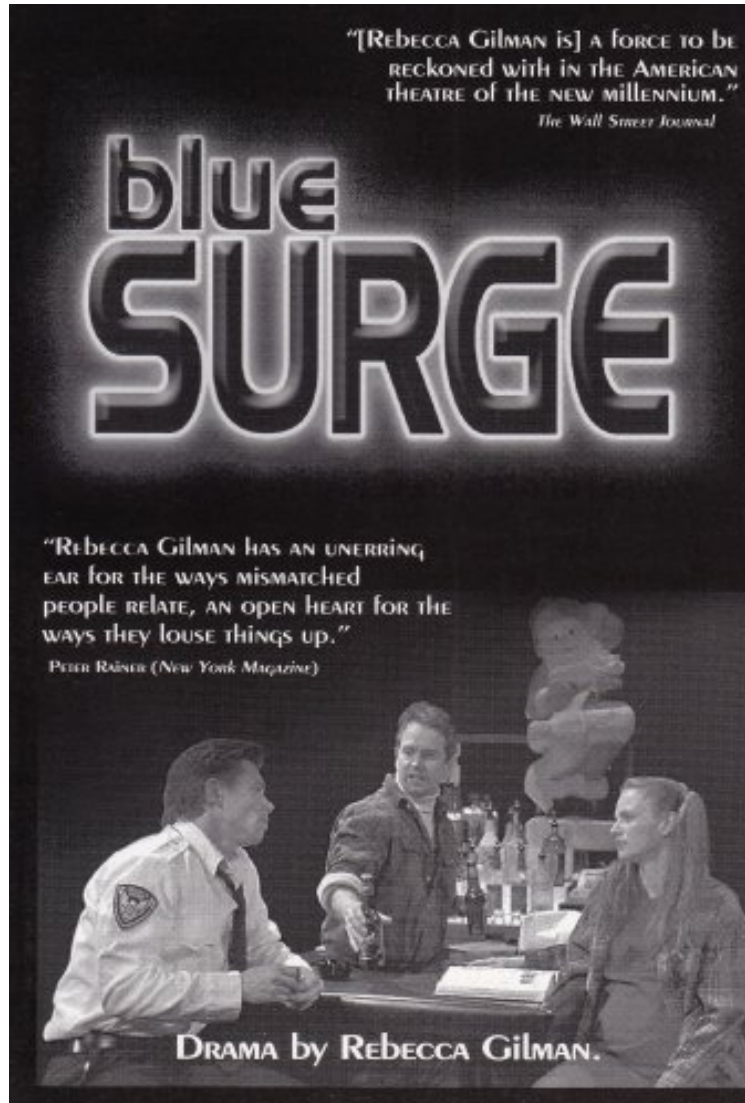


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## Blue Surge

Rebecca Gilman

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**Rebecca Gilman : Blue Surge** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blue Surge:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It was a play as requested and it was a good oneBy CustomerI enjoyed this play. It's something I worked on in a class and after reading it I really enjoyed the way the whole thing shook out. It doesn't go exactly where you think it's going to go and its got some great moments. Good Read!2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Look elsewhereBy J. OttThis play had a short run at The Public Theater in New York last year, where I happened to catch it. While there are flashes of wit and emotion in the writing, backing

up the many praises Gilman has received, the play as a whole fails to cohere. It's ostensibly about a cop who falls in love with a hooker, but the relationship never gets deeper than a lesson in botany. The exterior drama becomes more than a little kitchen-sink convenient, especially near the end. I'll admit, I haven't read or seen any other Gilman plays. But from what I hear, you may be better off working your way through them (especially *CHURNING INTO BUTTER*) before reading this one. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A lesser work from a modern master By C. Sanderson Rebecca Gilman is unquestionably one of the finest modern playwrights; *SPINNING INTO BUTTER*, *BOY GETS GIRL*, and *THE GLORY OF LIVING* are among my favorite plays. But *BLUE SURGE*, despite being generally well-written, is mostly forgettable. Like Gilman's other works, it tackles "big issues"--prostitution, poverty, class differences--but can't compare with her previous accomplishments. However, it's a worthy read, especially since it isn't likely to get too many staged productions.

Curt is a small-town cop in the Midwest; Sandy is the nineteen-year-old prostitute he first tries to arrest, then attempts to help, at the cost of his badge. What Rebecca Gilman makes of this familiar scenario is something startlingly real and compelling, delving deeply into the small space that can divide a feeling of hope from one of hopelessness, as Curt and Sandy both try to get a foothold in the American dream of a house, a job, a life, a relationship with another human being. Gilman's previous play, *Boy Gets Girl*, was acclaimed by Time magazine as the best play of 2000, saying that "with *Spinning into Butter*, her play about race relations on campus, Rebecca Gilman gave notice that she was a playwright to watch. And with this intense drama of a woman's encounter with a stalker, she became one to hail . . . It's not just a gripping play but also an important one." Marked by Gilman's characteristically sharp delineation of character, pitch-perfect dialogue, and effortless use of humor that is both biting and silly, *Blue Surge* is a worthy successor to these plays--an intimate look at the class struggle in America today as well as a brilliant example of the dramatic craft from one of today's most accomplished practitioners. It will have its world premiere at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago in the spring of 2001.

From Library Journal Gilman's young playwriting career continues to strengthen and improve as she stretches beyond her familiar *Spinning into Butter* (LJ 7/00) and the shocking *The Glory of Living* (Faber Faber, 2001) into a larger world. Gilman's previous plays have received numerous awards and accolades, and this work should be no different. At once a romance, a comedy, and a tragedy, *Blue Surge* offers a penetrating look at class struggle and at women's issues. This lean play of two acts and five actors moves quickly and leaves no winners in the reality of life. Curt is a small-town cop who tries to arrest Sandy, a prostitute. He fails in the arrest and then he fails in his attempts to help her and himself. One of the most poignant scenes occurs when Curt and his upper-class fianc e argue about the morality of arresting prostitutes. Beth is making fun of the family restaurant located next door to the massage parlor that Curt and his fellow policemen are trying to shut down. Curt argues that, just because the restaurant is not up to her high standards, the families that use it shouldn't have to be subjected to a massage parlor next door. Beth says, "Okay then. Places that put something besides iceberg lettuce in the salads." To which Curt responds, "I like iceberg lettuce." This great work by an upcoming playwright is recommended for public and academic libraries. J. Sara Paulk, Coastal Plain Regional Lib., Tifton, GA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Chicago-based Gilman emerged in the mid-90s with a tightly written thriller, *The Glory of Living*, about a fascinating pair of sociopaths who, a la *Natural Born Killers*, go on a murderous spree. In the years since, Gilman has wandered away from her initial noirish style to craft plays that, despite such serious themes as racism, stalking, and sexual harassment, retain a certain comic lightness. *Blue Surge*, which premiered at Chicago's Goodman Theater in July 2001, returns to the sleazy milieu of her first triumph but deals with it in the light manner of her *Spinning into Butter* and *Boy Gets Girl*. A pair of cops become emotionally enmeshed in the lives of a couple of massage therapists who hook on the side. Or are they hookers who do massage on the side? The play includes passages of astonishing dramatic power, and the first quarter of the play is particularly strong. Gilman's gift for believable dialogue remains, but a glib, TV-melodrama ending mars what might have been a much stronger play. Jack Helbig Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Remarkable...Gilman is--quite unabashedly--an old-school dramatist, conjuring recognizable characters and situations.... She does not think theater should be a metaphor for life or a poetic expression of life, but rather that it should BE life." --Joanne Kaufman, New York A new play about a policeman and a prostitute--and the dead-end lives they both face--by a "writer of surprising gifts" --Chicago Tribune -- "Remarkable...Gilman is--quite unabashedly--an old-school dramatist, conjuring recognizable characters and situations.... She does not think theater should be a metaphor for life or a poetic expression of life, but rather that it should BE life." --Joanne Kaufman, New York A new play about a policeman and a prostitute--and the dead-end lives they both face--by a "writer of surprising gifts" --Chicago Tribune