

Routing

1st read: 2 (AJ)

2nd read:3rd read:

By: [REDACTED]

Received: playwright to AK, 7/9/19

Reader: AJ, 2/10/20

Cast: 1 female**Time period/Locale:** Now / A theatrical space**Length / Intermission:** 39 pages / no intermission

Synopsis: In this one woman show, a Magician directly addresses the audience explaining that everyone is there for “Jenny” and she is her Magician. She’s only ever performed for Jenny, but she tells the audience she does not mind sharing her secrets in three short acts. She performs “magic” tricks throughout, in pantomime with no real objects. We discover that the Magician (actually named Kristen) was in love with Jenny and they were in a relationship. The show becomes more about Kristen than Jenny, as she tells the audience stories of difficult moments in her life and their relationship, particularly moments they experienced homophobic harassment. Jenny ends up in the hospital and Kristen holds her hand as she passes. After, Kristen starts to lose her magical ability. She wants to die now that the love of her life is gone, but her mother, who disapproved of her being gay before, encourages her to live because loved ones never leave us. In her final speech, Kristen resolves to live and open her eyes, and for her last trick, she pulls out a red scarf from her pocket (real object, not pantomimed as before).

Comments: This one-woman show is an emotional journey through the memories of a young lesbian woman. We begin thinking it will be about Jenny, but Kristen very quickly becomes the main character. She recalls moments and conversations in the present tense, always with “the urgency of the now,” which creates a very complex and theatrical character. Though the structure goes from the present theatrical now to her past, it feels very active as it moves chronologically through her story. However, I found the story very difficult to follow with frequent non-sequiturs and her speaking dialogue for the absent characters. However, the language is active and flows naturally, but it would depend heavily on a very skilled performer to keep the audience engaged throughout. The emotional arc is great, the end is very tender and sweet and inspiring.

Maybe it’s just lost on me, but I do not understand the dramaturgical function of the Magician. It’s not clearly explained in the script besides in the beginning she says anyone who has ever loved has had a magician (eg: King Arthur had Merlin, Penn had Teller) which does not really make sense to me. I like the theatricality of the magic, but was left wondering why most of the time. For me the strongest part was the beginning and the ending, I had a hard time engaging in the middle. I suspect it would be more engaging in performance. All that said, it is an option worth considering if ever we need a solo show and it's definitely a playwright to keep an eye on.

Positive Feedback: The beginning of the play draws you in with the theatricality of the magic, which continues into a very active story of her past through vivid language, and finishing in the end with a tender and powerful conclusion.

Production History: [REDACTED]**Recommendation:** Return with encouragement.