



# Picasso at the Lapin Agile and Other Plays

*Steve Martin*

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## **Picasso at the Lapin Agile and Other Plays Steve Martin**

Steve Martin is one of America's most treasured actors, having appeared in some of the most popular movies of our time. He is also an accomplished screenwriter who has in the past few years turned his hand to writing plays. The results, collected here, hilariously explore serious questions of love, happiness and the meaning of life; they are rich with equal parts of pain and slapstick humour, torment and wit.

## **Picasso at the Lapin Agile and Other Plays Details**

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## From Reader Review Picasso at the Lapin Agile and Other Plays for online ebook

### Conrad says

In case anyone doubts the serious craft and intelligence that goes into Steve Martin's humor, they should read this stat. Lapin Agile is slapstick and wistful at the same time, sophisticated and erudite and witty but also accessible. It takes way more brains than I will ever have to put Picasso and Einstein in the same room and make it as hilarious as this play.

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### Payam says

Einstein: I work the same way. I make beautiful things with a pencil.

Picasso: You? You're just a scientist! For me, the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line!

Einstein: Likewise.

Picasso (still dancing): Let's see one of your creations.

(Einstein pulls out a pencil. Picasso stops dancing, gets a pencil. The others back away as if it were a Western shoot-out.)

Picasso: Draw!

(They start to draw on the napkins. Einstein finishes first.)

Einstein: Done!

(Einstein and Picasso swap drawings.)

Einstein: It's perfect.

Picasso: Thank you.

Einstein: I'm talking about mine.

Picasso (studies it): It's a formula.

Einstein: So's yours.

Picasso: It was a little hastily drawn. . . yours is letters.

Einstein: Yours is lines.

Picasso: My lines mean something.

Einstein: So do mine.

Picasso: Mine is beautiful.

Einstein (indicates his own drawing): Men have swooned on seeing that.

Picasso: Mine touches the heart.

Einstein: Mine touches the head.

Picasso: Mine will change the future.

Einstein (holds his drawing): Oh, and mine won't?

(Sensing victory, or at least parity, Einstein starts to dance with Suzanne. Picasso stands befuddled.)

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### Kelly says

Found, basically brand new, at book sale!

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## Greg Kerestan says

There are two schools of thought on Steve Martin, actor, writer and comedian. One would have it that Martin is brilliant, subversive and incisive in his combination of high and low comedy, blending philosophy, art, science, theology and vaudeville. The other would have it that Martin is a smug, pretentious tool, never able to write anything without his iconic cleverer-than-thou smirk lurking in the background. The reality, I suspect, is somewhere in between. "Picasso at the Lapin Agile" and "Wasp," Martin's two most famous plays, have exquisite dialogue and Martin's trademark droll, slightly surreal humor. Nonetheless, audiences tend to feel a little insulted by them- that the joke, which they may not particularly get (does anyone?) is on them in a way. I directed "Wasp" in 2011, and cast and audience alike had little clear idea what to make of it. Despite this, I remain fond of Martin as both performer and writer, though, like Stephen Sondheim, I would fear meeting him and feeling the sting of his sharp tongue.

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## Nathan says

Picasso at the Lapin Agile is a collection of plays written by Steve Martin. The headliner, Picasso at the Lapin Agile, is stellar. It imagines a bar in France where one day Picasso and Einstein find themselves meeting & discussing their lives, their worlds and their ideas. A surprise guest at the end shows the two of them who is really in charge of human destiny. Other plays, WASP for example, are hilarious and equally deserving of top billing. Worth it alone for the conversation about hell between a young student and his father.

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## R. Parker says

I know of quite a few people who are familiar with Picasso at the Lapin Agile, which is a fine play, though the real treasure of this book is the one-act plays accompanying it. WASP in particular is riotously funny; when I was an actor I read from it for auditions. The Zig Zag woman requires several live magic tricks to be performed onstage in addition to the play itself, adding a wonderful extra element that you wouldn't normally expect to see onstage.

These plays are much more in the voice of Steve Martin the comedian, as opposed to his far more serious novellas. That can be a bad thing and a good thing—they're very difficult to immerse yourself in (especially if you're reading the plays rather than seeing them onstage) because you can't help but picture the words coming from Steve Martin's mouth, but Steve Martin's mouth says a lot of hilarious things.

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## Elizabeth says

Read this tonight at my book group. The play was witty and fun, but what added to the pleasure was having each of us take a part and read it out loud. Characters included Picasso and Einstein. A very creative idea for a night at book group! Lots of laughs from the always humorous Steve Martin.

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## Josh says

Steve Martin tricked me with this book of plays. They were so awesome and fabulous and funny and smart on the page that I thought I'd go see some of them, which didn't work out so well.

The first was really my own fault. Even if the play Picasso at the Lapin Agile was a witty philosophical rumination on the nature of art, science, the 20th century and human nature set as a conversation between Picasso, Einstein and Elvis over drinks perfectly executed on the page, I should have known better than to see it in a community theater on the busmall in Vancouver Washington.

The second time I saw a Steve Martin play, it was his "update" of a turn of the century German sex-farce called The Underpants. I hadn't read it previous. It was not good enough to be in this book.

The moral of this story is that the pages of this book are gold, but that doesn't mean productions or other Steven Martin plays will be.

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## Danielle says

This book includes "Picasso at the Lapin Agile" which was censored recently when my hometown high school in La Grande, OR tried to perform it under the directorship of Mr. Kevin Cahill. After much bruhaha, the school board decided not to perform it, and the local college, Eastern Oregon University, tried to follow suit when Mr. Cahill and the students turned to them. The Democratic student group petitioned the college and the play will indeed be performed, but without all of the props and materials they had already put into it at LHS. Steve Martin came forward a few days later, and in a letter to the local paper, he offered to pay for the performance and what funds are leftover will be put in a scholarship for student thespians.

I read a few of these plays in the 1990s, but had not read "Picasso at the Lapin Agile." I remember Martin's plays as interesting and quite good, but this time around, I really loved "Picasso at the Lapin Agile" for it's exploration of discovery, inspiration in art and science. That and I love Steve Martin's style, who breaks the fourth wall frequently and absurdly. I have not yet seen them performed, but will be going to see "Picasso..." when it is performed by the LHS students.

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## Dennis says

It's a solid play. I wanted to like it more than I did. Favorite Quote, "I could dream it forever and still not do it, but when the time comes for it to be done, God, I want to be ready for it."

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## Kim says

I decided to read this book after knowing Picasso at the Lapin Agile would be the school play this year. As I was reading this play there were many moments that I laughed out loud which doesn't happen very often when I am reading a book. Everything about this play is great and the comedy is brilliant. Steve Martin describes each character so perfectly and the reader falls in love with each one because all of them have different, peculiar personalities. My person favorite character is Schmendiman because although he was a

very minor character I found myself laughing most at his lines. The play follows eleven characters who all meet at a bar in France, the most famous characters being Picasso, Einstein, and a Visitor from the future; who is Elvis. The play doesn't have any real plot but everything is set up perfectly to have you laughing uncontrollably at times. After reading the play, I was able to watch them practice performing the playing and everyone embraced each character perfectly. I would definitely recommend this play to anyone, it was so different than anything I had read and was a very enjoyable to read.

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### **Bonnieb says**

Fun, quick read. Martin keeps the dialogue lively, the people fun and quirky, and the reader interested in this fictional view of Picasso and Einstein meeting, talking, and hanging out at a bar for the length of the play. Martin proves himself an excellent writer in this short piece, with seriousness and silliness combining for an intriguing group of characters as well as an engaging story.

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### **Tung says**

Four plays, including Martin's most famous one. Overall, he's a terrible writer, simply amateurish. But because he's so clever and funny, there'll be one or two lines in each play that almost salvage the mess that is the rest of it. The grand fault of all of the plays is that Martin has no concept of subtlety, so he beats an obvious theme into the ground. WASP is a cliché condemnation of WASP families – but the play's contrived surreality seems too out-of-place (aliens appear in a scene for no reason). The Zig-Zag Woman is clever but with no depth. Patter for the Floating Lady is my favorite of the four – very short, but the best-written of the bunch. I liked Picasso at the Lapin Agile overall, except for moments where Martin forces humor at the expense of the rest of the play (for instance, a moment where one of the characters anachronistically belts out "When a Man Loves a Woman" even though this play takes place in 1904), as if his standup comedy roots were at war with his artistic ambitions. And Martin's inability to grasp subtlety makes the ending of Picasso completely overdone.

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### **Amy says**

This is the most phenomenal book Steve Martin has ever written. I suspect a lot of people would be surprised by the poignancy and bereft tone the permeates through these plays. But you have to remember he also wrote "LA Story," and there are some utterly heartbroken and masterfully passionate parts in that movie.

This is Steve Martin unlike I'd ever seen before and remains my favorite thing he's ever given us.

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### **Em says**

This volume actually contains four short plays and I'd been wanting to read the title piece since it was staged in New York, but I just picked this up a couple of weeks ago. I'd heard it was brilliant and funny, but as much as I love Steve Martin and enjoyed his novella 'Shopgirl' I'd say 'Picasso', while interesting was a cup shy of brilliant and funny. And for the other pieces, I hated the last one 'Wasp' it was the worst piece of drivel and non sequitur junk, if he was aiming for 'Godot' greatness he missed. The two in the middle 'The

Zig Zag Woman' and 'Patter for the Floating Lady' each had a couple of good speeches and some underlying good motivation but not great. No, I would say that 'Picasso' is the best of the bunch. It has a couple of fresh conventions but he takes them over the top at the end. The ending just fizzles out like really flat champagne. It's going to be done and UWSP this fall, and I'm curious if a director can find bits to add that aren't scripted that can put feet on it. I generally like smart and esoteric theater literature, but this left me wanting a rewrite. Too bad.

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