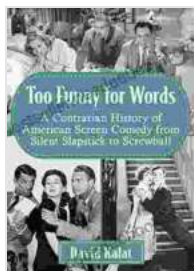


The Contrarian History of American Screen Comedy: From Silent Slapstick to Screwball



Too Funny for Words: A Contrarian History of American Screen Comedy from Silent Slapstick to Screwball

by David Kalat

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Print length : 260 pages



American screen comedy has a long and storied history, dating back to the silent era. In its early days, comedy was largely physical, with slapstick routines and pratfalls dominating the screen. However, as the industry matured, so too did its comedic sensibilities. By the 1930s, screwball comedy had emerged as a popular genre, characterized by its fast-paced dialogue, witty banter, and zany characters.

Silent Slapstick

The silent era of American cinema was a golden age for slapstick comedy. Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Laurel and Hardy were among the most popular and influential comedians of the time. Their films were filled with physical humor, often involving pratfalls, pie fights, and other forms of physical mayhem. Slapstick comedy was a popular form of entertainment

because it was accessible to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. It didn't require any knowledge of language or culture, and it could be enjoyed by people from all walks of life.

Screwball Comedy

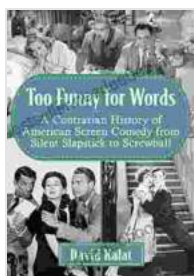
Screwball comedy emerged in the 1930s as a reaction to the Great Depression. These films were characterized by their fast-paced dialogue, witty banter, and zany characters. Screwball comedies often featured strong female characters who were more than a match for their male counterparts. Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant were two of the most popular screwball comedy stars. Their films were known for their hilarious dialogue and witty repartee. Screwball comedy was a popular form of entertainment because it offered audiences a much-needed escape from the hardships of the Great Depression.

The Evolution of American Screen Comedy

American screen comedy has continued to evolve over the years. In the 1940s, musicals and romantic comedies became popular. In the 1950s, television began to compete with film for audience attention, and comedy began to take on a more satirical edge. In the 1960s, the counterculture movement influenced comedy, and films like *The Graduate* and *MASH* reflected the changing social and political landscape. In the 1970s, comedy became more raunchy and adult-oriented, with films like *Animal House* and *Caddyshack* pushing the boundaries of what was considered acceptable.

American screen comedy has a long and rich history. From the silent slapstick of Charlie Chaplin to the screwball comedies of Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant, American comedy has always reflected the changing social and cultural landscape. Today, comedy continues to

evolve, with new genres and styles emerging all the time. However, one thing remains constant: comedy's ability to make us laugh.



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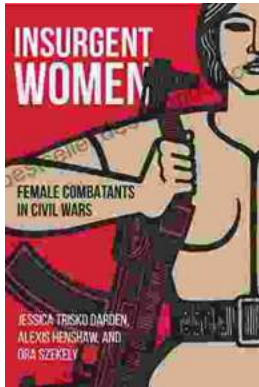
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