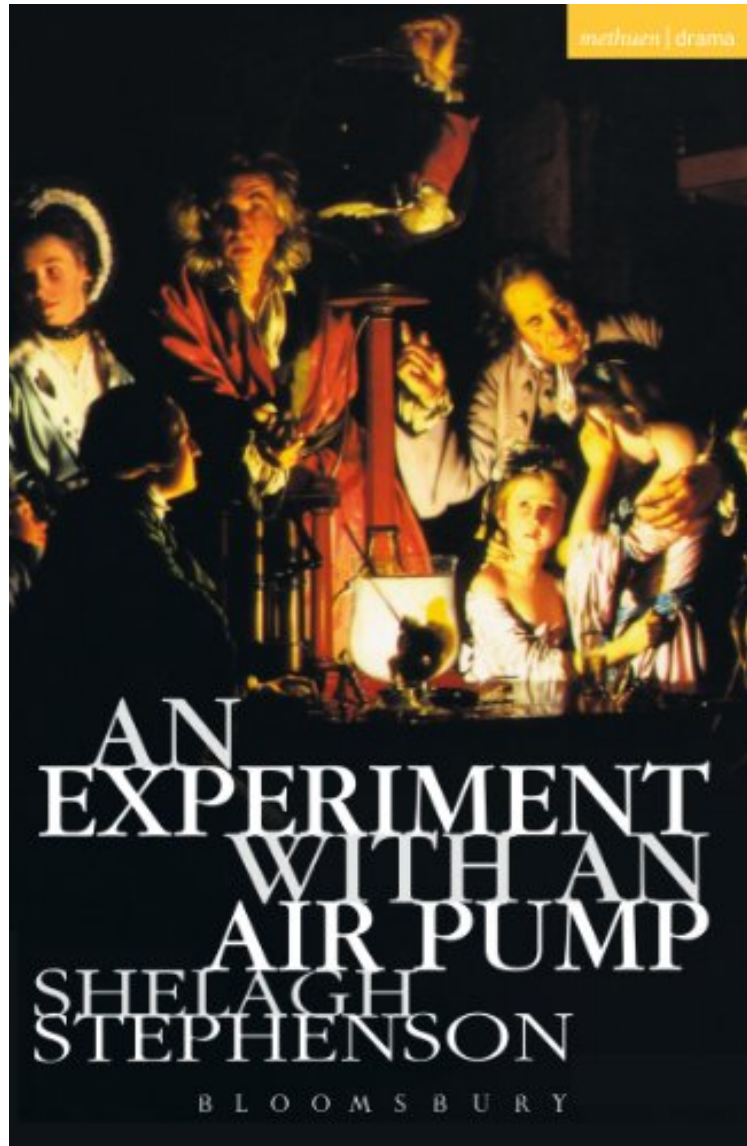


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An Experiment With An Air Pump (Modern Plays)

Shelagh Stephenson

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Shelagh Stephenson : An Experiment With An Air Pump (Modern Plays) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Experiment With An Air Pump (Modern Plays):

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy lindalouRequired for my daughter's acting class. Cheaper than college bookstore.10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. She blinded me with scienceBy Michael J. Mazza"An Experiment with an Air Pump," by Shelagh Stephenson, is an intriguing play that takes place in two different time periods: 1799 and 1999. The book notes that the play was first performed at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester in 1998; a biographic note on the author states that she was born in Northumberland and has

written a number of plays for BBC Radio. The play switches back and forth between the two time periods. The 1799 story is about scientist and political radical Joseph Fenwick, his family, servant, and professional associates. The 1999 story looks at a married couple in which the wife is a scientist, and at 2 of their associates. The intent is for four of the actors to double and each play one character in each time period. "Experiment" makes use of a play-within-a-play motif as some of the 1799 characters work on mounting a little production. There's also a tip of the hat to the epistolary novel as letters between two characters are read as part of the dialogue. Some of the issues addressed in the play are gender roles, creativity, class oppression, "Englishness" (i.e. English ethnic/national identity), cross-cultural contact, the role of the scientist in society, scientific ethics, and female beauty standards. There are some really cutting lines as the characters explore these issues. Complex and thought-provoking, this is a really remarkable play.

Shelagh Stephenson's daring and thoughtful new play 1799 - On the eve of a new century, the house buzzes with scientific experiments, furtive romance and farcical amateur dramatics. 1999 - In a world of scientific chaos, cloning and genetic engineering, the cellar of the same house reveals a dark secret buried for 200 years. An Experiment with an Air Pump was joint recipient of the 1997 Margaret Ramsay Award and premiered at The Royal Exchange Theatre Company, Manchester in February 1997. Due for a major London production in autumn 1998. Her previous play The Memory of Water won the 1996 Writers' Guild Award for Best Original Radio Play and the 1997 Sony Award for Best Original Drama