



Mrs. Warren's Profession

George Bernard Shaw (1881 - 1950)

Read by:	Multiple readers	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	2 hours 16 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1183
Language:	English	UPC:	0683422135040
Style:	Dramatic Reading	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Plays		

The genre of the “problem play” emerged during the movement towards realism in the arts in the 19th century and depicts social issues through the debates between the characters, who generally symbolize the conflicting points of view on a particular issue. *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is a textbook example of a “problem play”. The issue, as you might guess, is prostitution. The problem starts when Vivie, the daughter of Mrs. Kitty Warren, graduates from Cambridge and returns home to get to know her estranged mother. The play turns on her revelation that her mother had been a prostitute and now is an owner of a chain of brothels. Vivie is horrified at first, and further confounded to learn that the father of Frank, her love interest, has a history with her mother and may well be her father. Learning more

about her mother's life journey, Vivie comes to celebrate her as a champion of female independence, but eventually becomes disillusioned. We come away with a clear understanding of the hypocrisy of attitudes towards the “profession” and the limited employment opportunities available to women at the time.

The play was written in 1893 but was banned by censors until 1902, when it was staged at the private New Lyric Club, and was not performed publicly in London until 1925. The 1905 production in New York was raided by police and the cast and crew arrested. It is a staple in the Shaw canon and has been revived frequently, most recently in 2010 in London, New York and Washington.

George Bernard Shaw (July 26, 1856 – November 2, 1950), who went by Bernard Shaw, was an Irish playwright and critic who was the leading dramatist of his era and is considered by many to rank second only to Shakespeare in the roster of English-language dramatists. He was born in Dublin to a Protestant family of English descent and moved to London in 1876 with the ambition to become a writer. Within ten years he had undertaken an extensive self-education and established himself as a theatre and music critic. He first achieved success with *Arms and the Man* in 1894 after many years of writing plays. He went on to produce over sixty plays, including *Pygmalion* (1912), *Man and Superman* (1902), *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1902), and *Saint Joan* (1923). While his style ranges from contemporary satire to historical allegory, he consistently used his plays to promote his often controversial political and social thinking. He was an outspoken proponent of reform along Democratic socialist lines, promoted alphabet reform and eugenics, and opposed organized religion and vaccination. In 1898 Shaw married Charlotte Payne-Townsend, a wealthy Anglo-Irish woman who nursed him back to health after an illness. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925 and an Academy Award for his screenplay for *Pygmalion* in 1938, the only writer to have won both awards. The word “Shavian” has entered the language as a term used to describe his ideas and manner of communicating them.