



## Fool for Love and Other Plays

*Sam Shepard , Ross Wetzsteon (Introduction)*

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**Fool for Love and Other Plays** Sam Shepard , Ross Wetzsteon (Introduction)

Here are eight of Pulitzer-prizewinning Sam Shepard's most stunning plays. This brilliant American dramatist creates what *The New Yorker* dubbed "Shepard Country"--a landscape of the imagination, a unique theatrical experience that captures our culture and consciousness, our fears and fantasies.

FOOL FOR LOVE \* ANGEL CITY \* GEOGRAPHY OF A HORSE DREAMER \* ACTION \* COWBOY MOUTH \* MELODRAMA PLAY \* SEDUCED \* SUICIDE IN Bb

With an Introduction by Ross Wetzsteon

"Sam Shepard is phenomenal...the best practicing American playwright." --*The New Republic*

"Sam Shepard is the most exciting presence in the movie world and one of the most gifted writers ever to work on the American stage." --Marsha Norman

"The most ruthlessly experimental and uncompromising of today's young writers." --John Lahr

"Sam Shepard fills the role of professional playwright as a good ballet dancer or acrobat fulfills his role in performance. That is, he always delivers, he executes feats of dexterity and technical difficulty that an untrained person could not, and makes them seem easy." --Michael Feingold, *The Village Voice*

"One of the most original, prolific, and gifted dramatists at work today." --*The New Yorker*

"Increasingly recognized as one of the more significant dramatists in the English-speaking world." --Charles R. Bachman, *Modern Drama*

## Fool for Love and Other Plays Details

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## From Reader Review Fool for Love and Other Plays for online ebook

### Robert Owens says

When I went away to prep school, I was introduced to Sam Shepard through his plays *True West* and *The Tooth or Crime*. I really enjoyed these plays. I wanted more. I sought out more Shepard. That is this book. These plays may not have been as well-known as the previous, but I did enjoy them. I read them over the course of the next few years through college.

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### Myles says

Just the sort of weird for weird's sake situations that you'd expect from a satire of off-Broadway productions. I'm talking rattlesnake boots, unmade beds, the lingo of lifelong gamblers. Hoping volume two is an upgrade.

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### Gregory Knapp says

Sam Shepard will have to slug it out with Lanford Wilson for Best American Playwright of the last quarter of the 20th Century.

Whatever the outcome Shepard is in contention for his startling ability to delineate the various degrees of obscene psychic cruelty that family members are capable of inflicting on one another, and to put this on the stage in a way that's not only palpable, but riveting, and even comic -- without ever diminishing our comprehension of the horrors being perpetrated.

I have no idea if Shepard's plays meet the definition of "tragedy" (and Thank God I don't have to take a position on that). But one thing I know is that when I see, read, or hear one of his plays I come away with a severe case of almost giddy Catharsis -- which is, I suppose, what brings me back to him again and again.

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### Summer Brennan says

One morning in the West Village I went into a cafe to study for a language test for my grad program. It was raining hard, early fall, and rather dark. I realized there was only one other person in the cafe - and it was Sam Shepard. I have rarely been so star struck. I tried to be cool about it, and we exchanged a kind of nod of acknowledgement among cowboys. When he left, he leaned over and told me he liked my hat.

Fool For Love is great, as are all of his plays.

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### Erica says

I LOVE this man. Fantastic playwright, with a weird and wonderfully imaginative mind. He's very insightful

and entertaining. I love "Fool for Love" especially. I would love to see it staged, though the film version (with Shepard himself, Kim Basinger, and Harry Dean Stanton in the leads) is pretty damn cool. I own it.

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### **Dchavez06 says**

AWFUL. I hated most if not all of these plays. I was surprised, considering how I thought True West was pretty good and he's supposed to be a renowned playwright and all. The best thing I can say about Fool for Love (the only one I even remember afterwards) was that it had an interesting sense of place. Other than that, it was implausible and unnatural to the point of the grotesque. It was well written, sure, but I ended the play not caring a single bit about the main characters and happy that it was over.

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### **Theadra says**

I love Shepard. And "Fool for Love" is my favorite of his plays. I can't remember how I got turned on to it. But the sad, sexy, tragedy of this strange love "triangle" is delicious. I've seen the film with Basinger and Shepard and enjoyed it. I thought the chemistry burned well, if overall the film was a bit flat. Maybe I just liked seeing it performed. Shepard's stories work better through actors.

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### **PT says**

Sam Shepard is the strange spiritual core of the American West. This book of plays is essential.

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### **Michael says**

If you are looking to read some of Shepard's more abstract plays, look no further than this collection. With the exception of Fool For Love, this collection of mostly one-acts hover around the same theme: The simulatanious idolization and destruction of the artist. My favorites: Suicide in Bflat and Geography of a Horse Dreamer. There is also a peice entitled Cowboy Mouth that he co-wrote and performed with his then girlfriend, Patti Smith. Crazy stuff! The plays were wonderful reads but I urge anyone to see them peformed if they are showing. The images are extremely provoking and haunting.

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### **Daniel Klawitter says**

"I could run a list of hip references to make your tail swim. I've connived in the deepest cracks of the underground. Rubbed knuckles with the nastiest poets. Done the 'Rocky Mountain Back Step' in places where they've outlawed bubble gum. But that's neither here nor there." --The character of Rabbit in Shepard's play, Angel City.

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## **Simon Robs says**

These are (mostly) swirly surrealistic melodramas cooked to medium rare psychological taste for to outsource some brain twist imagery. Goon-ball broke-down characters doin' schemes as "Auggie March" might say. Too, fit nicely into a Denis Johnson short. Cowboy Junkies ropin' phantasy. Hehe, go ahead, build the wall, nuts and rapists will fly in anyway, may as well throw a welcome party an pass the pipe. Pay fer play!

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## **Ian says**

I just read Fool For Love. Larger than life characters at the end of their tethers. The crushing of the family (and I guess that implies the American Dream?). Untold secrets loom large, with the predictable shotgun ending. There was one passage where the male family character and his dad take a walk and the description drifted into Steinbeck. I guess once you know what theatrical style you're letting yourself in for then the bombshells aren't so bad. The theatre ticket should come with the caveat 'brace yourself :). Would like to read something set in a more modern context, not a hut in the wilderness with shotguns on every wall.

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## **Jennifer Haight says**

Fool For Love is a perfect play. Although the other plays in the collection aren't as strong on their own, it is an extraordinary gift to have the opportunity to see the work that formed one of America's most prominent playwright.

From Action:

"The candles draw you. You get a cold feeling outside. Separated. You have an idea that being inside is cosier. Friendlier. Warmth. People. Conversation. Everyone using a language. Then you go inside. It's a shock. It's not like you expected. You lose what you had outside. You forget that there even is an outside. The inside is all you know. You hunt far a way of being with everyone. A way of finding how to behave. You find out what's expected of you. You act yourself out."

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## **Andrew Kubasek says**

Excellent stuff, even if I'm not sure I "got" every moment. Always just a bit off-kilter, each of these plays strikes a strange chord in the mind, making one think and scratch the head, knowing, just knowing, that something is there, just under the surface, if only one had the key to decipher it all.

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## **Rae says**

Shepard continues his theme of "connectedness" and interaction between people in this play in which a half-brother and sister deal with incest and the sometimes overpowering passion that makes us "fools for love." His themes are always dark and they deal with complicated issues, but I often come away from them with new insights.

## Chris says

While plays like "Action" and "Seduced" have a sort of going-around-in-circles feeling to them, almost everything in this collection is well worth reading, both for the amount of disorientation from the world that they lead you to, and for their pure entertainment value. Shepard is funny in equal parts to how gruesome he can be at times, and also incredibly surreal.

My favorite play here is "Geography of a Horse Dreamer", seriously one of the strangest ideas for a play I have ever read, in which a man has been kidnapped and kept tied to a bed where he is supposed to dream up the winners of the horse races. It is bizarre but strangely, Shepard manages to make the plot feel like it's a natural thing, until there's a shift in the action that destroys the normalcy within the play.

Overall, an enjoyable set of plays.

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## Francisco Cardona says

I really just wanted to read "Fool for Love" and "Suicide in B?" because I wanted to compare them to Eugene O'Neill's early expressionism and saw more of it in "Fool For Love," where the characters subjectivism fuels the plot. Eddie's desire for May moves the plot along based on whether he really does want her (or not). For May, she feels Eddie does not want her, but is merely stringing her along. Here, the play becomes a departure from O'Neill because it's not allowing Eddie to become the sole authority on what he wants (or knowing what he does not want), but instead, it becomes an issue of "imagining" what he wants. Shepard steers more into Beckett territory at this point, where answers are created after the action. The play begins with Eddie showing up at hotel room, why? Well, Eddie starts to tell May it's because he's in love with her and no one really knows if this is true or not.

The blurring of what is real and imagined is more prevalent in "Suicide in B?." Two detectives investigate whether a death is a suicide or murder and here once again, the action occurs first (murder) and then the answers must be formed after. But the idea of what kind of death seems so much like Beckett's "Waiting For Godot." There is a moment in "Waiting" where Estragon reminds Vladimir of how Vladimir saved him from drowning in the river. It's such a small sentence and I don't know how much scholarship has been devoted to it, and quite possibly could generate a great paper . . . but it would be worthwhile to consider it in terms that Estragon killed himself and that Vladimir pulled him out and the whole play is about figuring out whether they died in that moment, or are trying to re-create the moment. But I find this scene important to parallel with "Suicide in B?" because not only are the detectives trying to create answers, but Niles and Paulette, who may, or may not be dead, are also trying to create answers as to whether Niles is dead (or not). It's such an interesting comparison between "Waiting" and "Suicide" that Shepard must devote great amounts of reading to Beckett.

I recently watched a documentary on Shepard about his relationship with Johnny Dark and in one of his letters, he mentions obsessing over Murphy, Molly, and Malone Dies, so I felt justified in making the connection and Shepard's language is so inspired by Beckett that a 3rd grader should be able to make the connection.

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## David says

This man was Pluto to the theatre universe. Despite what modern science says re Pluto's status! He was in the same solar system but on a totally skewed orbit that was his own path, alone. I've been in "Fool for Love." I've directed "Savage/Love." I've seen (this year) "Action" and "Cowboy Mouth" as well as "True West" and "Curse of the Starving Class" back in the 80s. And I've read pretty much every script he published up to at least 1987. Every re-read/re-view is new. Never less than astonishing.

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## Adrian Collins says

Shepard's themes of the West, the pressured artist, the outside world vs. the inner world, and character as an abstract concept jump out on every page of his work. Each of these plays gives you a feeling when you read it. You are consumed by the force of these characters and the rhythm of the text if nothing else. I enjoyed getting a more in-depth look at Shepard, and Fool for Love is the ultimate masterpiece for me.

Fool for Love: \*\*\*\*\*

This play is so extremely visceral to me. As I read it I could hear the doors slam with a boom from the kick drum. Every word spoken seemed to carry so much weight. The stakes for these characters are higher than they have ever been, ever increasing with each interaction they share. Here we are witnessing the climax of their lives in this seedy motel. I want to perform this play so badly. I want to investigate May and figure out who she is and why she makes the decisions she does. I want to know what effect love has on her more than just making her a fool. The intensity of this play jumps off the page, and I dream of bringing it to life.

Angel City: \*\*\*1/2

"The term 'character' could be thought of in a different way when working on this play. Instead of the idea of a 'whole character' with logical motives behind his behavior which the actor submerges himself into, he should consider instead a fractured whole with bits and pieces of character flying off the central theme. In other words, more in terms of collage construction or jazz improvisation."

Understanding this note is crucial to reading this play. I felt thrown into this high-stakes story, flailing to latch on to any of the characters. It was as if each one was twisting and writhing just as I started to grasp them. I started thinking of the characters less as people and more as emotions and actions, which I felt was necessary after reading Ross Wetzsteon's introduction. This helped me get into the play more and stop thinking about what was happening and focus on how it made me feel.

Melodrama Play: \*\*\*1/2

As a deep look into how the pressure of creativity can crush us and everyone around us, this play works. I think of it as a hyper-focused look at that pressure as well as wrongly assigned identities as a result of the need to churn out content. I can't say this is my favorite of Shepard's work, but I appreciate when a writer is able to turn their inner thoughts so accurately into art.

Cowboy Mouth: \*\*\*\*\*

The true story of Sam and Patti. Pretty heartbreaking, touching story within about the ugly duckling. I wanna read this play 100 times and learn something new with each read.

Action: \*\*\*

This play is all over the place. It's very hard to follow, and I feel that it would be so appreciated by huge Sam Shepard fans. I hope to meet someone who is obsessed with Sam Shepard and can explain it to me in person.

Suicide in Bb: \*\*\*\*\*1/2

I liked this play. It gave me noir vibes and the air of mystery made it sexy. "Too much is demanded of the visionary" is what Ross Wetzsteon argues as Sam Shepard's point in many of his works. And I would agree.

It's interesting that he's created these loose narratives that study the downfall of an artist under pressure, cutting the story of how they got there and pointing straight to the "Now what", dropping us into the aftermath. The jazziness matches perfectly that feeling of wanting to shed your current self and improvise a new life, as many times as it takes for you to feel removed.

Seduced: \*\*\*1/2

A pretty unlikable protagonist bosses people around. Though it was intriguing trying to figure out why we should sympathize with Henry, it was mostly frustrating as a lot of his actions are droning on about himself and bossing people around with an attitude. I enjoyed the presence of Luna and Miami, and the sequence set to "You can leave your hat on" by Randy Newman seemed visually provocative, but I'm not sure it fit the rest of the play for me. My favorite part was Luna seducing Henry with her 'femaleness'.

Geography of A Horse Dreamer: \*\*\*1/2

Again with the tortured, used up, pressured artist. Shepard tells this story well in so many of his plays, it's clearly personal for him. My favorite part while reading this play was tracking the arc of each character. They were all so distinct. Cody goes from externally tortured to a more internal suffering. He's not so much a prisoner of Santee and Beaujo, but now a prisoner of his own mind. Santee goes from demanding, no-bullshit boss to servant of Fingers. The descriptions of Fingers before his entrance paint him as the ultimate authority of power and intimidation, but his business with The Doctor leads us to make other assumptions. Each character has a lot to play with in this script. While the Deus Ex Machina provided a hopeful end for our protagonist, it also felt abrupt. I would have liked more of the brothers.

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## **Mike Rudden says**

Loved Fool For Love, Geography of a Horse Dreamer, and Cowboy Mouth. Could take or leave the others.

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