

The Lonesome West (Student Editions)

Martin McDonagh



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This Student Edition features expert and helpful annotation, including a scene-by-scene summary, a detailed commentary on the dramatic, social and political context, and on the themes, characters, language and structure of the play, as well a list of suggested reading and questions for further study and a review of performance history.

The Lonesome West was first presented as a Druid Theatre company and Royal Court co-production in the summer of 1997, and is the final part of McDonagh's Leenane trilogy.

This edition explores the play's substantial themes and textured controversy, which make it such a popular choice to study: the Catholic Church is exposed as irrelevant and powerless and the characters have a dangerously skewed sense of morality. The text is full of McDonagh's characteristic combination of farce, aggression and wit. The plot follows two brothers, Valene and Coleman, living alone in their father's house after his recent death. They find it impossible to exist without massive and violent disputes over the most mundane and innocent of topics. Only Father Welsh, the local young priest, is prepared to try to reconcile the two before their petty squabblings spiral into vicious and bloody carnage.

Martin McDonagh is the most controversial Irish dramatist working today, with his explorations of Irish national identity which look at the darker side of provincial life. His bleak but blackly comic portrayal of modern, rural Ireland courts debate with its dark farce, caricatures of violence and barbarism and an exaggerated, poeticised dialect of Hiberno-English.



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