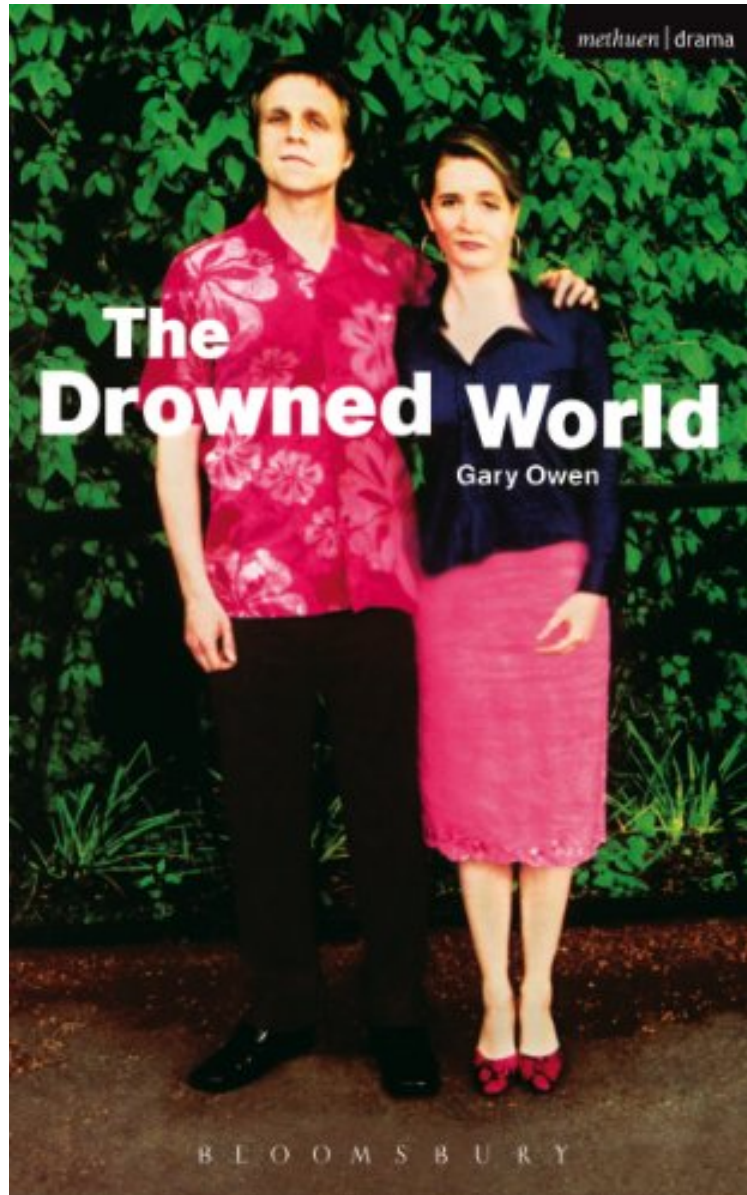


[Pdf free] The Drowned World (Modern Plays)

The Drowned World (Modern Plays)

Gary Owen

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Gary Owen : The Drowned World (Modern Plays) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Drowned World (Modern Plays):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful play about envy and desire
By Steven Reynolds
If you've ever felt intimidated by the beautiful people, and lamented the impossibility of ever achieving such effortless grace yourself, then you might be more comfortable living in Gary Owen's drowned world. Here, such jealousy isn't just acceptable - it's the law. This is a dystopian future where only the ugly are deemed "citizens", and the radiantly

beautiful are outcasts. They're hunted down by death squads in an effort to contain "radiance sickness": an affliction which saps the moral will and can be passed on simply by touching the hair of a beautiful woman, like Tara, or by glancing into the eyes a handsome man, like Julian. Exposure leads to "acute moral weakness": tears, mood swings, paralysis in the face of sunsets and birdsong. Worse, it makes you hate yourself. As the citizens explain, "We can't have these fatally radiant creatures walking round the place, reminding us how clumsy, and mean-spirited, and graceless, and cowardly, and shapeless, and flabby, and foul we all are." It just won't do. Radiance is dangerous, and it must be exterminated. But as in any society which establishes an Us and a Them, there are rebels among the citizens, like Darren, who will risk their lives to protect the outcasts; and doubters among the authorities, like Kelly, who are tempted to possess what they're tasked to destroy... "The Drowned World" explores the nature of envy and desire, the need to belong, and the ways in which we see ourselves in the eyes of other people. Beauty is figured as both irresistible and terrifying, something to be coveted and loathed in equal measure. Desire for the radiant people consumes us, ruining our chance of happiness with each other. As Kelly laments: "We turn on each other for want of them, we chew each other up, for want of them..." But you can't legislate desire out of existence. You can't kill a want, even if you remake the world. As Victor Hugo noted: "The new world which emerges from the chaos will see the ideas of the drowned world soaring above it, winged and full of life." In Owen's world, the citizens aren't free - they're still trapped by envy and desire. Owen's play is also interesting for its take on totalitarianism and institutionalized violence. Hatred of other groups - classes, races, genders - almost always has its origin in a hatred of the self. We crush others because they remind us of our weaknesses. Bigotry is self-hatred writ large; genocide a substitute for suicide. Today, stories dealing with genocide and cultural cleansing are sadly familiar. Yet often the situations they present are reasonably alien, dealing with people we don't know and places we've never lived. It's easy to empathize with victims you personally have nothing against. Owen's play, however, is about us. It jacks into a resentment that many of us feel and which is deliberately stoked by a culture that worships beauty and actually needs us to feel ugly so we'll more readily pay for a cure. Advertising insists on that lack. "The Drowned World" puts us, the imperfect ones, in a position of power and enacts a brand of victimization that many of us, in our darker moments, might actually relish. While this makes it original and personally relevant in a way that other stories of totalitarian violence aren't, it does share with them one important element: what they all demonstrate is that inhuman depravity is never far from the surface of "civilized" life. To unleash it, all we need is an excuse. And as "The Drowned World" argues, what ultimately divides good from evil, citizens from outcasts, isn't the colour or quality of our skin: it's how we choose to behave when that excuse presents itself.

Winner of the George Devine Award for 2002, published to tie in with the opening at the Traverse Theatre at the Edinburgh Festival And that is why we can't have these/Fatally radiant creatures/Walking round the place/Reminding us how clumsy/And mean-spirited/And graceless/And cowardly/And shapeless/And flabby and foul we all are. In a drowned world - how far will you go to save your own skin? In this vicious tale of love, revolt and beauty, Gary Owen presents a vision of a world divided between citizens and non-citizens, where friends betray one another and where surfaces matter more than love or kinship. "A blazing new talent" Guardian "A blast of brilliant theatrical writing straight from the heart of post-modern Wales" Scotsman

ldquo;A blazing new talent.rdqquo; Guardianldquo;A blast of brilliant theatrical writing straight from the heart of post-modern Wales.rdqquo; Scotsman About the Author Gary Owen is an award-winning Welsh playwright. Gary won the George Devine and Meyer Whitworth Award for his play *The Shadow of a Boy* and The Pearson Best Play Award for *The Drowned World*. Gary is currently working on an original series for BBC Wales called *The Fabulous Baker Boys* which he is co-writing with Helen Raynor and is under commission for the National Theatre of Scotland.