TIME-IN / TIME-OUT

By Burton Bumgarner

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PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

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STORY OF THE PLAY

A group of students from the late ‘60s are suffering through “time-out” suspension in school. A dreaded teacher, Miss Pruette, (who is never seen on stage), lectures them on the seriousness of their infractions. If they only knew the consequences of their actions they may act differently. She wishes she could show them the future.

Suddenly, another group of students from the ‘90s enter for in-school suspension and they bear a striking resemblance to the first group. It soon becomes apparent to the first group that these social renegades are their children! As the ‘60s students gravitate toward the ‘90s students they think are most like them, they are shocked to find that they picked out the wrong offspring!

Audiences of any generation will find *Time-In / Time-Out* both poignant and humorous.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 8 w)

PAST STUDENTS

PETE: A bully.
NANCY: A tough girl from the wrong side of the tracks.
DEBBIE: A flower child.
LEON: A geek.
JIM: An activist.
CINDY: A preppy.
BEAR: An unresponsive student.

PRESENT STUDENTS

AFTON: An angry girl.
TOBY: A geek.
TYLER: A loser.
SABRINA: Into grunge.
TIFFANY: A preppy.
ROACH: An unresponsive student.

MISS PRUETTE: The teacher from hell; never appears on stage.

PROPS

LEON: Book bag, several books.
NANCY: Purse containing candy bar and soft drink bottle, cell phone.
CINDY: Purse with nail file and polish.
TOBY: Book bag with several books, watch.
AFTON: Purse with carton of yogurt and spoon.
TIFFANY: Purse, cell phone.
PRE-SET: Grade book, white-out and pen, old yearbook.

SETTING

The setting is a classroom of Central High School in the present and in the past. The students are in detention for various minor infractions. The set has a teacher's desk upstage and other school desks, tables, bookshelves, etc.

TIME-IN / TIME-OUT

(AT RISE: In the darkness the PAST STUDENTS recite the Pledge of Allegiance.)

STUDENTS: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

(LIGHTS up. PAST STUDENTS are standing at attention facing SL.)

MISS PRUETTE: *(Speaks from off SR, angrily. STUDENTS quickly face SR.)* I trust you're all familiar with the rules of time-out!
STUDENTS: YES, MA'AM!
MISS PRUETTE: Do you think I'm a pushover just because I'm new at Central High School?
STUDENTS: NO, MA'AM!
CINDY: No one can handle the riffraff like you, Miss Pruette!
PETE: You're the best!
MISS PRUETTE: Do you think I enjoy having students like you in my classroom?
STUDENTS: NO, MA'AM!
MISS PRUETTE: I should say not! You students think this is all a big joke, don't you?
STUDENTS: NO, MA'AM!
MISS PRUETTE: You think I'm going to go easy on you?
NANCY: No chance of that, Miss Pruette. You're as mean as a snake!
MISS PRUETTE: And don't you forget it!
LEON: But Miss Pruette, I really shouldn't be here --
MISS PRUETTE: NO TALKING! *(More pensive.)* You know what I wish?
DEBBIE: That eating human flesh was legal?
MISS PRUETTE: I wish I could show you the future. I wish you could see your children and feel the responsibility and the disappointment. Just briefly.

MISS PRUETTE: *(Continued.)* Maybe then you'd be a little more careful about the decisions you make now.
PETE: *(To STUDENTS.)* I think Miss Pruette's off in the twilight zone.
MISS PRUETTE: Nothing wrong with twilight zone, sonny! *(PETE jumps.)* Answer when I call your name. Nancy.
NANCY: *(Tough.)* Yooo.
MISS PRUETTE: Peter.
PETE: Present!
MISS PRUETTE: Debbie.
DEBBIE: *(Gives peace sign.)* Cool.
MISS PRUETTE: Leon.
LEON: Yes, ma'am. And I want you to know how sorry I am-
MISS PRUETTE: Quiet!
LEON: Yes, ma'am. I'll be quiet.
MISS PRUETTE: That means no talking, Leon!
LEON: Yes, ma'am. No talking. I'll stop talking. I won't say a word...
MISS PRUETTE: QUIET!
LEON: Yes... *(PETE puts his hand over LEON'S mouth.)*
MISS PRUETTE: Cindy.
CINDY: *(Whining.)* You don't have to yell.
MISS PRUETTE: Rocky...Rocky...Where is Rocky?
PETE: He's still in jail, Miss Pruette.
LEON: *(Nervous.)* Why's he in jail?
PETE: I think he killed his parole officer or something.
MISS PRUETTE: When he gets out he'll owe me two hours in time-out. Ralph. Ralph Beasley. Is Ralph Beasley present?
LEON: *(Shoves BEAR.)* That's you, Sherlock! Hey, Ralph! Miss Pruette called your name!

(BEAR moves slowly toward LEON. PETE intervenes.)

PETE: Don't call him "Ralph"! His name's "Bear."
LEON: *(Fearful of BEAR.)* Sorry. I forgot.
MISS PRUETTE: Ralph Beasley!
PETE: *(Shoves BEAR.)* That's you, Bear. *(BEAR growls.)*
MISS PRUETTE: Jim.

End of Freeview

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