

up for **DISCUSSION**

EXCEPTION TO THE **RULE**

BEFORE THE SHOW

INSPIRATION

"Education is often structured to say, I'm going to teach you this thing and thus you will become better, smarter, faster, etc." says playwright Dave Harris in his interview. In what ways does this quote resonate with your experience as a student? In what ways have you been set up to succeed? What "rules" have been in place throughout your educational journey?

DETENTION

What did, or does, "discipline" look like in your school? Review the article "Shifting School Culture." How do you think educational institutions should approach discipline? Why do you think those methods would be beneficial?

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

How is the language you use with your friends different from the language you use with your parents? What about teachers, peers, or co-workers? In what ways does language influence our interactions, not only on what we mean, but how we communicate it?

AFTER THE SHOW

PACING

Pacing can refer to the speed in which the plot of a story moves or the tempo of the dialogue in a play. Playwrights and directors pay close attention to pace when writing and staging a new work. What did you notice about the pacing of this play? How did the pacing of this play affect the story?

ENDINGS

Throughout the play, all the characters are waiting for Mr. Bernie. What do you think Mr. Bernie symbolizes in this story? How did you interpret the ending of the play?

PORCH KIDS/STREET KIDS

In the stage directions of his play, Harris writes, "There are two types of teenager in this world: Porch Kids and Street Kids. The Porch Kids never leave their porch. As such, they are shielded from most of what goes on around them, though they see it. From the safety of their home, they watch but don't participate. The Street Kids venture away from the insides of their home. They become immersed in the world that they are necessarily a part of. Erika is a Porch Kid." What did you notice about Erika's presence in detention in comparison to the other characters? What did you notice about her that differentiates her from the other characters? How did she change throughout the play?

TRAPPED

In the play, Abdul says, "We in trouble, we carry trouble, trouble gonna be where trouble gonna be." What do you think he meant by this phrase? Why do you think he said this to Erika? What changed in the play the moment that the school "closed" and how did it make you feel?