



## Lost in Yonkers (Drama, Plume)

By Neil Simon

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**Lost in Yonkers (Drama, Plume) By Neil Simon**

**Neil Simon's inimitable play about the trials and tribulations that test families – winner of the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for Drama**

What happens to children in the absence of love? That is the question that lies at the heart of this funny and heartrending play by one of America's most acclaimed and beloved playwrights. Debuting at the Richard Rodgers Theatre in 1990, *Lost in Yonkers* went on to win four Tony Awards, including Best Play, as well as the Pulitzer Prize, and tells the moving drama about the cruelties and painful memories that scar a family.

It is New York, 1942. After the death of their mother, two young brothers are sent to stay with their formidable grandmother for the longest ten months of their lives. Grandmother Kurnitz is a one-woman German front—a refugee and a widow who has steeled her heart against the world. Her coldness and intolerance have crippled her own children: the boys' father has no self-esteem . . . their Aunt Gert has an embarrassing speech impediment . . . their Uncle Louie is a small-time gangster . . . and their Aunt Bella has the mentality of a child. But it is Bella's hunger for affection and her refusal to be denied love that saves the boys—and that leads to an unforgettable, wrenching confrontation with her mother. Filled with laughter, tears, and insight, *Lost in Yonkers* is yet another heartwarming testament to Neil Simon's talent.

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# **Lost in Yonkers (Drama, Plume)**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Simon's 1991 Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning play about two young boys who are forced to live for a year with their domineering, ill-tempered grandmother while their father takes a job in another state is beautifully realized by the L.A. Theatre Works cast. Like most of Simon's works, this one features an eccentric cast of characters. Listeners meet Aunt Gert (played by Gia Carides), whose voice frequently switches into a wheeze midsentence, and Uncle Louie (played by Dan Castellaneta), a Bogart-like gangster. This production realizes Simon's trademark mix of comedy and drama: the one-liners are hilarious, but the characters' sad, dysfunctional relationships are poignant. The compassionate, three-dimensional performances, combined with Simon's nuanced writing and authentic rendering of 1940s speech, make the listener fully believe in these realistic, complex characters. Standout performers include Roxanne Hart as the boys' kindhearted but nervous Aunt Bella and Barbara Bain as Grandma Kurnitz, whose tough, coldhearted exterior is a reaction to a lifetime of devastating pain and loss. Also excellent are Ben Diskin and Kenneth Schmidt as the young boys. At first lonely and miserable, fearing and hating their stern grandmother, they gradually come to respect and understand her. Based on the Random House hardcover.

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From School Library Journal

YA-- An insightful drama about one woman's drive and its emotional toll on her and her family. Grandma Kurnitz has endured many crises, ranging from a harsh childhood in Germany to being a young widow with six children in a foreign country. From her life she learned to be strong, hard, and cold, and this is the lesson she tries to instill in her four remaining children. While her two teenage grandsons are in her care, the three learn the importance of being loved and loving, and the difference between living and surviving. The themes of family ties and the search for love should strike a responsive chord with many young adults.

*Patricia A. Long, R.E. Lee High School, Springfield*

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### Review

"Neil Simon has done it again, with a craftsmanship and skill probably unmatched in the contemporary English-speaking theater." —Clive Barnes, *New York Post*

"If Broadway ever erects a monument to a patron saint of laughter, Neil Simon will have to be it."  
—*Time Magazine*

### Users Review

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**Ronald Jackson:**

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**Joseph Davis:**

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