THE WESLEYAN ARGUS

“She Kills Monsters” Plays, Kills the Game

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Directed by Mio Magee ’18, “She Kills Monsters” explores the life of a teenage girl through the game of Dungeons and Dragons.

If you’ve ever played the game Dungeons and Dragons, you’ve been on grand quests to restore lost souls and explore vast caves and coves in search of treasure and glory. You’ve risked your life for your mission and your party, the adventurers who fight alongside you and follow you to the very end.



Arianna Tamaddon, Staff Photographer

If you, like me, have never partaken in such a journey, then you should definitely get with the program and see “She Kills Monsters,” a thrilling and fantastical play directed by Mio Magee ’18. It is both the story of a girl venturing into a made-up magical world in pursuit of her sister’s lost soul as well as a snapshot of the world famous turn-based roleplaying game repainted with splashes of grunge, Quantum Leap, and VCR players.

“Monsters” stars Mads O’Brien ’16 and Alina Whatley ’18 as Agnes the Ass-Hatted and Tilly the Palladin, two young women who lived in two completely different emotional worlds despite having grown up together as sisters. We learn early on that Tilly and their parents passed away in a car crash, and that all Agnes had left to remember her estranged sister by was her D&D module, the set of rules, and characters that make up the magical world we dip in and out of for the entire narrative.

Chuck Biggs (Isaac Son ’18) also stars as the hilarious Dungeon Master, D&D’s version of an MC. Chuck delights in showcasing for Agnes all D&D has to offer, both because of his passion for the game and because Agnes is a teacher at Chuck’s school, and Chuck is just kind of into that. Chuck finds himself struggling to explain the nature of his relationship with Agnes to Miles (Will McGhee ’17), Agnes’ boyfriend of five years. Miles is sweet and cares deeply for Agnes, but is thrown off as he constantly mistakes the slang and terminology of D&D as sexual innuendos.

D&D is a character-based game, which is one of the reasons the play is so personal and human at its core. Agnes and Tilly get to kick some serious demon ass alongside Tilly’s equally nerdy and passionate friends: the badass demon queen Lilith Morningstar (Rebecca Hsieh ’18), the emotionally-deficient dark elf Kaliope Darkwalker (Giselle Reyes ’18), the lazy orcus (Jordan Tragash ’18) and former overlord of the underworld Ronnie (Tragash ’18), and the fearless, charismatic, ever-brave mage Steve (Adam DeSantes ’18). These valiant adventurers must ward off various villainous vagrants in Tilly’s world, with some pretty extensive fight choreography from Hannah Skopicki ’18, who herself plays a pathetically incompetent high school guidance counselor as well numerous magical creatures alongside narrator/evil faerie Emily Feher ’17.

The audience becomes immersed in Tilly’s world along with Agnes, and we are taught why D&D culture is so invigorating, and why it meant so much to a girl who just didn’t feel at home anywhere else.

“Tilly spent her time in Ohio constantly trying to get out of Ohio,” O’Brien said. “She was just very happy to do anything to get out of that. Agnes, she didn’t even know that she could break out of it.”

Throughout the play, Agnes is driven to learn as much as she can about her sister through the game, despite her inability to understand a life not spent talking about boys and TV shows.

“For the first time, she gets to see how Tilly saw the world,” Magee said.

The show boasts a really fun and imaginative use of its space, the transition between the world of the game and real life feeling fluid and consistent. It’s indicative of the mindset of a D&D fanatic. The sound cues and musical accompaniment just reek of the early ’90s, and the Kuroko (Nic de Soto-Foley ’17, Liza Woythaler ’18, Celine Tao ’18, Ben Forde ’17, Blake Pritchard ’18) add a cool layer of traditional Japanese theater to an already exciting and dynamic show. The papier-mâché that brings the Tilly’s fantasy world to life is also quite impressive.

But what resonates most from the show is the performance of the entire ensemble as one, all equally important moving parts in one teenage girl’s mind.

“As a cast we all got together one day and made D&D characters, because a lot of people in the cast had played before and a lot were unfamiliar with how it worked,” O’Brien said. “The story was just so much more fun to be a part of for everyone that way.”

Prepare to be transported to Tilly’s world, a place not unlike Wesleyan, where fantastic passions reign supreme.

“She Kills Monsters” continues in Albritton 311 this Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. Audience is limited to 40.