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Sylvia

A.R. Guerney

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Greg and Kate have moved to Manhattan after twenty-two years of child-raising in the suburbs. Greg's career as a financial trader is winding down, while Kate's career, as a public-school English teacher, is beginning to offer her more opportunities. Greg brings home a dog he found in the park or that has found him bearing only the name "Sylvia" on her name tag. A street-smart mixture of Lab and Poodle, Sylvia becomes a major bone of contention between husband and wife. She offers Greg an escape from the frustrations of this job and the unknowns of middle age. To Kate, Sylvia becomes a rival for affection. And Sylvia thinks Kate just doesn't understand the relationship between man and dog. The marriage is put in serious jeopardy until, after a series of hilarious and touching complications, Greg and Kate learn to compromise, and Sylvia becomes a valued part of their lives.

Sylvia Details

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From Reader Review Sylvia for online ebook

Helen says

So adorable but kind of sad and heartbreaking. I really liked reading the voice of a dog. Sylvia as a character was really important and interesting and this is a story concept I haven't seen too often but really enjoyed.

Lyric says

Very cute little play. The world and language of dogs is a fun experience. Sylvia is a very cute character and her relationship with the other characters in the play is heartwarming.

Pamela says

Fun to read . . . Fun to watch!

This is a delightful fun romp . . . A unique theatrical satire about marriage and relationships, told and enacted out partially through Sylvia - the family's loveable, but obnoxious dog.

At OKCCC during the late 90s, I played the role of Kate's best friend, Phyllis - the lush. It was a hoot!

Jayne says

Cute read! Will be especially great if you love or have a dog/dogs. Explores dog and human relationships in a way that is tangible for humans to understand to the dog's perspectives. Loved it and cried at the end. Dogs are the best. Also the play is a love letter to New York. ??

William says

Lots of fun throughout. The notion of dog as mistress -- well what dog owner hasn't been through that? The close is rather too cute and cheesy, given the actual darkness of the play.

Kate says

His name is spelled Gurney. They have it wrong here which annoys me.

G. Derek Adams says

A really clever script, that dips into some absurdist territory - I enjoyed it but wished it would have gone farther in that territory. Very affecting for dog-lovers -- somewhat annoyed at the denouement, it felt unnecessary and cheap.

Kristal Cooper says

Barring Shakespeare in school, this is the first play I've read -- and then only because it's one of the checkmarks I need to make for a reading challenge. I picked this particular play because it was referenced heavily in a book I recently read (*The Teachings of Shirelle: Life Lessons from a Divine Knucklehead* by Douglas Green) and it sounded good. And it IS good... but I think, as a book reader, I expected more. Realistically, I guess, many of the best parts of this story would be added by the actors. I can see how Sylvia could be one of the all-time greatest parts for a really talented actress. I'm going to pass this to a member of my community theater and see if they'll give it a go.

Sheri says

This is adorable. I am such a biophile and I loved the psychoanalysis of the Greg/Sylvia relationship. This text is cute and funny.

Makayla says

As someone who performed this as Sylvia, I can testify that this piece is brilliantly written and leaves many insights to be found throughout. I fell in love with the piece quickly and have yet to find a way to stop quoting it all the time.

Neil says

This is very clever. Husband Greg brings home a dog from the park, to wife Kate's annoyance. Since this is a play, and her part is extensive, and because Greg is fixated on the dog as if she was a human (and treats her as something of an alternative to his wife), the part of Sylvia is played by a human actor. This is very funny, but it's also insightful about relationships, jealousies, the ways we attach to animals, about midlife crisis, and about the way that exposure to the outdoors can bring out dissatisfaction with our interior lives.

The nice thing is that I think both dog lovers and those who sometimes find their family and friends overly solicitous to their pets would find plenty to enjoy here. I have enjoyed other Gurney plays, but this one is something new and different.

Ann says

2.5-3 stars. This doesn't hold up very well in the human world, although Sylvia is fun and entertaining.

Mel says

Quick paced and honestly funny comedy. I'd love to see it performed.

Kate says

Add this to my "would die to have the chance to act in" play list.

Alexander Davidson says

Interesting story on a relationship on the rocks when a married couple find themselves finally without kids at home. And no, it's not because of the addition of another woman... Well not exactly. When Greg brings home Sylvia, a dog he bonded with in the park, it throws his world with his wife Kate for a loop. Kate and Sylvia both duke it out for attention from Greg who is clearly oblivious to the problem of having two loves in his life. I would love to see this play because Sylvia is actually played by an actress and can talk to Greg and Kate throughout the show. Seems cool. This is not your typical love triangle, that's for sure!
