

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing

Cheaters

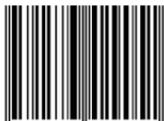
Drama
by
Don Zolidis

Cheaters

Drama. By Don Zolidis. *Cast: 18 either gender. May be cast with mixed genders or all women or all men.* Someone cheated on the test. And if the cheater doesn't confess, the entire class will fail. Those are the rules set out by the assistant principal and their teacher as the students walk out of the room. Now the entire class is forced to play detective and discover the cheater before it's too late. But what if everything isn't as it seems? Who are the liars and who is telling the truth? Was the cheater working alone? Was there more than one? And how can they possibly get a confession? With the pressure on, the class fragments into warring factions with each student trying to figure out the mystery. But with each revelation of cheating, the fissures grow wider, and the simple act of trying to discover the truth might rip the entire class apart. A Kafka-esque nightmare of betrayal and conflict under extreme circumstances. *Area staging. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Code: CP6.*

Cover design: Susan Carle.

ISBN: 978-1-58342-905-1



9 781583 429051 >

www.dramaticpublishing.com



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098
ph: (800) 448-7469



Printed on recycled paper

Cheaters

A drama in one act by

DON ZOLIDIS



Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMXIII by
DON ZOLIDIS

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(CHEATERS)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-905-1

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

Cheaters

CHARACTERS

THE ADMINISTRATION

MR. LEWIS: The teacher (can be MISS Lewis).

MR. ABRAMSON: The vice principal (can be MISS Abramson).

THE STUDENTS

TUCKER

JAMISON

CAL

BRANDON

MICHAEL

JOSÉ

NATHANIEL

SAMANTHA

ASHLEY

MADISON

MELANIE

ANGEL

ANNE

TONYA

YANINA

KAYLEE

SETTING

The classroom.

Two smaller playing areas, or “interrogation rooms,” on either side.

CHARACTER NOTES

Names

To make things easier, you may have students use their real names for their characters. Adjust the script accordingly. You may also adjust the gender of any of the characters. This could be a cast of all boys or all girls.

Cuts

If you find that the play is running too long, the interrogation scenes with Michael and Anne can be cut. If you need to cut only one of those scenes, the Anne scene should be the first one to go. If you cut both scenes, you should resume the scene on Cal's line, "Man, I should tell them it was you." This should follow immediately after the teachers leave the room.

Cheaters

AT RISE: *A classroom. MR. LEWIS and MR. ABRAMSON are walking amongst the desks, holding buckets. STUDENTS are dropping their cellphones into them as they pass.*)

MR. LEWIS. Thank you.

(Another STUDENT drops in a phone.)

MR. LEWIS *(cont'd)*. Thank you.

(BRANDON drops in his phone.)

BRANDON. I better get this back. Oh by the way, don't check the pictures on there.

(MR. ABRAMSON pauses a second, then continues.)

ASHLEY. You're disgusting, Brandon.

BRANDON. What? I didn't say anything.

(They finish collecting the phones.)

MR. LEWIS. First of all, I'm very disappointed in all of you.

SAMANTHA. Oh come on—

MR. LEWIS *(barely able to control his anger)*. I'd appreciate it if you didn't say anything right now. I know that some of you are innocent. Some of you have no idea what I'm talking about.

(ANNE raises her hand.)

MR. LEWIS *(cont'd)*. Put. Your. Hand. Down.

(ANNE drops her hand.)

MR. LEWIS *(cont'd)*. Here is the situation: Some of you decided that it would be advantageous to cheat on the test. Some of you decided to help the cheaters. Everyone who is involved in this is going to confess before they leave this room.

(ANNE raises her hand again.)

MR. LEWIS *(cont'd)*. I said put your hand down.

(ANNE drops her hand again.)

MR. LEWIS *(cont'd)*. Let me just say that I know who the cheater or the cheaters are. I am waiting for you to admit your guilt. Mr. Abramson?

MR. ABRAMSON. If *all* of the cheaters do not come forward, you will *all* fail this course.

(Uproar from the STUDENTS:

“What? Ah come on! What the heck?! You can’t do that!,” etc.)

MR. ABRAMSON *(cont'd)*. QUIET!

(All the STUDENTS are quiet.)

MR. ABRAMSON *(cont'd)*. When you were enrolled at this school you signed the honor pledge. That means we absolutely have the authority to do this. I don’t need to remind you of the stakes here. If you fail this course, some of you won’t graduate. Some of you won’t be getting scholarships. Some of you won’t be attending college. Mr. Lewis and I will be outside in the hallway. When you have a list of names, bring them to us.

(MR. ABRAMSON and MR. LEWIS leave with the cellphones. Quiet. The STUDENTS have their heads down. After a bit:)

TUCKER. Anybody wanna say anything?

(Pause.)

TUCKER *(cont'd)*. Now is the time—if you cheated on the test, just fess up now and we can all get out of here.

CAL. I say we just leave. What are they gonna do?

SAMANTHA. They're gonna fail us. That's what they're gonna do.

CAL. So?

TUCKER. I'm sure it doesn't matter to you. You're already failing.

CAL. Proud of it.

ANNE. Can somebody just confess to it?

(Pause.)

CAL. Oh it was me. Just kidding.

TUCKER. You think this is a joke?

CAL. Pretty much, yeah.

BRANDON. They can't do it. Think how bad it would look for the school. A whole class fails? A bunch of us don't graduate?

ASHLEY. It's not gonna look bad for the school, Brandon. Everyone's gonna be like—thank God somebody has standards. They're gonna think this was great.

TUCKER. Anybody gonna admit to it?

CAL. I bet it was you.

TUCKER. Why would I cheat? I've already got an A in here.

CAL. All the more reason to cheat to keep your grade up.

You're the Lance Armstrong of this class.

SAMANTHA. Why don't we try and figure it out?

ANGEL. How 'bout you shut up?

SAMANTHA. Not helpful.

ANGEL. What are you gonna do about it?

SAMANTHA. Oh that's real mature, Angel. Let's threaten to fight people.

ANGEL. Did you take that as a threat? I just want you to shut up and sit down.

SAMANTHA. Did you cheat on the test?

ANGEL. Why should I tell you?

SAMANTHA. Did you cheat on the test?

ANGEL. Did *you* cheat on the test?

SAMANTHA. Obviously, I didn't.

ANGEL. What's that mean?

TUCKER. All right, quiet.

ANGEL. You think you're better than me or something?

SAMANTHA. When was the last time you passed a test?

ANGEL. Like I care about the test. You're the one who cares. You're the one who probably cheated.

TUCKER. All right, enough! Let's think this through. We know that at least one person cheated. We know that they know who the cheaters are. Or at least who one of them is. All they want us to do is to get that person to admit that they're guilty. Easy.

SAMANTHA. And since whoever it is isn't confessing, we need to figure it out.

TUCKER. We need to think about evidence and motive. Who had a motive to cheat and who had the ability to cheat? And who would keep silent about it?

CAL. Maybe the guy leading the investigation should be the one to be questioned first.

TUCKER. Fine, fire away.

BRANDON. What was your grade in this class?

TUCKER. 96.

BRANDON. What did you have to lose if you failed this test?

TUCKER. Nothing.

BRANDON. You don't have a scholarship?

TUCKER. Sure—but if I got a zero it might drop me to a C. That's about it. I wasn't going to fail the class. Face it, I had no reason to cheat. The only people with a reason are people on the edge. Like you.

SAMANTHA. Tucker's right. No one with an A needed to cheat.

CAL. Maybe you got A's by cheating in the first place and this time you got caught.

TUCKER. I've got an idea. People who had A's over here. B's here. C's here. Failing kids over there.*

*(*If your school uses D's, you can have a smaller D group of CAL and KAYLEE. If your school does not use D's, then lump all of them together.*

Some of the STUDENTS get up to move.)

MADISON. Who put you in charge?

TUCKER. I put me in charge. Now move it.

(They separate into four groups.

A's: TUCKER, SAMANTHA, MADISON and ANNE.

B's: JAMISON, MICHAEL, BRANDON and ASHLEY.

C's: MELANIE, YANINA, NATHANIEL and JOSÉ.

D's and F's: ANGEL, CAL, TONYA and KAYLEE.)

ANGEL. Can I just say that this is really stupid?

SAMANTHA. I'm noticing that the people who like to complain are the people who are failing the class.

KAYLEE. I didn't say anything.

TONYA. Whatever.

TUCKER. All right—so let's do this logically. People who had A's aren't the cheaters. People who had B's might have had something to gain. People with C's are trying not to fail.

CAL. People with F's don't care.

BRANDON. That's not fair. I bet Kaylee cared. She's probably just too stupid to do anything about it.

KAYLEE. What the heck, Brandon? I didn't say anything to you.

SAMANTHA. OK you two, shut up.

BRANDON. Look who's tough all of a sudden.

ASHLEY. Would you be quiet, Brandon?

TUCKER. I just thought of something. What if the cheater has been cheating all along?

CAL. That's what I'm saying! So obviously it's not anybody over here because we've been doing a terrible job of it.

SAMANTHA. So you're saying that if someone's in a group and they don't belong in that group, then they might be the cheater?

TUCKER. Yeah.

MADISON. Wait, what?

ANNE. He's saying that if you're stupid and you're still getting an A, you might be the cheater.

BRANDON. Then it's clearly Tucker.

TUCKER. What's your grade, Brandon? 85?

BRANDON. So?

TUCKER. How much studying do you do?

BRANDON. Eighteen hours a night.

SAMANTHA. Just answer the question, Brandon.

BRANDON. Are you guys like the cops now?

CAL. Last semester you were failing.

BRANDON. So now I have a B. So what?

TUCKER. You suddenly figure everything out?

ASHLEY. Brandon copied off me last test!

BRANDON. Are you kidding me?!

ASHLEY. You did! I know you did!

BRANDON. I copied like two answers.

ASHLEY. You were looking over at my paper!

BRANDON. I happened to glance at your paper! Like you never looked at anyone's test!

ASHLEY. I don't cheat!

BRANDON. That's a lie!

SAMANTHA. How do you know that?

ASHLEY. He's just making stuff up to save himself.

BRANDON. Ashley copies off Samantha. I've seen her do it.

SAMANTHA. This is crazy.

BRANDON. She sits right behind you. She copies your answers.

ASHLEY. You're such a jerk.

SAMANTHA. Is that true?

ASHLEY. A couple of times. But not on this test.

TUCKER. All right, wait a minute—so both of you cheated?
We've got two past cheaters.

BRANDON. I didn't cheat on this test.

SAMANTHA. So all the other tests you cheated on, but not this one.

ASHLEY. Guys—they're not going to go ballistic because someone looked over someone else's shoulder. They're crazy angry because somebody got all the answers from somewhere else. They violated the whole system. That's why they're mad. It wasn't one of us. It was somebody lower down. Who had the most to gain? All the people who were about to fail.

SAMANTHA. So not the people who had been cheating so much that they had decent grades?

ASHLEY. I'm not as smart as you, OK? I need a little help. It's not fair that you get to have all the right answers and the rest of us don't.

SAMANTHA. That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

CAL. She said she wasn't as smart as you.

TUCKER. All right—we'll come back to you. (*Moves over to the C group.*) Yanina. What's your grade?

YANINA. C.

TUCKER. How long have you been in this country?

ANGEL. Are you kidding me?!

KAYLEE. Let her answer the question!

TUCKER. How long have you been in this country?

YANINA. One year.

TUCKER. And you're getting a C?

SAMANTHA. Tucker—

TUCKER. What? She barely speaks English.

YANINA. I study hard.

TUCKER. Uh-huh.

CAL. There's no way Yanina's the cheater. She doesn't have any friends.

SAMANTHA. Oh that's nice.

CAL. What? It's true. Whoever cheated had help. And—

(They all stop as MR. ABRAMSON enters.)

MR. ABRAMSON. The following students come to the front of the room: Melanie. Yanina. Nathaniel. José. Bring your things.

(The four of them get up and go to the front.)

MR. ABRAMSON *(cont'd)*. We've determined that you are innocent. You are free to go after you do one thing:

(MR. LEWIS hands them scraps of paper)

MR. ABRAMSON *(cont'd)*. Write down the name of one person you saw cheat. Once you put a name down, you can go.

CAL. Oh come on!

MR. LEWIS *(to the kids in front)*. Don't worry. They won't know it was you.

(The four STUDENTS at the front are writing down names.)

MR. LEWIS *(cont'd)*. Thank you. Goodbye.

NATHANIEL. Um—is it OK if—

MR. LEWIS. Goodbye.

(They leave. MR. LEWIS looks at the notes silently.)

MR. LEWIS *(cont'd)*. Anne. Come up here please.

ANNE. I didn't do it!

MR. LEWIS. Come up here.

ANNE. Are you kidding me? They wrote down my name?

MR. LEWIS. Why would you think they wrote down your name? I just said for you to come here.

ANNE *(gets her things and comes to the front)*. Can I go?

MR. LEWIS. I'm going to need to talk to you in the other room.

(MR. LEWIS and ANNE exit.)

TUCKER. It was her?

MR. ABRAMSON. All right, class. We've had enough diversions and we've given you enough time. Is anyone else ready to name one of the cheaters?

TUCKER. We're still working on it. Nobody has confessed yet.

MR. ABRAMSON. I don't think anyone's intending to confess, Tucker. I think the people who know who the cheaters are will have to tell us. Anyone?

(Quiet. BRANDON and ASHLEY are sweating bullets.)

MR. ABRAMSON *(cont'd)*. Samantha?

SAMANTHA. What?

MR. ABRAMSON. Has anyone been copying off your test?

SAMANTHA. I don't know.

MR. ABRAMSON. Are you sure you don't know? Because if you say that and you're lying to me, then you're just as guilty. And you know what's going to happen to you? You're going to receive a zero in this course. You won't get credit for it. You won't graduate. You'll lose your scholarship. So let me ask you again, and I want you to think real hard about this: Do you know of someone who's been copying off your test?

(Pause. MR. ABRAMSON waits.)

SAMANTHA *(quietly)*. Ashley.

ASHLEY. You can't say that! I didn't cheat on this—!

MR. ABRAMSON. Ashley, come here.

ASHLEY. Brandon's been doing it too! Brandon copied off me!

MR. ABRAMSON. Both of you.

BRANDON. But—