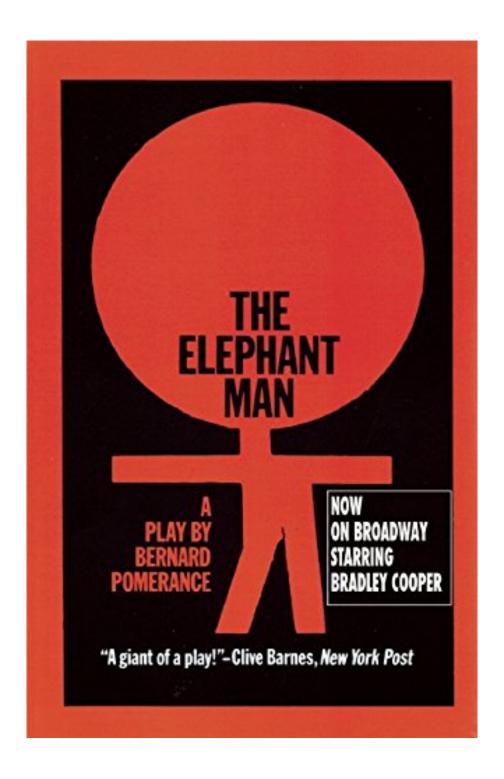


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"The Elephant Man" is based on the life of John Merrick, who lived in London during the latter part of the nineteenth century. A horribly deformed young man, who has been a freak attraction in traveling side shows, is found abandoned and helpless and is admitted for observation to Whitechapel, a prestigious London hospital. Under the care of a famous young doctor, who educates him and introduces him to London society, Merrick changes from a sensational object of pity to the urbane and witty favorite of the aristocracy and literati. But his belief that he can become a man like any other is a dream never to be realized.

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• Binding: Paperback

• 71 pages

Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Eric Washburn

Great play, and a good price for a very lightly used copy.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Modern theatrical masterwork

By Giuseppe C.

I can think of few films that have touched me as deeply as Lynch's "The Elephant Man." Hence, I was prepared for an anticlimactic theater piece when I picked up the script and subsequently attended the play. To my surprise, it's every bit as powerful as the film--in no way a replacement for Lynch's supreme achievement but a necessary complement to it.

Pomerance' play concentrates on Dr. Frederick Treves, whose experience places him in the company of Conrad's Marlowe. By the end of the play his promotion to knighthood is one more empty Victorian consolation added to a career that has become meaningless. In his powerful, climactic "corset" speech he rises to social indictment of the highest order--a recognition of the "horror" and a denunciation of the shallow, exploitive, self-deluded, spiritless society that he would prefer to be no part of (his epiphany is also suggestive of Charles Smithson's in "The French Lieutenant's Woman").

Juxtaposed with the film, Pomerance's play makes us aware of the power of the theater of the imagination. Unlike the movie, whose requirements for verisimilitude led John Hurt to putting on facial make-up for six hours prior to each day's shoot, the play's John Merrick appears without disguise. His normal features are

soon replaced, however, by the audience's realization that Merrick could be--and is--any one of us.

Both a little less realistic and less sentimental than the film, the play is at the same time a provocative and moving study in self-discovery.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

A Wonderful Play

By A Customer

I obtained a copy of the play from my local library think that it would resemble the movie; it did not. This play was so riveting that I read the play 4 more times while in my possession. The Elephant Man by Bernard Pomerance follows the tragic life of Joseph Merrick. Pomerance wrote everything just right to complete a masterpiece. Pomerances use of diction and dialogue took the read right into Merricks hospital room in turn of the 20th century London.

While reading the play, I found myself becoming emotionally attached to Merrick as he transformed from a horrid animal to a person of intelligence and wisdom. Each time I read the play I picked up the little things Pomerance wrote about how cruel humanity can be to things they don't understand.

I found myself finishing the play and then turning back to page one. The play was enthralling. Expanding my mind to the world before me while ironically keeping me away from it. The Elephant Man should be dispersed to high schools nation wide, so teenagers have the chance to read and annotate a great piece of literature. This play is great to read for your own pleasure. It will expand your mind, and rethink your position in society.

A strong worded masterpiece like a cannonball ripping through the literary cannon. I recommend this play to anyone of any age looking to expand their mind and thoughts of the society around them.

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