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Reflection on Participating in
the 2020 Senior Play: *Cleansed*

SANCTITAS BONITAS

PULCHRITUDO

VERITAS

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LOD

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LOD-Reflection of Senior Play

I still remembered the time that I sat in front of my desk, hesitating whether to devote myself into the senior play. Since I am a junior student, this year would be the busiest year in the English department. There would be countless papers, researches, presentations waiting for me to prepare for. Moreover, I shouldered the responsibilities of being a member in the student association as well. Thus, it is difficult to make the decision of participating in senior play and it is stressful to take the consequences of the decision. However, a series of images in which school sisters and brothers laugh with their mouths open widely occurred to me when I hesitated to ask about the senior play this year. Suddenly, I realized that that was the memory of the senior play (2020)-*Cleansed*. Although playing a less important role in the crew, I met talented people, spent a lot of time with them, and became close with them, allowing me to get involved in the English department and find a sense of belonging in the activity. Therefore, with the impressive memories, I sent the audition I filmed to the director, waiting for her reply with anticipation.

Fortunately, director Deedee gave me this opportunity to play as the character “Coby” in *No Quarter*. When reading the script, I found Coby is an optimistic girl who has a pure mind and has a character of having childlike innocence. Coby is a fourteen-year-old girl who lives near Robin’s house. In other words, they are close neighbors. Coby is glad that Robin is back to his house so that she can spend more time with him. After finding out Robin helps his mother to get suicide, although Coby firstly cannot accept this fact, she calms down, listens to Robin’s explanation, and recognizes the fact. Therefore, Coby decides to help Robin pretend that she does not know about the secret of the death of Robin’s mother. However, the visit of the twins drives Robin mad since they are sent from Robin’s brother, Olive, to get close to Robin on purpose. By this, Robin finally realizes Coby is the only one who loves him and supports him as well. Robin is so angry about the twins that he sets the barn on fire when the rest of the characters are high on drugs except Coby. Suddenly, Coby finds out Robin has disappeared from the room and she turns off the music in order to make everyone hear her voice so that they will know Robin is gone. Bang, bang, bang! There are sounds from the barn. Everyone in the room rushed out to find Robin. Unfortunately, Coby thinks Robin is in the barn, so she goes into it and gets hurt.

Director Deedee helps me to try to figure out the personality of the character, Coby. Deedee irritates me to picture Coby in my mind by asking me a few questions, such as “What her voice sounds like?”, “Why she says this?”, “What is her feeling when she says this to

Robin?", "How she feels when hearing Robin says this", etc. With the assistance of the director's inspiration, I can imagine not only the figure of Coby but also her reaction and feelings. Finally, this first script-read conference was coming. It took place in September, two weeks later after we read the script. Due to the pandemic, it was an online meeting via Google Meet. Moreover, it was the first time that all actors and actresses gathered to interpret the play.

Actually, I was a little nervous since I was a junior but the rest of them are all seniors. During the conference, I realized my ability to play a role was far from good, compared with the seniors. Thus, I kept practicing and imitating the tone of a fourteen-year-old girl.

(This was the first face-to-face table read with all the acting crew, lighting crew and sound effect crew.)



In October, it was time for every actor and actress to rehearsal with others at the basement in the ES Building after class. Moreover, due to the pandemic, we had to wear masks during rehearsals, which made it hard to breathe in fresh air. In addition, the atmosphere in the basement was stuffy, all the actors and actresses needed to suffer from the moist air. However, I still enjoy the time that we practiced together. Since that was the first time that I became an actress, I had difficulties making voice with proper position and getting involved with my character, which made me frustrated. Compared to my school sisters and brothers who did great on these warm-up exercises, I gradually lost my confidence until director Deedee and my partner Zaida encouraged me that I could do it. After practice several times, I could finally make my voice as loud as other members and make it properly. As for the eye-contact practice, it was still a challenge for me since I have known all the actors and actresses so well that every time when I looked into their eyes, I could not help but laugh out loud. Thankfully, I did not laugh out when rehearsing.

Another challenge I faced was that I had a kissing scene with Quentin in the play. Quentin was my team leader in Orientation Camp in my freshman year. Thus, we were close personally. Although it was not my first kiss and we were friends, it was still an obstacle for me to kiss a man who I was not in love with. Me and Quentin had practiced several times to find the most comfortable position for us. However, sometimes he might kiss so hard that he scared me. Except for this, I really enjoyed the time when practicing dialogue with him. We all knew that

Quentin had a huge load of lines, so he might forget or skip one to two lines when rehearsing. Nevertheless, I was still impressed that he could play Robin so well in terms of his tone, his attitude, and his spontaneous performances. I was thankful that Quentin was willing to cooperate with me and helped me whenever I had difficulties.



Time flies and it is November. Being a junior student, it was a challenge for me to strike a balance between preparing for senior play and completing school assignments. First of all, it was necessary for me to spare time to try on burnt make-up with make-up team member, Vivi. She was a patient, careful, and responsible partner who always completed her assigned tasks on time, spent a lot of time on improving burnt make-up, and made appointments with me to try on the upgraded one. Furthermore, because of pressure and insufficient sleep, there were a



few acnes on my face, which made me lose my confidence when I took my mask and looked into my reflection in the mirror. Thanks to Vivi's makeup, she made me confident again and I was able to take off my mask in front of people and even to stand on the stage to enjoy the play. Additionally, not to mention my costume partner, Elsie, she and her team members spent a lot of time looking for my costume and prepared an extra one to make burnt. They used a lighter to burn the left sleeve in order to imitate that the cloth suffered from a large fire. I was really grateful that I had so many supportive crew members who worked together collaboratively and effectively. Due to their hard work and perseverance, this play could be presented so completely and smoothly.



Secondly, the SOAP convention was around the corner when the first rehearsal was coming. Due to the unexpected complex relationship between the director and one of the actors who had depression, director Deedee took Quentin's place as Robin in the play. Actually, Deedee was overwhelmed that time, so when I knew that she was going to replace Quentin, I was worried about her mental and physical health and worried that she might not make it. In fact, she did well, but I could tell it was a heavy burden for her to memorize all the line in a short period. Therefore, after thinking carefully and discussing with all the acting crew, the director asked Quentin back to be Robin again. It was good news for all the crew members and everyone got excited about Quentin's coming back.

Finally, it's December. I had to rehearse three to four times a week. Thus, I tended to fall asleep when I did not have a line. Coby only showed up in scene 1 and scene 3, so I had a scene to take a little break. During the week of staying in BaiLian, the cast team was called at 9:30 in the morning and needed to practice until 9 in the night. Rehearsing in BaiLian was different from doing it in the classroom. Standing on the stage, I could see nothing but only lights that were shooting on me. Additionally, the lights were hot and even though it was winter and had air conditioning in the theater, I could still get sweaty.

Being one of the members in the cast group was an impressive experience in my courageous life.

First of all, I would like to thank myself that I was willing to take this challenge when studying in the busiest year in the English department. Secondly, I was grateful that all the members in the cast and crew team completed their assigned tasks effectively and supportively so that Senior Play 2021 could do so well. Thirdly, I appreciated that my friends who were from other departments and even from other universities came to watch the play and shared their positive reflections with me. They were touched by the last scene in which Robin and Oliver started to share their feelings and began to understand each other. Moreover, they were all impressed by the organized cast and crew and they said they would come to watch the play next year. Lastly, I did not regret that I spent a lot of time on the play. In next year, I would still choose to be a member in the cast team to create more memories with my classmates.

