

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATION PROJECT 2017

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

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2016 Senior Play Reflection

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17 Jan 2017

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

In the senior play of 2016, *The Secrets in the Wings*, I participated as the leader of the property group. I was in the Property in the senior play in 2015 as well. That was the first time I participated in the play of our department. I learned a lot from last year, enjoying working with other students in our department. I had great time last year and I had decided at that time that I would join the senior play this year. Considering I had the experience in the property, I thought I could help this year so I chose the same group. There were four people in our group, including two seniors and two juniors. They were Lily Jan, Monica Ma, and Carol Tang. I had known Lily and Monica before but I was not so familiar with Carol. Yet, my group worked well and I was happy to have them in our group.

The work content as the group leader was not as simple as I had thought even though I had already thought that it was a difficult job. I always thought that my personality was not suitable to be a group leader. Being a group leader needs to be decisive, be good at communication, represent the whole group and assign people work, which was totally opposite to my personality. I do not like to bother people for help and I have problem of making decisions. I am not good at rejecting people. I like to postpone. As a result, it was a quite stressful job for me. I had to do my best and take care of my group members at the same time.

During the period of the beginning of preparation, Property had read the script and listed the properties that might be used in the play. There was a meeting with the director and the stage manager to discuss what properties were needed in the play and what weren't. According to the experience from last year, I learned that we had to confirm the color, size, and amount of the property. After confirming the list of property, I did job division and set up deadlines for bringing the properties to school. I visited to two theaters several times to see what they had and decided what to borrow. In the meeting of all crew, I presented my group's progress and asked people if they had several properties could lend us. My job also included tagging group members to read the information on Facebook and made sure my group members knew what they were going to do.

During the later stage of preparation, there were two important things my group had to achieve, moving stages and finding properties. Crew moved the stages to a classroom for the

actors and actresses to practice. The stages were really heavy and large. I was so surprised when we really moved those stages from the theater to the classroom near the front gate of the campus, which was five hundred meters or more away and on the second floor without an elevator. That was the time I started to believe the strength of unity and everything is possible. As for finding property, since our play was about fantasy, there were several things that were hardly to get from daily life, such as a gun for hunting and swords. Luckily, when chatting with a school sister, she suggested that I could borrow the gun from one of the crew who used to be a guard of honor when she was in high school. I encountered many difficulties which I could not imagine before I started to find properties. For example, I had never been to a cloth store before. I did not know how much could count as cheap. I did not know what unit the owner used. Glad that everything was solved in the end. Thanks to the owners of cloth stores, I successfully bought the required size, color, and style of cloth. The owners of cloth stores taught me how to buy cloth patiently. They also told me where I could get the kind of cloth that I needed to buy, which saved me a lot of time.

On the other hand, even though I did confirm the size, color and amount of the property, I still found it difficult when we were actually looking for it. Despite of the fact that I had asked the details, everything seemed to be so vague and not detailed enough. When I stood in front of rolls of cloth that all looked similar to me, I was wondering what “sea blue” cloth was like. To avoid buying the wrong things, I had asked the director many times to make sure I found the things she wanted.

Then, the week in the theater came. Crew moved the stages back and also moved the borrowed properties to the theater. We marked the location of the properties on stage. I made a table for what, when and where our group should use the properties. My group made the blue sofa into brown. We made paper scrap during our free time.

I still remembered the rehearsal before our first performance. It was the first and only rehearsal we had. I remembered how nervous I was and how chaotic the backstage was like. After the rehearsal, the professor was angry because he thought we were not ready and we were not taken senior play serious enough. Afterward, in the three days of official performance, all the people gradually became like a team. I believed that teacher’s words worked and we got more time practice to figure what problems we might encounter in the play. To think in the bright side, I appreciated that we still had one rehearsal. We took notes on the problems and fixed them before the official performance. In the rehearsal, the actress told us that we had to leave clothes on stage during transition, which we had never heard before. During the break, we soon discussed with the actors, actresses and the clothing group

when we brought the clothes up and where we placed them. Glad that we did not have to discuss that in the official performance.

Lack of communication was the biggest problem in the senior play of 2016. There were many people working together so it was hard to convey messages to everyone. Sometimes they changed the ideas but I did not know. Thus, when they asked me where it was, I had to tell them this was the first time I had heard that. This was my fault. I should be more active instead of waiting people to come to tell me. On the other hand, I often got different messages from different people. The director told me she needed something directly. Yet, when I asked stage manager she told me that the director should discuss with her first. Changing mind too often was another problem that bothered me a lot. The properties we used in the official play were quite different from the original list of properties. We spent a lot of time on looking for something. When we found it, people just told me that they did not need that anymore. The time and money were wasted.

I was angry when the director kept asking me to find several property suddenly when we did not have much time left. I felt not being respected because she just asked whatever she wanted without considering how difficult it was or it did not make any sense. I remembered she asked me to make a book for the ogre because a real book was too heavy. I told her how difficult it was to find the lamp. When I finally found one, she told me she needed four and I could make by myself. I did but none of them were used in the play. When I asked how many books she needed from the library of the department, she told me all the books in the library. I should talk to her but I did not, which led to the worse part in the play for me. In the middle second performance, she came to backstage and blamed me because my group member moved the bear on the stage. The fact was that the eye shade for next half of play was behind the bear. I was angry as being blamed for something I never did in the middle of the play. Her attitude and the time she blamed me was inappropriate. I knew she tried very hard to present the best to the audience but she really needed to respect all the crew. What I learned from her was that communication is crucial. People will not understand unless I say it. People need to talk to fix the problems.

I had been on the intercom to control the backstage in the official performances. It was the most challenging thing. I had to control not only my group member but also helped to convey the information on the intercom to other people at backstage. Our group members divided job by themselves and did their job well, so I did not have to worry about them when I was on the intercom. After the performance, we had to sweep and pick the properties back.

When the final performance ended, we clean up the stage and returned the borrowed properties.

Even though the process was not happy all the time, I learned most of the things from those unhappy time. Senior play trained me the ability of problem-solving, critical thinking, leadership, communication, and cooperation. First, I learned how to solve problems under great pressure. Calm down, stop complaining and start doing it. Asking people who have experience or knowledge on that was helpful. If I have problems that I can not solve by myself, do not hesitate to ask for help. People are more willing than I thought to help. Second, this was the first time in my life that I played a role as a group leader. I learned that it was fine to assign job so that I would not have to do everything by myself. We were a team. I still had not get used to ask people to do something. Yet, I feel good when I trusted my group members and they trusted me. I became more confident that I could do the job as a group leader. Third, I learned the skill of communication from all people I met. I learned to respect others even if we had different opinions. I listened to them and chose the best option. I also learned to say no when I truly had nothing I could do, when I was busy or when I felt it did not make any sense. I learned not to be emotional while I was working. I had to separate the emotion from my job to let it affect my performance or being rude to others. Last, I learned to cooperate with different kinds of people. Understanding them first would be easier to work with them.

I met many wonderful people and became closer to them because of this play, which was the sweetest part of this play that I will never forget. Many thanks to those kind people who encouraged me and who were trying to find properties together or were willing to lend me properties. Without their help and encouragement, I thought I could not do my job well.

