

# That Face Polly Stenham: A Dark and Captivating Tale of Family Dysfunction

When it comes to exploring the complexities of dysfunctional families, few playwrights do it as brilliantly as Polly Stenham. Her gripping play, *That Face*, takes us on a rollercoaster ride through the dark and twisted world of a broken home, leaving us both captivated and disturbed.

Stenham's debut work, first staged in 2007, received widespread critical acclaim and solidified her position as one of the most exciting voices in contemporary British theatre. The play delves deep into the themes of mental illness, substance abuse, and the destructive nature of toxic relationships, delivering a powerful and unflinching portrayal of family dynamics.

The story revolves around Martha, a teenager burdened with caring for her alcoholic mother, Martha, who is deteriorating both mentally and emotionally. Izzy, Martha's brother, is absent for most of the play, abandoning his responsibilities and his sister's desperate plea for help. Instead, he flees to his wealthy father's care, leaving Martha to face the chaos alone.



## **That Face** by Polly Stenham(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 356 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 100 pages



Stenham's masterful writing explores the consequences of neglect and abuse, highlighting the desperate lengths family members will go to protect their secrets and preserve their false reality. The characters are flawed, deeply damaged, and bordering on the edge of madness, making for a truly intense theatrical experience.

With *That Face*, Stenham manages to create an unsettling atmosphere that keeps audiences on the edge of their seats. The play skillfully toys with our emotions, provoking a mix of sympathy, anger, and even discomfort as we become intertwined with the characters' despair.

One of the standout elements of *That Face* is Stenham's ability to write complex female characters. Martha, in particular, is a compelling figure. Played by a strong actress, her pain and vulnerability ignite the stage, leaving spectators haunted by her haunting portrayal of a young person trapped in an unending nightmare.

Another key aspect of the play's success lies in its dark humor. Stenham inserts moments of uproarious laughter amidst the chaos, creating a poignant contrast that adds depth to an already engrossing narrative. These moments serve as a brief respite from the heavy subject matter, allowing the audience to breathe before being submerged back into the darkness.

*That Face* is not an easy play to watch. It is raw, visceral, and unapologetically honest in its depiction of the brokenness that can exist within families. Stenham presents a bleak world where love is warped and twisted, and the lines between right and wrong become blurry.

However, beneath the dark surface, Stenham hints at the possibility of redemption. She shows that even in the midst of dysfunction, there can be tiny sparks of hope and strength that push us to fight against the odds. It is this delicate balance between darkness and light that makes *That Face* a truly unforgettable piece of theatre.

, Polly Stenham's *That Face* is a play that leaves a lasting impression. Its gripping story, complex characters, and unflinching examination of family dysfunction make it a must-see for theater enthusiasts looking to be challenged and enthralled. Stenham's writing is raw and powerful, and her ability to delve into the depths of human suffering is truly remarkable. So, buckle up and prepare yourself for an emotional rollercoaster that will make you question the very foundations of family and love.





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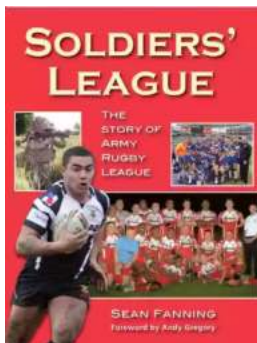
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I can't take care of you anymore. I can't take it. It's like an endless boxing match.

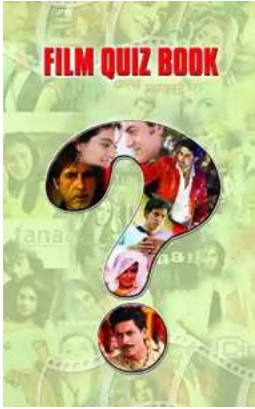
Mia is at boarding school. She has access to drugs. They are Martha's. Henry is preparing for art college. He has access to alcohol. From Martha. Martha controls their lives. Martha is their mother.

That Face premiered at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in April 2007, and won the TMA Award 2007 for Best New Play. Polly Stenham received both the Charles Wintour Award 2007 and the Critics' Circle Award 2008 for Most Promising Playwright.



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