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Murder by the Book

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The Raven Society has assembled for its annual meeting. This society consists of several authors/critics who choose the best and worst books of the year to be awarded. Because of the prestige of the award, members of the society keep their identity a secret even to each other. To accomplish this, they arrive in character as a famous historical author and remain so for the entire meeting, where they are cut off from the outside world for three days. At this year's meeting the society has received a death threat from last year's "worst book" author. He/she promises to kill each member of the society "by their own word." Almost immediately the members begin to die and a rush to solve the mystery ensues.

Literary enthusiasts will enjoy the characters and references throughout the play. However, much of the dialogue and plot depend on a prior knowledge of the authors who are portrayed. Accordingly, this play would suit an older young audience--high school and up. The author's characters make for a fun and simple character study, suitable for high school age actors to perform. The play heavily emphasizes characterization, to the detriment of the plot. The play is mainly spent developing characters as they sit and talk, and then the murder plot is somewhat clumsily tied up quickly at the end.

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