

HEAVEN CAN WAIT

A Comedy/Fantasy by Harry Segall

(The play on which the motion picture *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* was Based)

Jordan is checking passengers who are to depart in an airplane for the hereafter. The routine is interrupted by the arrival of Joe Pendleton, a prizefighter who refuses to admit he is dead and induces Jordan to look up in the "records," which reveal that Joe is not scheduled to arrive for another sixty years! But, as Joe strats to return to earth to continue his fighting, word reached Heaven that Max Levine, joe's manager, thinking he had been killed, had Joe's body creamted, and Joe has no body to return to. Jordan promises to find Joe another body and is informed that the wealthy jonathan Fransworth is about to be murdered by his wife, Julia Farnsworth. So Joe suddenly finds himself in the home of the multi-millionaire financier, visible to the audience as Joe, but apparently as Farnsworth to Mrs. Farnsworth and the public. The comedy begins when Joe, as Farnsworth, unaccountably goes into training as a fighter. In addition, "Farnsworth" decides to share his wealth and right the wrongs done by the original Farnsworth to charming Bette Logan's father. Bette, having despised Fransworth, finds herself falling in love with him and he with her. Just as Joe (still in Farnsworth's body) is about to get a chance to become a prize fighter again, Jordan reports that the real (and deceased) Farnsworth does not approve of Joe's treatment of his body (and money) and is raising a fuss in the Hereafter. While deciding on another body for Joe, Jordan receives a flash that champion boxer, K.O. Murdock, has been mysteriously shot in the middle of a boxing match. As K.O is about to be counted out, Jordan transfers Joe's spirit into the body of K.O. in time to have K.O remain champion. There are still problems to be straightened out when Joe really becomes Murdock and loses memory of his previous existence -- including Bette. Fortunately, Joe and Bette meet and fall in love again -- and Jordan is free to head to the Hereafter, his earthly task accomplished.

CHARACTER SUMMARY

JOE PENDELTON Male, 20s

Main character

Key characteristics: Endearing, Kin-hearted, Jovial. An ambitious boxer

Key relationships: Joradn, Max, Bette, and Messenger 7013

Joe needs to convey a soft side and an ability to deliver comedy in an apparently accidental fashion. When converted to K.O. Murdock at the end of the play, there must be a clear difference in voice and physicality, while retaining Joe's "soul."

JORDAN Male or Female Indeterminate age, but appears older than Joe

Joe's Heavenly guide throughout

Key characteristics: Wise, level-headed, kind, and patient yet obviously a powerful figure in Heaven.

Key relationships: Relationship with Joe is platonic and respectful (in both directions), yet Jordan is in charge. Relationship with Messenger 7013 is that of a sterner boss.

MAX LEVENE Male 40's or 50's

Joe's boxing trainer and loyal friend

Key characteristics: Dedicated friend of Joe's since he was a boy and experienced trainer. Max is not the wisest of men but is a delightful chap

Key Relationship: Joe and Max have formed a bond where they trust one other more than anyone else.

TONY ABBOTT Male 30s

Farnsworth's financial secretary

Key characteristics: Suave and charming on the outside. His true nature: dastardly, wily throughout, untrustworthy, Highly intelligent and devious. He is the villain of the piece.

Key Relationship: Julia Farnsworth Though he professes love for her, he is primarily interested in the money she will inherit after her husband's death.

MESSENGER 7013 Male or Female Any age

An angel new to heaven and new to their job

Key characteristics: Incompetent, but eager to please. Accidentally clutzy, reluctant to admit mistakes, nervous. Not unkind or uncaring, but concerned about how others view them

SLOAN Male or Female Any age

More Experienced Angel who runs interference between Messenger 7013 and Jordan

Key Characteristics: Keen, accurate, angel of few words

BETTE LOGAN Female 20s

A plucky, lovely, genuine young woman whose father's life and business is being unfairly ruined by Farnsworth

Key characteristics: Assertive. A forthright though sweet girl who will do everything to see that her father is treated fairly. There must be a clear transition from hating Farnsworth through to loving him. There must also be a very immediate and plausible connection between Bette and Joe.

JULIA FARNSWORTH Female 30s

Farnsworth's wife in love with Abbo

Key characteristics: Elegant and beautiful, with an entrenched dislike for her husband

Oppressed. She loves Tony Abbott and is smitten by his charms. Not an evil lady at heart yet she does undertake evil acts due to her circumstance

MRS AMES Female 40s +
Housekeeper at the Farnsworth residence

Key characteristics: Matriarchal and a little superior. The long-serving housekeeper who keeps herself subservient within reason. A proud lady who does not suffer fools gladly.

INSPECTOR WILLIAMS Male or Female Any age
Inspecting Farnsworth's death

Key characteristics: Serious. Officious to a fault. Over the top and lacking imagination. Possibly somewhat bumbling.

LEFTY Male 40s or 50s
Rival boxing trainer to Max

Key characteristics: Shifty, Gritty, Crude. Unlike Max, Lefty does not really care about anyone other than himself and the amount of cash in his pocket. Corrupt and not particularly nice especially since he tried to get K.O.Murdock to throw his fight, illegally. Low class cockiness.

ADDITIONAL ROLES

DOCTOR Male 50s
Inspects Joe as K.O.Murdock after the fight

PLAINCLOTHESMAN Male or Female 30s
Policeman supporting Inspector Williams

WORKMEN Male or Female 30s to 50s
Deliver gym equipment to the Farnsworth mansion

1st ESCORT

Worker in heaven at the beginning of the play

2nd ESCORT

Worker in heaven at the beginning of the play

MANSFIELD Male 60s

Butler at the Farnsworth Residence. Works closely with Mrs. Ames. Non-speaking role with visual comedy.

ANNIE teens to 20s

Maid under the leadership of Mrs Ames

SUSIE 20s to 30s

Maid under the leadership of Mrs Ames

NURSE

Looks after Jonathan Farnsworth (who is in poor health). Non-speaking part

Additional Ensemble Roles include:

Passengers, reporters, photographers, fans, trainers, messengers, etc.