

Sept 24, 2016

Dearest Friends at California Shakespeare Company:

You may not receive much correspondence from your local federal prison, but this one is long overdue. Approximately 11 months ago an extremely talented group of actors, musicians, stage hands and even the director of your production of *The Tempest* performed for about 100 female inmates on our basketball court at FCI Dublin. My best friend and I were members of the audience and we were enthralled.

My best friend is Danielle Metz and we had the pleasure to meet you after the show and express our gratitude.

I loved the voice of the beautiful songbird who played Ariel. I am a singer as well and I was mesmerized. True to her character, she enchanted us.

Danielle has been incarcerated for 23½ years. She received a sentence of 3 life sentences for her 1st offense—a NON-VIOLENT, drug charge. She had been married to a drug dealer and was considered part of his conspiracy. I realize it sounds absurd. By all means, google it.

There was a beautiful young african american

ballerina who played the daughter of Prospero. From the moment she took the stage, Danielle couldn't take her eyes off her. She favors Danielle's daughter, Glenisha, quite a bit. At one point this fine actor layed down at Danielle's feet and slept. Danielle cried and said "I've never seen my daughter sleep".

Finally the actress who played Prospero was humble and strong. Not a single cast member made us feel judged or less than, and her final monologue was sent through time, from Shakespeare by her... to us.

"As you from crimes would pardon'd be, let your indulgence set me free"

She looked Danielle and me in the eyes and reminded us that we matter and that we are still part of the world. I think about that actress often. I hope she continues to change lives with her amazing gift. I know she changed mine.

Danielle and I have reminisced fondly since your performance. We joke "We escaped that night." We wanted to express this to you, but we never did. We didn't think our words would do those feelings justice. But then, in a surprising "plot twist" of our own, President Obama

granted Danielle clemency a few weeks ago and she has been returned to her momma in New Orleans nearly 24 years later. Then last week Glenisha found out she is pregnant with Danielle's 1st grand baby and she has been offered a job as a motivational speaker with benefits!!!

In December, I will be relocated to a half-way house in San Diego, as my 5 1/2 year sentence is also almost over. I am also here for a non violent, 1st time, drug offense, but I am white. I invite you to draw your own conclusions.

Since your performance we have celebrated with you every opening night and award listed in our local newspaper. You deserve all and more than the accolades you receive. Thank you for bringing this incredible production to us and for creating for us a magical and beautiful ... freedom.

Your friends,

[Redacted Name]

[Redacted Name]

