

Corona Del Mar's "She Kills Monsters" Is a Truly Magical Adventure!
written by Abby Schmude, a sophomore at Irvine High School

Set in the 1990s, "She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition" follows a high school senior named Agnes a year after the death of her sister. When Agnes decides to play through her sister's final Dungeons and Dragons campaign, she is forced to question everything she thought she knew.

Agnes (Ella Avital) uses clear vocal inflection to portray the strong emotions frequently felt by the grieving teenager. Her body language shifts throughout the course of the play to reflect her relationship with New Landia, starting off stiff and unsure, and becoming gradually more expressive and confident. At the climax of the play, Agnes stands center stage, tears forming in the corners of her eyes, and delivers a powerful performance that does not leave a single dry eye in the audience.

Agnes's sister, Tilly (Georgia Connelly), strides across the stage in a truly heroic manner. She brandishes her sword like an extension of her body, confidently executing stage combat in a way that suits her paladin character.

The monster ensemble has a strong stage presence, bringing a playfulness into the combat scenes with their clear personalities and movements. During one of the fight scenes, three of them stand in a ready position, bouncing on the balls of their feet, hilariously reminiscent of an old fighter video game.

Morgan Savage portrays Kaliope's distinct personality with humorous quips and a deadpan delivery, complimenting Lilith's (Jasmine Jenkins) fiery personality. Hair and makeup designer Olivia Sandoval's colorful designs for both Kaliope and Lilith help to bring their fantastical characters to life. Sandoval's and her makeup crew's airbrush work has depth and dimensions, and their otherworldly makeup appears organic on stage.

Light designers Delaney Duby and Jonah Cordas cleverly use a spotlight to represent Tilly's "Magic Missile" and illuminate the stage with gray when in Athens, Ohio and bright neons when in New Landia, displaying the contrast between the two settings. Their collaboration with scenic design results in the placement of a strip of LED lights around the set. The LED lights further differentiates the two worlds and complements the set with bursts of bright colors.

Heart-wrenching and fantastical, Corona Del Mar's "She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition" is a reminder of the power that comes with accepting oneself and others for who they are.