



## Plays in One Act

*Daniel Halpern (Editor) , Edward Gorey*

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A dazzling collection and already a standard reference for those interested in contemporary drama, **Plays in One Act** is a unique compilation of plays and monologues that showcases a stunning and diverse array of work from some of the most important voices in theater.

Forty-three modern works are collected here: from plays by important contemporary artists such as David Mamet, Wendy Wasserstein, Sam Shepard, and John Guare, to gems by masters like Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, and newer talents like Carol S. Lashof and Perry Souchuk. Leading British playwrights — Tom Stoppard, David Hare, and John Osborne — are also featured, along with the international voices of Václav Havel and Kobo Abe, and works by such established writers as Eudora Welty, Joyce Carol Oates, Richard Ford, and Garrison Keillor, who are writing outside their traditional genres.

## Plays in One Act Details

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# From Reader Review Plays in One Act for online ebook

**Akemi G. says**

I've had this anthology of contemporary one-act plays for years. I like reading dramas. It's an old form of literature. (Think of Prometheus Bound--which can be considered a one-act play.)

This is an anthology, so I like some of them, and not so much of some others. That's okay--I read this to get various tastes.

**The Man Who Turned Into a Stick** by K?b? Abe

I guess this is included to give the book the international feel. Does anyone really like Abe? Anyone, really?

**Finding the Sun** by Edward Albee

Although this didn't impress me, I'd love to read his Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

**On Sundays** by Lynne Alvarez

**Stops** by Robert Auletta

Ah . . . disproportionately long monologues intercepted with a few lines by others. I guess we once called this modern.

**Jack Pot Melting: A Commercial** by Amiri Baraka

**Naomi in the Living Room** by Christopher Durang

**American Tropical** by Richard Ford

**Springtime** by Maria Irene Fornes

**Helpless Doorknobs** by Edward Gorey

**Life Under Water** by Richard Greenberg

**Four Baboons Adoring the Sun** by John Guare

**The Problem** by A R Gurney

This is my favorite in the book. Although it's a short, simple play, there is the beginning, the middle, and the end (whereas some of the other plays here leave us with undigested feelings; but then, simply presenting problems and not solving them was the style before), with the kind of sense of humor I like.

**The Bay at Nice** by David Hare

**Protest** by Václav Havel

**Am I Blue** by Beth Henley

**Our Man in Madras** by Gert Hofmann

**Teeth** by Tina Howe

**Prodigal Son** by Garrison Keillor

**She Talks to Beethoven** by Adrienne Kennedy

**Linda Her** by Harry Kondoleon

**Success** by Arthur Kopit

**Medusa's Tale** by Carol S. Lashof

**Can Can** by Romulus Linney

**A Life with No Joy in It** by David Mamet

To me, this almost refuses to be read.

**Chicks** by Grace McKeaney

**Prelude and Liebestod** by Terrence McNally

**Camp Cataract** by Joseph McPhillips (adapted from a story by Jane Bowles)

**Waking Women** by Cassandra Medley

**The Last Yankee** by Arthur Miller

So? (This was my first Arthur Miller. Perhaps it wasn't a good choice.)

**Tone Clusters** by Joyce Carol Oates

**A Bond Honored** by John Osborne

**Heatstroke** by James Purdy

**Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, Part II** by Jonathan Reynolds

**The Cuban Swimmer** by Milcha Sanchez-Scott

**Excerpts from Slave of the Camera** by Sam Shepard

No offense, but I don't think this is one-act play.

**The Pleasure of Detachment** by Perry Souchuk

**The Boundary** by Tom Stoppard and Clive Exton

**Placebo** by Andrew Vachss

I like his voice. Among so many smartasses, this stands out. (Just not sure about the ending . . . but I'm sure that's because I'm not smart enough.)

**Tender Offer** by Wendy Wasserstein

**Bye-Bye Brevoort** by Eudora Welty

**The Chalky White Substance** by Tennessee Williams

Did you know Tennessee Williams wrote dystopian SF? It's really boring.

**Testimonies** by August Wilson

**The Moonshot Tape** by Lanford Wilson

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## **John Vanderslice says**

This is a useful but curious anthology. While it includes some superb plays and undeniably important playwrights, some of the choices are also disappointing. Perhaps most disappointing is the inclusion of writers who are by no means thought of as playwrights, because they aren't. For instance, Richard Ford, Garrison Keillor, and Joyce Carol Oates. A book intended to introduce a group of students to the art of the one act play should take care of first business first, and in my mind that means giving useful and deserved exposure to the plays and playwrights that are significant to contemporary theatre. Including the likes of Keillor and Ford in a playwriting anthology reeks of a marketing move. A second objection I would raise is that the anthology, contemporary when it first appeared in the early 90s, desperately needs updating. Nearly every play in the book dates from the 1980s. Given how many great plays have been written since 1990, it's time for the publisher to give this volume a second look.

All that said, Plays in One Act contains some beautiful, even stunning, examples of the form. And the idiosyncratic selection process didn't just result in disappointments but also some wonderful surprises, like the 1975 television play "The Boundary," written by Tom Stoppard and Clive Exton, and "Medusa's Tale" by Carol Lashof, a modern and provocative re-working of the old Greek legend. Most stunning, and simply a brilliant choice, is Terrence McNally's "Prelude and Liebestod," one of the most unique ideas for staging I've ever seen. Owning a copy of that play is almost worth the cost of the book.

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## **Liz Maurant says**

Superlative theater craft! Much humor involved here also!

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## **Rosa says**

“Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, Part II” is hilarious, and the easiest play for me to read in here. But this is a great collection.

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