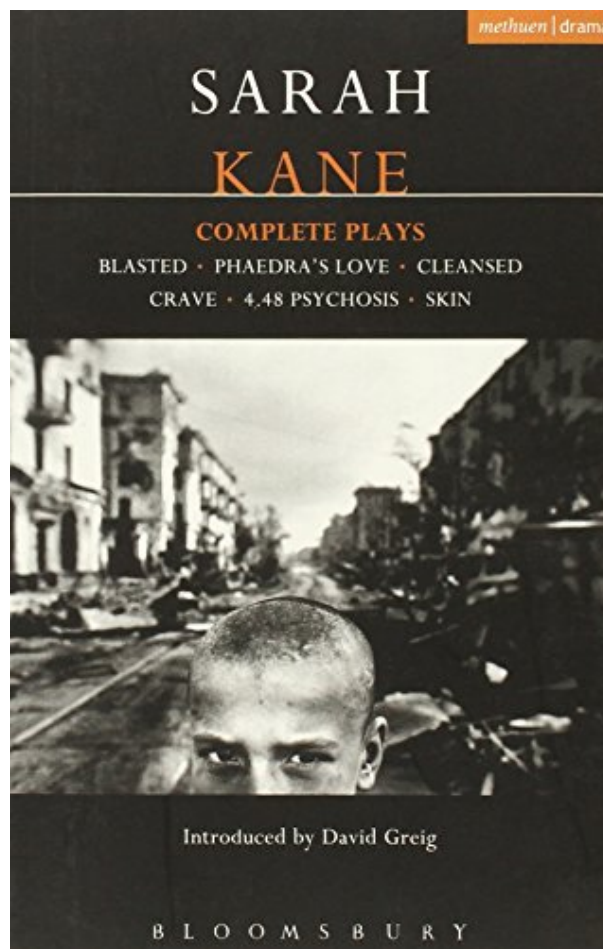


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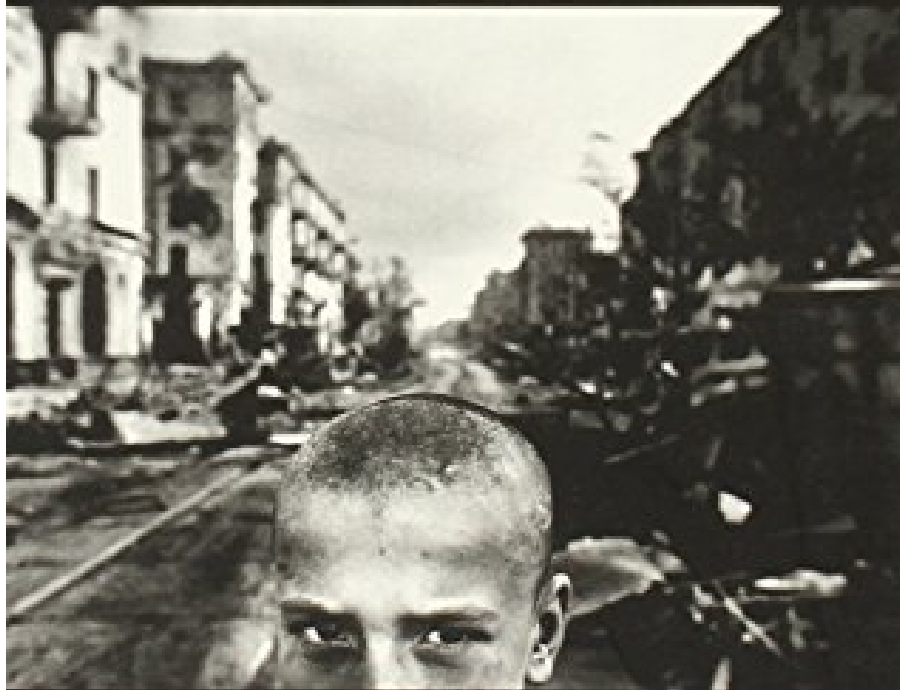


methuen | drama

# SARAH KANE

## COMPLETE PLAYS

BLASTED · PHAEDRA'S LOVE · CLEANSED  
CRAVE · 4.48 PSYCHOSIS · SKIN



Introduced by David Greig

B L O O M S B U R Y

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## Review

“Sarah Kane, a provocative playwright whose bleak view of the limitations of human relationships and graphic dramatizations of violence and sex earned her a reputation as an enfant terrible of the British theater...Blasted immediately established her as an important voice in modern playwrighting.” ?The New York Times

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“Shocking and revelatory.” ?New York Magazine (Blasted review)

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## About the Author

Sarah Kane (1971 – 1999) was an English dramatist. She is best known for the extraordinary public controversy over *Blasted*, her first play which, like subsequent works from her, were shocking and defining moments in theater: explosive, theatrical, lyrical and laced with emotional power and bleak humor.

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When Sarah Kane's first play *Blasted* was staged at the Royal Court Theatre in 1995 it was hailed both as a "masterpiece" and as a "disgusting piece of filth" (Daily Mail). That play, and the others that followed, have been produced all over the world. This anthology includes Kane's never-before-published Channel 4 screenplay, *Skin*.

Plays include: *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love*, *Cleansed*, *Crave*, *4.48 Psychosis*, and *Skin*.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Still my favorite playwright; may always be my favorite playwright.

By Brittany

A great way to thrust yourself into the world of 'In-Yer-Face-Theatre'. Whenever I read one of her plays, I find myself almost forced to read it to the very end as if pausing the pain, even for a day, could cause me even more trauma. Once finished, I usually cry or sit in awe of what I've just experienced. I then completely divorce myself from the crude acts that took place for months at a time merely to return to the same story that I allowed myself to forget in order to continue functioning. And the cycle begins again. I have read that Mark Ravenhill is also in Kane's ranks if you find yourself in need for more from this genres.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Desolate, Forlorn, Hopeful

By Kevin L. Nenstiel

For a long time, Sarah Kane's name was almost a curse word, but this is manifestly unfair. Her work is challenging, poetic, austere, and can threaten people who want theatre to be simple, cheerful entertainment. But for audiences who want their art to speak to the truth of our human situation, Sarah Kane was one of the bright lights of late 20th Century theatre.

The five plays and one screenplay comprising Kane's corpus chart a remarkable arc out of the "real" world to a stunning, surrealistic landscape. Her first three plays could be called realistic, but not naturalistic. They mix social commentary, secular spirituality, stunning brutality, and dream imagery to create a tenor too real for the real world.

In the introduction to this volume, David Grieg says that Kane cast off her parents' evangelical faith in her teens. It's easy to see that in these plays. She needs absolutes in the world, but she can no longer turn to God. Ordinary human violence leaves us bleak and forlorn. And yet, particularly in "*Blasted*" and "*Cleansed*," moments of hope inevitably poke through.

Her later plays change their tone. Though she still lives in a desolate, godless world, her style is more mature, even as it turns more inward and personal. "*Crave*," her last play produced during her life, dramatizes her private thoughts to provide one of the most nuanced introspections in recent theatre. And "*4.48 Psychosis*," based on Kane's stays in mental institutions, is so personal that it wholly dispenses with character attribution, stage direction, and other conventions.

"*Skin*," the script for a ten-minute TV film, is primarily a curiosity. It takes up some themes and dream icons from Kane's plays, but it reads poorly. It's thick with camera directions and narrative that get between her and the reader. The film is on the internet; Google it and compare the finished product to the script, as an oddity, if you must.

Sarah Kane's suicide, clearly at a time when her best work was not yet past, leaves a major hole in the theatre world. But this hole still hasn't been recognized in America. Her debut play, "*Blasted*," didn't get its New

York premiere until the fall of 2008, fifteen years after its London premiere and nearly ten years after Kane's death.

It's downright sad that Kane's entire body of work can fit in such a slim volume. But the fact that her work survived its initial assaults to be recognized as contemporary classics gives me hope. The trajectory she began needs to be continued, because the needs and gaps she realized still live in the heart of world theatre today.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Dramatics

By Jonathan O. May

Sarah Kane's collected plays represent an underestimated force in theater. Much like the work of Elfriede Jelinek or Ntozake Shange, Kane takes a private pain (losing oneself in another or testing the limits of proclaimed love) and creates a verbal landscape that the audience must inhabit, either by force of shock or noble acceptance of empathy. In either case, her plays must be reckoned with upon finishing. I think perhaps the most intriguing and powerful to me was 4.48 Psychosis, her final and posthumously performed play. There are no defined characters because who cannot claim a piece within the multitude of confessions that the play really unfolds as. Brutally honest and intentionally confrontational, this play, above the others, embodies the last possible moments of hope in anyone's life. Kane's characters rarely make the choice to latch on to these moments, but they are there and cannot be ignored.

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