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You Can't Take It With You: A Comedy In Three Acts



Synopsis

A comedy for a cast of 9 men and 7 women 93 men extras). At first the Sycamores seem mad, but it is not long before we realize that if they are mad, the rest of the world is madder. In contrast to these delightful people are the unhappy Kirbys. The plot shows how Tony, attractive young son of the Kirbys, falls in love with Alice Sycamore and brings his parents to dine at the Sycamore home on the wrong evening. The shock sustained by the Kirbys, who are invited to eat cheap food, shows Alice that marriage with Tony is out of the question. The Sycamores, however, though sympathetic to Alice, find it hard to realize her point of view. Meantime, Tony, who knows the Sycamores are right and his own people wrong, will not give her up, and in the end Mr. Kirby is converted to the happy madness of the Sycamores, particularly since he happens in during a visit by an ex-Grand Duchess, earning her living as a waitress. No mention has as yet been made of the strange activities of certain members of the household engaged in the manufacture of fireworks; nor of the printing press set up in the parlor; nor of Rheba the maid and her friend Donald; nor of Grandpa's interview with the tax collector when he tells him he doesn't believe in the income tax.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"You Can't Take It with You," by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, can be quickly described as a comedy about a madcap family. It is, however, beneath its very funny surface, a meditation on the problems of individuality, conformity, and the ways in which one decides to live one's life. The plot concerns the Vanderhof clan, an extended family who all live in a large house situated somewhere near Columbia University. The house is owned by Grandpa Vanderhof, a man who left his life in

commerce some years before and now spends his time collecting snakes, throwing darts, and attending college commencements. His daughter, Penny, writes plays on a typewriter which had been delivered to their home by mistake. Penny's husband is named Paul. Paul manufactures fireworks in the basement with the help of Mr. DiPinna, a gentleman who came to deliver something and has stayed on for seven years. Paul and Penny have found time to produce two daughters: Essie, who dances ballet to the xylophone accompaniment of her husband, Ed, and Alice, the sole "normal" member of the family. Alice has become involved with the boss's son, and most of the plot revolves around the complications that arise from the son (Tony) bringing his parents to dinner at the Vanderhofs' one night before the dinner was actually scheduled. The plot, however, is only a small part of what makes this comedy (which ran for more than 800 performances on Broadway in a time when 200 performances was considered a hit) an endlessly fascinating, always enjoyable event. The characters are rich, often loopy, and even eminently sensible. Grandpa Vanderhof is a sage, and lines of his run through my head almost daily as little pieces of wisdom with which I make my way through life.

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