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The Clean House And Other Plays



Synopsis

âœPassionate. Show-stopping. Daringly over-the-top and impressively consistent in its delirious excess. The Clean House shines.â•â”New Haven AdvocateâœThe Clean House is not, by any means, a traditional boy-meets-girl story. In fact disease, death, and dirt are among the subjects it addresses. This comedy is romantic, deeply so, but in the more arcane sense of the word: visionary, tinged with fantasy, extravagant in feeling, maybe a little nuts.â•â”The New York TimesâœTouching, inventive, invigoratingly compact, and luminously liquid, Eurydice reframes the ancient myth of ill-fated love to focus not on the bereaved musician but on his dead brideâ”and on her struggle with love beyond the grave.â•â”San Francisco ChronicleThis volume is the first publication of Sarah Ruhl, âœa playwright with a unique comic voice, perspective, and sense of theaterâ• (Variety), who is fast leaving her mark on the American stage. In the award-winning Clean Houseâ”a play of uncommon romance and uncommon comedyâ”a maid who hates cleaning dreams about creating the perfect joke, while a doctor who treats cancer leaves his heart inside one of his patients. This volume also includes Eurydice, Ruhlâ™s reinvention of the tragic Greek tale of love and loss, together with a third play still to be named.Sarah Ruhl received the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize in 2004 for her play The Clean House, which has been produced at Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Wilma Theatre in Philadelphia, South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa, and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, DC. Her play Eurydice has been produced at Madison Repertory Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

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Customer Reviews

Before Sarah Ruhl was a playwright, she was a poet. This is not a great surprise. I mean, just look at the format, imagery and dialogue found in *The Clean House* and *Other Plays*. This is drama, yeah, but it is drama that even contains poetic line-breaks! I feel I can deposit my pain right there--like a coin, into a hole. (from *Melancholy Play*, page 236) In a March 2008 *New Yorker* interview, Ruhl calls herself "a fabulist." She is someone whose characters build rooms of string and travel in raining elevators (*Euridyce*). In another story, Ruhl echoes Monty Python's idea of jokes that can kill--only hers are used as mercy killings (*The Clean House*). Ruhl's lesbian cowboy seems natural riding imaginary horses in Pittsburgh (*Late: A Cowboy Song*); and watch where you step, because the depressed are turning into almonds at almost every turn! (*Melancholy Play*) The experience of reading plays is a different one from that of reading other fiction or non-fiction works. Plays stretch the mind to consider subjects such as lighting, sound, and props. As a list given here, such material might be perceived as mundane and dull. In Sarah Ruhl's hands, they become magic. A lack of narrative and the addition of technical details doesn't mean that the nuances of emotion are left behind as something only the actors can manage. Tears, real tears, are no doubt regularly shed as Ruhl's readers feel the beautiful emotional-roller coaster moments on these pages: the strong father-daughter bond and ridiculousness of new romance in *Euridyce*; the love for parents and heartbreaking compassion of *The Clean House*; the true and false loves of *Late: A Cowboy Song*; and the sweet disorder of *Melancholy Play*.

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