



## Black Comedy

*Peter Shaffer*

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## **Black Comedy** Peter Shaffer

Carol and Brindsley, an engaged couple, have invited a millionaire to see Brindsley's sculpture, and to impress him have 'borrowed' antiques from a neighbour, the camp Mr Gorringe. Carol's formidable father is also expected. Then the lights fuse, and the the arrival of several other unexpected visitors in the darkness wrecks the evening.

## **Black Comedy Details**

Date : Published 1997 by Samuel French Ltd (first published 1965)

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Author : Peter Shaffer

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## From Reader Review Black Comedy for online ebook

**Jenni says**

Another high school memory...the first student directed/produced play I was a part of. Love it.

Albert says

I saw this in high school, it was junior year.

I thought it was a decent play, the idea and staging are quite interesting.

I thought the chemistry between the characters could of been better, especially between the minor characters.

But all in all it was ok

## **Giusy Cirillo says**

Original play to watch! The reversed lighting scheme is genial!

## Astraea says

## **Karen Roberts says**

I thoroughly enjoyed playing Miss Furnival... a fantastic play.

**Misti says**

Had its funny moments, but the ending was a bit strange.

**Whitney Rachel says**

## Hysterical.

That's the thing with comedy though, everyone has a different sense of humour. I found this to be an exceptional story with just the right amount of sass and crass one-liners. I thought the concept of reverse lighting was interesting too!

I also recently a university production of this and it was flawless.

## Ahmad Sharabiani says

## Black Comedy: A Comedy (French's Theatre Scripts), Peter Shaffer

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## Jacqueline says

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## **Cameron Stuart says**

If you like Neil Simon and the sheer ridiculousness of British class divide, this presents a great read for you. Reading this after reading "Equus" many times over whilst working on the portraying the character of Alan Strang, the extent of Shaffer's spectrum of ability, wit and guile are recognized. There's also a funny German

and plenty of slapstick staples, who wouldn't!

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### **Izzy says**

The idea of this play is brilliant. Also the happenings in this play are completely absurd but seem so normal.

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### **Gene Heinrich says**

Loved reading this little gem of a one act play! The whole concept is what pulled me in - light means darkness, darkness means light. Could very well be the next play I direct. Yeah, loved it that much.

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### **Amir Reza says**

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### **Geert says**

Toneelstuk met Iever en Eendracht

Geert = Stephane

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### **Bionic Jean says**

Peter Schaffer's **Black Comedy** is a classic farce from 1965, in the tradition of the Marx brothers. In a way it is a one-joke play, where the joke is indefinitely prolonged and becomes more absurd every moment.

The initial premise on which all this hangs, is that pitch darkness to the characters is equivalent to brilliant illumination to the audience. This inspired device by Peter Shaffer is topped off by the clincher, that this could not have happened at a worse moment for the main character, Brindsley.

The play begins with the main character, Brindsley, hovering in his apartment in South Kensington, London, at 9.30pm on a Sunday evening. He has a roomful of sculpture waiting to be viewed, and hopefully purchased, by a millionaire (who turns out to be deaf). At that point the lights fuse.

Brindsley also has a fiancée who needs to be kept sweet, and a prospective military martinet of a father to be impressed. In order to impress the millionaire still further, expensive antique furniture has been borrowed from the flat across the hall, without the knowledge of its fanatically possessive owner. More and more difficulties present themselves to be juggled on the return of said owner. Brindsley has a vain hope that the furniture may be returned before the neighbour catches on, and also that his fiancée may be kept in the dark (excuse the pun!) about what is really happening. The arrival in the darkness of several further unexpected visitors completely wrecks the characters' evening - and provides much entertainment for the audience.

This is a play which it is essential to see as a live production, because of the basic premise. It simply will not work on the page, or on radio. Also the actors need to be topnotch, as timing is key. The first production I saw of this play was lively and full of fun. The main part of Brindsley was played by a very determinedly upbeat and chirpy Peter Machin, his debutante-ish girlfriend Carol Melkett was played by Gemma Craven, her military father by Neil McCarthy, and the camp neighbour Mr. Gorringe was played unexpectedly by Timothy Dalton. There were also four other minor roles, as further unexpected guests kept arriving, including Clea, who was played by Celia Bannerman.

The play is necessarily quite short, to be able to sustain the illusion, and is often paired in production with another play by Peter Shaffer, *"White Liars"*.

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