

A MAN'S HOME SYNOPSIS:

Inspired by Franz Kafka's unfinished novel, "The Castle", *A Man's Home* begins with the character of K, a man who is thrust into an unfamiliar world. He is told that he does not have permission to exist in this place and that he can only receive such permission from the local Castle. K spends the entire play (and novel) attempting to gain such permission. Along the way, however, he has romantic entanglements, gains employment and builds a semblance of a life. Since, however, he does not have permission to engage in such ways, he can never feel secure.

The play combines this basic narrative (Kafka's) with playful explorations of philosophy and techniques from vaudeville and the Yiddish Theatre. A constant side show, the play's landscape, much like the character's position, remains always tenuous. Into this world, the play interjects a mysterious figure who appears, at first, to have divine attributes. As the piece proceeds, we come to realize that this figure might, in fact, be the creator and as he, much like Kafka himself, dies of Tuberculosis, the world of the play comes crumbling around K.

An intellectually rigorous, stylistically ambitious and probing exploration of our relationships to our makers and our never ending search for meaning in an uncertain world.

K breathes deep and is thrust into the space.
 He looks into the darkness.
 Walks this way
 that way
 this way.
 His body sags.
 Makes his way to a space to rest.
 Lies down.
 As soon as his body hits the floor, #1 breathes
 deep and is thrust into the space. #1 is A
 VILLAGE RUFFIAN. Walks to K.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
 It is time.

K
 Hnnnuh?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
 It's time.

K
 (still coming out of sleep)
 For what?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
 For you
 to leave.

K
 But I have just arrived.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
 You cannot be here without permission.

K
 I have permission.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
 From whom?

#2 breathes in and is thrust into the
 space.

K
 (indicating #2)
 The landlord.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

The landlord cannot give permission.

K

Of course he can. It is his establishment, unless he is a liar.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

I lord over the land, but do not truly own it.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

See. This Village Ruffian told you so.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

This Inn belongs to the Castle.

K

There is a castle here?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Did you not spy its spires?

K

I entered and did not see anything but this place to rest my head.

So weary.

RUFFIAN grabs K by the arms and shows him
the audience.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

See, Spires!

K

(as though he is looking far away)

Ah, I don't know how I missed them.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Well now you know and you must obey its ordinances.

K

Ordinances?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

He don't got no papers.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Anyone who arrives here needs have a note or a memorandum or at least a letter of invitation from The Castle.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Yeah.

(beat)

Except me.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Then you must leave.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

You tellin' me what to do?

LANDLORD holds up a piece of paper.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

What is this?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Hey, that's mine!

RUFFIAN grabs the paper from LANDLORD.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Exactly. You may stay.

(beat, to K)

In this place, what is written is.

K

Is what?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Is

K

What?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Is what is.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I'll handle this.

You are nobody.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Without written correspondence.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Nobody.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

And if you are nobody there is no place for you as only somebodies need to rest their heads.

K
I assure you I have an invitation.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Assurances alone cannot confirm your purpose here.

K
Purpose?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Yeah, what is your purpose?

K
I ...
set things down.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Specifics.

K
On a page.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Better.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Still not enough.

K
So that others may read them.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Alright. Go on.

K
And know where they are going.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Just say it, my good man.

K
I
MAKE
MAPS!!

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Yes! That is what you do.

(beat)

Who cares.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

What the gentleman is trying to say is "*What are you?*"

K

I am a man.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

And I'm not?

Puts his dukes up.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

(tries to calm RUFFIAN, speaks to K)

That is plain.

But vague.

K

I am a maker of maps.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I ain't lost.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

(calms RUFFIAN but speaks to K)

True, but redundant.

(beat)

One more try and I think you'll have it.

K

I

AM

A

LAND SURVEYOR!

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

GOOD FOR YOU!

(beat)

This land has no need for a surveyor.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

(smiles)

Go away.

K
But I was summoned.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and LANDLORD
Proof.

...

K
Call them.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Them?

K
It.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
It?

K
The Castle.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
One does not call The Castle.

RUFFIAN
Yeah.

K
One does not or you do not for you do not have the proper authority and need someone with a bit more stature to reach its walls?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Where's your phone?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
We are just a poor Inn and do not have a phone.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Oh! A Phone!

VILLAGE RUFFIAN grabs the VI LANDLORD and thrusts him into the air.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD picks up a phone, made of paper, and hands it to the VILLAGE RUFFIAN.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Hello and please forgive me for disturbing you so late in the evening. I am not calling on my own behalf but on behalf of another who did not know the number and as such consider my voice his and if you have a complaint about the hour his ears should receive it not mine for—

Yes, a man who claims he has been summoned.

(beat)

Land Surveying.

(pause)

Very well.

Please accept my regrets and express them to the proper—

(gives the phone to LANDLORD who puts it in his pocket)

There ain't no summons.

K, who has returned to his resting spot during the above exchange, suddenly speaks as though channeling.

K

My development was a simple one. While contented I wanted to be discontented and with all the means that my time and tradition gave me, I managed to plunge into discontent and then wanted to turn back again.

RUFFIAN AND LANDLORD notice K is lying down and approach him as though about to attack.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Bum.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Vagrant.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Liar.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Fibber.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Nobody!

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

(into it now)

NOBODY!!

K

And so I decided to pretend I was not who I was when I was there.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I will pull his limbs.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

And I his feet.

K

Strange how make believe if engaged in systematically enough can change dis-ease into acceptance.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I will rattle his torso.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

And I his teeth.

K

(still channeling)

I deliberately cultivated a facial tic, for instance.

K does a facial tic.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Look at him, so scared.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Not to mention frightened.

K

And crossed my arms behind my head.

K stands up, facial tic going and his arms swiftly bent behind his head.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

I'm not touching him.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Don't be a ninny.

K

All of this while crossing the path.

K starts spinning about, wild.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

He might have rabies.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Oh.

K
A repulsively childish but successful game.

They back away.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Now's our chance!

K stops and smiles, triumphant.

K
If it is possible so to force misfortune upon oneself, it is possible to force anything upon oneself.

They pounce on him.

K opens up, jumps to his feet as though about to fight back. THE MEN stand back.

K
But my nature cannot make it so.

K, as though not of his own accord, flops to the ground.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
him three times.

K
Steadfastness. I don't want to pursue any particular course, I want to change my place in the world entirely, which actually means that I want to go to another planet. It would be enough if I could consider the spot on which I sit as some other spot. It would be enough if I could exist alongside myself.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
both lift their feet high to give the climactic kick.
The phone rings.
Rings.
Rings.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Answer it.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
It is for you.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
It is your inn.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
You were the last to make a call.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

And so, I would be the last to get one.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

It could be your father.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Oh.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN drops his foot and picks up the telephone.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Yes?

I see.

An error?

Of communication or judgment?

Neither?

Then, whose error was it—

Mine?

But

No

But

No

Yes, the error was mine.

Thank you.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN leans into the VILLAGE INN LANDLORD whose foot is still in the air and does a whispering cartoon thing.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

You don't say!

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD puts his foot down.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Mr. Land Surveyor, welcome to the village.

They hold out their hands and lift him.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Now sir, do you still wish to sleep?

K

I may wish to, but I cannot, for the castle Authorities are waiting.