

BAD MONSTER

A Play by Jeremy Gable

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SMOKY, early 20's, female

JANE, 30's to 40's, female

LORENZO, late 20's, male

The story takes place in a small house in a remote area of northern Idaho

Time: Present day

NOTE ON SMOKY'S DIALOGUE

When Smoky repeats a word three times, such as "and and and", it is not a stutter. It is a repetition of the word until Smoky regains her train of thought.

ACT ONE

(Dim blue lights on a sorry excuse of a house. The wood is worn, the metal rusted, various items in the house squeak, sputter and drip water. There is a twin-sized bed center. The house decorations are stark and austere. Few pictures on the wall, no books, no computer, no television, no phone. However, there is a small cross on the wall, an old yellowed newspaper on the bed, and a small American flag somewhere in the house. Mousetraps are placed along the wall. A makeshift closet rod hangs with a smattering of coats, jackets and dresses. Decaying clothes, all women's, are folded in neat piles on the floor under the closet rod. A door to the outside stands on one end of the stage. Doors to the bathroom and pantry are on the other side, both open. Our limited view of the pantry shows that it is cramped and meagerly stocked. One small window is the only view to the outside world. The branch of a tree outside is pointing at the window, almost touching it. Moonlight streams through, casting the shadow of the tree on the floor. This house sits in a forest about a mile away from the end of County Road 51-B in northern Idaho, right on the Canadian border, on the edge of America and in the middle of nowhere. At first, all is silent. Then, a weird hum, like a low rumble mixed with the electrical chirp of cicadas, is heard. This shall be referred to from this point forward as The Hum. It intensifies slowly, building in volume. Then...BANG! Something slams against the door)

SMOKY

Ow!

(The door is thrown open, and SMOKY enters. She is a beautiful woman and does not know it. She has limited intelligence but endless curiosity, a quick knack for learning but problems with retention. She is dressed in a jacket, sweatpants and sneakers. She is holding a leash in her hand. Throwing it aside, she leaps onto the bed, calling behind her:)

I am still alive! I forgot to open the door!

(She feels her forehead)

My head is alive.

(She throws off one of her sneakers)

Left...

(She throws off her other sneaker)

Left! No...right! Right right right!

(She takes off her jacket, revealing a camisole underneath.
As she does, she sings:)

SMOKY
(CON'T)

I was on a walk
The trees were tall with green
It was dark and cold
And I was scared and scared...

(She gets an arm stuck in the jacket sleeve. She vigorously
shakes it out)

But I am at home...
And I am on the bed
Aaaaaand...the song will stop!

(She starts to remove her sweatpants, revealing shorts
underneath. As she removes her pants, which takes some
difficulty, she accidentally rolls off the bed. She giggles at
her own clumsiness)

Jane saw a monster! And and and...it was walking.

(She looks to the door)

Right?

(No answer)

Jane?

(No answer)

Jaaaane?

(No answer)

Jane!

(No answer. To herself:)

There was a monster. And I was scared.

(Suddenly, JANE appears at the doorway)

JANE

What, Smoky, for God's sake, what is it?

(SMOKY leaps off the bed)

SMOKY

Jane-Jane!

(She runs to JANE excitedly and throws her arms around
her in a huge hug)

JANE

Get off!

(She pushes SMOKY off of her)

SMOKY

I missed you!

JANE

Yeah, the whole thirty seconds I was checking the traps, how did you even manage to breathe?

(She puts a hand on the open door)

Do you see this?

SMOKY

That is the door!

JANE

(Waiting for something more)

Yeeees?

SMOKY

That is the door that I forgot to open...it, and and and I hit my head and and and...it...hurt.

JANE

Thrilling. You also forgot to close it.

SMOKY

Yes.

(Pause. JANE prompts her for more)

Yes...I did.

JANE

Aaaaaaand?

(She points to SMOKY's body. SMOKY looks down at her lack of clothes)

SMOKY

Oh! I took off my clothes!

JANE

Bingo. And we don't take our clothes off with the door open.

SMOKY

(Overlapping)

...the door open.

JANE

Where's the leash?

(SMOKY points to where she threw it. JANE picks it up and hangs it on a nail in the wall)

The door has to stay closed, Dummy, it's for your own protection.

SMOKY

My own potesshion!

(She leaps on the bed and gets tangled in the sheets)

JANE

You don't care, do you?

SMOKY

Nope.

(As she gets further tangled, JANE takes a beer can and balances it on the doorknob)

JANE

Well, there are things out there, Smoky, living breathing slobbering things, that want nothing more than to break in here, and the moment they got one look at you, they'd do some really awful things.

SMOKY

Awful, waffle.

(All that can be seen of SMOKY is one leg poking out from the sheets)

JANE

What are you doing?

SMOKY

The bed is eating me!

JANE

Well...that's not very nice.

SMOKY

Help!

JANE

In fact, that's downright un-neighborly.

SMOKY

I do not want to be food! Helllllp!

(JANE walks over and untangles SMOKY from the sheets)

JANE

(Unenthusiastic)

Hooray you're saved now get out of bed.

(SMOKY laughs and tangles herself in the sheets again)

Oh, Smoky, c'mon, not tonight!

(SMOKY is tangled)

SMOKY

Help!

JANE

Not this time.

(She tickles SMOKY's foot. SMOKY squeals)

Out!

SMOKY

Ha!

(She gets herself untangled from the sheets)

That was funny!

JANE

Yeah, we had a laugh.

(SMOKY tries to tangle herself in the sheets yet again)

Oh, for fuck's sake.

(She grabs SMOKY's leg and drags her out of bed.
SMOKY drags a few sheets with her in protest)

No more.

(She smells something)

Did you pee yourself?

(SMOKY shakes her head)

Are you lying?

(She shakes her head again)

Do you need to pee?

(She shakes her head again)

Then what's that smell?

(She shrugs)

We shouldn't've gone on that walk. You're too...uppity now.

(She checks the mousetraps)

SMOKY

You saw a monster.

JANE

Yes, I most certainly did.

SMOKY

It was the the the...the Kyjinn!

JANE

It most certainly was.

And and and...
...we were quiet!

SMOKY
(Whispering)

JANE
What I wouldn't give to have that back.

SMOKY
I I I was scared.

JANE
Well, you should be. There's a lot of scary shit out there.

SMOKY
Scary shit!

JANE
Watch your mouth!

(SMOKY lowers her head. Silence)

SMOKY
You did...Did you get scared?

JANE
Nope. I've seen it all. There ain't nothing that gets past these baby blues.

SMOKY
I I I, uh...
(She loses her thought)

JANE
Are you hungry?

(SMOKY is spacing out)

Smoky.
(No response)

Dummy!
(SMOKY looks at her)

You hungry?
(SMOKY nods)

Okay.
(JANE makes her way to the pantry)

SMOKY
I don't want peanut butter.

JANE

Well, that's what you're having until the we can catch something.

SMOKY

(Louder, stomping)

I don't want peanut butter!

(JANE gets in her face)

JANE

Is this what you're doing to me now? You're giving me this? Because you really shouldn't, not now, not when I'm in this mood, the mood I'm in. So...are you giving me this?

(Silence)

SMOKY

Mayb--

(JANE raises her hand. SMOKY flinches and cowers)

JANE

Is...this...what...you're...giving me?

(SMOKY shakes her head no)

Are you going to behave like a good girl and eat your peanut butter?

(SMOKY nods)

Good. Look at me.

(SMOKY does)

As soon as I trap something, we're gonna have ourselves a nice big meaty dinner, okay?

SMOKY

With...With the sprinkles?

JANE

Yes. And that's called pepper.

SMOKY

Pepppep...Pepper.

JANE

That's it. Pepper and ketchup and all the other luxury items.

(She goes to the pantry)

SMOKY

I like mouse, and and and I like chitmunk and and and...I like cat!

(JANE returns from the pantry with a mostly empty jar of peanut butter and a spoon)

JANE

Well if I trap one, you'll be the first to know. One scoop.

(She opens the peanut butter and hands it to SMOKY, who takes a giant scoop. JANE smacks her hand)

JANE
(CON'T)

Whoa there, eager beaver! This has to last us to the end of the month.

(She takes the spoon from SMOKY, scrapes it on the rim, and hands it back. SMOKY makes sure to lick every smallest bit from the spoon)

You know there are some places where people can't even eat peanut butter? They eat leaves. And mud. And sometimes, they even eat each other.

SMOKY
(Mouth full of peanut butter)

That ith weiw!

JANE
So consider yourself lucky. Someone else could have taken you in, and maybe one day they would've looked at you and said, "I think today I'm gonna have a heaping serving of Smoky for breakfast!"

SMOKY
(Giggling)

I am not brekkest!

JANE
Hate to break it to you, Dummy, but you're whatever someone else makes you. We're not actually top of the food chain, and if anything out there wanted to prove it, we'd have a hard time telling them otherwise.

SMOKY
I don't know what you just said.

JANE
I'm saying don't leave the house because there are big monsters out there.

SMOKY
The Kyjinn?

JANE
Yes, like the Kyjinn. He's just waiting for you to step outside so he can gobble you up.

SMOKY
And turn me into poop!

JANE

Exactly. And turn you into a big ol' stinky pile of Smoky poop.

(SMOKY giggles. She remembers something)

SMOKY

Oh, I saw your your your...Kyjinn paper.

JANE

My Kyjinn paper?

SMOKY

The paper with my picture on it.

(JANE gets suddenly very serious)

The paper with the words on it.

(Silence)

JANE

You saw that?

(SMOKY nods)

SMOKY

I heard a mouse, and I wanted to catch it, and and and I heard it in your boot, and I put my hand in your boot, and and and the mouse was not in there, but a paper was...in there...in your boot.

JANE

And...did you read any of the words?

SMOKY

Kyjinn.

(Silence)

JANE

(Confused)

Kyjinn.

SMOKY

It was a big word, and it was a "K" word. "K" words start with "kuh".

JANE

(Relieved)

Oh. Yes. Yes, it is a "K" word, and that's what it says, it says Kyjinn.

SMOKY

Kyjinn starts with "K". "K" words start with "K".

Ain't that the truth?
JANE

Kill. Kiss. Kite.
SMOKY

And now you're gonna list 'em...
JANE

Would you kill me?
SMOKY

What? Of course not.
JANE

Okay. Would you kiss me?
SMOKY

No, Smoky.
JANE

Okay. Would you kite me?
SMOKY

Yes, sure, I will kite you.
JANE

Good.
SMOKY

And just how exactly am I going to "kite" you?
JANE

Welllll...you put a string on me and and and you put me in the air...and I fly and I say
"Ahhhh!"
SMOKY
(She simulates flying)

And and and you say "I got you! Ever and ever!"

I see.
JANE

Would you kite me?
SMOKY

Sure.

JANE

SMOKY
And and and you will hold me? I will not fly away into the sky?

Nope.

JANE

SMOKY
Ever and ever?

Ever and ever.

JANE

SMOKY
I love you!
(She hugs JANE)

Off!

JANE
(SMOKY bounces onto the bed)

SMOKY
(Singing)
I will be a kite
I will be high as trees
And Jane will hold the string
And she will keep me...
(In pain)

Ahh!

(She sticks a finger in her mouth)

JANE
What is it now?

SMOKY
My tooth hurts.
(She tries sticking both hands into her mouth)

JANE
Okay stop it, stop it! Let me look. Say ahh.

SMOKY
Ahh...
(She repositions SMOKY)

JANE

Here, move into the light.

SMOKY

Ahh...

(JANE looks in her mouth)

JANE

I don't see anything.

SMOKY

It hurts!

JANE

Well I can't fix it if I don't know what it is, Dummy. I'll get you some water.

(SMOKY rubs her cheek)

SMOKY

Mmmkay.

(JANE starts heading to the door)

JANE

It's probably how you eat. This wouldn't be happening if you had something other than peanut butter. It's giving you cavi--

(A knock at the door. JANE freezes in terror. A moment of silence)

SMOKY

Some one is at the--

(JANE pounces on SMOKY, covering her mouth. She drags her into the pantry and puts a finger to her mouth to indicate quiet. SMOKY nods and covers her own mouth. JANE closes the pantry door, runs to the mattress and puts her hand under it. The door knob slowly turns, dropping the beer can, which hits the floor with a clattering thud. Springing to action, JANE pulls a handgun from under the mattress and aims for the door. It slowly opens. A man leans in. We only see his head, but it is a strikingly handsome head. He is LORENZO, a man with good looks, immense charm and a nice voice. He sees JANE. A moment of frozen silence. Then, LORENZO raises his arm. He is holding a gun, which he aims at JANE. He slowly enters, the two of them facing off. A moment)

LORENZO

Despite how this looks, I'm really very nice.

JANE

There's nothing I have that you'd want.

LORENZO

Well, actually, yeah. I just need a place to stay for the night.

JANE

I can't do that.

LORENZO

Just one night.

JANE

That's one night too many.

LORENZO

I can't stay out there. It's dangerous.

JANE

Yeah, who knows, there might be men with guns.

LORENZO

Well, look, we can put away the guns, okay? 'Cause, I mean, if you shoot me, then...ya know, someone will come looking for me, so...And really, I don't mean any harm. I mean, let's face it, from the looks of it, you could probably take me.

JANE

Oh, I know I could.

LORENZO

Right? So...
(JANE considers)

JANE

On three?

LORENZO

Sure. You can count.

JANE

I most certainly can. One. Two...three.

(LORENZO starts lowering his gun. JANE tightens her grip. LORENZO raises his gun again)

LORENZO

Okay, seriously?

JANE
How can I trust you?

LORENZO
I was putting my gun down!

JANE
Alright alright, fine!
(They both slowly lower their guns)

LORENZO
Better. Now to the ground?
(They both slowly place their guns on the ground)
Beautiful. Now...
(He sticks out his hand)
I'm Lorenzo.
(JANE looks at his hand)

JANE
What kinda name is that?

LORENZO
Well, I mean...I didn't choose it.
(He sticks his hand out further. Begrudgingly, JANE takes it. They stare at each other)
Um...ow.
(JANE lets go)
Thanks. And your name?

JANE
Nope.

LORENZO
Oookay. Well, it's nice to meet you.
(SMOKY enters from the pantry)
I know this is an inconvenience, so I really appreciate...
(He sees SMOKY)
Hello.

SMOKY
You are tall.

JANE
Smoky, not one word!
(To LORENZO:)

JANE
(CON'T)

You do not get to talk to her!

LORENZO

Her name is Smoky?

SMOKY

Yes, and her name is Jane.

JANE

Hey!

LORENZO

I'm Lorenzo.

JANE

Hey!

SMOKY

Lenzo!

JANE

Smoky!

LORENZO

Jane.

(JANE turns)

Please, one night.

JANE

You can't stay.

LORENZO

Well, I can't leave...

JANE

Well, that's just tough luck, buddy, because there's no way that you're staying here, and how can I trust you when you come barging in here with a loaded gun pointed at my...

LORENZO

...and I can't really tell you why, so you're gonna have to trust me when I tell you that I can't go outside right now or else I'll DIE BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE!

(Silence)

LORENZO
(Calmer)

There's something out there.

SMOKY

The Kyjinn?

LORENZO

What?

JANE

It was probably a bear.

LORENZO

No, this was too big.

JANE

Have you ever seen a bear up close?

LORENZO

Every day for three years.

JANE

Well...wait, really?

SMOKY
(To herself)

I do not like bears.

LORENZO

A bear I can handle. It wasn't that.

SMOKY

It was the Kyjinn!

LORENZO

Um...What's the Kyjinn?

JANE
(Not sure how to explain)

Just a, uh...

SMOKY
He's a monster, a bad bad monster! He's big...
(She demonstrates)

...and he has these...

(She simulates fangs)

SMOKY
(CON'T)

...and and and he's....

(She stomps around the room, snarling and pretending to wreak havoc)

RAAARGH! Rar! Rar!

(With the hands, she creates a tiny person walking along)

Doot da-doot da-doo, da-doot da-doo.

(She pounces on the tiny person)

RAAARGH!

(Tiny person voice:)

Noooo, noooo!

(Gobbling up the tiny person)

Raggle-mong-mong-mong-mong-mong!

(Faking another person shooting at her with a gun)

Pew! Pew pew!

(Pretend wounds)

BRAAGH!

(Snatching up the tiny person, who says:)

Oh no you are going to eat me now!

(Monster voice:)

Yes I am!

(Eating the person and chewing)

Brom-nyang-nyang-nyang! Burp!

(Silence)

LORENZO

Yeah, that sounds about right. Whatever it was that attacked us, it looked like it was maybe fifteen, sixteen feet ta--

JANE

Wait wait. "Us"? There's more of you out there?

LORENZO

Well, was. Not anymore. I'm the only one in my troupe who escaped, I think. I'm pretty sure.

JANE

Troop? The military's here?

LORENZO

Oh, uh...no, not the military, the, uh...The Rakonto Fable Players.

JANE

I'm sorry?

LORENZO

It's a...a storytelling troupe. Troupe with...a "u".

JANE

You tell stories? That's your job?

LORENZO

Well yeah, among other things, I also make puppets, I construct various types of machines and contraptions for shows, I train animals and wow, this couldn't matter less right now.

SMOKY

I like stories!

JANE

Smoky...

LORENZO

What happened was we were crossing the border to get to the next school, but the van started making a weird knocking noise, ya know, like a thunk-thunk-thunk-thunk kind of noise, so we all got out to look, and then...

SMOKY

The Kyjinn!

LORENZO

Yeah, I guess. And I managed to, ya know, somehow get away. And then I saw the light from your window, so...

SMOKY

You are here.

LORENZO

Yeah. All I need is one night, and the moment the sun's up, I promise I'll go. I just can't be out there when the...that thing is. Trust me.

SMOKY

(To herself)

Trustee...trust me.

JANE

Well Lorenzo, I don't trust you. I don't believe a word you've said.

LORENZO

Right, yeah, that's understandable, 'cause to trick two grown women I'd run in here screaming "Monster".

JANE

It's...

(She gives a quick look to SMOKY)

It's not the monster. It's what you're hiding.

LORENZO

Okay, like...?

JANE

Like why you and your friends were trying to sneak into Canada.

LORENZO

We weren't...what? We weren't sneaking. We were trying to get to Calgary.

JANE

In the middle of the night?

LORENZO

Yeah! We left Orofino this afternoon, we need to get to Queen Elizabeth Elementary by tomorrow morning.

JANE

Well that...

(She calculates in her head)

...okay, that seems to check out.

LORENZO

I mean, obviously that's not happening anymore, so that'll be a bunch of disappointed kids.

SMOKY

Kids! Kuh, kuh, kids! That is a "K" word!

LORENZO

Uh...yeah. Yes it is.

SMOKY

What are kids?

(JANE starts to protest)

LORENZO

Well, they're, uh...they're the same as children.

SMOKY

Oh, okay. What is that?

(LORENZO looks at JANE, who shakes her head “no”)

LORENZO

Um...I think...Jane, do you, uh...?

JANE

Smoky, put away the peanut butter.

SMOKY

But I want to know what kids are!

(JANE gets in SMOKY’s face)

JANE

Is this what you’re giving me?

(Silence)

SMOKY

I wanna know what--

(JANE raises her hand to slap SMOKY. She cowers. LORENZO freezes, not knowing what to do. Scared and submissive, SMOKY takes the peanut butter and goes into the pantry. The moment she is gone, JANE grabs LORENZO and leads him to the other side of the house)

Look, she has a very simple mind, and there are lots of things that I don’t want her to know about, because they would only make her confused and scared, you get me?

LORENZO

Yeah, but--

JANE

Shut up, the Kyjinn is something I tell her so that she doesn’t leave the house without me. I can tell you’re trying to play along, so keep it up.

LORENZO

I’m not lying about the monster, I--

JANE

Shut up, I can give you some water before you leave, but I don’t have food, I don’t have money, and above all, I cannot cannot let you stay here, do you understand?

(Silence)

LORENZO

So...you don’t want her to know?

(JANE realizes what she has done)

LORENZO
(CON'T)

About the Kyjinn?

JANE

Don't...you...dare!

(SMOKY has re-entered and sees JANE in LORENZO's face)

SMOKY

Is Lenzo in trouble?

JANE

No, he--

LORENZO

Jane was just telling me a secret, something about the Kyjinn. Did you wanna finish?

JANE

You son of a--

LORENZO

Something 'bout that big bad monster out in the woods?

SMOKY

What?

JANE

No!

LORENZO

All this time, it turns out it was never actu--

JANE

One night!

(Silence)

Daylight comes, you're gone.

LORENZO

I promise. Thanks.

SMOKY

The Kyjinn is not what?

JANE

Smoky!

LORENZO

It's not actually bad.

(JANE shoots him a look)

It's just very angry.

(He looks at JANE)

And it doesn't like people touching its stuff.

(To SMOKY:)

Hey, show me your best angry face!

(SMOKY makes a playfully angry face)

SMOKY

Grrrrrrr!

LORENZO

Awesome.

SMOKY

Aw-sum!

JANE

Smoky, get the bed ready.

SMOKY

'Kay. Kay kay, cake-ee-day!

(She starts making the bed. JANE goes to LORENZO)

JANE

You stay away from her. And none of your stories.

LORENZO

As long as you agree to lock up the guns.

JANE

Yeah, do I look like a bank? Do you see a vault?

LORENZO

Fine, can you...I dunno, put them in your pantry?

JANE

Deal.

(She grabs the guns)

I'm keeping an eye on you.

(She exits to the pantry)

SMOKY

Yeah!

(She widens one of her eyes with her fingers and stares at LORENZO. He smiles)

LORENZO

You're funny.

(SMOKY is surprised by this statement)

SMOKY

No, I'm not!

(Silence)

LORENZO

Okay.

(JANE re-enters)

JANE

Arms out.

LORENZO

What?

JANE

C'mon, gotta make sure.

LORENZO

Oh, for the love of...

(He sticks his arm out, and JANE searches him for another weapon)

JANE

My roof, my rules. You're under the eye of God right now. I'm watching your every move, and so help me I will not take these peeping toms off you, even if it means I don't sleep, got it?

(Silence)

LORENZO

Did you really just say peeping toms?

JANE

Do you understand?

(Silence)

LORENZO

When are you going to realize that I'm not a threat to you?

JANE

When you're gone.

(Lights change)

If you would like to read the script in its entirety,
you can contact the author at jeremygable@jeremygable.com