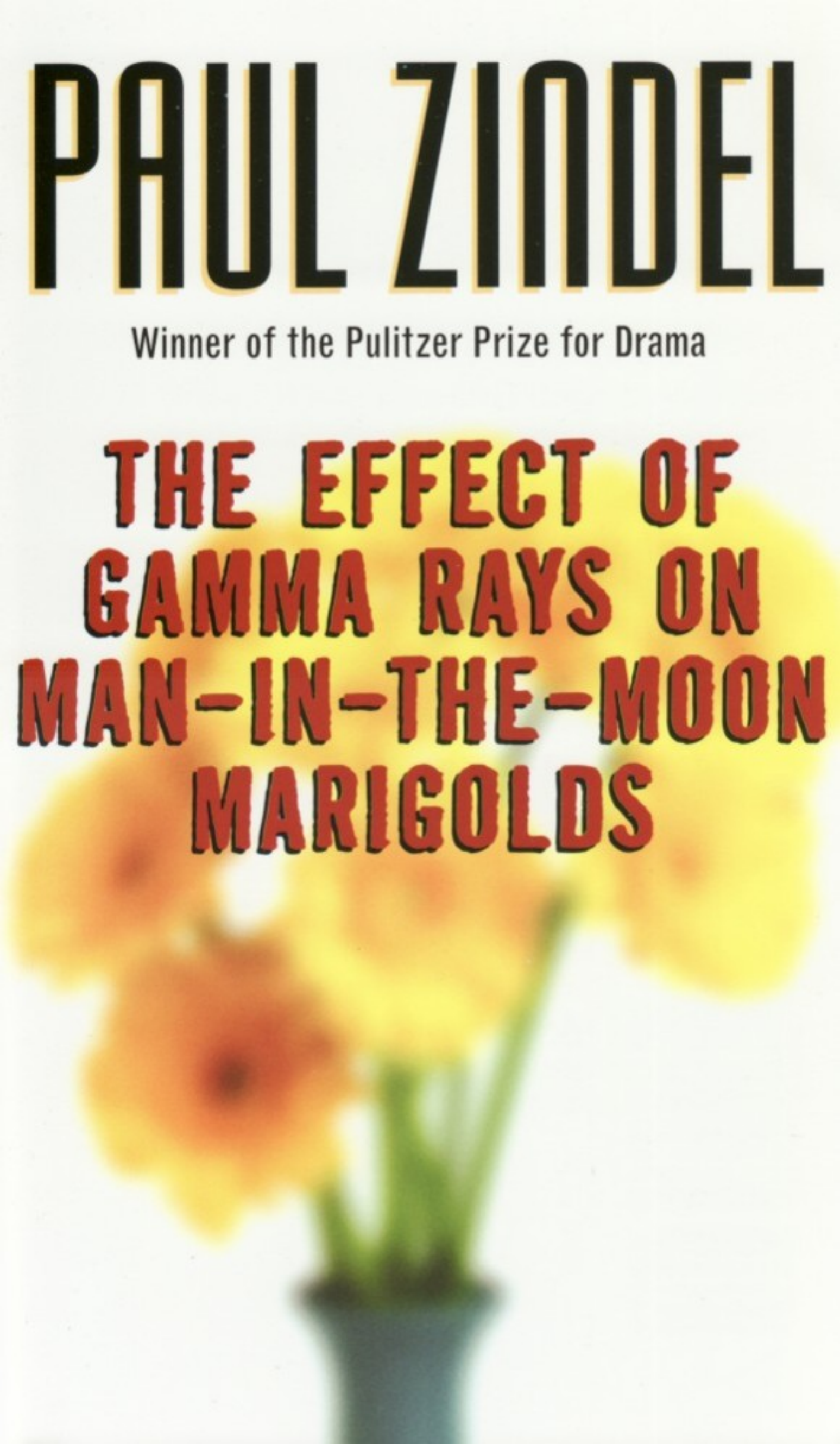


PAUL ZINDEL

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama

**THE EFFECT OF
GAMMA RAYS ON
MAN-IN-THE-MOON
MARIGOLDS**



*The lights go down slowly as music creeps in—
a theme for lost children, the near misbegotten.
From the blackness TILLIE'S VOICE speaks against
the music.*

TILLIE'S VOICE:

He told me to look at my hand, for a part of it came from a star that exploded too long ago to imagine. This part of me was formed from a tongue of fire that screamed through the heavens until there was our sun. And this part of me—this tiny part of me—was on the sun when it itself exploded and whirled in a great storm until the planets came to be.

Lights start in.

And this small part of me was then a whisper of the earth. When there was life, perhaps this part of me got lost in a fern that was crushed and covered until it was coal. And then it was a diamond millions of years later—it must have been a diamond as beautiful as the star from which it had first come.

TILLIE: *Taking over from recorded voice.*

Or perhaps this part of me became lost in a terrible beast, or became part of a huge bird

that flew above the primeval swamps.

And he said this thing was so small—this part of me was so small it couldn't be seen—but it was there from the beginning of the world.

And he called this bit of me an atom. And when he wrote the word, I fell in love with it.

Atom.

Atom.

What a beautiful word.

The phone rings.

BEATRICE: *Off stage.*

Will you get that please?

The phone rings again before BEATRICE appears in her bathrobe from the kitchen.

No help! Never any help!

She answers the phone.

Hello? Yes it is. Who is this? . . . I hope there

hasn't been any trouble at school . . . Oh, she's always been like that. She hardly says a word around here, either. I always say some people were born to speak and others born to listen . . .

You know I've been meaning to call you to thank you for that lovely rabbit you gave Matilda. She and I just adore it and it's gotten so big . . .

Well, it certainly was thoughtful. Mr. Goodman, I don't mean to change the subject but aren't you that delightful young man Tillie said hello to a couple of months back at the A & P? You were by the lobster tank and I was near the frozen foods? That delightful and handsome young man? . . . Why, I would very much indeed use the expression *handsome*. Yes, and . . .

Well, I encourage her at every opportunity at home. Did she say I didn't? Both my daughters have their own desks and I put 75-watt bulbs right near them . . . Yes . . . Yes . . . I think those tests are very much overrated, anyway, Mr. Goodman . . . Well, believe me she's nothing like that around this house . . .

**“The most compelling work
of its kind since Tennessee Williams’
The Glass Menagerie.”
—*Variety***

The old, converted vegetable shop where Tillie lives is more like a madhouse than a home. Tillie’s mother, Beatrice, is bitter and cruel, yet desperate for her daughters’ love. Her sister, Ruth, suffers epileptic fits and sneaks cigarettes every chance she gets. In the midst of chaos, Tillie struggles to keep her focus and dreams alive. Tillie—keeper of rabbits, dreamer of atoms, true believer in life, hope, and the effect of gamma rays on man-in-the-moon marigolds.

“A splendid and tormented play.”—*Time*

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Winner of the New York Drama Critics Circle Award
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US \$6.99 / \$8.75 CAN

ISBN-13: 978-0-06-075738-0

ISBN-10: 0-06-075738-8



HarperTrophy®

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Cover art © 2005 by C Squared Studios

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