

# STAGEsceneLA

STEVEN STANLEY'S STAGESCENELA.COM: SPOTLIGHTING THE BEST IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA THEATER

## FOREVER BOUND

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WOW!

Expect the unexpected from the money-making scheme concocted by the cash-starved protagonists of Steve Apostolina's astonishing *Forever Bound*, now getting an absolutely splendid World Premiere at the Atwater Village Theater



French Stewart reins in his wacky screen persona as Edmund, who shares little more in common with his freewheeling buddy Shep (Apostolina) than a job that has the two of them scouting out thrift shops and yard sales for books so seemingly ordinary they can be bought for a couple of bucks, then sold for a whole lot more.



Unfortunately for Edmund, the sixty-five hundred he pocketed last year for his prize Avengers collection has long ago run out, the hundred-twenty-eight he's just made for a signed *Gone Girl* won't even begin to cover his rent and utilities, and unless he can scout out something amazing to sell, he may soon find himself without a roof over his head.



Meanwhile over on another part of the stage, a distinguished looking, well-dressed, old-worldly gent (Rob Nagle) is schooling his 20ish charge (Emily Goss) on the works of Coleridge, Dickens, and Austen in language

suggesting they may exist in another time zone entirely,

Playwright Apostolina takes his deliberate time in connecting these two pairs of characters, but when he finally does, in the words of Margo Channing, "Fasten your seatbelts. It's going to be a bumpy night."



As in the recent Road Theatre

Company smash *Through The Eye Of A Needle*, director Ann Hearn Tobolowsky navigates tonal transitions with abundant expertise, eliciting four absolutely superb performances beginning with Stewart's star turn as Edmund, a role that allows him to rise to heroic levels without a trace of 3rd Rock zaniness.

Apostolina is terrific too as the considerably less principled Shep, who's got a story or two to tell about his post-military deeds; Goss is radiant as a young woman discovering a world she never even knew existed; and Nagle commands the stage in the perfect follow-up role to last year's fearless and formidable Uncle Mike in Sharr White's *Stupid Kid*.



Scenic designer Pete Hickok gives

Edmund a just-right flophouse of an apartment covered with roach carcasses forever bound by scotch tape to deliberately windowless walls lit with dramatic flair by Bosco Flanagan. Joanie Coyote's equally first-rate costumes range from Edmund's schlump to Thomas's fine-and-dandy with Mike Lawshé's edgy sound design completing the top-notch production design mix.

*Forever Bound* is produced by Sankalpa Productions. Yridia Ayvar is assistant director. Amanda Sauter is stage manager. Kevin Delin is dramaturg. Casting is by Raul Clayton Staggs.

Expect to be bound to the edge of your seat. Expect L.A. theater at its most original and unpredictable. Expect all this and more from *Forever Bound*.

Atwater Village Theatre, 3269 Casitas Ave., Atwater Village. Through June 16. Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8:00. Sundays at 2:00. Reservations: 323 960-4429

[www.plays411.com/foreverbound](http://www.plays411.com/foreverbound)

—Steven Stanley  
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