



The Black Monk and The Dog Problem: Two Plays

David Rabe

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The Black Monk has been called a singular "collaboration" between two writers: Anton Chekhov and David Rabe. Based on Chekhov's novella of the same name, Rabe's brilliant stage adaptation tells the story of Kovrin, the young philosophy student who returns from Moscow to the estate owned by Pesotsky, where he spent his youth. Kovrin and Pesotsky's daughter, Tanya, soon fall in love and plan to marry. But the appearance of an emissary from the unknown -- the black monk -- threatens to have a devastating effect on all of them.

Trouble starts in when Teresa tells her brother Joey that this guy Ray did something to her with his dog in bed. Nobody seems to know exactly what happened, but they do know that somebody's got to pay. So what is *The Dog Problem*? It starts with being born into a world where the wrong thing said to the wrong person ignites a chain reaction of misplaced passions and galloping sentences that race to a deadly conclusion. The playful title is revealed to be a wry pun on the Cartesian mind/body problem, as Uncle Mal, the aging mobster, must face his turn to be the dog in this darkly funny play about men, women, sex, betrayal, and ghosts.

Vastly different in their aesthetic, these two recent and highly praised plays embody all of the celebrated hallmarks of David Rabe's writing and art: unflinchingly honest and perceptive themes, starkly luminous dialogue, and the unsettling humor that have made him an icon of the American theater for more than forty years.

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