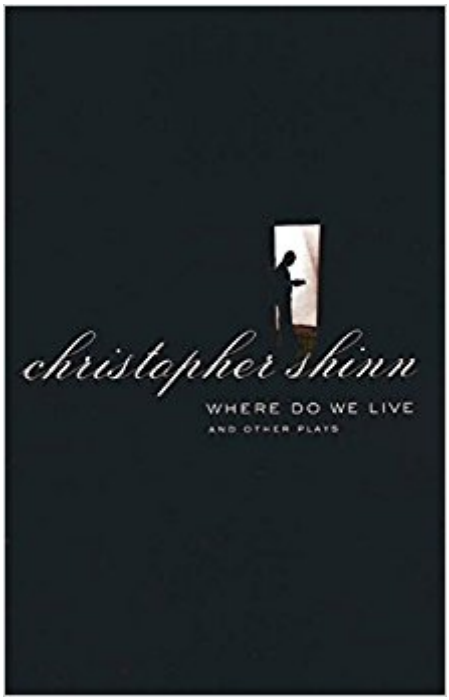
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Where Do We Live And Other Plays



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Synopsis

This anthology marks the emergence of one of the finest and most innovative new artists writing for the theater today. Ã¢â ¬Å“The secret of ShinnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s success is in the way he exploits the dramatic gap between what is said and that which is left unsaid . . . writing like this is rare,Ã¢â ¬Â• said the London Independent. Where Do We Live, the title play, was written shortly after 9/11 and though never referenced, it still haunts this chronicle of the struggles of several aspiring and gifted young New Yorkers on the Lower East Side. Like all his work, it is a deeply affecting story of how we define our lives and our place in the world.The Coming World Ã¢â ¬Å“Shinn certainly looks like a shining prospect for the future.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Daily TelegraphFour Ã¢â ¬Å“Nothing is simple emotionally. The play keeps delivering small shocks and aches that end in a standoff, or maybe in that pause between despair, resignation and a twinge of hope. Haunting.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Margo Jefferson, The New York TimesOther People Ã¢â ¬Å“Shinn writes with graceful compassion about people trapped inside their own skins unable to make sense of their lives.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •The GuardianWhat DidnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t Happen Ã¢â ¬Å“. . . is about the distance between people, and the ways in which even friends, spouses and lovers are ultimately unknowable to one another . . . a playwright to cherish.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •The New York TimesChristopher ShinnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s plays have been produced at Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Vineyard Theatre in New York and often at LondonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Royal Court Theatre. Where Do We Live received a 2003 Olivier Award nomination for most promising playwright. His next play, On the Mountain, premieres in New York City early in 2005.

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Customer Reviews

Christopher Shinn was born in Hartford, CT and lives in New York. His plays include "Where Do We Live," "Other People," "What Didn't Happen" and "On the Mountain." His work has been produced around the world. He is a winner of an OBIE in Playwriting and the Robert S. Chesney Award. He teaches playwriting at the New School.

The plays in this collection are Mr. ShinnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s first plays, published between 1996 and 2003. The earliest, Four, was written when Mr. Shinn was in love, his first love. Two years later, the love had failed and he wrote Other People. What DidnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t Happen reflects another period of turmoil in the playwrightÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s life and the last two plays, The Coming World and Where Do We Live. were written as his father took ill, Mr. Shinn fell in love again, and his father died. None of the plays seems even remotely autobiographical but they all capture the authorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s moods at the time he wrote them. As Mr. Shinn writes in the preface: These plays were written to exact revenge and bring the dead back to life. They failed.So what are these plays about? Searching for connection, mostly. And not getting it. Because the world Mr. Shinn describes is for the most part a perilous place for connection. Even the rich suffer in these plays, cursed by surfeit of goods and the superficiality of life and emotion that seems to attend it. There is a great deal about homosexual love but thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not what the plays are about. TheyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re about connection, only in our world, itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s connection that doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t last.The bleakness of this description doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t catch a couple of things about playwright Shinn. He writes great dialogue and it is often funny-witty. And he is an acute observer of people. These are very good, affecting plays.

I don't review on , but since no one else is saying it here, I feel I should. Christopher Shinn is a damn good playwright. He talks about things relevant to our times w/o simplifying things. His characters are psychologically credible and complex. He has range (he doesn't simply write the same play over and over). He's not a writer who will hit you over the head, but his intelligence and subtlety can be even more rewarding. Also, he does have his own voice, and set of obsessions. He's a moralist in the tradition of all great writers, meaning not that he's moralistic but that he seems interested in bringing into question accepted mores and stereotypes. "Other People" and "Where Do We Live" are two of the best plays I've read recently (and I read a lot of plays). The other plays in the book are also really good. People who criticize him for writing naturalistic plays are way off. It's

like criticizing someone for NOT writing naturalistic plays; it simply reveals more about the person's preferences than any actual shortcoming. Moreover, the plays are not really that naturalistic. "Long Day's Journey Into Night" is not really that naturalistic either. Like any good dramatic writing, Shinn's plays lend themselves to a variety of possible stagings. I recommend this book to anyone who loves theatre.

A formidable talent in a generous soul who insists on the full embodied humanity of his characters. Climax, refusal to climax and anti-climax are recurrent expressions of desire fulfilled, stifled or suppressed. Shinn dispenses orgasms like a jolly Santa Claus on Christmas morning rewarding the struggles of his characters and offering them the stuff of hope they need to reach the next moment. The greatest gift he bestows on them, no matter how privileged or ravaged, is consciousness of their own limitations--intellectual, moral and emotional--up and down the socio-economic ladder. In consciousness, he confers dignity and plants the seeds of individual positive transformation. One senses he is very much on this journey too, sharing insights when they're sufficiently developed and shaped to be of service. A wonderful, illuminating collection. Highly recommended.

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