



presents...

“The Return Of The Hall Monitor”

By Dominic DeFreeze

About the Author

Citizen, playwright, and aspiring Medal of Honor recipient, Dominic DeFreeze has lived his entire life in the small town of Dover. Almost all of his time at Garfield Middle School has been defined by his loyal service to the student body. Dominic is proud to present his debut written work, “The Return Of The Hall Monitor.”

Scene 1: The Severe Weather Drill

Narrator: *On a cool and windy morning at James A. Garfield Middle School, eighth grader Dominic DeFreeze strolls into his homeroom. Brave, independent, and handsome, Dominic considers himself something of a lone wolf within the wilds of Garfield Middle. Intimidated by his distinguished record of service as hall monitor, most of Dominic’s classmates keep a respectful distance. Still, he’s managed to be on friendly enough terms with a few of the kids who sit by him, plus his teacher, Mrs. Frangipane.*

Dominic: *Morning, all. (He nods to Mrs. Frangipane, a girl named Erica, and a small, quiet boy known as Lil’ Pop-Tart.)*

Mrs. Frangipane: *Good morning, Dominic. Eat quick, we have the severe weather drill this morning, remember?*



Characters

Dominic
Narrator
Mrs. Frangipane
Erica
Principal Wade
Lil’ Pop-Tart



Narrator: *Dominic slips out of his windbreaker and drapes it over the back of his chair. He tosses a pack of fruit snacks on his desk and eases into his seat. Taking a swig of chocolate milk, he notices two rain drops ping the window pane.*

Dominic: Didn't have too many severe weather drills in elementary school, did ya, Lil' Pop-Tart? Don't want to frighten the youngsters.

Narrator: *Lil' Pop-Tart is really smart. So smart they moved him all the way up to eighth grade right after first. They call him Lil' Pop-Tart because that's what he had for breakfast on his first day of middle school.*

Dominic: Don't worry, I'll show you the ropes.

Erica: You're not responsible for Lil' Pop-Tart, Dominic. You're not the hall monitor anymore. You were fired.

Narrator: *Dominic takes a long, cold look at Erica.*

Dominic: For your information, madam, I was not fired. I retired.

Erica: The custodian mopped up some spilt chocolate milk, and you forgot to put out one of those yellow wet floor signs. A sixth grader slipped and fractured her pelvis. You were fired.

Narrator: *Dominic winces at the taste of chocolate milk on his tongue.*

Dominic: *(eyes squeezed shut)* I was patrolling the other end of the school at the time of the incident. The young woman's parents and doctors agreed it was not my fault. I happened to conclude my service to the school that very same week. I retired.

Erica: Fired.

Dominic: Retired!

Mrs. Frangipane: *(lifting her gaze from her computer)* Hey! Settle down over there. They're going to start the severe weather drill soon. We need to be able to hear the announcements.

Narrator: *She keeps scrolling as her gaze returns to her screen. Everyone knows that during homeroom while everyone is eating breakfast, Mrs. Frangipane loves to research parts for her beloved Kawasaki motorcycle.*

Dominic: Ignore Erica, Lil' Pop-Tart. Just stick with me. All ya gotta do is sit criss-cross-applesauce against the lockers and cover your head. These things usually take about five minutes. It'll be over before ya know it.

Narrator: *A severed branch suddenly smacks into the window pane, making Dominic and the rest of the class jump. The wind howls. A flurry of rain spatters the glass.*

Dominic: Mrs. Frangipane, are we sure this is a drill? It's starting to look worrisome out there.

Mrs. Frangipane: *(still scrolling)* Don't sweat it, Dominic. You're not the hall monitor anymore. Remember, bud?

Principal Wade: *(over the PA)* Attention teachers and students, we will now begin today's severe weather drill. Homeroom teachers, please lead your students to your designated secure location.

Dominic: Okay, people! Single file!

Mrs. Frangipane: *(placing a hand on Dominic's shoulder)* At ease, soldier. I'll take it from here. Into the hallway, everybody!

Erica: *(chuckling as she passes Dominic)* Fired.

Dominic: Retired.

Lil' Pop-Tart: *(on his way out the door, looking from Dominic to Erica and back to Dominic)* Fired.



Questions

What do you think really happened to Dominic's hall monitor career? Was he fired or did he retire? Why do you say so?

Scene 2: Kawasaki Surprise

Mrs. Frangipane: That's it, Lil' Pop-Tart. I'm the line leader. Follow me, pal. Just like in elementary.

Narrator: *Mrs. Frangipane leads her class into the hallway. Lil' Pop-Tart is as brilliant as any kid at Garfield Middle School, but sometimes he gets panicky on days like today, when a wrench gets thrown in the routine.*



Characters

Dominic
Narrator
Mrs. Frangipane
Erica
Mr. Trusk
Lil' Pop-Tart
Principal Wade



Lil' Pop-Tart: *(muttering)* Mrs. Frangipane, line leader.

Narrator: *The students sit down in a row against the lockers. When Lil' Pop-Tart tries to stay standing next to Mrs. Frangipane, Erica gets up and guides him to his spot on the floor. Confused, Lil' Pop-Tart anxiously watches Mrs. Frangipane stroll toward the window at the end of the hallway. The whistling wind and aggressive patter of rain are not helping to keep him calm.*

Erica: Teachers can stay standing, Lil' Pop-Tart. We've got to sit.

Mrs. Frangipane: *(calling to Mr. Trusk, another teacher)* Hey, it's getting pretty bad out there! Are we sure this is a drill?

Dominic: *(arms crossed, leaning against a locker)* Gee, what an interesting thought. I believe I've heard that question somewhere before...

Principal Wade: *(over the PA)* Attention teachers and students, at this time we will begin to shelter in place. Remember, this is only a drill. This. Is only. A drill.

Dominic: Hands over heads, people!

Mrs. Frangipane: Dominic! Let us handle it.

Mr. Trusk: Quiet, everybody! We've got to take attendance.

Narrator: *Mr. Trusk starts calling his roll while Mrs. Frangipane pats her pockets.*

Mrs. Frangipane: Horseradish, I forgot the roster. *(She starts toward her classroom.)*

Lil' Pop-Tart: *(muttering)* Mrs. Frangipane, line leader. *(He stands up, trying to follow his teacher back into the classroom. Mrs. Frangipane freezes.)*

Mrs. Frangipane: Dominic, could you run into the classroom and grab the roster? There should be one on my desk.

Erica: It's the hall monitor's return to duty!

Mrs. Frangipane: I mean, I wouldn't go that far. *(Everyone snickers.)*

Erica: I hope he doesn't slip up! *(More snickering.)*

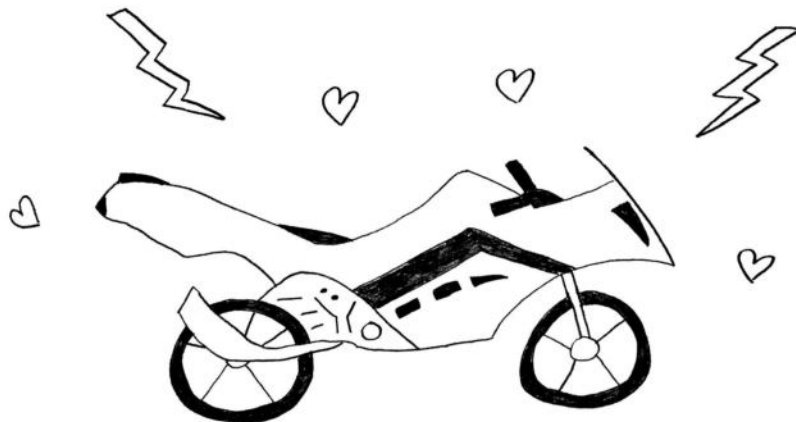
Narrator: *His pride shaken but not shattered, Dominic rises from his place on the floor. In retirement as in active duty, his deep sense of responsibility outweighs his personal pride. He nods to Mrs. Frangipane, his commanding officer, on his way toward the classroom. He notices a yellow caution sign leaning against a closet at the intersection. He winces. A sharp flashback of spilt chocolate milk and a tottering sixth grader. Back in the classroom, he refocuses and gets to work at the teacher's desk.*

Dominic: Roster, roster. Where are you, class roster?

Narrator: *Shuffling some papers, Dominic notices the screen open on Mrs. Frangipane's desktop. A blog called "Kawasaki Fanatics" with pictures of neon-colored motorcycles like Mrs. Frangipane's. Dominic feels a wave of frustration. "Really? On severe weather drill day?" he thinks. Then a branch smacks against the window.*

Dominic: *(shrieking)* Sweet Miranda!

Narrator: *He inches toward the window and peers out. Through the swirling rain, he can see Mrs. Frangipane's Kawasaki in the parking lot. It's on its side, and a massive tree branch is intertwined in its engine. Orange sparks are spitting at the concrete.*



Dominic: *(sprinting into the hallway)* Mrs. Frangipane!!! Your motorcycle!!!

Mrs. Frangipane: *(head snapping toward the window)* Horseradish!!! *(She darts down the hallway.)*

Lil' Pop-Tart: Mrs. Frangipane, line leader. *(He gets up and runs after Mrs. Frangipane.)*

Erica: Lil' Pop-Tart, come back!

Mr. Trusk: *(at the window)* She's already outside! *(All of the students stand up and join him.)*

Erica: What is she doing? Who cares about the stupid motorcycle? She's going to get struck by lightning.

Dominic: Where's Lil' Pop-Tart? Does anyone have eyes on Lil' Pop-Tart?

Mr. Trusk: It really is a nice motorcycle...

Erica: Seriously, where is Lil' Pop-Tart?

Narrator: *Holding their breath, they all stare out the window, squinting through the downpour, waiting to see Lil' Pop-Tart appear. But he doesn't.*

Dominic: He must have gotten lost somewhere along the way. We've got to do something.

Narrator: *Suddenly, a massive clap of thunder and a brilliant flash. A bolt of lightning strikes a giant oak tree across the parking lot. The smoldering tree falls straight toward the window.*

Dominic and Erica and Mr. Trusk: Look out!!!



Questions

Why does Mrs. Frangipane go outside?
Why does Lil' Pop-Tart?

Scene 3: Back In Action

Narrator: *Everyone scampers away from the window just in time. The tree crashes through the glass, sending shards, water, and leaves into the hallway. Chaos ensues.*

Mr. Trusk: QUIET!!! I NEED EVERYBODY QUIET!!!

Narrator: *Out of breath, Principal Wade and an assistant principal arrive on the scene. One gives an order into a walkie talkie while the other tries to corral the students.*

Principal Wade and Mr. Trusk: QUIET!!!

Narrator: *Amidst the chaos, Dominic stares for a moment at the shattered window. Then he straightens up and calmly approaches Principal Wade.*

Dominic: Good morning, madam. Dominic DeFreeze, eighth grader and retired hall monitor. I'd like to offer my assis—

Principal Wade: *(catching her breath and waving her arms)* Not now, Dominic. Just go to your teacher, please.

Dominic: I regret to inform you my teacher has fled the premises. I am, however, willing to offer my services during this emerg—

Principal Wade: EVERYONE!!! PLEASE, SETTLE DOWN!!!

Dominic: Madam, I must also make you aware of an ongoing investigation. Missing student. The subject's name? Lil' Pop-Tart. Brown hair, short build, glasses. He was last seen approximately five minutes ago, following Mrs. Frangipane outside—

Narrator: *But Principal Wade runs after two students approaching the shattered window. Dominic finds Mr. Trusk.*

Dominic: You keep an eye on things here, Trusk. I'm going after Lil' Pop-Tart.

Mr. Trusk: Can you help me get everyone into my classroom, Dominic? I need all the help I can—

Script 1

Characters

Dominic
Narrator
Erica
Mr. Trusk
Principal Wade



Dominic: *(grabbing Mr. Trusk's collar with both hands)* Listen to me, Trusk. Lil' Pop-Tart is missing, and I am going to find him.

Erica: *(appearing next to Dominic)* I'm going with you.

Narrator: *Mr. Trusk studies Dominic. He can see the fiery determination in his eyes. He knows it can only be extinguished once the job at hand is complete.*

Mr. Trusk: *(whispering)* Be careful.

Dominic: *(releasing the collar)* Thanks, Trusk.

Narrator: *Dominic marches toward the stairwell, Erica following closely behind him.*

Mr. Trusk: *(calling)* And DeFreeze? Good luck.



Dominic: Yet another classmate I've inspired into service with my leadership. You'll make a decent lieutenant, Erica.

Erica: *(rolling her eyes)* Let's just find Lil' Pop-Tart.

Dominic: Already on it. Let's give the little fella a call. *(He reaches inside his pocket for his phone.)*

Erica: Really? Lil' Pop-Tart doesn't have a cell phone yet. He's seven, remember? Besides, there's no service. The storm must have knocked it out.

Narrator: *As Dominic repockets his phone, the hallway lights begin to flicker. Dominic and Erica can hear muffled yelps from nearby classrooms.*

Principal Wade: *(over the PA)* All students should be in their homerooms at this time. Again, all students should be in their homerooms at this time.

Narrator: *The hallway lights go out completely. The yelps become full-on screams.*

Dominic: *(whispering)* No problemo. The lights went out this one time last year when I was patrolling during a basketball game.

Narrator: *They tiptoe onward through the darkness.*

Dominic: This other time in elementary school, a first grader got lost on his way back from the bathroom. I helped him get back to class.

Narrator: *Erica slows down just a little.*

Erica: You really liked being hall monitor, huh?

Dominic: I did.

Narrator: *They turn a corner and come to an abandoned hallway. They can see a puddle of water shimmering at the far end. A yellow caution sign stands in front of the puddle like a night watchman. Dominic gasps.*

Dominic: Let's go a different way.

Erica: But this way is quickest.

Narrator: *A horrifying flashback is spinning inside Dominic's mind. A puddle of chocolate milk. A slipping sixth grader. A yellow caution sign left folded in the custodial closet.*

Dominic: I said let's go a different way!

Narrator: *In silence, they tiptoe down a few more dark hallways until finally reaching a door that leads outside. They push it open and the storm spits at them like some angry sea serpent. The wind wants to keep the door open, but they manage to slam it shut. Suddenly they are left alone in the elements. Shielding their eyes, they can make out the white flagpole across the parking lot, swaying among the gusts. But instead of a flag, they see the shape of a tiny boy, clinging to the flag's clip by the velcro straps of his sneakers.*

Dominic and Erica: Lil' Pop-Tart!!!



Question

What are some of Dominic's memories from his days as hall monitor?

Scene 4: Return

Dominic: Hang on, Lil' Pop-Tart! I'm on my way!

Narrator: *Before Erica can stop him, Dominic is shimmying up the flagpole. With the confidence and skill of a Navy SEAL, he bounds up the pole, tucks Lil' Pop-Tart under his arm, unhooks the velcro, and slides back down to safety. Enthralled, impressed, inspired, Erica stares at Dominic like he's a movie star. But our hero remains humble.*



Characters

Narrator
Dominic
Erica
Mrs. Frangipane
Principal Wade
Lil' Pop-Tart
Mr. Trusk



Dominic: It's nothing. I've been up the pole a time or two before. The flag got stuck a lot last year.

Narrator: *Erica is refocused by the sight of a shadowy, rain-soaked figure lumbering toward them.*

Erica: Mrs. Frangipane!

Mrs. Frangipane: *(shouting through the storm)* Have no fear, kids! The bike will be fine! A little banged up, but nothing my Kawasaki guy can't handle! Back inside!

Narrator: *Back in the hallway, they slick back their hair and wring out handfuls of loose clothing, the water dripping to the floor in tiny pats. But Dominic's movement is restricted. Lil' Pop-Tart has clung to his right leg like a toddler waiting for a ride.*

Erica: Come on, Lil' Pop-Tart. We've got to get back.

Narrator: *But Lil' Pop-Tart doesn't budge. So they start back toward their homeroom hallway, Dominic heaving his right leg to accommodate his tiny passenger. Erica and Mrs. Frangipane are a few yards ahead, and Dominic can only make out pieces of what they are saying.*

Erica: ...climb so fast...

Mrs. Frangipane: ...new spark plug...easy fix...

Erica: ...Navy SEAL...

Mrs. Frangipane: ...minor structural damage...

Erica: ...so impressive.

Narrator: *Dominic can't help but feel his mouth curve into a grin. He gears up for another swing of his right leg but stops himself. Erica and Mrs. Frangipane have stopped, and they are both looking back at him. They've arrived at the hallway with the yellow caution sign. Chocolate milk, flailing limbs, and cries of pain fill Dominic's head and his grin becomes a grimace.*

Erica: Dominic, it's okay. We can go around.

Dominic: (eyes squeezed shut) No.

Mrs. Frangipane: ...Dominic? Are you okay?

Narrator: *Memories of chocolate milk and idle wet floor signs swirl in Dominic's mind like the storm clouds outside. But he remembers Erica's words. They are blue skies. He feels Lil' Pop-Tart's tiny fingers clawing into his calf. They are sunshine.*



Dominic: No. We press onward. Lil' Pop-Tart, hold on tight.

Narrator: *Dominic heaves his right leg and charges down the hallway.*

Dominic and Lil' Pop-Tart: AAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Narrator: *Safely on the other side of the yellow caution sign, Dominic looks back at it as he catches his breath.*

Mrs. Frangipane: That was very dangerous, Dominic. Didn't you see the wet floor sign?

Dominic: (still catching his breath) I saw it. I saw it, and I conquered it.

Narrator: *Arriving back at the homeroom hallway, the returning champions are greeted with cheers and applause from students and staff alike.*

Principal Wade: *(extending her hand)* That was some impressive work back there, DeFreeze. I'm sorry I underestimated you. Any chance I can talk you into coming out of retirement?

Narrator: *A mass of classmates swarms our hero, and he feels on his back their pats of gratitude. He stares at Principal Wade's hand for an extra second. Then he finally shakes it.*

Dominic: I never retired, madam. I was fired. But now I believe I am back.

Narrator: *The crowd goes bananas.*

Lil' Pop-Tart: Rehired.

Erica: Rehired.

Mrs. Frangipane and Mr. Trusk and Principal Wade: Rehired.

Dominic: *(grasping the hands of his many admirers and friends)* Rehired.


THE END



Question

How does Dominic change from the beginning of the story to the end?