

Hit the Books

By Dwayne Yancey

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Molly, a college student studying for exams, becomes so frustrated she hits herself in the head with her art history textbook. Suddenly, she thinks she's the Mona Lisa. Her roommate, Abby, becomes frantic. A suitemate, Zoë, arrives who thinks the logical thing to do is to hit Abby on the head with another book. Soon, Brittany, an airhead, and Jeremy, Molly's boyfriend, are on the scene. Throughout, every time someone gets hit in the head with a book, they instantly acquire command of the subject matter: from art history to the laws of physics, and from phone book listing to cookbook recipes. The scene becomes increasingly more chaotic as the students search for a solution to get back to normal. You'll need some soft books, because everyone gets hit on the head at least once, and usually more in this hilarious slapstick farce.

Running time: About 25 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 m, 4 w)

MOLLY: Hits herself in the head with a book and now thinks she's the Mona Lisa.

ABBY: Molly's practical, and increasingly frustrated, roommate.

ZOË: The "tough girl" suitemate, whose solution is to hit Molly in the head with even more books.

BRITTANY: An air-headed suitemate who, when hit in the head with a book, turns into a genius and then, later, a mime.

JEREMY: Molly's boyfriend.

Hit the Books

(AT RISE: A college dorm. MOLLY is studying her art history textbooks. She's getting more and more frustrated, and is starting to vocalize that frustration.)

MOLLY: What the -- but it says over here -- the French realists ... is that the same as the surrealists? ... It kinda sounds the same -- so it ought to be the same, right? ... No, wait -- that's something different -- that's unreal! No, it's surreal!

(Optional: And so then there's expressionism -- and the cubists -- and the Dadaists -- who the heck are the Dadaists? It sounds like a baby sound: Dada! Dada! Dada! So why aren't there any Mamaists?)

MOLLY: *(Cont'd.)* And who are these people they're calling the Dutch masters? I thought those were a bunch of cigars?! Aaargh! -- all these names and dates and concepts and --- I just don't get it -- aargh! I don't get any of this! I'm never going to pass this stupid test! Never! Never! Never! *(Starts hitting herself in the head with her books. Suddenly, she stops -- and looks up, with a look of wonderment on her face.)* Oh. *(Starting to realize, and begins to assume the posture and facial expression of the Mona Lisa throughout the next few lines.)* Oh. Well! I see. Maybe I am starting to understand this now. Oh, why yes, I believe I do.

(SHE finally assumes the posture of the Mona Lisa. After a few moments of smiling, ABBY enters and speaks to the audience.)

ABBY: So this is how it all began. My roommate Molly here was having trouble with her art history class. She had this big test coming up and she was threatening to pull an all-nighter -- that's when I came home and found her --

ABBY: *(Cont'd.)* She was just sitting there. Like she was in some kind of daze or something. Not that that was different from any other night, mind you, but you get the idea. Just watch. *(Re-enacts coming home.)* I'm home! You wouldn't believe the library tonight! It was like a zoo in there! There was this one guy -- I swear, it looked like he had checked out every book in one whole section -- he had them stacked up to here! It was like the Leaning Tower of Pisa! He said he was a bit behind -- he hadn't been to class since the first week of fall semester. His freshman year. And then -- get this -- I go back in the stacks and there was another guy scrunched up on the empty shelves! Like this! *(Demonstrates.)* He said it was the only place he could find to study! I swear, people are going nuts around here. Just nuts! You'd think exams were coming up or something. *(Realizes MOLLY is frozen in position.)* Molly? Molly?

(ABBY goes to MOLLY and tries to get her attention.)

ABBY: *(Cont'd.)* Are you OK, Molly?

(ABBY waves her hand in front of MOLLY'S face.)

MOLLY: *(In a curious, sing-songy voice.)* Leonardo?

ABBY: *(Confused.)* What?

MOLLY: You are not Leonardo.

ABBY: Umm, no. What are you talking about?

MOLLY: Do you know when Leonardo will be here?

ABBY: Who's Leonardo?

MOLLY: You do not know Leonardo? The painter? He is quite famous, you know. I am surprised you have not heard of him.

ABBY: *(Getting a little exasperated.)* Is this some kind of new study technique or something?

MOLLY: He told me to sit just like this until he came back. I think he has some touch-up work to do. He never gave me eyebrows, you know. Have you ever noticed that?

MOLLY: *(Cont'd.)* I do not have any eyebrows. Or eyelashes, either. See? I'd point them out but he doesn't want me to move my hands.

ABBY: You're weird.

MOLLY: No, just enigmatic. It is the smile.

ABBY: Whatever. *(Looking around.)* Molly, why are your art history books scattered all over the floor?

MOLLY: Lisa. My name is Lisa.

ABBY: Lisa?

MOLLY: The Mona part is just a title. You know, like Mrs. I have a husband, you know. He commissioned me.

ABBY: *(Stretching out the word, with a little disbelief as she attempts to distance herself from the situation.)* Riiiiiiight. *(To the audience.)* So I figured, hey, whatever works for her -- that's her business, right? Right!

(ABBY exits. MOLLY continues to sit as the Mona Lisa. After a suitable pause, Abby enters.)

ABBY: *(Cont'd. To the audience.)* Wrong! It was just so -- so creepy! Her just sitting there like that. Finally, I just couldn't stand it anymore. *(Speaking to MOLLY.)* Uh, listen, Molly --

MOLLY: Lisa.

ABBY: OK, Lisa -- Molly Lisa -- Mona Molly -- whatever it is you're calling yourself -- can I just ask you one thing?

MOLLY: What is that?

ABBY: How long are you going to sit there like that?

MOLLY: Well, it took Leonardo four years to paint me. And then it has been another 500 years or so since then -- and the experts think I am holding up quite well for my age -- so -- quite a while yet, I would think. Why?

ABBY: Because, well, you're kinda freaking me out, actually.

MOLLY: I do sometimes have that effect on people. I do not know why. You know, they have stolen me. They have splashed acid on me. One guy threw a rock at me. Hit me right on the left elbow.

End of Freeview

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