

'No Exit', Jean Paul Sartre

PENINSULA PRODUCTIONS
14600 North Bluff Road
White Rock BC

PRODUCTION DATES: August 11 - 27, 2023

DIRECTOR: MAHARA SINCLAIRE

SYNOPSIS

'No Exit' is a 1944 existentialist play by Jean-Paul Sartre. The play was first performed at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in May 1944. The play begins with three characters who find themselves waiting in a mysterious room. It is a depiction of the afterlife in which three deceased characters are punished by being locked into a room together for eternity. It is the source of Sartre's famous phrase "L'enfer, c'est les autres" or "Hell is other people", a reference to Sartre's ideas about the perpetual ontological struggle of being caused to see oneself as an object from the view of another consciousness.

CHARACTERS

Garcin

He is a journalist from Rio and the first to arrive in the room. He was shot by a firing squad for attempting to desert during a war. He is also the best of the three prisoners at dealing with damnation. He recognizes that the three of them have been grouped together to make each other miserable and thinks that each of them should remain silent in their respective corners. He continually tries to make peace with himself and the people he hurt during his lifetime. He does not question his damnation, easily recalling how awful he had been to his wife.

Inez

A self-described "damned bitch," she is the second prisoner and also the most hostile. She had been a postal clerk and thinks that she is in hell for seducing a friend's wife. Her lover killed them both by leaving the gas on while Inez was asleep. She says that she does not like men and instantly detests everything about Garcin. However, she finds Estelle very attractive and tries to seduce her. She offers to be Estelle's "mirror," by describing her physical appearance, but ends up frightening her instead. After laughing off Estelle's attempt to kill her with a paper-knife, she agrees to let Garcin try and convince her that he is not a coward.

Estelle

The third and final prisoner, she is also the most frightened. She desperately wants to see her reflection in a mirror and swears that she does not belong in hell, having just died of pneumonia. Inez tries to seduce her, but she says that she needs to be with a man. She eventually confesses to not only having an affair, but also drowning the baby of her lover. Garcin is momentarily drawn to her but chooses instead to focus all his energy on Inez. She tries to kill Inez, forgetting that they are all already dead.

Valet

A taciturn representative of the devil. He shows each prisoner to their room, answers their questions, and promptly leaves. There is a call bell in the room but he doesn't always answer it.