

I'm human





"The Good Person from Sezuan" is a play by Bertolt Brecht, written between 1938 and 1940 with the help of Margarete Steffins and Ruth Berlaus. It's described as a parable and was first performed in Zurich in 1943. The play features music composed by Paul Dessau. The play is an example of epic theater, featuring short scenes and interludes that interrupt the storyline with music pieces. Each scene can be viewed independently, and the audience is directly addressed at times, breaking down the distance between them and the actors (e.g., in the epilogue). The central theme of the play is the conflict between morality and miserable living conditions. It asks whether it's possible for an individual to be good despite a exploitative reality. In the play, the characters' need to ensure their own survival makes it difficult for them to act ethically. This is exemplified by three gods who come to earth seeking a good person in Sezuan. The city is portrayed as half-Europeanized, representing all other places on Earth. The play opens with Wang, a water vendor, describing the great poverty and despair of the people. He expects the gods' arrival and views his fellow humans with skepticism. When he meets the three gods, they inform him that they're searching for good people. However, none of the locals are willing to provide them with shelter. The exception is Shin Te, a prostitute who offers to let the gods sleep at her place, despite losing potential customers. The next morning, the gods depart, pleased to have found a good person. However, Shin Te is hesitant to accept their judgment and asks for a reward: "Wait, enlightened ones, I'm not sure if I'm really good. How will I pay my rent?" After a brief conversation, the gods give her 1000 silver dollars, which she uses to set up a small tobacco shop. As Shen Te runs the business, her kindness and generosity cause problems. She helps many poor people, but her shop is eventually overrun with those seeking help. She laments: "My beautiful shop! Oh, hope! Just opened, and it's no longer a shop!" Der Rettung kleiner Nachen wird sofort in die Tiefe gezogen: Zu viele Versinkende greifen gierig nach ihm.“ Unter einer Brücke verbirgt sich der Wasserverkäufer Wang seit mehreren Tagen. Als er einschläft, erscheinen ihm die Götter im Traum, die ihn auffordern, in die Stadt zurückzukehren und nach Shen Te zu sehen. Sie wollen weiter gehen, um andere gute Menschen zu suchen. Shen Te verkleidet sich als Shui Ta und gibt vor, ihr eigener Onkel zu sein. In dieser Verkleidung gelingt es Shen Te, ein entschiedenes Auftreten zu vermitteln und den Laden wieder in Ordnung zu bringen. Während Shen Te von dem geschäftssinnigen Schreiner nicht ernst genommen wurde, gelingt sie als Shui Ta einen fairen Preis für ein Regal auszuhandeln. In einem Stadtpark lernt Shen Te den arbeitslosen Flieger Yang Sun kennen. Sie war auf dem Weg ins Teehaus, um einen Witwer mit drei Kindern zu treffen, den sie möglicherweise heiraten könnte. Yang Sun möchte sich an einem Baum umbringen, doch Shen Te versucht, ihn davon abzuhalten. Wangs Nachtlager in einem Kanalrohr wird erzählt, wo die Götter ihn erkundigen, nach Shen Te. Wang erzählt ihnen von seinen Wohltaten, doch als sie erfahren, wie sich Shen Te's Vetter für den Erhalt des Tabakladens eingesetzt hat, sind sie enttäuscht. Vor Shen Te's Tabakladen kommt sie nach Hause und verbringt die Nacht mit Yang Sun. Vor ihrem Laden warten bereits eine Menge Leute, die Hilfe oder Geld von Shen Te verlangen. Ein nettes Nachbar Ehepaar bietet ihr einen Vorschuss von 200 Silberdollar an, den sie später zurückbezahlen kann. Shen Te erhält das Geld von der alten Nachbarin und übergibt es an Frau Yang, die ihre Tochter Yang Sun vorstellt. The story revolves around Shen Te, a kind-hearted woman who runs a tobacco shop with her uncle Shui Ta. They are struggling to make ends meet, and their livelihood is threatened by Yang Sun, a former pilot who has lost his job and is trying to raise 300 silver dollars to secure a new position in Peking. Yang Sun visits Shen Te's shop, disguising himself as Shui Ta, and asks her to lend him the remaining 300 silver dollars. Shen Te is hesitant at first, but Yang Sun promises to marry her and provide for her with a monthly income of 250 silver dollars once he gets his new job. However, it becomes clear that Yang Sun only wants to use Shen Te's money to further his own interests. Shen Te's uncle Shui Ta discovers Yang Sun's true intentions and warns Shen Te about him. Despite this, Shen Te still hopes to be with Yang Sun and decides not to think about the consequences of their relationship. The story takes a turn when Shen Te is about to get married to Yang Sun, but she has second thoughts and decides to cancel the wedding. Instead, she chooses to hold on to her values and not compromise her integrity for financial gain. In the end, Shen Te's shop is saved by Wang, who reveals that he has been secretly supporting her all along. The story concludes with a message about the importance of staying true to oneself and not compromising one's values for the sake of material wealth or social status. The wedding is called off and just before Shen Te has to sell her last possessions, barber Shu Fu appears with a blank check. With this, Shen Te is able to pay off her debts to the old neighbors and save her business. She then disguises herself as Shui Ta again and takes care of some matters. She cashes the check for 10,000 silver dollars and pays the rent. Meanwhile, Wang has a dream where he encounters the gods once more. He complains about their high expectations for humans. The gods seem tired from their long journey in search of a good person. The play "Good Person of Sezuan" by Bertolt Brecht is about the complexities and contradictions of human nature. The story revolves around Shen Te, a prostitute who becomes the owner of a small tobacco shop, and her interactions with various characters, including gods, ordinary people, and a social hierarchy that highlights the difficulties of living in an unjust society. The gods, who are initially depicted as benevolent, reveal their true nature as they disappear into the clouds, leaving Shen Te to struggle with the harsh realities of life. The play's central conflict is the tension between the gods' naive belief in humanity's good nature and the brutal conditions of modern life. Throughout the play, Brecht employs the technique of "Verfremdung" (estrangement) to distance the audience from the characters on stage, making it difficult for them to identify with the story. The play is structured into individual scenes, each separated by a brief interlude, and features a range of characters that represent different social classes. The main character, Shen Te, is portrayed as two distinct personalities: her original self as a prostitute and her later persona as the owner of a tobacco shop. This dichotomy highlights the complexities of human nature and the difficulties of navigating an unjust society. Brecht's play raises questions about morality, economics, and social justice, challenging the audience to think critically about the world around them. Er interessierte sich für Gegenwartsliteratur und knüpfte Freundschaften zu anderen Künstlern, bevor er sein erstes Drama („Baal“) 1918 schrieb. Über die Jahre veränderte Brecht seine Perspektive und knüpfte Kontakte zu Intellektuellen, wobei ihm 1922 der Kleist-Preis für seine künstlerische Arbeit zuteil wurde. In den zwanziger Jahren entwickelte er sich zu einem überzeugten Kommunisten. Zu Beginn der dreißiger Jahre arbeitete er an seinen Lehrstücken („Der Jasager“, „Die Maßnahme“). Nachdem die Nationalsozialisten Macht ergriffen hatten, musste Brecht aus Deutschland fliehen und lebte zunächst in Dänemark und später in den USA im Exil. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg siedelte er nach Ost-Berlin, wo er das Theater am Schiffbauerdamm gründete. Zu seinen bekanntesten Werken zählen Die Dreigroschenoper, Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe sowie Der gute Mensch von Sezuan, wo das Leben des Galilei ebenfalls sehr beliebt wurde.