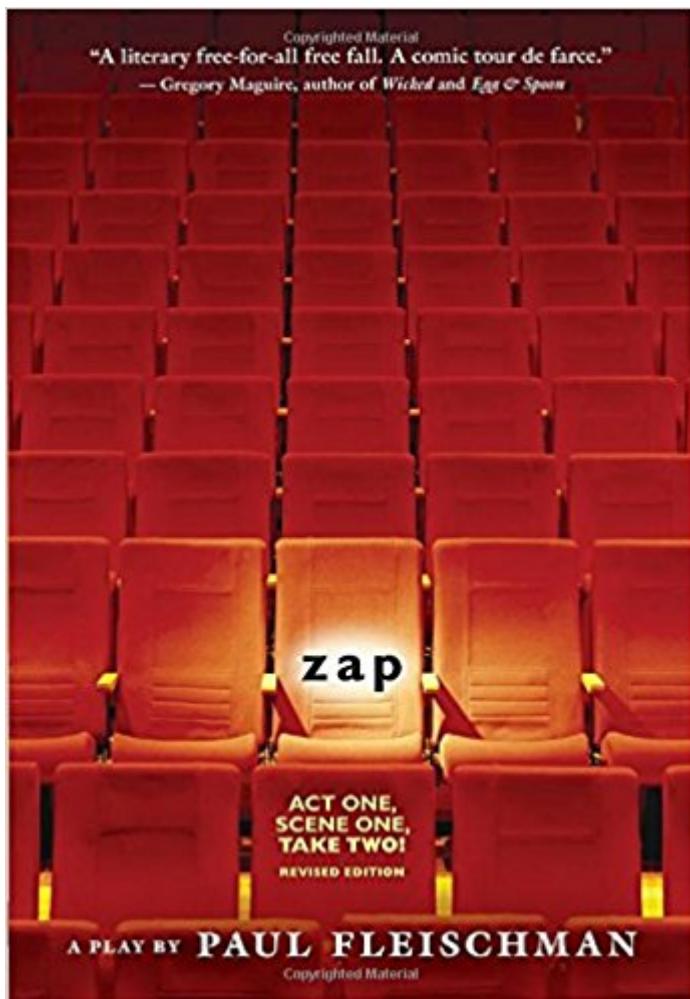


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Zap: A Play. Revised Edition.



Synopsis

Aimed at a generation of short attention spans and a taste for razor-sharp comedy, the rapid-fire ZAP is a smart, farcical new play for high-school students that's ready to bring the house down. When they're not dusting off the old classics — over and over — high-school drama departments are constantly in search of new material. But what play could possibly suit the point-and-click attention spans of kids born with remote controls in their cribs? Cue the lights for ZAP, a nonstop farce that juxtaposes seven different plays — performed simultaneously — with a comic genius reminiscent of masters from Monty Python to the Marx Brothers. Combining spot-on parodies of Anton Chekhov, Agatha Christie, Tennessee Williams, Samuel Beckett, Neil Simon and performance art and throwing in scenes from RICHARD III for good measure, ZAP flicks rapidly back and forth from play to play, with hilarious results. As characters from one play end up on the set of another, their befuddlement, exasperation, and brave attempts at improvisation are truly priceless. A hoot to read, ZAP is a dream to perform — as high schools in California, New York, and Florida have already discovered.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up
For practiced young thespians bored with chestnuts like Grease or Romeo and Juliet, Fleischman dishes up a hilarious pastiche that mixes speeches from Shakespeare with original scenes done in the styles of Chekhov, Tennessee Williams, Agatha Christie, Samuel Beckett, and Neil Simon — plus the occasional babble from Marsha, a neurotic performance

artist. Working from the conceit that everyone in the audience gets a remote control to switch channels when interest lags, the author creates an increasingly rapid-fire sequence that has the various casts scuttling on and off stage, sometimes cut off in mid-line. Soon, they're losing their respective threads, falling out of character, and ultimately blending together in a general melee: Whoa. Chekhov meets WrestleMania, as Marsha sardonically puts it. Requiring a large cast and players (not to mention audiences) sufficiently versed in stage history to get the array of theatrical conventions Fleischman's spoofing, this script will challenge and reward in equal measure any company courageous enough to take it on. —John Peters, New York Public Library

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Gr. 9-12. In a natural extension of his works for readers' theater (*Joyful Noise*, 1988; *Seek*, 2001), Newbery Medalist Fleischman offers his first "bona fide play." Framed as a performance for an imaginary audience armed with remote-control "zappers," this is actually seven plays mashed into one: a turgid rendition of Shakespeare's *Richard III* alternating at audience's whim among six spoofs of other dramaturgical biggies, among them, "The Russian Play," "The English Mystery," and "The Southern Play." Playgoers and actors alike, particularly those with some experience of the less-mainstream genres lampooned (for example, absurdist theater, in which a crossword player's request for "a three-letter word for despair" might reasonably be answered with artichoke), will relish the irreverent chaos as the boundaries between the plays gradually erode. Not every adult will agree that the way to invigorate students' interest in the stage is to reinforce the perception of tedium surrounding theater's greatest works. Still, it's easy to imagine student actors tackling this with verve. Mature references and on-stage consumption of "whiskey" limit this to high-school casts. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Great Play

great fun; it would be a blast to stage it!

This started out as a really strong, solid play for me. It is essentially seven plays in one, where the "audience" gets to choose which one they wish to watch by "zapping" or "changing the channel" with remotes provided. As the plays go on they slowly disintegrate and start to impede on each

other. While this is amusing, I actually became invested in the plays and sort of wish we could have seen them acted out to fruition. I imagine seeing the play in real life would be hilarious and completely on point.

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