

Six Degrees of Separation: A Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon for the Stage

Six Degrees of Separation is a play by John Guare that explores the themes of identity, race, and class through the lens of a seemingly harmless game. The play follows the story of Paul, a young black man who pretends to be the son of Sidney Poitier in order to gain access to the homes of wealthy New Yorkers.



Six Degrees of Separation: A Play by John Guare

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1079 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 134 pages



As Paul's lies unravel, the play examines the ways in which people create and maintain their own identities, and the consequences of those actions. The play's title refers to the "six degrees of separation" theory, which posits that any two people on the planet can be connected by a chain of no more than six acquaintances. This theory is often used to illustrate the interconnectedness of the world, but in *Six Degrees of Separation*, it is used to explore the ways in which people can be both connected and disconnected from one another.

The play opens with Ouisa Kittredge, a wealthy art dealer, being mugged on the street. She is rescued by Paul, who claims to be the son of Sidney Poitier. Ouisa is immediately taken with Paul's charm and charisma, and she invites him to stay at her home while he looks for his father. Paul quickly becomes a fixture in Ouisa's social circle, and he uses his charm to gain access to the homes of other wealthy New Yorkers.

As Paul's lies begin to unravel, the play examines the ways in which people create and maintain their own identities. Paul is a master of disguise, and he is able to adapt his personality to fit in with any group of people. However, as his lies become more elaborate, he begins to lose track of who he really is. The play also explores the ways in which people can be both connected and disconnected from one another. Despite the fact that Paul is able to gain access to the homes of wealthy New Yorkers, he is ultimately an outsider. He is not accepted by the people he pretends to be, and he is ultimately betrayed by the people he trusts.

Six Degrees of Separation is a powerful and thought-provoking play that explores the complex themes of identity, race, and class. The play is a reminder that we are all connected, but that we are also capable of great cruelty and betrayal.

Characters

- **Paul:** A young black man who pretends to be the son of Sidney Poitier.
- **Ouisa Kittredge:** A wealthy art dealer who is mugged on the street and rescued by Paul.
- **Flan Kittredge:** Ouisa's husband, a psychiatrist.
- **Kitty Kittredge:** Ouisa and Flan's daughter, a college student.

- **Trent Conway:** A young white actor who becomes Paul's friend.
- **Elizabeth Dorsett:** A wealthy socialite who is friends with Ouisa.
- **Dr. Fine:** A psychiatrist who treats Paul.

Themes

- **Identity:** The play explores the ways in which people create and maintain their own identities. Paul is a master of disguise, and he is able to adapt his personality to fit in with any group of people. However, as his lies become more elaborate, he begins to lose track of who he really is.
- **Race:** The play also explores the role of race in American society. Paul is a black man who pretends to be the son of a famous black actor. This lie allows him to gain access to the homes of wealthy white people, but it also exposes the racism that exists in American society.
- **Class:** The play also explores the role of class in American society. Paul is an outsider who is able to gain access to the homes of wealthy New Yorkers. However, he is ultimately betrayed by the people he trusts. This betrayal highlights the class divisions that exist in American society.

Productions

Six Degrees of Separation premiered Off-Broadway in 1990. The play was a critical and commercial success, and it was adapted into a film in 1993. The play has been produced around the world, and it continues to be a popular choice for theater companies.

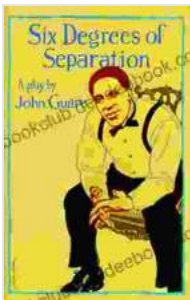
Awards

Six Degrees of Separation has won numerous awards, including:

- 1991 Pulitzer Prize for Drama
- 1991 Tony Award for Best Play
- 1991 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play
- 1991 Obie Award for Best American Play

Legacy

Six Degrees of Separation is a classic American play that continues to be relevant today. The play's themes of identity, race, and class are still relevant in today's society, and the play's exploration of these themes is both insightful and thought-provoking. *Six Degrees of Separation* is a must-see for anyone interested in theater, drama, or American culture.



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