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“God of Carnage’s” poster artwork depicts the play’s subtle message.

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Whim

Children fight, and this is generally accepted by parents as inevitable. However, parents are calm, collected and mature. Or are they?

This year, Radford University’s theater department challenges this notion in their production of Yazmina Reza’s play, “God of Carnage.”

The audience laughed, the characters cried, and anything even resembling manners was left at the door as the characters worked their way through what turned out to be an hour and thirty minute argument.

Upon finding that their son lost two teeth from being hit in the face with a stick, Veronica

(Theresa Mantiplay) and Michael (Jason Krage) Novak invite the parents of the attacker, Annette (Lyndsay Halpin) and Alan (Felix Birdie) Raleigh, over to talk. Everything begins in a normal way, with two sets of parents, both with 11-year-old sons, that just want to resolve the issue. Everything seems fine, but in minutes the conversation goes from calm to furious and tense.

“God of Carnage” doesn’t just show what happens when adults become reduced to the level of their children, it shows them taking sides with whoever is most agreeable at the time. The argument cycles through being couple vs. couple, gender vs. gender to person vs. everyone else.

The play addresses how parental attitudes might affect children and insinuates that, while parents pretend to care about their children and other people’s problems, they really are only interested in their own problems. This results in the drowning of a cellphone, excessive rum consumption and the violent death of a bowl of tulips.

The cast played their characters with the intensity of people who really can’t stand to be in the same room together. Although it’s not immediately obvious, Anette’s nervous stomach and loathing for Alan’s constant cellphone use was well portrayed. The gagging and vomiting really helped, too.

Alan’s disregard for everyone around him, including his wife, was also very obvious. He switched between phone and face-to-face conversation seamlessly, as if it was all the same to him.

Michael’s transformation from a nice, funny guy, to an uncaring, ridiculous person was dramatic and unsettling. The actor made it apparent, but somehow still managed to prevent the character from seeming like a total monster.

Veronica was perfect at holding her holier-than-thou attitude throughout the whole production. While she yelled and fought just as much as everyone else, she refused to consider herself on the same level as the rest of the characters. Her dedication to this role showed, even while screaming obscenities at her husband and guests.

The cast did a marvelous job sticking to their roles and made the play come alive. No one seemed to tire during the performance, despite there being no intermission.

Altogether, it was an enjoyable experience. The performance really explained why the program said, “Kids will be kids, but grownups can be, oh, so much worse.”