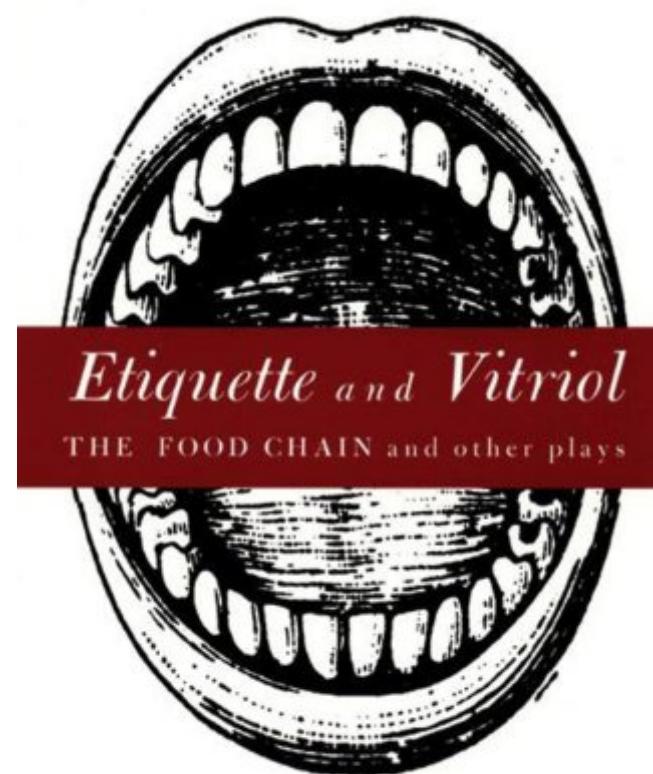


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Etiquette And Vitriol: The Food Chain And Other Plays



N I C K Y S I L V E R



Synopsis

This collection brings together two of Silver's highly acclaimed and successful works, the long-running Off Broadway hit The Food Chain and Pterodactyls, with two of his earlier works, Fat Men in Skirts and Free Will and Wanton Lust.

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Customer Reviews

Great book!

I wanted to love this skirt and I do. I bought two and they far exceeded my expectations. Make sure you use their measurement chart and not 's because they are sized by the length. Soooo happy with this purchase.

Here are some of silver's early works that got him where he is today....and some that didn't. He admits that he is most known for 'the food chain' and 'pterodactyls' but he also included 'free will and wanton lust' and 'fat men in skirts.' All of the plays are well written and entertaining in the same

envelope pushing way. Some are more successful than others. There's a reason he's most known for 'the food chain' as it's the most easily digestible piece of frivolity here. The other plays come with some baggage that will affect the ability for audiences to handle them. 'Pterodactyls' is about the breaking down of a yuppie family through absurdism and magical realism. While the play is knowing and wry about its subject, the subject of aids seems to be merely a means to an end for a certain part of the family. When discussing the play in the foreword, he mentions that he includes the ailment as means to talk about those who have been ignored and marginalized by society. I wouldn't say he accomplishes that exactly. He brought that up because he was once asked in a talk back whether the play is about aids. He was rather defensive, in my opinion, saying his play is about a lot of things and it's very limiting to think that way. So basically, the answer is no. 'Free will and wanton lust' is also about a fractured family and the reasons for it. It's meant to be an exercise in violent juxtaposition with the worlds of coward and Brecht. This play plays really gets into the mind of the characters' in the second act. The first two scenes are 9 & 1/2 page monologues. In addition, the play ends in a uniquely demented silver fashion. 'Fat men in skirts' is about a family going insane after surviving a plane crash and resorting to cannibalism to survive. It's alternately ruthless and arcaneously innocent, if that makes sense. It could be the funniest play in the collection, but is also the most polarizing. All in all, a very solid collection of Nicky Silver's voice and style. Every one of his plays are distinctive and very similar. To him, the element of shock is but one tool he can use to draw an audience in. To some audiences, that's enough to make them run away. Humor runs throughout his plays, but shock is the glue that holds them together. Once you know that, the marathon monologues become second nature instead of intimidating and you look for the themes.

This collection of plays has the ability to satisfy both the comic and tragic needs of any dramatic reader. Silver's ability to write dark comedy is perhaps unparalleled by any living playwright. He has the skill to smoothly draw the reader into an entertaining story, and then to slowly put the reader off-guard until you find yourself wrapped up in the middle of a very dark narrative. Silver uses many different theatrical approaches in the collection. Most of his plays are a mix of dialogue and monologue, and he often takes modernist perspectives of staging. In any given play he will engage two opposing dramatic styles -- such as Noel Coward v. Berthold Brecht in Free Will and Wanton Lust -- to accentuate his message. The playwright's language flows easily and the dialogue is smooth. While some characters at times appear to have a forced three-dimensionality, the reader feels that Silver is doing this on purpose. The greatest benefit of Silver's gift is that, through comedy and the guise of comedy, he is able to present otherwise difficult subjects to us, such as deeper

meanings of love and hate, loneliness, self-denial, and spiritual needs. Recommended for all theatre fans.

When I was a theatre student I rarely found plays that excited me to actually want to read, direct, or act in. I was on a crusade one year buying script after script after script. Usually I would be bored and put them down after the first scene. When I picked up *Etiquette and Vitriol* I think I almost died. Here was a gay playwright who didn't write your normal "I'm ok and I'm gay" play. He writes about the deconstruction of families and relationships. He has an amazing ability to give you something so horribly disgusting and then to make you laugh at it. Like in *FAT MEN IN SKIRTS* which is a dark comedy about a mother and son who are trapped on a desert island and their struggles to survive and their inability to acclimate back to civilized culture. At the end of the first act the mother is raped by the son and in the back ground you here *Bali Hai* from *SOUTH PACIFIC*, if you get the reference of the song there is almost no way you can stop from laughing but then you realize what you are laughing at. That is the brilliance of his writing. I highly recommend all of his works!

Nicky Silver's work will in time be noticed by the masses. For now, his plays will intrigue and entertain the relatively small number of people that pays allegiance to them. *Etiquette and Vitriol* is a well-shaped, fully engaging product. And it's funny. Extremely. It's hillarious really. And textured and smart. The work brings in characters of all sizes, and plants them together upon the stage, focusing on relationships -- familial, social, sexual... Each of the plays is hardly cluttered however. We are given a few figures to work with and thus these figures must be and are quite complex. They carry with them a certain authenticity often unrealized by many a playwright. Silver's work is impressive and sure to make jealous any aspiring artist. Buy the book. You'll love it.

if you buy no other anthology this year...you must own this one. nicky silver remains one of the american theatre's funniest, smartest, most exciting writers. if you like your comedy served up with the occassional gut-punch, you can't go wrong. exciting, viscerally engaging, challenging...i can't say enough. this is a collection of plays bound to endure.

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