

AlumDie

By Noell Wolfgram Evans

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AlumDie

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DEDICATION

To Cara, Anna, Luke, and Ella. The funniest people I know.

STORY OF THE PLAY

AlumDie is a fast and funny interactive murder mystery! It takes place at a 20-year college reunion where the guest of honor, Professor Perkins, turns up dead before he has time to accept his award. Several of the alumni decide to search for the murderer on their own. That way they'll look like heroes and the school will be saved the embarrassment and humiliation of a long, public investigation. It's their duty as alumni. (Well, that and to donate, of course.)

Among the mourners -- and suspects -- are the professor's life-long assistant Blaine, the school janitor, and the wife of an alumnus who is always professionally rated behind the professor.

AlumDie invites the entire audience to get into the spirit of the class reunion in a number of ways -- as long as they are careful about not offending anyone. If Professor Perkins isn't safe, who is?

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

AlumDie had its premiere at the Theatre League in Dublin, Ohio, in 2006.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 1 w, 1 flexible)

JANITOR WRIGLEY: Lifelong school janitor. Hard worker, with a strong dedication to the school and his profession. His first allegiance is to cleanliness. Friendly. Proud. Would knife a man for critiquing his cleaning abilities. Nearly always has his mop. Just in case.

BLAINE: *(Can be played by a female.)* For 25 years he has been a teaching assistant to Professor Perkins. He's slightly unkempt and always seems to be in another place. He has a strong attention to detail and strict, perhaps authoritarian, focus on work. Would not be out of place at a conspiracy theorists convention.

MARC: Alumnus. During his school years, was known as the man who was friends with everyone. Perhaps a little too in love with his former school. Sees anyone not from the school as a person not to be trusted. Slightly edgy and nervous. A little desperate now to recapture the feeling he had of going down the halls and saying hello to everyone. He is completely decked out in the school colors.

DAN: Alumnus. Attending the reunion because he feels he should, but he has moved far beyond his school days. He doesn't hold a strong attraction to school but has a curiosity about his old classmates. Businessman. Cautious. Believes he's grown past school reunions but attends out of obligation and work as he is always looking for a sale. Very middle of the road. Married to Sue.

SUE: Attended the rival school. Married to Dan. Cynical but not bitter. She can be demanding and focused. Seems tough, almost seen it all. In the workplace, feels like she has never been taken seriously and must fight for her place. Because of this she has a strong will and quick temper.

SETTING

A large gathering space that adjoins the college's main dining room. It is sparsely decorated in celebration of a 20-year class reunion. A banner hanging on the back wall reads "Welcome Back Class of 19--" (insert date 20 years earlier). On one side is a table displaying several pieces of memorabilia as yearbooks, trophies, photo albums, etc.

Before "Curtain Up" cast members can mingle with the audience in character, striking up conversations with them, reminiscing. Crew and others may do this as well to help make the reunion feel fuller. They may pause for photos, carry and discuss props, or ask people to sign their yearbook/program. Audience members' names can also be incorporated into the yearbook props, be used on "Most likely to..." posters and added in as captions on staged photos. Audience should be encouraged to explore the entire reunion space before the show and at breaks. If possible, instant pictures could be taken of various audience members and then incorporated into the before/after posters and placards that dot the area.

Posters cover the walls. There are the usual – "Best Dressed," and "Prettiest Smile" – but there are also others as "Most Likely to Be Killed in a Bar Fight Over the Peanuts," "Most Likely to Develop an Allergic Reaction to Baseball," and "Best Impression of a Carpet."

ACT I

(AT RISE: DAN is looking over everything when MARC approaches him. Both are dressed casually in suits. For the beginning of this act, most of the action takes place CS or to the immediate SR or SL.)

MARC: Well I'll be ... it is you.

DAN: Marc Barris, right? Great to see you. How have you been?

MARC: Dan Dempsey. Dan, Dan, Dan, Dan Dempsey. So good to see you. Look at you. How are you? Tell me everything.

DAN: I'm good.

MARC: And the family? You're married right?

DAN: Yep. They're all doing good.

MARC: Good.

DAN: Good.

MARC: I can't tell you how great it is to see a familiar face. *(Looks to audience.)* I've been here for half an hour. These people have changed so much I hardly recognize them.

DAN: Really? That's *(Audience member.)* over there. And right behind her, with the _____, is *(Audience member.)*.

MARC: Oh yeah. Wait, wait, don't turn around. I think that's *(Audience member.)* behind you. Hard to tell though because it looks like she _____.

DAN: Is that *(Audience member.)* there?

MARC: Yeah, wow, looks like he lost a lot of weight.

DAN: And it looks like Shelia Thompson found it.

(There is a long pause while the MEN search for something to say.)

DAN: *(Cont'd.)* This is quite a reunion, huh?

MARC: Really takes you back.

(Long pause while the MEN search for something to say.)

DAN: Do you remember that time, I think it was sophomore year, when we all went up to Canada?

MARC: No.

DAN: Oh.

(Long pause while the MEN search for something to say.)

MARC: Hey did you see Professor Barnes?

DAN: Professor Barnes is still teaching? Remember his History of Economics class?

MARC: That was the worst thing I've ever been a part of. And that includes my first marriage.

DAN: His class was horrible. It was the holocaust of addition.

MARC: It was worse than horrible.

DAN: It was Michigan. *(Can substitute the name of a rival "state" or college.)*

(SUE walks over holding a couple of drinks and looking thoroughly disconnected.)

MARC: Check her out. Damn.

DAN: That's my wife, Marc.

MARC: *(Apologetically.)* Of course it is.

(SUE downs one drink and shows no intention of giving up the other.)

SUE: The last time I was this bored was ... well, you remember our wedding night, honey?

DAN: Sue, this is Marc Barris. Marc this is my wife Sue. Sue went to Poly Tech.

MARC: *(His anger builds as he talks.)* You married a Fighting Lizard? Our bitter collegiate rivals? You won four school spirit awards. So what was all that for then? I know you won at least two of those because of the way you led the charge against that black hole of knowledge, that school whose name I refuse to say.

End of Freeview

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