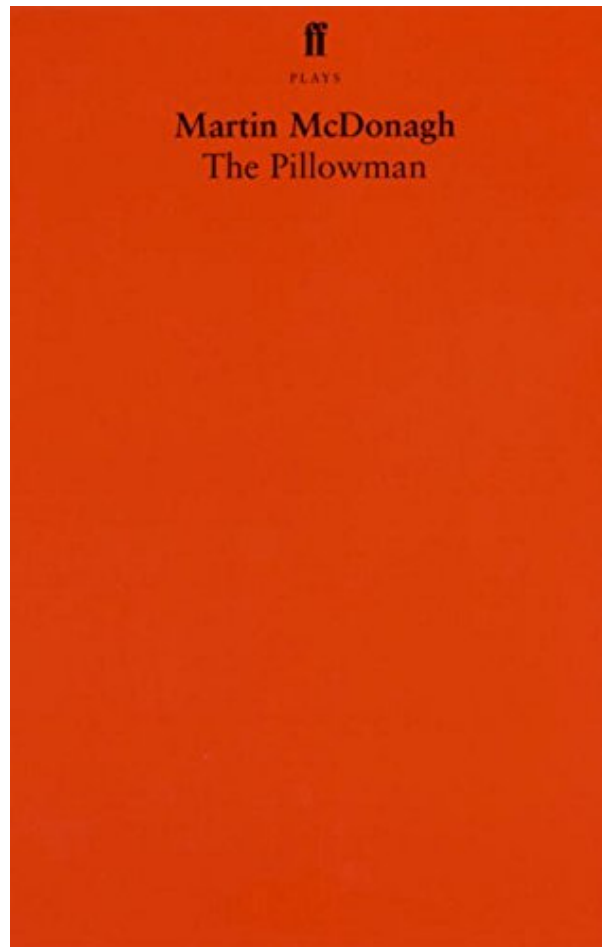


THE PILLOWMAN: A PLAY BY MARTIN MCDONAGH



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PLAYS

Martin McDonagh
The Pillowman

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Review

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THE PILLOWMAN: A PLAY BY MARTIN MCDONAGH PDF

While still in his twenties, the Anglo-Irish playwright Martin McDonagh has filled houses in New York and London, been showered with the theatre world's most prestigious accolades, and electrified audiences with his cunningly crafted and outrageous tragicomedies. With echoes of Stoppard and Kafka, his latest drama, *The Pillowman*, is the viciously funny and seriously disturbing tale of a writer in an unnamed totalitarian state who is interrogated about the gruesome content of his short stories and their similarities to a number of child-murders occurring in his town.

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- Brand: McDonagh, Martin
- Published on: 2004-09-01
- Released on: 2004-09-09
- Original language: English
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- Dimensions: 8.19" h x .35" w x 5.42" l, .24 pounds
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- 112 pages

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epitome of mediocrity.

By John

While an interesting idea, this play is flawed. The frequent use of profanity takes away some of the promising character building making the officers seem somewhat shallow. The main characters are somewhat better. The biggest problem that the play has is creating an idea that it stuck to. To avoid telling spoilers I will resist saying what they are exactly. The writer had an idea, though, and he ran with it. The bad thing about it is that idea really drained the characters even more so. Their decisions were not their own they were now means to an end and that turned some of them two dimensional. There Was A Lot Of Potential Here But A writer trying to be clever just missed it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

I Was a Good Writer

By Kevin L. Nenstiel

Martin McDonagh is one of the living legends of British theatre, a voice so brutal and yet so moving that we, the audience, find it very difficult to respond. I give *The Pillowman* five stars, but that does not mean I "like" this work--it makes himself immune to being liked. Rather, I give it five stars because, like a virus, it works his way into the cells of my being and refuses to leave me unchanged.

This is the only one of McDonagh's seven famous plays which is not associated with a real place in Ireland, or part of a longer arc of plays. Unlike *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* or *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, it is not necessary to be familiar with any other plays to understand this one. But the author does assume you're a literate person, familiar with the likes of Kafka's *The Trial* or Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, both of which it heavily alludes to.

Even if you've never seen this play, reviews and publicity have already told you that Katurian is a frustrated amateur writer who is being questioned by a pair of police who don't answer to anyone. His brother is being tortured down the hall. Katurian is the ultimate unreliable narrator, even though he only narrates at the very end of the play: he has no idea the effects he has on everyone around him. Like a hurricane, he is blind to the devastation he leaves in his wake. You can't trust a word that comes out of his mouth, even as you can't help feeling sorry for his predicament.

But he's not the only unreliable character in the play. Alliances are made and broken in the space of a sentence. Promises are only worth the air they're made of. As Detective Tupolski says, "I am a high-ranking police officer in a totalitarian f***ing dictatorship. What are you doing taking my word for anything?"

The play challenges you to come into its world and answer its questions. Does free speech extend to cover lies? How about Katurian's gruesome stories--are they free speech? Are they "speech" when someone, maybe Katurian himself, starts acting them out? And why is the interplay between the characters so bleakly funny?

This is not a light or frivolous drama, not something you'll ever see in a school play. And its staging, with multiple locations and remarkable on-stage violence, will require a very heightened sense of theatricality which will push many producers to their limits. But it is also an experience which will not leave you unchanged in your seat. One of the top dramatists of his generation, Martin McDonagh is a force to be reckoned with, a force of nature, like a hurricane--blind to the devastation in his wake.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Best Play I Have Read in a While

By Ruben Carrazana

I saw Martin McDonagh's "In Bruges" and absolutely loved the film. The dialogue was fantastic and the blend of comedy with dark and twisted violence is done perfectly. I purchased "The Pillowman" because I heard that it was one of his best plays. It is amazing. I loved reading every second of it. The main character makes such an incredible transformation throughout the play. In each act his objectives are constantly changing, and it was quite an experience to see the many layers to Katurian. Perhaps even more impressive is that the three other characters are just as rich and fleshed out. This is a play that has a lot to say, but very rarely directly says it. The themes and questions are all there, but McDonagh allows the audience and readers to form their own opinions and fill in the missing bits of information. The plot twists are thrilling, and the humor is side-splitting. This is a definite 5-star play by one of the best playwrights out there today.

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