Attention Detention

A Comedy in One Act

By Bradley Hayward

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Four honor roll students have been summoned to detention. To avoid punishment, they each come up with a preposterous excuse for their tardiness, and their wacky tales are acted out by an ensemble of performers. As one wild lie piles on top of the next, the principal gets farther away from the truth. Will he be able to figure out these bright young minds? If so, he'll have to pay close attention in detention, for he's up against a swift bunch of kids, each with a knack for making the most ridiculous stories sound entirely possible.

PERFORMANCE TIME

Approximately 30-35 minutes.

SETTING

A classroom at center stage, with four desks facing the audience. There are platforms downstage left and right that serve as various locations. Alternately, the desks can be rearranged for each setting.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Entirely gender flexible cast of 6 to 21)

PRINCIPAL

ADAM: A student in detention.

JANICE: Another.

MARISSA: Another.

TREVOR: Another.

ENSEMBLE:

DOCTOR	BERNICE
RITA	STELLA
LUCY	MURRAY
MR. HOOK	BRANDON
MISS TRAVIS	MODERATOR
JACKIE	ZELLNOID
KAT	YIGGLE
MITCH	SNOOKIE

CASTING NOTES

All of the roles are gender flexible. Alternative names for the core group of students are as follows: ADAM (ADDIE), JANICE (JACOB), MARISSA (MARK), TREVOR (TANIS). Modify the names of the ensemble (and all pronouns) at your discretion. Actors may also play both genders, if desired. The ensemble roles may be played by a core group of 4 actors, divided among 16, or played by the students listed above. In order to accommodate the number of actors available, other casting combinations are also perfectly acceptable.

PROPS

Yardstick
Stethoscope
Blood pressure pump
Thermometer
Notepad and pen
Hockey uniform and hockey bag
Football uniform and football
Large bandage
Wig
Foam finger
Scripts
Rocking chairs
Heart monitor
Bingo card
Bingo dabber
Cafeteria trays
Bowls
Corn cob
Bell
Monster costumes (or accent pieces)
Cloth napkins
Books
Backpacks

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(AT RISE: There are four desks center stage facing the audience. ADAM, JANICE, MARISSA and TREVOR are seated with their heads down. Out of nowhere, the PRINCIPAL storms in. He has a booming voice and carries a yardstick.)

PRINCIPAL: Attention detention! *(All the STUDENTS snap their heads up at once. Their eyes are wide as saucers, like deer caught in the headlights.)* The time is 3:45. Detention begins... *(The STUDENTS inhale deeply.)* …now. *(The STUDENTS exhale. The PRINCIPAL creeps around the room dangerously.)* Time for roll call. *(He approaches ADAM.)* Desk number one, your name.
ADAM: Adam.
PRINCIPAL: Adam what?
ADAM: Sorry, sir?
PRINCIPAL: Adam what?
ADAM: Adam...and Eve?
PRINCIPAL: No, Adam. Your full name.
ADAM: It's not on your record?
PRINCIPAL: We go by first name only. Otherwise our filing cabinets would be spilling over.
ADAM: Um, okay. Adam Dinsmore, sir.
PRINCIPAL: And your middle name?

(ADAM looks to the OTHERS quizzically. They just shrug their shoulders.)

ADAM: Dennis, sir. Adam Dennis Dinsmore.
PRINCIPAL: Thank you. *(Pause.)* Wait a moment.
ADAM: Yes, sir?
PRINCIPAL: Your initials spell A-D-D?
ADAM: Yes, sir. They do indeed, sir. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry, what were we talking about?
PRINCIPAL: Never mind. *(Moves on to JANICE.)* Desk number two, your name.

MARISSA: Marissa Dawn Jackson. You might recognize the name. My brother Kevin lived in detention.
PRINCIPAL: As a matter of fact, I do. He was quite a prankster.
MARISSA: Yes, sir.
PRINCIPAL: He tee-peed the school so many times, Charmin paid for the new chem lab.
MARISSA: That's him, sir.
PRINCIPAL: And our longest-running senior, too. It took him three years to graduate.
MARISSA: Four, actually.
PRINCIPAL: He was pretty cozy in here.
MARISSA: I'll say. I'm sitting in his desk.
PRINCIPAL: How can you tell?
MARISSA: There's a plaque with his name on it.
PRINCIPAL: That's right! The faculty chipped in for that. So what's he up to nowadays?
MARISSA: Probation. But I assure you I'm nothing like him. This is just a simple misunderstanding.
PRINCIPAL: We'll get to that later. *(HE moves his attention to JANICE.)* Desk number three.
JANICE: Do I hafta?
PRINCIPAL: "Hafta"? Watch your grammar, young lady.
JANICE: My grammar is fine. I get straight A's without cracking a book. I've never missed a day of school in my life. And I'm gorgeous. So do we really have to go through this charade?
PRINCIPAL: Indeed we do.
JANICE: Come on. I have good grades, good insight and good hair. Don't I deserve a "get out of jail free" card?
PRINCIPAL: There's a price to pay for poor behavior.
JANICE: I take Miss Moon's gym class. Isn't that punishment enough?
PRINCIPAL: I thought everyone liked Miss Moon.
JANICE: Are you kidding? She's a basket case. Last month during archery, she put pictures of her boyfriend on all the targets.
PRINCIPAL: I'll have a word with her about that.

End of Freeview

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