

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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The West Wing
a short play by Jenny Kirlin

LINDA, 29, sits on the floor in an empty room, back up against the wall, her knees tucked up against her. She is typing furiously on her laptop when JANET, mid-thirties, in a black skirt suit, rushes in.

Janet Jesus. Sorry. I thought this was...

Janet starts to head back out the door.

Linda *(without looking up)* It's alright.

Janet turns around in the doorway.

Janet Linda?

Linda looks up. Her eyes narrow.

Linda Janet.

Janet I'd heard they were bringing you in. I didn't believe it.

Linda puts her laptop aside and rises.

Linda What are you doing here?

Janet The meeting on the Hill. The President's council requested -

Linda I KNOW. *Beat.* I just thought they had decided not to bring you up for it.

Janet Why is that?!

Linda Because it's a publicity stunt. You can't come near Washington right now without it being a press circus. And unless you're planning on backing down from your position, it's going to look like nothing was accomplished.

Janet Listen. I don't want to be here either. And I'm not in a position to care what it *looks like* for the President.

Linda stares at her.

Janet *(cont.)* I'm leaving.

Janet turns to leave.

Linda rushes between Janet and the door. Back against the door, she closes it shut behind her. She and Janet are face to face, Linda slightly shorter.

Janet (*cont.*) What is wrong with you?!

Linda I want to know what you're planning to do here.

Janet I'm going.

Linda Are you going to apologize?!

Janet Apologize? For what?

Linda *For shooting the President's cousin!*

Janet I didn't do anything to his cousin. I defended the man who shot him. That's my JOB.

Linda You might as well have.

Janet He wasn't wrong! He was on the man's *property* and refused to leave. He had every right to not want his kind loitering.

Linda DON'T talk about the President that way! Not in the West Wing!

Janet I—

Linda Someone could end up shooting his *brother* next. Or HIM! Because of people like you who say it's okay. Is that what you want?!

Janet It's not like you can tell them apart.

Linda slaps Janet in the face. Beat.

Janet (*cont.*) Fuck. You.

Janet makes a move past Linda. Linda shields her off.

Linda What gives you the right to dictate what is or is not good for the American people?

Janet You are the ones to blame for what is happening in our country right now. It's this mass upheaval. This widespread panic that lead to THIS. We were fine before. The country was fine.

Linda The country was NOT fine. The world was against us, the economy was sinking, unemployment reached its all time high, insurance companies were panicking...

Janet And *this* is supposed to make it better?!

Linda He is. Yes. It was like America had won the Super Bowl the night he was elected. For a good month afterwards, everywhere you looked, everyone was smiling at one another on the street. He is a symbol of peace for our country and WHY is that such a bad thing?!

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Janet *He is a PIGEON!*

Linda *He is MY PRESIDENT!*

Silence.

Janet I'm *sorry*, but a good HALF of the United States hates pigeons. One third shoots them for game. I'm not the only bad guy here. You would have voted for an *elephant* if it had told you it could fix the economy. Which, by the way, is still not fixed. A giant goose egg.

Linda Stop!

Janet I'm sorry if I am offending you, but I find it more than a little offensive that I just walked my daughter past a portrait of a pigeon in the National Art Gallery before I came here.

Janet looks around the room.

Janet (*cont.*) I guess pigeons don't need furniture.

Linda It's my first day. It hasn't arrived yet.

Janet Save money *and* drive the humans out.

Linda He is NOT driving the humans out. Take that back! If that was his plan, I'm not sure why over *half* the country voted him into office.

Janet Because pigeons held the majority of votes.

Linda In the Northeast cities. The Midwest and South counted too. And even all the pigeons that *wanted* to vote, couldn't. The touch screen ballots are heat censored.

Janet Do we really want a species in office that can't work a touch screen?!

Linda If we discounted everyone that couldn't cast a vote correctly...

Janet He is in a position to dictate what happens to this country for the next FOUR years -

Linda Or eight!

Janet And he's not like us. You can't tell me he has not even *thought* about -

Linda No.

Janet We already know he wants pigeons to serve alongside our troops.

Linda Why would we turn away *anyone* who is willing to serve for his or her country.

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Janet Because our troops need to be able to coexist with *pigeons* and trust their units won't be preening their feathers when they should be shielding off attacks.

Linda Pigeons were *heroes* in World War I.

Janet They were *homing pigeons*. Someone strapped paper to their leg, they were shot at, and they flew home. Big deal.

Linda There's one in the Smithsonian.

Janet So is Archie Bunker's chair, but you don't see furniture running for office.

Linda Really?

Beat.

Janet What's going to happen when he DIES in two years?

Linda STOP.

Janet An average life expectancy is what, fifteen years? Five years if he grew up in the wild? Do we even know how old he is?! There's no birth certificate. What's going to happen with the morale of the American people when their President, the great symbol of peace, drops dead.

Linda That's why we have a Vice President!

Janet *Who is an eagle!*

Linda With an incredibly extensive background in foreign affairs. AND is the national symbol of America!

Janet And *anyone* we put up against him is going to lose. Who would vote against an eagle?!

Linda He wants to bridge the gap between species. He doesn't want to take over the world.

Janet Then why not reach out to Oberstar or Henley for Vice President. Extend a wing in the direction of the humans, not in the direction of other fowl.

Linda Because this is where we have to show a united front. He didn't win because he had a great HUMAN Vice President. He won because America is ready to own up for our mistakes of the past two elections.

Janet By electing a *messenger*.

Linda It's a strong message.

Janet It's a giant leap.

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Linda It's the next step. He's already issued a \$1,000 tax cut for the middle class and a three-year spending freeze on domestic programs. He's proposed a bill to lengthen classroom hours beginning at dawn and he's working on cleaning up the streets and issuing mandatory vaccines for pigeons.

Janet Well.

Janet walks over to the window and opens it.

Linda (*bee-lining it to the window*) STOP! He'll get out!

Linda slams the window shut.

Janet What are you doing??

Linda He likes to go outside!

Janet *This is embarrassing.*

Linda He has a meeting.

Janet The world is laughing at us right now. And they're right.

Linda Our allies are behind us.

Janet You think Germany is going to put up with this? Canada's having a good laugh.

Linda What about London? They *love* pigeons. You should have *seen* the swarm of people and other pigeons he attracted.

Janet It was Trafalgar Square! That's what they do! The President shouldn't be fed breadcrumbs from tourists. The President has to be seen as a real leader.

Linda He also has to be well liked.

Janet Well, he *is* a delicacy in some countries.

Linda That's disgusting.

Linda moves past Janet to retrieve her laptop. She heads towards the door, when...

Janet He has to pardon a turkey!

Linda turns.

Linda Excuse me?!

Janet There are things Presidents *do*. He has to pardon a turkey at Thanksgiving.

Linda He has to what?

Janet *He has to pardon a turkey.* What if he pardoned ALL the turkeys?!

Linda What would be so wrong about that?

Janet It's un-American. America is not just a political system. We're a culture. And being an American means being able to eat turkey at Thanksgiving.

Linda It also means growing up to believe that anyone can be President.

Janet I'm not sure this is what they meant.

Linda I think it is. By definition.

Janet What about the Easter egg roll?! *He would sit on the eggs.* He has to throw out the first pitch at the World Series! What would *that* look like?!

Janet mimes throwing a pitch as a pigeon.

Linda Janet.

Janet stops.

Janet He's going to be a joke here at home too. He makes us look weak.

Linda FDR got us through World War II and the Great Depression.

Janet And?

Linda He had a disability and was STILL considered one of our strongest Presidents.

Janet He had polio! He wasn't *a pigeon!* He could hoist himself up for photos. The President looks blurry *because he can't keep his head still.*

Linda It's for depth perception!

Linda moves towards the door.

Janet *(cont.) He's so tiny!*

Linda turns and slaps Janet.

Linda Listen to yourself!

Janet That's the second time you've slapped me!

Linda That's the fourth time you've deserved it! I can't have this argument with you.

Janet takes a step towards the door. Linda steps out of her way.

Janet It was a mistake for them to bring you in to spearhead dog suffrage. They'll see.

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Linda Why?! I've been at the forefront of the movement for seventy years.

Janet You weren't *born* seventy years ago.

Linda Dog years.

Janet What's next?! GIRAFFES?!

Linda Giraffes??? They're foreign. They can't vote.

Janet I don't recognize this country anymore.

Linda (*pleased*) Me either.

Janet That's not a good thing.

Linda The country is changing. It's ready for us.

Janet When pigs fly.

Linda He's the President. Flap flap, bitch.

And Janet is gone. Linda is left alone in her empty office.

Blackout. End of play.

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