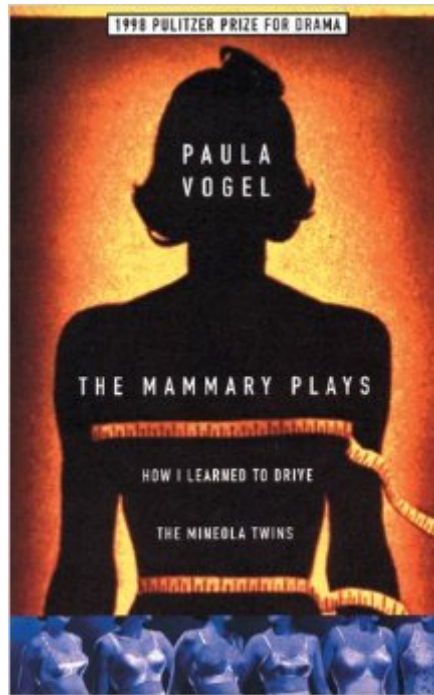


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The Mammary Plays: Two Plays



Synopsis

Latest plays by the author of *The Baltimore Waltz*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The two plays in this volume have been performed recently in New England, and were among the best new plays I've seen recently. Particularly, *How I Learned to Drive*, as performed by the American Repertory Theater, was funny, touching, disquieting, and completely absorbing. There's more in both of these plays than I could absorb seeing them only once, however. Without question, *How I Learned to Drive*, which presents two complex major characters and asks us to question who has the power in their relationship and who is the victim, is the richer play. But Vogel's satire on extremism in the politics and life-styles of Baby-boomers, *The Mineola Twins*, is a fitting complement to *How I Learned to Drive*. In both plays Vogel succeeds in disquieting us, urging us to see past black and white judgements and to understand that life in the human family (both plays contain the refrain "family is family") is complicated by many cross-currents. Consider reading these plays, even if you've seen them. (In both plays I discovered essential details I'd misunderstood when I saw the plays on the stage.) If you missed the chance to see these plays, do read them, particularly *How I Learned to Drive*. This is more than a story about sexual abuse; it's an extreme example of what can be true in any family, though we may be slow to admit it--that those who hurt us may also give us much love. Perhaps one sign of Vogel's sense of perspective is that this play--about the grimmest of subjects, child abuse--is as funny, at times, as it is touching.

This play does a wonderful job of bringing to life a situation often avoided in literature: sexual abuse. The author, Paula Vogel, creates the character of Li'l Bit so clearly that the reader has no trouble identifying with her. Vogel also uses Peck, the infatuated uncle, as a foil character for Li'l Bit by creating him in such a manner that forces the reader to find fault easily in him. This leads the reader to the conclusion that Li'l Bit is innocent in the horrendous acts her uncle continuously performs with and on her, which is very true. Since the acts of sexual abuse began when she was only a small child, she has grown up with this most of her life. To her it seems normal what is going on between her and her uncle, but when she finally leaves and goes on to college, she realizes how wrong it really is and finally gains enough courage to tell her uncle to stop. It is courage like this that most people, females especially, can relate to, whether they have found it for themselves or are hoping to find it in the future. This play brings that courage to life for them and makes it seem that much more attainable.

This volume of two Paula Vogel plays is a very fascinating and valuable work. *How I Learned to Drive* deals with a taboo topic in literature and in most of society - familial sexual abuse. The lives of Li'l Bit and her Uncle Peck are displayed with a coy frankness that warrants a couple of reads to more fully understand. As the story unfolds, the readers find themselves flopping between one character and the other. You're never really sure who is abusing who. *The Mineola Twins* is a very fine social satire of alternate lifestyles and obsession with power. The quirkiness of the characters and some of the absurd situations provide an extremely insightful and amusing view on Boomerism and society's interest in appearances. Both plays are great reads - especially when taken in this one-two punch of a book. And, if you have a chance to see them on the stage, don't miss out.

The copy I ordered arrived in fantastic time and in perfect condition. I'm producing *How I Learned to Drive* for my college theatre & I already love the play, so this copy will be the perfect companion during the production!

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