

Mahesh Dattani Books

Mahesh Dattani, b. 1958, Indian English playwright; contributed articles.

Collected Plays Penguin UK

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, Wasafiri Tara and Chandan have always been close. They were, after all, born as conjoined twins. But a horrific revelation drives a wedge between the siblings, plunging Chandan into a cycle of guilt and blame from which he cannot escape. One of Mahesh Dattani's most popular works, Tara was also one of the first Indian plays in English to highlight the dangers of gender discrimination, and the insidious ways in which it operates in our society. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee

'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, Wasafiri First staged in 1991, Bravely Fought the Queen created a stir with its disturbingly honest portrayal of the dysfunctional Trivedi family, confirming Dattani's reputation as a playwright at the top of his game. Unfolding at a relentless pace, the play provides an unflinching insight into the urban Indian milieu, throwing light on a wide range of issues—marital friction, sibling rivalry, sexual politics and the lies we often tell ourselves—before racing to a shocking finale. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

Abhinay wants to start a music group and while he has a singer, a guitarist, a drummer and lots of talent, he feels there is something missing—something that he finds only in Swarnalatha, a Carnatic singer, who was his mother's best friend. But Swarnalatha has her own demons to fight—the fateful accident that killed her son and Abhinay's mother. A meeting of two worlds, Morning Raga brings together the modern and the traditional, unites the past with the present, Carnatic music with Western music, and fate and coincidence with individual choices. Read this wonderful screenplay of the critically acclaimed film Morning Raga, which was directed and written by Mahesh Dattani. The film, starring Shabana Azmi, Perizaad Zorabian and Prakash Kovelamudi was released in India in October 2004.

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, Wasafiri Final Solutions is one of Mahesh Dattani's most renowned and widely performed plays. Moving between the Partition of India and the present day, it explores issues of religious bigotry and communal violence. One night, after being chased by a murderous mob, two Muslim boys seek shelter in the home of a Hindu Gujarati family. The boys' arrival unleashes a flood of bitter memories and deep-seated prejudices. And as the tension builds towards a powerful climax, the play becomes a timely reminder of the need for tolerance. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

The Present Volume Makes A Pioneering Attempt At Evaluating The Major Plays Of Dattani.

Brief Candle: Three Plays brings together the most recent work of Sahitya Akademi award-winner Mahesh Dattani as he continues to explore subjects that need to be addressed but are relentlessly brushed under the carpet of middle-class morality—incest; gender bias and death. The title play is set in a hospital ward where terminally ill patients put up an energetic farce in memory of their friend who died of

cancer. The blurring of lines between their romp and the events of their own lives leads to revelations that are both tragic and life-affirming. In the radio play *The Girl Who Touched the Stars*; Bhavna—now an astronaut ready to take off on a mission into outer space—reflects on her past in this moment of glory; only to confront the bitter truths she has tried to ignore all her life. The fragile fabric of familial relations is ripped apart in *Thirty Days in September* when memories of a traumatic past return to haunt a mother and her daughter. Playful and poignant; devastating and redemptive; these critically acclaimed plays lay bare the far-reaching consequences of the choices we make; confirming Dattani as one of India's foremost dramatists.

Dattani is a versatile theatre person - a writer, director, actor, dancer and teacher, all welded into one. He has been awarded the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for *Final Solutions* and *Other Plays*. In his plays, Dattani provokes our thinking, compels us to think afresh about the problems he presents and appeals to us indirectly like an artist to change our conventional attitudes and assumptions about what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil. From his plays, Dattani emerges as humanist who cares for the marginalized section of the Indian society. -- Introduction.

Twenty years ago, Anna Gosweb had an affair with a local man while visiting India from the UK. Having never kept in touch after the trip, Anna is surprised when she receives a letter from him asking for help. As she comes back to India, she relives her past, not quite knowing what's in store for her ahead. *The Tale of a Mother Feeding her Child* was commissioned as part of a landmark drama series marking the 600th death anniversary of Geoffrey Chaucer, poet and author of the *Canterbury Tales*. Produced by the BBC, the series included the works of twenty-one writers who were asked to write a story which might be re-told to a group of travellers forced to spend the night together at a service station on a motorway in England. Poignant and subversive, like most of Mahesh Dattani's work, this is a vibrant, entertaining and challenging contemporary drama that stays with you long after you've read the last lines.

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* is the first contemporary Indian play to openly tackle gay themes of love, partnership, trust and betrayal. Kamlesh—young, gay and clinically depressed—invites his friends home ostensibly for an evening of camaraderie. However, with the arrival of his sister and her fiancé, a series of dramatic confrontations is set into motion, leading to startling revelations and unexpected catharsis. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—*The New York Times*

Includes: *The Fire and the Rain* by Girish Karnad; *Aramba Chekkan* by Kavalam Narayana Panikkar, translated by the author and Erin B. Mee; *Rudali* by Usha Ganguli, translated by Anjum Katyāl; *The Wooden Cart* by Tripurari Sharma, translated by Mohit Satyanand; *Tara* by Mahesh Dattani and *Routes and Escape Routes* by Datta Bhagat, translated by Maya Pandit.

Mahesh Dattani is the first Indian-playwright writing in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi award. His plays bring Indian drama into the present day in their themes "sexuality, religious tension and gender issues" while still focussing on human relationships and personal and moral choices which are the classic concerns of world drama.

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri Clearing the Rubble*, a radio play

for three voices, was commissioned by BBC Radio to commemorate the first anniversary of the massive earthquake that devastated Gujarat on 26 January 2001. Two lives are brought together by tragedy. Toby, an English journalist, decides to help a young Muslim boy whose mother and two sisters are buried under the debris of the fallen hospital. The play is a touching tale of the victims of both natural calamity and social discrimination. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* In this cleverly constructed radio play, negotiations are underway for an arranged marriage between Alpesh Patel and Lata Gowda. Despite their cultural differences, both their families are desperate for this match. But while all seems genial on the surface, tension simmers beneath the happy facade—for both Alpesh and Lata have their own secrets to hide . . . 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

Includes short life and works of Mahesh Dattani, b. 1958, Indian English playwright and critical perspectives by various contributors.

When Michael Forsyth, the actor playing Oberon in a special performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Bangalore is shot dead in the greenroom minutes after the performance, it becomes a matter of international concern involving three countries. Forsyth, part of a theatre troupe based in England, was reported to have been kidnapped earlier in the day—only to reappear in time for the performance—by his wife, Nila Ahmed, originally from Pakistan. Uma Rao—having outsmarted her husband, the superintendent of police, on two previous cases—is intrigued to say the least and realizes that there might be more to it than political conspiracy. With the Interpol getting involved, suspecting terrorist activity, will Uma be able to solve the case in time? Read on, as Mahesh Dattani masterfully weaves another pacy thriller around Uma Rao and her sleuthing skills in *Uma and the Fairy Queen*, while raising some compelling questions about the role of women in society.

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* *Mango Soufflé*, India's first major gay-themed film, is an adaptation of Mahesh Dattani's seminal play *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*. Kamlesh, a young gay man, invites his friends home ostensibly for an evening of camaraderie. However, with the arrival of his sister and her fiancé, a series of dramatic confrontations is set into motion, leading to startling revelations and unexpected catharsis. Directed by Dattani himself, the film made a splash at various film festivals abroad and even won the Mostra Lambda Award for best film at the Barcelona Film Festival in 2002. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

Contributed articles.

Mahesh Dattani, b. 1958, Indian English playwright.

The Present Critical Anthology On Indian-English Drama Is A Welcome Addition To The Ever-Increasing Repertoire Of The Academic World. It Contains Some Twenty-Two Papers On Diverse Authors, Themes And Trends. The Authors Treated In It Are Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani, Badal Sircar, Rabindranath Tagore (Chronologically, Tagore Should Have Been Placed First), And Vijay Tendulkar. The Themes Dealt With Herein Are Myths And Folk Tales, Religious Propensity, Social Alienation, Audience Participation, Feminine Psyche, Role Of Freedom, And Man-Woman Relationship. And The Trends Touched Upon In This Anthology Are Mythic And Symbolic Interpretations, Focusing On Folklore, Experimentations In Third Theatre And Street Plays, And Feminist Approaches To Certain Plays. The Broad Spectrum Of Indian-English Drama Has Also Been Presented In A Few Papers. In Its Present Shape And

Size, This Anthology Will, Hopefully, Find A Place On The Library Shelves And Enlighten The Academics On The Perspectives And Challenges Inherent In Indian-English Drama.

Mahesh Dattani's work has shaped contemporary English theatre in India over the past twenty-five years, boldly exploring themes like homosexuality, religious fanaticism, child sexual abuse and gender bias while also raising the bar for theatrical innovation. In *Me and My Plays*, he eloquently reflects on the highs and lows of surviving in a system largely indifferent to professional theatre. Included in this edition are *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?*, which explores the life and travails of Nazia, a feisty actress now in her eighties, who is forced to confront her past demons when she attempts to stage a comeback, and *The Big Fat City*, a black comedy about the residents of an apartment complex in Mumbai who unwittingly become accomplices to a murder. Intense and hard-hitting, both plays deal with the lies that simmer beneath the surface of our daily lives.

An exploration of gay identity in South Asia. From Ashok Row Kavi's autobiographical piece on growing up gay in Bombay to Vikram Seth's brilliantly etched account of a homosexual relationship in *The Golden Gate*, the stories, poems, plays and prose extracts in this collection cover a range of literary styles, themes and sensibilities. Mahesh Dattani's play *Night Queen* is significant as one of the first serious attempts at dramatizing homosexuality on the Indian stage; the poems by R. Raj Rao included here are part of a series that formed the basis for the Bollywood film *Bomgay*; and the poetry of Dinyar Godrej, Adil Jussawalla and Sultan Padamsee is searing in its intensity. Apart from the pieces written originally in English, there are works translated from Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and other Indian languages, which speak of the agony and the joy of being a man in love with other men. Extracts from the work of well-known writers including Bhupen Khakkar, Kamleshwar and Vishnu Khandekar provide a rare insight into the lives of homosexual men in India's small towns and villages. An extract from Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* details an account of growing up gay in war-torn Sri Lanka, while K.C. Ajay, an illiterate taxi driver, gives us an alternate glimpse of love and friendship in Nepal. Pieces such as these along with the poetry of Agha Shahid Ali and Iftikhar Naseem expand the scope of this collection to include writers from South Asia. With wit, passion and courage, these writings bring to the fore the true meaning of yaraana or male friendship and bonding, an often ignored facet of South Asian life and sexuality.

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* *Seven Steps Around the Fire* is the first in a series of radio plays featuring the amateur sleuth Uma Rao, wife of Bangalore's Superintendent of Police. When Kamla, a beautiful eunuch, is brutally murdered, Uma's investigation takes her on an unexpected journey into the mysterious world of the hijra community, revealing hidden realities and shocking truths. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—*The New York Times*

Mahesh Dattani, b. 1958, an Indian English playwright.

Includes bibliographical references (p. [142]-147).

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* Framed by the age-old battle between traditional authority and youthful rebellion, *Dance Like a Man* pivots on the strained relationship between Jairaj Parekh and his wife Ratna, both ageing Bharatanatayam dancers. When their daughter arranges for them to meet the boy she wants to marry, the fissures in the elderly couple's relationship come to the fore. As old wounds are torn open again, both Jairaj and Ratna find that they must come to terms with their bitter past. The play was later adapted into a National Award-winning film. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* A witty and enjoyable black comedy, *Where There's a Will* was Mahesh Dattani's first play. Following the death of business tycoon Hasmukh Mehta, his family is in for a rude shock: Hasmukh's mischievous will stipulates that they will not inherit his wealth anytime soon and, worse, his mistress must come to stay with them. But while Hasmukh's ghost gleefully watches the proceedings from the sidelines, little does he know that he is in for the biggest surprise of all. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* *The Swami and Winston* is the second radio play to feature amateur sleuth Uma Rao, wife of Bangalore's Superintendent of Police. Lady Montefiore, an English aristocrat, has been murdered outside a Hindu temple. A Burberry raincoat and a mischievous dog provide the only clues about the identity of the murderer. But what could be the motive for her murder? Uma's second investigation brings her into contact with religious fanaticism in the extreme. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* *Thirty Days in September* remains one of the bravest contemporary Indian plays to seriously deal with child sexual abuse. As a child, Mala was sexually abused by her uncle—a fact she suspects her mother has known about all along despite her refusal to acknowledge it. But the fragile fabric of familial relations is ripped apart when memories of a traumatic past return to haunt both mother and daughter. Performed extensively to critical acclaim and commercial success, this play powerfully explores the brutal severance of the unbreakable bond between adult and child. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

'A playwright of world stature'—Mario Relich, *Wasafiri* In this stage adaptation of his radio play of the same name, Mahesh Dattani weaves an enthralling murder mystery featuring amateur sleuth Uma Rao, wife of Bangalore's Superintendent of Police. Following the brutal murder of Kamla, a beautiful eunuch, Uma's investigation leads her into the mysterious world of the hijra community, where shocking truths and labyrinthine conspiracies abound. 'At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity'—Alyque Padamsee 'Powerful and disturbing'—The New York Times

Mahesh Dattani Is India's Best-Known Playwright And The First Indian Playwright Writing In English To Have Won The Sahitya Akademi Award. Collected Plays: Volume II Showcases Dattani's Talent As A Writer And Director And His Wide Thematic And Stylistic Range. The

Ten Plays In This Volume Include 30 Days In September, Performed Extensively In India And Abroad To Commercial Success And Critical Acclaim, The Radio Plays Aired On Bbc Radio And The Screen Plays Of Mango Soufflé (Winner Of The Best Motion Picture Award At The Barcelona Film Festival), Dance Like A Man (Winner Of The Best Picture In English Awarded By The National Panorama), And Morning Raga, Premiered At The Cairo Film Festival And Winner Of The Award For Best Artistic Contribution, That Established Dattani As The New Voice Of Contemporary Indian Cinema. With A General Introduction By Jeremy Mortimer Of Bbc Radio And Introductions To Individual Plays By Actors Like Lillete Dubey And Shabana Azmi, The Plays In This Collection Provide Fascinating Insights Into The Human Psyche And Reveal Just How Caught Up We Are In The Complications And Contradictions Of Our Values And Assumptions.

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