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The Beauty Queen Of Leenane And Other Plays



Synopsis

These three plays are set in a town in Galway so blighted by rancor, ignorance, and spite that, as the local priest complains, God Himself seems to have no jurisdiction there. The Beauty Queen of Leenane portrays ancient, manipulative Mag and her virginal daughter, Maureen, whose mutual loathing may be more durable than any love. In A Skull in Connemara, Mick Dowd is hired to dig up the bones in the town churchyard, some of which belong to his late and oddly unlamented wife. And the brothers of The Lonesome West have no sooner buried their father than they are resuming the vicious and utterly trivial quarrel that has been the chief activity of their lives. "[McDonagh is] the most wickedly funny, brilliantly abrasive young dramatist on either side of the Irish Sea.... He is a born storyteller." --New York Times

Book Information

Paperback: 259 pages

Publisher: Vintage; 1 edition (September 8, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375704876

ISBN-13: 978-0375704871

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #145,310 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > Aviation > Repair & Maintenance #98 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > Aviation > Piloting & Flight Instruction #234 in Books > Education & Teaching > Higher & Continuing Education > Test Preparation > Professional > Professional

Customer Reviews

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most wickedly funny, brilliantly abrasive young dramatist on either side of the Irish Sea.... He is a born storyteller."--New York Times

Saw this play off Broadway 15 years ago and have never forgotten the intensity and the hold-your-breath, sit-up-straight quality that the actors produced. It is the same, reading this Irish play and in the print medium. It's a classic and has intensified my interest in reading Irish Literature. Very different, unexpected story line..... a good purchase to be read again and again.

This is another of Martin McDonagh's black comedies in his growing canon in the theater of malice and cruelty. He'll soon corner the market on the make 'em laugh, then shock 'em Irish village genre. Here a mother and daughter exist together in an atmosphere of mutual hatred. The mother Mag is a harpy, a harridan, lazy, spiteful, self-centered, and malicious. Her daughter Maureen, frustrated, unstable and equally malicious, is shackled with her. A local man Pato Dooley, headed for the States, dubs forty-year-old Maureen the beauty queen of Leenane which is their tiny Irish village in Connemara. McDonagh's characters often start with verbal nastiness and graduate to physical cruelty with torture, blood and gore. He's carved out a niche for himself that can cause his audiences to cringe and cower at the lengths he'll go to finish off a character or two. There may be bloody consequences. A McDonagh character must learn to duck to fend off violence and nastiness. Herein beware of hot cooking oil and heavy pokers. His characters often seem like simpletons teetering on the edge of insanity who speak at times in an absurdist nonsensical dialogue. The playwright seesaws his audience between seemingly harmless comic absurdity and dark cruelty and sadism. In his theater of savagery human life is negotiable and precarious, and often valueless. He's an original, edgy creative talent who may turn off the queasy and those easily shocked, but he is a force in the theater to be reckoned with. Making his audiences uncomfortable, making them wriggle in their seats may well be his goal. In this play expect less blood and gore than in "The Lieutenant of Inishmore," but don't expect much compassion for the human race. Sickly brilliant, perhaps?

Big fan of McDonagh's work

I'm a big fan of Martin McDonagh's movies (IN BRUGES, SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS), but didn't realize he was a playwright until someone pointed me to this book. After reading it, I'm now just as big a fan of his plays as I am of his films. The three plays featured in TBQOL are interconnected and

focus on the locals in the titular town. What appear on the surface to be funny slices of life turn out to be a whole lot more and, as he does in his movies, McDonagh steers the comedy into dark, violent territory. I loved each one of these plays equally and will certainly be seeking out more of his work, whatever the medium.

McDonagh caught my husband's & my interest with "In Bruges," the film starring Colin Farrell. So we bought the script to that. These plays are darker (if that can be believed) but with sections that make us laugh loudly. What a strange blend of hilarious and horrific. McDonagh is a genius!

Read one of these plays and you love it. Read three and you become oppressed and depressed by the inevitable failure of hope that no amount of rural humor can lighten, as characters with an IQ of 85 stumble around, loquaciously, in the confining dark.

I bought this book for the book club that meets at my local Irish Center. It was very morbid, but hilarious. I liked how the 3 plays were interwoven with the same characters and subplots. A quick and humorous read altogether.

Loved this book

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