Thank you for that recount of our last meeting, Daniel. This brings us to our new order of business.

*(She can't contain her excitement)*

I'm sure you all heard, but, in case you haven't, let me be the one to shower you with this amazing news: Durchschnitt High School Drama Club has been nominated for a Tammy Award!

*(Everyone cheers.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

Ms Arie has informed us that this is the first time the club has ever been nominated for one.

**ARIE**

Oh, darlings! This is monumental! Positively monumental, students! You all should be so very proud of yourselves for your hard work and dedication.

*(Alex raises their hand.)*

**OLIVIA**

Yes, Alex. I acknowledge you.

**ALEX**

What were we nominated for?

**OLIVIA**

Oh, it's a great category.

**ALEX**

Like...best actress?

**OLIVIA**

No.

**ALEX**

Directing?

**OLIVIA**

No.

**ALEX**

Costume design?

**OLIVIA**

Alex, I don't acknowledge you anymore. Please sit down.

*(To the group)*

It's vital to remember that all the categories in an awards show such as The Tammys are important. People like to give attention to the big categories like "Best Actor" or "Best Director", but there are a wide variety of categories so that everyone can shine.

**TABI**

What were we nominated for, Olivia?

*(Olivia glares at Tabi and is about to speak when Arie steps in-)*

**ARIE**

"Best Sound Design in a One Act Showcase at a Public High School".

*(They all stare at her.)*

**TABI**

That's a category?

**ARIE**

It sure is! And we are in the running for it!

**TABI**

How many categories are in this awards show anyway?

**ARIE**

Seventy-six.

**TABI**

There are seventy-six categories?

**ARIE**

Yes! And we're nominated for one of them! Oh, Olivia, tell them the best part!

**OLIVIA**

We're taking a field trip! For anyone who would like to attend, we are going to Madison for the actual ceremony. We will arrive Friday night and then spend the majority of Saturday attending various workshops, hosted by the Tammy Awards. The hotel we are planning to stay at is directly across the street from the theatre where the awards take place and is the location of the workshops. We encourage you all to join us and support Durchschnitt Drama Club! Ms Arie has given me the esteemed privilege of accepting the award - should we win, of course. As varsity members, you are encouraged to attend, but if you can't make it, we'll understand.

*(So very passive aggressive)*

We know that the most devoted of our members will find a way to make it, but we completely understand if you have something "more important" to do than represent your fellow artists and your school as a whole.

**ARIE**

The more, the merrier! That's what Olivia is trying to say.

*(She hands out forms to all the students.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

Here is all the information. Please share it with your parents or guardians. There is a small cost, but we are still selling those candy bars in order to offset it so, again, the more you sell, the more people we can fund to attend. This is an overnight stay. I will need these permission slips back ASAP!

**ALEX**

*(To Olivia)*

I'm totally going to be there! It sounds like so much fun! Maybe we could share a hotel room, Olivia!

**OLIVIA**

Yeah. Probably not. I'm sharing a room with Riley Thane.

**ALEX**

What?! No way!

*(Janet begins to silently panic. And then she starts wheezing. She grabs her inhaler and takes a deep breath.)*

**ARIE**

Are you alright, Janet?

*(Unable to speak, Janet just gives her a thumbs up.)*

**DANIEL**

Olivia! You know Riley Thane?

**OLIVIA**

Of course! We go way back.

**ALEX**

Oh, my gosh.

**DANIEL**

That is so cool!

**ALEX**

I saw her show last January. It was amazing! She just commands the stage. You'd think that you'd get bored looking at one actor for a whole play, but Riley was simply spellbinding! You can't look away from her.

**OLIVIA**

Riley told me that she actually doesn't like it when people who aren't her friends call her by her first name. Seeing as you are not her friend, Alex, you need to refer to her as Ms. Thane.

**ALEX**

Oh my gosh. I'm so sorry. Ms. Thane, wherever you are, I'm so sorry!

**ARIE**

Ms. Thane is a true artist. I also saw her show at the Dixon Library. She's nominated for the GOAT Award, you know.

**DANIEL**

Of course she's going to win it!

**ARIE**

You never can tell with these things, Daniel. But just being nominated is amazing. I was nominated for the GOAT award, you know.



*(Olivia and Daniel roll their eyes, having heard this story many times.)*

**ALEX**

No way! Really, Ms. Arie?

**ARIE**

Oh, yes. My junior year. I played the titular character in my high school's ground-breaking production of *Doctor Faustus*.

*(Arie takes this opportunity to relive the glory days. She rises and begins to recite lines.)*

**ARIE: (CONT'D)**

If we say that we have no sin,  
We deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us.  
Why then belike we must sin,  
And so consequently die.  
Ay, we must die an everlasting death!

*(Olivia, Janet, Alex, Tabi, Daniel, and some of the other students applaud politely. Arie, of course, takes a dramatic bow and then sits down.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

But that was a very long time ago. Time marches on, and a new crop of artists must spread their wings. Maybe you could introduce us all to Ms. Thane, Olivia.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, I'll see. But Riley is very selective in who she spends time with.

**TABI**

If she hangs out with you, she can't be that selective.

**OLIVIA**

I don't acknowledge you, Tabi!

**TABI**

I don't care! Now where is my cake!?

**OLIVIA**

Will you shut up about the cake?!

*(Olivia looks like she's about to explode when Janet steps rises.)*

**JANET**

I acknowledge that you have not acknowledged me, Olivia, but Tabi does bring up an excellent point. Uh, the cake is an ice cream cake. Uh, yes, there is cake and perhaps we should cut it up now rather than later...seeing as it is ice cream...and we don't want it to...uh...ya know...melt.

*(Janet quickly sits down.)*

**OLIVIA**

I see your point, Janet. We will adjourn for ten minutes so that Tabi can have her cake. We can continue this conversation afterwards.

**ARIE**

Into my classroom, little artists! Cake awaits!

*(Arie leads everyone out. Janet, however, stays behind to clean up a bit. Upon seeing this, Tabi stays behind as well.)*

**TABI**

Don't you want cake, Janet?

*(Janet is wiping down the throne-like chair that Olivia was sitting in.)*

**JANET**

Yeah. Uh...just a minute. Olivia wanted to sit in this chair rather than a folding chair. It's kind of an antique so I'm just...

*(She shakes the chair a bit.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

It just needs to be tightened. Go get cake, Tabi. I just need to grab a screwdriver.

**TABI**

Is that part of your duties? As the secretary?

**JANET**

No. I just noticed that some of the chairs in our storage are quite nice and they need a little love. We need to take care of them, otherwise we won't have them for later productions.

*(Janet retrieves a tool box.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

Tabi, really. Go have cake.

**TABI**

I like cake as much as the next person, but I mostly just didn't want to listen to Olivia talk anymore. Let me help you.

*(Janet smiles and begins looking through the tool box. A terrifying thought comes over Janet and she freezes before grabbing her inhaler again and taking a puff.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Janet, what's wrong?

**JANET**

*(Her voice squeaking)*

Nothing.

**TABI**

I think that's the fourth time you've reached for that inhaler in the last two hours.

**JANET**

My lungs-

**TABI**

Is your asthma bad again?

**JANET**

Yes. No. I don't know.

*(She continues to dig through the toolbox, looking for a screwdriver. Tabi sits next to her friend.)*

**TABI**

If something is bothering you, you can talk to me, Janet. I'm not those pretentious jerks. We're friends, remember?

*(Janet smiles but doesn't make eye contact with Tabi. Tabi looks into the toolbox and immediately finds the screwdriver.)*

**JANET**

Thanks.

*(Janet accepts it and begins working on the chair. After she's done, she continues to clean up the area.)*

**TABI**

That was really awesome what you did just now: when you suggested to Daniel that he could announce the upcoming season. You stopped a blowout between me and Olivia AND you stopped Daniel from prattling. I mean it. I'm really proud of you. You spoke in public! Gosh, it took weeks for you to open up to me and now you're actually talking in front of groups? That's awesome, Janet.

**JANET**

Thanks, Tabi.

**TABI**

You know, if it weren't for your shyness, you could be running this joint.

**JANET**

*(Laughing)*

No, I couldn't.

**TABI**

Yes, you could!

**JANET**

Don't be ridiculous.

**TABI**

Janet, why are you a part of the Drama Club?

**JANET**

*(Shrugs)*

Because it's fun, I guess.

**TABI**

That's right! Because it's fun.

*(Tabi points in the direction that the other students left.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

And they do it because they like the spotlight. If you were enrolled here full time, you'd be the president of this club. Goodness knows I wish I had some classes with you. Why do you have to be home-schooled, anyway?

**JANET**

It has its pros and cons. There are certain things that I can't learn from home like PE or chemistry so I come here. But otherwise, I like the quietness of being at home and learning how I want to learn.

*(She stares around the stage.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

There's so much pressure here.

**TABI**

You're telling me. But, given enough time, you would adapt. And this drama club would be better off with you as its president.

**JANET**

No, it wouldn't. Olivia is a leader. I'm...not a leader.

**TABI**

Olivia is a leading lady. That doesn't make her a leader. She looks the part, but she doesn't care about any of us. You think that just because you're not an actor, that means you can't be the president?

**JANET**

I think because I get a panic attack whenever I have to talk in front of people is why I wouldn't be a good leader. I like being the person behind the scenes who helps the leader or the leading lady get the job done. I'm...I'm better at that.

**TABI**

Janet, when the drama club walked in the homecoming parade, and it started to rain, but there was only so much room in Ms Arie's car, who gave up her seat so that the new freshman could ride back to the school? It wasn't Olivia. When we did *The Music Man* and Alex cut their finger mid-Shipooopi, who dressed up like a tree and tap danced their way onto the set to give her a band-aid? It wasn't Olivia. And, finally, during the Night of One Acts last fall, when right before the house opened and Ms. Arie realized that she had forgotten to buy crepe hair for Daniel's beard, who cut out a hunk of her own hair because she knew that it matched Daniel's wig perfectly? It wasn't Olivia. It was you. You care about this place.

**JANET**

I do. I love the theatre. It's scary, but it's also safe, you know? You can be whoever you want to be and try new things and be a part of a team and...it's great. But...

*(Somewhat somberly)*

"Act well your part; there all the honors lie." I know my part.

**TABI**

Who said that? That "Act well your part" line?

**JANET**

Alexander Pope.

**TABI**

*(Laughing)*

Not Neil Simon.

**JANET**

*(Laughing)*

Definitely not Neil Simon.

**TABI**

Are you going to those stupid Tammy Awards?

*(Janet averts her gaze.)*

**JANET**

I...I don't know.

**TABI**

I'm not. It sounds dumb. You know who gets nominated for these things? The schools with the biggest budgets.

Not the best artists. Not the most talented. Just the schools who can afford pyrotechnics and rotating sets.

**JANET**

I hear that Riley Thane had a pretty simplistic set.

**TABI**

Ugh! Riley Thane! Riley Thane! Riley Thane! Who the heck cares? Her parents probably paid for everything. I bet she's really rich. I bet she didn't even actually write that show.

**JANET**

I think she did.

**TABI**

Don't tell me that you're obsessed with her, too.

**JANET**

I wouldn't say obsessed with her, but I hear she's very good.

**TABI**

That doesn't mean she's the be-all-end-all of theatre. The trouble with these competitions is that they make everything into a, well, a competition! Why does there need to be a "best"? Why can't we just do theatre and leave it at that?

*(Janet doesn't seem to be paying attention. She's lost in thought. Tabi notices this and softens a bit.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

But, ya know, if you want to go, don't let me stop you, Janet. I think it's just dumb pageantry, but if you can get something out of it, cool. I guess.

*(Janet looks like she's on the verge of exploding. There's a pause and then she suddenly shouts.)*

**JANET**

Tabi, I need to tell you something!

**TABI**

I knew that something was bothering you. What is it? You can tell me anything. Do I need to kick someone in the shins?

**JANET**

What? No - no shin-kicking! It's just that...okay, this is going to sound absurd and you're not going to believe me so just listen all the way through before you react, okay?

**TABI**

Okay.

*(A dramatic pause.)*

**JANET**

I am Riley Thane.

*(A pause. Tabi is stoic.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

You're not reacting.

**TABI**

You told me not to react until I heard all the facts.

**JANET**

Well, I was expecting some kind of reaction.

**TABI**

It's partially because I have no idea HOW to react to that. Do I laugh? Do I gasp? Do I just stare in shock? I'm feeling "stare in shock" is my best bet so that's what I'm going to do.

*(She stares in shock at Janet.)*

**JANET**

It's a very complicated situation.

**TABI**

*(Still in shock)*

I bet. Tell me everything.

**JANET**

Well, I guess it started when I wanted to write a play. I don't know. You read enough plays, and you start getting ideas for your own. It was just a pipe-dream. Just a thought I had. But I started to write. It was just for fun. It's not like I thought that I would perform it. I've never considered myself an actor, obviously. It was just fun to write. But then I ended up really liking what I wrote. It's an epic story of this young woman: Riley Thane. What a name! Riley Thane! She's cool! She's daring! She tries things and doesn't mind getting messy. She's the kind of person who would roller blade off a dock, into sea lion-infested waters just to see what it was like. She loves the feeling of being alive! She's outlandish and dramatic and says what she wants when she wants to! In short, she's everything I'm not. And, well...I came to really like Riley. I liked being Riley. I would work on the show, reciting all of her monologues, and I guess I got a little carried away. My mom works at the library and she suggested that I put on a show. So...I did. I just wanted to do it for myself, but people came. At first, I was terrified at the thought of performing, but then I thought, "I don't need to perform. Riley does!" You understand? I became Riley instead of Janet. I took my name out of the program and everything. Nobody needed to know who Janet was. They just needed to know Riley.

It went from a piece of fiction to a performed memoir. And it was a big success. And things have gotten out of control. And now I'm here and everyone loves Riley so much that she was nominated for that GOAT Award and that's amazing, but also... ahhhhh! I'm not Riley! I'm just Janet! And Janet can barely string two words together when she's in front of other people let alone perform! Janet isn't an actor. That's Riley. And I mean, I've technically lied because Riley isn't real. So Riley can't win the award, can she? I just...I just...I don't know what to do, Tabi!

*(A pause)*

Okay. You can react now.

*(Tabi tries to choose her words carefully.)*

**TABI**

Okay. Okay. Okay. You're Riley Thane?

**JANET**

Yes.

*(A dramatic pause.)*

**TABI**

Holy Saint Genesius! You're Riley Thane! That's amazing, Janet! You are literally the coolest person I know!

*(She runs at Janet, hugging her.)*

**JANET**

I thought you hated Riley.

**TABI**

That's when I thought she was a snob. Janet, you could win a full scholarship!

**JANET**

You're not listening. It's not me they want. It's Riley.

**TABI**

But you are Riley.

**JANET**

No, I'm not.

**TABI**

Yes, you are. She may be an alter ego, but she's one that you created. She's a part of you. You've got to go to that awards ceremony now. You could go to college for free!

*(A beat)*

So Olivia was lying before when she said that she knew Riley Thane?



**JANET**

Yes! I didn't know how to react to that. I can say without hesitation that Riley and Olivia have never met. No one has met Riley! She never talked to anyone after the show. She only really existed on the stage.

**TABI**

No wonder you've been so anxious lately. That's a big secret.

**JANET**

Oh, I wish I hadn't been nominated! Can you imagine if I did win? I'd have to get up in front of all those people...on a stage...and...

*(Gulps)*

...TALK!

**TABI**

You got up in front of a bunch of people and talked for your show.

**JANET**

That was Riley! That wasn't me!

**TABI**

Why can't Riley just miss the award ceremony, but you accept it on her behalf?

**JANET**

It's a stipulation of the Tammy Awards that you have to be present to accept the award.

**TABI**

What if you were sick?

**JANET**

*(Rambling, panicking)*

"The show must go on!" What if they find out that Riley isn't real? That means she can't win the award, right? I mean, I lied! I lied big time! There are two thoughts in my brain, and they're battling. And one is like, "What are you doing, Janet? You can't do this! Come clean!" And the other one is like, "But what if you won? What if you got that scholarship? Then you're off!" I could actually be an actress. But I can't be Riley AND Janet.

*(An idea comes to Tabi.)*

**TABI**

Yes, you can.

**JANET**

No, I can't.

**TABI**

Yes, you can! I'm going to these lame awards, and I'm going to help you. We'll do quick costume changes, just like we do in the shows here. When you need to tap out from being Riley, I'll escort you off. When you need a pep talk, I'll be there.

**JANET**

You don't need to do that.

**TABI**

Yes, I do. You work hard and you're talented and you're kind. You deserve to win, Janet. Let me help you. If nothing else, let the world see me, pathetic Tabi, walking arm-in-arm with THE Riley Thane. Imagine the look on Olivia's face!

**JANET**

I can't do it.

*(Tabi grabs Janet's face and makes her look at her.)*

**TABI**

You can do this. You have worked so hard all these years, and this is your time to shine. The power dynamic has been all off, but we can make it right. It's time that the Janets of the world win. I am going with you to the Tammy Awards, and we are going to get you up on that stage in an awesome outfit and get you that award. Okay?

*(Janet takes a puff from her inhaler.)*

**JANET**

*(Her voice squeaking)*

Okay.

**TABI**

Let's do it. Let's go win you a scholarship.

*(The lights go down.)*

**ACT 1, SCENE 2**

*The foyer of a hotel. Upstage there is a door leading to the stairwell and an elevator door. There are passages to the right and left, leading to rooms on the first floor, the pool, and community rooms where workshops will be held. A front desk sits down stage with a door leading off the backroom where employees mingle. A group of students stand in the center of the foyer. They are attempting to harmonize and sing the latest cool hit from Broadway. Perhaps they're a little off pitch but don't realize it out of sheer excitement.*

*A hotel employee stands behind the front desk, looking bored beyond belief. Daniel enters from the main entrance and runs past the group of students.*

**DANIEL**

Excuse me! Pardon me! It's an emergency!

*(He runs into one of the bathrooms. Arie, Olivia, Janet, Tabi, and other students enter, carrying luggage.)*

**ARIE**

I did warn you! I did say, "Speak now or forever hold your pee!" Maybe next time you'll believe me!

*(Arie crosses to the front while her students mill around a bit.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

Good afternoon. Checking in for Arie Gleason.  
*(Bragging a little)*  
We're here for the Tammy Awards.

**EMPLOYEE**

*(Unenthused)*  
You and everyone else.

**ARIE**

*(Still bragging)*  
We are...nominated for a Tammy Award.

**EMPLOYEE**

*(Unenthused)*  
I'm so happy for you.

**ARIE:**

*(Smiling, coyly)*  
Yeah. It's no big deal.

*(The employee pushes a piece of paper in front of Arie.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

Here are your keys. And I need you to sign here.

**ARIE**

Oh! You want my autograph.

*(She picks up a pen.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

We are here representing Durchschnitt High School. Remember our name.

**EMPLOYEE**

Durchschnitt? What a weird word. Is it German?

*(The elevator doors open, revealing Mr. Beau. He's dressed in a nice suit and thinks he's very cool. As he exits the elevator, he addresses Arie and the hotel employee...but mainly he talking to Arie.)*

**BEAU:**

Yes, it is. It's German for "average".

*(Arie hears the voice but can't bear to turn around and look. Beau pushes the students aside to get to Arie.)*

**BEAU (CONT'D)**

Well, well, well. Look who it is: Arie Gleason. In the flesh. Here and now. Look at you.

*(Ms Arie finishes signing her name with a flourish of anger and then twirls around to finally meet Beau's eyes. The two stare each other down. The hotel employee rolls their eyes and exits.)*

**ARIE**

Beau. Hello.

**BEAU**

What on earth are you doing here?

**ARIE**

I could ask you the same thing.

**BEAU**

Arie, don't play coy. You know why I'm here.

*(He gestures to himself.)*

**BEAU (CONT'D)**

Fifteen Tammy nominations. That's a record. Last year, Washington Middle School had thirteen. We just keep getting better and better.

**ARIE**

Little Learners Early Development School is nominated for twenty this year.

*(This clearly upsets Beau and it seems he may lose his composure for a moment, but he takes a deep breath and reverts back to his cool self.)*

**BEAU**

Gosh, I love those Little Learners. They are so very talented.

**ARIE**

Yes. They truly are the future. Twenty nominations. It's hard to compete with that.

**BEAU**

Yes, well, at least Washington Middle School has thirteen. That's nothing to sneeze at. I don't suppose that you and your...

*(He sneers at Arie's students.)*

**BEAU (CONT'D)**

...students...are nominated for anything. You came to support the winners and partake in the workshops. How fun!

*(Arie laughs but it's clear that she wants to snap Beau's neck.)*

**ARIE**

Oh, Beau. We ARE nominated.

**OLIVIA**

We are nominated for Best Sound Design in a-

**ARIE**

I can handle this, Olivia!

*(Arie gets right up in Beau's face.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

We are nominated, but the competition isn't the important part of this weekend. It's the things we learn. *And the friends we make along the way.*

*(Beau isn't afraid of Arie and glares right back at her.)*

**BEAU**

How true.

*(They continue to stare at each other. It lingers on for a while. Arie's students exchange looks, confused as to what exactly is going on. Suddenly, both Arie and Beau begin to laugh. It's a forced laugh, dripping with indignation, but they attempt to put on a show of friendliness.)*

**BEAU (CONT'D)**

Do enjoy yourselves.

**ARIE**

Oh, we will. We will.

**BEAU**

I guess I'll see you around, Arie.

**ARIE**

I'll see you around, Beau.

*(Beau makes a dramatic exit, staring Arie down all the way. The pair never take their eyes off each other until Beau is out the door and gone. Daniel exits from the bathroom. He stares at his classmates and Arie.)*

**DANIEL**

I'm sensing some tension.

*(Arie's students run to her.)*

**TABI**

Uh, Ms Arie, who was that?

**ARIE**

It's nothing, kids. That's Mr. Beau. We went to school together and we just...we have beef. Real beef. Bad beef. Rotten, rancid beef. I figured he'd be here, but I hoped he'd be staying at a different hotel. I can't believe that I have to sleep under the same roof as that man! Ugh!

*(Arie takes a deep breath and reverts back to her usual perky self.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

But we're not focused on that now. Let's go check out our rooms and then we get some dinner and then who wants to go swimming!?

**TABI**

Aw, yeah!

**ARIE**

Of course, we'll wait thirty minutes after eating!

*(Everyone begins to exit but Janet stays back, clearly nervous. She can't move forward and reaches for her inhaler again. Tabi sees Janet looking nervous and hangs back as well.)*

**TABI**

Hey. You okay?

**JANET**

I'm just nervous.

**TABI**

Look, there's nothing to worry about. We've got this. We worked it all out. Tonight is just kicking back and chilling.

Tomorrow during the day, we'll take Riley out for a test run. We'll get up before the others, get some breakfast and then get you dolled up. We'll go to a workshop and we'll see how it goes. If you need to excuse yourself, I'll help you get out and we'll take a breather.

**JANET**

Which workshop?! Which workshop are we going to?!

*(Tabi pulls out a pamphlet on the various workshops and looks it over.)*

**TABI**

I thought we agreed on "First Folio Fun".

**JANET**

I don't want to go to "First Folio Fun".

**TABI**

Why not?

**JANET**

They might ask Riley to get up and recite something. You know...because she's Riley Thane. This is my first run at Riley in public. I don't think I want my first run to be reciting Shakespeare.

**TABI**

Fine!

*(She consults the pamphlet again.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

We'll go to "Fight Choreography 101".

**JANET**

Yes! That's good.

*(She realizes something)*

No. Wait. That's horrible. What if I'm moving and fighting and throwing a sword around and I get all sweaty and my wig slips off? What if someone runs at me with a lance and I get so nervous that I pee myself?

**TABI**

First off, it's unarmed stage combat so no lances involved. Secondly, you're nervous about peeing yourself?

**JANET**

It's a possibility.

**TABI**

Okay.

*(She goes back to the pamphlet.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

How about "Subtext Studies."

**JANET**

Yes! Tabi, that's a brilliant idea!

*(Janet looks like she's about to exit when she stops abruptly, terrified.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

No. Wait. That's a terrible idea! It's SUBTEXT work which means that people are going to be reading into what I'm saying. What if they read too deeply and see beneath my exterior that I'm just a big liar? What if someone opens me up and reads me like a book and right there and then, they expose me and call me out and then I pee myself and then-

*(The hotel employee enters, dusting.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

Please don't pee yourself. I just mopped the floors.

**TABI**

*(To the employee)*

Thank you for your concern!

*(The hotel employee shrugs and exits. Tabi grabs Janet by the shoulders.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Janet! Get ahold of yourself! I'm here to help. It's going to be okay. You are better than you think you are and you can do this. You are a strong person and you are in full control of your bladder! You'll feel one hundred percent better once you get that one run under your belt. It's like opening night: Once you get that first performance in, the jitters go away. Now, you got your Riley stuff?

*(Janet nods, holding up a suitcase.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

You've got everything? The scarf? The dress?

**JANET**

I have a couple of dresses. I wasn't sure which one to wear so I brought options. And I have a couple of wigs, just in case something happens to the one.

**TABI**

Good. Options are great. Now I want to hear you say it. I want you to say: I can do this.

*(It's difficult to say, but Janet manages to say it.)*



**JANET**

I can do this.

**TABI**

Yes, you can.

*(They share a smile. Olivia bursts in from the stairwell, looking livid and carrying some kind of iced coffee beverage from an overpriced coffee shop.)*

**OLIVIA**

Ahem! Ms Arie sent me to find you two. You need to stay with the group.

*(She slurps her drink loudly.)*

**TABI**

We'll be up in a second, Olivia.

**OLIVIA**

No. Now.

**TABI**

We just spent three hours on a bus, listening to you lecture us on the rules. Let us have a little bit of peace.

*(Olivia saunters towards them.)*

**OLIVIA**

Perhaps you didn't hear me: you two are coming upstairs with me. I am the president and you won't defy me.

*(She grabs Janet by the arm and pulls her towards the stairwell.)*

**TABI**

Don't you touch her like that!

*(Tabi grabs Janet's other arm. She and Olivia tug Janet back and forth during the next few lines.)*

**OLIVIA**

We're going upstairs! And we're going now!

**TABI**

You are not the boss of us, Olivia!

**OLIVIA**

I'm the president so, yes, I am the boss of you! Get used to it!

*(Tabi looks like she's about to burst. She's had enough of Olivia. Suddenly, it all boils over and she snaps.)*

**TABI**

I know, for a fact, that you don't know Riley Thane!

*(Janet is terrified. Tabi and Olivia let go of her.)*

**OLIVIA**

Um...yes, I do.

**TABI**

No, you don't. I know that you don't. I know that you're a liar, Olivia. You want to know how I know? I know because while you're prancing around pretending to know Riley, I actually do! Yeah! We're friends! Best friends! Best, best friends! We're best friends and she's...

*(Tabi looks at Janet who is absolutely petrified. She shakes her head weakly, silently begging Tabi not to spill the beans. A beat. Tabi has to think quickly.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

She is, uh, she is in that bathroom!

*(Tabi points at the bathroom doors. Olivia laughs.)*

**OLIVIA**

Right. Whatever.

**TABI**

*(Still improvising quickly)*

She is! That's why Janet and I didn't follow you. We were waiting for Riley to show up. And she did and then she needed to pee. But once she is done peeing, the three of us are going to hang out. Because Janet and I actually know Riley.

**OLIVIA**

Right. Well, I'm going to go say hi to Riley then if she's in the bathroom-

*(Tabi and Janet block her way.)*

**TABI**

*(Mocking Olivia from before)*

Riley is very selective of who she wants to share a bathroom with-

**JANET**

We're on bathroom duty!

**TABI**

That's right, Janet. We're on bathroom duty. We make sure that no one bothers Riley while she is going number one.

**JANET**

Or number two!

**OLIVIA**

I totally don't believe you.

**TABI**

I don't need you to believe me, Olivia. I'm right and that's all I need to know.

**OLIVIA**

Ugh! Get out of my way. I'm going into the bathroom-

*(Olivia attempts to push past Tabi and Janet, but the two hold her off. A small struggle ensues.)*

**TABI**

No! You're not! Riley is selective of her friends!

**OLIVIA**

I should know! I'm one of them!

*(The hotel employee emerges again from the backroom upon hearing the commotion. They seem relatively uninterested in this fight until Olivia drops her coffee, spilling it everywhere.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

I just mopped the floors!

*(Things happen very quickly. The employee comes out from behind the counter, huffing as Tabi grabs the suitcase from Janet and dives into the bathroom. Olivia turns to the employee, addressing them.)*

**EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)**

I literally just mopped these!

**OLIVIA**

Oh my gawd! You just mopped them, but there's no "wet floor" sign. I could have totally fallen and died! My parents are going to sue you!

**EMPLOYEE**

This is why I hate these stupid competitions! You all walk in here like you own the place and-

**OLIVIA**

I do own the place! I am a guest here, and I have paid for the right to be here!

*(Olivia and the employee begin an argument that only ends when Tabi emerges from the bathroom but now she is wearing the complete Riley Thane outfit: a quirky and colorful dress, a floral scarf, and the iconic red hair (a wig). Tabi, too, becomes a different person when she pretends to be Riley. She's over the top, outlandish, and speaks in a wild English dialect for some reason. Everyone is stunned: the employee by this person wearing this ridiculous outfit, Olivia by the fact that THE Riley Thane really was actually in the bathroom, and Janet by what Tabi has just done.)*

**TABI**

*(As Riley)*

Sorry I took so long! I had to poo!

**OLIVIA**

Oh. My. Gawd. Riley Thane. It's you. It's really you!

**TABI**

Well, of course it's me.

*(Tabi pushes past Olivia to get to Janet. The employee shrugs and exits.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Janet, darling, did I mention that you are looking stunning tonight.

*(She sees the spilled coffee.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Oh dear. What seems to have happened here?

**OLIVIA**

Riley! It is such an honor to finally meet you. I saw your show two times!

**TABI**

Who are you?

**OLIVIA**

My name is Olivia Hayward. I'm the president of Durchschnitt-

**TABI**

You seem to have made a mess.

*(She gestures at the coffee on the floor.)*

**OLIVIA**

Oh, well...uh...there was a little misunderstanding with Tabi.

*(Olivia looks around, realizing now that Tabi is gone.  
The hotel employee reenters with a mop and bucket.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

Where did she-

**TABI**

Come now, Odette. Don't go blaming your mistakes on others.  
You made a mess and you should clean it up.

*(She sees the employee with the mop and bucket.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Ah, lovely! Here we are...

*(Smirking at Olivia.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Clean up your mess.

**EMPLOYEE**

*(Sighing)*

It's okay. I've got it.

*(Olivia pushes the employee out of the way and grabs  
the mop and bucket.)*

**OLIVIA**

No! I'll do it! You're right, Riley-

**TABI**

Opal, you may call me Ms. Thane.

**OLIVIA**

Of course. Excuse me. You were right, Ms. Thane. I made a  
mess and I should clean it up.

**TABI**

Excellent.

*(Olivia mops feverishly. The hotel employee shrugs and  
walks to their spot behind the front desk. Janet pulls  
Tabi aside.)*

**JANET**

*(Whispering)*

What are you doing?

**TABI**

*(Whispering)*

Acting!

**EMPLOYEE**

You theatre folks are weird.

**TABI**

Yes, darling, we are. But the greatest people on earth are the weird ones. You never caught Viola Davis doing anything ordinary.

**EMPLOYEE**

Oh, I do love Violas Davis!

**TABI**

Don't we all?!

*(Olivia finishes mopping.)*

**OLIVIA**

I did it, Ms. Thane! I cleaned up my mess!

**TABI**

That's nice, Octavia.

*(Suddenly, a group of people enter the foyer including Arie, Daniel, Alex, Chester, and several students.)*

**STUDENT 1**

Look, everyone! It's Riley Thane!

*(They all descend upon Tabi. She's very careful to always pull Janet along with her.)*

**STUDENT 1 (CONT'D)**

Ms. Thane!

**STUDENT 2**

Riley!

**ARIE**

It's such an honor to meet you. To think that you're at our hotel!

**CHESTER**

Ms. Thane! Ms. Thane!

*(He gets pushed to the back of the crowd and the general hubbub of excitement over "Riley" grows.)*

**ALEX**

I saw your show, and it changed my life!

**STUDENT 3**

You inspire me!

**STUDENT 2**

I'm planning to study theatre because I saw your show, and I knew that that's what I wanted to do!

**STUDENT 4**

Ms. Thane, I know that you're going to win the GOAT Award!

**TABI**

Alright, alright. Settle down, everyone! Thank you for your kind, kind words. But it is getting rather late, and I would very much like to retire for the evening. If you have any questions for me or my work, look for me tomorrow at the, uh, the workshop of...

*(She glances at Janet.)*

**JANET**

Uh...“First Folio Fun”.

**TABI**

“First Folio Fun”! I will be glad to answer any questions after tomorrow's workshop, which I'm sure is bound to be lovely and spectacular. I'm taking my good friend Janet with me. Has everyone met Janet? She's a doll and really, the backbone of what I do. Oop! I think I just saw my other dear friend Tabi run upstairs. Please allow us all some privacy. My two very good friends and I are going to catch up. Goodbye! Good night! Goodbye! Good night!

*(She makes a grand exit, pulling Janet along with her. Janet looks awestruck as everyone stands and admires them.)*

**CHESTER**

Riley Thane! I love you!

*(The lights go down.)*

**ACT 1, SCENE 3**

*The foyer of the hotel. The next morning. Janet has exited the area designated for continental breakfast, wearing a big smile and carrying some kind of food. A moment passes. The same employee as last night enters from the backroom and stands behind the counter. Janet stares at them and decides that she's going to say hello. She approaches the front desk. The employee looks up. Janet has lost her nerve. She just awkwardly stares at the employee.*

**EMPLOYEE**

Can I help you?

**JANET**

Uh...uh...

*(Janet backs away and finds a spot at a distance. She takes out her inhaler and breathes deeply before smiling brightly and eating more of her bagel. The rolls their eyes and exits to the back room. A moment passes. Tabi enters from upstairs. She looks around nervously, spots Janet, and runs to her.)*

**TABI**

Hey.

**JANET**

Hi. Go get yourself some breakfast. I have lots of different bagels.

*(Tabi sits down next to Janet.)*

**TABI**

I wanted to apologize again-

**JANET**

Tabi, you can stop apologizing.

**TABI**

I don't know what came over me. I was just so mad at Olivia and she was so smug. I didn't mean to steal your spotlight-

**JANET**

Tabi, it's okay. I feel a lot better after everything that happened last night. Everyone really does love Riley, don't they? Did you see their faces? You hear about people fangirling over Riley, but I saw it for real last night. I made that. I did that. It was amazing.

**TABI**

You did do that. Riley is awesome. It felt really good: to be loved that much, to be appreciated.

**JANET**

Yes! Riley is like a security blanket. You can be anything when you're her.

*(Laughing)*

Why did you give her an English dialect?

**TABI**

*(Laughing)*

I don't know. It just seemed right! Nobody has really talked to her outside of her show, right? So she could be anything in "real life".

**JANET**

You did such an amazing job last night. The look on Olivia's face!



**TABI**

She was all like...

*(She imitates Olivia's surprised expression and both laugh.)*

**JANET**

My favorite part was when you said, "Sorry! I had to poo!"

**TABI**

Did you see that guy last night? The one who just screamed, "Riley Thane! I love you!"

**JANET**

That performance! You could win a GOAT just for that.

**TABI**

Oh, stop it-

**JANET**

Who says you're not an actor?

**TABI**

I really did do it, didn't I?

**JANET**

You did! The only thing is I don't think I know how to do an English dialect. I'll have to work on it. I mean, I don't have to do it I guess. Maybe Riley was just being mysterious and putting on airs last night. But it's probably best if I keep up with what you started.

**TABI**

What do you mean?

*(Janet stares at her, confused.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

What do you mean "keep up what I started"?

**JANET**

I mean...for when I play Riley today. You created the bit. I need to see it through.

**TABI**

Oh. I guess I didn't realize that you were going to still play Riley.

**JANET**

Why wouldn't I play Riley?

**TABI**

It's just...I've already played her. Everyone has seen me as her.

**JANET**

Yeah but you were wearing the wig and the whole getup so we could easily sneak me back into the part.

**TABI**

But...is that necessary? The whole conflict in this situation was that you didn't want to talk in front of people, but now you don't have to. I'll be Riley for you. You can sit back and enjoy the ride. No social interactions required.

**JANET**

But I'm not afraid anymore. You were right: you need one good performance and then all the butterflies are gone. I saw you do it, and I know that it can be done. Opening night jitters are no more.

**TABI**

But you just saw me do it. You didn't actually do it.

**JANET**

It still made me feel more confident. I figure if you can do it, I surely can do it.

**TABI**

What does that mean?

**JANET**

Well, it's just that...you're not an actress. You're a techie.

**TABI**

I'm a techie so automatically I can't act?

**JANET**

That's not what I said. Look, I really appreciate what you did last night, Tabi, but I can handle it from here.

**TABI**

Are you sure that you're still not too nervous? You seemed really nervous yesterday.

**JANET**

But I'm not nervous anymore.

**TABI**

Are you sure?

**JANET**

Yes.

*(They stare at one another. Tabi relents.)*

**TABI**

Well, good. I'm glad to hear that. People are going to question, though, that you sound a bit different today than you did last night.

**JANET**

Classic theatrical trick: tell everyone that I had a cold last night.

*(Tabi is obviously a bit disappointed.)*

**TABI**

Of course.

*(A beat. Janet tries to change the subject.)*

**JANET**

They have blueberry bagels. I know how much you like blueberry bagels.

**TABI**

*(Smiling)*

I do like blueberry bagels. Do they have cream cheese?

**JANET**

Of course they have cream cheese.

**TABI**

But do they have garden veggie cream cheese?

**JANET**

I think so - wait. You want garden veggie cream cheese on your blueberry bagel?

**TABI**

Don't knock it till you've tried it.

**JANET**

*(Laughing)*

You're so weird.

**TABI**

*(Putting on the Riley voice)*

You never caught Viola Davis doing anything ordinary!

*(The two laugh. Tabi exits to the continental breakfast area. Janet eats her breakfast, content. Chester enters from the stairwell and, upon seeing Janet, hastily crosses to her.)*

**CHESTER**

I beg your pardon-

*(Janet is spooked by his sudden appearance.)*

**CHESTER (CONT'D)**

My apologies. I didn't mean to startle you. May I join you?

**JANET**

*(Too nervous to really speak)*

I...I just...my...

*(Chester takes this as a yes and sits very close to Janet who is clearly uncomfortable with this.)*

**CHESTER**

Thank you. I was hoping to catch you before today's events began.

**JANET**

I...me?

**CHESTER**

Yes, you! Jane, correct?

**JANET**

Uh-

*(Chester pushes on-)*

**CHESTER**

Jane, my name is Chester Dodgerton. You've probably heard of me.

*(Janet shakes her head, but Chester is too caught up in himself to notice.)*

**CHESTER (CONT'D)**

Yes, I am THAT Chester Dodgerton: the youngest to ever be nominated for a playwright award here at the Tammys. My first work - an adaptation of *Beowulf* - won the "Best Adapted Script" three years ago when I was merely ten. But enough about me. I want to talk about you - well, your friend, Riley Thane. I saw you with Ms. Thane last night. She made quite a spectacle, didn't she?

**JANET**

Uh-

**CHESTER**

Jane, I am desperate - desperate! - to meet Ms. Thane. She's a writer. I'm a writer. Can you imagine the art that we would create together? I saw *Thane's the Thing* four times! Do you think anyone else showed that much devotion to her art? I doubt it! I tried valiantly, yet in vain, last night to speak to her. Ugh! That insufferable crowd that keeps us apart. If there is anything - anything! - that you can do to get Ms. Thane and I in the same room, it would mean the world to me. Are you an actor yourself?

**JANET**

Yes-

**CHESTER**

Jane! Get me in to see Ms. Thane, and I will write you a role so moving and beautiful, that it will assuredly get you a Tammy nomination. I assume that you're not nominated this year, are you?

**JANET**

Uh-

**CHESTER**

You know what they say: actors don't get nominated, parts get nominated! Oh, Jane, please tell me you can help me! Ms. Thane and I are kindred spirits! I must meet her! I simply must! Please, do this poor and pitiful man the greatest of favors and say that you'll introduce us. Jane, please! Jane, I beg you! Jane, Jane, Jane!

*(Janet is stunned, confused, and overwhelmed.)*

**JANET**

Uhhhh...

*(Chester, of course, takes as a yes.)*

**CHESTER**

Thank you! You are a saint, a true saint! Riley and I shall name our first child Jane! I promise you!

*(He runs out. Janet is shocked. Tabi enters, munching on her bagel.)*

**TABI**

The trick is you have to put the cream cheese on thick and then add honey to one side of the bagel and sriracha on the other side and-

*(She stops upon seeing Janet's worried face.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Uh-oh. What's wrong?

*(But there's no time to explain as the elevator doors open and Olivia enters.)*

**OLIVIA**

Janet!

*(She rushes to Janet and links arms with her.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

Hey there! How are you this morning?

**JANET**

I'm okay-

**OLIVIA**

That's great. Say, have you seen Riley? Is she with you?

**JANET**

Uh-

**TABI**

We were just about to bring her breakfast up to her.

*(Olivia glances at the bagel monstrosity that Tabi is holding.)*

**OLIVIA**

THAT'S her breakfast?

**TABI**

Yes. Got a problem with it?

**OLIVIA**

No! It looks delicious.

*(The elevator door opens. Arie, Daniel, Alex, and the rest enter.)*

**ARIE**

We are running a touch behind schedule, students, so be like a squirrel and fetch yourself some breakfast. Olivia and Daniel, are you two still planning on attending the "Meisner Made Easy" workshop?

*(Olivia glances at Tabi.)*

**OLIVIA**

I don't know. Riley said that you guys were going to the "First Folio Fun" workshop, right?

**JANET**

We are-

**TABI**

Riley changed her mind. We're going to "Fight Choreography 101".

**OLIVIA**

Oh, fun! Ms Arie, Daniel and I are attending the fight choreography workshop with Riley, Tabi, and Janet.

**DANIEL**

But I was looking forward to the Meisner-

**OLIVIA**

I don't acknowledge you, Daniel!

**ARIE**

Alright, alright: off you go! Get some breakfast, everyone!  
No one can learn if their tummy is a-rumbling!

*(Arie Daniel, Alex, and the other students exit to get some breakfast. Olivia hangs back to talk with Tabi and Janet.)*

**OLIVIA**

I'll see you guys there. Tell Riley I say hi.

*(She exits. Tabi rolls her eyes.)*

**TABI**

Oh, yes. We'll see you. NOT!

**JANET**

Tabi, I can talk for myself. I'm feeling more confident now. Remember? You don't have to answer for me every single time. Besides, I thought we agreed that we were going to the "First Folio Fun" workshop.

**TABI**

Oh, we are. But I don't want to spend an entire workshop with Olivia! I just told her that to keep her off our tail.

**JANET**

Could you at least let me in on the plan?

**TABI**

I don't plan, Janet. I just wing it. Things just happen. I should do improv.

**JANET**

Tabi, I feel as though you're kind of, sort of missing the whole point of why you're here.

**TABI**

And what is the point of me being here?

**JANET**

To help me.

**TABI**

I thought that you didn't need my help.

**JANET**

You're mad at me because I said you can't play Riley anymore.

**TABI**

You have to admit that it's going to look silly if we suddenly change actors midway through a performance.

**JANET**

You don't think I can do it. You don't think I can be Riley.

**TABI**

It's not that. This is a very delicate situation, and a lot is on the line here. We're fooling Olivia, and I have big plans to make an absolute fool out of her-

**JANET**

Olivia is not the issue here. My future is.

**TABI**

Riley is bigger than you, Janet. You're going to win the award. We all know it. Why not have a little fun with it while we've got the ball in our court? Think of the good you could do with this Riley platform. I know that you want to play Riley, but this just makes more sense.

*(The hotel employee enters from the back room and begins to sweep the floor.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Okay. How about this: you can have Riley if you go talk to that hotel employee.

*(Janet is struck speechless.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Just go over and say hello. Ask how their day is going.

**JANET**

What does that have to do with anything?

**TABI**

Prove to me that you can handle the role, and Riley is all yours.

*(Janet looks from Tabi to the employee and then back again. She can't decide what to do. Finally, she crosses to the hotel employee. They look up.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

Hello again.

*(Janet can't speak.)*

**EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)**

Can I do something for you?



**JANET**

I...uh...hi. How are you?

**EMPLOYEE**

I'm-

**JANET**

FINE! THANKS FOR ASKING!

*(She immediately runs back to Tabi. The employee exits, confused.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

There! I did it!

**TABI**

That didn't count!

**JANET**

Yes, it did!

**TABI**

No, it didn't!

*(They glare at one another.)*

**JANET**

We need to go get dressed.

**TABI**

RILEY needs to get dressed.

**JANET**

Yes.

**TABI**

So it's understood then?

**JANET**

Yes.

*(It is not understood.)*

**TABI**

So which workshop are we going to?

**JANET**

"First Folio Fun".

**TABI**

Okay. You go on up. I'm going to grab something to drink.

**JANET**

See you up in the room.

*(Janet exits. Arie enters from the continental breakfast area. She quickly grabs Tabi and pulls her aside.)*

**ARIE**

Tabi! I'm so glad that I've got you. I wanted to talk to you about a very delicate situation.

**TABI**

What is it, Ms Arie?

**ARIE**

Do you remember yesterday when we arrived and we all had the extremely unfortunate displeasure of bumping into that insufferable ignoramus Mr. Beau?

**TABI**

Yeah.

**ARIE**

Now, I would never speak ill of a fellow teacher. We all have it so rough these days with the budget cuts and long hours and what not. I could NEVER criticize someone...unless, of course, I had ample and sufficient reason to.

**TABI**

This Mr. Beau is a real jerk, right?

**ARIE**

Yes! He is the jerkiest of the jerks! He's...he's beef jerky!

*(Laughs at her own joke)*

See, it's funny because I'm a vegan and I despise beef in any form...unless it is living beef. But then, it isn't BEEF, is it? It's just a cow. Not JUST a cow, you understand. But a beautiful and majestic bovine who deserves love and respect just like anyone else-

**TABI**

Ms Arie-

**ARIE**

The point is...I was hoping that you and Janet could do your favorite drama teacher a real solid. Could you please introduce me to your friend Riley.

**TABI**

Well, I don't know. She's very particular about who-

**ARIE**

-about who she hangs out with. Yes, I know. Riley Thane is all anyone can talk about at these awards, it seems. Could you imagine the look on that lame-o Beau's face when I am seen cavorting about with THE Riley Thane?

**TABI**

What's the deal with you two, Ms Arie? Why all this hostility? Did you two use to date or something?

**ARIE**

Oh, Tabi. I just threw up a little in my mouth. The mere idea of - nope, nop! I cannot think about it.

*(Gags a little)*

No, no, no. Mr. Beau and I were were classmates back in high school, and there's always been competition between us. You remember how I told you that I was nominated for the GOAT award back when? Well, so was Mr. Beau! I played Faustus, and he played Mephistophilis. On stage, we battled it out and then in real life we did the same. Truthfully, the show was a spectacle. We both did beautiful jobs. And we were both nominated. But then Beau wins? It didn't make any sense! I was Doctor Faustus! I was the titular character! I had to suffer the pangs of hell! I had the character arc, not Mephistophilis! It didn't stop there, though. Beau had his choice of any college and he followed me to the same school! I had to endure four more years of that buffoon. We both wanted to be Professor Chicorel's student aid our senior year. We both applied for the same job in the set shop. We sometimes went up against each other for parts! And Beau always won! Every. Single. Time. I hate Mr. Beau. He has spoiled every aspect of my life, and I shall not sleep well until I walk across the ashes of everything he loves and holds dear.

*(Arie takes a breath. Tabi is terrified.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

So...what do you say?

*(Tabi pats Arie on the shoulder.)*

**TABI**

I think we can make something work. I guarantee that I can get you and Riley together.

**ARIE**

Really?

**TABI**

Really. That Mr. Beau seems like a piece of work. If I - I mean - if RILEY can help take them down a peg or two, I'm sure she'd be more than willing to help.

**ARIE**

You're going to the fight choreography workshop, correct?

**TABI**

Yes. No. Wait. Uh... Riley decided that she wanted to go to, uh, "Subtext Studies" instead.

**ARIE**

But you just told Olivia-

*(Tabi pulls out her phone.)*

**TABI**

Riley just texted me!

**ARIE**

I should tell Olivia and Daniel-

**TABI**

Don't bother. I already texted them.

**ARIE**

Well, aren't you prompt! Alright so we'll all go to "Subtext Studies". I'll make sure that Mr. Beau is there as well. Will Riley sit next to me?

**TABI**

I'll make sure of it.

**ARIE**

Excellent! Oh, I could kiss you, Tabi!

**TABI**

Please don't.

**ARIE**

Of course not. That would be unhygienic. Alright! I'll see you in a bit!

*(Arie exits through the stairwell.)*

**TABI**

*(To herself)*

It was "Subtext Studies", right? Right. Or...was it "First Folio Fun"?

*(Tabi shrugs and exits through the elevator. All is quiet for a moment until the front door bursts open and Bre Rossmiller enters. She looks around the lobby, perplexed. Upon seeing that there is no one at the front desk, she hits the bell and waits impatiently. The employee enters from the backroom.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

Can I help you, ma'am?

**BRE**

I was told that Riley Thane was staying at this hotel.

**EMPLOYEE**

I don't know who that is. Even if I did, I couldn't tell you. It's against hotel policies. Wait! Is she that one girl who made a big scene here last night?

**BRE**

So she IS here?

**EMPLOYEE**

I don't know! I can't tell you.

**BRE**

It's vitally important that I find this "Riley Thane". Something is going on here. I have reason to believe that the Riley Thane you met last night is an imposter.

**EMPLOYEE**

*(Indifferent)*

Okay.

**BRE**

I saw *Thane's the Thing*. How could I not? It was all anyone could talk about. And a homeschooled student? That would look so good for the organization as a whole. It makes us look very inclusive. I saw pictures from last night's little display, and whoever that was was not Riley Thane. I know greatness, and that wasn't her.

**EMPLOYEE**

*(Indifferent)*

Okay.

**BRE**

What's more, I've been doing some digging and there's no evidence of anyone actually named "Riley Thane" living anywhere near here. There's one in Liverpool, but she's forty-seven and a mother of three. That can't be right! Don't you find that odd? The organization as a whole wants to turn a blind eye, but I won't. The integrity of the awards is at stake.

*(The employee flips through a comic book and slurps a large soda.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

*(Indifferent)*

Okay.

**BRE**

I'm not about to let some little imposter walk in and out with a full ride scholarship. I mean, we have a reputation to keep up. I've given too much to this stupid thing-

*(She stops herself)*

Anyway, you'll tell her, yes? When you see her...

**EMPLOYEE**

I'll tell "Riley Thane"...what?

**BRE**

That Bre Rossmiller is coming for her. This is the end of "Riley Thane".

*(She exits in a flurry. The lights go out.)*

**ACT 2, SCENE 1**

*The hotel lobby an hour or so later. A group of students walk from one corridor to the other, carrying large theatrical weapons. This is completely normal. The elevator door dings and opens. Another group of students exit the elevator, still attempting to harmonize. This is also very normal. The employee is sweeping the floor. The singing students exit the elevator and walk down one of the corridors. A beat. Beau enters from the main entrance and walks to the employee.*

**BEAU**

You there!

*(He snaps his finger at the employee.)*

**BEAU (CONT'D)**

Yes, you! The help.

**EMPLOYEE**

I have a name.

**BEAU**

I don't care. I need to know if Arie Gleason is in.

**EMPLOYEE**

I can't even tell you if someone by that name is checked in here.

**BEAU**

Well, I know that she's checked in here. I saw her.

**EMPLOYEE**

You saw her here, but you don't know for sure that she's staying here.

**BEAU**

She had a suitcase with her.

**EMPLOYEE**

Still seems like speculation to me.

**BEAU**

Could you just relay a message to Arie when you see her?

**EMPLOYEE**

You think I know every guest by face around here? That is...IF she is a guest.

**BEAU**

Just tell her that Beau Simms is looking for her. I'll be at the "Subtext Studies" workshop.

**EMPLOYEE**

Yeah. Okay. Whatever.

*(Beau hands the employee a nickel.)*

**BEAU**

There you are. Don't thank me.

*(Beau dashes down the corridor to the left. The employee sighs dramatically and continues to sweep the floor. The elevator door dings open and Arie enters. She crosses to the hotel employee.)*

**ARIE**

Good morning, my friend.

**EMPLOYEE**

Friend? I don't know you.

**ARIE**

Oh! What a way to greet a guest.

**EMPLOYEE**

ARE you a guest?

**ARIE**

Of course. Don't you recognize me?

**EMPLOYEE**

Everyone just starts to look the same after a while. You come in, you make a mess, you leave. You come in, you make a mess, you leave.

**ARIE**

Anyway, I was wondering if you could tell me if a Beaugard Simms is in.

**EMPLOYEE**

Never heard of him.

**ARIE**

He's a guest at this hotel.

**EMPLOYEE**

How do you know?

**ARIE**

I saw him here in this lobby.

**EMPLOYEE**

A lot of people wander in and out of this lobby. Who is to say that he is actually staying here?



**ARIE**

Mr. Beau is about yay tall-

*(She demonstrates how tall Beau is.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

-with dark\* hair and a dimple. But don't let the dimple fool you. This man is a maniac! If you see him, be sure to tell him that Arie Gleason will be at the "Subtext Studies" workshop, and, holy smokes, do I have a surprise waiting for him there!

\*Adjust if necessary.

*(Arie runs gleefully down the corridor to the left. Before the employee can fully react to this, the elevator door opens, revealing Janet, decked out in the Riley outfit. The employee is stunned by her outlandish outfit. Janet attempts to speak with the English dialect, but she isn't as good as Tabi. In true "Riley fashion", Janet has a new persona when she's got the getup on.)*

**JANET**

*(As Riley)*

Good morning, my dear! I am in desperate need of your assistance.

**EMPLOYEE**

You and everybody else, miss.

**JANET**

You can just call me "Riley"!

**EMPLOYEE**

What can I do for you?

**JANET**

Perhaps you have seen my dear friend, Tabitha? We call her Tabi for short if that helps.

**EMPLOYEE**

Why does everyone assume that I know everyone here? I work fifteen hours a week and am barely keeping my own life together, let alone keeping tabs on all the guests here!

**JANET**

I'm going to take that as a no...?

**EMPLOYEE**

I don't know your friend "Tabi" or "Tabitha" or whatever her name is...I don't know her from Adam.

**JANET**

Who is Adam?

**EMPLOYEE**

It's an expression.

**JANET**

Well, if you see Tabi, will you tell her-

**EMPLOYEE**

Let me guess: you're going to the "Subtext Studies" workshop?

**JANET**

Where did you hear that?

**EMPLOYEE**

Well, this person and that person just came in and said they're both going to "Subtext Studies".

**JANET**

Who is "this person"?

**EMPLOYEE**

I don't know! They're about yay tall-

*(They demonstrate how tall Beau is)*

**EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)**

-and a dimple may have been involved.

**JANET**

A dimple? Oh, you must mean Olivia and Daniel! Yes, Olivia does have a mole on her right cheek that one might mistake for a dimple. I mean, they may mistake it for a dimple if it were very dark and they were visually impaired, but nonetheless. I thought Olivia and Daniel were going to attend the fight choreography workshop. Perhaps they changed their minds. The important thing is that I find Tabi. If you see her-

**EMPLOYEE**

I'll tell her you're going to "Subtext Studies".

**JANET**

No! We're going to "First Folio Fun".

**EMPLOYEE**

Well, if you all went to the "Subtext Studies" workshop, then I wouldn't have to remember all the names of these stupid theatre words!

**JANET**

*(A little concerned)*

Yes, well. I should be going.

*(She backs away from the employee.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

Thank you for your help, darling!

**EMPLOYEE**

Does this awards show happen every year?

**JANET**

Like clockwork, darling!

**EMPLOYEE**

Remind me to request off next year.

**JANET**

*(Laughing)*

You are a delight!

*(Janet exits down the corridor to the right. Just as she exits, the employee remembers something.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

Oh, yeah! Some lady was looking for you! Something about doom and gloom and the end of you. I don't know.

*(But she's gone. The employee shrugs and continues to sweep. The door to the stairwell bursts open and Tabi enters, also dressed in the Riley getup.)*

**TABI**

*(As Riley)*

Darling! Hello, my little darling!

**EMPLOYEE**

Wait a second. Didn't you just...I would have sworn I saw you go down the...never mind. I'm not getting involved! Did you find your friend?

**TABI**

How on earth did you know that that was precisely what I was going to ask? Are you a mind-reader? Well, have you?

**EMPLOYEE**

Have I what?

**TABI**

Have you seen my friend? Dear, dear Janet! You must have seen her scurrying through here and that's why you brought it up.

**EMPLOYEE**

I thought your friend's name was Samantha or something.

**TABI**

What? Samantha? Who is Samantha?

**EMPLOYEE**

That's what you just said.

**TABI**

I said her name was Janet.

**EMPLOYEE**

Did you?

**TABI**

Yes. Just now.

**EMPLOYEE**

Huh.

*(They stick their finger in their ear.)*

**EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)**

I must be losing my hearing. I would have sworn you said Samantha...or something like that..

**TABI**

I said no such thing, you silly thing, you.

**EMPLOYEE**

Well, Janet or Samantha or Tabi or whatever your friend's name is, I haven't seen them. Some people are going to this "Subtext" thing and some people are going to this "First Polio" thing. Who is actually anywhere, I don't know.

**TABI**

*(As Tabi, an aside)*

"Subtext Studies"? Was that it? I think that's what I told Ms Arie.

*(Suddenly remembering)*

Ms Arie!

*(She turns back to the employee, now as Riley.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Darling, you said you haven't seen my dear friend Janet, but perhaps you've seen-

**EMPLOYEE**

I haven't seen anyone! I don't know anybody!

**TABI**

No need to shout at me.

**EMPLOYEE**

There is every reason to shout!

*(Olivia appears from the right corridor.)*

**OLIVIA**

Riley! There you are!

**EMPLOYEE**

I found your friend.

**TABI**

*(Fuming)*

She is not my friend.

*(Tabi turns to address Olivia as the employee continues to sweep the floor.)*

**OLIVIA**

Riley!

**TABI**

Ozaukee!

**OLIVIA**

It's Olivia.

**TABI**

Whatever.

**OLIVIA**

The workshop is about to start. I was hoping you'd be my partner.

*(Daniel enters from the right corridor. The employee pulls out a rolling mop bucket and begins to mop the floor.)*

**DANIEL**

Olivia! The workshop is about to start!

*(Olivia crosses to Daniel.)*

**OLIVIA**

What do you think I'm doing? I'm getting Riley!

*(While Olivia's back is turned, Tabi darts towards the stairwell and disappears inside.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

*(To Daniel)*

I told you to wait in the room and save our spots! We had prime seating! I'm sure someone has snatched up those chairs by now!

**DANIEL**

It's rude for me to hold three chairs when everyone is looking for a seat. Besides, we were supposed to save seats for you, me, Riley, Tabi, and Janet.

*(Janet runs in from the corridor to the left and winds up in the exact spot that Tabi had been standing. Nobody sees this. Upon hearing her name Janet forgets herself and becomes herself again.)*

**JANET**

Yes?

*(Olivia and Daniel turn to look at Janet who attempts to cover her tracks.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

*(As Riley)*

I heard you mention Janet! Have you seen her? And Tabi? I simply cannot find Tabi anywhere.

**OLIVIA**

*(To Daniel)*

You see, Janet and Tabi aren't participating in the workshops. It's just us three.

*(To Janet)*

Shall we go, Riley?

**JANET**

Go? Where?

*(Olivia grabs Janet by the arm and pulls her along towards the right corridor.)*

**OLIVIA**

To the "Fight Choreography" workshop, of course.

*(As the two exit off, they slip a little on the newly mopped floor.)*

**JANET**

Oh! Slippery!

*(They walk off gingerly. Daniel sighs deeply just as Ms Arie runs in from the left corridor.)*

**ARIE**

Riley! Oh, dear. Where did she go? Daniel, have you seen Riley?

**DANIEL**

She's going to the fight choreography workshop with Olivia.

**ARIE**

No! She can't! Tabi promised me that she'd go to the "Subtext Studies" workshop with me.

*(Mr. Beau enters from the right corridor.)*

**BEAU**

Well?

**ARIE**

She...uh...

**BEAU**

Where is she, Arie? You promised me that you knew Riley Thane? It seems like somebody told a little fib. Was it you? Did you tell a fib?

**ARIE**

I certainly did not! I know Riley Thane! She's just...uh...

*(The stairwell door opens and Tabi enters, still dressed as Riley. The employee finishes mopping and exits.)*

**ARIE (CONT'D)**

She's right there!

**TABI**

*(As Tabi)*

I...uh...what?!

**DANIEL**

Wait a second. I could have sworn I saw you go down the hallway with Olivia.

*(Tabi steps forward, as Riley.)*

**TABI**

Olivia? Why would I want to spend a minute with that conceited creature? I don't understand why you're friends with her, dear Daniel. She doesn't care about you, and she's only using you for her own devices. That's not how friends behave. But we're not here to talk about Olivia. I'm here to discuss theatre and learn all about...

*(She can't remember which workshop she's going to.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

...something...with my dear friend Ms Arie Gleason.

*(She takes Arie's arm.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

How are you, my dear and talented darling?

*(Arie shoots a look at Beau.)*

**ARIE**

Riley, it's lovely to see you.

**TABI**

I have heard so much about you from Tabi and Janet. It's as if we already know each other. The paragon of educational instruction! That's you, Ms Arie!

*(To Beau)*

And you are...?

**BEAU**

My name is-

**TABI**

I don't actually care.

*(Tabi links arms with Daniel as well.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Ms Arie and Mr. Daniel, will you join me in the "First Folio Fun" workshop?

**DANIEL**

If that's the one you want to attend, Riley, then sure!

**TABI**

Daniel, let me ask you something that I'm sure Olivia has never once asked you: what do you want?

**DANIEL**

Oh, I don't know...

**TABI**

Yes, you do. What do you want to do? Say it loud and say it proud!

**DANIEL**

*(Valiantly)*

I want to go to the "Meisner Made Easy" workshop!

**TABI**

Thatta boy! Let's go!

*(Daniel, Tabi, and Arie march off down the corridor to the left. As they exit, they slide a little on the newly mopped floor.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Oh! Slippery!

*(They walk off gingerly. Beau sighs deeply and takes a seat somewhere in the lobby, looking forlorn. A moment passes. A group of students enter from the left corridor.)*



**STUDENT 3**

I'm sorry. I just think that Christopher Marlowe is better than William Shakespeaere.

**STUDENT 4**

How can you say that?! Shakespeare has so many classics! *Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, Macbeth-*

**STUDENT 3**

What?!? Are you insane!? Don't you know that you never...  
*(Gulps)*  
 ...you never mention the name of "the Scottish play" when you're in a theater. It's bad luck!

**STUDENT 4**

But we're not in a theater.

*(Student 3 stares out into the audience.)*

**STUDENT 3**

*(Dramatically)*

Aren't we?

*(The other student and Beau look out, staring suspiciously at the audience. It ends when one student grabs the other, escorting them outside.)*

**STUDENT 3 (CONT'D)**

Come on! We gotta get you outside! You gotta spin around three times, spit over your shoulder and then recite a line from a different Shakespeare play-

*(They continue to explain as they exit. Beau goes back to looking forlorn. Chester enters, also looking forlorn. He spies Beau and walks over.)*

**CHESTER**

Why the long face?

**BEAU**

Shouldn't you be in a workshop?

**CHESTER**

Shouldn't you?

**BEAU**

These workshops are asinine. There's nothing here that I don't already know.

**CHESTER**

I feel the same. Or at least, nothing that I care to learn.

*(Chester holds out his hand to Beau.)*

**CHESTER (CONT'D)**

Chester Dodgerton. Perhaps you've heard of me.

*(Beau shakes Chester's hand.)*

**BEAU**

You're that young playwright fellow, aren't you?

**CHESTER**

The one and only.

**BEAU**

Yes, I saw your adaptation of *Beowulf* a few years ago.

**CHESTER**

Yes?

**BEAU**

I hated it.

*(Chester gasps.)*

**BEAU (CONT'D)**

Nothing personal. I hate most things. I have very high standards.

**CHESTER**

Are you a writer?

**BEAU**

I have many talents, but writing plays isn't one of them.

**CHESTER**

Only the most empathetic and witty of souls can truly create dialogue worth saying. You never answered my question: why the long face?

**BEAU**

*(Sighs dramatically)*

Oh, it's nothing.

**CHESTER**

Come now. I know a troubled soul when I see one.

**BEAU**

Aren't you, like, thirteen\*?

*\*Adjust if needed.*

**CHESTER**

If I were a betting man, I'd say that I know exactly what's got you looking so mirthless and morose. Is it...love?

*(Beau stares off into the distance dramatically.)*

**CHESTER (CONT'D)**

That's all the answer I need!

**BEAU**

*(Weeping)*

And it's the worst kind of love!

**CHESTER**

Unrequited?

**BEAU**

Yes!

*(Beau sobs. Chester wraps his arm around Beau's shoulder.)*

**CHESTER**

There, there. Ah, sweet, sweet love. You fickle and tantalizing monster of our fantasies. How high you take us and, yet, how low you will also throw us.

*(Chester forces Beau to sit up.)*

**CHESTER (CONT'D)**

But you know what they say: you can always make someone love you.

**BEAU**

I'm pretty sure no one has ever said that.

**CHESTER**

Nonsense! Tell me about this love of yours. Who is the lucky soul who has caught your eye?

**BEAU**

*(Smiling like an idiot)*

Arie Gleason.

**CHESTER**

*(Stunned)*

You can't mean that flighty nincompoop who oversees Durchschnitt High's drama club.

**BEAU**

*(Still smiling)*

The one and only.

*(A beat)*

Who are you calling a "flighty nincompoop"? You better watch your words about Ms Gleason when you're in my presence, young man-

**CHESTER**

My apologies. I should know better than to speak ill of someone's muse...even when they are a nincompoop.

*(Beau is about to protest but Chester cuts him off.)*

**CHESTER (CONT'D)**

Truthfully, Ms Arie isn't exactly my type, but I can't fault someone for liking what they like.

**BEAU**

Again, aren't you, like, thirteen\*?  
\*Adjust if needed.

**CHESTER**

Tell me about Arie. What do you like about her?

*(Beau rises and twirls around, in love.)*

**BEAU**

I like everything about Arie. From the very moment I saw her, I loved her. All I have ever done has been in an attempt to receive her approval, her praise, her love! We shared the stage back in high school, and while my character was the one leading them into the bowels of perdition, in reality it was Arie who was tempting me and ensnaring me. How could you not love that perfect woman? I fear I'm not very good at this "wooing" thing. Arie seems to be completely in the dark when it comes to my intentions. Sometimes, it almost seems as though she thinks I'm her enemy. I can't imagine why. It's the strangest thing.

**CHESTER**

Well, when I'm trying to impress someone, I want to present myself as strong and capable so I talk down to them. Have you tried belittling them?

**BEAU**

Yes!

**CHESTER**

And, still, Arie dislikes you?!

**BEAU**

Yes!

**CHESTER**

Strange! Your nincompoop is a pickle.

**BEAU**

Stop saying nincompoop!

**CHESTER**

Sometimes, the best thing to do is just scream.

**BEAU**

Scream?

**CHESTER**

Yes. Scream! Scream your love from the rooftops! Be loud! Be obnoxious! Don't give her a chance to look away! Eventually, she will have no choice but to love you - if for no other reason than to shut you up. Like I said: you can make anyone love you if you try hard enough.

**BEAU**

Really? Screaming?

**CHESTER**

It's how I'm going to win Riley's heart.

**BEAU**

Riley? As in Riley Thane?

*(Chester dramatically stares off into the distance.)*

**CHESTER**

Yes!

**BEAU**

Oh, well. Riley Thane. Everyone and their dog is in love with Riley Thane.

**CHESTER**

Including yourself? I swear, sir, I will fight for my lady's honor! You have no claim to her! I saw her first!

**BEAU**

Calm down, ya little freak. I don't want Riley Thane. She's a child, for goodness sake! What's more, I'm in love with Arie. Remember?

**CHESTER**

Forgive me. A man is not himself when he is in love.

**BEAU**

He's stupider.

**CHESTER**

Indeed.

**BEAU**

Well, it just so happens that your darling is with my darling at this very moment. It was so peculiar. Arie seemed interested in introducing me to Riley. I thought we were getting somewhere: that she wanted me to be involved in her friend group, but when Riley actually showed up, they all just danced away without me.

**CHESTER**

Where are they? Where are they, man?

**BEAU**

Attending some workshop.

**CHESTER**

Which one?

**BEAU**

The Meisner one I believe.

**CHESTER**

I must find her! We must find them together! Enough of this pining and unfulfilled yearning. Put your feelings into words and tell Arie that you love her! No. SCREAM! Scream your feelings!

**BEAU**

I don't think I could.

**CHESTER**

You must! You have to!

**BEAU**

I suppose it is time. I have loved Arie from afar for so long.

**CHESTER**

Enough of that. Let's love them up close!

**BEAU**

Yes! Let's love them up close! I can't remember which direction they went, though. You go to the left and see if you can find them, and I'll go to the right.

**CHESTER**

It's a deal. Let's get to loving!

*(The two dash down their respective corridor, but before they exit, they slip on the newly mopped floor.)*

**BEAU AND CHESTER (CONT'D)**

Oh! Slippery!

*(They gingerly walk off. A beat. Janet quickly exits from the corridor to the right with Olivia following close behind her.)*

**OLIVIA**

Riley! Where are you going?

**JANET**

*(As Riley)*

I don't want to attend the fight choreography workshop, Olivia!

**OLIVIA**

Of course. It's so lame.

**JANET**

It's not that it's lame. In general, I love fight choreography and respect the artists behind it who keep us safe.

**OLIVIA**

Did I say "lame"? I meant..."great".

**JANET**

Olivia, you can stop trying to impress me. You're just trying to be like me. Isn't that boring? Aren't you tired? Don't you want to just be Olivia? Who is Olivia, anyway?

**OLIVIA**

I'm Olivia!

**JANET**

Yes, but who is she? What does she want? What is she hiding? Why is she so rude to everyone? What is she trying to compensate for?

**OLIVIA**

I'm not rude.

**JANET**

You are. You are the rudest person I have ever known. You're an egomaniac!

**OLIVIA**

You don't even know me!

**JANET**

Believe me, Olivia. I know you.

**OLIVIA**

I think it's rude to go throwing out unfounded opinions about people you've just met. The question is: who are you, Riley? Who are you?

*(She begins to storm off before turning back one last time.)*

**OLIVIA (CONT'D)**

And your English accent is awful!

*(She storms off down the left corridor. Janet runs after her.)*

**JANET**

It's not an accent! It's a dialect! There's a difference!

*(She stops. Janet catches a glimpse of herself in a mirror. She stares at herself, taking off the wig.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

*(As Janet)*

Who am I? That's a very good question.

*(She hears someone coming and before she can put the wig back on, Bre enters. Janet hides the wig behind her back and stares at Bre.)*

**BRE**

Hello there.

**JANET**

You're...you're Bre Rossmiller!

**BRE**

Oh, you've heard of me.

**JANET**

Of course I've heard of you. You're the face of the Tammy Awards. It's very nice to meet you. I'm Janet!

*(She holds out her hand to Bre, forgetting that she's got the wig in it. Bre is looking off in another direction and doesn't notice the wig. Janet quickly puts her hand behind her back just as Bre looks back at her.)*

**BRE**

Janet. It's nice to meet you. Are you nominated for a Tammy?

**JANET**

Well, that's complicated. I...uh...my school is. Durchschnitt High. We're nominated for a sound design award. It's nothing special.

**BRE**

All of the awards are special.

**JANET**

Even "Best Sound Design for a One Act at a Public School"?

*(A beat.)*

**BRE**

Even that one. The Tammy Awards have really launched some careers. A lot of important life events will happen tonight. People meet people. Ideas get spread around. That's how the world moves forward: through ideas.

*(Janet is in awe of Bre.)*



**JANET**

You won a GOAT award, right? That must have been amazing.

**BRE**

*(Smiling weakly)*

It was. It was...good.

**JANET**

I heard you went to a very prestigious acting school.

**BRE**

Yes. It was prestigious, alright.

**JANET**

You're still in school, right?

**BRE**

Oh, of course. I just finished my sophomore year.

**JANET**

Are you acting in anything?

**BRE**

I'm very busy with the Tammy's, but I was just in my school's production of *Steel Magnolias*. It was...fun.

**JANET**

It must be so much fun: studying acting all the time.

**BRE**

Between you and me, I wanted to study organic chemistry.

**JANET**

Wait. What?

**BRE**

I've never actually admitted that to anyone. Aside from my parents. Yes, I really wanted to be a chemist. I do love science, but, well, you can't turn down a free ride to college, can you?

**JANET**

No. I suppose you can't. Organic chemistry, really? How is that different from regular chemistry?

**BRE**

*(Smiling)*

organic chemistry is the study of molecules with carbon so you might research things such as amino acids, proteins, alkanes, alkenes, alkynes, and so on. But general chemistry is the study of molecules without carbon so you're looking at compounds, moles, atomic structure, and whatnot. There's more to it than that, but that's a very basic description.

**JANET**

Your face really lit up when you were saying all that. "Alkenes, alkynes, alakazam..." And whatnot.

*(The two laugh.)*

**BRE**

Have you met this "Riley Thane" person?

**JANET**

Riley Thane? Uh, yeah, I've met her.

**BRE**

Have you? I need to meet with her. It's incredibly important.

**JANET**

Everyone wants to meet with Riley Thane.

**BRE**

Yes, but it's extremely important that I meet with her.

**JANET**

Is she in trouble or something?

**BRE**

I have reason to believe that the young woman parading herself around as Riley is, in fact, lying. She isn't the real Riley Thane.

**JANET**

*(Stunned)*

You don't say.

**BRE**

I saw Thane's the Thing. I loved it. I'd know Riley Thane anywhere, and whoever that was last night was not here.

*(She stops and really looks at Janet who nervously looks away.)*

**JANET**

So, you liked her show?

**BRE**

Of course. It was smart and funny. As a representative for The Tammy Awards, I get sent out to see shows that have caught the organization's attention. I understand that part of the appeal of Riley is that she's mysterious and elusive, but she's a little too elusive for my taste.

**JANET**

Well, if I see her, I'll send her your way.

**BRE**

Thank you. It was nice talking to you, Janet. I hope we meet again.

*(Bre exits out the main door. Janet is silent, thinking about everything she's just heard. She finally allows her arms to come out from behind her back and she notices the wig.)*

**JANET**

Wait a second. I wasn't wearing the wig. I wasn't Riley! I was Janet!

*(She laughs)*

I was Janet! I am Janet!

*(She hears someone coming, however, and quickly puts the wig back on. Beau enters and lights up upon seeing Janet.)*

**BEAU**

There she is!

**JANET**

*(As Riley)*

Here I am!

**BEAU**

I have two very important things to tell you!

**JANET**

Oh, uh, have we met? Wait! You're that Mr. Beau person, right? That friend of Ms Arie's?

**BEAU**

A friend? Arie truly referred to me as a friend?

**JANET**

Friend? Enemy? I wasn't entirely sure. Ms Arie certainly has strong feelings for you one way or the other.

**BEAU**

I'll take it! As long as it isn't that horrible indifference. Where is she?

**JANET**

Ms Arie?

**BEAU**

Yes!

**JANET**

I haven't seen her.

**BEAU**

But you just left with her.

**JANET**

Did I?

**BEAU**

Yes! You went to the Meisner technique workshop?

**JANET**

*(Confused)*

I did? I was just at the fight choreography workshop with Olivia.

**BEAU**

You are mistaken.

**JANET**

I don't think I am.

**BEAU**

The point is: I need to find Arie!

**JANET**

Well, I can't help you.

**BEAU**

But you were just with her!

**JANET**

I assure you, I wasn't-

**BEAU**

You're confusing my brain!

**JANET**

It really isn't that confusing!

**BEAU**

Chester Dogerton is looking for you-

**JANET**

Oh, for goodness sake!

**BEAU**

He loves you!

**JANET**

Chester Dodgerton is an idiot!

**BEAU**

How can you speak so horribly of someone who loves you so?

**JANET**

I barely know the guy. Besides, love isn't a feeling. It's an action. None of his actions have led me to believe that he loves me.

*(Beau is struck by this.)*

**BEAU**

"Love isn't a feeling. It's an action." Chester told me that love is screaming, but you're saying that love is an action. Interesting. Your version makes way more sense! You truly are brilliant, Ms. Thane. What a concept. "Love isn't a feeling. It's an action." So what you're saying is that instead of just talking to Arie, I should actively do something to prove my love?

**JANET**

Oh! You love Ms Arie? That's...unexpected?

**BEAU**

I must find her immediately and prove my love to her with actions! Thank you, Riley! Thank you!

*(Beau dashes down the corridor to the right. A group of students enter from the left corridor; they are having a heated debate. Janet runs down the right corridor in an attempt to hide from them.)*

**STUDENT 1**

I told you that that workshop would be lame.

**STUDENT 2**

I enjoyed it!

**STUDENT 1**

That instructor didn't know their Stephen Schwartz from their Stephen Sondheim!

*(Another student emerges from the stairwell.)*

**STUDENT 3**

Where have you guys been? We're going to be late! We said we'd meet back here by four! We have to get ready for the awards!

**STUDENT 2**

We just went to check out this-

**STUDENT 3**

We are leaving in five minutes!

**STUDENT 1 & 2**

Thank you, five!

*(The students exit out through the stairwell. Janet peeks her head out to make sure they're gone and then enters into the main lobby area just as Tabi bursts in from the corridor to the left. They both slip on the newly mopped floor and collide with each other. When they speak, they speak simultaneously.)*

**BOTH**

*(As Riley)*

So sorry, darling! I didn't see you-

*(They both look at the other and realize who they're talking to.)*

**BOTH (CONT'D)**

*(As themselves)*

You! What are you doing? Why are you dressed like that? I said I was playing Riley! We talked about this! Wait a second. It all makes sense now. They thought I was you!

**TABI**

The employee saw you and then they saw me! That's why they were confused!

**JANET**

You were at the workshop with Ms Arie, weren't you? That's why Mr. Beau kept asking me about her.

**TABI**

Janet, we both know I'm the better Riley.

**JANET**

That's bold of you to say...considering I created her.

**TABI**

You created her, but I made her better-

**JANET**

I'm nominated for a Tammy-

**TABI**

Oh, who cares about those stupid awards?!

**JANET**

I do! This whole thing is mine!

**TABI**

Because you're an actor and I'm not?

**JANET**

Ugh! We don't have time to argue about this. Please! You need to take the getup off. This is getting too complicated. Bre Rossmiller is on to me! On to us! She knows that it wasn't really me playing Riley last night.

**TABI**

Bre Rossmiller? That perky chick who announced the nominations?

**JANET**

She could get me kicked out of the running!

**TABI**

Okay, whether or not this Bre person is actually on to us is unimportant. The important thing is that the workshops are almost over, and it's time to start thinking about the actual awards ceremony. I'm not saying that I will take the award or the scholarship; you deserve it and it's yours. What I am saying is I think it would be best for me to play Riley at the ceremony.

**JANET**

You aren't Riley!

**TABI**

I want a Tammy Award!

*(A beat)*

Okay? I said it! I want to walk up on that stage and get handed an award. I want people to look at me and listen to what I have to say! I want people to care about what I do instead of just being that insignificant kid in the black T-shirt who is watching the prop table.

**JANET**

You're not insignificant-

**TABI**

Oh, come on, Janet! Of course, I am! I was just saying that the Tammy's are stupid because I knew that I'd never get nominated for one, but this is my one chance. You're going to win so many awards! You're so talented! Let me have this one!

*(Chester enters from the corridor to the left. Tabi has her back to him but Janet can see him. Spooked at the sight of him again, Janet ducks behind the front desk, leaving Tabi to deal with him.)*

**CHESTER**

Riley!

*(Tabi is so confused as to what Janet is doing that she doesn't notice Chester calling to her right away.)*

**TABI**

Janet, what are you doing?

**CHESTER**

Riley, my darling!

*(He runs to her. Tabi turns to him, spooked by his sudden appearance.)*

**TABI**

*(As herself)*

Good gravy!

*(As Riley)*

Oh. Hello!

**CHESTER**

Forgive me. We haven't had the pleasure of actually meeting. My name is Chester Dodgerton. Perhaps you've heard of me.

*(Tabi begins to back away. Chester follows her.)*

**TABI**

Afraid not.

**CHESTER**

Ms. Thane, everyone here is talking about you as an actress, and while, yes, you are superb in that regard, it's not all you are. You, like me, are a playwright. I have never heard words - aside from my own - that moved me with such feelings until I saw your work. The truth of the matter is that I'm utterly devoted to you!

**TABI**

Um...thanks but no thanks.

**CHESTER**

Allow me to explain myself-

**TABI**

Please don't-

**CHESTER**

I love you, Riley! I love you! I love you! I love you! I saw your show four times! Tell me: did anyone else see your show four times?

**TABI**

I don't know. I wasn't really in charge of the ticket sales-

**CHESTER**

I can guarantee that no else did. Only I! I know that I'm younger than you, but I will prove myself!

**TABI**

Why are you screaming?

**CHESTER**

Please! Give me the chance! Let's meld our minds into one and create something truly beautiful!



**TABI**

Ew! Gross! What are you suggesting?

**CHESTER**

Let's DATE!

*(Tabi tries to get away, but Chester cuts her off.)*

**CHESTER (CONT'D)**

Perhaps a single moment could change the course of our entire lives. We come here as strangers, but we leave as so much more. I am shouting, and you are falling in love with me! Look into my eyes!

**TABI**

Nope. Not gonna do that.

*(Tabi tries again to escape, but Chester grabs her by the hand and holds her back. He's on one knee with this declaration.)*

**CHESTER**

My devotion could move mountains! It could burn down forests! It could create art! Love me! Love me!!

*(For once in her life, Tabi is completely at a loss of words. Chester seems to move in slow motion as he brings his lips closer and closer to her hand. He puckers his lips out and is almost kissing her hand when suddenly Janet pops up from behind the front desk. She has discarded the Riley wig and is truly appearing as herself.)*

**JANET**

Get your hands off of my friend, ya little creep!

*(Tabi and Chester turn, stunned at Janet's sudden appearance. Janet runs at Chester.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

Read the room, Chester! Look at her body language! Listen to the words she is saying! She isn't interested and she will never be interested! Your presence is not wanted and you smell like cabbages for some weird reason!

**CHESTER**

I, uh, Jane, we talked about-

**JANET**

My name is Janet Straid! Remember it! Riley is my friend, and she clearly wants nothing to do with you. Isn't that right, Riley?

*(All eyes on Tabi.)*

**TABI**

*(As Riley)*

That...that is correct. You're gross and you do smell like cabbage!

*(Chester lifts his arm and smells his armpit.)*

**CHESTER**

I had no idea. I just...I love you so, Riley.

**JANET**

Love isn't a feeling. It's an action.

**CHESTER**

I don't know what that means.

**JANET**

Get out of my sight and go ponder it, ya weirdo!

*(Chester runs off, in tears. Janet and Tabi share a look.)*

**TABI**

*(As herself)*

Janet, you're...you're you.

**JANET**

I am. I'm me.

*(Tabi hugs Janet.)*

**TABI**

I'm so sorry. I liked being Riley so much. The fanfare was new and different. I've never felt that powerful, and I let it get to me.

*(She takes off the wig and hands it to Janet)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Here. Riley is yours.

**JANET**

No, Tabi. You clearly are the better Riley. You're better at thinking on your feet. Your dialect is better. The only reason I had the courage to even write Riley into existence is because you've been my friend and helped me come out of my shell. It's time for you to shine a bit.

*(She pushes the wig back into Tabi's hands.)*

**TABI**

Janet, no-

*(They push the wig back and forth between them with each line.)*

**JANET**

Tabi, I mean it. You be Riley-

**TABI**

No. You be Riley-

**JANET**

I'm serious about this.

**TABI**

You have to be Riley-

**JANET**

No-

*(The hotel employee pops out from the back room, having heard enough of this.)*

**EMPLOYEE**

For the sake of all that is good and decent, will one of you just be Riley Thane! Talk, talk, talk! That's all you theatre people do! Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah!

*(To Janet)*

You're Riley!

*(To Tabi)*

You're Riley! I'm Riley! Everyone is Riley!

*(They scream in frustration.)*

**JANET**

You know what? You're right. Everyone is Riley. Riley isn't a person. Riley is a concept. No! Not a concept! An idea! And that's how the world moves forward: through ideas. Boy, do I have an idea.

*(To the employee)*

You are brilliant.

*(She takes the wig from Tabi and then runs behind the front desk.)*

**TABI**

What are you doing?

*(Janet appears again with her own discarded wig from before.)*

**JANET**

I'm going to set this right. Keep them busy, Tabi.

*(Janet exits through the stairwell door.)*

**EMPLOYEE***(Sarcastic)*

Well, that was very informative.

*(They go back to the desk to sulk. The elevator door pops open and Olivia enters, dressed nicely for the awards ceremony.)*

**OLIVIA**

Hello, Tabi.

**TABI**

Olivia. Why are you sulking?

**OLIVIA**

I had the extreme misfortune of actually getting to know your friend, Riley, and I must say: she isn't as cool as I thought she was.

**TABI**

Oh really?

**OLIVIA**

She told me I was rude!

**TABI**

The audacity!

**OLIVIA**

I know, right? I don't know what you see in her.

*(The elevator door opens again and Arie enters, also dressed nicely.)*

**ARIE**

Oooh! There you are! I seem to have misplaced Riley - and Daniel, for that matter.

**OLIVIA**

Daniel! Yes! Where is that boy? He ditched me to go hang out with Riley, didn't he?

**ARIE**

I thought you and Riley were good friends.

**OLIVIA**

Hardly!

*(Bre enters from the stairwell, also dressed for the awards. She crosses to Tabi.)*

**BRE**

Tabi, isn't it? I hear that you're a friend of Riley. It is of the utmost importance that I find her!

**ARIE**

Yes, where is Riley?

**TABI**

*(Nervously)*

I really can't say.

*(Beau enters from the main entrance. He is dressed in the same outfit as before, but he's dirty and has twigs stuck in his hair.)*

**BEAU**

Arie!

**ARIE**

Good grief!

**OLIVIA**

*(To Beau)*

Are you alright? You look like you've been dragged through the mud.

**BEAU**

I thought I saw Arie so I jumped out the window, but it turned out it was just a different person who, upon closer inspection, looks nothing like you, Arie.

**ARIE**

You jumped out a window because you thought you saw me?

**BEAU**

Yes, of course.

**ARIE**

Why would you do that?

**BRE**

*(To Tabi)*

When did you last see Riley?

*(Bre continues talking to Tabi.)*

**ARIE**

*(To Beau)*

You hate me so much that you would jump out of a window to avoid me? I should be the one jumping out of the window to avoid you!

**BEAU**

*(To Arie)*

Hate you? Hate you? You're misunderstanding the whole situation, Arie! I didn't jump out the window to avoid you! I jumped out the window to be closer to you! I thought I saw you outside!

*(Beau and Arie continue arguing.)*

**BRE**

*(To Tabi)*

The integrity of the whole Tammy Awards organization is at stake-

**OLIVIA**

*(To Bre)*

I don't know why you want to find Riley. She's a terror! I wouldn't hang out with her if she were the last person on earth!

**BRE**

*(To Olivia)*

This really doesn't concern you-

**OLIVIA**

I don't even know why Riley got nominated for an award in the first place! We did *Our Town* this past season and I played Emily. It was spectacular, but not a single Tammy Award for me! Where is my Tammy Award?

**ARIE**

*(To Beau)*

What are you babbling on about? Closer to me?

*(Daniel enters from the stairwell, dressed nicely and looking very confident.)*

**DANIEL**

I learned some Meisner techniques!

**EMPLOYEE**

What on earth is "Meisner"?

**DANIEL**

I'm so glad you asked!

*(He crosses to the front desk and begins to explain the Meisner technique to the poor employee who clearly regrets asking.)*

**OLIVIA**

*(To Bre)*

I would like to know how you exactly decide who gets nominated and who doesn't! That's what I want to know!

**BEAU**

*(To Arie)*

You're not listening to me-

**ARIE**

You have been nothing but a pain in my side since we were fourteen, Beau!

**BEAU**

A pain?

**ARIE**

Yes! You always got everything that I wanted!

**BEAU**

Like what?

**ARIE**

Professor Chicorel was my favorite professor, but she always liked you more!

**BEAU**

Professor Chicorel is my aunt!

**ARIE**

You stole the set shop job from me! You stole my GOAT award from me!

**BEAU**

I didn't steal it! I won it! You're missing the point! Arie, I love you! I have always loved you! And everything I have ever done was to get closer to you!

**ARIE**

Oh, come on!

**BEAU**

It's true! I followed you to college because I couldn't bare to be apart from you-

**ARIE**

You were always so mean to me! You call that love?

**BEAU**

I was trying to impress you! I thought if I won awards, you'd be impressed!

**ARIE**

That's not how love works, Beau!

**OLIVIA**

*(To anyone who will listen)*

I just wanted Riley to like me! I just wanted to be cool like Riley!

*(She wails.)*

**BRE**

*(To Tabi)*

Tabi, are you listening to me?

**ARIE**

*(To Beau)*

If you liked me so much, why didn't you just tell me?

**BEAU**

Tell...tell you?

**ARIE**

Yes! Just say, "Arie, I like you! Let's go on a date!" You know, like normal people do!

**BEAU**

I...I guess I never thought of that.

**ARIE**

Because you're a psychopath!

*(Daniel is still at the desk, happily explaining the ins and outs of the Meisner technique to the employee. Olivia is still screaming at Bre. Bre is trying to simultaneously fend off Olivia and get Tabi's attention. Beau and Arie are screaming at one another. Tabi looks like she's about to burst from all the noise. Chester enters from the corridor to the left, in tears.)*

**CHESTER**

Love is so cruel! Love is awful! What a fool I've been!

*(To Beau)*

She rejected me! She said no! Can you believe that?

**BEAU**

Dude, I'm kind of in the middle of something.

*(To Arie)*

See, I jumped out the window because I was trying to use my actions to prove my love-

**ARIE**

Beau, you're a narcissist! And you like torturing people! You could have picked any college in the world, but you chose to follow me! You wanted to flaunt it in my face that you got to be the Greatest of All Time, and I didn't!

*(Chester throws himself at Beau, still weeping. Beau tries to fend him off while still arguing with Arie. Daniel and Olivia are fighting now. The employee is banging their head on the wall out of frustration and Bre continues to hound Tabi. Everything is coming to a climax. Suddenly, the elevator dings, and it catches everyone's attention.)*



*The doors open Janet enters, decked in in a beautiful gown and wearing the iconic Riley wig. She looks stunning. Everyone is in awe of her for a moment.)*

**JANET**

*(As Riley)*

Hello, darlings. What have I missed?

**BRE**

Miss Thane - if that is your real name - I NEED to speak with you.

**JANET**

I'm sure you do, dear Bre. Everyone wants a piece of Riley Thane's glory.

*(Janet and Bre share a look and Bre notices Janet's eyes. She backs down as Janet walks across the room and assesses everyone's chaotic state.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

What is going on here? This is supposed to be a happy time, but nobody here looks happy. We're at the Tammy Awards, people! Isn't this the greatest time of the year for us theatre folks? Well, isn't it?

*(No one looks happy.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

No, it isn't. This may be my first time attending these awards, but I have a feeling I know everything I need to know about them. Olivia, you look upset. Why is that?

**OLIVIA**

You were very mean to me. You called me an egomaniac. It hurt my feelings.

**JANET**

And why do you care what I think?

**OLIVIA**

Well, you're Riley Thane. You're...amazing.

*(Janet turns to Chester.)*

**JANET**

Chester. Why are you so unhappy?

**CHESTER**

All I wanted to do was love you. My soul burns with such love that I-

**JANET**

Alright! That's enough. I'll ask you the same question: why do you care what I think?

**CHESTER**

Because you're Riley Thane.

*(Janet turns to Arie.)*

**JANET**

Dear Arie, I assume you have some grievances to air as well.

**ARIE**

Well, I didn't win the GOAT award, and I should have! I played the titular character! I had all the lines! A reviewer came to see our show and said that I was "stunning"! Truthfully, he said that I was stunning in the role!

**JANET**

And who was this reviewer?

**ARIE**

I...I don't remember his name, actually. Or it could have been a woman now that I think about it...

**JANET**

Funny. You put so much weight in someone's opinion of you, but you can't even remember their name. Why do you care what they think? Do you think you did a good job, Ms. Arie?

**ARIE**

Yes. I think I was a fantastic Doctor Faustus.

**BEAU**

You were. Whoever that reviewer was, they were right: you were stunning.

*(Arie glares at Beau and he backs off.)*

**JANET**

*(To everyone)*

Isn't that all that should matter? Are you proud? Did you, in fact, act well your part? You all care so much what I think simply because I'm Riley Thane, but what if I told you that I wasn't.

*(Janet removes the wig, revealing herself fully as Janet. Everyone gasps.)*

**OLIVIA**

Janet?

**ARIE**

Janet?

**BRE**

Janet?

**EMPLOYEE**

I don't know who that is!

*(A beat)*

Oh, wait. You were that one girl who was too shy to talk to me. It was weird.

**OLIVIA**

Janet, you're Riley Thane?

**JANET**

Yes. Riley is the character I created for a play that I wrote.

**ARIE**

YOU wrote *Thane's the Thing*?

**JANET**

That's right. It's all made up. I created the character of Riley to help me come out of my shell. Things got carried away and here we are. Why did you like my show to begin with? Because it was flashy? Because I had a rotating set or pyrotechnics? Because I'm someone with a lot of clout? I think you liked it because it was just a good piece of theatre, if I do say so myself. You all are so worked up over a fictional nobody. The real question you should be asking yourself is: what do you think of yourself?

**BEAU**

Actually, my problem has nothing to do with Riley Thane.

**DANIEL**

Yeah. I'm quite content so this monologue doesn't really apply to me.

**EMPLOYEE**

What is a GOAT Award, anyway?

**TABI**

Hey! Everyone! Janet still has the spotlight. Calm down.

**JANET**

*(To Bre)*

I understand if this makes me ineligible for the GOAT Award. I fully accept that. I've come to like Janet, and I'd rather be her than Riley.

*(Everyone just stares at Bre, waiting for her response. Suddenly...)*

**BRE**

I don't want to act, anymore!

*(Everyone is stunned.)*

**BRE (CONT'D)**

It was fun while it lasted, but I'm done with the late night rehearsals and the memorizing of lines and the constant auditions and wondering if you're gonna get into this show and thinking that you have to get into the show or you're a failure. I just want to be a pharmacologist!

*(She begins to cry. Arie and Tabi go to her side and embrace her.)*

**ARIE**

There, there. That was very brave of you to admit.

**BRE**

I just really like beakers and microscopes and safety goggles. Oh, I love safety goggles! They're so practical!

**TABI**

It's alright.

**JANET**

That doesn't really answer my question.

**BRE**

*(Between tears)*

What was the question, again?

**JANET**

Am I still in the running for the GOAT Award?

**BRE**

Of course! Why wouldn't you be?

**JANET**

Because I lied about my real name.

**BRE**

How old are you?

**JANET**

Seventeen.

**BRE**

And you attend high school?

**JANET**

Yes.

**BRE**

Then you qualify.

**JANET**

I'm an imposter.

**BRE**

You're an artist. You have a pseudonym.

**JANET**

But I-

**TABI**

Janet, let it go. You're still in the running. That's all that matters.

**BRE**

Oh, goodness! Look at the time! I have to get over to the theatre!

**TABI**

One more hug!

*(Arie, Tabi, and Bre hug.)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Feel the love!

*(Bre breaks away, looking happier than ever.)*

**BRE**

Thank you for your love and sympathy. You all should go and-  
*(To Beau)*

-clean up a bit.

*(To everyone)*

See you all there!

*(She exits out the main door. Arie watches Bre go.)*

**ARIE**

Huh. I guess being the Greatest of All Time isn't all it's cracked up to be.

*(Beau approaches Arie.)*

**BEAU**

You're still the greatest of all time...to me...

**ARIE**

Don't talk to me.

*(Daniel approaches his drama club.)*

**DANIEL**

Well, Varsity Members of the Durchschnitt High School Drama Club, shall we go win a Tammy?

**TABI**

How about we just go and enjoy ourselves. I heard that the buffet afterwards is going to be off the charts.

**BEAU**

It is quite good. Last year they had a mashed potato bar.

**TABI**

Like all the different fixings for mashed potatoes?

**BEAU**

Yes.

**TABI**

And you just add whatever you want?

**BEAU**

Exactly.

**TABI**

Friends, I'm really looking forward to this evening.

*(She offers her arm to Olivia)*

**TABI (CONT'D)**

Shall we?

*(Olivia takes Tabi's arm.)*

**OLIVIA**

Yes! We shall!

*(Arie, Beau, Tabi, Daniel, and Olivia all walk out happily together. Janet lingers and notices Chester still looking sad and alone.)*

**JANET**

Chester.

*(He looks up, and Janet tilts her head to the door where all of her friends just exited.)*

**JANET (CONT'D)**

Let's go.

*(Chester and Janet begin to exit.)*

**CHESTER**

Janet, you have the most beautiful eyes-

**JANET**

Shut up, Chester.

*(The lights go down.)*

**EPILOGUE**

*A single spotlight hits a podium as applause is heard. Bre enters the stage, standing at the podium and smiling brightly.*

**BRE**

Well, friends, our time here at the Tammy Awards is almost done. What a spectacular evening of talent, drive, and passion tonight has been. This will officially be my final year heading up the Tammy Awards so I couldn't possibly ask for a better night on which to end my interesting theatrical career. But the festivities aren't over, yet. There is still one more award to give out. Oh, yes, the GOAT Award. I know we're all just dying to know who is the *greatest of all time* so, without further adieu, the nominees for this years GOAT Award are: from Green Bay High School, Spencer Johnson for his performance as Heathcliffe in *Wuthering Heights*, from Cudahy High School, Nancy Polowitz for her performance as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, from Madison East High School, Robin Dober in their directorial debut of *Rumors*, and from Durchschnitt High School, Janet Straid for her one woman show *Thane's the Thing*. The envelope please!

*(Someone presents Bre with an envelope.)*

**BRE (CONT'D)**

And the Greatest of all Time Award goes to...

*(She opens the envelope and immediately looks a bit disappointed but hides it well as she announces the name.)*

**BRE (CONT'D)**

Robin Dober from Madison East!

*(There's a flurry of applause as everyone waits for "Robin" to take the stage. A beat. And then they present themselves: Robin enters and it's none other than the employee from the hotel. Bre looks stunned as she hands "Robin" the infamous GOAT trophy. Robin approaches the mic and smiles brightly.)*

**ROBIN**

You theatre people are weird. I should know. I'm one of you.

*(The scene fades shifts to the Durchschnitt crew (plus Chester and Beau) sitting in the audience looking just as shocked as Bre. Tabi leans over to Janet.)*

**TABI**

Hey. I'm sorry. That stinks.

**JANET**

Honestly, I'm kind of relieved. You wanna get some mashed potatoes?

**TABI**

Yeah. Let's go get some mashed potatoes.

*(The two friends rise as the lights go down.)*

**The End**