

Deadly Weapon

SCENE ONE

JANICE and FREDERICK enter from opposite sides of the stage simultaneously. They take each other in and react very differently. They are both dressed in a similar school uniform.

JANICE
Not this guy again...

FREDERICK
I'm going to kill you.

JANICE
Excuse me?

FREDERICK
You heard me.

JANICE
No....I'm not sure I'm followi--

FREDERICK
I'm going to kill you.

JANICE
What?

FREDERICK
Kill you! As in murder. As in, to extirpate, raze, or...annihilate.

JANICE
(bursting into a fit of laughter)
Yeah, right.

(FREDERICK stares on, unblinking).

You're not serious, right?

FREDERICK
Where is it?

(FREDERICK takes a sudden step towards JANICE. She reactively dodges.)

JANICE
I don't know what you're talking about...

FREDERICK
Please don't play inane with me.

JANICE
Eh-who? Look, I'm just trying to—

(FREDERICK pulls a gun from inside his coat pocket and points it at JANICE. She is suddenly stricken with real fear and raises here hands.)

Woooooah now is all that really necess—

FREDERICK

Where is it?

JANICE

I—I don't—

FREDERICK

Say you don't know, and I swear you'll find your life barreling swiftly toward the point of cessation.

JANICE

Bro...what the fuc—

FREDERICK

(Noticing the audience)

Ah! And you are all probably wondering how we got here, I'm sure. Allow me to elucidate.

JANICE

I...huh?

(FREDERICK crosses downstage left of JANICE, gun still steadily trained on her. JANICE moves away from FREDERICK as best she can.)

FREDERICK

Well, to put it simply, she stole from me one of my most prized possessions.

JANICE

I...don't think that's true.

FREDERICK

I have worked my entire life to own something so, palatial.

JANICE

Huh?

FREDERICK

What could possibly be so valuable, you ask?

(FREDERICK lowers the gun from its steady tread on JANICE as he

begins to think to himself and fiddle with the trigger.)

JANICE

(To the audience)

I, too, would like to know what could possibly be that damn valuab—

FREDERICK

Somehow this...bitch—

JANICE

Excuse you?

FREDERICK

Pardon me, for the vulgarity but...

FREDERICK

This bitch, managed to take the one thing that I veritably cared about in my whole entire life.

(JANICE, no longer held hostage by the gun situation, slowly starts to edge her way off the stage as he speaks.)

Actually...

JANICE

(freezing midstride)

Shit shit shit.

FREDERICK

(Seeming to have completely forgotten JANICE for being wrapped up in the thought of his lost item, he moves to sit at the front edge of the stage. The clicking sound of him fiddling with the gun is audible.)

I have to ask, have you ever cared about something so much you could kill over it? Like a child, or your spouse, or a friend?

(JANICE is completely off stage now)

Now, what if I told you all that she took ...more so abducted, something like that from me? If someone took something that valuable from you, and you wanted to kill them for it, how would you go about it?

JANICE

(From an unknown spot in the audience)

Uhh, no need to indulge him guys, truly.

(FREDERICK, jolted out of his thoughtful reverie looks out into the audience before turning and pointing his gun at the empty spot where JANICE was last noticed.)

FREDERICK

Sonofabitch!

JANICE

(under the cover audience)

Language!

FREDERICK

Ah! I'm—I'm sorry I know words can be damaging I just—

(He starts to anxiously circle and survey the stage)

She—she has it and I need it back.

JANICE

(Muffling her voice)

Ehem...what does she have, Frederick?

(FREDERICK turns to look back towards the audience.)

FREDERICK

Once upon a time...There was a young man...

JANICE

(to a neighboring audience member)

Is...Is he really—

FREDERICK

His name was Frederick...yes, the young man is me.

JANICE

Oh, my God.

FREDERICK

Frederick is highly educated. And his studies became the cornerstone of his existence.

JANICE

(muffled voice)

Indeed.

FREDERICK

Frederick discovered his love for and found his wealth of knowledge by reading one book.

The dictionary!

JANICE

(Her regular voice)

The goddamn dictionary?

FREDERICK

Yes! Yes, the dictionary.

(Rediscovering the thought on JANICE's whereabouts. He crosses into the wings on both sides of the stage, searching. He then makes his way back to the front of the stage.)

I hear you, Janice. Show yourself.

(JANICE does not respond.)

Well...one day, Frederick met a woman named Janice.

JANICE

That's me.

FREDERCK

(Brandishing his gun towards the audience.)

Ahah! I know you're out there. Let's make this a facile process for everyone why don't we. C'mon. Come on out.

(JANICE, at this point, should be doing what she can to move through the audience, hidden from FREDERICK's view.)

C'MON!

(No response.)

FREDERICK

(Changing his approach.)

Well, Frederick was immediately attracted to Janice.

JANICE

Oh, I'm flattered.

(FREDERICK brandishes the gun in the direction of JANICE's voice.)

FREDERICK

I will come out there and I will apprehend you.

JANICE

(from a different place in the audience)
I thought you were gonna “kill me?”

FREDERICK

I am.

JANICE

Well what’s stopping ya?

FREDERICK

I—I’m not done with my story.

JANICE

Ah, I see, well carry on.

FREDERICK

Why thank you.

JANICE

(Still moving around this whole while)
You’re welcome.

FREDERICK

(Distracted again, lowering the gun. He continues to speak to the audience.)
Where was I...Oh yes! Uh, he was attracted to her, but he wasn’t attracted to her for the stereotypical reasons you would think.

JANICE

Ooooh goody.

FREDERICK

Now, I’m sure your inner monologue is saying, “but Frederick, if not for her striking good looks or her voluptuous assets, what could possibly have attracted you to this woman?”

(JANICE vocalizes in contempt from somewhere new in the audience.)

Well, I’m glad you asked.

JANICE

They didn’t a—

FREDERICK

(Enthralled in the story)
When I first saw Janice, it was in the library.

JANICE

This... is actually true.

FREDERICK

And what attracted me to her had nothing to do with her looks.

(under his breath)

Because to be perfectly honest, she was not much to look at.

JANICE

Oh really? Because that's not wha—

FREDERICK

But it had everything to do with the book she was reading.

JANICE

Are you kidding?

FREDERICK

That's right folks!

JANICE

I was looking up a word in the dictionary...

FREDERICK

She was reading the dictionary!

FREDERICK

Now you see, I always carry my dictionary with me wherever I go. So, I strode over to the table where she sat and laid my beloved dictionary right there on the table in front of her.

JANICE

Yes, he did...

FREDERICK

Yes, I did! And she looked up at me and asked,

JANICE

(mildly irritated.)

Can I help you?

FREDERICK

(Coy and intrigued.)

Can I help you?

FREDERICK

And I said to her, "I see you have taken an interest in the dictionary"

JANICE

I really have not—

FREDERICK

“I would love to explore the extensive wonders of this book with you if you’d like”

JANICE

I would not like—

FREDERICK

And she didn’t say a word to me. She simply stared in my face like she was awestruck or something.

JANICE

Hardly.

FREDERICK

I didn’t quite know what to say next, so I just stared back, hoping she’d respond eventually.

JANICE

Yeah...yeah he did.

FREDERICK

And after a wildly uncomfortable amount of time—

JANICE

Oh, you were uncomfortable?

FREDERICK

She finally said to me something along the lines of...

JANICE

(Nonchalantly matter of fact.)

Sorry, no thank you.

FREDERICK

(overly sassy.)

Sorry, this seat is taken.

JANICE

That’s not what I said.

FREDERICK

And I was mortified. Absolutely mortified at the thought of taking up someone else’s space. Surely they would be back any minute!

JANICE

I didn’t say the seat was take—

FREDERICK

In all my haste and embarrassment, I got up quickly and ran back in the direction from which I'd came.

JANICE

He was quite shaken up about the fact that a girl had rejected him.

FREDERICK

I was quite shaken up at the fact that she was so matter of fact with her lack of interest. I don't get that level of coldness a lot in my interactions. I mean, look at me.

(JANICE bursts into a fit of laughter. FREDERICK brandishes the gun again in the direction of the sound.)

This is serious! Let me finish or I swear—

JANICE

(on the move again)

Ok ok okaaaay.

FREDERICK

Once I had caught my breath, I noticed something absolutely dreadful.

(FREDERICK begins to feel on his person, as if he's missing something. As makes the realization that something is missing, he starts to panic.)

My dictionary! I'd left my dictionary on the table! In FRONT of Janice!

JANICE

Yep.

FREDERICK

So, I immediately ran back to where I'd left my beloved book and to my utter horror—

JANICE

Okay, I'm over this.

FREDERICK

My dictionary was gone! And so...was she.

JANICE

(sneaking her way back to the stage.)

Yes, that is in fact, exactly what happened.

FREDERICK

I knew she took it. And in that moment, I swore I would make her pay.

(JANICE, positioned against a far wall somewhere perhaps and still largely out of FREDERICK's direct view, begins to slow clap. She encourages others in the audience to clap with her.)

FREDERICK

Uh...I umm...well tha— thank you! Thank you all!

(FREDERICK begins to bow enthusiastically, over and over again. He is eating up this attention. The whole while, JANICE is slowly making her way back to the stage. She slips into a wing while FREDERICK is still bowing.)

I'm so glad that you all understand my plight and why I have to take such drastic measures.

JANICE

(From the wings)

Actually, we don't. Or at least, I still don't understand why this...

(She walks onstage from the wings, carrying a dictionary. FREDERICK immediately points the gun at her again.)

is soo important to you. It's just a dictionary.

FREDERICK

It's not just a dictionary. Not to me.

JANICE

I took it to fuck with you, okay. You seemed like this pompous asshole and I immediately disliked you, so I figured, eh, why not.

FREDERICK

Wow. You really are blunt when it comes to expressing yourself, aren't you?

JANICE

And you really are crazy, aren't you?

FREDERICK

You should be more careful in how you speak to people like me, you know.

(The two begin to circle the stage. JANICE has her hands up, one empty and one with the dictionary in it while FREDERICK continues to point the gun at her.)

Any final words?

JANICE

Just what gives dude? Like why all this? Your dictionary is right here man, just take it.

FREDERICK

That thing is my whole life. You—you don't understand.

JANICE

Obviously. And I guess I never will. Look, I swear this whole thing was just a joke. I can just leave this here, you can grab it and go on about your psychotic way, alright? Just let me go. It's not that deep.

(JANICE slowly places the dictionary on the ground and nudges it toward FREDERICK, hands still raised and trying to be non-threatening. He stares at it for a bit, unmoving.)

FREDERICK

But sweet Janice...it is that deep.

JANICE

(drops her hands, irritated.)

Gross. Whatever. This isn't funny anymore.

(JANICE turns to exit offstage. Suddenly, FREDERICK darts for the dictionary. After securing the dictionary, FREDERICK shouts "*Hey!*" and points the gun at JANICE. She turns and upon him pulling the trigger..)

BLACKOUT