



# The Revisionist

*Jesse Eisenberg , John Patrick Shanley (Introduction)*

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*The Revisionist*, the second play by the award-winning actor and regular New Yorker contributor Jesse Eisenberg, is a stunning exploration of obsession, secrets, and the nature of family. The play had its world premiere at the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York in spring 2013, starring Jesse Eisenberg and Vanessa Redgrave and directed by Kip Fagan.

In *The Revisionist*, young writer David arrives in Poland with a crippling case of writer's block and a desire to be left alone. His seventy-five-year-old second cousin Maria welcomes him with a fervent need to connect with her distant American family. As their relationship develops, she reveals details about her postwar past that test their ideas of what it means to be a family.

## The Revisionist Details

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# From Reader Review The Revisionist for online ebook

## Matthew says

I thought the Polish/English direct translations were funny. I understood what the author was getting at about the cultural contrasts between American/Polish societies but felt it was overall a bit heavy-handed.

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## Jonathan says

When I visited Boston recently I went to a used book store. Among the shelves of beaten up plays and prose, I found this gem, written by a familiar name. I picked it up simply because I love Eisenberg; he is so smart, and witty, and if his writing is anything like his acting, I knew the play would be really fucking good. Needless to say (as expressed by my 5 star review) this play is amazing. Eisenberg created two characters that are strikingly relatable. The first, David, is an enterprising, young, pseudo-succesful writer, who is used to solitary activity and does not quite enjoy socialization. The second, Maria, is his aging second cousin, and she enjoys conversation yet never has anyone to talk with. The play follows David's visit to Poland - a trip he uses to write his book and smoke weed - and the ensuing secrets and experiences that follow. Jesse has a knack for poignant prose and natural dialogue, and the play reads much like a real conversation would. The play is also beguilingly layered, and there are so many intriguing, thought provoking, and tear jerking moments thrown throughout. It is quirky, and heartbreaking, and hilarious all at the same time, and if you are able to read it or see it without reflecting on your own family, whether it be family across generations or across continents, then you my friend, are not looking hard enough.

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## Doug says

I wasn't terribly impressed by Eisenberg's latest play (The Spoils), but this was a winner... very funny, as well as heartbreaking, and I only wish I could have seen its premiere production starring Eisenberg and the great Vanessa Redgrave - and it's a shame the intended transfer from Off-Broadway to Broadway never happened.

One thing I particularly liked is how the title of the play changed meaning - you initially think it refers to David (Eisenberg's character), a callow pseudo intellectual who has taken a trip to Poland to cadge a free place to live while he revises his latest novel. Late in the play you realize it probably refers to his cousin, Maria, who has 'revised' her tragic history. And then eventually, you think that just maybe the title refers to the audience itself... who has to revise their opinion of BOTH characters by the end of the play.

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## Erica says

Quirky...and heartbreaking.

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## Ash says

Did I read this because I have a huge crush on Jesse Eisenberg?

Yes, I did.

I kind of wish I knew of this play existence when it was playing in New York City because I would have definitely gone to it. *The Revisionist* is about a young writer David who is suffering from writer's block. His remedy? Visit his aging second cousin Maria in Poland. While he only wants to work on writing his book and smoking weed, she wants to have family time as she is lonely in her apartment, many worlds away from her family. During a four day period, many revelations are revealed.

I think I'm more surprised on how much I really enjoyed *The Revisionist*. Maria's revelations about the origin of her family were tear-inducing. Although, there were many times I wanted to smack David for being ungrateful, I felt bad for him as well. He was lost and aimless. I know that feeling all too well.

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## Maciek says

*The Revisionist* is the kind of play which one is supposed to see, not read - Jesse Eisenberg is an actor and clearly created the main character with himself in mind, and does perform the role on stage. I suspect that when the play will end its run, we won't see it performed with another cast.

The main problem that I had with *The Revisionist* is that it's simply not a very interesting play to begin with. The main protagonist, an American writer named David, travels to the Polish port city of Szczecin to cope with his writer's block. He stays with his second cousin, a 75 year old Polish woman named Maria, in her small, stuffed apartment. David is largely antisocial, self-absorbed, and wants to be left alone - which is a great contrast to Maria, who is desperate to develop a connection with her family.

The relationship between David and Maria (played on stage by Vanessa Redgrave) is the key point of the play - but on the page it reads clumsily and develops without many surprises. The main reason I picked the play up is because it was set in Poland, and featured Polish characters - but there's little Poland in it, as it takes place in an apartment which could as well be in East Village. Since this is a script, characters are occasionally said to speak in Polish but their dialogue is written in English - which is not Eisenberg's fault, but is what didn't allow me to immerse myself in the situation that he created. I'm sure I would enjoy it at least a bit more if I saw him and Vanessa Redgrave perform this on stage; but since I didn't two stars are all I can give it.

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## Marc says

Didn't know what to expect. I was impressed. Enjoyed the humor.

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## **Grant says**

Skip John Patrick Shanley's annoyingly spoilerific introduction/review that seems fixated on black-and-white classification in a play rife with ambiguities. Eisenberg's character of David is heavily autobiographical, and therefore THE REVISIONIST's initial scenes can feel insular. However, the eventual way in which he utilizes self-deprecation proves that it isn't affectation. Neurosis is no façade. The play isn't an altogether satisfying read, but it's a frequently funny and humane work about privilege (check it) and necessity of open communication.

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## **Little Gray Mouse says**

As a Jesse Eisenberg fan, I obviously bought the book as soon as it was published and read it at the first opportunity I had. I've heard a lot of great things about both his plays, and couldn't wait to read the script to his second play, also entitled The Revisionist.

First of all, it's a SCRIPT, not a book. It's just the dialog and a few situation descriptions. It's literally the play written down!

David, a writer, travels all the way to Poland to live with his seventy-five-year-old second cousin Maria to try and get rid of his writer's block. In the short time he lives with Maria, he discovers a few secrets that test both their ideas on the meaning of family.

I really liked it. The fun thing is that plays have a very well thought-out character development and the use of the correct words is very important.

The jokes are genius, the situations are funny and the ending heartbreaking and slightly shocking.

I really liked it, that's all I can say. It's hard to rate a script when you've never seen the play. I wish I had the opportunity to see it, though!

Jesse Eisenberg often writes short stories for the New Yorker, and I personally like his style. He has a very creative way of thinking and always finds a funny way of putting something. He chooses his words carefully and has a quick pacing that keeps you reading.

The play starred Jesse Eisenberg as David and Vanessa Redgrave as Maria. Its world premiere was at the Cherry Lane Theatre on February 28th 2013. Tickets were sold out in three days. There's been talk the Revisionist will be on Broadway in the beginning of 2014.

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## **Rebecca M. says**

Simply put, this is a beautiful play. Jesse Eisenberg has a good ear for dialogue and seems to have a solid understanding of the human mind and heart (which doesn't surprise me as he's an actor). His characters are real people, their interactions are authentic, and the story forces the reader to think. I love a writer -- or an artist, really -- who doesn't spoon-feed his/her audience, who asks the audience to do a bit of work, and Jesse is certainly one such artist. I admire him for that.

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**Vanessa says**

I couldn't relate much to the characters, but it's a beautiful story.

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**Lisa Marie Plant says**

I think I would've liked to see this play, I think the humor would have been more obvious when acted.

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**Arielle says**

This might be my favorite Jesse Eisenberg play this far. It was quick witted and fast paced (in typical Eisenberg fashion) and spoke about the difference in how various generations view human connection.

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**Katie says**

I bought this after seeing the play multiple times at the theatre earlier this year so i was already familiar with the story and characters and obviously could easily picture each scene as it was on stage.

however, it was still funny and sarcastic and witty and a little heart wrenching seeing the words on the page and i think the importance of the story still translates in this format.

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