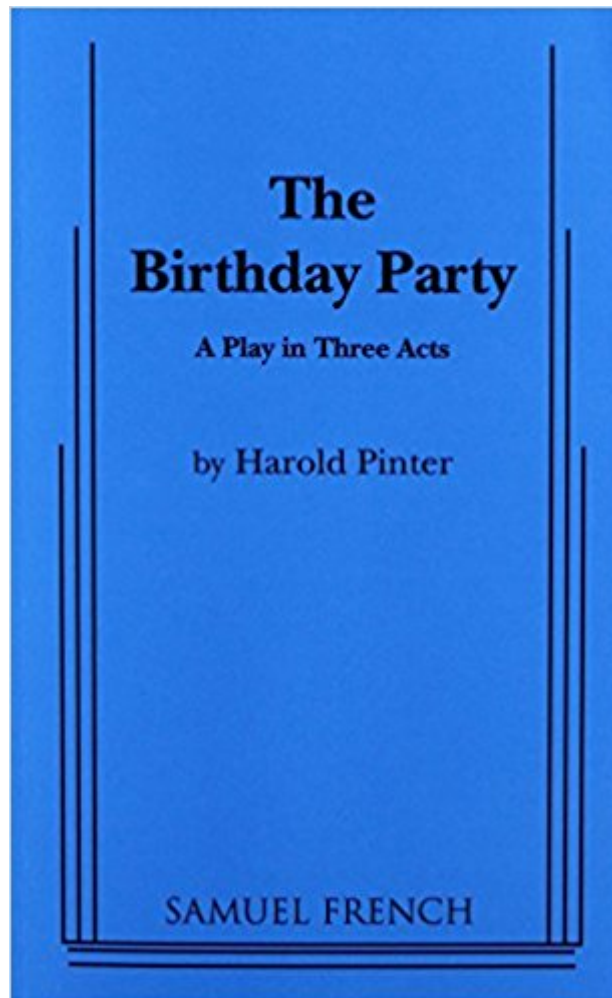




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The Birthday Party: A Play In Three Acts



Synopsis

Stanley Webber is visited in his boarding house by strangers, Goldberg and McCann. An innocent-seeming birthday party for Stanley turns into a nightmare. The Birthday Party was first performed in 1958 and is now a modern classic, produced and studied throughout the world. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is improv comedy from top to bottom and from inside out. If you want to form an improv comedy workshop, sharpen your improvisational acting skills in a group setting, or simply study the subject on your own, Andy's well-thought-out text and invaluable exercises will put you on the right track. Improv Comedy is also a useful text for writers or anyone else who wishes to study the basics of controlled spontaneity as a path to believable humor.

Harold Pinter was born in London in 1930. He lived with Antonia Fraser from 1975 and they married in 1980. In 1995 he won the David Cohen British Literature Prize, awarded for a lifetime's achievement in literature. In 1996 he was given the Laurence Olivier Award for a lifetime's achievement in theatre. In 2002 he was made a Companion of Honour for services to literature. In 2005 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and, in the same year, the Wilfred Owen Award for Poetry and the Franz Kafka Award (Prague). In 2006 he was awarded the Europe Theatre Prize and, in 2007, the highest French honour, the Legion d'honneur. He died in December 2008. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Everything went great!

Got what i expected!

I read this in college and really enjoyed it, so it was nice to find it again.

In "The Birthday Party" sixtyish batty Meg and husband Petey live in a past-its-prime British seaside resort and run a seedy boarding house which has only one guest, a strange loner named Stanley whom Meg has grown too fond of. Two mysterious ill-boding strangers, Goldberg and McCann, show up and decide to give Stanley a birthday party when it isn't even his birthday. Lulu is a young neighbor who visits and regrets it. A toy drum becomes a disquieting prop. Pinter, child of Beckett, sets up a bizarre situation. All of the people are weird, kooky, save Petey, and their behavior becomes grotesque. The party goes badly awry and gets into scary territory. This is early Pinter, not top-drawer, in which he is groping his way toward the Pinteresque theater of the Absurd. He toned down his antics in some of his later, better works like "The Homecoming." A Pinter play frequently presents:

1. Round-the-bend, barely functional, often disreputable characters living on the fringes of society, some criminal types
2. Commonplace, prosaic dialogue that is often funny, satiric, inane and Absurdist
3. A sense of nameless terror and menace, pending violence, a mystery, the surreal, and the unexpected
4. Often the motivation of some characters is unclear. We see people who are barely able to make it. Are they dumb, out of it, or puppets on a string?

Pinter keeps you interested by the plot. Where is he leading me? Why are these people doing these things? Nothing seems earthshaking. You step into his askew world and you're asking for trouble, and if you're adventurous, you are enjoying being toyed with. Part of the charm of Pinter are his enigmatic plots. They're fun because he's going to tease you, to make you wonder. This is a clever play, funny, off-beat and Absurdist, but not really much else. He's showing off, proving that he can pull off a stunt, but does it take a master dramatist just to play games? In this 1958 play one can see touches of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" Albee's 1962 classic. Pinter was extremely influential.

'The Birthday Party' was first presented by Michael Codron and David Hall at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, on 28 April 1958 with the following cast: Petey Willoughby Gray, Meg Beatrix Lehmann, Stanley Richard Pearson, Lulu Wendy Hutchinson, Goldberg John Slater, McCann John Stratton. Stanley Webber is visited in his boarding house by two strangers, Goldberg and McCann. An innocent seeming birthday party for Stanley turns into a nightmare.

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