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Reflection on Participating in the 2016 Senior Play: *The Secrets in the Wings*

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Senior Play Reflection  
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When I watched the senior play *Black Comedy* in my freshman year, I was impressed by the amazing performance of school's brothers and sisters. Therefore, I made my resolution to participate in senior play once in my college life. Last year, I joined the property of senior play. Due to the nice memory of senior play, I plucked up my courage to attend the audition of senior play *The Secret in the Wings* in 2016 and fortunately I was one of the actresses ultimately.

I decided to take part in the audition was not because I am interested in acting originally but I enjoy performing under the spotlight and receiving applauses from the audience which can make me have a sense of achievement. The play *The Secret in the Wings* consists of several fairy tales. There are many characters in each fairy tale so that we had up to nine actors this time. Moreover, almost everyone had more than three characters in the play. I was in charge of the mother in the opening, third blind queens, royal dance couple, and singer. Being an actress was an exciting thing for me at first because I have never experienced before. However, the fact was always different from the wonderful imagination before; instead, I had encountered many difficulties during the practice of the play which made me depressed sometimes.

To begin with, the first difficulty was analyzing the script. To produce a good play or act well, it is quite important to analyze the script profoundly. This was difficult for me because I was not good at literature and analyzing the context though I had already taken the literature course. I had the difficulty in expressing my own viewpoints in public. I was nervous when we had the discussion about the play at first time. Even though I finished reading the script and understand the plot of story, I could not come up with the deeper meanings or symbols in each fairy tale. I failed to

figure out what concepts or main ideas that the playwriters wanted to convey through each fairy tale. The play was easy to understand but it had meaningful concepts in each story. We spent much time discussing with each other in our free time. In the beginning, I just paid attention to the discussion and took notes about what others said. After discussion and practice, I read the play again and the notes we have already discussed. I tried to think again and again in my mind and practicing speaking up my viewpoints at home. Additionally, I read many articles or researches related to the play which can help me understand more about the play. Whenever I had questions about the play, I searched for help from my peers. We discussed together and helped each other solve and figure out the confusing parts. Through brainstorming all the time, I was more familiar with the plot and deeper meaning hid in the fairy tales. Take the main lines in the play for example, the ogre kept asking “Will you marry me, Kristen?” In the beginning, we did not know ogre’s intention is. Why did he try hard to ask Kristen to marry him? What was the meaning behind the ogre’ words? After keeping discussing and sharing our viewpoints for a couple of weeks, we realized that ogre is the person who eagers to be loved. Whenever he finished telling a story, he would ask Kristen to marry him. He was eager to be loved. He revealed his personality and mind deeper and deeper via telling different stories. When realizing the symbolic meaning and details about the script, it was much easier for us to interpret the play. From this play, I have learned that how to analyze literature works word for word and find out the symbolic meaning or symbols in the context.

Secondly, the difficulty I encountered was acting. Acting is not as easy as I expected before. I felt confident at first because I thought I was outgoing and not afraid of being on stage. Nevertheless, saying is one thing, and doing is another. First of all, actors need to have the imagination of our own characters as on the basis of acting. After reading the script, we have come up with image of our own characters.

We had to be familiar with them, like what kinds of appearances or personalities they were. Before the practice, we kept asking ourselves whether we have seen our characters or not. In order to understand more about my characters, I wrote the autobiographies of my characters to help me get into the characters. Next, a good actor should have intention and motivation when doing the action. Even though there was no script in the play, we had to speak in our mind. Each action was important and meaning in the play. Although I learned and memorized the principles taught by director and advisor, it was difficult to perform when acting. Take my character mother in the opening for example, I remembered that I felt much pressure when the advisor taught us at the first time. In the play, the personality of the mother was crazy and a little bit irritable. Originally, I thought that I could portray this character well because I found some similarities among us. For instance, I am so crazy that I can do something stupid as well as exaggerated in public. But the truth was that when I got into the character, I could not act naturally. I felt like my voice and body were a little strained. Much to my disappointed, I could not interpret the character and act well even though the advisor kept directing us how to act for five hours or even more. I was wondering why I always felt embarrassed as I acted the mother on my way home. I thought that I was familiar with the character very much but actually I failed. To speak honestly, I just knew my character superficially without understanding more about her from my bottom of my heart. To some extent, I disagreed with her thoughts actions so I might feel awkward when interpreting this character. From then on, I decided to use mother's viewpoint to see different situations I encountered in my life. "If I were the mother, how would I react to the circumstance?" this kind of question began to appear in my mind in the following days. I tried to find more similarities among us and convinced me that I was the mother. Once I believed in myself and the character, I have utterly changed comparing to the past and become confident again

on the stage.

Since I have learned more about acting gradually, I felt joyful when practicing. However, the most challengeable part was acting with high heels. I have never tried high heels since I was born. As soon as I put on high heels, I forgot how to act because I worried about falling down. What's worse, I was not able to walk as usual once I put on high heels. To overcome the difficulty, I put on high heels to practice all the time and even kept practicing walking at home. Furthermore, I was lack of confidence and nervous when putting on high heels so I went to the park nearby my home and practiced walking and running with high heels and speaking the lines at the same time. Although I felt that my legs were exhausted and sore, I told myself not to give up easily and tomorrow would be fine. As the old saying goes, "practice makes perfect." After the senior play, many audience told me that you were suitable for this character which made us entertaining. My father also gave me positive comments. Since I have complained about acting with high heels at home and once told him that I felt frustrated to act, he was surprised by my improvement. He said, "I did not notice you in the beginning until you spoke." He thought that the one who walked well with high heels was absolutely not his daughter. To conclude, acting is not like an easy task I imagined before. Instead, an actor must spend lots of time getting along with the characters and believe in yourself. Moreover, finding the similarities between actor and the character is significant which can help actor get into the character easily. I have ever read an article about a promising movie actor in recent years. He mentioned "it is a bad acting when you are acting." in the article. The words were intriguing and tricky which made me think about the meaning again and again in my mind. The words seemed to be my inspiration during the practice and I wanted to connect them to my acting. After the end of the play, I realized that a good acting is once you enjoy every moment of acting. To put it simply, when you get into the character and believe

in yourselves, you will act naturally. The audience do not sense that you are acting. to sum up, I have learned more about what acting is and how to become a good actor due to senior play.

Lastly, this was the first time to work with many classmates and school brothers and sisters in my college life. The cast was up to nine people and the crew was even up to forty. That is, cooperation and communication played an important role this time. As actors, we talked to director or director assistants very often. If we have any problem, we should let them know first. I tended not to open my heart and share my feelings with others easily before. In the beginning of practice, it was difficult for me to point out the weakness of other actors directly when discussing our performance because I felt uncomfortable to say that. Plus, I thought I was not enough familiar with them to say something bad to them. Instead, I would tell them that how could they improve in person or through social networks. As time passed by, on the one hand, I knew more about other actors; on the other hand, I gradually used to give my point of view in public. Thus, I declined to point out the mistake or weakness bravely when practicing. There was no need to be shy or uncomfortable to say because we could only improve fast once we observed problems and revised them.

Thanks to senior play, I have made plenty of friends just as family members. We underwent good and bad things for several months and encouraged each other when encountering obstacles and adversity. We did not blame on each other when making mistake. Instead, we offered positive comments and help each other to become a good actor. Last but not least, it was my honor to experience the amazing journey with these guys in 2016. I am definitely proud of being part of the senior play *The Secret in the Wings* forever.