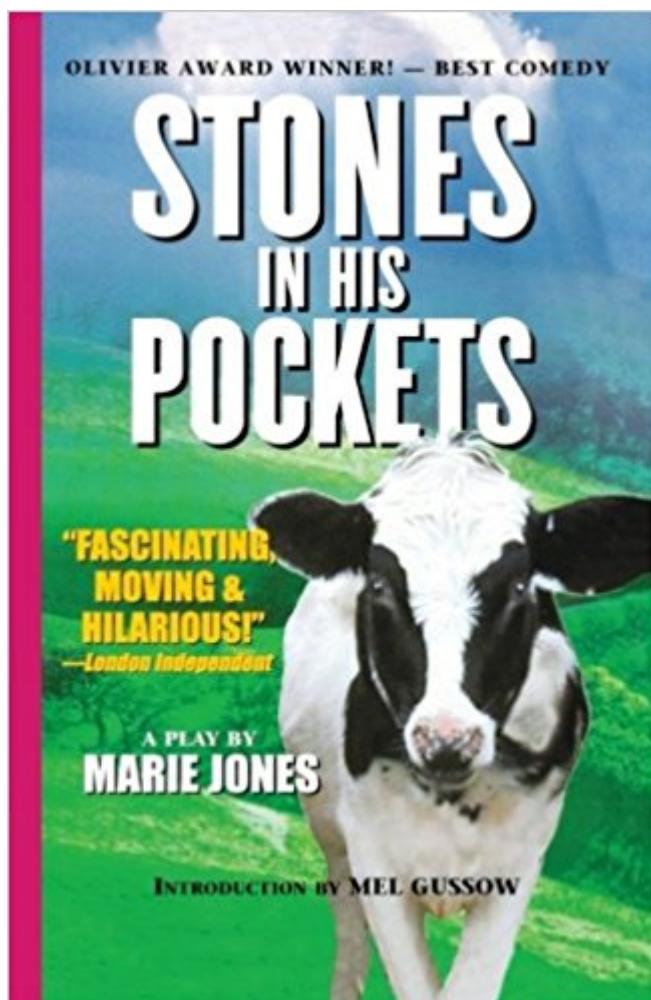


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# **Stones In His Pockets: A Play By Marie Jones With An Introduction By Mel Gussow**



## **Synopsis**

The Broadway sensation tells the tragicomedy story of a movie location shoot in Ireland, and the delightful, touching characters caught up in it. 'An inventive and riotously funny comedy' - Mike Kuchwara, Associated Press

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

It's a really great play. Fun read. It's a production that I think should be done more often.

I laughed, I cried, I covered my ears. This is such a classic piece of Irish-ness! The storyline is fanciful (unless YOU regularly have Hollywood crews arrive in your little town) but the underlying truths are not. When we saw this play performed in London, two actors played all the parts, which just added to the poignancy and hilarity. Drunks, dreamers and the depressed are all part of the Irish national psyche, and "Stones" hits on all these. This little gem of a story deserves wider acclaim.

This is a wonderful play, but unless you have a prodigious imagination, reading it won't be nearly as enjoyable as seeing it performed. 'Tis no small feat to move this one from the page to the stage. Plenty of laughs to earn the "comedy" label, but it wouldn't be Oirish if it was nothing but funny.

I was reading it as a director so please take that into consideration when reading this review. I think it is an interesting play but I do not like nor think it adds to the quality of the story to have the two actors play all the roles. Not my favourite as read but I would like to see it on stage to add a proper opinion.

"Stones in His Pockets" is a play about two men whose lives get turned upside down when a movie is being shot in their small Irish town. The suicide of a friend complicates things even more and the men are left to try and understand why he did it. The suicide inspires them to write their own film. The story is moving at times, but it's also forgettable. I just didn't find a lot of compelling drama in it. The book I have also contains the play "A Night in November," by the same playwright. It's the better of the two plays in my opinion. It's a one man show about a football fan who is able to discover a lot about life through the game of football. It's a pretty powerful story about one man's struggle to find acceptance of himself and his surroundings.

A small farming village in County Kerry, Ireland, where a new Hollywood film is being shot, serves as the setting for this hilarious and affecting comedy. Many of the local residents are working as extras for "forty smackaronies a day," including Charlie Conlon and Jake Quinn, both in their mid-thirties, through whose eyes we observe the lives of the real residents of Kerry, a world dramatically different from what is being recorded on film. For the director and crew of the film and for Caroline Giovanni, the American star, the daily takes and on-set activity are, unfortunately, the only reality. When Sean Harkin, a dream-filled, 17-year-old local boy with crushed hopes, is humiliated by the film crew, and, depressed, puts stones in his pockets and drowns himself, this wry and exuberant social commentary tackles important themes and achieves a universality and significance that are rare in comedy. Winner of the Olivier Award in 2000, this play by Marie Jones features fourteen characters played by two actors, whose role changes occur instantaneously. These include, among others, the roles of the film's star, Caroline Giovanni; Mickey Riordan, a 70-year-old local man whose only claim to fame is that he was an extra in *The Quiet Man*; Clem, a British Director; Jock Campbell, a Scottish security man; and Dave, a Cockney crew member. Requiring a variety of accents and quick-change artistry, this is a daunting play for all but the most ambitious director and most versatile of actors. The two actors reflect moods that range from satiric amusement at the silliness of the film industry to righteous anger at the insensitivity of the film crew, from poignant understanding of Sean's dreams to the guilt-filled helplessness of the friend who witnessed Sean's death, and from Charlie's hopeless cynicism about the possibilities of getting his

own script produced to Jake's infectious optimism about "taking on the real world." As the village and the film crew come together at Sean's wake and funeral, the themes of real life vs. reel life, the importance of dreams and need to keep working for them, and the acknowledgment that genuine respect must underlie meaningful human relationships permeate the play but never intrude. This is a comedy, after all, and as Jake and Charlie come to new recognitions about themselves and think about their future lives, the audience is there with them, rooting for their success. Mary Whipple

This is an Irish play calling for two actors to play multiple parts. The main characters, Charlie and Jake are extras for an American film in County Kerry to shoot Quiet Valley, a rural Irish romance. In the course of the play the two actors are also Production Assistants, other extras, a couple local kids, the film's famous lead actress, and other characters. As an acting piece this would be both awe-enducing in it's complexity and thrilling in it's shifting of tone and character. The skill to perform this piece demands well worked out, detailed individualized characters. All the demands of an actor in a solo piece are here, only for two. The play itself is frequently funny, marked by a swift pace, moving toward a hopeful and unforeseen ending. I enjoyed very much the possibility of seeing or being in Stones in His Pockets, as the movement from scene to scene is immediate, and the development of relationships tight-igniting my imagination. There is also much said thematically, about Hollywood hypocrisy (i.e., authentic dialects vs. being able to understand) and inspiration, small town dreams, and "the whole disintegration of rural Ireland." This quote is from Mel Gussow in the Introduction. I would suggest reading the intro after the play, as the spirit of Stones in His Pockets is best kept to the text of the play itself. The intro is informative though. I would love to see this performed.

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