



[L.A. Weekly July 9-15](#)

THEATER REVIEW

" THE PIG AND I"

Within the struggles of apartheid South Africa, 15-year-old Rachel (Evelyn Tollman) is fighting for her own racial identity — namely, the battle to keep her beauty-centric mother (Nadine Kadey) from paying an apprentice plastic surgeon to slice the Jewish bumps from her daughter’s nose. “If she’s prettier, she’ll be sweeter,” the family speculates magnanimously. Rachel finally acquiesces to the knife, and when the bandages peel off, the mangy duckling is an unearthed princess uncomfortably straddling both the swamp and the castle grounds in her new high heels. Tollman’s sprightly fable of insecurity and acceptance benefits greatly from director Brenda McFarlane’s blithe and trim staging, though McFarlane needs to crack the whip on her actors, particularly the winsome but flaccid Kadey, who gets away with such slack delivery, she may as well have phoned her lines in. Still, more often than not, Tollman manages to find a sinister edge, even when dredging up the play’s Barbie-and-Ken humor. The unctuous menace of **Brandon Hall**’s bedeviling Pig, who rallies Rachel’s self-loathing, is topped only by a beastly love scene straight out of Terry Southern. Friends and Artists Theater, 1866 N. Vermont Ave. (alley entrance), Los Feliz; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m. (no perfs July 16-17); thru Aug. 14. (323) 665-3852. Written 07/08/2004 (Amy Nicholson)

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