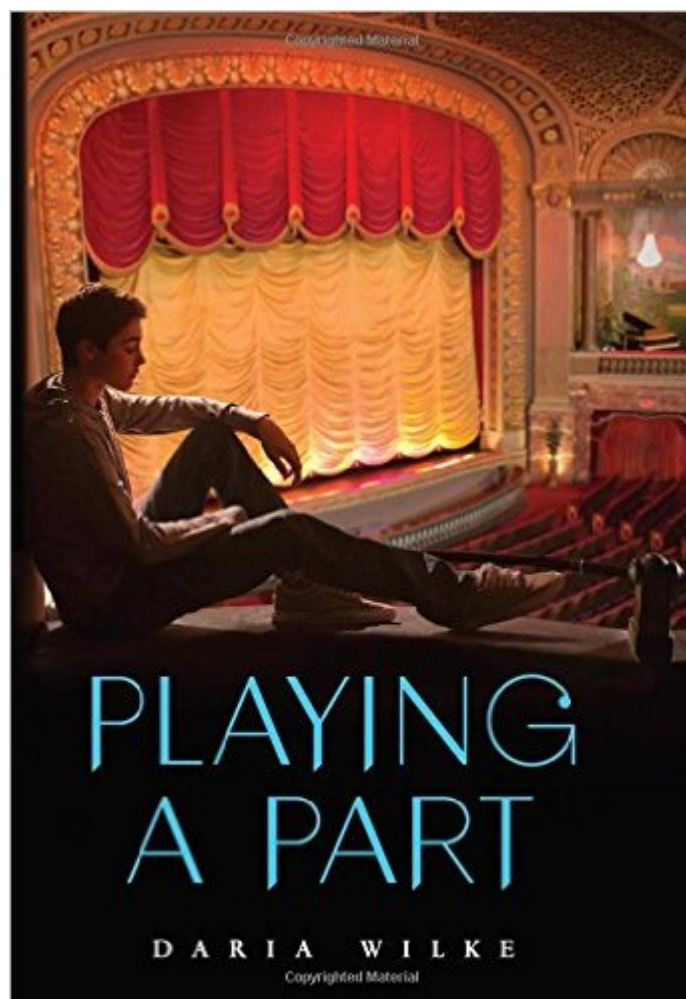


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# Playing A Part



## Synopsis

The first young adult novel translated from Russian, a brave coming-out, coming-of-age story. In June 2013, the Russian government passed laws prohibiting "gay propaganda," threatening jail time and fines to offenders. That same month, in spite of these harsh laws, a Russian publisher released *PLAYING A PART*, a young adult novel with openly gay characters. It was a brave, bold act, and now this groundbreaking story has been translated for American readers. In *PLAYING A PART*, Grisha adores everything about the Moscow puppet theater where his parents work, and spends as much time there as he can. But life outside the theater is not so wonderful. The boys in Grisha's class bully him mercilessly, and his own grandfather says hateful things about how he's not "masculine" enough. Life goes from bad to worse when Grisha learns that Sam, his favorite actor and mentor, is moving: He's leaving the country to escape the extreme homophobia he faces in Russia. How Grisha overcomes these trials and writes himself a new role in his own story is heartfelt, courageous, and hopeful.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 880 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books; Tra edition (March 31, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0545726077

ISBN-13: 978-0545726078

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 0.7 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #482,206 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Theater #217 in Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Bullying #366 in Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Gay & Lesbian

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

"Playing a Part" was an interesting glbtq story set in Russia, but it didn't live up to the potential that I had hoped for, which was ironically fueled by (shall I say it?) the soviet-type propaganda promoting the book. Daria Wilke's story had an intriguing premise and a decent plot and descriptions. I was

initially drawn into the characters, especially the narrator MC and his experiences, family, friends, and desires. I was sympathetic to the circumstances and at times moved. And the setting in Russia was also of interest. Unfortunately, this reinforced my wariness of translations, because I find they too often seem to lose some of the style, subtleties and richness of the original language. This may be behind what I found lacking in this translation by Marian Schwartz - it was at times flat and simplistic. Issues that could have been poignantly portrayed - its depiction of a bullish society, the determination to fight that and stay true to oneself - ended up being rather stereotypical and not having much contextual or emotional depth or maturity. I realize this was a YA story, but even for that age of reader, I've seen better and more nuanced treatment of these and the other aspects below. I'm not sure if it was the author or translator or both, but it seemed like this could have been a debut novel in its writing. The plot was not that exciting, at times slow and choppy; the characters were not compelling enough and didn't emotionally draw me in, and though initially interesting, there was too much on puppets and not enough on the MC and other key matters. Kudos to the Russian publisher for printing this, and I'll give the author credit for venturing into the homophobia of the Russian culture, but this also seemed like an opportunity lost - I yearned to learn more of the Russian culture, and more specifically of what it would be like to be living there as a glbtq person under current circumstances. Since I at least got some of that, and for the credit, I'll give this 3.0 stars. [I'm excited to have won this as a Goodreads First Read " so thanks, Scholastic!]

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