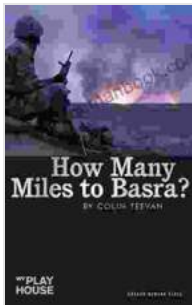


How Many Miles to Basra? An Exploration of Harold Pinter's Modernist Masterpiece

Harold Pinter's 'How Many Miles to Basra?' is a seminal work of modern theatre. Written in 1958, it premiered in the same year, propelling Pinter to prominence and establishing him as a leading figure in the Theatre of the Absurd. The play explores themes of alienation, identity, and power dynamics, using its enigmatic characters and elliptical dialogue to create a haunting and unsettling atmosphere.



How Many Miles to Basra? (Oberon Modern Plays)

by Colin Teevan

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 388 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 103 pages
Paperback	: 100 pages
Item Weight	: 3.84 ounces
Dimensions	: 5 x 0.23 x 8 inches



Characters

- **John:** A young man who is captured and interrogated by the mysterious interrogator.
- **Interrogator:** An enigmatic and authoritarian figure who manipulates and controls John throughout the play.

The relationship between John and the Interrogator is central to the play. John is vulnerable and unsure of himself, while the Interrogator is dominant and authoritative. The Interrogator uses his power to manipulate John, creating a sense of fear and uncertainty.

Themes

- **Alienation:** John is isolated and alienated from the world around him. He is captured and interrogated, stripped of his identity and dignity.
- **Identity:** The play explores the nature of identity. John struggles to maintain his sense of self under the pressure of the interrogation.
- **Power Dynamics:** The relationship between John and the Interrogator highlights the power dynamics at play. The Interrogator has complete control over John, using his authority to manipulate and coerce him.

Symbolism

- **The title:** The title of the play refers to the distance between Basra and John's home. This distance symbolizes the physical and emotional journey that John must take throughout the play.
- **The interrogation:** The interrogation is a symbol of John's struggle for identity and freedom. It is a process of stripping away his humanity and reducing him to a mere object.

Influences and Context

'How Many Miles to Basra?' was influenced by the Theatre of the Absurd, a movement that emerged in the post-World War II era. Playwrights such as Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco explored themes of absurdity, alienation, and the search for meaning in a meaningless world. Pinter's

play shares many similarities with these works, particularly in its use of elliptical dialogue and enigmatic characters.

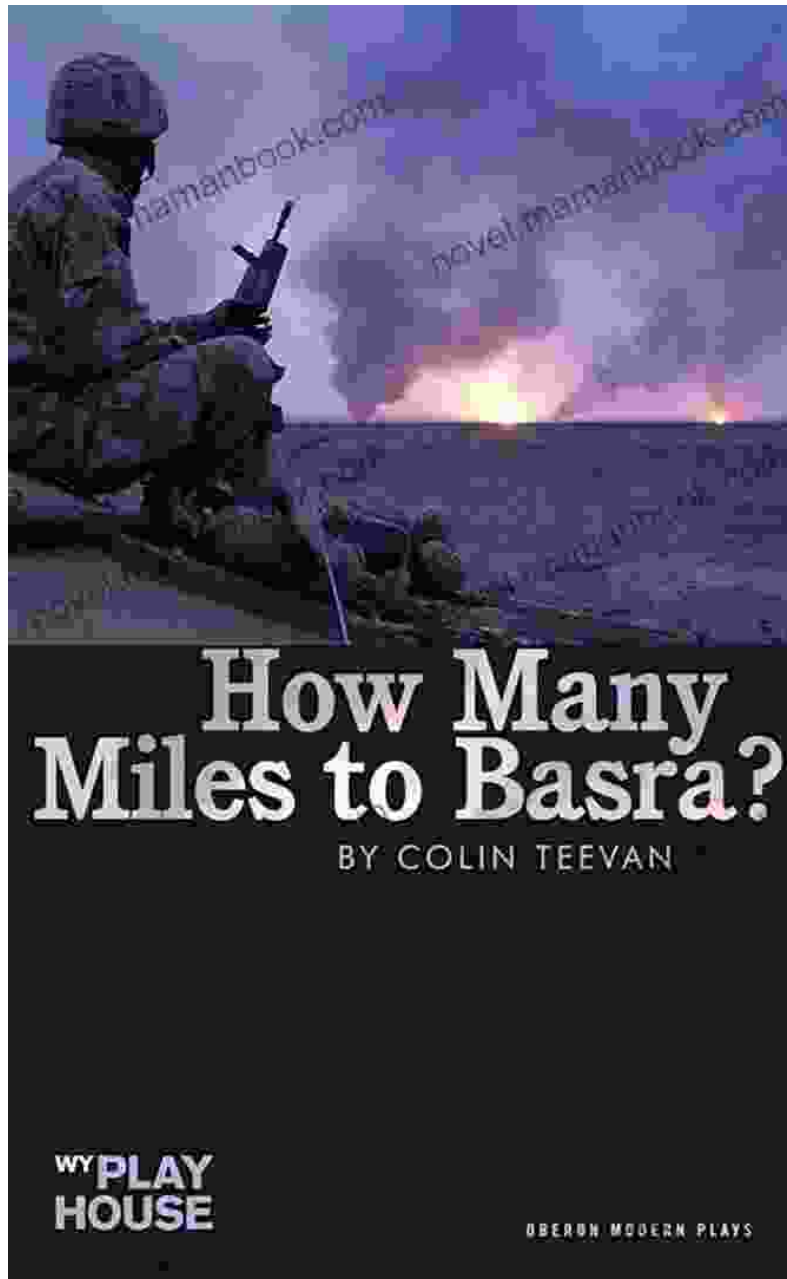
The play also reflects the political climate of the time. The Cold War and the threat of nuclear war cast a shadow over the world, creating a sense of uncertainty and anxiety. Pinter's play captures this mood of unease, exploring the themes of power and control in a world where traditional values and beliefs are crumbling.

Impact and Legacy

'How Many Miles to Basra?' had a profound impact on modern theatre. It challenged traditional notions of drama, pushing the boundaries of what was considered acceptable onstage. Pinter's use of language and his exploration of complex psychological themes inspired a new generation of playwrights.

The play continues to be performed around the world, captivating audiences with its haunting atmosphere and timeless themes. It is considered one of Pinter's greatest works and a landmark in modern drama.

Harold Pinter's 'How Many Miles to Basra?' is a masterpiece of modern theatre. Through its enigmatic characters, elliptical dialogue, and haunting atmosphere, the play explores themes of alienation, identity, and power dynamics. It is a work that continues to challenge and inspire audiences, leaving a lasting legacy in the world of drama.



Source: Harold Pinter - How Many Miles to Basra?

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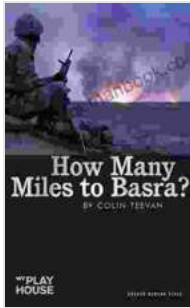
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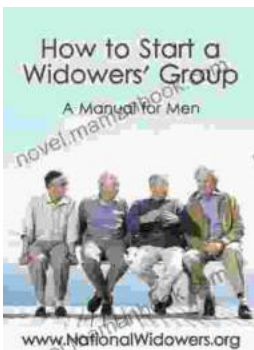
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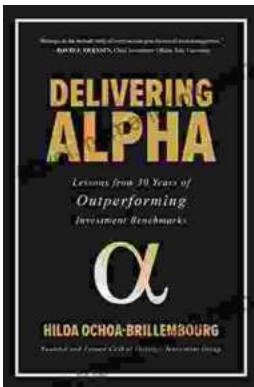


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