



# Three Uses of the Knife: On the Nature and Purpose of Drama

*David Mamet*

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The purpose of theater, like magic like religion...ids to inspire cleansing awe. With bracing directness and aphoristic authority, one of our greatest living playwrights addresses the questions: What makes good drama? And why does drama matter in an age that is awash in information and entertainment? David Mamet believes that the tendency to dramatize is essential to human nature, that we create drama out of everything from today's weather to next year's elections. But the highest expression of this drive remains the theater.

With a cultural range that encompasses Shakespeare, Brecht, and Ibsen, *Death of a Salesman* and *Bad Day at Black Rock*, Mamet shows us how to distinguish true drama from its false variants. He considers the impossibly difficult progression between one act and the next and the mysterious function of the soliloquy. The result, in *Three Uses of the Knife*, is an electrifying treatise on the playwright's art that is also a strikingly original work of moral and aesthetic philosophy.

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