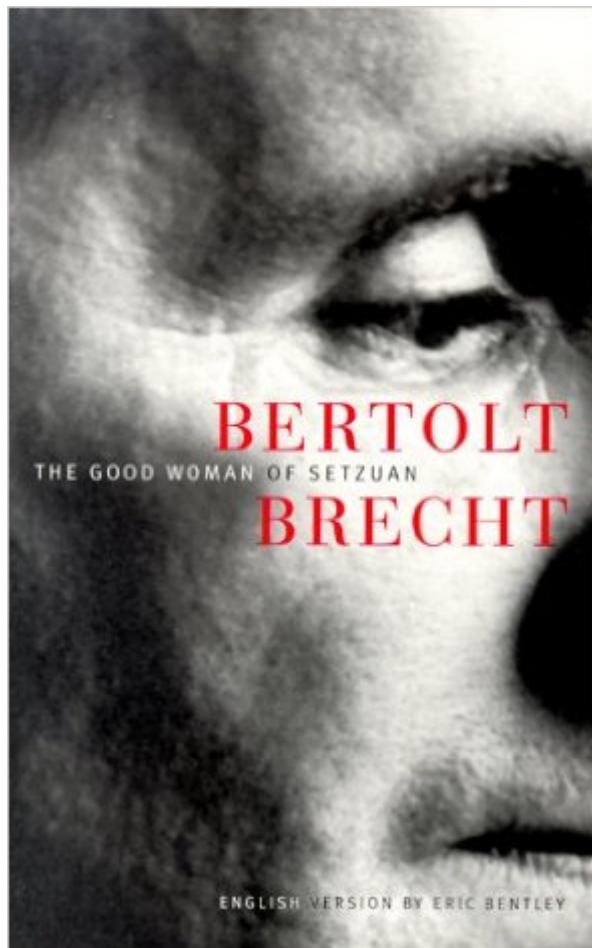


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The Good Woman Of Setzuan



Synopsis

In 1952, Hannah Arendt hailed Bertolt Brecht as "beyond a doubt the greatest living German poet and possibly the greatest living European playwright." His plays, widely taught and studied, are searing critiques of civilizations run amok. During the thirties, the subversive nature of his work sent Brecht from Germany to Scandinavia and later to the United States. *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, written during Brecht's exile and set in Communist China, is a parable of a young woman torn between obligation and reality, between love and practicality, and between her own needs and those of her friends and neighbors. Adhering closely to the original German text, this is a performance-friendly translation of one of Brecht's most popular plays.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Never was there a story of..concern. It's a gut hitter as it addresses on a tale as old as time about what it takes to be "good." It's a little hard to understand, but that's the style. A must read for those interested in theatre literature.

I needed this for a college class, but recommend it to anyone interested in dramatic plays. Very moving and heartfelt. It makes you question people's motives and personalities. The ending was... interesting. So glad I read it.

Brecht used to a very big name, one of the biggest in world theater. His writing makes for lively and

entertaining theater, but I am afraid I must put myself in the category of not really knowing what the fuss is about. This play was entertaining, and I could see its roots in classic theatrical themes and approaches, but it did not strike me as being a great piece of writing. Certainly in today's politico-artistic environment it would be hard to see an inauthentic work like this being hailed and loved. Brecht's Chinese heroine Shen Te is a hooker with a heart of gold, a kind but foolish young woman who manages to get along by charming everyone. She eventually falls for a loutish young aviator, and their tribulations become the basis for the second half of the plot. The plot has some nice twists and moves along at a very brisk clip. Numerous characters appear and get their due - a couple of unidentifiable gods, a poor water seller, an older shop owner, some freeloaders, etc. There are all sorts of manipulations going on, everyone keeps trying to get an edge on each other. Money changes hands quickly and this becomes the engine of the narrative - Shen Te gets some, opens a shop, does well, then gives it away to the unworthy flyer. Her sweet, happy-go-lucky character is balanced by the presence of her supposed cousin, Shui Ta, a shrewd and tough negotiator who appears at key moments to bail out his relative. How one would effectively pull this off on stage is a bit of a mystery to me, and for that reason alone I would like to see a production of it. Overall, an entertaining play with a humanistic heart, but not a work of genius.

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