2009

Murder by the Book

Rebeca Wallin

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Wallin, Rebeca (2009) "Murder by the Book," Children's Book and Media Review: Vol. 30 : Iss. 5 , Article 32. Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol30/iss5/32

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin
Reading Level: Young adult
Rating: Dependable
Genre: Plays; Detective and mystery plays; Humorous plays;
Subject: Mystery--Juvenile drama; Drama--Reviews;
Theme: All actions have a consequence.
Production Requirements: Simple interior set with simple lights and props.
Acts: 2
Run Time: 90 minutes
Characters: 10
Cast: 4 male, 6 female
Time Period: Present day

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.

Volume 30, no. 5 (May/June 2010)