

The Hunt For Aiken Drum

A play for youth casts

by Jonathan Whiteside

Spotlight Publications

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The Hunt for Aiken Drum

CAST (in order of appearance)

Hamish (Nick) He is the oldest of the kids and so the leader of their gang, he is stubborn and a mild bully.

Valerie (Val) Oldest girl and really the gang's leader. She's fairly bossy, but is nicer than Nick.

Katie The youngest and most naive of the group, but she has a mouth on her like the Clyde tunnel.

Connor A year older than Katie, he's hyperactive and does not have a lot of common sense. He is not allowed anything remotely close to sugar.

Floyd An English kid on holiday in Galloway with his parents. He is quite polite and also very shy, not used to having friends.

Auld Jock He tells the kids the story and is an older man of about 80. He speaks in a broad Scotch accent and carries a stick.

Girl 1 & Girl 2 Mistaken for the real Brownie of Bladnoch, these little girls are caught in the kids' trap. They cry a lot.

Girl 3 Replacement for Girl 2 when she annoys the writer.

Aiken Drum The real Brownie of Bladnoch. He is a horrible creature covered in thick brown hair.

Please note that an older boy is required for the part of Auld Jock.

Scenes

Scene 1: A park

Scene 2: A bus to Bladnoch

Scene 3: The woods near Bladnoch

Scene 4: Woods near Bladnoch, later

Setting Galloway, a town to begin with then the area around Bladnoch. It's set in the present day during the summer holidays.

PROPERTIES

A hand held tape player, a lunch box, a jacket, a sweet, several worms, a blanket, some rope, a gag, a large stick, some smaller sticks, a stuffed pigeon, a walking stick, a book on English history, a packet of 'Jammie Dodgers', a piece of paper and camping equipment.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The character of **Floyd** can be changed to **Emily** if there are not enough male actors. However, all the other characters should remain in their given gender even if they are being played by the opposite gender. Also **Aiken Drum** should be listed as **Andy** in the program so as not to spoil the ending.

The story Auld Jock tells is based on "Aiken Drum - The Brownie of Bladnoch" from "Tales of Galloway" by Alan Temperley.

Scene 1

The play opens with the song 'New Slang' by the Shins, a song about accepting someone for who they are, the play's underlying theme at times

The curtain opens on a blackout with wind howling ominously

*Then **Val** is heard shouting "Stop it!" to which the SFX abruptly stop and the lights blink on*

They reveal a park with two benches dragged together CSR, a third CSL and a turned over bin UPSC

***Nick**, **Val** and **Katie** sit at the benches, **Nick** holding a hand held tape player, **Katie** with her lunch box and a jacket her mother has forced her to take in case it snows in July. SL sitting on a third bench is **Floyd**, who is eating some sandwiches and reading a book on English history*

Nick (answering **Val**) Why?

Val Because I hate that stupid sound effect stuff.

Nick Well I like it.

He presses a button on the tape player and the wind howls again, then he presses another button and a cow moos

Katie What is it?

Nick It's a magical box that has all of these things trapped inside it, like wind, (*we hear the wind*) toilets, (*we hear the toilet flushing*) and dogs (*we hear a dog barking*). And you're lucky I've caught them in this machine as some of the monsters in here are so horrible that even I was scared to catch them.

Katie What kind of monsters?

Nick Lots of them, ones that roar (*we hear a lion roaring*), ones that laugh (*we hear a cackle*) and ones that lie (*we hear a snippet of the Prime Minister talking*).

Katie Stop it Nick! I don't like them. (*She hides under her jacket*)

Val Don't be stupid, Katie, he's having you on.

Nick No I'm not! I would never lie about a thing as serious as monsters! Right, Katie?

Katie Yeah, if Nick says he can catch things with his magic box then he can!

Val No he can't, he's lyin' through his teeth.

Nick I am not!

Val Well then prove it. Catch me in your magic box.

Nick (*looking confused*) Well, I can't because...umm -

Katie You are lying! (*She hits him with her lunchbox*) You shouldn't lie, it's bad! My mummy says if you lie you go to the bad place with Satan who will bite off your ears and play hopscotch with your eyes and then you get eaten by lots and lots of giraffes, so you will! *And -*

Nick Aye and that's why your mummy's in the Nut House.

Val (*smacking him on the back of the head*) Leave her mum out of this, besides she's back home now, right, Katie?

Katie Right she's goin' to the antiseptics anonymous classes now too, so she won't have anymore serieses.

Nick Have any more whats?

Val She means an episode, not a series.

As Katie says this next speech Connor creeps or crawls on SL behind the benches holding some horrible looking sweets. Floyd tries to stop himself from laughing whilst all of this is happening as he can see Connor but the others can't

Katie I knew it had something to do with the telly. Anyway I know there isn't any monsters no more, I saw the Ghostbusters and in it they caught them all!

Nick That's just a film though, it's not real, just most monsters only come out when we're asleep. You don't get any durin' the day.

As he says this Connor jumps up behind them screaming "Booga Booga!" and both Val and Nick jump in the air but only Nick squeals like a girl. Katie remains seated and unfazed. Floyd laughs uncontrollably

Katie Hello Connor, what you doing down there?

Connor I'm Batman! Raaar! I can fly!

He runs around the stage twice then falls over. Val and Nick sit back down

Val I thought you weren't allowed sweets?

Nick Yeah, not since that time in the church with Christmas tree and the Minister's wife?

Connor I escaped from mum and found this on the ground, some big boys dropped it. But it's still good.

He wolfs the rest of it down and runs upstage to the upturned bin where he begins digging. Katie notices Floyd

Katie Who's that laughing at you, Nick? He's new! Do you think he's an Americaner! I heard from my mummy that they live in big cars and eat chickens whole! And, and, and they shoot people when they're playing football! *And -*

Val Wheesht Katie! And I think he's English.

Nick Laugh at me will he, I'll show that little son of a goat! (*He stands up and strides over to Floyd*) Hey you! Captain English! Were you laughing at me?

Floyd No...um, sorry, I just thought it was funny.

Nick Well I didn't, and people who laugh at me usually end up like Sherlock Holmes.

Floyd What? (*Slight pause as he thinks*) Fictional?

Nick No...um dead, at least I thought he was dead?

Val He's not real, stupid! (*Very sarcastic*) Way to scare him though, he won't laugh at you again.

Katie My mummy says that not even Sherlock Holmes could've helped find my Granny's purse when she thought she lost it in the butchers but it was really under her glasses case in her handbag all the time and the police said that you can be fined for wasting time so I never do.

Val Katie, go and stop Connor from eating those worms would you?

During this little speech of Katie's, Connor has been digging furiously behind the bin and is indeed about to eat some worms

Katie Okay!

Val Sorry 'bout that. Hi, I'm Valerie, but you can call me Val.
Floyd (*shyly*) Um, hi, I'm Floyd.
Nick What? We're being friends with Captain English here?!
Val Yes, and you'll do it just so I forget about your girly little scream.
Nick Fine.

*He goes and helps a struggling **Katie** to relieve the worms from **Connor**'s hand*

Val That was Hamish.
Floyd Uh, but I'm sure I heard you call him Nick?
Val Aye Nick, short for Hamish. And that's Katie and Connor.
Floyd I see.
Val So where are you from, Floyd?
Floyd I'm from Bath.
Nick (*coming across pushing a worm-free **Connor** in front of him*) You live in a bath? You don't look that poor.
Connor I hate baths! They make me smell clean, yuck!
Floyd No it's a town in England, it's just called Bath.
Val Why are you up here?
Floyd I'm on holiday with my parents.
Katie Where's your brothers and sisters? Did your mummy and daddy put them in kennels like they do with dogs and cats? I think it'd be fun to live there, it'd be like a little town for cats and dogs!
Floyd I don't really have any brothers or sisters.
Connor Everyone does!
Val You don't.
Connor 'Cept for Andy.
Katie Who's that?
Connor My friend, but he's invistable.
Nick You're nuts, Connor.
Val Connor, no one's invisible.
Connor I know, I made it up. But Andy's real, and he lives in the moon!
Nick (*pushing him off the bench*) Shut up, Connor, you're doin' my head in.

The Hunt for Aiken Drum

A lively play for youth groups (8 to 12 year-olds) involving a group of children, a man called Auld Jock, some Brownies, and a local monster. A mixed cast of five boys and six girls (other permutations are possible)

Plot Summary

A bunch of kids meet Auld Jock who spins them a fantastic tale about Aiken Drum. This local monster, the 'Brownie of Bladnoch', hasn't been seen for a hundred years, but Jock gives them directions on where to see it. One of the kids, Connor, is convinced he's already seen it ...

Approx. 35 minutes

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