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**Reflection on Participating in the 2019 Senior Play:
*Golden Child***



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LOD – 2019 SP Reflection

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2019 Senior Play Reflection

My hands started to sweat as I sat in my seat, waiting for my turn to perform the monologue I prepared. My heart skipped a beat as I heard my name being called. This is it. I trudged onto the stage, took a deep breath, and began. I felt all eyes on me and I heard every little scuffle and saw every tiny bit of movement. I felt like I was watching myself from afar, as my foot trembled in irrational fear. Yet, as I was immersed in the deep trance of anxiety, another feeling of thrill also shot up into my mind. This is *it*. This is what I've been aiming for; this is the time to give myself up to the stage. Before I knew it, I finished my monologue, felt my soul return to my body, and walked back to my seat after giving an awkward little nod, unable to give myself a grade on my performance. Holding onto this feeling of uncertainty, I found myself standing along with other fellow actors and actresses of the senior play a few weeks later.

However, I felt like my anxiousness never died down even after meeting up and discussing the script with the cast, and I found myself making up all sorts of excuses to skip practice in my mind just in case my anxiety took ahold of me. Luckily, I never let myself do

something so irresponsible, and always tried to make the time to talk to myself before rehearsals. It didn't really work and I still felt nervous every time, but at least I didn't bail on them or suddenly say that I was "sick." It was really stressful for me because Natasha and Irene, who respectively played First Wife and Third Wife, are both experienced actresses who have joined the Senior Play and Annual Play for many times consecutively. As for me, I was a newbie with zero experience on my plate, and after every rehearsal, I always felt like I was dragging the whole crew down.

The character I played was Luan, the second wife of Tieng-Bin, our husband. She is someone who thinks at least ten steps ahead of others, and lusts for power and will do whatever it takes to attain it. I've actually always yearned to be able to play the villain, but when I actually was one, I found it so hard to grasp. Not to brag or anything, but my personality lies more on the kind side, so I've constantly found it hard to act out what Luan is going to do, like slapping someone, or confronting people. I've even had trouble from the very start, while I was trying to figure out how Luan would walk. She is a lady, and I have to admit, I am not at all lady-like. She is clever and beautiful, and I feel like I am awkward and average. Everything she does is out of confidence, but the thing I've always lacked the most is just that.

I talked with many of my friends to try and shake off the sense of lacking and self-hatred. It didn't exactly work out as well as I wished, but what they have said started to

become a personal mantra I repeated to myself whenever I felt like I wasn't enough. They told me that Mandy chose me to play Luan for a reason, so I shouldn't be disrespecting her decision by denying myself of the role. Whenever I started to doubt myself again, this is what I would tell myself. I told myself that I was enough, and that instead of fearing for what I might do wrong, I should be living in the moment as the character. It was certainly difficult to achieve such a mindset, and I never really actually got the hang of it until before I went on stage as Luan on the first day of the performance.



Luan and Siu-Yong (portrayed by Natasha) unamused by Ahn (portrayed by Cara)

Mandy always led an exercise before rehearsals, which we would close our eyes and imagine ourselves walking down the hallway. At the end of the hallway, there is a door, and as we push it open, our character would be in there. We would observe how they sit, how they

stand, how they look, or even how they behave. After seeing them clearly, we would step forward and overlap with them, eventually becoming them. I never really succeeded in doing so, but on the first day of the performance, Natasha led me through this exercise again, and instead of trying to go with the flow using my mind, I used my heart. This time, I saw myself overlapping with Luan completely, and I became my own person as her. This experience was really life-changing in a way, and really hard to describe with words, but in a way, it felt so comforting. As I stepped onto the stage, I could feel all eyes on me, but instead of feeling terrified, I felt this strange flow of excitement coursing through me, leading my every step. I could still feel myself in there, telling me what to say or where to go, but I knew that at that moment, everything else was Luan. I was Luan.



Rehearsal Luan in Western clothing

Even as the three days passed by, I found it really hard to jump out of the character. I still interacted with people the way Sharlene would, but sometimes, I just felt like there was Luan in there, trying to gain dominance of my body. It really would show at times, and I would be shocked by myself, since it wasn't exactly what I would normally do. For example, when someone asked me a question, I would still answer them, but not without jeering at the dumbness of the question first. Perhaps I've always had this tendency, I just never took notice of it, and now that I had the experience of being openly judgmental, I found it hard to ignore anymore.

All in all, the Senior Play was a transformative experience for me, and I got to know many people along the way. I also realized what it would feel like to be on stage, to be in front of so many people. I've always thought myself as someone with stage fright, and maybe I more or less do, but in those three days, all I knew was that I enjoyed every second of it. I enjoyed it even though I messed up my lines or didn't properly do things I should. I enjoyed hearing the audience making discreet noises of disapproval at my actions and I absolutely loved acting as Luan for just a bit longer during the curtain call. Being a part of the Senior Play is certainly in no way all fun and games, in fact, it's one of the most commitment-needed tasks I have ever done. I've never poured so many hours into something that is not video games. It is really tiring, and honestly, not that rewarding at first. However, I'm glad that I stuck through, and managed to bring out a part of Luan on stage for people to see.



Cast and crew members of 2019 Senior Play