

:witness
a theatrical experience

THE SITE:

In the basement of a church in the town of Annandale-On-Hudson, on the campus of a college, there is a room. It must have been a closet. It might still be a closet. It is down the unstable stairs. When you reach the bottom there is a prayer room to the left and a hall to the right. Down the hall are two bathrooms across from them a door. On the door there is a rainbow poster. It hangs long and leads into a space that is used for weekly meetings of the Queer Alliance. The space is long (straight and very narrow). There are pictures that line the wall. Man and man. Woman and woman. The light is dim. There is no power: all the outlets are void of current. The air is warm and still. There are no windows and it is uncomfortable even to those who know it. There are few places to sit. There are a few chairs. There is platform that lines both sides, causing the room to shrink even more. When bodies fill the space, it collapses even further and the air grows heavier. And this is where safety is to be felt? Sure, it is easy to hide here; it is even easier to be stored. Packed away in the crevice, it is hard to concentrate on extending out into the world beyond.

THE PLAYERS:

- *Greeter 1: boy, over-zealous
- *Greeter 2: girl, just as over-zealous
- *She who questions
- *He who answers
- *Dancer
- *Discipliner
- *She who pleads

THE SCRIPT:

The audience is small. They sign up for the meeting. They receive the announcement. It has open definition of the group. They go to the chapel and meet outside. It is evening. The greeters are engaged in their own conversation. As the audience members come, the greeters are greatly hospitable. They may hand out cookies and tea. Everyone is engaged in small talk and the generic “getting to know you.” Once everyone arrives, the greeters explain that the meeting is for the Queer Alliance and they are glad you could attend. The audience follows them downstairs. Coats go on the hangers next to the cobwebs.

Everyone crowds into the room. The lights are dim.

“Well, it seems everyone is here. Please, if there aren’t enough chairs, take a seat on the platform. Great! I think it is time to start the meeting.”

Lights out.

Lights up. Dim.

Two characters are seated on two blocks at the end of the room.

The boy sits on the one lower. He is in white. The girl in black sits above and begins to question him, forcefully, the boy answers.

Girl: Clothes go?

Boy: In the closet.

Girl: Shoes go?

Boy: In the closet.

Girl: Mustiness?

Boy: In the closet.

Girl: Fears?

Boy: In the closet.

Girl: Skeletons?

Boy: In the closet.

Girl: Past?

Boy: In the closet.

Girl: Hope?

Boy: In the closet.

Girl: But where’s your future?

Boy: -----

Lights out.

The door is opened by one of the greeters.

The dancer, in white, enters. She holds a dressmakers frame. The female frame draped in a traditional skirt. The dancer does “El Train”, a flamenco step, down the aisle. She begins at single speed. A man, clad in black, enters behind her. He is her discipliner. After he enters, he slams the door and the lights come up (dim). The questioning in the front of the room begins to repeat. The discipliner begins to command the dancer: “Stop veering. I hear you! Stop! Straight. Narrow is the path. There is virtue in this discipline. Do you hear me! Can you feel the path? STRAIGHT!”

As his voice raises the dancer’s step becomes double speed down the aisle.

While the discipliner has yelled a muffled voice is heard from behind the door—it is a girl’s (anguished). She begins to knock at the door.

The voice from outside: “Can I come in? Please. Please. PLEASE!”

The dancer stumbles and loses hold of the mannequin and the questioning pauses as the last “please” is heard.

Lights out.

The boy on the floor, the dancer: “*Let us out!*”

Outside the voice continues, “God please. Someone let me in. Please, let me in.”

As the trembling voice pleads, the others lie on the floor. Boy next to boy. Girl next to girl.

The door opens. The girl, clad in color, enters on her hands and knees and crawls through the narrow space. She makes her way through dirt and miscellaneous legs. The door closes behind her. She looks worn from the little light that shines on her. She crawls over and lies across the bodies.

The lights flash on.

The lights flash off.

There is silence.

Thirty-seconds. You can hear the clock in the corner chime them away.

Lights up.

Greeters: “Thanks for coming. We hope you had a great time. Please come back next week. We have meetings every week. Please, let us show you the way out.”

They usher the crowd through the door and close it after them. The audience is alone.
All the lights in the basement are now off.

Find your way out.