

## Emily and Becket: Diamonds in the Rough

By [Cynthia Citron \(http://smdp.com/author/cynthia-citron\)](http://smdp.com/author/cynthia-citron) on September 1, 2016 in [Play Time \(http://smdp.com/category/life/entertainment/play-time\)](http://smdp.com/category/life/entertainment/play-time)



Wendy Graf usually writes well-crafted plays. Unfortunately, “Please Don’t Ask About Becket” isn’t one of them.

The play, now having its world premiere in Los Angeles, is about a dysfunctional family, the Diamonds, with twin kids: a girl named Emily (played a little too frazzled and a little too hurriedly by Rachel Seifert) and a boy named Becket (Hunter Garner) who has charm and talent but refuses to live up to his parents’ demanding expectations. He spends his youth being kicked out of one school after another, even though he is recognized as being potentially as bright as his sister.

Emily, on the other hand, takes the position of “perfect child” in the family and because her parents don’t need to agonize over her,

they ignore her. And so she and Becket form a lifelong bond so intense that it might be classified as “incest without sex”.

It starts in childhood with a long sequence of the two playing childish games and continues through their school years as Becket becomes a rebellious alcoholic and Emily continually makes excuses for him.

Their father (the always excellent Rob Nagle) is the head of a movie studio or something. (I say “or something” because his position is not clear. He makes important pronouncements and talks about Hollywood talent agencies, but if he is the head of the studio why is he going off to Italy to “scout locations”?)

At any rate, he makes enough money to get Becket into USC while Emily goes off to Northwestern. She does very well there, of course, while Becket soon drops out of school altogether.

Meanwhile their mother (Deborah Puette) continues to live in her fantasy world of societal correctness, refusing to recognize that her son is in emotional turmoil. She smothers him with love while making light of his anxieties and trying to push him into a role she thinks would be appropriate for him.

Eventually Becket and a girlfriend, both drunk, get into an automobile accident where a man is killed. Becket, facing a difficult trial, and after a frenzied scene with his parents, disappears.

Emily is devastated, but later, when he returns, she reprises their early years and plays childhood games with him again. But is he

there only in her imagination? Will he ever really return? Or is he dead? Don't ask.

The actors are competent under the direction of Kiff Scholl, but the play itself doesn't do the job. "Please Don't Ask About Becket" is only 90 minutes long, but it seems much longer. The action is repetitive and tedious and the characters are all one-note. Sadly, it's virtually impossible to work up any empathy with any of them.

"Please Don't Ask About Becket" will be performed Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 through September 18th at the Sacred Fools Theater Black Box, 6322 Santa Monica Blvd. in Los Angeles. For reservations, call (323) 960-7745 o

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