

M. Butterfly: With an Afterword by the Playwright

David Henry Hwang

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David Henry Hwang's beautiful, heartrending play featuring an afterword by the author – winner of a

1988 Tony Award for Best Play and nominated for the 1989 Pulitzer Prize

Based on a true story that stunned the world, *M. Butterfly* opens in the cramped prison cell where diplomat Rene Gallimard is being held captive by the French government—and by his own illusions. In the darkness of his cell he recalls a time when desire seemed to give him wings. A time when Song Liling, the beautiful Chinese diva, touched him with a love as vivid, as seductive—and as elusive—as a butterfly.

How could he have known, then, that his ideal woman was, in fact, a spy for the Chinese government—and a man disguised as a woman? In a series of flashbacks, the diplomat relives the twenty-year affair from the temptation to the seduction, from its consummation to the scandal that ultimately consumed them both. But in the end, there remains only one truth: Whether or not Gallimard's passion was a flight of fancy, it sparked the most vigorous emotions of his life.

Only in real life could love become so unreal. And only in such a dramatic tour de force do we learn how a fantasy can become a man's mistress—as well as his jailer. *M. Butterfly* is one of the most compelling, explosive, and slyly humorous dramas ever to light the Broadway stage, a work of unrivaled brilliance, illuminating the conflict between men and women, the differences between East and West, racial stereotypes—and the shadows we cast around our most cherished illusions.

M. Butterfly remains one of the most influential romantic plays of contemporary literature, and in 1993 was made into a film by David Cronenberg starring Jeremy Irons and John Lone.



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