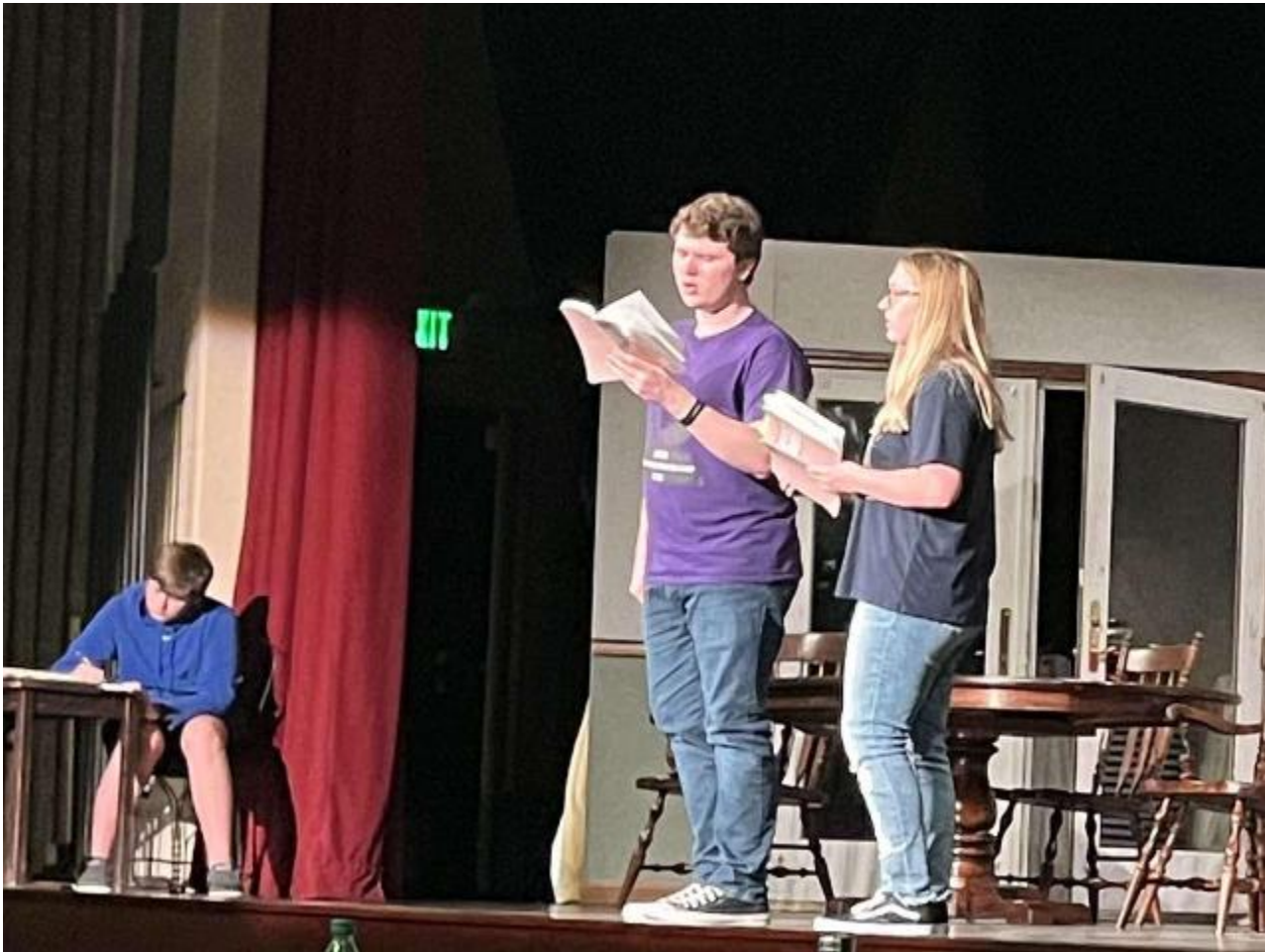


# Can You Solve the Murder?

by Amelia Jones

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JERSEYVILLE - The JCHS theater department starts the school year with *The Plot Like Gravy Thickens*. The play is a murder mystery and comedy with audience interaction that is enjoyable for any age. The show will take place on September 22 through 25 and tickets are \$10 per person; audience members can purchase them in the office or at the door.

As the play begins, Walter, a playwright's alter-ego, paints the perfect crime on Edward's 50th Birthday. The only leads in the murder are 13 prime suspects, all with different motives. Audience members will help the detective solve the case and arrest the guilty party.

During the second act, improvisation is a primary aspect for the actors on stage, presenting a few challenges for them. "Honestly, I just try to be my character. Like truly be Tony, and not just memorize lines," said Camden Schroeder, the actor who plays Tony Blackwell.

All the actors are finding means to overcome these challenges; by continuously reading their script or truly trying to embody the character. Director Mr. Brett Beachump's goal for the improv portion is to: "Just to get them used to thinking off the top of their head."

Another problem that can arise during the improv section is that audience members can ask questions not related to the play. Overall, Mr. Beauchamp has confidence in the actors to perform to the best of their abilities with whatever the audience asks of them.

"I feel like our kids can handle it, and with having Billy out there, he will know to move on and go on to the next question," says Beauchamp of Jacob Shiply, also known as Billy, the actor playing Walter, the narrator.

*The Plot Like Gravy Thickens*, the first showing at 7 p.m. on September 22, will be played by the understudies, and the subsequent performances will be the main cast performing. Friday and Saturday shows will start at 7 pm, while the Sunday show starts at 2 p.m.