



The Hard Problem: A Play

By Tom Stoppard

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Above all don't use the word good as though it meant something in evolutionary science.

The Hard Problem is a tour de force, exploring fundamental questions of how we experience the world, as well as telling the moving story of a young woman whose struggle for understanding her own life and the lives of others leads her to question the deeply held beliefs of those around her.

Hilary, a young psychology researcher at the Krohl Institute for Brain Science, is nursing a private sorrow and a troubling question. She and other researchers at the institute are grappling with what science calls the “hard problem”—if there is nothing but matter, what is consciousness? What Hilary discovers puts her fundamentally at odds with her colleagues, who include her first mentor and one-time lover, Spike; her boss, Leo; and the billionaire founder of the institute, Jerry. Hilary needs a miracle, and she is prepared to pray for one.

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The Hard Problem: A Play By Tom Stoppard Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #81116 in Books
- Published on: 2015-10-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.10" h x .30" w x 5.30" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 96 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for *The Hard Problem*:

“Mr. Stoppard is, as always, an adept craftsman. . . . [He] has provided food for thought, and not just a tasting menu but a full, footnoted banquet.”—**Ben Brantley**, *New York Times*

“Tom Stoppard [is] the English-speaking world’s brainiest playwright.”—*Wall Street Journal*

“Oozes learning. . . . [Stoppard] proves that it is possible to construct a tight 100 minutes of drama around neuroscientific conceits. . . . He has succeeded . . . this is a play to admire.”—*Economist*

“[*The Hard Problem*] displays intact the dramatist’s remarkable ability to synthesize complex knowledge into wittily metaphorical dialogue. . . . Demand for this brainy, funny, and touching play will long outstrip supply.”—*New Statesman*

“Tom Stoppard’s first play for nine years is typically witty—an intellectually charged piece that delights in the slippery nature of language and pulses with interesting ideas.”—*London Evening Standard*

“100 minutes of condensed brain-ache, marbled by wit and some camisoled sexiness. . . . Admirably high-minded . . . It succeeds, in my view triumphantly.”—*Daily Mail*

“Stimulating . . . absorbing . . . A rich, ideas-packed work that . . . offers endless stimulation and represents, like so much of [Stoppard’s] work, a search for absolute values and a belief in the possibility of selfless virtue.”—*Guardian*

“The dialogue is flashily impressive . . . it leaves one panting with admiration.”—*Spectator (UK)*

About the Author

Tom Stoppard is the author of such seminal works as *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Jumpers*, *The Real Thing*, *Arcadia*, *The Invention of Love*, and the trilogy *The Coast of Utopia*. His screen credits include *Parade’s End*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Enigma*, *Empire of the Sun*, and *Anna Karenina*.

Users Review

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