

MY NAME IS (JENNY AND PATRICK)

Jenny Lídice Saldaña

Norma Elia Cantú Award in Creative Writing

JENNY SITTING ALONE CENTER STAGE DRESSED
IN PINK FROM HEAD TO TOE

JENNY

(She speaks as if she is in a self-help support group.)

I'd like to share. Hi my name is BC Jenny and I have the big C. Why do I have to say it, you know what I mean, you have it, too. I'm facing it; I keep coming here, don't I? Well, sometimes I say the "BC" stands for "before cancer Jenny," but I know that "before cancer Jenny's" dead. No matter how much I try, I'll always be "breast cancer Jenny" from now on. Soon I'll have the scars to remind me every day. At least the new breast will be real and not an implant. I've always been very proud of my very real breasts... yes—they're real!

ENTERS PATRICK (another member of the support group)

PATRICK

Yes, they are real. Even though I'm a total ass man, she's got a hot rack.

JENNY

There're no boobies like my boobies.

PATRICK

Like no boobies you'll know.

BOTH BREAK INTO SONG AND DANCE TO THE TUNE OF
“*THERE’S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS*”

JENNY

Everything about them is appealing.

PATRICK

Everything our great God would allow.

JENNY

Nowhere could you get that happy feeling.

PATRICK

Like when you’re stealing that extra WOW.

JENNY

There are no boobies like my boobies.

PATRICK

Make me smile when I am low...

JENNY

Standing on a club line out in the cold, I flash them once...

PATRICK

And in I go!

JENNY AND PATRICK

Worth more than Pam Anderson’s sil-li-cones...

JENNY AND PATRICK

Let's go on with the...

JENNY GOES BACK TO TELLING HER STORY

JENNY

It all seems so matter of fact, you know? "Hi Jen. You have cancer. We're cutting off the breast in three weeks. We'll make a new one from your gut and then you won't have cancer anymore." I feel fine! How can I be dying if I don't feel sick? These last two weeks have been great! I get to stay home from work and watch *The View* and *Maury Povich* all day. Everyone's taking me out to dinner and sending me flowers. The doctor doesn't even think I'll have to do chemo, just a new breast and a tummy tuck to boot! Cancer's not as bad as I thought it would be. It can't be this easy, there has to be something else. Other than the initial shock, when do I freak out?

PATRICK

When do I freak out? I did already, even with a double mastectomy my ex-girlfriend died and she was only twenty-eight. She didn't look anything like the beauty queen I dated by the time she died. Seeing her go through chemo was the worst. The agony, the pain, the vomiting; Michelle that was her name... was so weak she spent all day sitting on the floor next to the toilet. That's cancer, that's never routine. I don't know if I can go through all that again. (BEAT) Everyone's being super nice to her and taking her out. You know why they do that? Because they think she's gonna die, they already buried her in the valley of the shadow of death! She taught me the twenty-third Psalm. So anyways these people take her out and send flowers and cards with phony inspirational messages 'cause they want to make themselves feel better and say: "I was there for my poor little friend with cancer! I'm such a

good friend! No one can ever say I wasn't there for her." I wanna see these people when things get ugly 'cause that's what this is, ugly. She'll laugh in their faces, she's so strong...It's me, ok; I just don't know if I can do this again.

JENNY

I'm teaching myself to love the color pink; trying to make it my new favorite color...it used to be red. An artist friend of mine once drew me a painting for my birthday called 'Red Jenny.' That was me, I was 'Red Jenny.' Red is hot, bold, sexy, daring, romantic, womanly. But I can't be Red Jenny anymore, 'cause Red Jenny doesn't have cancer! Red Jenny is strong! Red Jenny runs the show! Now I'm just Pink BC Jenny who wishes she could be Red, who pretends to be red.

PATRICK & MOM VOICE OVER

You will always be red.

JENNY

I'm pink, soft, weak, full of cancer and scared...

PATRICK & MOM VOICE OVER

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me.

JENNY & PATRICK

Thanks for letting me share.

LIGHTS FADE

BRIDE OF FRANKENBOOBIE

From: PINK: The Chronicles of BC JENNY

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JENNY IS IN PINK ROBE WHILE HOLDING SEVERAL PINK AND RED BRAS IN HER HAND. SHE IS REFLECTING ON HER LIFE BEFORE CANCER THROUGH A SERIES OF PICTURES FLASHED ON AN UPSTAGE SCREEN WHILE WE HEAR ELLA FITZGERALD SINGING “SOLITUDE.” MUSIC AND PICTURES STOP AS JENNY BEGINS TO SPEAK.

I can't wear any of these. I spent so much money building my bra wardrobe and I can't wear ANY of these. I have to toss them out. I hate this body! I HATE this body! I had my bandages removed today. I'm ugly! I look like a patched-up rag doll. I'm the bride of Frankenboobie! All the people that have invaded my house since I left the hospital have told me the same things. That I look great and how brave I am and how proud of me they are! Liars! You're all liars! You're all just feeling sorry for me. You don't know what to say, so you compliment me, my strength; 'cause that's what you say to someone in the valley of the shadow of death. But what you really want to say is: 'better her than me, I don't know what I'd do if it were me.' Or 'poor girl cancer that really sucks. She's obsessed with her tits.' Well, ok that's true. God's showing me some humility; No one will ever look at me the same again. Everyone sees me as a one tit cancer patient. That's what I am from now on, BC Jenny forever! “How did this happen Jen, what did you do?” Oh, I don't know...I stood in front of the microwave; talked on the cell phone; colored my hair;

listened to my iPod; the disc man before that; sprayed Raid on the ants; wore underwire bras (*puts on a bra over her clothes*); used deodorant; sat on public toilets; bought tampons; used hairspray; drank the water; took prescription drugs; breathed the air at Ground Zero; ate the pesticide fruit and, the steroid beef; had caffeine; visited Staten Island. I never smoked a cigarette. WHAT DID I DO TO GET CANCER? I LIVED MY LIFE!

LIGHTS OUT

THE DOÑA EFFECT (an excerpt) From: Titi Jenny's Desperate Digital Dating Diary

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*(all words in **BOLD ITALICS** are to be flashed on screen for audience participation)*

When you're online dating, you're talking to multiple people, a lot with the same name. (*screenshot of contacts*) So, I started giving all my dates nicknames to better keep up. Not only does online dating bring out the freaks, but it also, for some strange reason, gives younger men license to approach women WAY older than them. One actually said to me, "Yo Jen, I know I'm young but my dick game is strong!" I shot him down with "my aborted child is older than you" and blocked him. If I had a dollar for every time a guy twenty years my junior said to me, "I prefer older women," I'd have eleven-billion dollars and a pony. But there's something exciting about a younger man liking you even though I'd have to explain all my pop culture references. A very young Boricua—we'll call him Ponyboy—asked me out dancing. I love dancing and thought it would be a blast, Ponyboy was a cop, cops love me for some reason. Average height, with a sexy fade, and a baseball player's ass from years of Little League; Ponyboy was HOT! I arrive at the club and spot the first red flag: there's a line. I don't do lines, I have paid my line dues, bitches. That line at The Palladium back in the nineties was NUTS. Second red flag: everyone in line was a Queens Hoochie. The Queens Hoochie looks very different from the Bronx, Uptown, or Brooklyn Hoochie.

The QH usually resembles a college freshman girl who just got invited to her first frat party. She wears no coat, because her crossed arms, hunched shoulders, too much makeup, opened toed shoes and tiny skirt will protect her from the elements;

think, Shakira. A Bronx Hoochie is more of a bamboo earring, baby hair kinda girl; think, Cardi B. A Staten Island Hoochie is just like a Jersey Hoochie; think Adriana from the Sopranos. Anyways... I'm an OG Uptown Hoochie, think Lisa Lisa; I went right up to the bouncer holding back the *slaughter of Hoochies*, I decided that's what you call them if they're from Queens. If they were from the Bronx, it would've been a *stabbing of Hoochies*. Staten Island, *a stench*. (beat) 'Is Reg still here? He told me to ask for him, I'm Jenny!' And just like that, walked right in free of charge, past the slaughter of Hoochies. I *always gottaguy*. You should have a guy everywhere, someone who can hook you up in any situation. I get a text from Ponyboy: "Hey Jen, I'm right by the bar, tell me what you want and I'll order it for you". Ok, good move my sexy cub, having a drink ready for me when we meet. I locate Ponyboy, and right on cue, the bartender hands him my drink, which he hands over to me with a kiss on the cheek.

Then, the DJ blessed us with *POISON*, yeah, I know, misogyny but you really can't argue with 'never trust a big butt and a smile!' So, there we are, falling into a very sexy dance groove, impressing each other with our moves until he starts to chant, "*Go Doña, go Doña, go Doña!*" ESCUSAME? I lost my shit! WTF is GO DOÑA? He stutters as he tries to explain, 'Jen you got it going on, these young girls aint got nothing on you.' DUH! He proceeds to tell me it's a compliment, like MILF?? I don't have kids! Use your words child—COUGAR? Look here, little boy, there's no way you're gonna sexy up Doña, ain't gonna happen. Doña will always bring Latinas images of house coats, rollers and Vicks. For the record, being *DOÑA-ed* is worse than being ma'am-ed. You can jokingly say to a young woman or even a little girl, "yes ma'am." You would never call anyone you didn't consider your elder, Doña. Not that there's anything wrong with that, pero that ain't me, papi. I finished my drink and left. He apologized, I accepted the apology pero, not a second date, I'm nobody's fetish...ok fine, just not THAT ONE!

(end of excerpt)