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Arsenic And Old Lace - Acting Edition



Synopsis

We meet the charming and innocent ladies who populate their cellar with the remains of socially and religiously "acceptable" roomers; the antics of their brother who thinks he is Teddy Roosevelt; and the activities of the other brother - these require no further description or amplification here. "Arsenic and Old Lace" is a must for all, a ready-made comedy hit.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although these words refer to Teddy Brewster in this hilarious play by Joseph Kesselring, they could have applied equally to most of the other members of the Brewster household. Teddy thinks he is Teddy Roosevelt, always "charging" upstairs when he is not in the basement digging "locks for the Panama Canal." His two elderly aunts, with whom he lives, also have their own bizarre secret, for which the hand-dug "locks" in the basement are employed to good effect. Jonathan, Teddy's "disagreeable" brother, who disappeared many years ago, returns during the play with secrets of his own. With his face altered by plastic surgery, he is accompanied by Dr. Einstein, with whom he plans to set up an operating room in the house so the doctor can give new faces to criminals. The only normal person in the family is Mortimer, a drama critic who hates plays, engaged to marry Elaine, the innocent daughter of the minister next door. Mortimer is particularly upset by Jonathan's return--"the most detestable, vicious, venomous form of animal life I ever knew." The frantic action, the ironies, the comic routines, and the dramatic surprises all center around two bodies, hidden at various times in the window seat of the living room, and the reactions to them by the various people within the household. The local police, friends of Aunt Abby and Aunt Martha, stop by to chat, have

coffee, and protect these "sweet" old ladies, often at the worst possible moments, while Mortimer tries to decide what to do about his strange family and the bodies in the house. Arsenic and Old Lace is such a strong play, with so many hilarious moments, that it is not surprising that this is a staple of local theaters and high school drama groups.

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