

The Devil and W.H.S.

by

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FADE IN:

INT. JANIS' CAR - DAY

JANIS, a plain-looking girl in disheveled, "bag-lady" clothing, is sitting in her stationary car. She sighs as her hands fidget on the steering wheel.

JANIS

(talking to someone O.S.)

I just don't know why no one will talk to me. I'm nice enough, aren't I? Gee, Otis. Sometimes I feel like you're the only one who understands me. I'm glad I have you...you're my best friend.

The shot switches to reveal to whom Janis is speaking. Her companion is OTIS, a bobble-head dog doll. He nods.

JANIS

But really, Otis. Am I that horrible?

Otis nods, causing Janis to frown and throw her hands up in anger.

JANIS

Otis!

She sighs and looks at him, a small smile breaking through her frown. She laughs as she grabs Otis and holds him to her face.

JANIS

Oh, Otis. I could never stay mad at you. Come on, let's get you into school.

Janis gingerly places Otis in her bag before zipping it up just as gently. She opens her door and starts to walk towards the school.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Janis walks through the hallway, her eyes focused on her shoes. She looks up and sees a good-looking football player surrounded by girls pass her by. This is DEREK. A smile brightens her face, and she hastily smooths down her hair in an effort to look attractive.

JANIS

Hi Derek! Nice weather we're...

Derek ignores her and keeps walking, the girls giggling. Janis moves to her locker and opens it, only to have it shut in her face. She looks up to see a cocky student with a smirk on his face. This is MIKE.

MIKE

(sarcastically)

Don't be late, Janis.

He throws his head back and laughs as he walks away. Janis frowns, her lower lip trembling. She opens the locker again, pulls out all her things, and runs the other way.

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASS - DAY

Janis sits in her desk, her head down as students throw wads of paper and paper airplanes at her back and head. A powerful looking man watches from his desk with an evil smirk on his face. This is MR. GIBSON.

A group of students laugh in the corner as one of their group heads towards her bag. He pulls it away from her and unzips it, taking out Otis. He passes it from one to the other as Janis grabs for it.

JANIS

Stop it! Let him go!

The students' laughter is cut short as Gibson's hand shoots out to grab Otis in mid-air.

GIBSON

Class is over.

STUDENT

What? No, it's not...we still have

Gibson holds up his finger as the BELL rings. The students merely shrug and gather their things, leaving Janis alone. Gibson strokes Otis' head before placing him on Janis' desk. She gets up and starts to leave after putting Otis in her bag, but she is stopped by Gibson's voice.

GIBSON

Janis. Stay for a moment. There is something you and I need to talk about.

JANIS

I'm sorry for the mess, Mr. Gibson. I would have picked up the papers, but I don't want to be late for class, and, you know, with the risk of paper cuts...

GIBSON

What? No. That's not what I meant. Janis...are you unhappy?

JANIS

Well, I -

GIBSON

It's alright. I know your pain, Janis.

JANIS

I...

GIBSON

Yes. All you want is to be popular, right Janis? A chance to be the "it girl"?

JANIS

Yeah...I...I do.

GIBSON

You see, Janis. I can give you all that. All you have to do is sign this little paper and...

JANIS

The paper they threw at me? I can pick it up if you want. My mom says that I...

GIBSON

No! Forget the paper Janis. It's not important.

Janis blinks and fixes him with a quizzical look.

GIBSON (CONT.)

(still looking at Janis)

Oh Landry! Come here a moment.

A boy slowly limps into the room, a large hunchback causing him to bend over slightly. This is LANDRY.

LANDRY
Master, is this the new sla-

Gibson fixes him with a glare, eliciting an embarrassed chuckle from Landry.

LANDRY (CONT.)
...Recruit?

GIBSON
Yes, Landry. This is she.

JANIS
(on the verge of
recognizing Landry)
I know you! Didn't you graduate
a few years ago or something?

LANDRY
(nervously)
You must be thinking someone
else.

GIBSON
(ignoring Janis)
Landry, do you have the papers?

JANIS
Papers? There are some -

LANDRY
Yes master.

Landry fumbles in his pockets before he finally finds what he's looking for. He takes out a folded piece of pink paper and hands it to Janis. Gibson raises a brow at the object and coughs as if in query.

GIBSON
(tiredly)
Landry...why is the paper pink?

LANDRY
There was no white paper left,
Master.

LANDRY (CONT.)

(muttering)

Because someone forgot to go to
Office Max.

GIBSON

Of course. Now come, Janis.
Sign these papers, and everything
will be fine. You can have
everything you have ever wanted!
Popularity, friends, boys...

JANIS

(excitedly)

Really? I can have all that? How?

GIBSON

Let's just say I have powers.
Evil powers.

Janis stares at him in confusion.

JANIS

What?

GIBSON

From down below.

JANIS

Um...

GIBSON

I'm Beelzebub.

Janis scratches her head quizzically, mouthing the word.

GIBSON

Satan.

Janis still looks confused.

GIBSON

The devil, for goodness sake!

JANIS

Oh!

GIBSON

(aside)

I suppose we all know who isn't
in the honors classes.

JANIS
Is there a catch?

Landry laughs sardonically, earning another glare from Gibson.

GIBSON
Catch? Of course not. But I am obligated to inform you that, when sign this document. Well, I will own your soul.

Derek walks by the open doorway. Janis is only focusing on him as her hand sloppily signs the document.

JANIS
Yup, yup. Signing the document. Got it.

Gibson smirks and throws his head back in an evil laugh as Janis hands him the paper.

GIBSON
Everything appears to be in order, then. Have a good day Janis. A very good day. Landry will escort you to your locker.

LANDRY
(muttering)
"Landry this! Landry that!"

He laughs evilly as Landry nods and limps over to Janis. He takes her elbow to take her out of the classroom. Once they exit, Gibson moves to the window, his hands in front of his face in a devious gesture.

GIBSON
Yes. Everything appears to be in order. EVIL ORDER!

He laughs maniacally, halting suddenly to stroke his chin.

GIBSON
Evil order? Now that wasn't very good.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Janis and Landry stand in the elevator, corny elevator music playing in the background. She raises a brow and looks at him every once in a while, but Landry merely shifts uncomfortably off in his own little world.

The doors open and Landry gestures for Janis to exit.

LANDRY
Goodbye Janis.

He shakes his head as the door closes. Janis merely shrugs and begins to walk away. She passes a janitor, AL BROWN, whose eyes follow her before focusing on the elevator. He shakes his head.

MONTAGE - JANIS BECOMES POPULAR

-- Janis, still wearing a similar outfit, is laden with many books as she hurries into school from her car. Immediately, a group of students flock around her.

STUDENT 1
Oh Janis, let me get that!

STUDENT 2
No! I want to carry her books!

Janis gingerly hands over her books, looking over her shoulder as the group follows her into school.

-- Janis walks into the lunchroom, frowning when she sees there is no place to sit. The students see her and start to push each other off the benches to make room for her. A group of cheerleaders and football players wave her over. Janis looks behind her, certain they were referring to someone else.

She carefully walks over and sits down where everyone starts talking to her. Derek puts his arm around her, causing Janis to smile widely. Al Brown watches from the corner, shaking his head.

-- Janis, wearing more preppy clothing, walks through the mall with a group of cheerleaders. They point out stores and pull Janis inside.

-- Janis, wearing clothing that mirrors the popular girls' style exactly, walks down the hall with Derek on her arm. The cheerleaders and football players walk behind them, laughing and talking. The other students move out of their way reverently. Janis notices a smaller student with a large backpack and nerdy glasses, a FRESHMAN, struggling to open his locker. The freshman finally opens it and starts grabbing for his books. Janis smirks and walks over to him, slamming the locker shut in his face.

JANIS
 (sarcastically)
 Don't be late!

Janis laughs, as do the other popular kids and Derek. The freshman looks at her in horror, his lower lip trembling before he breaks into sobs and runs down the hall. He almost runs into Al Brown, who sighs and shakes his head as his gaze fixes on Janis.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A group of teachers sits around a table, folders and papers strewn in front of them. Gibson sits with his hands folded neatly in front of him on top of a folder. One man, obviously in charge, stands in front of the group talking. This is MORRIS.

MORRIS
 Next order of business. I'm afraid it concerns you, Mr. Gibson. It appears as if we're going to have to cut all your AP classes.

Gibson smirks and waves his forefinger and middle finger in front of him in one fluid motion.

MORRIS
 What I mean to say is, we'll be doubling your salary. This means that we will be cutting Mr. Giblin's.

GIBLIN stands up.

GIBLIN
 Hey! You can't cut my salary! I won't give up my hard-earned money to -

Gibson smirks again and repeats the motion.

GIBLIN
 Okay, sounds fair to me.

Gibson repeats the motion, gesturing to the whole room. A tall teacher, WAISGERBER, stands up.

WAISGERBER
 You can have mine too. And my car.

Gibson waves his fingers again, knocking over a man's coffee. The man stands up and shouts. This is JEAN.

GIBSON
 (smirking)
 I love department meetings.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Gibson casually struts down the hallway, the doors and lockers thrown open magically and violently as he passes them. Teachers and students peer out of the doors in shock. The door to Gibson's room opens slowly, and he enters, the door closing behind him just as slowly as it opened.

As the door closes, Janis enters the hallway. She is followed by a group of popular kids. The freshman she terrorized earlier emerges from a door. Upon seeing Janis, he shrieks and runs down the hall. He slams into a locker opened in Gibson's wake, and something falls out. Janis notices and walks over to it only to realize it's Otis. She gasps and picks him up, throwing him into the locker and slamming it shut. The group gathers around her.

POPULAR GIRL
 Hey Jan, what was that?

JANIS
 Nothing...I- I have to go.

Janis turns and runs down the hallway.

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASS - DAY

Gibson sits at his desk with a smirk on his faces, his hands held before him with palms pressed together. Landry stands to his right, shifting from one foot to the other.

GIBSON
 So, minion, how are things going with the Janis case?

LANDRY
 Good, master.

GIBSON
 Excellent. All is going according to plan.

Gibson snaps his finger and the door opens, admitting a man holding a tray of drinks with a towel over one arm. This is BAKALE.

GIBSON (CONT.)
 Ah, there we are. My vanilla coke, if you will.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Janis and her popular friends sit in a group of desks. Two popular girls, Ashley and Summer, are having a conversation and everyone is listening to them intently. Janis becomes increasingly bored and disgusted.

ASHLEY

And I said, "Um, no way does that lipstick match that purse!" Can you believe it? I almost died!

SUMMER

No way!

ASHLEY

I know!

SUMMER

Ugly people should just stay home.

ASHLEY

So true!

DEREK

Yeah.

Janis stands up suddenly and hurries out of the classroom.

JANIS

(over her shoulder)

I have to go.

Her friends look after her in confusion. Ashley and Summer shrug before resuming chatter.

Janis runs to her locker and flings it open, panicking when she doesn't see Otis inside.

AL

Looking for Otis?

She turns in surprise when she suddenly hears someone speak behind her.

JANIS

How did you...?

AL

Let's just say I have some powers of my own.

JANIS

Huh?

AL

(handing her Otis)

Here's your friend, Janis. And remember Otis isn't the only one who needs a friend.

Janis looks at Otis for a moment.

JANIS

Thank you...

Janis looks up, but Al Brown is nowhere to be seen. She furrows her brow and gingerly holds Otis to her chest as she walks away.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Gibson sips on his vanilla coke languidly, Landry staring at the drink with thirst. The door swings open to admit a distraught Janis. Landry is caught off-guard, but Gibson merely slowly looks up from his beverage.

GIBSON

Yes, Janis?

JANIS

I don't want to be popular anymore. Otis and I have drifted apart, and things are just...bad.

GIBSON

Are you asking me to break our deal Janis?

JANIS

Yes?

GIBSON

Hm...well, Janis. Then it's done. You can have your unpopularity back.

Janis beams and claps her hands together.

JANIS

Oh, thank you so much!

GIBSON

But I get to keep your soul.

Janis' face falls, and she looks bewildered.

JANIS

What? But...

GIBSON

That was the deal, Janis. Now
run along. Landry, show our guest
the way out.

LANDRY

(muttering sarcastically)
Yes, master. Of course, master.

Landry grabs Janis' elbow and forcibly escorts her out the door.

GIBSON

Goodbye, Janis.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Janis walks down the hallway the next morning. She waves to a group of people, but they merely roll their eyes and laugh as they turn to talk to each other. Janis furrows her brow as she moves to her locker. She struggles to open it, only to have it shut in her face by Mike when she finally succeeds.

MIKE

(sarcastically)
Don't be late, Janis.

He laughs and walks away, leaving behind a very perplexed Janis. She sighs sadly and walks away as well.

MONTAGE - JANIS BEING UNPOPULAR

-- Janis sits down in class, immediately hunching down in her seat. A student laughs as he crumples up a piece of paper and throws it at the back of her head. Janis sighs.

-- Janis walks down the hall with many books in her hands. A football player walks by and knocks them out of her hands, laughing and high-fiving his friends as he walks away.

-- Janis sits next to the group of popular girls in class.

JANIS

Hey guys!

The girls turn to look at her with faces of disgust before picking up their books and moving to another part of the classroom. Janis bites her lip and looks down sadly.

She gets up and walks out of the classroom with a "Kick Me" sign on her back.

-- Janis walks into the cafeteria, holding her lunch bag. She tries to sit several places, but people merely scooch over so she can't sit. Frustrated, she turns around suddenly, only to knock right into Derek and spill his lunch all over him. Her eyes widen in shock.

JANIS

Oh my God, I'm so sorry...

Janis turns and runs away, leaving laughing cheerleaders in her wake.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Janis runs down the hall, obviously distraught as she tangles her hands in her hair. She sniffs loudly as she tries not to cry. She turns the corner, only to see Landry dragging a large bag up the hallway. He limps and mutters as he works, not noticing Janis.

LANDRY

Stupid Gibson. "Landry, Landry, Landry." Every day. Every night.

Janis slowly walks up to him, tapping him on the shoulder. He jumps in surprise, dropping the bag and causing its contents - dolls - to spill out onto the hallway floor.

JANIS

I'm sorry! I didn't mean to...I just saw you, and I thought... are those dolls?

LANDRY

(irritably and
sarcastically)
Are those dolls?

JANIS

Well?

LANDRY

(angrily)
Now move. The master needs his merchandise.

JANIS

Wait!

Janis reaches for his arms as he starts to walk away. She looks up to see Al Brown at the end of the hallway holding a mop. He nods to her before resuming to mop. She nods back in understanding.

JANIS
(warmly)
Are you hungry?

INT. UNDER STAIRWELL - DAY

Janis sits with her legs folded and a sandwich in her hands. Landry sits across from her awkwardly, fidgeting every now and then. She hands him half her sandwich.

JANIS
So now no one will talk to me,
and when they do...it's only to
make fun of me. But it doesn't even
matter because I don't have my
soul. You need to help me get it
back!

LANDRY
I see what you mean, but I can't.
Master would never listen to me.

JANIS
Please, you have to try! This
whole not having a soul thing
is horrible! I feel worse than
before! Ten times worse.

LANDRY
Alright, alright. Give me some
time to think it over.

Janis nods and takes a sip from her juice box. Landry looks up suddenly.

LANDRY
I have it! Yes, this will work
just fine.

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASS - DAY

Janis walks into class gloomily, sitting down. Gibson smirks at his desk as students begin to pelt Janis with paper airplanes and rolled-up paper balls.

GIBSON
We have more paper up here,
children.

Janis looks down sadly.

JANIS
I...I have to go!

She stands up hurriedly, gathering her books and snatching a rolled-up pink piece of paper surreptitiously.

GIBSON
Oh, and we will all miss you,
Janis.

He laughs evilly as she exits the room. Before she exits, she turns to see Landry sitting in the corner. He smiles for the first time, and she smiles back before resuming her gloomy expression.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

She slowly walks into and down the hallway before she quickly moves to hide behind a set of lockers. Unfolding the paper, she looks down at the contract. She smiles widely and starts to run down the hallway.

INT. RAMP - DAY

Janis walks down the ramp. She starts as she sees Al Brown standing in the alcove but smiles when she realizes who it is.

AL
So you got the contract back,
did you?

JANIS
(perplexed)
Yeah...but how did you...?

AL
I told you Janis. I have some
powers of my own. So, what
are you going to do with it?

JANIS
Burn it, I guess.

AL
No, no. You can't burn something
like that. I'll take care of it.

Janis shrugs and hands it to him. He places it into his mop bucket and pushes the mop down. When he lifts it up, the contract is gone. Janis opens her mouth in shock.

JANIS
But how did you...?

AL
Old janitors' trick. Now here,
I think you might need this.

Janis looks down to see Otis in her hands. When she looks up to ask Al Brown about it, he has disappeared. She looks around cautiously before she turns around. Landry is walking towards the lobby with a suitcase on it that says "Hollywood or Bust". She runs towards him.

JANIS
Where are you going?

LANDRY
My work here is done. I'm
leaving town. Never to return.

JANIS
But why?

LANDRY
I just told you. Goodbye, Janis.

He continues to limp away.

JANIS
Wait! Before you go...

Janis holds out Otis to him. He stares at the dog for a moment before taking it and starting to pet its head, marveling at the way it moves back and forth.

JANIS (CONT.)
His name is Otis.

LANDRY
Otis...yes...

Landry starts to walk away again, holding Otis carefully and murmuring to him unintelligibly. Janis laughs warmly and starts to walk down the hall with a spring in her step.

INT. MR. GIBSON'S CLASS - DAY

Gibson is alone as he coolly sips another vanilla coke, staring at the wads of paper that still litter his floor.

GIBSON
Landry never was a very good
henchman anyway.

He thinks for a moment before snapping his fingers.

GIBSON
Hoffman. I need this mess cleaned
up pronto.

HOFFMAN, a crazed teenager, happily scurries into the room.

HOFFMAN
Yes, master! Pronto.

He laughs happily as he begins to pick up the paper. Gibson smirks as he takes another sip from his beverage.

GIBSON
I love my job.

FADE OUT