



# **Blood on the Stage, 480 B.C. to 1600 A.D.: Milestone Plays of Murder, Mystery, and Mayhem**

*Amnon Kabatchnik*

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In four volumes of *Blood on the Stage*, Amnon Kabatchnik examined more than 400 crime-themed plays produced in the 20th century. As any theater lover knows, however, depicting acts of wrong-doing is not a recent phenomenon. The stark, violent plays of Seneca in ancient Rome were followed by liturgical dramas of the Dark Ages that drew on both the Old and New Testaments. The golden age of Elizabethan drama boasted masterful plays drenched with treachery, bloodshed, and horror.

In *Blood on the Stage, 480 B.C. to 1600 A.D.: Milestone Plays of Murder, Mystery, and Mayhem: An Annotated Repertoire*, Kabatchnik analyzes more than fifty blood-splattered plays that have withstood the test of time. Beginning with masterpieces like *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus, *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles, and *Medea* by Euripides, this volume spans centuries of equally compelling dramas such as *The Haunted House* (200 B.C.), *Phaedra* (c. 60 A.D.), and *The Killing of Abel* (mid-15th century). Later works include Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, as well as several plays by Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, notably *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*.

The plays in this book—a “prequel” to the other four volumes of *Blood on the Stage*—represent ancient Greece, ancient Rome, the Middle Ages, and Elizabethan England. The entries are arranged in chronological order and include plot synopses, biographical sketches of playwrights and actors, details about productions, and critical reception, if available. From the killing of Abel by his brother Cain to Hamlet's revenge of his father's murder, *Blood on the Stage, 480 B.C. to 1600 A.D.* provides a critical overview of some of the most significant dramatizations of criminal behavior.

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