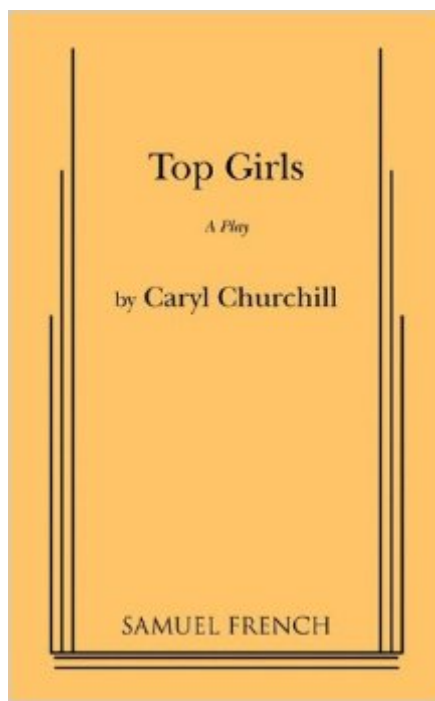


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Top Girls



Synopsis

Serious Comedy / Castin: 7f. with doubling / Ints. Marlene has been promoted to managing director of a London employment agency and is celebrating. The symbolic luncheon is attended by women in legend or history who offer perspectives on maternity and ambition. In a time warp, these ladies are also her co workers, clients and relatives. Marlene, like her famous guests, has had to pay a price to ascend from proletarian roots to the executive suite: she has become, figuratively speaking, a male oppressor and even coaches female clients on adopting odious male traits. Marlene has also abandoned her illegitimate and dull witted daughter. Her emotional and sexual life has become as barren as Lady Macbeth's. "A blistering yet sympathetic look at women who achieve success by adopting the worse traits of self made men.... Truly original." N.Y. Times. "Very funny and provocative.... A mind lifting experience." N.Y. Post.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Caryl Churchill, Top Girls (Methuen, 1982)I almost stopped reading this play altogether at the conclusion of the first scene. I ended up glad I continued on, but really, there would have been so many better ways to handle that first scene. Putting it somewhere else in the play, for example.Top Girls concerns Marlene, a woman just promoted to the head of her branch office of the Top Girls temp agency. She was promoted over a man, and in celebration, she imagines for herself a lavish dinner party, the guests for which are a number of notable historic women. This is understandable, and having other players in the play playing guests whose personalities are mirrored in their other

roles is clever. But, really, the scene takes up an entire quarter of the play's length, and the information you get in the scene that's actually relevant to the plot is summed up in the first sentence of this paragraph. (You don't find out about the second sentence until later.) There's a lot more going on in the play's remaining four scenes, much of which is quite important, but it's shuffled off for this massive dinner party. Once we get back into the real world, though, things get quite a bit more interesting. Marlene's niece Angie wants to run away from home and come live with Marlene, whom she sees as a great success, while Angie's mother, Joyce, is content to stay in the country eking out an existence and griping about everything possible. Angie's odd friend Kit is always hovering about in the background, being ominous. At Top Girls, life goes on, with the employees gossiping and interviewing potential workers. The play's final four scenes are very good stuff, with all sorts of insight into their characters and action that flows through the talkiness.

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