



## **The Dining Room – Foxcroft School**

Everyone has a special place that holds their highest highs and lowest lows. Foxcroft's The Dining Room showcases this: a show that, through passionate acting and attention to detail, shares how one room can impact the lives of so many through small, emotional interactions throughout history.

The Dining Room is a show written by A.R. Gurney. Through small scenes (called vignettes), it recounts the culture of upper-middle-class Protestants throughout history and their differing relationships with the dining room. With 52 characters split between the cast of 13 Foxcroft thespians, the show is jam-packed with heart and witty humor.

Anna Carey is incredibly versatile as she plays her five essential characters. From an ambitious but regretful housemaid to a flirtatious wife and a troubled daughter looking for shelter, she portrays many characters realistically and accurately. For instance, while cheating on her husband at her daughter's birthday party, she switches from her bright, cheery parenting tone to a very different tone when sidebarring with the other man. However, soon before that scene, she plays a more somber role as Aggie, a maid who has to come clean to the house's son that she is moving away. Her sincere emotion as she expresses her hopes and dreams to the boy who doesn't want anything to change is heartbreaking. Anila Schmidt didn't have much of the same chances with her roles simply because they were more similar. However, her comedic timing is a standout in this show. As the architect, her facial expressions, combined with her earnest delivery and annoyance towards the idea of the dining room, contrasted with her impromptu therapy session, fit in so much character growth into a few seconds, blinking will miss it.

The show is very purposeful in every aspect of its titular dining room, from floors that take in the eye's gaze to a bare-bone frame that allows the room to fit into any time frame, from the early 1900s to the modern day. The set designer, Manabi Kono, made the room to make it adjustable to the time period, using props organized by Sarah Baker and ZoraNelle Broussard. Sarah and ZoraNelle made sure to use their differing time period-specific research, collecting different plates and other forms of silverware to not only be used in scene but also to be placed on the shelves on the back of the set, helping identify the show's time period. Another easy way to determine the time period was through the costumes designed by Anila Schmidt. She chose wildly different costumes for different characters, ranging from traditional dresses to 70s and 80s flowery dresses to, finally, modern-day wear. These specific choices allowed the show to showcase a lot of detail.

The Foxcroft school really makes this play all about a normal dining room very special. It reminds me that, I too grew up in a place just like this.