

OPENING THE CURTAIN



Perverse magic of LA's intimate theaters

You know that moment at the bookstore when you're browsing the serious, literary classics and the salacious cover of something pulpy catches your eye? It's that same impulse that has you order a plate of cheese fries. You know it's not going to be good for you, but god is it satisfying. "Forever Bound" by Steven Apostolina is the theatrical equivalent of that moment.

May 28, 2018

You know that moment at the bookstore when you're browsing the serious, literary classics and the salacious cover of something pulpy catches your eye? It's that same impulse that has you order a plate of cheese fries. You know it's not going to be good for you, but god is it satisfying.

"Forever Bound" by Steven Apostolina is the theatrical equivalent of that moment.

We spend most of the play in Edmund's apartment - which he's about to be evicted from. Edmund is a book scout, the kind of guy who scours thrift shops and yard sales for first edition books and comics that he can sell at a profit. It's a speculators game and he's not doing so hot, hence that eviction notice. His friend Shep, whose morals are a little looser, is in the same racket and seems to be doing okay.

He's trying to cheer Edmund up but Edmund's had it. He's ready to give up the life and take a regular 9 to 5. He's got to or he's going to end up homeless. He's already sold his early Marvels so he needs a big score or he's done.

Meanwhile, sort of mysteriously in that faint light special sort of way, this fairly humdrum kitchen-sink-saga keeps intercutting with a mysterious red haired girl reading "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" at the knee of a rather professorial, tweeded-up gentleman who seems to be her odd, and strangely strict, tutor.

The juxtaposition is jarring if a little intriguing. The play feels like it has one foot in a sort of man-child modernity and the other somewhere in a literary late 19th century.

"Forever Bound's" dramatic engine is that accessible, tantalizing ripped-from-the-headlines strategy that Law and Order thrives on. Through circumstance and a bit of criminality, these two story lines intersect. I won't give away the specifics because figuring out how the pieces fit together is the play's game.

"Forever Bound" would be as dismissable as that guy who keeps quoting from old books and using big words just to let you know he has an English degree - it'd be a forgettable play if it weren't for the performances.

Here's where we get to the perverse magic of Los Angeles intimate theater. Here's this play in a tiny theater, nestled oddly in the heart of Atwater

Village with a script that's good without being great - with three knockout performances by fantastic actors.

French Stewart, a stalwart of LA's small theater, gives Edmund a complexity that in another actor's hands would have been little more than a comic book geek finally having to get a real job. Rob Nagle, as that tweedy professor type, pushes right up to the edge of stereotype without descending into it. And Emily Goss, as that mysterious red-haired reader makes what could have been a one-note, stilted character intriguing and complex.

Is "Forever Bound" a great play? No. It's good. And it's a play that's going to make you feel smart. Is this a fantastic production of this play with a terrific cast? Definitely.

If you're in the mood for some theatrical comfort food, this might be perfect.

"Forever Bound" plays at the Atwater Village Theater through June 16th.

Running time: 95 minutes without an intermission.

Host:

[Anthony Byrnes](#)

