



2017

Spoonface Steinberg

Rebeca Wallin

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Wallin, Rebeca (2017) "Spoonface Steinberg," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 38 : Iss. 7 , Article 28.
Available at: <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol38/iss7/28>

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Play Review

Title: Spoonface Steinberg

Author: Lee Hall

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin

Publisher: Methuen Drama

Publication Year: 1997

Number of Pages: 35

Production Requirements:

Simple bedroom set, one costume, and sound requirements for recorded music.

Estimated Run Time: 45 minutes
Number of Acts: 1

Number of Characters: 1

Cast Requirements: 1 Female

Time Period: 1990s

Reading/Interest Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Review

Spoonface is in bed in the last stages of cancer when she explains her life to the audience. Her parents discovered her autism at an early age and later her gift with numbers and dates. The parents go through a rocky divorce leaving Spoonface mostly with her mother with occasional visits from the father. When her cancer is discovered, doctors give little hope but still try grueling treatments which weaken and sicken Spoonface. Through all her descriptions of the tragic life she has lead Spoonface stays optimistic, cheerful, and hopeful. She finds joy in the opera music she loves and always sees the good in those around her. The playwright manages to bring humor, hope, and joy to the tragedy as Spoonface contemplates the meaning and end of life.

Lee Hall, famous for pieces such as Billy Elliot and Warhorse, brings us a touching, heart wrenching, funny, and beautiful play. Spoonface first appeared as a radio play with one actress playing the part. The stage play adaptation closely follows that format with a simple bedroom set and a girl in bed speaking to the audience. Although the main character is a seven-year-old girl, the subject matter is very heavy for young children. The play discusses subjects such as adultery, divorce, debilitating sickness, death, and a mention of sexual abuse by her father without repercussions, and makes this play more suitable for older youth and adults. Lee captures the cadence of the autistic speaker in an endearing, captivating, and heart-wrenching way.