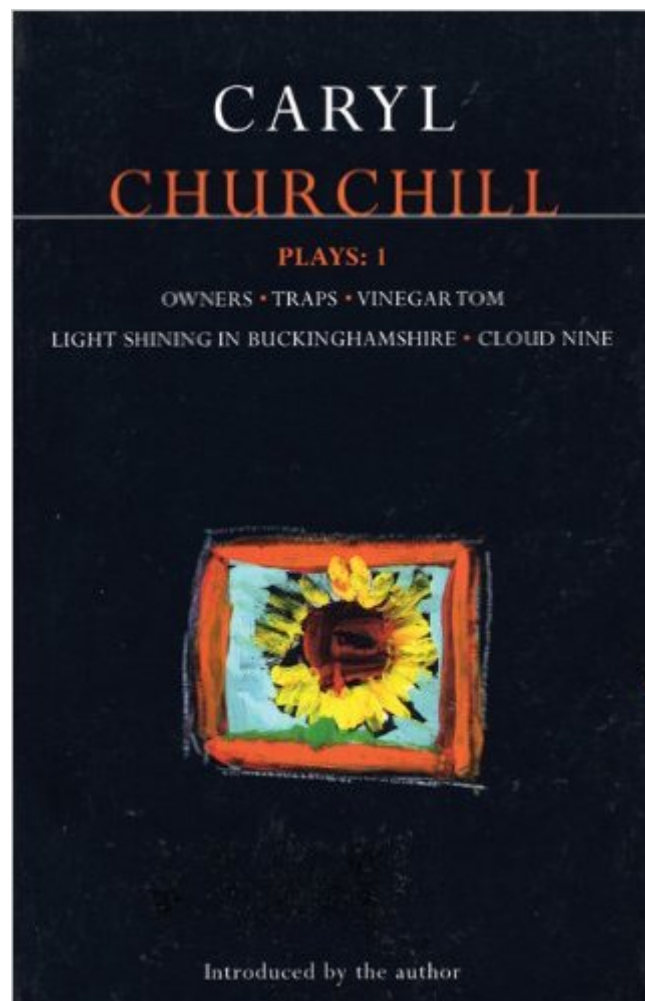


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Churchill Plays: 1: Owners; Traps; Vinegar Tom; Light Shining In Buckinghamshire; Cloud Nine (Contemporary Dramatists) (Vol 1)



Synopsis

In *Traps*, a set of characters meet themselves and their pasts to create "plenty of sinewy lines and joyous juxtapositions" • *Plays and Players* Vinegar Tom "is set in the world of seventeenth-century witchcraft, but it speaks, through its striking images and its plethora of ironic contradictions, of and to this century" • *Tribune* Light Shining in Buckinghamshire is set during the Civil War and "unflinchingly shows the intolerance that was the obverse side of the demand for common justice. Deftly, it sketches in the kind of social conditions.. that led to hunger for revolution" [The play has an austere eloquence that precisely matches its subject." • *The Guardian* *Cloud Nine* sheds light on some of the British Empire's repressed dark side and is "a marvelous play - sometimes scurrilous, always observed with wicked accuracy, and ultimately, surprisingly, rather moving. It plunges straight to the heart of the endless convolutions of sexual mores" and does so with acrobatic wit." • *Guardian* Owners: "I was in an old woman's flat when a young man offering her money to move came round, that was one of the starting points of the play" • *Caryl Churchill* The plays in this volume represent the best of Churchill's writing up to and including her emergence onto the international theatre scene with *Cloud Nine*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This collection of Caryl Churchill's early plays is astounding. Tony Kushner rightly calls her the best playwright currently writing and these plays immediately make that clear. Churchill is an

unabashedly feminist playwright whose work addresses issues of power and gender throughout history. Writing in the 1960s and 1970s, her plays are experimental, politically motivated, and ideologically challenging. They are also brilliantly clever, innovative, shocking, and often darkly funny. "Owners" is the most straight-forward selection here and centers around real estate agents in working-class England. "Traps" explores some similar issues of working-class England but approaches them from a more lyrical, less structured way; Churchill prefaces the play by explaining that it does not conform to the limits of reality, but is ruled by the imagination. This becomes more clear as the play progresses, and the final moments of the play--wherein all of the characters take turns bathing in a washtub onstage--take on a beautiful, almost hallucinatory quality. I skipped over "Light Shining on Buckinghamshire" and went straight to "Vinegar Tom," which is a brilliant account of the English witch hunts. Churchill presents the play from a feminist perspective, focusing on the plight of various women who are victimized by witch-hunters. Like Miller's "The Crucible," Churchill argues that sexual hysteria, repression, and misogyny were the driving forces behind witch hunts; Churchill's spare, stark play is considerably more cutting, more shocking, and more bleakly funny than Miller's. "Cloud Nine" is undoubtedly the highlight of this volume and stands as one of the most remarkable plays of the last 50 years.

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