



The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds

By Paul Zindel

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The old, converted vegetable shop where Tillie lives is more like a madhouse than a home. Tillie's mother, Beatrice, is bitter and cruel, yet desperate for her daughters' love. Her sister, Ruth, suffers epileptic fits and sneaks cigarettes every chance she gets. In the midst of chaos, Tillie struggles to keep her focus and dreams alive. Tillie -- keeper of rabbits, dreamer of atoms, true believer in life, hope, and the effect of gamma rays on man-in-the-moon marigolds.

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Editorial Review

Review

Naturalistic drama in two acts by Paul Zindel, produced in 1965. It won the Pulitzer Prize when it was published in 1971. Largely autobiographical, the play is noted for its sympathetic characterizations. The story centers on Beatrice Hunsdorfer, an impractical, embittered widow living with her two awkward teenage daughters in a ramshackle house where she makes a living by nursing an elderly invalid. Alternately charming and abrasive, Beatrice is generally selfish like her elder daughter, Ruth, who suffers from convulsions brought on by a childhood trauma. The younger daughter, Tillie, is an eccentric outcast who earns respect by winning her school science project. -- *The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature*

From the Publisher

Beatrice was a mother . . . and the embittered ringmaster of the circus Hunsdorfer featuring three generations of crazy ladies living under the sloppiest big top on earth. Nanny was no problem. She sat and stared and stayed silent as a venerable vegetable should. Ruth was half-mad and easily bought with an occasional cigarette. But how is the world would Beatrice control Tillie--keeper of rabbits, dreamer of atoms, true believer in life, hope, and the effect of gamma rays on man-in-the-moon marigolds . . .

"Paul Zindel was written a masterful, pacesetting drama. It combines moments of pain, poignancy, beauty, and hope. It is the most compelling work of its kind since Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*."--*Variety*.

"The ultimate accolade must go to Paul Zindel for creating a psychologically perceptive ambiance. Shame hangs in the air of this house and palpably as poison gas. And yet, Zindel reminds us, strong, strange, beautiful flowers spring from such compost heaps. It is a troubling thought, one of the honest and intelligent values of this splendid and tormented play."--*Time*

From the Inside Flap

Beatrice was a mother . . . and the embittered ringmaster of the circus Hunsdorfer featuring three generations of crazy ladies living under the sloppiest big top on earth. Nanny was no problem. She sat and stared and stayed silent as a venerable vegetable should. Ruth was half-mad and easily bought with an occasional cigarette. But how is the world would Beatrice control Tillie--keeper of rabbits, dreamer of atoms, true believer in life, hope, and the effect of gamma rays on man-in-the-moon marigolds . . .

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