

# Cinema Series Collado Villalba



**Title:** You Can't Take it with You

**Directed & Produced by** Frank Capra, based on a play by George S. Kaufman & Moss Hart.

**Screenplay by** Robert Riskin.

**Starring:** James Stewart, Jean Arthur, Lionel Barrymore, Edward Arnold, Mischa Auer, Ann Miller, Spring Byington, Ward Bond

**Original Language:** English

**Running Time:** 126 minutes

**Country:** United States

**Release Date:** September 1st, 1938

## Summary

*The only normal person in a family of lunatics falls for his boss, who is a member of a rather snob and rich family. The huge difference between lifestyles and way of thinking of both families comes into play when her parents are invited to dinner with his, the party ending with the arrival of the Police and everyone getting arrested for anarchism.*



# About FRANK CAPRA



Capra met a golden age at Columbia in the 1930s and 1940s. He developed his most tender and tragicomic side and exalted values such as kindness, generosity, simplicity and love. And something essential: the pursuit of happiness. Society was increasingly

accelerating, becoming more dehumanized, that greedy giant called ambition sowing unhappiness everywhere. There was a lack of affection, solidarity, the simple gesture of doing something for someone just for the pleasure of injecting a little joy. Sincere smiles were missing, the enjoyment of small things. Exactly what has been happening in these crazy centuries and in our hyper-developed civilizations, in stark contrast to the under-developed ones. A theatre play provided an excellent base for one of the brightest comedies in history: "You can't take it with you" by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1937. In contrast to the reality of the American dream (which, as nice as it wanted to paint the picture in theory, in practice contributed to a competitive and materialistic society), the successful comic work, and the script adapted for Capra, pose a radical departure from the aforementioned deceptive dream.

Two parallel and opposite worlds are confronted: on the one hand, the opulent, snob, boring and greedy world of the upper middle class which plunges into a fierce capitalism system and on the other hand the simple, welcoming, relaxed and funny world belonging to the middle-class for which money is a factor disregarded as of scarce relevance, being replaced by spiritual wealth. In the end, the affluent come out as the poorest since they cling to a mirage which only offers emptiness and solitude in return. On the contrary, the economically poor are affluent in love, friendship and happiness. Although apparently "You Can't Take It with You" might seem to be just another one of Capra's epics of good and noble feelings, it offers far more elements for reflection than might be considered at first sight. To begin with, it aims not only to depict the traditional confrontation between the insignificance of the individual and the corruption of the great powers, traditionally claimed to be Capra's quintessential recurrent topic. Far from it, the view which is described is much more complex, as the genuinely American praise for individualism slowly turns into a sour sweet poem not only about the evils of capitalism, but above all, about America as an obsession, about the true identity of the American dream, thus bringing Capra close to the glorious tradition led by John Ford and King Vidor, whose contemporary advocates could be Michael Cimino and Francis F. Coppola. The film wonders about what has become of those big American ideals, the ones which inspired the Founding Fathers and attracted millions of hopeful immigrants, including Capra's own family. "You Can't Take It with You" is as much a funny and moving comedy as a heartfelt lament for that lost ideal, a subtle recollection of the moral degradation of society – easily transferable to our current times – where money and ostentation are the key codes signalling the crisis of values in our consumerist society.

**Translated into English by Julián Alonso Losada, Susana Caballero Pascual and Vania Lea Briceño, C2.2 students at EOI Collado Villalba.**