



The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe

Jane Wagner

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Jane Wagner's masterpiece--The first play in more than 20 years to become a national bestseller--is now a motion picture!

In this satire, a form all too lacking in American theater, Trudy the bag lady, Wagner's central character, tries to explain modern American material society to an alien (i.e., interstellar) committee.

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe Details

Date : Published January 17th 1991 by HarpPeren (first published 1986)

ISBN : 9780060920715

Author : Jane Wagner

Format : Paperback 240 pages

Genre : Plays, Humor, Fiction, Drama, Theatre



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From Reader Review The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe for online ebook

Paige Goodwin says

I want to be Trudy when I grow up. No doubt about it.

Dante Ashby says

I was asked a few times what this book was about and a month later I still don't really have an answer. I can't put into words what this is supposed to be about or if there even is a plot - but what I do know is that I found the stream of conscious rambling to be pleasant. I can't visualize this being a play and I know nothing about Lily Tomlin but she must be one heck of a lady! The book had me very curiously hooked from beginning to end. I just can't explain it. This is one of the better books I've picked up in a while. (all year for sure)

Maureen says

Jane Wagner had to have had Lily Tomlin in mind when she wrote *Signs*, because so many facets of Tomlin's personality are reflected in this brilliant play. The characters are loosely interwoven, diverse in nature, and absolutely unforgettable. I really came to love this play when my daughter used different monologues from it as audition pieces, and I got to hear the language and hear the characters develop over and over. Kudos to Wagner: she did a splendid job.

Jessica says

I read this because when you hear so many women pulling monologues from it (the same one really) you feel the need to read the actual play. I really wish I could have seen this show performed by Lily Tomlin. I think her as the actress would be a lot of what makes it, but I did like it. Considering when it was written and when it was on Broadway, it is no wonder it was the smash it was. I will say this however: actresses who pull that same Trudy monologue for auditions need to pick different monologues. Don't get me wrong, the one you consistently choose is a nice one, but there are definitely more meaty and gritty monologues later in the show to provide a better showcase for your acting chops. Just saying...

David Dutkiewicz, III says

Jane Wagner's play was almost too fractured, especially in the first half. It acts as a sort of moving portrait of the lives of various characters in 1980's America. The same occurs in the second half, but there is a greater focus placed on a smaller cast of characters. It becomes difficult to really concentrate on any of them for too long because they're going to be swept away in a few pages, until the last 30-40 pages of the play. There is a lot of wit and truth in what Wagner has to say and in the characters she portrays, but it all would have fallen

flat if it weren't for the saving grace that was the play's conclusion. Everything comes together perfectly in a way that is both unique and powerful.

Holden says

Excellent play. Allow me to gush over the closing paragraphs:

[Context: Trudy, a bag lady and narrator of the play, shows aliens around Earth (or that's what she thinks -- she may just be crazy). They have many goals. One is to define "art", which Trudy tries to illustrate by showing them a can of Cambell's Soup and then the famous painting. "Soup...Art...Soup...Art," she says, but the aliens don't understand. Then she tries to describe what it's like to be human, another goal of the aliens. She tries to explain things like "goosebumps", but again the aliens don't understand. So she takes them to a play.]

"Did I tell you what happened at the play? We were at the back of the theatre, standing there in the dark, when all of a sudden I feel one of 'em [the aliens] tug at my sleeve, whispers, "Trudy look!" I said, "Yeah, goosebumps. You definitely got goosebumps. You like the play that much?" They said it wasn't the play that gave 'em goosebumps, it was the audience!

I'd forgot to tell them to watch the play; they'd been watching the audience! Yeah, to see a group of people sitting together in the dark, laughing and crying at the same things...well that just knocked 'em out! They said, "Trudy, the play was soup, the audience, art."

So they're taking goosbumps back with 'em into space. Goosebumps! Quite a souvenir. I like to think of them out there in the dark, watching us. Sometimes we'll do something and they'll laugh. Sometimes we'll do womething and they'll cry. And maybe, one day we'll do something so magnificent, the whole universe will get goosebumps."

Dinah says

Holds up pretty well, considering. Bumped up to 4-stars for the fantastic photographs of Lily Tomlin in the original Broadway production - truly added joy to the reading experience, and elevated the material to something closer to its performance form.

Jill says

F-ing nuts.

"Here we are, standing on the corner of 'Walk, Don't Walk.' You look away from me, tryin' not to catch my eye, but you didn't turn fast enough, did you?"

Chels says

I absolutely loved this piece of feminist art. It was inspiring, beautiful, heartfelt. Between the interconnectedness of life/characters/ideals, Jane Wagner also kept the humor, the discussion, and the heartbreak. It really is a masterpiece of a script that more people should read, as it still has an effect on today's culture. I wish I could have seen Lily Tomlin perform it.

Kaethe says

Brilliant characters and monologues, even when Tomlinson isn't bringing them to life.

Paige Gardner says

This was unbelievable! The most fun I've had reading something in a long time!!!! In the beginning I kept reading lines and pausing to think "that's such a great quote" but halfway through I realized I had thought that for most of the play! It had so many awesome, thoughtful and well written lines. I loved everything about it!

Bri Wilson says

I randomly picked this up at a used book store because it looked weird and I am a sucker for long titles. This has turned out to be a blessing of impulse buying because I loved this play! It is comprised mostly of monologues because it was written as a one woman show. Each monologue gives us a new character simply talking about their experience on life as a business woman, mother, teen rebel, feminist, and crazy bag lady. In the end this play left me with an appreciation of life and what makes it so beautiful (almost ironically as none of the characters are truly content with their lives, they are simply living them). Wagner's play is funny, witty, and heartfelt and I am going to run to the store to try and find the DVD of Lily Tomlin's performance in the film version!

RANSOM says

Feminist, humanist, philosophical, comedic, physical, and temporal. Full of anecdotes and quotes so full of character that you don't read them so much as feel them, right down to the lilt of each individual word. Its narrative dips and leaps and packs its pages full of such viscous human experience that it sticks to your cortex and you thank it for going through the trouble.

Nicole Anne says

I can't quite pinpoint what I loved about this play but I loved it. I really enjoyed Trudy and Lily Tomlin is

just genius!

Shane says

This is a beautiful piece which explores our disconnects and our many attempts to reconnect with each other through all the muck. It's just as poignant today as it was when it was first written.
