

# Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

*Dramatic Publishing*

# **S.P.A.R.**

**A Play**

**by**

**STEPHEN GREGG**



**Dramatic Publishing**

**Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand**

**\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalog and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING  
P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 60098

*COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES.* This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMIII by  
STEPHEN GREGG

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(S.P.A.R.)

ISBN: 1-58342-157-2

## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in this book, may be used on all programs. *On all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with  
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

# S.P.A.R.

A Play in One Act  
For 4m., 3w.,  
and anywhere from 3 to 100 either gender

## CHARACTERS

RENATA..... a high school student

MARIA ..... her best friend

PAUL ..... another student

### THE AUTHOR

RENATO..... Renata in an alternate universe. A guy.

MARIA 2.. Maria in that same universe. Not at all like Maria.

PAUL 2..... Paul in that universe.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS ..... at least four of them

TODD . a high school student. Handsome except for one thing.

## NOTES

The first production of this play made one serious error.

A group of Thespians from a bunch of Northeastern states performed S.P.A.R. (back then it was called G.L.A.M.O.R.) at the Yankee Thespian Festival.

I was in attendance at the festival. The extremely nice, very talented young man playing Stephen Gregg made a point of studying my mannerisms and shlumpy dress. He actually borrowed one of my shirts to play the role.

He played me.

That was a reasonable choice but, as it turns out, not a good one.

I'm not all that compelling as a character. Disheveled and low key. These are attributes that play better in life than onstage.

Stephen Gregg is the center of this play and needs to be a strong presence: powerful (Charlton Heston as Moses), or spooky (Gene Wilder as Willy Wonka) or evil and a little ridiculous (Cruella de Ville as herself).

Fortunately, the first cast got a chance to perform the play at another festival. This time, the actor playing Stephen Gregg had lost any fear he had of offending me and played it much bigger. It was a huge improvement.

Ironically, for a play that's about being trapped by the exact words in a text, this text can be messed with. For example, the audience member with the laser pointer is just a suggestion. You could simply identify the first audience member by what he or she is wearing. Or you could have that person annoy the audience in a different way—by coughing periodically, or maybe by walking in late.

The advantage of the laser pointer is that it starts the play before the play has actually started, and so blurs the line between reality and the stage. (In one of the early productions, the principal of the school came out to announce that whoever was using the laser pointer had to stop it or face immediate expul-

sion. The principal was scary and completely convincing.) To that same effect, in the scene where Stephen Gregg controls the audience, you might want to use anyone who happens to be in attendance and is willing to go along: teachers, the principal, visiting dignitaries, the guy making the videotape.

You might also want to find a different way to start the play over. Having the actors forget their lines works fine, and is an interesting acting exercise; the extreme naturalism required to sell that moment is different from the heightened realism more appropriate in the rest of the play. However, there are other options. One thought I had was to have frantic Paul knock over some set piece. But the boys whom I've seen play Paul tend to be the kind of high-energy kids who seem likely to take on that task too enthusiastically. I envisioned broken bones and lawsuits. If you think you can *safely* have a member of the cast screw something up on the set, feel free.

Alternatively, you could have Renata choose that moment to get the candle out of a drawer and not be able to get the drawer open. Or you could have the lights go out suddenly and have someone apologize for the fuse problem.

In the program, you might want to identify Stephen Gregg merely as "The Author."

It would be best if Stephen Gregg caught the cantaloupe, but if he drops it just change Renata's line to "Don't drop it again."

And finally, as promised, if you think the lines about Renata's sexuality will offend your audience, you may cut them. An easy fix would be as follows:

STEPHEN GREGG. Well, you know what? He was going to.

But now he doesn't. HA!

MARIA. Yes he does.

STEPHEN GREGG. No, he doesn't. (*He takes out a script.*) It says so in the script.

RENATA. That's the script?

— SG

## S.P.A.R.

*(As the audience settles in, and in the blackout right before the play, the red dot of a laser pointer flits across the stage. It's irritating.)*

*Lights up on RENATA's bedroom. She enters sincerely upset, but also aware that she's overdoing it. She throws herself on her bed. MARIA follows her in.)*

RENATA. It's over! It's over it's over it's over!

MARIA. My day was worse.

RENATA. My life is over. Go home.

MARIA. I wish I could sing.

RENATA. Maria, I just want to be alone.

MARIA. Seriously, wouldn't that be great? To have your best talent be so public? Plus, if I could sing, I'd sing protest songs in front of the jail. *(No answer.)* So what's the name of this new love object?

RENATA. Todd. And I can tell he doesn't like me. Please go away.

MARIA. You haven't even asked me about William.

RENATA. Oh, would you shut up about William already?

MARIA. He's in prison!

RENATA. There's nothing you can do about that.

MARIA. I'm going to bust him out. POW! Pow pow!!!  
*(She hits the air, then shakes her hand as though she's*



*hurt it by hitting something hard.) Ouccchhh. (Then, apparently, there's someone—an imaginary prison guard—in front of her. Whispered, to RENATA.) Prison guard. (She assumes a martial arts pose, starts to creep up on him.) He doesn't see me, he doesn't see me... (She grabs his arm and twists him into a hammerlock. Two quick chops to his neck and then a choke-hold, which she administers as he struggles, until he's out. She places her foot on his imaginary body, triumphant.)*

*(PAUL runs into the room. Perhaps he hides behind something.)*

RENATA. What are you doing here?

PAUL. Don't let them find me!

RENATA. Who?

PAUL. The demons! *(He starts to run from the room, trips, and stumbles. He goes back to the place he tripped. Leans down and examines it.)* There's something disgusting on your floor. *(He runs out.)*

RENATA *(pause)*. What have you got to lose? *(There's a long awkward pause.)*

MARIA. Did you want to say something about my singing?

*(They have gotten lost. The actors that is. Neither of them is sure whose line it is. Perhaps one of them is unable to keep from smiling a little bit. Or maybe it's just terrifying to both of them. Either way, after a long moment, MARIA gives up and walks off stage. The lights start to fade. RENATA gets the hint, follows her. Once the lights have gone all the way out, we wait a long moment, and then we start the play again.)*

*RENATA's bedroom. She enters sincerely upset but also aware that she's overdoing it. MARIA follows her in.)*

RENATA. It's over! It's over it's over it's over!

MARIA. My day was worse.

RENATA. My life is over. Go home.

MARIA. I wish I could sing.

RENATA. Maria, I just want to be alone.

MARIA. Seriously, wouldn't that be great? To have your best talent be so public? Plus, if I could sing, I'd sing protest songs in front of the jail. *(No answer.)* So what's the name of this new love object?

RENATA. Todd. And I can tell he doesn't like me. Please go away.

MARIA. You haven't even asked me about William.

RENATA. Oh, would you shut up about William already?

MARIA. He's in prison!

RENATA. There's nothing you can do about that.

MARIA. I'm going to bust him out. POW! Pow pow!!!  
*(She hits the air, then shakes her hand as though she's hurt it by hitting something hard.)* Ouccchhh. *(Then, apparently, there's someone—an imaginary prison guard—in front of her. Whispered, to RENATA.)* Prison guard. *(She assumes a martial arts pose, starts to creep up on him.)* He doesn't see me, he doesn't see me... *(She grabs his arm and twists him into a hammerlock. Two quick chops to his neck and then a choke-hold, which she administers as he struggles, until he's out. She places her foot on his imaginary body, triumphant.)*

*(PAUL runs into the room. Perhaps he hides behind something.)*

RENATA. What are you doing here?

PAUL. Don't let them find me!

RENATA. Who?

PAUL. The demons! *(He starts to run from the room, trips, and stumbles. He goes back to the place he tripped. Leans down and examines it.)* There's something disgusting on your floor. *(He runs out of the room.)*

MARIA. What was that about?

RENATA. I have no idea. *(MARIA makes herself comfortable and starts to sing a song to herself. She is not a good singer.)* You can't sing.

MARIA. And Todd doesn't like you. Oh well.

RENATA *(grabs a book)*. But he could.

MARIA. Renata.

RENATA. It could work. Just try it with me...

MARIA. You don't really believe this, do you?

RENATA. What have you got to lose? This book explains it all. I have everything we need. A candle and a watermelon.

MARIA. A watermelon.

RENATA. It's for protection. *(She reads from a book of spells.)* "To keep this spell from going bad, hold onto the melon. Drop it and everything will go horribly wrong." *(She hands the melon to MARIA.)* Think you can handle it?

MARIA. Oh I do hope so.

RENATA. Come on! Play along. *(She turns down the lights. Maybe turns on some music. We see the scene mostly by candlelight. RENATA starts to chant.)* Urlagoma. Urlagoma. *(MARIA finds this funny.)*

MARIA. What are you chanting?

RENATA. R-L-G-O-M-A. Urlagoma.

MARIA. What does that mean?

RENATA. I don't know. *(She starts the chant again.)* Urlagoma. Urlagoma. Urlagoma. *(Perhaps we hear a little wind. To MARIA.)* Help me! *(MARIA joins her with no enthusiasm.)*

BOTH. Urlagoma. Urlagoma. Urlagoma. Urlagoma.

*(RENATA blows out the candle. Whatever technical razzle-dazzle you can muster should be used right here: wind, thunder, lightning.)*

RENATA. I want to know everything there is to know about Todd.

*(Angelic music plays. A warm glow suffuses the stage. STEPHEN GREGG, the playwright, enters. The girls are both a little astounded.)*

RENATA *(re: the melon)*. Don't let go.

MARIA. Don't worry.

RENATA. Who are you?

STEPHEN GREGG. I'm Stephen Gregg.

RENATA. Who?

MARIA *(to RENATA)*. Did you do this?

RENATA. I'm not sure. *(To STEPHEN.)* I have questions about Todd. Are you here to answer them?

STEPHEN GREGG *(after a moment)*. I can answer them if you're sure you want to know.

RENATA. Of course I want to know. Why wouldn't I?

STEPHEN GREGG. Because in order to answer your questions, I'd have to tell you how I know the answers.

RENATA. And... ?