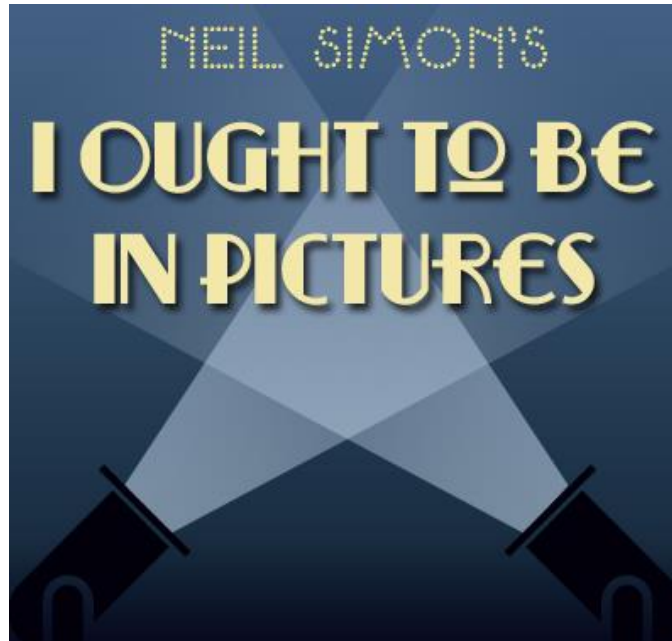


Sacramento Theatre Company

Study Guide



By: Neil Simon

Study Guide Materials Compiled by Anna Miles

Sacramento Theatre Company

Mission Statement

The Sacramento Theatre Company (STC) strives to be the leader in integrating professional theatre with theatre arts education. STC produces engaging professional theatre, provides exceptional theatre training, and uses theatre as a tool for educational engagement.

Our History

The theatre was originally formed as the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre in 1942, an ad hoc troupe formed to entertain locally-stationed troops during World War II. On October 18, 1949, the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre acquired a space of its own with the opening of the Eaglet Theatre, named in honor of the Eagle, a Gold Rush-era theatre built largely of canvas that had stood on the city's riverfront in the 1850s. The Eaglet Theatre eventually became the Main Stage of the not-for-profit Sacramento Theatre Company, which evolved from a community theatre to professional theatre company in the 1980s. Now producing shows in three performance spaces, it is the oldest theatre company in Sacramento.

After five decades of use, the Main Stage was renovated as part of the H Street Theatre Complex Project. Features now include an expanded and modernized lobby and a Cabaret Stage for special performances. The facility also added expanded dressing rooms, laundry capabilities, and other equipment allowing the transformation of these performance spaces, used nine months of the year by STC, into backstage and administration places for three months each summer to be used by California Musical Theatre for Music Circus.

Sacramento Theatre Company can accommodate 292 patrons in the proscenium-style auditorium of its Main Stage, while the Pollock Stage offers a more intimate experience with only 87 seats in a black box-style theatre. Both provide good acoustics and sight-lines. This professional, Equity theatre presents seven professional productions per season with a reputation for excellent stage adaptations of classic literature. Three annual productions in the Cabaret Stage, which seats 100, round out the experience with high-quality Broadway musical revues.

The Young Professionals Conservatory, a training program for young theatre artists, was founded in 2003. The program, as well as the entire STC School of the Arts, is directed by Michele Hillen-Noufer.

For further information about the Sacramento Theatre Company please visit us online:

<http://www.sactheatre.org>

I Oughta Be in Pictures

Sacramento Theatre Company Production Study Guide

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Study Guide Materials Compiled by Anna Miles

Neil Simon

By Rachelle Hughes

American playwright Neil Simon understands that humor and hardship are a winning combination in the entertainment world, and for the past five decades he has leveraged this winning literary combination into a successful career as one of America's most prolific and successful stage and screenwriters.

The proof can be seen in his body of work as the author of over thirty plays and almost as many movies, most of which were adaptations of his plays. Neil Simon's iconic work has been performed by some of the biggest names in the theatre and film world. His ability to write about life's more difficult issues with wit and comedy has won him a Pulitzer Prize for *Lost in Yonkers* (1991) and three Tony Awards for *The Odd Couple* (1965), *Biloxi Blues* (1985), and *Lost in Yonkers* (1991), as well as a special Tony Award for his contributions to theatre (1975). His popular works like *Barefoot in the Park* (1963) and *The Odd Couple* (1965) continue to be celebrated in the theatre world fifty years after they were written.

Born Marvin Neil Simon on July 4, 1927 to Jewish parents Irving and Mamie Levy Simon, his childhood was often plagued by many of the same conflicts that show up in some of his plays. Simon grew up in New York during the Great Depression with parents who fought frequently. His father often disappeared, leaving Simon's mother to fend for herself and her two sons. In order to escape turmoil at home Simon often escaped to the movies to find laughter and sanctuary. His early inspiration included comedy greats like Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Laurel Hardy.

Simon began his writing career at the age of fifteen when he began writing comedy scripts with his brother Danny Simon. They sold their scripts to comedians and radio shows. After graduating from high school he enlisted in the Army Air Force Reserve. He continued to write during his military service, and on his release from the army he joined his brother again in writing for radio and television for shows over the next five years. In 1961 Simon's first Broadway play *Come Blow Your Horn* was produced and ran for 678 performances. This was the beginning of a successful and long career as a playwright. Simon had discovered theatre, and the theatre world loved him. For the next twenty-five years Simon would have at least one of his plays running on Broadway every year. His subsequent successes of *Barefoot in the Park* and *The Odd Couple* cemented his place in the theatre world. *The Odd Couple* also opened the door for his success in film and television. In 1966 he dominated Broadway with four of his plays running simultaneously: *Sweet Charity*, *Star-Spangled Girl*, *Barefoot in the Park*, and *The Odd Couple*.

His unique writing brand of trouble meets comedy fueled his career as he continued to draw from his own and other friends' real life battles. According to Simon, *The Odd Couple's* story of two men who have unhappy marriages and decide to live together only to find themselves experiencing many of the same challenges as roommates was based on two people he knew (Encyclopedia of World Biography, <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Sc-St/Simon-Neil.html>). Stories like *Barefoot in the Park*, *Chapter Two*, and *Jake's Women* explore the various aspects of marriage from newlyweds to divorce and remarriage and widowhood. Simon had ample experience in the marriage department with five marriages to four different women.

His first wife Joan Baim died after twenty years. Chapter Two is a reflection of what it meant to remarry after the death of his wife. Simon married his second wife, actor Marsha Mason, after a whirlwind romance following his first wife's death. When Simon's third marriage

to Diane Lander ended in divorce he wrote Jake's Women, the story of how the good and bad experiences in two marriages affected the third marriage. Simon is currently married to performer Elaine Joyce. Simon has three children, Nancy, Bryn, and Ellen.

In a 2009 interview with Michael McGregor for the online version of "The Oregonian–Oregon Live," Simon answered questions about his inspiration for material for his work when McGregor asked "Many of your characters tend to be somewhat stubborn, self-absorbed people forced in some way to recognize themselves; would that be a fair assessment?" Simon's Answer? "Sort of. I'd say all of the people I write about—and this goes for playwriting altogether—had better be in trouble. Otherwise, what's the play about?"

He continued to speak to the power of humor despite pain when he said, "There's a great deal of pain in humor. I think people want to hear it. Just laughing makes them feel better" (http://www.oregonlive.com/performance/index.ssf/2009/05/playwright_neil_simon_explains_1.html).

Simon entered his third decade of writing with his most celebrated work to that point with *Lost in Yonkers* (1991) the story of an abusive mother's effect on her grown children. The play won Simon a Tony Award and a Pulitzer Prize. The Pulitzer Prize may be his most prestigious award, but he has enough awards to fill a room. His works have been nominated fifteen times for Tony Awards. Almost every one of his thirty-plus plays has been adapted into a motion picture and he has won more Oscars and Tony awards than any writer in history. Appearing in Simon's films helped make the careers of many well-known actors, including Robert Redford, Walther Matthau, and Marsha Mason. In 2006 Simon was awarded the Mark Twain Award. His plays continue to find captive audiences around the world, five decades after he made his Broadway debut. Simon has easily earned his title as America's playwright.

Summary: I Oughta Be in Pictures

Libby Tucker, a 19-year-old from Brooklyn, New York, shows up on the Los Angeles doorstep of Herb Tucker, a struggling screen and television writer. There she meets Steffy Blondell, Herb's long-term, casual girlfriend. After learning that Libby is the daughter Herb abandoned 16 years earlier, and that Libby has hitch-hiked her way across the country to reconnect, Steffy excuses herself to go to the super market, leaving Libby and a sleeping Herb alone in Herb's apartment.

When Herb awakes, he is shocked to see his daughter waiting for him in his living room. After uncomfortable small talk and a failed fatherly kiss from Herb, things seem promising: Libby confides in her father about her relationship with her dead grandmother, with whom she claims she speaks every night, and Herb tells her about his beloved fruit trees. But things turn sour when Libby explains to her father that she is an aspiring actress (despite having almost no experience), and demands his help in breaking into the entertainment industry. Herb becomes angry that Libby is seemingly only interested in his connections, and after Libby fights back claiming he "owes" her, Herb tells her that in his own house she must speak to him with respect. When Libby leaves so she can be "outside" and "speak however she wants," Steffy returns from the market and begs Libby not to leave under such terms. However, Libby does not listen, and storms out.

Steffy tries to make Herb understand that Libby only wanted to feel a genuine connection with her father, and urges him to invite her to stay with him. Herb resents Steffy's meddling, and snaps at her, telling her to mind her own business. This leads Herb to ask Steffy why she "bothers" with him, considering he doesn't treat her very well. Steffy and Herb discuss their relationship, but come to no conclusions before Steffy decides to leave the house as well.

Later that same evening, Libby and Herb are returning to Herb's house after sharing a meal, having reconciled when Herb told Libby to "get her things and let's go" earlier in the evening. Herb formally invites Libby to stay with him, but Libby responds that she can only stay a couple of days. Looking around the shabby apartment, Libby decides she can "fix the place up real cute." After the two retire to bed, Herb hears Libby practicing her acting, and goes to her room so she can practice for him.

Two weeks later, Libby sits at her father's type writer, in a newly cleaned and spruced-up house. Soon conversation shifts to Herb's screenplay, which he has barely begun. Libby is surprised when Herb confesses that he only has 46 empty pages after seemingly working on the script for the past two weeks. Libby encourages Herb to believe in himself, and Herb deflects from the conversation by inviting Libby to dinner. She declines, telling Herb that she has "business plans" that evening. Herb is clearly nervous to let her go out alone, but Libby insists.

Steffy shows up late to have dinner with Herb, but stays until midnight anyhow. Herb is worrying about Libby still being out, but Steffy informs him that she is seeing someone else, and intends to focus all of her attention on this other man if Herb is unwilling to take their relationship to the next level. Both Steffy and Herb know, however, that Herb is incapable of making such a commitment. Steffy, in her words, "goes home alone at 12:30 at night."

Libby tiptoes into Herb's house around 3 AM. He has been up waiting for her and catches her coming in the door, demanding she explain where she has been. She tells him she was parking cars at a big Hollywood party, where she wrote notes with her contact information on the backs of the valet company's business cards and left them on the Hollywood big shots' windshields. Herb asks Libby if she honestly believes that anyone in the business would call her

in for an audition after reading her name scrawled on the back of a valet ticket, and Libby responds that doing something that seems silly is better than doing nothing at all. She accuses her father of doing just that: nothing at all, sitting around in a shabby bungalow refusing to write.

Herb attempts to retreat, but Libby stops him, wanting to ask him about sex. She explains that she wants to fool around with a boy she likes, but doesn't know what to expect. This conversation leads into a talk about Herb's relationship with Libby's mother and why he left. Libby breaks down, confessing that she doesn't have as much confidence as she appears to have, and that all she wants is a family member to love her for who she is. Herb calms her and holds her.

The next morning, Libby tells Herb that she is leaving, since he has finally given her all she ever wanted: a true connection with her father. He protests at first, but eventually lets her go, giving her some oranges from his beloved tree for the road. While Libby makes Herb's bed before she departs, Herb calls Blanche, Libby's mother, and Robby, Libby's brother, managing to carry on a civil conversation. The play ends with Herb planning to get some writing done at last, inspired by an idea- an old one, that began about "sixteen years ago."

I Oughta Be in Pictures

Characters

Libby Tucker- A 19-year-old aspiring actress from Brooklyn, New York. Raised by a lonely and distracted single mother, Libby is close to her brother and especially to her grandmother. Libby claims to "speak" with her grandmother frequently, despite the fact that her grandmother has passed away. Positive, independent, and determined, Libby will do anything to accomplish her goals, whether that goal is to become a movie star or to reconnect with the father she never knew.

Herb Tucker- a screenwriter struggling with writer's block and a fear of commitment. Married three times and unable to take the next step with his current girlfriend Steffy, Herb is unequipped to deal with the sudden appearance of his daughter Libby 16 years after he abandoned her, her mother, and her brother in New York.

Steffy Blondell- a Hollywood make-up artist, Steffy has been seeing Herb "on-and-off" for several years. Steffy is a single mother and has a strong sense of responsibility. She wants more of a commitment from Herb, but is aware that he is likely unable to give it to her.

Hollywood in the 1970s

By Anna Miles

Neil Simon's *I Oughta Be in Pictures* takes place in 1970s Hollywood, in the home of a middle-aged man struggling to succeed in the film and television industries of the time period. But what was Hollywood like in the 1970s?

The 1970s fell in the middle of the period of film history known as "New Hollywood" or the "American New Wave." This period was launched in the mid-1960s when a new generation of young film makers took over Hollywood and began to cater to a new generation of young movie goers, effectively overhauling the way movies were made, marketed, and consumed.

The beginning of the "New Hollywood" era is often linked to two key films: *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate*. These two movies marked a stylistic shift from the movies of previous generations, and a shift in authority over a film from the movie studio to the film director. Film makers in the "New Hollywood" movement were usually young film-school graduates who were part of the "counterculture" of their generation, who infused the New Hollywood films with a passion, sexuality, and energy that had never been seen before. These new directors, including such well-known names as Brian De Palma (*Carrie*, 1976), Woody Allen (*Annie Hall*, 1977), Francis Ford Coppola (*The Godfather*, 1972), Martin Scorsese (*Taxi Driver*, 1976), Steven Spielberg (*Jaws*, 1975), and George Lucas (*Star Wars*, 1977), were able to reach out to the youth market that the old Hollywood studios were struggling to grab hold of.

The New Hollywood era marked a major departure from the previous industry standard known as "the studio system" which dominated during the period between the 1920s and 60s, referred to as the "Golden Age of Hollywood." Under this system, motion pictures studios maintained complete control of the films they made, and contracted movie stars to their studios, rather than to individual films. This meant that many films were "vehicles" for the studio's contracted stars, as well as that film actors and directors were almost completely denied any creative freedom. In the New Hollywood, the film director took control of the film-making process, and creative teams and actors were chosen to be in specific films, rather than films being chosen in order to feature specific actors. The creative control wielded by this new generation of young film directors led to the birth of the "auteur" concept. An "auteur" refers to a director whose vision, style, and creative control are so strong over a film and the process of making a film that they could be considered the "author" of that film.

With the birth of the "auteur" came the birth of new and innovative narrative and stylistic techniques. The directors of the New Hollywood era, particularly those active in the 1970s, tended to make movies closer to everyday life than did their earlier counterparts. During the studio system, movie stars were remote, almost other-worldly figures, and most films were made in isolated film studios. Films were prone to censorship and content regulations, limiting what issues could be explored. In the 1970s, under the guidance of the New Directors and thanks to breakthroughs in film technology, such as the Panavision Panaflex camera invented in 1972, location shooting became much more popular, leading to the advent of the "new realism" of the period. Younger movie-goers were drawn to this new style because they were able to more clearly see themselves in the stories they were paying to see told. The counterculture generation wanted to see the nitty-gritty of real life represented on screen rather than the glamorous, unrealistic fantasies of the 1940s and 50s, and the directors of the American New Wave delivered.

Herb and Libby come from dueling generations- Herb represents the older, more traditional generation bred on the films of the Golden Age, while Libby is a member of the up-and-coming youth culture, more in tune with the auteurs of the New Age. The tension between the two, especially when it comes to the tenacity and aggression with which they are willing to pursue a career in Hollywood, mirrors the larger tension that existed between creative generations of the time period. Herb sees his day as a successful Hollywood screen writer as virtually over, because he is unsure of how to break into the new, younger aesthetic favored by the business. Libby sees the industry as full of possibility, and by spending time with her father and forcing him to confront his past, she is able to shed some of her optimism on her father, who by the end of the play is finally sitting down to write a script more grounded in reality.

Glossary of References

Neil Simon's play *I Oughta Be in Pictures* takes place in Hollywood in the 1970s- and the many pop culture references his characters use take place in the 1970s as well. This glossary will help give you some context of the time and place in which Simon's play takes place, as well as help you understand some of the more time-specific jokes the characters make.

Notions department at Abraham and Strauss (Libby 1.1)

A New York department store based in Brooklyn, founded in 1865. Bought by Macy's in 1994- most stores took the Macy's name. The "Notions Department" refers to an area of a department store selling more miscellaneous or "novelty" items, such hair accessories, scarves, glasses, socks, stockings, hangers, pin cushions, etc.

Actor's Studio (Libby 1.1)

A membership organization for professional actors located in Manhattan, New York, famously run by Lee Strasberg from 1951-1982. Best known for teaching and refining the "method technique" of acting.

Song of Bernadette (Libby 1.1)

A 1941 novel and 1943 film about Bernadette Soubirous (Saint Bernadette) who claimed to have experienced eighteen visions of the Virgin Mary between February and July of 1858 in Lourdes, France.

Columbia Pictures (Steffy and Libby 1.1)

A film studio currently affiliated with Sony Pictures. Founded in 1918 as "Cohn-Brandt-Cohn Film Sales," the released its first feature film in August 1922, and went public in 1925 after adopting the name "Columbia Pictures" in 1924. It is the world's fifth largest major film studio. In the 1970s, the studio was recovering from near bankruptcy. Columbia partnered with Warner Brother's Studios to form the "Burbank Studios," and through this partnership, Columbia Studios gradually regained their wealth and status.

Jane Fonda (Steffy and Libby 1.1)

Actor, Writer, Political Activist, Fitness Guru, and Former Fashion Model. Jane Fonda rose to fame by starring in several movies in the 1960s, including *Barefoot in the Park* (based on the Neil Simon play of the same name) and *Barbarella*. She won two Best Actress Academy Awards in the 1970s for her roles in *Klute* and *Coming Home*.

Hollywood Hills (Herb 1.1)

A mostly white, upper-middle class hillside neighborhood in Los Angeles.

Hank Bauer (Herb 1.1)

An American Major League Baseball player who played right fielder for the New York Yankees (1948-1959) and the Kansas City Athletics (from 1960-1961) and who managed the Athletics in Kansas City from 1961-1962 and in Oakland in 1969. He also managed the Baltimore Orioles from 1964-1968.

Berra (Herb 1.1)

Yogi Berra, an American Major League Baseball player and manager. An 18-time All Star and 10-time World Series champion as a player. Considered one of the greatest catchers of all time, Berra was voted MVP three times over the course of his career, and was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972. He was also well known for his malapropisms, saying such famous lines as "it ain't over till it's over."

Food Fair (Libby 1.1)

A large American super market chain.

Carl Hubbell (Herb 1.1)

An American baseball player for the New York Giants from 1928-1943. His nick-names included "The Meat Ticket" and "King Carl."

National League (Herb 1.1)

The National League of Professional Baseball Clubs- the older of two leagues making up [Major League Baseball](#) in the United States and Canada, and the world's oldest professional team sports league.

Screwball pitcher (Herb 1.1)

A baseball pitch thrown with the goal to break in the opposite direction of a slider or curve ball.

Wide World of Sports (Herb 1.1)

A television program on ABC that featured events from different sports from around the world. Famous for coining the phrase "The thrill of victory, the agony of defeat."

Dustin Hoffman (Libby 1.1)

A popular actor who began his career in the late '60s and continues to this day. Usually considered one of the most talented actors and emblems of the '70s Hollywood era, and at the time known for his roles in *The Graduate*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Little Big Man* and *All the President's Men*.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (Libby 1.1)

A 1961 novel by Muriel Spark and later a 1968 play and 1969 film about an unorthodox teacher at a conservative Scottish girl's school.

The Waltons (Herb 1.1)

A popular 70s TV show about an idealized family from rural Virginia in the 1930s and 1940s.

"I'm on the way up on the local and you're on the way-down express" (Libby 1.1)

Libby is using a metaphor referring to the subway system in her native New York, mentioning "local" and "express" trains, which describe different subway routes in the city.

Marlon Brando (Herb 1.1)

A well-regarded method actor and sex symbol, known for his roles in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Godfather*, as well as for his distinctive speaking voice.

Find Eichmann (Herb 1.1)

A reference to the hunt for Adolf Eichmann, a senior Nazi official who went into hiding for twenty years following World War II, until he was discovered and captured by Israeli operatives. He stood trial in Israel for crimes against humanity and was executed in 1962.

Roman candle (Steffy 1.1)

A large and explosive type of firework.

Pocketbook (Herb 1.1)

A coin purse or hand bag.

George Bernard Shaw (Steffy 1.1)

An Irish playwright (1856-1950) of the early 20th century known for his plays *Saint Joan* (1924) and *Pygmalion* (1913), which was the basis for the musical *My Fair Lady* (1956).

Thomas' English Muffins (Herb 1.2)

A brand of English muffin based in New York City, known for its "nooks and crannies."

Filling stations (Libby 1.2)

Gas stations.

Motor Bureau (Libby 1.2)

The DMV.

Cream soda (Libby 1.2)

A vanilla-flavored soft drink.

Roots (Libby 1.2)

An American TV miniseries about the story of one family's experience of slavery in the US, based on the novel by Alex Haley. It was shown in eight parts on eight nights in a row in January 1977 because ABC feared the series would prove unpopular. On the contrary, the series was immensely popular and the final episode still holds the record of the third most watched TV episode in history. It was nominated for 37 Emmys and won 9.

David Niven (Herb 1.2)

An English actor (1910-1983) known for his roles in *The Pink Panther* and *Around the World in 80 Days*, as well as for his stereotypical "Englishness."

The Belle of Amherst (Libby 1.2)

A one-woman play by William Luce based on the life of American poet Emily Dickinson. (See Below)

The Depression (Herb 1.2)

The Great Depression, a worldwide economic depression that lasted from 1929 until the late 1930s. Considered the worst economic depression in history, it was marked by mass unemployment and migration across the country and sparked Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

Posturepedic mattress (Herb 1.2)

A brand of mattress sold by Sealy.

Emily Dickinson (Libby 1.2)

American poet (1831-1886) famous both for her poetry, unique for its time in form and subject matter, and her eccentric behavior, as she disliked greeting visitors to her house in Amherst, MA and later in life to even leave her room. Much of her poetry was disseminated in letters to friends and acquaintances, and she was not well known to the public at large until after her death. She is now thought to be one of the most important and innovative American poets.

Julie Harris (Libby 1.2)

American actress (1925-2013) known for her performance of *The Belle of Amherst*, for which she won a Tony and later a Grammy for her recording of the script. She won four other Tonys and 3 Emmys during her career, playing such roles as Sally Bowles in *I Am a Camera* (the non-musical basis for Cabaret) and on film as Frankie in *The Member of the Wedding*, for which she was nominated for an Oscar.

Janet Leigh (Libby 2.1)

American actress (1927-2004) best known for her performance as Marion Crane in *Psycho*, for which she won a Golden Globe and was nominated for an Oscar.

Psycho (Libby 2.1)

A thriller film directed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1960, based on the novel by Robert Bloch. Its most famous scene is the murder of Janet Leigh's character in the shower.

Museum of Modern Art (Herb 2.1)

Museum in New York City, often abbreviated MoMA, and one of the largest and most influential collections of modern art in the world.

Indy 500 (Herb 2.1)

The Indianapolis 500, an annual motorsport race held over Memorial Day weekend in Indianapolis, IN. One of the most prestigious events in motorsports.

Upstairs, Downstairs (Herb 2.1)

A British TV series set in a manor house during and after WWI that ran from 1971-1975. The series followed both the aristocratic owners of the house (the "upstairs") and the servants that tended the house (the "downstairs").

Races at Hollywood Park (Herb 2.1)

Thoroughbred horse races at Hollywood Park, a racetrack located in Inglewood, CA, southwest of Los Angeles.

Berlitz School of English (Herb 2.1)

Berlitz is an international language teaching organization, using the direct method of learning, where the class uses only the target language, and not the native language of the student. This necessitates much repetition of words and phrases, hence Herb's joke about repeating himself.

Pierre Cardin suits (Herb 2.1)

Italian clothing designer known for prizing geometric shapes and more unisex forms over practicality.

Pageboys at NBC (Herb 2.1)

Interns working a one-year training program for a career in television and entertainment at NBC studios.

Prospect Park (Libby 2.1)

A park in Brooklyn, NYC.

Yosemite National Park (Herb 2.2)

A US National Park in the east of California known for its granite cliffs, waterfalls and giant Sequoia trees.

Beverly Hilton (Herb 2.2)

A large hotel in Beverly Hills, CA, and home of the Golden Globe and Daytime Emmy award ceremonies.

Lent (Steffy 2.2)

A Christian religious observance beginning with Ash Wednesday and occupying the forty days leading up to Easter Sunday and commemorating the death of Jesus Christ. Christians may fast or pledge to give up something else important to them as an act of penance in honor of the period.

Stickball (Herb 2.2)

A street version of baseball, typically played with a broom handle and a rubber ball.

Pennant flying over Yankee stadium (Herb 2.2)

A pennant, or commemorative flag, was typically given to the championship team of the current season in either the National or American League. Herb imagines the Yankees winning the American League pennant for "the next two-hundred years."

Marlboro Country (Herb 2.2)

One of the ad campaigns for Marlboro cigarettes, featuring a rugged cowboy known as "the Marlboro Man."

Sagebrush cologne (Herb 2.2)

Sagebrush is a plant native to the American West. Sagebrush cologne, while probably not a real product, would be a fitting scent for any cowboy, including the Marlboro Man.

Rocky Mountains (Steffy 2.2)

The principal mountain range in the West of the United States, containing both the highest peaks in North America and the Continental Divide. Much of the range is protected by various National Parks and reserves.

Wilshire Blvd (Steffy 2.2)

A major east-west thoroughfare in Los Angeles.

Orphan Annie (Herb 2.3)

A comic strip character that later made the jump to theatre and film with the musical Annie, with well-known songs like "Tomorrow" and "Hard Knock Life." Annie was an orphan during the Great Depression who is adopted by a millionaire named Daddy Warbucks.

Jack Nicholson (Libby 2.3)

American actor known for his outsider roles, as well as for being part of counter culture and the New Hollywood movements. Best-known films of the era include *Easy Rider* (1969), *Five Easy Pieces* (1970), *Chinatown* (1974) and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975).

James Caan (Libby 2.3)

American actor best known for his role in *The Godfather* (1972) as the short-tempered Sonny Corleone, for which he was nominated for an Oscar.

Candice Bergen (Libby 2.3)

American actress best known for playing the lead role in the sitcom *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998). Film work from the 1970s include *The Sand Pebbles* (1966), *Carnal Knowledge* (1971) and *Starting Over* (1979), for which she received Golden Globe and Oscar nominations.

Suzanne Pleshette (Libby 2.3)

American actress best known for Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) and for her role as Emily Hartley on *The Bob Newhart Show* from 1972-1978.

"Director who directed Jaws" (Libby 2.3)

Steven Spielberg, long considered one of the greatest directors of all time, who shot to stardom with his film *Jaws* in 1975. *Jaws* is considered to be the first summer blockbuster, and was the highest grossing film of all time until *Star Wars* in 1977, directed by Spielberg's close friend George Lucas. These two directors, along with Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Michael Cimino and Brian de Palma, were the vanguard of the "New Hollywood" movement in the 1970s. Spielberg is also known for his films *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park* and the Indiana Jones films, and has won the Best Director Oscar twice, for *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*.

Beverly Hills, 11704 Benedict Canyon (Libby 2.3)

An address and neighborhood populated mostly by socialites and celebrities.

A Touch Of Class (Libby 2.3)

A 1973 British romantic comedy film, about a couple having an affair who begin to fall in love with each other, starring George Segal and Glenda Jackson.

Los Angeles Academy of Dramatic Arts (Libby 2.3)

The American Academy of Dramatic Arts, a two-year performing arts conservatory dedicated to training actors, with locations in both LA and NYC.

George Segal (Libby 2.3)

American actor best known for *A Touch of Class* (1973), for which he won a Golden Globe and for the film version of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* (1966), for which he was nominated for an Oscar.

Mount Hebron Cemetery (Libby 2.3)

A Jewish cemetery in Queens, NYC.

Time Magazine (Herb 2.3)

An American news magazine in circulation since 1923, that continues to have the highest circulation of a news magazine to this day.

Fruitcake (Libby 2.3)

A cake made of chopped fruits and nuts, though in this case, a derogatory term for a crazy person.

Nate and Al's (Herb 2.4)

A Beverly Hills delicatessen founded in 1945 and still around today.

Dodger Stadium (Herb 2.4)

A baseball park built in 1962 in the Elysian Park neighborhood of Los Angeles and home to the LA Dodgers.

Groucho Marx (and his letters to his son) (Libby 2.4)

American actor and comedian who, along with his four brothers, made up the comedy/filmmaking team the Marx Brothers. Groucho's distinctive comedic delivery and appearance, including oversize glasses and greasepaint moustache, carried over from his days as a vaudeville performer. Groucho was known for his quick wit, which he indulged in numerous letters to various personalities and family members, many of which are available to read today.

French Riviera (Libby 2.4)

The region of Southern France that lies along the Mediterranean. Known for its great beauty and as a spot for the rich and famous to spend leisure time.

Study Guide Questions: *I Oughta Be In Pictures*

By Anna Miles

- 1.) **Symbolism:** Steffy claims Herb's three fruit trees, the lemon tree, the orange tree, and the tree that only grows pits stand for the family he left behind. Do you agree with Steffy's assessment? What else might these trees symbolize?
- 2.) **Symbolism and Character:** When Libby comes, she paints and cleans her father's house, making it brighter and cheerier. To what extent is this a metaphor for Libby's relationship to her father? How does Herb's house at the beginning of the play represent his state of mind then, versus his house and state of mind at the end?
- 3.) **Character:** How do each of the three characters change over the course of the play? What are they like at the beginning versus how they are at the end? To what extent do the other characters affect each others' character arcs?
- 4.) **Story:** Why do you think Neil Simon chose to make Herb a writer in the entertainment industry, and why make Libby an aspiring actress? What is the significance of show business in this story? Why is it important that the two main characters want to succeed in show business?
- 5.) **Setting:** Libby comes to Hollywood from Brooklyn- what is the narrative significance of the Hollywood setting, and the Brooklyn back story?
- 6.) **Context:** What other stories (books, movies, TV shows, plays, etc) do you know that are about fathers and daughters? Compare and contrast these stories to *I Oughta Be In Pictures*.

Study Guide Questions: Engage With the Play

By Anna Miles

Take charge of your theatre-going experience and make it your own by asking yourself questions before, during, and after watching a play.

Questions to ask before the play:

If you **HAVE** read the play:

How did you envision the set, or the visual world of the play, while reading?

How did you imagine the characters looked while reading the play?

What themes did you notice repeating throughout the play?

What images jumped out at you while reading the play?

How would you describe the central theme of the play in one sentence?

If you **HAVEN'T** read the play:

Do you know anything about the play? If so, what do you know?

In General:

When you think about "theatre," what impressions come to mind? What does "theatre" mean to you?

What do you expect your experience to be when you watch a play? Do you expect to be bored? Excited? Engaged? Curious? Angry? Tired?

Questions to ask after the play:

If you **READ THE PLAY BEFORE SEEING IT:**

How did the production set differ from what you had imagined while reading the play? How was it similar? How did these changes affect your understanding of the story?

Did the characters look different from how you envisioned them looking while reading the play? Did they sound different? Act differently? How did these changes affect your understanding and

opinion of each character? How did these changes affect your understanding of the overall story?

How did the themes and images you noticed while reading translate to performance? Did the same themes and images jump out at you? Did you notice new ones?

Did this particular production seem to have the same central theme, or a different central theme from the one you discovered while reading? What elements of the staging, acting, or design helped convey the theme?

Did they play gain or lose anything in performance? Did you enjoy reading it more, or watching it?

If you **DIDN'T READ THE PLAY BEFORE SEEING IT:**

How did the play live up to your expectations? Did it turn out the way you thought it would? Was your knowledge of the play correct?

Were you able to follow the story?

Which part of the story did you most respond to? What themes and images jumped out at you?

Which character did you most relate to? Why?

In General:

How did this production change or confirm your original impressions of "theatre"?

How did your experience watching the play differ from how you expected it would go?

In your own words, how would you summarize the plot of the play? How is the plot different from the story, or the thematic implications, in the play?

Did you feel the story was relevant to your life? How and why?

Did you feel the story said something about our society, or about the world at large? If so, what?

Do you feel this story is an important one to tell and keep telling? How and why?

What kind of stories do you most respond to?

Theatre Etiquette

- Arrive at the theater on time.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Turn off your cell phone. Do not speak on the phone or text during the performance.
- Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to the show about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.
- Don't speak during the performance unless you are encouraged by the performers to participate.
- Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in musical theater is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
- Do not take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and can cause a mishap. It can also be a violation of an actor's contract.
- Remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, wait for an appropriate break in the show. It is rude to get up in the middle of a quiet moment.
- Do not eat or drink in the theater.
- Do not put your feet up on the seats or balcony and do not kick the seat in front of you.
- Don't put or throw anything on the stage.
- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when it is appropriate during the performance.
- Do applaud when the performance is over... this tells the performers and crew that you appreciate their work.
- Stand and applaud if you really thought the show was great (a standing ovation).
- Do not whistle, stomp your feet, or scream out to the performers except for a Bravo or Brava.

Additional Study Material

Rewrites: A Memoir by Neil Simon

"I Oughta Be In Pictures": 1982 Film

The Collected Plays of Neil Simon

New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction by Geoff King

The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s by Thomas Elsaesser (Editor), Noel King (Editor), Alexander Horwath (Editor)