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Columnist

The tiny capsule of a theater, The Players' Ring, is currently presenting a provocative intimate drama of Catholic suspicion and intrigue.

Doubt, A Parable was written by John Patrick Shanley and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in addition to the Tony award for Best Play in 2005.

The theater experience at the Portsmouth Players' Ring is unique. The confines of this tiny brick playhouse place the actors at arm's length from the audience. The low-ceilinged, former marine workshop creaks

consumption by one of the altar boys after a private meeting with Father Flynn is revealed.

The scourge of sexual misconduct of a dreaded homosexual nature is suspected.

The play touches on a series of sensitive issues that include gender inequality, sexual ethics, carnal shame and salacious behavior, leaving the audience much room for doubt. The ethical dilemma of right and wrong is wrestled with and tested by the proceedings.

Despite its size limitations, the set design is smartly conceived and very well executed. The exposed brick of the theater serves as a perfect background for the school. The creative use of space, two faux stained glass windows and a very clever use of props, takes us successfully to the pulpit, the principal's

pens.

It is obvious from the get-go that a power struggle between the young and warm-hearted Father Flynn and the steel and oppressive Head Mistress Sister Aloisius will ensue.

The suspicions and menace of Sister Aloisius are fueled when news of alcohol

