The story of modern drama is a tale of extremes, testing both audiences and actors to their limits through hostility and contrarianism. Spanning 1880 to the present, Modern Drama: A Very Short Introduction shows how truly international a phenomenon modern drama has become, and how vibrant and diverse in both text and performance. It explores the major developments of modern drama, covering two decades per chapter, from early modernist theatre through post-war developments to more recent and contemporary theatre. The emergence of new theories from the likes of Brecht and Beckett are tracked alongside groundbreaking productions to illuminate the fascinating evolution of modern drama.

From before history was recorded to the present day, theatre has been a major artistic form around the world. From puppetry to mimes and street theatre, this complex art has utilized all other art forms such as dance, literature, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. Every aspect of human activity and human culture can be, and has been, incorporated into the creation of theatre. Theatre: A Very Short Introduction moves through Ancient Greece and Rome, to medieval Japan and Europe, and to America and beyond. It looks at how the various forms of theatre have been interpreted and enjoyed, and it explores the role that theatre artists play.