

VOICES OF THE ARMORY
A Play in Three Acts
by Bronwyn Rucker

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Playwright Note

This is a story about desire, oppression, survival and love. It is part play within a play. Act one is the play, "*Voices of the Armory*". It is a re-enactment of a day in the life of the weekly empowerment and advocacy group held at a women's shelter in the upwardly mobile progressive middle-class community of Park Slope, Brooklyn. It was performed by members of that original group in various venues throughout the community in order to increase the dialogue among shelter and community residents; to address the ongoing NIMBY crisis and related racist, sexist and classist values.

Act I is based on the original shelter advocacy group started by Laura, Barbara and Marie with the shelter residents.

Acts II and III depicts the story of the advocacy effort as Meltdown, a small not-for-profit community-based organization struggles to be heard and be effective in the ongoing controversy in community meetings and with themselves and the women of the shelter.

Cast of Characters

Actresses may double, sometimes triple in roles.

Minimum cast requirement: 9 women, 1 man

KATE - 35-year-old AA; resident of shelter in Act 1, community member in Act 2.

JAMAICA - 35-year-old Jamaican born American. Resident of Armory.

Act 1.

CYNTHIA - 36-year-old African American. Resident of Armory. Act 1 and 2.

BED 33 - 45-year-old, from Barbados. Resident of Armory. Act 1.

HELEN - 45-year-old African American. Resident of Armory. Act 1 and 2.

FREDA - 27-year-old African American. Resident of Armory. Act 1 and 2.

LAURA - 36-year-old Italian American. Community Resident. Act 1 and 2.

MARIE - 33-year-old African American. Community Resident. Act 1 and 2.

BARBARA - 44-year-old Irish American. Community resident. Act 1 and 2.

SANDRA - 19-year-old African American. Resident of Armory. Act 2.

DEBY - 29-year-old African American. Resident of Armory. Act 2.

ANNIE - 45-year-old African American. Resident of Armory. Act 2.

LOUISE - 35-year-old Puerto Rican. Resident of Armory. Act 2.

GRACE - 35-year-old Caribbean American. Resident of Armory. Act 2.

AMANA - 35-year-old African, with speech defect. Resident of Armory. Act 2.

LOUISE - 35-year-old Puerto Rican. Resident of Armory. Act 2.

SUSAN - 35-year-old African American. Community Resident. Act 2.

REVEREND - 55-year-old Euro American minister of local church, ACT 2. (also plays community resident, JOHN MCALLISTER).

ROBERTA STING - COMMUNITY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMUNITY BOARD 6 (CCP OF CB6) 45-year-old Euro- American Woman. Community Resident. Act 2.

ELSA CRABTREE - COMMUNITY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CCP OF CB7) 45 Year

Elder Irish American Woman 60-70+. Community Resident. Act 2.

REUSE COMMITTEE PERSON - 45-year-old, any gender. Act 2

JOHN MCALLISTER/COMMUNITY MEMBER 60-70+ White Male

STEVE RIZZO/COMMUNITY MEMBER Department of Housing representative.

LUZ RODRIGUEZ/COMMUNITY MEMBER Latina 50+

COMMITTEE and COMMUNITY MEMBERS - Other cast members may double/triple in these roles.

JAY JOHNS - 40-year-old White male. Spouse of Barbara Rick, Executive Director of Meltdown and of the community development agency that shares Meltdown office space.

Place

The TV room is dingy and poorly cleaned, peeling paint, ill matched and broken-down furniture. The walls are painted dreary army green. The shelter is in a very small part of a large city Armory. Unused exercise equipment fills one corner. Metal file cabinets with notebook sized paper with black felt tipped penned "Arts and Crafts" signs are taped to the doors. A 27" TV is in the front of the room, also a water cooler. As the act progresses the women come and go, sometimes under the guise of getting a cup of water. A large garbage pail props the door. Occasional signs taped randomly to the walls. As the play opens the actresses deliver the lines directly to the audience. The women then relax in a presentational semi-circle, simulating the weekly group.