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Thornton Fractional District 215
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Thornton Fractional South High School Drama Students Host Virtual Theater Productions



TF South students performing a virtual murder mystery play

Lansing, IL- This weekend, Thornton Fractional South High School will debut a virtual performance of a murder mystery for friends, family, and the community. TF South Drama is inviting the audience to [join via Zoom](#) as they present the Zoom play “A Virtual Whodunnit” by Flip Kobler and Cindy Marcus. The show will be performed December 3, 4, and 5 at 7:00 p.m. The play tracks the aftermath of the shocking murder of the patriarch of a tech company, asking the audience to follow along and help solve the mystery.

TF South students auditioned for the show via Zoom in early October and have also rehearsed virtually several hours per week over the past two months. TF South teacher Douglas Schlessler, who is directing the show, noted that he intentionally picked a one act show since the students would have less rehearsal time than in a traditional theater setting. Schlessler stated, “The kids have really taken ownership of this piece. It's odd being in Zoom for so long each day, but these kids are killing it. Each time we run it the nuances get better and better, just like a real performance.”

The cast of the show includes the following TF South students: Roger Carter as Augustus Sterling/Sloan, Brian Valentine as Barry Schwarz, Adam Jones, Jr. as Bullion Sterling, Zechariah Overall as Eugene Everton, Juliean Gullede as Florina Sterling, Kayla Wright as Juniper Everton, Abigael Popp as Macy Sterling, and Joy Lewis as Haley Hawkins. Photos of the cast members are posted on the show’s [Facebook event page](#). “A Virtual Whodunnit” follows Detective Rockford Sloan as he attempts to solve the murder of tech mogul and patriarch: Augustus Sterling, who was murdered during a Zoom call in which he revealed that he would be changing his will. Sloan (and the audience) must decide who the killer really is. The actors received coaching from directors Doug Schlessler and Asa Wallace, a TF South alumnus who recently graduated from ISU with a degree in acting.

In addition to this weekend’s production, another virtual show will premiere next weekend, December 10, 11, and 12 at 7:00 p.m. TF South teacher Ann Wolpert is directing “She Kills



Monsters: Virtual Realms” by Qui Nguyen. The Zoom link to attend the production will be posted on Monday, December 7 on the [TF South webpage](#) and [Facebook page](#).

The play tells the story of older sister Agnes who never paid much attention to younger, geeky sister Tilly, until tragedy strikes. Agnes is forced to enter the mysterious world of Dungeons and Dragons to find and “save” her sister. The play is not meant for very young children as it has some frightening images and some adult language.

Cast members of “She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms” include Natalie Dominiak as Agnes Evans, Payton Stachelski as Tilly Evans/Tillius, Jeremiah Kimbrew as Miles, Angel Sanchez as Orcus/Ronnie, Saniah Johnson as Vera, Griffin Pollicy as Chuck, Joria Wood as Lilith Morningstar/Lilly, Harmony Johnson as Kaliope Darkwater/Kelly, Olufunmilola Williams as Narrator, Jack Raeck as Steve, Victoria Gonzalez as Farrah, Mercedes Garcia as Evil Gabbi, and Zamayah Holmes as Evil Tina.

Principal Jacob Gourley stated, “I’m really proud of the ways our staff and students have persevered in this remote learning environment and discovered ways in which they can continue to connect and pursue extracurriculars despite the many challenges we have faced. I’m excited for the shows!”

About Thornton Fractional High School District 215: District 215 serves the students of Burnham, Calumet City, Lansing, and Lynwood at Thornton Fractional North High School, Thornton Fractional South High School, Thornton Fractional Center for Academics and Technology, and Thornton Fractional Center for Alternative Learning. The mission of District 215 is to provide diverse learning opportunities that inspire all students to become life-long learners who contribute to their community.

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