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We the Family

George F. Walker

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#4517686 in Books 2016-05-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.10 x .60 x 5.401, .0 #File Name: 0889229821128 pages | File size: 37.Mb

George F. Walker : We the Family before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised We the Family:

Canada's master playwright applies his trademark black humour and incredibly crisp dialogue to the family and multiculturalism. We the Family follows the ripple effects within two culturally and racially divergent families when

their children wed. We the Family's list of characters reads like an ethnic joke, which, indeed, it is, at least in part: the son of the main characters, David and Lizzie Kaplan, a Jewish-Irish Catholic mixed marriage, marries the daughter of Jenny Lee, a Chinese Canadian widow. There's also a Russian mistress, a Palestinian lover, and a glamorous, possibly fraudulent Italian psychologist, while offstage Pakistani terrorists kidnap the also-offstage honeymooning couple, then sell them to Sicilian gangsters who sell them to Russian gangsters, one of whom turns out to be the father of the Russian mistress (another family). By the end of the play, Walker has deconstructed the dysfunctional Kaplan and Lee families and family love as well. Through the plays pervading treachery, with family members and lovers betraying each other in horrifying ways, he satirizes the hypocrisy of expounding family values while behaving in viciously selfish and self-centred ways. These hyphenated Canadians certainly aren't nice, and no amount of sweet-and-sour matzah balls (which the Kaplan matriarch serves at the multicultural wedding reception) can hide the nasty taste.

About the Author George F. Walker has been one of Canada's most prolific and popular playwrights since his career in theater began in the early 1970s. His first play, *The Prince of Naples*, premiered in 1972 at the newly opened Factory Theatre, a company that continues to produce his work. Since that time, he has written more than twenty plays and has created screenplays for several award-winning Canadian television series. Part Kafka, part Lewis Carroll, Walker's distinctive, gritty, fast-paced comedies satirize the selfishness, greed, and aggression of contemporary urban culture. Among his best-known plays are *Gossip* (1977); *Zastrozzi, the Master of Discipline* (1977); *Criminals in Love* (1984); *Better Living* (1986); *Nothing Sacred* (1988); *Love and Anger*