



Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo

Rajiv Joseph

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The lives of two American Marines and an Iraqi translator are forever changed by an encounter with a quick-witted tiger who haunts the streets of war-torn Baghdad attempting to find meaning, forgiveness and redemption amidst the city's ruins. Rajiv Joseph's groundbreaking new American play explores both the power and the perils of human nature.

Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo Details

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From Reader Review Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo for online ebook

Brian says

tiger ghost > hamlet's dead dad

Kim says

Devastatingly sad play about the early days of Iraq. A tiger from the zoo (later his ghost) is one of the characters.

Lauren says

Inspired by actual events during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* is the ripple effect in action: a play about how one brief moment affects multiple lives.

In comparing dramas dealing with the Iraq War, I'd give a slight edge to Christopher Shinn's *Dying City*, but *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* is no theatrical slouch. Ghosts, topiary, golden guns – all of these small irreverent details add wonderful atmosphere while never overpowering the plot. Given the modern tendency to let quirky too often overpower storytelling, *Bengal Tiger* is a nice change. The play poses some interesting questions and Mr. Joseph knew when answers to those questions were needed – and when the audience should be left wondering. Recommended.

Charles says

This is the first play by Joseph that I'm not totally taken with. There is much I like. The connections that tie the characters into a story. The details that become metaphors. All good, beyond good actually.

I can't, however, visualize the play. This is not something I typically have trouble with. I guess I'll just have to wait till someone does it again locally. It's a shame I've had my head in a shady spot. This play premiered not five miles away from me.

Bridget says

This is arguably one of my favorite plays of all time and one I've read many times over. I just reread it for a Script Analysis class I teach and every time find something new that haunts me. If you are looking for a truly complex play about the consequences of war, this is your play. If you are looking for a play that cracks the divide between life and death, this is your play. If you are looking for a play that allows for rich explorations

of director and design concepts, this is your play. I cannot recommend this play highly enough. I'd give it 6 stars if I could.

Zach says

It's so frustrating to not be able to immediately watch the best possible iteration of this play on demand right after finishing it. That's how good it is. Dammit, I wanna watch it.

Bobby Sullivan says

I'm sure Rajiv Joseph had a point in writing this play, but damned if I can find it. Gold plated guns and toilet seats, characters getting killed and becoming ghosts for no apparent reason, and a lot of musing about topiary and blaming God for how He chose to make us. Maybe this is philosophical depth to some, but I found it a boring waste of time. As an actor, I would find playing any one of these characters a study in two-dimensionality.

Christine says

3.5 stars.

L.T. Woodyard says

I did not expect to like this play so freaking much. It's hilarious, but also very tragic. It's my favorite kind of work. Is there a recorded version when Robin Williams was the Tiger in this? This play deals with a lot that I cannot wait to explore in our production. I'm particularly interested how we stage the scenes where Arabic is used. It's just magical.

Kaila Tacazon says

more like 3.5 bc the political commentary is very interesting. 5 for originality. my issue with the play as a book is that it relies heavily on visuals so it's hard to read and the characters are absolutely hateful.

Emma Getz says

3.5/5

Haunting and true representation of war and its consequences without showing any actual scenes of war. Warning the dangers of American war and imperialism.

Greg Wise says

#9 Definitely a nice quick and easy read, even with all the sections in Arabic--the translations are included and easily followed. Other than the character of MUSA, I didn't feel a great deal of empathy or connection with our "Tiger"--he felt neither likeable or ferocious and I wanted him to either be more funny or serious than he was. Joseph's sense of military hardship, language and the convention of afterlife is engaging, though again I wanted something more from all the cleverness. It would be a rather fantastical adventure for a scenic designer this one.

Ayelet says

Very thought provoking- in terms of war and peace and good and evil but mainly the nature of man. Can we change who we are? How much are we responsible for bad actions and behaviors?

The recurring imagery of hands was very striking- especially with the prostitute and the old woman with no hands.

Sarah Lillo says

Wow. This was a seriously powerful and thought provoking play. Joseph ingeniously tackles sticky issues like war, guilt, and allegiances through this dark comedy. I would love to see this on stage some day!

Joshua says

A haunted play (both literally and metaphorically). A brilliant and incisive look at the relationship between Iraqi's and their American invaders during the 2003 Iraq invasion (sometimes through the eyes of the tiger himself). A richly drawn play, with surprise after dramatic surprise that keeps the play tumultuously interesting. A serious and multi-layered look at what happens to humanity when it is suddenly cast adrift by war and indifference. Rajiv Joseph's best work to date.
