



The Hothouse

Harold Pinter

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A black comedy set in a government-run mental institution, *The Hothouse* revolves around a sinister murder plot hatched against a backdrop of corruption, sexual favors, and hopeless bureaucratic ineptitude. Beneath the surface comedy there are frightening implications concerning a bureaucracy ostensibly dedicated to humanitarian concerns, but where people are referred to by numbers and forgotten as easily as troublesome figures on a balance sheet. Written in 1958, *The Hothouse* was first performed at London's Hampstead Theatre in April 1980, in a production directed by Pinter himself. "A blistering funny play. . . . *Hothouse* is wild, impudent, fiercely funny."-Jack Kroll, *Newsweek*

The Hothouse Details

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From Reader Review The Hothouse for online ebook

Swarnadeep Banik says

this is a great thing about harold pinter that he is a master of building tension in his plays. this is absolutely unique and masterful skill from him whenever i read his plays.

this play is his first written play but he staged it in 1980. so, being the first written play, the beginning of the play had the pale shade of beckett's "endgame" (which is one of my most favourite plays). however, that pinteresque originality flourished later on in this brilliant thriller of a play. i think it also parodied the structure of revenge tragedy with an ending which is close to the ending of jean-luc godard's "masculin feminin". also, i didn't get a clear idea about the setting or venue of the play. it might be a hospital, a mental asylum or a government-run institution.

lastly, i cannot help but appreciate the control of the playwright where he made some of his characters think that they gain the upperhand over others. also, the ending has that pinteresque finesse as the ending is a complete shocker where pinter leaves us in a state of confused ambiguity. that's why pinter is original and i love reading his plays.

Algernon says

This is not Pinter's best-known work, and it actually lived in his desk drawer for 22 years, but it is very good quality both for the stage and for good reading.

It is a dark comedy set in a state-run mental hospital where patients are referred to strictly by numbers and, we soon infer, are not well treated. A patient has been impregnated by someone on staff, and the mystery and potential scandal launches a macabre quadrille of investigation, torture, and obfuscation. Meanwhile, the patients seem to be getting restless...

Seeing this play performed by Trinity Rep in 1980 (a production that went to Broadway and was nominated for a Tony) helped hook me on theatre for life. It was funny and frightening, and the tension never let up. Later, sitting down to read the play that had made such an impression on me, I was surprised at how good a read it was all on its own.

Pooriya says

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Gilgamesh Nabeel says

I do like it, it is the best of Harold Pinter till now as I see. It is so deep and represent the real corruption occurs everywhere. Roote, the manager of a rest house or a psychiatric hospital as I think, was involved in rape of a patient, killing another one. And he was always talking about his great efforts and insisting on the

importance of order so as to raise their assembly high sky and let it to continue its false success, his subordinate Gibbs was saying all the time “Yas, sir.” Gibbs agreed with him while he is willing to take his position. Roote himself, was once in Gibbs position saying “Yes, sir” this is really what our life is! And the play starts with 2 opposing events a woman giving birth! And a man died! The manager talks as if he do not know either of them and blame his subordinates for those bad events. While he was the criminal! He wanted to know what occurs! He wanted to know false things as he knew the truth! They accused Lamb, a new employee, wants to be greater. They can make him a lamb as his name is! They can scarify with him to cover the real criminal they all know. Miss Cutts was in love with Roote, the manager, and tried her chance with Gibbs. At last Gibbs let all the patients leave their room and kill all the staff except the 2nd line and him and he got his dream, to be the new manager. This is exactly what occurs in real life. At the ministry, he was honored and exposed his x-manager of being killer and rapper. He said that Lamb was responsible for that. It is so realistic and comic sometimes, it took place in Christmas time and that assistant Lush was repeating “snow turns into mud” it seems so silly but I think he means how good people “clear as snow turns suddenly into dark awful things just like mud” it is quite realistic although it seems strange but this is life full of vague and uncertain answers for great events. As they left the matter of killing the whole staff except Gibbs and promised him to find new professional persons. And say “sorry for delaying your work”. At last we found poor Lamb in a room in schizophrenic status. Always poor people pay the bill instead of the real criminals.

Patrik Sampler says

I’ve just finished re-reading The Hothouse after quite a few years, and find it just as hilarious now as the first time—perhaps even more so. To my knowledge it has never been performed in my own country, no doubt because Canadian patients—I mean, audiences—haven’t show great enthusiasm for looking at the Roote—I mean, root—of all sorts of corruption. Or maybe it’s because we hardly need a production of The Hothouse here: one can see the same kinds of things enacted in our national parliament without having to pay an admission fee.

J Benedetti says

Quite frankly blew my head off, I work in a bureaucracy, this is my first play of his I have read. It is an incredible text. Work hasn't been the same since.

Issa says

The first time I’ve read Pinter was in a class on Modern Drama. And I enjoyed it to the most. And I still love the sense of humor in his plays.

Elizabeth says

Ending seems abrupt, easily explained/cleaned up.
