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Six Degrees Of Separation



Synopsis

The extraordinary tragicomedy of race, class and manners. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Based on the true story of a wealthy, well-meaning liberal couple in the upper echelons of New York society's upper crust, we have Flan or Flanders Kittredge and his wife Ouisa or Louisa; the former is a standoffish but deep down good-hearted art dealer in the private sector who has a penchant for the works of Kandinsky and Cezanne; the latter is his wife, articulate and intelligent who is in need of something of greater meaning and depth other than money, art, fancy restaurants and wealthy friends. And so the evening commences with a friend from South Africa; they are discussing poverty, the downtrodden and the oppressed, overblown intellectual banter to elevate the ego and make the evening progress smoothly and divinely. But the night is anything but that, for it is dramatically interrupted by Paul - a young black homosexual flimflammer or Peter Funk man with a penchant for male street hustlers (only when he is happy - his words). He comes into the lives of these two unwitting victims after stabbing and passing himself off as a friend to their children who are at Harvard. And what else does he profess? You guessed it - that he is the son of you-know-who: Academy Award winner Sidney Poitier, the most eminent black actor of his generation, the hero that has been the catalyst for the lives of these socially and politically 'aware' forty-somethings. Paul charms and bedazzles himself into the lives of those he encounters, using his wit, knowledge, ease and most importantly, his race, more specifically, Sidney Poitier's name.

As the play intensifies, Paul promises the Kittredges and future unsuspecting victims minor roles in the movie version of *Cats*, for which his 'father' is purportedly directing.

Loosely based upon real events, *SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION* is a dramatic comedy that explores the deep interconnectivity of people while at the same time illustrating how shallow our quest for fame and fortune often is. The play tells the story of Flan and Ouisa Kittredge, an upper class Manhattan couple. The Kittredges are art dealers, but they've about run out of funds and unless they sell something soon, they might have to downgrade their lifestyle. One evening while they are having a friend from South Africa over for dinner (and trying to get some money from him), a young black man appears on their doorstep. He claims to have been mugged in Central Park and that he is a college friend of their kids. The initial tension soon dissolves when Paul, the young black man, begins cooking them dinner and lets slip that his father is Sidney Poitier. Paul makes everyone feel better about themselves and the Kittredges agree to let Paul spend the night in their apartment. However, things begin to unravel when the Kittredges find Paul having sex with a man the next morning. They throw Paul out and they think that's the end of it until later they learn of acquaintances who have been duped by Paul in similar ways. Thus begins a quest to find out who Paul really is and in doing so the Kittredges discover themselves. I think *SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION* is a great play. Most of the characters are pretentious and snobbish and at times not very likeable. However, they have no idea that they are pretentious, they think they are charming, and very likeable. The irony is that it takes a con man who no one really knows to help them take their own masks off and truly see themselves for the first time.

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