

ABBOTT ELEMENTARY SPEC EPISODE

GREGORY'S NEW STUDENT

Written by

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INT. MELISSA'S HOME - EVENING

There's tension in the room.

Jacob looks at the camera, frustrated, holding his arms up to his face. The camera zooms in on red scratches and peeling Band-Aids all over his arms. The camera then zooms in on a large orange cat, standing on the floor, intently staring at Jacob.

JACOB

Melissa, your cat keeps scratching me. I've got more battle scars than a military vet.

Melissa lifts up the cat to her face and gestures a cute, kissy face.

MELISSA

Awww, he didn't mean to, isn't that right, Pancake?

Pancake meows silently, as if to gesture a yes. Melissa continues with the kissy faces.

JACOB TALKING HEAD

JACOB

So, over summer break, Melissa got a cat: Pancake. He's truly the most adorable little thing, but for whatever reason, he doesn't like me. Which really bothers me, considering animals love me.

JACOB (CONT'D)

You know, I used to have a dog that always got so excited to see me that he ran up and practically tackled me every chance he got. Then, he ran away when I was like 13 and oh...

(realizes the dog actually didn't like him)

END COLD OPEN

ACT 1

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - MORNING

Janine, Gregory, Jacob, Melissa, Mr. Johnson and Barbara are all sitting in the teacher's lounge, drinking coffee and eating breakfast. Janine looks at Jacob's arm.

JANINE

Jacob, oh my gosh. Uhhh, what happened to your arm?

JACOB

Oh, yeah. Sticky situation with Pancake. I tried to pet the little bugger, but he finds me unlikable and annoying.

Ava walks in.

AVA

Look what the cat dragged in. Damn, Garfield must can't stand your ass, Jacob.

Ava, Mr. Johnson and Melissa all chuckle. Gregory stares at the camera.

Jacob continues talking to Janine and Gregory at the table.

JACOB

Anyways, it'll be a tough challenge, but I'm determined to make a friend out of Pancake.

GREGORY

Well, speaking of challenges, a student on the autism spectrum will be joining my class today. His mom and I spoke the other day, although when she was describing some of his mannerisms to me, everything sounded like things I struggled with as a kid. Hell, as an adult, too.

Everyone looks around at each other, as if they're having a conversation with their eyes. But no one wants to say anything.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

What?

JANINE

Oh, nothing (nervously). Anyways, I gotta get to class. Happy first day, everyone.

BARBARA

Well, honey. I've taught many children on the spectrum. So, how have you prepared for this student to be successful in your classroom?

GREGORY

Well, I just said that I talked to his parent. What else should I do?

BARBARA

Sweetheart, children on the spectrum have specific needs. They require patience, understanding, simplified language, an individualized approach, etc.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You can't just waltz into the classroom and do whatever it is that you do. What if he's behind on a specific lesson? What if he doesn't pick up specific social cues between him and his classmates? What if...

Gregory accidentally cuts Barbara off.

GREGORY

So, what do you suggest that I do, Barb? Any advice is helpful. Especially considering the district hasn't given me any resources and I have 10 more students in my class this year than I did last year.

BARBARA

Meet me in the library during lunch (she says enthusiastically). Melissa and I will give you some tips.

MELISSA AND BARBARA TALKING HEAD

MELISSA

10 additional students in his class? Yeah, I think he'll probably be burnt out by October.

BARBARA

Something tells me that this year  
is gonna be different for our  
younger teachers, especially  
Gregory. They're gonna have to get  
comfortable with being  
uncomfortable.

END OF SCENE (FOR CLASS)