



**IN THE  
BODY OF  
THE WORLD**

**BY EVE ENSLER**



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



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IN THE BODY OF THE WORLD was commissioned by and had its world premiere at the American Repertory Theater (Diane Paulus, Artistic Director; Diane Quinn, Executive Director; Diane Borger, Executive Producer), Cambridge, Massachusetts, on May 10, 2016. It was directed by Diane Paulus; the scenic and costume design were by Myung Hee Cho; the lighting design was by Jen Schriever; the sound design was by M.L. Dogg and Sam Lerner; the projection design was by Finn Ross; the movement director was Jill Johnson; and the production stage manager was Carolyn Rae Boyd. It was performed by Eve Ensler.

IN THE BODY OF THE WORLD was produced in New York City by Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Director) on February 6, 2018, with the same design team. The production stage manager was Katie Ailinger. It was performed by Eve Ensler.

### NOTE ON MUSIC

The stage directions in this Acting Edition reflect the choices made for the original New York City production. They are not prescriptions for future productions. The author encourages productions to create their own unique designs for the play.

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For more information, please see the Note on Songs/Recordings, Images, or Other Production Design Elements at the back of this volume.

# IN THE BODY OF THE WORLD

## PART I: SOMNOLENCE

### 1. Divided

*Lights up on Eve in her loft. A chaise, a wooden chair, throw pillows, and a credenza with a cabinet/altar above it. "Part I: Somnolence" is projected on the upstage wall.*

A mother's body against a child's body makes a place. It says you are here. I have been exiled from my body. I was ejected at a young age and I got lost.

For years I have been trying to find my way back to my body, and to the earth. I guess you could say it's a preoccupation. I have tried various routes to get back. Promiscuity, anorexia, performance art.

As I had no reference point for my own body, I began to talk to other women about their bodies, in particular their vaginas (as I sensed vaginas were important).

I spent time with women in colleges, sex clubs, cafés, refugee camps, and war zones. Then in 2007, I was invited to the Democratic Republic of Congo by Dr. Denis Mukwege, a Congolese gynecologist who was literally sewing up the vaginas of rape survivors as fast as the militias were tearing them apart; soldiers hired and trained by multinational corporations who have been invading, occupying, and pillaging the Congo for decades for minerals—copper, tin, gold, coltan—which go into your iPhones and computers.

It was there in the Congo that I went outside what I thought I knew.

There where I met an 8-year-old girl who couldn't stop peeing on herself because huge men had shoved themselves inside her. I met an 80-year-old woman whose legs were broken and pulled out of their sockets because the soldiers pulled them over her head to rape her.

There were hundreds of these stories. They all began to bleed together. The destruction of vaginas. The pillaging of minerals. The raping of the earth.

But inside these stories of unspeakable violence, inside the women, was a determination and a life force I had never witnessed. The women had hunger and a vision and dreams: a dream of a place that would be their place. Their City of Joy. A sanctuary for healing. A revolutionary center where they would turn their trauma and pain into power.

I, along with my team, promised to find the resources to help them build it. The process took years and was seemingly impossible—rain, lack of roads, no electricity, corrupt building managers, poor oversight by UNICEF, rising prices. We finally scheduled the opening for May 2010, but then they discovered a huge tumor in my uterus. Cancer threw me into the center of my body's crisis. The Congo threw me into the crisis of the world, and these two experiences merged as I faced what I felt sure was the beginning of the end.

## **2. Cancer Town**

*Hotel lobby Muzak plays.*

How to describe Rochester, Minnesota? It is essentially cancer town. There is one massive hospital complex called the Mayo Clinic. Thirty thousand people who work there and everything else in the town either supports or supplies it. It is simultaneously something out of a bizarre sci-fi, we-destroyed-the-earth future and the most ordinary middle-American town.

The whole place is like one palliative care unit. The waitresses are

grief counselors. They serve you hamburgers and hold your hand as you weep for your son, daughter, mother, father, wife, or husband. There are wig stores on every corner.

In the one hotel, the Marriott hotel, every room is filled with a sick person or a person hoping not to be sick.

*Eve moves the chaise to center and pulls a white hospital sheet over it.*

If you have been in massive denial up to this point about illness and how many people for example have cancer, this would be your “holy shit” moment.

*Eve sits down on the chaise.*

### **3. Dr. Handsome**

The most handsome doctor in the world comes in to examine my ass. What else, of course?

*Eve lies down on the chaise/exam table.*

I lie on the table, my underpants around my ankles, and think this is it. This is what the end looks like. The most handsome man in the world knowing I have some horrible tumor up inside me and he has to feel it. I’m obviously shell shocked. I have already died from the humiliation and terror that are now merged in a cocktail of sweat and nausea. I am actually curled on the table, praying he will not notice me.

And at that moment, Dr. Handsome walks from one side of the examining table around to the other, looks me in the eyes, and says, “Before we begin, I want you to know that I’m aware of all your work with women. I promise you I will do my very best to care for you.” This moment makes everything that follows in the next days bearable, and I know I can trust him with my body and I bet he will save my life.

It takes so little to give patients dignity. It just takes a short walk around a table.

# IN THE BODY OF THE WORLD

by Eve Ensler

1 woman

In May 2010, while helping rape victims in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eve Ensler received a life-threatening diagnosis: She had uterine cancer. Told with her signature brand of humor, Eve's journey through her illness uncovers connections between her body and the earth, as well as the transformative and transcendent potential of illness itself. From Tony Award-winning author, performer, and activist Eve Ensler comes this powerful one-woman show based on her critically acclaimed memoir.

*"[Ensler] bubbles with psychological insight and empathy for anyone in distress. And, as always, she laces her tales with humor, gallows or otherwise."*

—The New York Times

*"[Ensler] goes beyond simply recounting her experience with cancer—and an intimate, shocking and touching tale it is—to create a bold, political work that is as personal and global as her signature work... [She] presents... a thoughtfully laid-out narrative quilt, made up of engaging frankness, measured sentiment, smartly-timed revelations and disarming humor."*

—Variety

*"While Ensler's story is a unique one, what is thoroughly relatable is her demonstration of the charitable side of humanity, and the downplaying of one's own suffering in order to use your experience to ease the pain of others."*

—BroadwayWorld.com

*"IN THE BODY OF THE WORLD is tough love, harsh medicine, a tonic... I came out rattled as I have rarely been rattled by any theater experience, devastated and blissful at the same improbable time."*

—Deadline.com

**Also by Eve Ensler**

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