



Marisol

Jose Rivera

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Marisol Perez, a young Latino woman, is a copy editor for a Manhattan publisher. Although she has elevated herself into the white collar class, she continues to live alone in the dangerous Bronx neighborhood of her childhood. As the play begins, Marisol narrowly escapes a vicious attack by a golf-club-wielding madman while traveling home on the subway. Later that evening Marisol is visited by her guardian angel, who informs her that she can no longer serve as Marisol's protector because she has been called to join the revolution already in progress against an old and senile God who is dying and "taking the rest of the universe with him." The war in heaven spills over into New York City, reducing it to a smoldering urban wasteland where giant fires send noxious smoke to darken the skies, where the moon has not been seen in months, where the food has been turned to salt, and where water no longer seeks its level. Alone, without her protector, Marisol begins a nightmare journey into this new war zone. She finds herself on the streets, homeless, where her many encounters include a woman beaten for exceeding her credit limit and a homeless burn victim in a wheelchair looking for his lost skin. With the apocalypse well under way, the angels have traded in their wings for Uzis and wear leather motorcycle jackets and fatigues. As the action builds to a crescendo, the masses of homeless and displaced people join the angels in the war to save the universe.

Marisol Details

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From Reader Review Marisol for online ebook

Susanne Reed says

Still my favorite play.

Jillian says

what the everloving fuck was that

Helen Sebesta says

Just saw a live production at Trinity Conservatory Theater in Providence and I think the play is fascinating. It keeps one thinking long after the last scene. It is definitely part of Theater of the Absurd, but the themes in the play are not really so absurd. The characters abound in real life and they make the play quite accessible. I saw Lenny, when he demanded that he control Marisol and she could have his baby, as a God figure, or perhaps a symbol of the Catholic church in that he said she wouldn't need to take responsibility anymore. He would decide what was good for her.

The title and the title character seem significant: Mary plus sun or "loneliness" and the many and varied, obvious, references in the play to the Catholic church. The man in the wheelchair who had been burned and was looking for his skin, at times seemed to be treated by Marisol as a Christ figure. The woman in the fur coat who was lost because she lost her credit rating, seems to represent all of us who ignore the poor, the homeless, and the forgotten members of our society. I'm still thinking about the guardian angels!

The humor in this play kept it vital and accessible to the audience. I won't ruin that part by discussing it.

Robyn says

There is WAY too much going on in this play: Magical realism, science fiction, apocalypse, Nazism, feminism, race relations, heteronormative criticism, religion, capitalism, materialism, etc., etc.

WTF did I just read?

Bt says

I just saw a production of this, and oh! it was so fascinating, and I have so many mixed feelings and so many things to say! I did not like the plot or the characters, and yet this was the most engaging thing I've seen all year (I believe I've seen about 20 plays this year). I mean, I was in the moment every second. A lot of it, I think, was the design of the production I saw, which was *so* well done. It captured the mood perfectly. And I think that's what makes this play work: the mood, the tone, the atmospheric emotion... all of which are so

poignant and powerful they could knock you over.

Let me put it this way (I'm going to use sort of a metaphor or a parallel). I don't like Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series. There's a lot of bad writing in there. And I don't like the plot and I really don't like the characters or the messages or the writing style. And yet. And yet I got through three books and I couldn't put them down. I mean could *not* put them down. I didn't understand this for a long time, and then I read a review that I think had the answer. Stephanie does a lot of things wrong but what she does right is truly capture the emotion of human longing. She somehow catches it and melts it onto the page, and the emotion is so strong and so relatable and so *real* that we flock to it. We all know what it is to long, and we can't help but be drawn in when we see ourselves represented so vividly... even if Bella and Edward are both stupid, annoying jerks.

Marisol was like that. One of the highest compliments I can give a work of fiction is that it is very human, and *Marisol* was human in a weird, strange, messed-up, fascinating way. The emotion *Marisol* captured was not longing but fear - fear of the unknown and fear of being alone. I always think sci-fi movies are the scariest kind of movies because there are no rules. In a realistic movie, you see a tree or a lamppost, and you know it's just what it looks like. You see a bad man, and you know he can be killed. But in a sci-fi movie, you can never be sure of anything; anything could be an alien or a robot or a monster or a death machine. *Marisol* is not sci-fi. *Marisol* lives in the real world... or so she thinks. And yet, all the rules start breaking, and you never know if the entire set is going to come crashing down on her head, which of course keeps you on the edge of your seat. And it's so human because you see this tiny girl in big, scary, hungry New York, and she's all alone, and you cannot help but sympathize with her.

I didn't like the characters or the plot or the messages or the themes. It's pretty depressing and a little anti-religion, and frankly, I just don't know what it was trying to tell me, and I'm not even entirely sure what happened. But wow... oh wow... wow, it was worth seeing.

Jessica Barkl says

I re-read this play yesterday as another option for the 2014-2015 Season for SUNY Sullivan. My friend Suzanne Hobbs-Reed had produced and directed this play in 2002, right before we graduated from graduate school, and I did my first lighting design with it. I had remembered really liking it, but I couldn't remember all of the details as to why, so...of course...I re-read it. The characters are really complicated and, yet, silly, for such a heavy topic: the end of the world... It has the diversity of New York City, the topic of climate change (or God's intervention of how the world is treated) and then some interesting leveling of the playing field for our class system in the United States that no one wants to talk about. We shall see what the students of SUNY Sullivan vote to have me direct, but...I have a feeling this might be one of the top choices...

Sarah says

A fascinating fusion of absurdism and magical realism, *Marisol* generates many questions about religion while its characters spend most of the play grappling with each other. Rivera is a keen study of other writers; his rhythm here resembles Ionesco, and his flights of fancy represent the best of modern theatrical technique.

When all the angels of heaven decide to rebel and kill God, who has become imbalanced in his old age, and

so is destroying the planet Earth, Marisol and the rest of humanity are left to fend for themselves. Everything they know will change, and it does--wildly. Environments stretch, people lost their personalities, and Marisol is warned that she must grab power in order to survive until the new order is established.

Full of mayhem, this play never lets you forget the deep humanness of its title character. She is our tether, and as more and more horrible things happen to her and those around her, her revelations fuel our own. Most powerfully, Rivera points out through Marisol that the mere presence of angels as guardians of humanity grants humanity the importance to change and fortify themselves with the power of belief. Even in her awful world, Marisol's religion is not a crutch but a signifier of the hidden power that lies within each of us, as reflected by the wonders of the spiritual.

ReadingWhiskers says

This play was really good! I started reading it for my theatre class and it was one of my favorites we've read thus far! I love how blunt all of the characters are and how far they are willing to go simply for a little friendship.

Polytimi says

A dystopian (but also potential) depiction of reality, a distorted nature of things and dialogues that remind us the theatre of the absurd. A quite prophetic and diachronic play that I would be really interested in watching on stage as well. City scapes and human portraits are twisted in a horrifying way, which however do not strike us as extraordinary. Although appalled, we constantly feel the bond with caos that smolders through various violent scenes. "Magic Realism" is a drama genre I really enjoy!

Emma says

I was in this play so obvi I've got a soft spot for it, but it's a really spectacular work!

Spectacles says

This one is about a girl named Marisol being protected by a guardian angels until the angels decide to go to war with God. They decided they needed to get rid of God and replace him with one of the angels because he has gotten too corrupt. In the midst of this battle, New York City becomes completely unfamiliar to Marisol and people are changing during this kind of apocalyptic event. It's every man, woman and child for themselves. It's Marisol's job to survive amongst people she cannot trust. I gave this book 2 out of 5 stars. I didn't particularly enjoy this one much. It was a bit too odd for me. In class, we've talked about the audience's suspension of disbelief. I just couldn't withdraw the impossibility of this ever happening.

review cross-posted on my blog: Spectacle Aglow

Spencer Fancutt says

Picked this up in the uni shop, thinking I hadn't read any drama in a while. I was expecting more than a WTF. There is a guardian angel with an Uzi, and a skinhead neo-nazi running around setting fire to homeless people. In spite of this, I didn't enjoy it at all.

Elena Mey says

Masterpiece.

Robin says

This play reminded me quite a bit of *Angels in America*, if *Angels* solely focused on the angels and the destruction and tragedy occurring on Earth. This play is witty and thoughtful, though perhaps a bit too hopeful for me. It is a show I would definitely like to see live.

Katerina Siapatori says

I am not particularly fond of absurdish drama nor did I entirely understand what the play is about. But for me it's certainly one of those works that you struggle to grasp and that you enjoy whatsoever, comprehension not being a deterrent for that.
