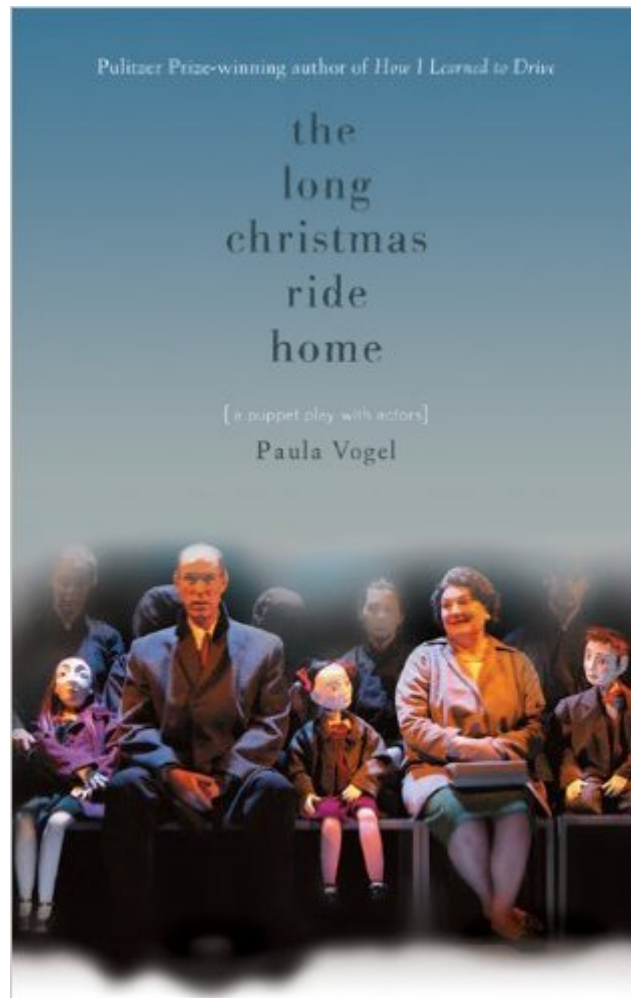


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The Long Christmas Ride Home



Synopsis

â€œBrilliant . . . even more ambitious than Vogelâ€™s *How I Learned to Drive* . . . it covers more ground and is bolder in its storytelling. Vogelâ€™s language is at its most poetic, eloquent and elegiac. In fact, its vivid imagery rivals the prose style of any great American short story writer. The play sounds like it might have been adapted from a beautiful, undiscovered novella.â€ *New Haven Register*â€œOne of the most absorbing evenings of theatre to come along in some time.â€ *Variety* Past and present collide on a snowy Christmas Eve for a troubled family of five. Humorous and heart-wrenching, this beautifully written play proves that magic can be found in the simplest breaths of life. Combining the elements of No theatre and Bunraku with contemporary Western sensibilities, Vogelâ€™s *Ride* is a mesmerizing homage to the works of Thornton Wilder, including *Our Town*. A moving and memorable study of the American family careening near the edge of oblivion. Paula Vogelâ€™s plays include *The Baltimore Waltz*, *Mineola Twins*, *Hot â€ˆnâ€™* *Throbbing*, *Desdemona*, *And Baby Makes Seven*, among others. Ms. Vogel will be the resident playwright during the Signature Theatreâ€™s 2004â€“05 season dedicated to her works. She has taught at Brown University in the MFA playwriting program since 1985.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Everybody views holidays through their own prism. Paula Vogel, whose body of work substantially focuses on family trauma, sees Christmas through the prism of fights, resentments, estrangement, and sexual alienation. Nobody who's seen *How I Learned to Drive* will be surprised by the themes of

this play. What will surprise them is the form. This play takes elements of Bunraku puppet plays and Japanese Noh theatre and folds them into the sort of Christmas pageant a local church would stage, short on technical know-how and long on love. But instead of a celebration of Baby Jesus, this play dissects the way harsh words thrown out flippantly can come back into a person's life years later. Unforgiving and unsentimental, though not entirely without hope, Vogel here presents us a Christmas where three children make decisions that will resonate through the rest of their lives. At an estimate, this play would probably run to about forty-five minutes in performance. But because of the special technical needs, the script runs a little longer than that might normally require. And because this play is so emotionally dense, reading it can be a downright brutal experience. I recommend breaking the reading into two or three segments, even though you could read the whole thing in ninety minutes or less. In her notes, Vogel recommends not producing this play during December. I recommend also not reading it during that time.

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