

# SLAUGHTERHOUSE JIVE

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By **Abbey Ferrier**

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**SYNOPSIS:** Barry “the Brain” O'Brian and his psychic partner, Madame Celeste, have been invited to investigate the strange happenings at an abandoned slaughterhouse. Hoping to find proof that the paranormal exists, the pair get more than they bargained for when they meet Frankie, the ghost of a 1950s greaser who haunts the place.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 MEN, 1 WOMAN, 1 EITHER)

BARRY “THE BRAIN” O’BRIAN (m).....Lead investigator. Cocky and a bit dense. (147 lines)  
MADAME CELESTE (f) .....Psychic medium. Clumsy and not quite all there. (159 lines)  
FRANKIE (m) .....The ghost. (68 lines)  
CURATOR (m/f) .....A skeptic. (26 lines)

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

*Slaughterhouse Jive* was originally produced at the Paul Bunyan Playhouse in Bemidji, MN as part of the *Out of the Hat V* by KG Entertainment, October 30, 2011. The original cast and crew were as follows:

BARRY “THE BRAIN” O’BRIAN.....Brett Cease  
MADAME CELESTE ..... Eva Anderson  
FRANKIE ..... Jake Baggenstoss  
CURATOR ..... Yma Sautbine

Producer ..... Greg Gasman  
Director ..... Cynthia Booth  
Stage Manager ..... Cheryl Winnett  
Sound ..... Mark Anderson  
Lights ..... Robert Byers  
Crew .....Pattie Giedd, Harlan Giedd, Elizabeth Byers, Darcie Anderson

**SETTING:**

*The present. An old abandoned slaughterhouse that has been closed up since the 1950s. A metal butcher's table sits stage left with various tools scattered on it. Another table sits center stage, also covered with various tools. Meat hooks dangle from the ceiling. An old radio is also present. Along the back wall is a door, which opens into a bathroom with a toilet.*

**AT RISE:**

*The CURATOR is standing on stage, tapping her foot, waiting impatiently. CELESTE, dressed in a silk robe and a turban, enters, searching for something.*

**CELESTE:** Oh, dear. *(She looks around.)* Oh, dear. Oh, dear.

**CURATOR:** *(Looking up, noticing CELESTE.)* Is something the matter?

**CELESTE:** I lost the Brain again!

**CURATOR:** I'm sorry, what?

**CELESTE:** The Brian! I lost the Brain again!

**CURATOR:** Brain? What Brain? What are you talking about?

**CELESTE:** *The Brain. (Continues to search.)* The Brain is missing.

**CURATOR:** I can see you've lost your mind, at any rate.

**CELESTE:** *(She steps in front of the CURATOR and stands nose to nose.)* No, not my mind, the Brain.

**CURATOR:** *(Throws her hands up in exasperation and backs away.)*

Okay! I get it! You've lost the brain! Whatever that means. Are you the ghost hunter?

**CELESTE:** Paranormal investigator. Yes.

**CURATOR:** Oh good, you're late. I've been waiting out here for almost an hour now.

**CELESTE:** Late? Oh, yes, I lost the Brain.

**CURATOR:** And there you go with that brain thing again...

**CELESTE:** Have you seen him?

**CURATOR:** Him?

**CELESTE:** Yes, he's about yea high and yea wide. *(Gives accompanying hand motions.)*

**CURATOR:** Uhh...

**CELESTE:** Here, let me read you. *(She puts her hands on the CURATOR's temples.)* Oooooom. Oooooom. Oooooom. Haaaaaave yoooooooo seeeeeeeen the Braaaaaain... *(She rubs the CURATOR's temples as she chants.)*

**CURATOR:** Who or what is the brain?

**CELESTE:** The Brain is the lead investigator. Barry "the Brain" O'Brian.

**BARRY:** *(From offstage.)* I'm inside here! Come inside!

**CELESTE:** Yes! That's it! I'm getting a strong reading now. I'm feeling...he's...inside somewhere. Maybe a building...or a room! It's dark...someplace...he's someplace dark... *(She collapses dramatically, draping herself over the CURATOR's shoulders.)* I've lost him.

**CURATOR:** Oh, for heaven's sake! It sounds like he's just inside there. *(Breaks away from CELESTE's hold and calls offstage.)* Hello? Barry, is it?

**BARRY:** *(Offstage.)* Yes! I'm in the other room.

**CURATOR:** You wait here. *(Motions for CELESTE to stay. She exits.)* What are you doing? You shouldn't be in here already. Who let you in...wait...what's that you've got? No! Put that down!

**BARRY:** The K2 meter is spiking! I've got to destroy it! The ghost, he could be tied to this object! He won't leave unless it's destroyed!

**CURATOR:** What are you doing? No! That's valuable property! *(There is the sound of paper ripping.)* Oh my God, you idiot!

*BARRY enters, followed closely behind by the CURATOR. The CURATOR is holding an old torn set of blueprints, looking obviously distressed.*

**BARRY:** I'm sorry, it had to be done. Ah, Celeste! You made it.

**CELESTE:** I lost you.

**BARRY:** Yes, yes. Sorry about that. I decided to scout out ahead. Good thing, too. I ran into some nasty activity in there.

**CURATOR:** These were the original blueprints to the slaughterhouse! Did you really have to destroy them?

**BARRY:** Look, you called us. If you are just going to stand there and question our methods, we can just pack up our equipment and leave right now.

**CELESTE:** *(Nodding in agreement.)* Right now.

**BARRY:** And you can just deal with your little ghost problem on your own.

**CELESTE:** *(Nodding in agreement.)* On your own.

**CURATOR:** But... *(She looks at the set of torn blueprints, then lets go, watching the halves fall to the ground.)* they were the original blueprints. Our only copy.

**BARRY:** Well, look on the bright side. We now know that it isn't the ghost of the architect who built the place.

**CURATOR:** What?

**CELESTE:** Thankfully. Do you know how hard it is to get rid of an architect?

**BARRY:** Very hard.

**CELESTE:** And expensive.

**BARRY:** That's right. Very hard, and very expensive.

**CELESTE:** *(Nodding in agreement.)* Mmmhmm.

**BARRY:** They get into your walls, plug up your drains and rattle your windows. Yep, nasty business, architects.

**CURATOR:** Whatever, just please, try and be more careful. This is a historic landmark.

**BARRY:** You won't even notice we are here.

**CELESTE:** Not a peep. *(Mimes zipping her lips up. She takes a step back right into the table, causing it to topple, spilling the tools on it.)* Starting now.

**CURATOR:** *(Sighs.)* I can't believe I agreed to this. This is the last thing we need, a couple of quack ghost hunters ruining the reputation of this magnificent building.

**BARRY:** I'll have you know, we are two of the premier paranormal investigators in the country. NAY! I daresay the world! Why, I myself have a Ph.D. in the field of paranormal studies. And Madame Celeste here, why, she's one of the best psychics you will ever meet!

**CELESTE:** I'm sensing your skepticism.

**CURATOR:** *(Rolling her eyes.)* Amazing.

**CELESTE:** It's a gift.

**BARRY:** Trust me. You'll be glad you called in the S.I.S.S.I.E.S.

**CURATOR:** I'm sorry, what?

**BARRY:** Madame Celeste and I are probably two of the most accomplished S.I.S.S.I.E.S. in the state. You won't be disappointed.

**CURATOR:** (*Suppressing a laugh.*) I'm sorry, I must be hearing you wrong. Are calling yourselves a couple of sissies?

**BARRY:** Yes, that's right.

**CURATOR:** Is that really something to be proud of in your line of work?

**BARRY:** (*Beckoning for CELESTE.*) Madame Celeste, if you please. Undo your robe and turn around.

*CELESTE lets her robe slip down her shoulders. Underneath is a t-shirt that reads S.I.S.S.I.E.S. in bold letters.*

**BARRY:** See, we are the Society for the Investigation and Search of Spectral Inhabitants through the Empirical Sciences. S.I.S.S.I.E.S.

**CURATOR:** (*Laughing.*) Really? Are you kidding me?

**CELESTE:** Why? What's so funny?

**CURATOR:** You couldn't have thought of anything better? Seriously?

**CELESTE:** (*Looks to BARRY in confusion.*) I don't get it?

**BARRY:** What do you suggest we call ourselves, then?

**CURATOR:** No, no, I'm sorry. You guys just go ahead and do your thing. I'll be in the front office if you need anything. (*Suppressing another giggle.*) Just please, try not to destroy anything else of value.

**BARRY:** I can't promise that.

**CURATOR:** Uh huh... (*Exits.*)

**CELESTE:** Alright, Brain, what now?

**BARRY:** Bring those cases in from the other room, would you? I'd like to get our equipment set up in here.

**CELESTE:** (*Looking around.*) In here? You sure?

**BARRY:** Yeah, the curator said that this is where most of the activity has been reported.

**CELESTE:** What sort of activity are we dealing with?

**BARRY:** Just your average cold spots, disembodied voices, footsteps...you know, your average haunt. So, if you don't mind, the equipment, Celeste.

**CELESTE:** Alright, you're the boss.

**BARRY:** What's that supposed to mean?

**CELESTE:** Nothing.

**BARRY:** What?

**CELESTE:** It's just that I'm not really feeling any energy in this room.

**BARRY:** Do you have the Ph.D.?

**CELESTE:** Well, no...but...

**BARRY:** Then you don't get to decide where we set up. Go get the stuff.

**CELESTE:** Alright... (*Exits.*)

**BARRY:** (*Calling after her.*) And don't break anything this time! We don't need a repeat of Minneapolis. Remember how hard it was without our flashlights? Couldn't see a thing! Not a damn thing.

**CELESTE:** (*Calling from offstage.*) Yeah, yeah! Don't worry! I've got this under— (*The sound of falling equipment can be heard.*) uhh...control.

**BARRY:** Everything alright in there?

**CELESTE:** (*Enters, carrying a couple of large suitcases and looking a bit ruffled with her turban askew.*) Everything's fine. Here's the equipment.

**BARRY:** Excellent! Quick, let's get these cameras set up so we can go lights out.

**CELESTE:** (*Straightening herself out.*) Where do you want them?

**BARRY:** Let's put one up on that table over there. And...umm...another over there in the corner. That should give us coverage of the whole room.

*BARRY and CELESTE proceed to set up their equipment.*

**CELESTE:** Oh!

**BARRY:** What? What is it!

**CELESTE:** Oh! I am getting something. Right here...in this area. (*She closes her eyes and begins to feel around the area, taking a "reading."*)

**BARRY:** What do you see?

**CELESTE:** Not see! Feel! I feel something! I feel the cosmic vibrations; the energy of the past trying to contact me.

**BARRY:** (*Feeling out the area.*) Yes! Yes, I think I feel it too!

**CELESTE:** *(Begins to chant.)* Omni-reeki-dosey-doe. Omni-reeki-dosey-doe. There it is again! The vibrations are getting stronger! Yes! Yes, spirit! Use me as your vessel! Take me! Speak through me!

**BARRY:** Yes! What does it want?

**CELESTE:** *(Opens her eyes and drops her hands to her pockets.)* Oh. Oh, dear. *(Reaches into her pocket and pulls out her cell phone and answers it.)* Hi, Mom, no, now is not a good time...I'm on a hunt. Yes, this is very important...no, you never got it...it's my job, Mom. Mmmhmm...okay, look, I'll call you back later. Okay? Yes...I love you, too. Bye. *(Grins sheepishly.)* It was set on vibrate.

**BARRY:** Give me that! *(He snatches the cellphone away and pockets it.)*

**CELESTE:** I'm sorry!

**BARRY:** Let's just go lights out. Hit the lights, Celeste.

**CELESTE:** I'm on it! *(She flips the light switch.)*

*BLACKOUT.*

**BARRY:** Hey, Celeste, do you have the EVP recorder?

**CELESTE:** Yeah.

**BARRY:** Hand it over here.

**CELESTE:** Over where?

**BARRY:** Here.

**CELESTE:** Where are you?

**BARRY:** Over here.

**CELESTE:** *(Exasperated sigh.)* Over where?!

**BARRY:** Right here. I'm right over here, where you left me. Follow the sound of my voice.

**CELESTE:** *(Wanders around, bumping into things.)* It's too dark, I can't hear you.

**BARRY:** What? That doesn't even make sense.

**CELESTE:** Sing something.

**BARRY:** Absolutely not. Why?

**CELESTE:** Sing something. So I can find you.

**BARRY:** What? Okay...what should I sing?

**CELESTE:** (*Bumping into a wall.*) Ouch! I don't care! Anything, just sing anything!

**BARRY:** Uhh... (*Clears his throat and sings.*)

OH, SAY CAN YOU SEE

BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT...

**CELESTE:** Good! Keep going!

**BARRY:**

WHAT SO PROUDLY WE HAILED

AT THE TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING?

**CELESTE:** Oh, here you are!

**BARRY:** (*Not hearing CELESTE, he really starts to get into his song.*)

WHOSE BROAD STRIPES AND BRIGHT STARS

THRU THE PERILOUS FIGHT...

**CELESTE:** You can stop now! I've found you!

**BARRY:** (*He belts out the last line.*)

O'ER THE RAMPARTS WE WATCHED

WERE SO GALLANTLY STREAMING—

**CELESTE:** (*Yells.*) Barry!

**BARRY:** What?

**CELESTE:** I've got the EVP recorder.

**BARRY:** Oh, right, good. Hand it over.

**CELESTE:** Here.

**BARRY:** (*Turning on the recorder.*) Alright, this is Barry O'Brian and Madame Celeste in the slaughterhouse.

**CELESTE:** With the candlestick. (*Snickers.*)

**BARRY:** What?

**CELESTE:** You know...it was Barry...in the slaughterhouse...with the candlestick...

**BARRY:** What the hell are you going on about?

**CELESTE:** Never mind.

**BARRY:** Shh. (*Into the recorder.*) It's about 12:13 on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**CELESTE:** (*Leans into the recorder and speaks in a low, mystical voice.*) All Hallows Eve...

**BARRY:** Boo!

**CELESTE:** (*Jumps.*) Don't do that! It scares me!

**BARRY:** Afraid of ghosts, Celeste?

**CELESTE:** No. No, of course not. Just don't do that again.

**BARRY:** Alright. Just remember, I run the EVP, you just stand there and look omnipresent.

**CELESTE:** (*Nods.*) Fine.

**BARRY:** Is there anyone here with us? Anyone who wishes to communicate with us?

**FRANKIE:** (*From offstage.*) Morons.

**CELESTE:** Did you hear that?

**BARRY:** Could you repeat that? We didn't quite hear you.

**FRANKIE:** (*Offstage.*) Morons!

**CELESTE:** I sense a spirit. Over there...by the door. (*Walks towards the door, crashes into the toppled table and falls into a heap.*)  
Owwww!

**BARRY:** You're a psychic, Celeste, how did you not see that coming?

**CELESTE:** We psychics see the metaphysical, not the physical.  
Owwwww.

*Lights go up. FRANKIE, the ghost of a 1950's greaser, is leaning on the wall by the light switch.*

**BARRY:** Celeste? Did you do that?

**CELESTE:** (*Writhing in pain on the floor.*) Does it look like I did that?

**FRANKIE:** I will never understand why you people insist on turning the lights off like that! You are just begging for an accident. (*Snorts.*) And you say we're the ones who go bump in the night.

**BARRY:** Hello? Is anyone here?

**FRANKIE:** You tell me. You're the one with all that fancy equipment. (*He blows on the back of BARRY's neck.*)

**BARRY:** (*Swatting the back of his neck.*) Celeste, get up. Get up! There's something here.

**FRANKIE:** (*Saunters to CELESTE and nudges her with his foot.*)  
What's wrong with this one?

**CELESTE:** What was that?

**FRANKIE:** (*Sitting down on top of CELESTE.*) This should be good.

**BARRY:** Get up!

**CELESTE:** I'm trying! I can't get up! It's like there's...something...something pressing down on me. Like there's a weight on my chest. *(She struggles to get up, but is trapped under the weight of FRANKIE.)* Quick, Barry, get the K2!

**FRANKIE:** *(Pulls out a comb and starts to comb his slicked back hair.)* Yeah, quickly, Barry!

**BARRY:** Yes! Good! *(He pulls the K2 from his pocket and holds it above CELESTE.)* Alright, what I have here is called a K2 meter. All you need to do is light up the lights for me. Okay?

**FRANKIE:** Yo, I'm down here, buttercup.

**BARRY:** Are Madame Celeste and I bothering you? If you want us to leave, light up the K2.

**FRANKIE:** Naw, go ahead and stay. I don't get much company around here.

**CELESTE:** *(Gasping for breath.)* Anything?

**BARRY:** Nothing.

**CELESTE:** Try again!

**BARRY:** Again, if you are angry or upset that we have invaded your space, here are the lights. Just make them flicker. On and off. Just once, and we will leave you alone.

**FRANKIE:** *(Shaking his head.)* No, really. It's cool, man. Stay.

**BARRY:** Hmm. No activity from the K2. There must not be anything here. Maybe you were right, Celeste, no energy in this room.

**FRANKIE:** Wait? What? Leaving? But I didn't light up the lights! Just like you asked!

**CELESTE:** No energy? I can't move! I can't breathe!

**BARRY:** I saw no activity on the K2 meter.

**CELESTE:** The pressure, it's so heavy...

**FRANKIE:** *(Looks down at CELESTE, offended.)* Hey, you are no lightweight yourself, lady!

**CELESTE:** *(Gasping for air.)* I feel...faint...

**FRANKIE:** *(Stands up.)* Quit being such a baby.

**CELESTE:** *(Taking a few deep breaths.)* It's gone now.

**BARRY:** *(Helping CELESTE up.)* Is it gone? Did we lose it?

**FRANKIE:** "It" has a name. And "it" is still here.

**CELESTE:** I don't know. I don't feel anything anymore.

**FRANKIE:** It's Frankie. Thanks for asking.

**BARRY:** Are you sure? Can you try a reading?

**FRANKIE:** Oh, I'm good. How about you?

**CELESTE:** *(Closes her eyes.)* I can try. Oooooom. Oooooom.

**FRANKIE:** It's like talking to a wall.

**BARRY:** Spirit? Are you still with us?

**CELESTE:** Oooooom. Oooooom.

**FRANKIE:** It's always a one-sided conversation with you people.

**BARRY:** If you are still here, could you make your presence known?

Push one of us! Throw something at Celeste!

**CELESTE:** What!

**FRANKIE:** Hey, just who do you think I am? A common poltergeist?

**CELESTE:** We just want to speak with you.

**FRANKIE:** *(Strolls over to the radio.)* Alright, you want some action?

**BARRY:** Or maybe move something? Can you move something for us?

**FRANKIE:** *(Gives the radio a Fonzie-punch. Fifties era music starts to play.)* Aaaaaaeeyyy.

**CELESTE:** Look! The radio!

**FRANKIE:** Yeah, you like that trick? *(Turns the radio off.)*

**BARRY:** Starting the EVP recorder!

**FRANKIE:** You think that's neat, try this one! *(He rattles the meat hooks, causing them to swing and sway violently.)*

**BARRY:** Yes!

**FRANKIE:** And if you liked that, you are sure to love this! *(Strolls over to one of the tables and picks up a couple of the tools and waves them around.)* WOooooOooo! They're floating!

**BARRY:** I hope the cameras are catching this!

**FRANKIE:** Cameras? Oh, no, no, no! *(He drops the tools, and runs to the cameras and picks them up.)* I'm a little camera-shy. *(He tosses them aside.)*

**CELESTE:** No! The cameras!

**BARRY:** Our footage!

**FRANKIE:** Whoops.

**CELESTE:** Who or what do you think we are dealing with, Barry?

**BARRY:** *(Sighs.)* I don't know, I think maybe this might just be a residual haunting. It certainly doesn't seem intelligent.

**FRANKIE:** Hey! I'll show you who's intelligent, moron. *(He shoves BARRY into a wall. Then hops up onto the table to watch the action.)*

**BARRY:** Oooph!

**CELESTE:** I don't know, Barry, I think it might be smarter than you think.

**FRANKIE:** Thank you, doll face.

**CELESTE:** Have we caught any EVPs?

**BARRY:** Let me see. *(He rewinds the recorder and presses play. "Mooing" is heard.)* What the...

**CELESTE:** What is that?

**BARRY:** I think its saying...mo...moo...ummm...

**CELESTE:** Is it mooing? Are those cows?

**BARRY:** *(Looking around.)* We are in a slaughterhouse...

**CELESTE:** Ghost cows?

**BARRY:** *(Shrugs.)* Hauntings are often caused by those who died unexpectedly or violently...

**CELESTE:** Barry, you can't be suggesting...

**BARRY:** They did die violent and unexpected deaths...

**CELESTE:** Ghost cows?!

**FRANKIE:** *(Laughing.)* Maybe you'll want to investigate the barn next. *(Starts strutting like a chicken.)* I hear there's some phantom chickens out there.

**CELESTE:** Maybe we should try to communicate in a different way. *(She goes to one of their cases and pulls out a snow globe.)* Let's do this my way.

**BARRY:** With a snow globe?

**CELESTE:** I broke my crystal ball, alright? This was the best I could do. *(She sets it on the table next to FRANKIE.)* Okay, hold my hand. Barry. Close your eyes and concentrate. Dear spirit, please come forth and make yourself known.

**FRANKIE:** *(Waving his hand in front of her face.)* Yooo-hooo, I'm right here.

**CELESTE:** Yes, I hear you spirit. You are here with us. What is your name?

**FRANKIE:** I told you, it's Frankie.

**CELESTE:** Frankie? Yes. Yes, I hear you, Frankie.

**FRANKIE:** Whoa, this broad's good.

**BARRY:** Frankie? Its name is Frankie?

**FRANKIE:** Yeah? You go a problem with that?

**CELESTE:** Shh! Concentrate. Frankie, can you tell us what happened to you? How did you die?

**FRANKIE:** Well, I'm glad you asked. Picture it, the year was 1954, and I had it all. The hot rod, the hair, and the good-looking woman by my side. Or at least, I thought I had it all.

**BARRY:** What's he saying?

**FRANKIE:** Hey, zip it, motor mouth. Didn't your momma teach you it's rude to interrupt?

**CELESTE:** (*Smacks BARRY on the back of the head.*) Shh! Go on Frankie.

**FRANKIE:** As I was saying, I thought I had it all, until one day I find out my girl is cheating on me with some goody-two-shoes on the football team. He even gave her his pin! Can you believe it? Pinning another guy's gal, wrongamundo! I tried to reason with her, I told her that I loved her and all those sissy things chicks like to hear. But she wouldn't listen. That ditzzy dame broke up with me. Me? Can you believe it? I was heartbroken. No one breaks up with Frankie D'Agosto, nobody! So, I got in my car and I drove it up here to the slaughterhouse and I broke in. I'd show her! I threw myself in to the meat grinder. (*He pauses and sighs.*) Took days for anyone to notice. In hindsight, it probably wasn't one of my best decisions.

**CELESTE:** Why haven't you moved on, Frankie? What is holding you to this plane of existence?

**FRANKIE:** Well, the truth is, I'm sorta embarrassed.

**CELESTE:** Embarrassed? Why would you be embarrassed to cross over?

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