

Unveiling the Complexities of George Bernard Shaw's "Major Barbara"



Study Guide for George Bernard Shaw's Major Barbara
(Course Hero Study Guides) by Lindsay Locraft

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Welcome to our comprehensive study guide for George Bernard Shaw's groundbreaking play, "Major Barbara." This guide will provide a thorough analysis of the play's themes, characters, and historical context, empowering you to delve deeper into Shaw's witty and thought-provoking work.

Major Themes

- **Religion and Morality:** Shaw explores the hypocrisy and contradictions within organized religion, questioning the true nature of faith and morality.
- **War and Poverty:** The play confronts the devastating effects of war and poverty, exposing the social injustices that perpetuate suffering.
- **Class Conflict:** Shaw deftly depicts the class divisions of his time, contrasting the motivations and values of the upper and working classes.
- **Gender Roles:** The play challenges societal expectations of gender, showcasing strong female characters who challenge traditional norms.

Key Characters

- **Major Barbara Undershaft:** A Salvation Army major who grapples with her faith and the realities of social inequality.
- **Andrew Undershaft:** Barbara's estranged father, a wealthy munitions manufacturer who represents the cynical side of capitalism.
- **Cusins:** A socialist who advocates for a more just and equitable society, challenging Barbara's religious beliefs.
- **Lady Britomart:** Barbara's aunt, a wealthy and influential woman who embodies the shallowness of the upper class.
- **Charles Lomax:** A young man who becomes Barbara's love interest, representing the dilemmas faced by those torn between morality and social expectations.

Historical Context

"Major Barbara" was written in 1905, at a time of great social and political change. The play reflects Shaw's own socialist and anti-war beliefs, which were shaped by events such as the Boer War and the growing labor movement.

Act-by-Act Analysis

Our study guide provides a detailed act-by-act analysis of the play, covering:

- Scene summaries
- Character motivations
- Major themes and symbols

- Historical connections

Critical Reception

"Major Barbara" has been lauded for its wit, social commentary, and complex characters. Critics have praised Shaw's ability to provoke thought and challenge societal norms. The play has been adapted numerous times for stage and screen, showcasing its enduring relevance.

Our study guide for George Bernard Shaw's "Major Barbara" is an invaluable resource for students, scholars, and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of this timeless play. By exploring the play's major themes, characters, and historical context, we provide you with the tools to engage with Shaw's challenging and insightful work in a meaningful way.

Delve into the world of "Major Barbara" and let Shaw's words provoke, inspire, and ignite your own critical thinking. Free Download your copy of our study guide today and embark on a journey that will enrich your understanding of literature, society, and the human condition.

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