

Five Late Plays Translations From the Asian Classics: Uncovering Hidden Gems of World Drama

The world of theater is vast and ever-evolving, with countless stories waiting to be told. Among these are hidden gems, plays that have been translated from different cultures and languages, bringing fresh perspectives and insights to the stage.

In this article, we explore five late plays from the Asian classics that have been translated into English, offering a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Asian theater and its enduring relevance.



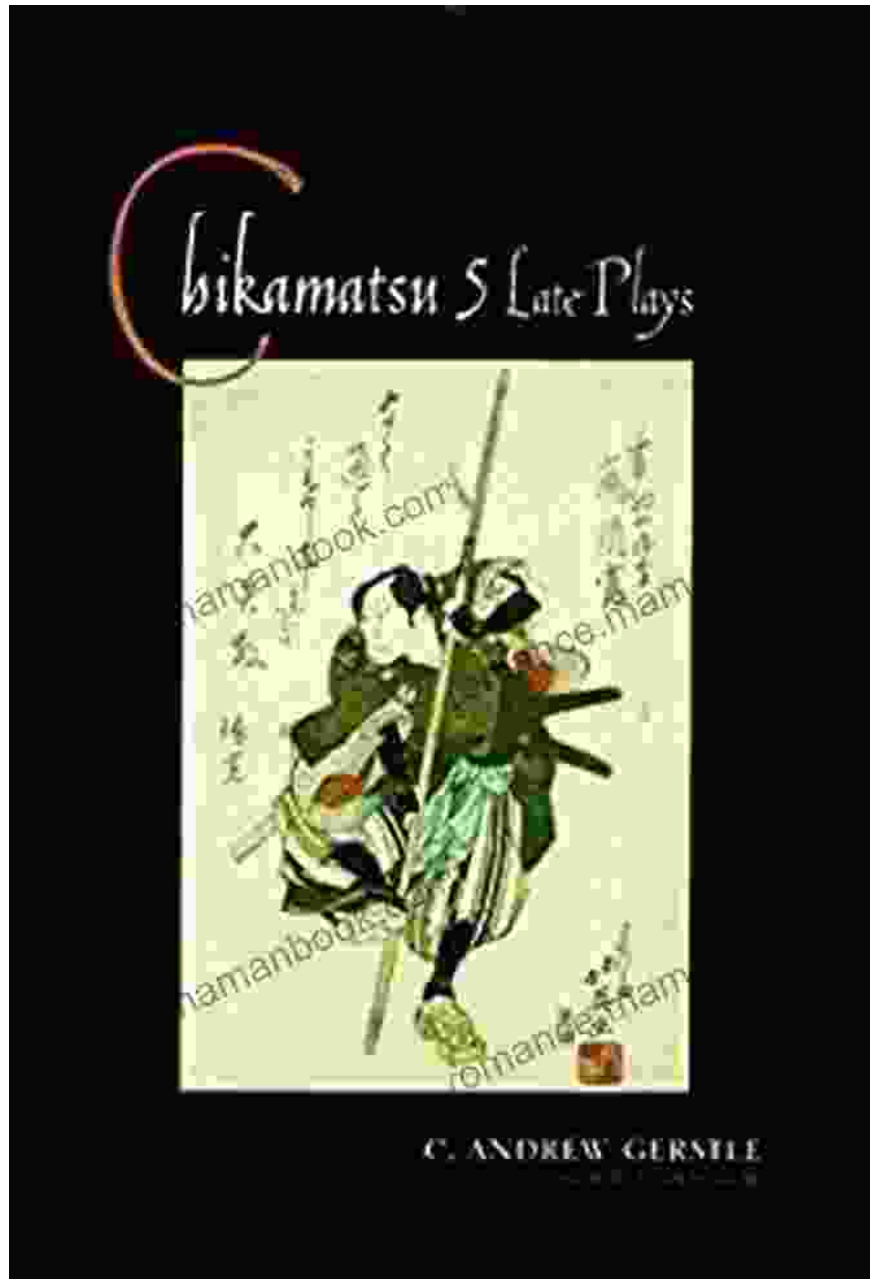
Chikamatsu: Five Late Plays (Translations from the Asian Classics) by P.G. Van

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 7140 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 553 pages



1. "The Peony Pavilion" (1598) by Tang Xianzu (China)



Considered one of the greatest plays of Chinese literature, "The Peony Pavilion" is a romantic masterpiece that explores themes of love, loss, and the power of imagination.

The story follows Du Liniang, a young woman who falls in love with Liu Mengmei in a dream. When she awakens, she pines for him until she dies

of heartbreak. However, her spirit refuses to accept her fate and sets out on a journey to find her true love.

Translated by Cyril Birch, "The Peony Pavilion" is a breathtaking spectacle that combines lyrical language, elaborate stagecraft, and unforgettable characters.

2. "The Pillowman" (2003) by Martin McDonagh (Ireland)



Image: Martin McDonagh, *The Pillowman*

A modern classic of Irish theater, "The Pillowman" is a dark comedy that delves into the twisted world of storytelling and the boundaries of violence.

The play follows Katurian, a writer who is interrogated by two detectives for allegedly writing stories that mirror a series of child murders. As the interrogation unfolds, it becomes increasingly unclear who is the real victim and who is the perpetrator.

Translated by the author himself, "The Pillowman" is a chilling and thought-provoking exploration of the power of words and the nature of evil.

3. "The Orphan of Zhao" (13th Century) by Ji Junxiang (China)



A timeless tale of revenge and loyalty, "The Orphan of Zhao" is one of the most enduring plays in Chinese theater history.

The story revolves around Zhao Dun, a general who is falsely accused of treason and executed by the treacherous Prince Cheng. Zhao Dun's loyal retainer, Cheng Ying, sacrifices his own family to save Zhao Dun's infant son.

Translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, "The Orphan of Zhao" is a powerful drama that combines elements of tragedy, history, and moral philosophy.

4. "The Bacchae" (405 BC) by Euripides (Greece)



Image: Euripides, *The Bacchae*

A classic of Greek theater, "The Bacchae" is a tragic tale of divine vengeance and the clash between reason and passion.

The play follows Pentheus, the king of Thebes, who refuses to acknowledge the divinity of the god Dionysus. As punishment, Dionysus drives Pentheus's mother and other women of the city into a frenzy, leading to his eventual downfall.

Translated by W.B. Yeats, "The Bacchae" is a haunting and unforgettable exploration of the Dionysian spirit and its transformative power.

5. "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui" (1941) by Bertolt Brecht (Germany)



A satirical masterpiece, "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui" is a parable about the rise of fascism and the dangers of political corruption.

The play follows Arturo Ui, a small-time gangster who uses violence and intimidation to gain power. As Ui's influence grows, so does the threat to democracy and the rule of law.

Translated by George Tabori, "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui" is a powerful and timely warning about the dangers of allowing history to repeat itself.

These five late plays translations from the Asian classics offer a glimpse into the vast and diverse world of theater. They showcase the timeless themes of love, loss, revenge, loyalty, and the struggle for power, and they remind us that the human experience transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Whether you are a seasoned theatergoer or a newcomer to the art form, exploring these translated plays is an enriching and rewarding experience that will broaden your horizons and deepen your understanding of the world.

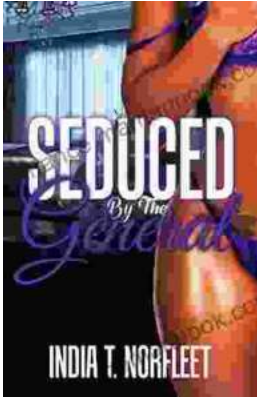


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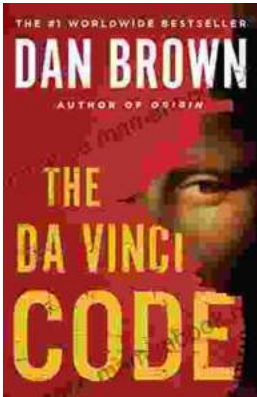
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