If you've ever pulled an all-nighter only to get distracted, accomplish nothing and stalk the campus living-dead style the following day, bear in mind: You could have written a comic one-act play and seen it performed the following evening. How's that for incentive?

The 24 Hour Theatre Experiment, held in the Arellano Theatre on March 4 by the Witness Theatre program, proved just how fruitful one night and a day can be for actors, writers and directors alike. Created last year by Jim Graziano for his Homewood Arts Certificate Final Project, Witness Theatre decided this year to "adopt" the format once more. At 9 p.m. on Friday night, props were distributed to the four groups, who were then left to brainstorm plot ideas. The writers stayed up all Friday night producing original scripts, while the actors and directors would have the remaining day to rehearse. At 8 p.m. on Saturday night, nearly 24 hours into the project, the curtain went up.

"We generally produce showcases of one-act plays, written by students, with student directors and actors, usually with just over a month to rehearse. It's amazing to see what can be produced in only 24 hours," junior Ashley Watson said. Watson coordinated this year's showcase and was an actress in the final one-act. Given the time constraints and required props, the results were surprisingly entertaining.

**Cinderella in a Laundromat**, written by freshman Tom Hintze and directed by sophomore Emily Wisnioski, finds Daniel (junior Chris Hamel) in a bind. Late for work and out of change, he wanders into a laundromat in search of quarters and ends up falling for Amy (freshman Esther Bell). Of course, it's not just her altruism that gets him -- a freak flash of fate in the form of the "Laundry Godmother" (sophomore Liberty Tilleman-Dick) appears, a bubbly young "fairy" who tricks Daniel into believing that he has found Amy's underwear (at the end of a magical Bounce dryer sheet trail), in order to get closer to him.

While the interactions between our affable protagonist and the "fairy" were often humorous, their quest for the underwear's owner felt a bit too prolonged, about as repeated as the Laundry Godmother's lexical slip-ups. The play ended "sexily ever after" when Daniel finally figured out to whom the bright red, lacy underwear really belonged.

The second one-act, **Peanut Butter**, written by Adar Eisenbruch and Sal Gentile (both sophomores) and directed by freshman Rachel Pierson, began innocently enough. Lindsay (freshman Zoe Bell) and Kate (freshman Charlotte Chen), two college everygirls, are working on a crossword puzzle when Kate, all too earnestly, suggests to Lindsay she try the "grow-a-boyfriend" that Kate had bought her in case her real date failed. When Lindsay arrives back at her home, date in tow -- wait for it -- the unassuming gag gift thrown hastily in the bathtub has grown into none other than "Bruce" (sophomore Paxson Trautman). He proceeds to nearly ruin Lindsay's date with Graham (senior Aditya Madhusudhan) by being one of the most obnoxious grow-a-boyfriends imaginable.

One minor trouble was the delivery of the actors' lines. Audience laughter precluded some of the dialogue from being heard at points, though if nothing else, this stands a testament to the comic abilities of the writers. Also of note were the small satirical details of college courtship, such as the awkward first-date-shifting-on-the-couch scenes, thanks to the writing and to Pierson's direction. All in all, **Peanut Butter** stood out as the highlight of the night.

Like the proverbial elephant in the room that often accompanies such situations, **A Little Moonlight**, written by senior Ben Kingsland and directed by freshman Ryan Harrison, involved clichéd scenes of broken homes, deadbeat dads and alcoholism, with a wonderfully obtrusive comic twist: The man of the house was played by a plastic penguin lawn ornament. The action took place over the course of the final day of the penguin's dismal life and consisted, for the most part, of bizarrely deadpan one-sided conversations. The wife, Polly (sophomore Jen Petsche) provided for some of the funniest "interactions," repeatedly threatening to walk out on her husband. A difficult format to work with, but one which ultimately provided for a satisfying play.
In the final one-act, *The Orange and the Worm* written by graduate student Adam Ruben and directed by junior Jason Maur, it seems the outlandish potential of a more "realistic" plot had finally trumped anything else produced over the night. Junior Dave Haldane played the sole male in attendance at some oddball new age Lamaze class; his wife is sick, but he doesn't want to lose the deposit. The "leader" of the class (junior Lisa Nagy), holding and caressing an orange, guides the pregnant women (graduate student Charity Tilleman-Dick and junior Ashley Watson) through round after round of "behold[ing] the orange" and through metaphor after metaphor of the orange as various body parts, while the husband can only sit in bewilderment.

Less plot-driven, this play definitely relied on wildly exaggerated physical acting, which Nagy delivered in spades. While the orange worship became a little repetitive and over-the-top, the play followed a convincing emotional arc. The mothers' hysteria over the orange mounted and took a sinister man-hating turn just as the husband's pent up frustration caused him to finally devour the fruit in a rewarding ending.

It is interesting that such variety developed among the writers from the distribution of just four props: Bounce dryer sheets, a grow-a-boyfriend, a plastic penguin and an orange. "I think the shows came out amazingly well. The rehearsal process can be a bit scary, knowing that even though you first touched the script five hours ago, in two hours you have to make it really count," Watson said.