

El Dorado's The Book of Dog Unleashed!

written by Alex Thompson, a sophomore at Fullerton Union High School

With a hyperactive dog bouncing off the walls, El Dorado's melancholy production of "The Book of Dog" takes the audience on an emotional roller coaster as Marvin (Owen Switzer) gets adopted by Olivia (Riley Mills) and her family. Protesting at first, the family learns how to accept this new chaotic addition to the family, and in the process, deal with life's coming-of-age.

Through his exaggerated physicality and planted voice, the rambunctious mutt Marvin places well-timed comedic bits that keep the audience giggling and eagerly anticipating his next move. Not only does Switzer have amazing comedic timing, but sprints across the stage as he grabs the audience's hearts and cuddles them to his last breath. Marvin reminds the audience why he is man's best friend, and ensures his title of the best boy through his smooth collaborative synergy with his "dad," Ellison (Blake Schalliol).

One deeply warming and symbolic character throughout the show is Mama (Avery Henkenius) as she lovingly provides a foundation for Marvin to build upon. As Henkenius expels an aura of tenderness and affection, the stage fills with a homey ambiance that is certainly strengthened by the composition and instrumentation of Tahllia Pompel and Dee Tran. By using a violin, ukulele, and harp throughout the show, each note dances in the background to immerse the scene's mood with the captivated audience.

A magnificent part of the entire production is how beautifully well done the set is. With a rustic barn ambiance, this complex yet relaxing atmosphere feels right at home through the handy craftsmanship of Addison Hughes and Ethan Taylor-Swift. Moreover, the dirty washing of the wood in the set not only made the set real, but allowed for the color palette of the production as a whole to be picturesque. Underscoring this wonderful hand-made world was the incredible focus of the Ensemble throughout the play. The storytellers build an environment and tell the story together, solemnly developing the show with intentional movement that is synchronized.

This play by El Dorado was wonderfully executed by an outstanding technical team and majestic cast, and reminds the audience of the fond memories of our furry friends, even if that time is limited. El Dorado's The Book of Dog is an excellent piece that many should watch.