

That Face Polly Stenham: Exploring the Dark Depths of Familial Dysfunction



When it comes to exploring the complexities of familial dysfunction, few playwrights can rival the raw power and emotional intensity of Polly Stenham's iconic play, "That Face." With its provocative storyline, unforgettable characters,

and gripping dialogue, this dark masterpiece continues to captivate audiences and push the boundaries of contemporary theater.

A Tale of Disturbing Proportions

Set in the heart of London, "That Face" takes viewers on a disturbing journey into the lives of an affluent family grappling with issues of addiction, mental illness, and abuse. The play centers around Mia, a troubled teenager whose life slowly unravels as her mother, Martha, sinks deeper into alcoholism and her absentee father, Hugh, tries to maintain his image as a successful businessman.



That Face by Polly Stenham (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 356 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 100 pages



Stenham's script delves into the darkest corners of human behavior, painting a haunting portrait of a family on the brink of collapse. Through intense dialogue filled with biting wit and underlying tension, the play exposes the toxic dynamics that exist between family members and raises poignant questions about the destructive power of denial.

Unforgettable Characters That Stay with You

One of the hallmarks of "That Face" is the rich tapestry of complex characters that Stenham has woven into her narrative. Mia, played by Stenham herself in the original London production, is a force to be reckoned with. Her vulnerability and

desperation seep through her tough exterior, leaving a lasting impression on audiences.

Martha, portrayed by an astounding lineup of talented actresses such as Lindsay Duncan, Tamsin Greig, and Meryl Streep in different productions, embodies the tragic figure of a woman trapped in her own addictions. Her emotional journey resonates deeply, highlighting the destructive cycles that can plague families for generations.

As the play uncovers the twisted relationship between Mia and her enigmatic friend Izzy, audiences are confronted with uncomfortable truths about the lengths people will go to protect their loved ones or force them into conforming to societal norms. These characters, flawed and compelling, invite us to delve into our own psyches and confront our own moral boundaries.

Stenham's Dark Prodigy

At just 19 years old, Polly Stenham burst onto the theater scene with "That Face," instantly earning critical acclaim and catapulting her name into the spotlight. Her raw talent as a playwright and her ability to dissect the complexities of family dynamics with both vulnerability and fearlessness garnered her comparisons to established playwrights like Edward Albee and Tennessee Williams.

Stenham's own experiences growing up in a privileged environment heavily influenced the themes of "That Face." Her willingness to bare her soul and confront uncomfortable truths sets her apart from her peers and solidifies her status as a fearless voice of her generation.

A Thought-Provoking Examination of Society

Beyond its exploration of familial dysfunction, "That Face" holds a mirror up to society, forcing us to confront the uncomfortable realities that exist beneath the surface of our seemingly perfect lives. Stenham's unflinching portrayal of privilege, power, and the relentless pursuit of happiness exposes the cracks in the facade of the upper echelons of society.

The play challenges the audience to question the impact of societal expectations and pressures on individual happiness and mental well-being. By shining a light on the darker aspects of human nature, Stenham invites us to reevaluate the values and norms that govern our lives.

Continuing Impact and Relevance

Since its premiere in 2007, "That Face" has continued to captivate audiences across the globe. Its gritty subject matter, as well as its ability to provoke visceral reactions from viewers, ensures the play's enduring legacy. Productions have garnered critical acclaim and awards, including the prestigious Evening Standard Award for Best Play.

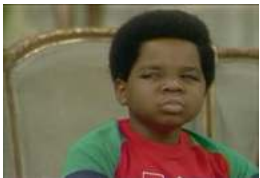
Moreover, "That Face" remains a powerful tool for theatrical education and exploration. Its rich themes, complex characters, and thought-provoking dialogue offer actors, directors, and students a wealth of material to analyze and dissect.

: A Theatrical Masterpiece

In her bold and unapologetic exploration of familial dysfunction, Polly Stenham has created a theatrical masterpiece that continues to demand attention and provoke conversation. "That Face" forces us to confront our own demons and challenges the complacency of societal values.

As we navigate the complexities of human relationships and the unending search for self-identity, Stenham's work serves as a poignant reminder that love, pain, and the existence of darkness are often inextricably intertwined.

The legacy of "That Face" and its long-lasting impact on the world of theater cements Polly Stenham's position as a visionary playwright and leaves audiences eagerly awaiting her next powerful work.



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I can't take care of you anymore. I can't take it. It's like an endless boxing match.

Mia is at boarding school. She has access to drugs. They are Martha's. Henry is preparing for art college. He has access to alcohol. From Martha. Martha controls their lives. Martha is their mother.

That Face premiered at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in April 2007, and won the TMA Award 2007 for Best New Play. Polly Stenham received both the Charles Wintour Award 2007 and the Critics' Circle Award 2008 for Most Promising Playwright.



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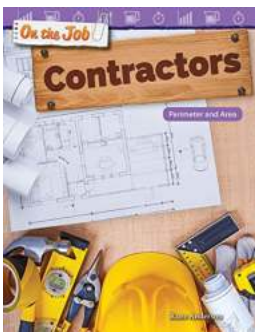
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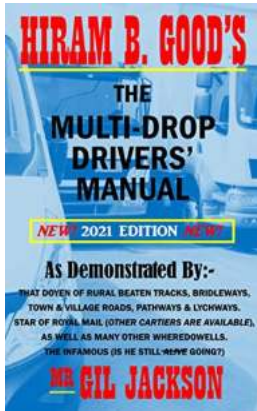
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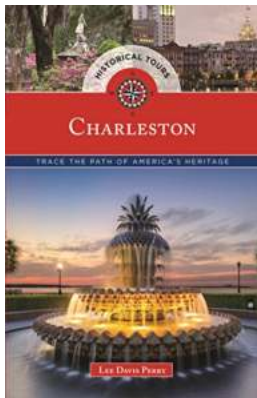
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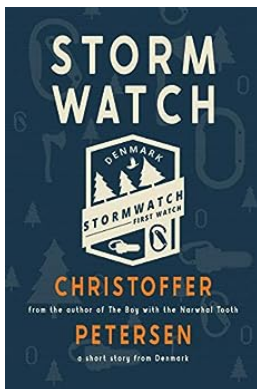
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