



Plays and Pinot: Neighbourhood Watch

Synopsis

Things are not right on The Bluebell Hill Development. Theft, petty crime, vandalism, all the ills of modern suburban existence are on the increase. Newcomers Martin and his sister Hilda are the crime wave's latest victims and resolve to take action. After all, the law of the land, all that's right and proper and even God Himself are surely on their side. But what starts out as a well-intentioned neighbourhood watch scheme soon develops into something altogether more sinister. Alan Ayckbourn's hilarious cautionary tale of the dangers of taking the law into your own hands is his seventy fifth play.

About the Playwright

Alan Ayckbourn, in full Sir Alan Ayckbourn, (born April 12, 1939, London, England), is a successful and prolific British playwright, whose works—mostly farces and comedies—deal with marital and class conflicts and point out the fears and weaknesses of the English lower-middle class. He wrote more than 80 plays and other entertainments, most of which were first staged at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough, Yorkshire, England. At age 15 Ayckbourn acted in school productions of William Shakespeare, and he began his professional acting career with the Stephen Joseph Company in Scarborough. When Ayckbourn wanted better roles to play, Joseph told him to write a part for himself in a play that the company would mount if it had merit. Ayckbourn produced his earliest plays in 1959–61 under the pseudonym Roland Allen. His plays—many of which were performed years before they were published—included *Relatively Speaking* (1968), *Mixed Doubles: An Entertainment on Marriage* (1970), *How the Other Half Loves* (1971), the trilogy *The Norman Conquests* (1973), *Absurd Person Singular* (1974), *Intimate Exchanges* (1985), *Mr. A's Amazing Maze Plays* (1989), *Body Language* (1990), *Invisible Friends* (1991), *Communicating Doors* (1995), *Comic Potential* (1999), *The Boy Who Fell into a Book* (2000), and the trilogy *Damsels in Distress* (2002). In 2002 he published a work of advice and instruction for aspiring playwrights and directors, *The Crafty Art of Playmaking*. After suffering a stroke in 2006, Ayckbourn limited his activities, though he soon resumed writing. In 2009 he stepped down as artistic director of the Stephen Joseph Theatre, a post he had held since 1972. He later directed (2014) a musical version of *The Boy Who Fell into a Book*. His numerous honours include Laurence Olivier (2009) and Tony (2010) awards for lifetime achievement. Ayckbourn was knighted in 1997.

Characters

Martin and Hilda

Devoutly Christian siblings who move into a nice, middle-class area fringed by a run-down estate. They are middle-aged Christians, both unmarried, utterly respectable, and sex never seems to have played a part in either of their lives.

Dorothy

Daily Mail reader, nosy, gossipy



Rod

Former security officer who positively revels in his role as a vigilante

Gareth

Cuckolded Welsh engineer who delights in making instruments of torture and punishment

Amy

Amy married to Gareth. Dyed red hair, short dresses, dangerous eyes, loose tongue and looser cannon

Luther

Thirties, married to Magda. A bully

Magda

Married to Luther, over emotional

References: *Britannica.com*