

San Clemente's "Murder Mystery" Is To Die For
written by Madeleine Cox, a senior at Corona del Mar High School

In a hilariously disastrous "play within a play," The Murder Mystery at The Murder Mystery faces a sudden turn of events when the actors in the show begin to face mysterious deaths. Together, the Cheboygan Theatre Company must prepare their show for opening night while simultaneously discovering the truth behind these sudden murders.

Avery Santore's portrayal of Brett, the director of the show, uses obscene physicality to encapsulate the escalating frustration building up inside of her as obstacles in the play arise. By helplessly flailing her limbs and contorting her body to escape her handcuffs, jabbing her finger aggressively at inspectors when defending herself, and yelling constantly with her eyebrows raised at every actor on stage, she demonstrates her authority and rage as her cast continuously digs themselves into deeper holes.

Ella Corbridge flawlessly switches between Gertrude Polk, the posh, princess-like character that her actress is playing, and Sandy Smith, the naive, child-like actress herself. Her proper, uptight composure as Gertrude completely shifts as she transitions to Sandy, enthusiastically explaining her desire for method acting, wailing dramatically and hunching over Gary's (Rimini Busacker) body, and sprawling out on the couch while shoving muffins in her mouth, building a deep and entertaining contrast between her two characters.

The Cheboygan Theatre Company, composed of both actors and technicians, used vocal comedy to enhance the scenes they were acting out, as well as when they weren't "acting." The Maid (Gabby Miller) put on an over-the-top, sassy accent, while other characters like Susan (Lilia Davey) spoke in a timid, defeated voice, creating a contrast that complemented each individual character.

The costumes team (Gabby Miller, Ella Corbridge, Ashton Andersen) creatively utilized pop culture references to portray characters a certain way. Inspector Wright and Inspector Fuller were dressed in the same color palettes as Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde from Zootopia, and were accessorized with sunglasses that had the silhouettes of a fox and a bunny, adding an engaging comedic element to the show.

Props (Derek Herrmann, Sydney Ingersoll) used real food to add even more chaos to the show within a show aspect. Actors used different types of messy food, including tacos and muffins, to make hilarious choices and bring their characters to life.

With hysterical characters, lots of confusion, and a plethora of poker sticks, The Murder Mystery at the Murder Mystery is simply unforgettable.