

Dykes To Watch Out For

the p word
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judgment day
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THE MOSTLY UNFABULOUS SOCIAL LIFE OF ETHAN GREEN

... By Eric Orner.

STALL STORY
with ethan green...

SO YOU'RE CAUSING A LITTLE BLINDNESS IN A PUBLIC RESTROOM WHEN YOU ARE INTERRUPTED BY THE SUDDEN OCCUPANCY OF A NEIGHBORING STALL...

WHILE YOU WAIT, YOUR EYES DRIFT UP AND SETTLE ON ONE OF THE PANELS IN THE CEILING...

PRESENTLY YOU'VE CONVINCED YOURSELF THAT BEHIND IT SITS EXTENSIVE SECURITY-CAMERA MONITORING EQUIPMENT, AND THAT SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, IS VIEWING THIS ENTIRE, DELICATE MATTER.

MAYBE ITS SOME RIGHT-WING CADAVER OR OTHER, WHO REPRESENTS A MISGUIDED PIEDMONT STATE IN CONGRESS...

...OR MAYBE IT'S THAT HOT, REDHEADED, TRASHY-LOOKING BUILDING-OPS GUY YOU PASSED ON YOUR WAY INSIDE...

Perhaps HE'D BE WILLING TO HELP YOU FINISH THE JOB...

Book Review: Damned Strong Love

by Lutz van Dijk
Henry Holt and Company, New York NY 1995

Reviewed by Paj Wadley-Bailey

I read Lutz van Dijk's *Damned Strong Love* on Tuesday, June 11, prior to attending an outcry against the heinous throat-slashing of two Vermont lesbians while hiking the Appalachian Trail. And while these murders were taking place, two hetero women — one Asian and the other European-American — were murdered just for being women in pursuit of happiness. As a lesbian who is African-American, I connect these atrocities to the bombings of black churches, the hub of African-American social/political/spiritual activity.

Thus, it was in a mood of grief and outrage that I read *Damned Strong Love*, meditated, and screamed "We don't deserve this! Never again!"

Written for youth and adults, this dramatization of

the Nazi persecution of homosexuals based on the life of Polish-Jewish teenager, Stefan K, is a wake-up call, and it is imperative for activists working for social justice to read this story and make the connections.

When Stefan K. fell in love with a German-Austrian soldier, Willi G., who was stationed in Poland on his way to the Eastern front, they both knew immediately that their love was damned. Stefan's letter to Willi was found by German authorities and used to identify and convict him as "sub-human" before sentencing him to a concentration camp.

Stefan managed to survive. How? What happened to Willi? Was he, too, condemned as "sub-human?"

Lutz van Dijk, who grew up in Hamburg, (West) Germany and is now with the Anne Frank Institute in Amsterdam, has written *Damned Strong Love* with uncommon tenderness, simplicity, and clarity.

For me, van Dijk raises questions that we must deal with, i.e. who are we as a group? What is resistance in our daily lives? How do we find strategies together against this rise of contemporary neo-fascism? How do we integrate the struggle to change systems of oppression on a personal level with real institutional changes?

How do we as lesbians and gay men work on imperialism, colonialism, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, etc.— and how do we recognize our difference and maintain our integrity? What are the differences between our cultures, and how does anti-Semitism and racism get played out in them? How does our political work reflect our consciousness of racism? And how do we keep from dying spiritually?

In a world of five second sound bites, we need books like *Damned Strong Love* to help us remember how this history past is also our present. If we do not keep ourselves informed and active, it will be part of the future as well.

Dr. Lutz van Dijk will be the keynote speaker at the Holocaust Studies Institute for Youth to be held from August 11-17th at the Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center. Dijk will speak on Sunday, August 11, at 7p.m. The Institute includes a bus trip to the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington DC from August 15-17. For more information and registration materials, call Glenn or Paj at 802-223-3409.