

Bringing Up Baby Film Summary

Bringing Up Baby by Howard Hawks

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Context

Bringing Up Baby is another of Howard Hawks's hilarious comedies. The day before David Huxley's marriage, as he tries to raise a million dollars for his museum, he finds out that he is going to receive a special bone to finish a dinosaur skeleton. Then he meets Susan Vance, and his entire life changes.

Susan decides that David is the man she's going to marry, and she goes about ensuring that it will happen. The two are actually in competition for the million dollars, since her aunt is the woman giving away the money. Finally, David ends up falling for Susan, after they hide her aunt's new leopard, Baby, and chase it through the forest.

Howard Hawks created some great classic movies, but he was little appreciated during his own time. He was nominated just once for an Oscar, and his peers and the critics largely overlooked his work. Hawks directed such films as *The Road to Glory* (1926), *Scarface* (1932), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *His Girl Friday* (1940) and *The Big Sleep* (1946). He also directed *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) and *Hatari!* (1962).

Cary Grant had roles in over 60 movies and was the main star in dozens of those films. *Bringing Up Baby* was one of Grant's most successful roles, and no discussion of his success would be complete without it. Grant starred in such films as *Once Upon a Honeymoon* (1942), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944), *The Bishop's Wife* (1947), *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949), *An Affair to Remember* (1957), *North by Northwest* (1959), *The Grass Is Greener* (1960), *Charade* (1963), *Father Goose* (1964), and *Walk Don't Run* (1966).

Katharine Hepburn was one of the most beloved actresses of all time. Although this was not one of Hepburn's first films, it is certainly one of her best. She made her name on the stage first and then starred in *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932) with John Barrymore, becoming instantly popular with the public. For years both her films and her relationships, such as the one she had with Spencer Tracy, kept the public intrigued with her work and her life.

Hilarious and fun, *Bringing Up Baby* wasn't considered Oscar material.



Summary and Analysis

Bringing Up Baby begins at a museum. Dr. David Huxley is up on a ladder trying to put together a large brontosaurus. He has received a telegram that the last piece he needs will be arriving the next day. He kisses his fiancée, Alice Swallow, who asks him to stop. Professor LaTouche reminds her that they are getting married the next day and suggests they celebrate two wonderful events happening on the same day. He says they're going to celebrate on their honeymoon, but she says that they should stay and finish the dinosaur instead of going on a honeymoon, refusing to let anything get in the way of the work. She suggests that their marriage is a dedication to his work; she thinks the brontosaurus should be their "child."

David has to play golf with Mr. Peabody. Alice reminds him to make a good impression and let Mr. Peabody win. Peabody explains on the golf course that he simply represents Ms. Random, who is considering making the donation to the museum. Peabody convinces David to hold off the talk until after the game. A young lady, Susan Vance, hits David's ball before he can get to it.

When David tries to explain to Susan that she is hitting his ball, she chides him for talking as she swung and talks about her great shot. She refuses to listen to him and doesn't care that she has his ball. She doesn't care that she's embarrassed him, and she lets him take the ball. Peabody yells for him to come on, and they go to him.

As David and Mr. Peabody are walking, however, the caddy points out that Susan is driving his car and running it into another car. She rams his car into another car, and she refuses to listen to David. He stands on the running board and yells to Peabody as Susan drives off.

That evening, David goes to a restaurant to meet with Mr. Peabody. At the bar, Susan talks to the bartender, and he shows her a few magic tricks. Susan and David run into each other again, but David tries away to get away from her. Susan follows David, though, and borrows olives from a man's table. The man is Dr. Fritz Lehman, a psychiatrist. Susan sits down and asks his professional opinion about a man who follows her around then fights with her. He suggests that the love instinct is revealed in terms of conflict and that David has a fixation.

Susan then goes and tells David that she knows why he's following her. She explains what Dr. Lehman told her, and he explains that all he wants to do is find Peabody. Susan hands him a purse and walks off toward the bar.

A few minutes later, Lehman's wife comes back to her table, and she asks where her purse is, since it has her diamond pin in it. David begins to walk past them, and when Lehman's wife sees him approaching with the purse, she begins to thank him for returning his purse. David attempts to tell her that the purse belongs to Susan.



Susan then walks up from the bar, carrying her own purse, and explains that she must have picked up Mrs. Lehman's purse by accident. They return the purse to Mrs. Lehman, and Susan follows David out. As they walk down the stairs, Susan accidentally tears his coat.

Frustrated, David asks Susan to play a game in which he puts his hand over his eyes, and she goes away. As she walks away, though, he is standing on the back of her dress, and it tears. David stops her and tries to cover her with his hat. Finally, Susan realizes the problem and is appalled. They walk out together.

Back at Susan's apartment, she sews up David's jacket, and he explains the situation with Mr. Peabody. She tells him that she knows "Boopie," her name for Mr. Peabody, well and is actually having dinner with him that evening, so she will put things straight. Susan also discovers that David is engaged to Ms. Swallow and is supposed to meet her at Carnegie Hall that night. Susan seems concerned before they leave for Peabody's house.

Susan and David finally arrive at Peabody's house, and David points out that they've passed this same house six times in an hour. Susan rings the doorbell, but when no one answers, she goes around to the side of the house and yells for Peabody.

Susan and David go around to the side, and she tries to throw pebbles at the window and accidentally breaks the glass. She finds a larger rock and hits Boopie in the head. Susan and David run away, and she tells him that they'll go see Boopie together the next day. David then explains that he's getting married the next day.

Later, while on the phone with Alice, David tries to explain the situation with Mr. Peabody. The doorbell rings, and David answers the door to find a messenger. Alice questions him, and he tells her that she can't interfere with his affairs when they're married.

After hanging up with Alice, David signs for the package, opens it and finds the last bone for the brontosaurus. The phone rings again, and Susan asks whether David wants a leopard that her brother, Mark, caught while hunting in Brazil. While on the phone, Susan tries to convince David that she knows what he does, and she puts the leopard back into the bathroom. She can't believe that he won't help her, and then she falls to the floor after tripping over a table. She begins screaming that the leopard is attacking her so that David will come to her house.

By the time David gets to the house, Susan is dressed, and he yells at her because of her deception. She tells him that the leopard is in the bathroom, but he checks anyway. He is shocked to see it and tells her she must get out. She shows him her brother's letter about the leopard, which her brother named Baby. The audience is finally introduced to the catalyst for many of the events in the film.

Finally, Susan brings Baby out after turning on some music, and she is amazed that Baby likes the music so much. David is terrified, and Baby keeps rubbing against him. Susan tries to convince him that Baby is his new friend. She wants him to help her keep



Baby hidden. Susan is trying to get \$1 million from her aunt, and she doesn't want the leopard to interfere. When David leaves, Baby follows David down the stairs and out into the street. Susan gets into her car and offers both man and leopard a ride. He finally agrees to get into the car.

David, Susan and Baby get into the car, and they prepare to get rid of Baby. David is sick of Susan because, in his opinion, she looks at everything upside down. As they drive down the road, though, Susan runs into a truck loaded with ducks and chickens, and Susan tries to hold onto Baby's tail to keep the leopard from jumping out of the car. When Baby gets away, they try to find him. David wants to hurry to get to his wedding, but they have to buy some meat from the grocery because Baby is getting hungry. They stop in a town where there's a circus performing down the street from the butcher shop.

While David is inside ordering steak for Baby, the sheriff tries to arrest Susan for parking next to a fireplug, but she talks him out of it. While they're talking, though, Baby jumps into the next car. Inside, the butcher questions David as to why they need so much meat. David and Susan climb back into the car and drive off, thinking that Baby is still in the back. Eventually they discover that Baby is missing. They find the leopard and then arrive at the house and leave Baby in the barn.

David wants to call Alice, but Susan convinces him to clean up first. David takes a shower, but Susan comes into the bedroom and takes his clothes so that Hannah, the maid, can send them into town to have them cleaned and pressed. Susan then goes into the room and looks in the box that David's been carrying, which contains the dinosaur bone, while he's in the shower. A few minutes later, he leans out of the bathroom and asks her to leave after she hands him his clothes, but she explains that his clothes are being pressed. He can't leave without his clothes, and she's going to take a shower. After David finds a robe, he yells at Susan and threatens to come into the bathroom, but he can't bring himself to do it.

While Susan is still in the shower, the doorbell rings, and David answers. An old woman comes in and asks why he's wearing a woman's robe. She wants to know what he's doing. The woman's dog comes in and barks as Hannah enters the room to find out what's going on.

Before things become more confusing, Susan runs in and greets her Aunt Elizabeth. Susan explains that Mark wrote that David needed to relax in the country. David says the only thing he wants is to get married, and Aunt Elizabeth forbids it since she thinks he wants to marry Susan. David finally gets the women quiet and asks for Aunt Elizabeth's help.

Aunt Elizabeth points David to Mark's room for clothes. Then Susan shouts that she doesn't want to give David clothes because then he'll go away, and he's the only man she's ever loved. Meanwhile, George, Aunt Elizabeth's dog, finds the dinosaur bone and takes it outside without anyone noticing. Susan enters Mark's room to see David as he finishes getting ready. Susan then explains that Peabody is Aunt Elizabeth's lawyer, and



David realizes that Aunt Elizabeth is the one who might be giving money to the museum.

David begs Susan not to tell her aunt about his true identity. Otherwise, he'll have no chance of getting the money. David then realizes that the bone is gone. He asks Susan where she put it, and she realizes that George might have taken it. They run around the house calling for George.

Finally, David and Susan find George outside and realize that George has already buried the bone. They then follow George all over the property to find the bone. Aunt Elizabeth comes out and complains about the holes they are digging. Susan once again explains to Aunt Elizabeth that she plans to marry David. Aunt Elizabeth calls George away, and David and Susan continue searching.

Finally, David calls Alice and explains that he can't get away. Susan tells him that the leopard is starting to make a ruckus. David is four hours late for his wedding, and Alice is very angry.

After David gets off the phone, Major Horace Applegate arrives at the house for dinner with Aunt Elizabeth. She introduces David to the major, and then Susan pulls David away. They both think David's had a nervous breakdown and is still recovering. She tells the major to talk to David about big-game hunting.

Susan and David feed Baby and get ready to go inside for dinner. George runs in, and they take him away quickly in case Baby doesn't like the dog. During dinner, David watches George instead of listening to the conversation, still wanting to find the dinosaur bone. After George walks out, David follows him, and Susan tries to explain the situation to the major. David follows George out again a few minutes later, and the major and Aunt Elizabeth are shocked by his bizarre actions.

The gardener watches David and becomes annoyed by the way David is bothering him, going in and out of the house. Then, the gardener sneaks a drink from his hidden liquor in the barn and accidentally lets Baby outside.

Suddenly, Baby starts crying, and the major thinks it is a loon. David says it's a leopard, but then he changes his story again. The major then imitates what a leopard should sound like this time of year, and David tries to convince the party that what's outside is a loon. When he tries again, though, the sound they actually hear is Baby.

Susan and David try to go outside to find Baby, but Aunt Elizabeth insists that Susan stay. The gardener becomes upset again and keeps drinking. He thinks if anything else happens he'll start seeing things. A moment later, he sees Baby. He runs in to Hannah and yells for his gun after Baby walks up to him. She drops a dish in surprise, and everyone runs into the kitchen.

Susan and David run out to find Baby. David decides that they should call the zoo about the leopard so that they'll catch it. A cable comes in from Mark asking whether Aunt Elizabeth likes Baby, and Aunt Elizabeth is upset that he has said nothing about her



leopard. She's always wanted one. Susan finally realizes that Aunt Elizabeth has been expecting the leopard all along.

Susan runs in to David's room and tells him to call the zoo back. Everyone is out leopard hunting now, and Susan is angry with him. George is missing when they go back in, and they want to find the bone. The major points where George went, and David and Susan run after him.

The major and the Elizabeth go for a walk as well. The major mimics the leopard's cry again, and Baby returns the cry. He thinks it's Elizabeth, but she didn't make any noise. Baby runs out of the bushes. When the major sees Baby, he and Aunt Elizabeth run back inside.

Susan and David walk around Aunt Elizabeth's property singing. They look for George in the bushes, and Susan gets caught in poison ivy. David slips down a hill, and Susan laughs hysterically before she slips as well. She catches him with the butterfly net she's carrying, and they have a good laugh together.

Then, Susan and David hear both Baby and George. They find the two playing in the clearing. David is concerned that Baby will try to eat George, and he's also worried that he'll lose his bone forever. They try to cross a stream, but it's much deeper than they expected. They swim to the other side and start a fire to dry off, but the animals are already gone.

As David and Susan sit together, Susan tries to convince David not to be grouchy. David is upset that he probably won't get the money for the museum, especially since Mr. Peabody is coming to see Aunt Elizabeth tonight. They hear music from the circus where viewers see that several men have captured a wild leopard that has escaped.

Susan and David finally get dressed and watch as a car drives up. Susan thinks it's the zoo truck, and she wants to save Baby. They see a leopard, the mean one from the zoo, in the back of the truck. David talks to the men while Susan lets the leopard out of the back. Susan then runs up and says that it's escaped, and they run off to find the leopard. They hear shots being fired by Major Applegate, and they beg him to stop.

Susan explains to the major that the leopard belongs to Aunt Elizabeth. They all go look for the leopard. The bad leopard walks up near the major and the gardener, and the major try to lasso it. The leopard keeps growling, though, and the men run away. Elsewhere, Susan and David fall down again and break David's glasses. Frustrated and angry, David tries to get rid of her, and Susan begins to cry. She then trips over a branch, but she continues to cry because David wants to get rid of her. She begs to go with him to continue looking for Baby, and he finally agrees.

When Susan and David get back to the house, a leopard is lying on the roof. They begin to sing the leopard calls they learned from the major. Dr. Lehman, who owns the house, is angry, but Susan keeps singing to get Baby back. Lehman frightens Baby, and he comes out and walks Susan toward the corner. He pulls her into the house as David



continues watching Baby. Two men then pull up to the house and think that David's a Peeping Tom. They carry David inside, and both he and Susan are arrested.

The police then call Aunt Elizabeth about David and Susan being in jail, but she tries to explain that Susan must be in bed. The major tries to tell her differently, but she refuses to listen. The police tell David and Susan that they want the whole truth, but the police don't believe the truth. Finally, David comes out of his cell to help explain that they won't get anywhere with Susan.

The police lock David back in the cell. Then, they bring the gardener in for trying to move a car; he explains that he works for Susan's aunt. Suddenly, Elizabeth barges in and shouts at the police. The police don't believe that Elizabeth is Susan's aunt, especially after the major says he's been hunting leopards. They take the major's gun and put everyone in jail. The constable calls Hannah, who tells him that everyone's in bed.

When the police start asking questions again, all the prisoners talk at once until the constable focuses on David. Susan interrupts and takes the attention off David. They finally let her out so that she will talk. She begins to accuse David of being a womanizer and goes to the desk to talk to the police. They give her a cigarette, and she makes up a story about being part of the criminal Leopard Gang. She sits on the windowsill as she talks and jumps out when their backs are turned. Then she steals a car.

Mr. Peabody and Alice come to the station to find Aunt Elizabeth. Dr. Lehman recognizes Mr. Peabody, and they go in to see Aunt Elizabeth and the others. Peabody also recognizes David, and Aunt Elizabeth is appalled that he would want her to give away her money to David. The two men from the zoo come in to say they lost a leopard. Baby and George follow them in. David goes over to Baby, and Aunt Elizabeth is thrilled with her new leopard. The men can't believe that there's actually another leopard out there.

David's worried about Susan since she's still out trying to catch the wrong leopard, and he believes she's helpless without him. Before he can go find her, Susan drags the mean leopard into the police constable's office. Everyone runs away as Susan comes in, and David points out Baby to her. The two men come to get the wild leopard, and David tries to protect Susan. He locks the leopard into a cell, and Susan tells him how wonderful he is. Then, he passes out in her arms.

The next day at the museum, David stands up on the scaffolding by the brontosaurus while Alice reprimands David for being untrustworthy and leaves. Susan then runs in and shouts to him that she has the missing dinosaur bone. She runs onto the ladder on the other side of the brontosaurus. David asks her to leave the bone on the table, but she wants to talk to him. She proudly announces that she also has the \$1 million to give to the museum.

David shouts at Susan that his time with her was the best time of his life. She's thrilled and begins rocking back and forth on the ladder. They shout that they love each other,



just as her ladder begins to tilt and Susan begins to fall. She climbs onto the dinosaur, just as the ladder falls to the ground. David pulls her up onto his scaffolding as the brontosaurus falls to the ground. She apologizes for the mistake, but he just smiles and embraces her.



Characters

Susan Vance, played by Katharine Hepburn

Description

Susan Vance is a spoiled young woman who primarily focuses on her own needs and desires. She wants to receive a million dollars from her aunt, and she wants to win David. She decides to try both at the same time. Susan tries to keep David close to her even though she knows his wedding is the next day. Susan's conniving causes all sorts of problems for David, but in the end, he falls in love with her.

Susan's innocence and exuberance keep people interested in her. She is an absolutely exciting person, and she keeps everyone waiting to see what she will do next. Susan finally wins David and the million dollars.

Analysis

Susan is a planner. She knows what she wants and makes plans to get it. During the time the audience knows her, she efficiently obtains David and a million dollars. She decides to make her own happiness rather than waiting for things to fall in place for her.

Susan's fun-loving attitude is a refreshing contrast to David's very serious attitude about life and love. Susan introduces him to a lighter side of life. She makes his life more difficult so that he can have more fun, emphasizing joy over security and emotion over logic.

Dr. David Huxley, played by Cary Grant

Description

Dr. David Huxley runs a museum, and when the audience first sees him, he's putting together a brontosaurus skeleton. He is planning to marry Alice the next day, and they are now going to skip the honeymoon so that he can finish the dinosaur.

David meets Susan at the golf course when he's trying to convince Peabody to donate the million dollars to the museum. She drives off with his car, so he's forced to go with her. Through the next day, she keeps pulling him away from everything else, and he even misses his wedding. Finally, he realizes that he has fallen in love with this crazy woman.



Analysis

David is very serious and dull. He doesn't know how to have any fun before Susan comes into his life and turns everything upside down. Although he is a little shocked by Alice's very serious look at their marriage as an extension of his work, he agrees with her to some extent and isn't terribly worried. David's job as a scientist reflects the logical aspect of his character, which takes over to the exclusion of his emotional side.

As David and Susan try to take care of Baby and help David ingratiate himself with Peabody, he finds himself being drawn to her more and more, even though she makes his life increasingly complicated. Susan represents what is missing from David's emotionless life. David may not win the million dollars, but he does win Susan and her million dollars.

Aunt Elizabeth Random, played by May Robson

Description

Aunt Elizabeth Random is Susan's aunt and the woman from whom David wants to get the million dollars for his museum. Aunt Elizabeth is very proper, so Susan is shocked to discover that she was actually expecting the leopard. After getting put in jail, Aunt Elizabeth decides that David isn't worthy of the million dollars and gives it to Susan without realizing that she will marry David and donate the money to the museum.

Analysis

Aunt Elizabeth is the epitome of prim and proper behavior. Her attitude is one of old money, and she expects Susan to act according to her station in life. Aunt Elizabeth does have a few quirks, though, and she is looking forward to getting her new pet leopard. Although she does have a few interesting experiences, such as going to jail, during the film, she retains her air of superiority through it all.

Major Horace Applegate, played by Charles Ruggles

Description

Major Horace Applegate is a close friend of Aunt Elizabeth. He is invited to dinner at her house. He is witness to all the chaos caused as Susan and David try to keep Baby hidden from Aunt Elizabeth.



Analysis

Maj. Applegate thinks that Susan and David are crazy. He helps Aunt Elizabeth figure out what is going on and ends up in jail with everyone else. He is a stereotype of a major and a big-game hunter.

Constable Slocum, played by Walter Catlett

Description

Constable Slocum arrests Susan and David because of their arrival at Lehman's. Then, he arrests the rest of Aunt Elizabeth's entourage and frees them only when after Peabody arrives.

Analysis

Constable Slocum tries to act like an all-important, big-city sheriff, but in reality, he is a small-town lawman.

Mr. Gogarty, played by Barry Fitzgerald

Description

Mr. Gogarty is the groundskeeper for Aunt Elizabeth and Hannah's husband.

Analysis

Mr. Gogarty adds comedy, as he sees Baby and runs around shouting and surreptitiously drinking.

Hannah Gogarty, played by Leona Roberts

Description

Hannah Gogarty is Aunt Elizabeth's housekeeper.

Analysis

Hannah and her husband help give validity to the story, emphasizing Aunt Elizabeth's wealth. They also add humor to the story through their minor roles.



Dr. Fritz Lehman, played by Fritz Feld

Description

David and Susan meet Dr. Lehman, a brilliant psychiatrist, in a restaurant where Susan is trying to make up for the trouble she's caused David. Instead of helping, she just gets David deeper in trouble for stealing a purse. Then, David and Susan run into Lehman again as they try to find Baby and are thrown in jail.

Analysis

Lehman's appearance always means bad news for David and Susan. Every time they meet, the two end up in trouble either with the manager of the restaurant or the law.

Alice Swallow, played by Virginia Walker

Description

Alice is David's fiancée. They are getting married the day after the story begins, but she sees their marriage only as a furthering of their work.

Analysis

Alice has little feeling. She's totally focused on David's career and doesn't even seem to really love him. By marrying Alice, David is marrying his work instead of acquiring an emotional life to balance his intellectual life. Alice even insists that they give up their honeymoon to finish putting the brontosaurus together, an idea that David greatly dislikes.

Dr. Alexander Peabody, played by George Irving

Description

Peabody is Mrs. Random's lawyer, who is deciding who will receive her \$1 million. David keeps trying to meet with Peabody but has no success because of Susan, who is also trying to get the money.

Analysis

Peabody thinks David is absolutely crazy after he disappears with Susan from their round of golf and hits him in the head with a rock at his own home.



Themes

Overwhelming Love

David's fiancée at the beginning of the film, Alice, sees their marriage as a further focus on his work. She isn't at all worried about missing their honeymoon because a missing bone is coming in. Her love for David seems to be primarily a love for the museum and his work there.

When David meets Susan, he is completely exasperated by her. He can't understand why she is always making his life difficult and trying to keep him around. She ruins his chances at getting the million dollars for the museum, and every time she tries to make up for it she makes things worse.

By the end of the film, though, David has fallen head over heels in love for Susan. She may exasperate him and cause his life to be more complicated, but he can't get over the fact that he now loves her. True love seems to be a force that overwhelms even the most reticent among us.

Chase Your Man

Susan, unlike most girls during her time, doesn't believe that you should wait for a man to come calling on you. Instead, she goes out and chases her man until she has him. David tries to ignore her advances at first, but she always manages to get him to do whatever she wants.

Once Susan sees David, she makes sure to attract his attention by stealing his golf ball and then driving off with his car. By promising to help him get his money, she makes sure that he will have to see her at least one more time. Susan uses many other means to see David as well, and after Baby arrives, she easily gets his attention when she claims to be hiding a leopard. As David helps Susan, her plan slowly but surely begins to work. Finally, she gets her man and the million dollars they both want so desperately.

Caring for a Cause

David's life is focused almost completely on his work. He is in charge of a museum and has spent many tiring hours putting together a giant brontosaurus skeleton. Now he also has the chance to procure funding for the museum by getting a million dollars from a woman interested in giving it away.

David's focus on his work and on getting Susan's help pulls him away from his wedding and temporarily, at least, makes him lose the final bone for his dinosaur. After he is unable to secure the money, he becomes angry with Susan and simply returns to his job, doing the best he can.



David loves his cause, but eventually, he comes to love Susan more. When she brings him the bone, she also accidentally knocks the dinosaur down, but he is still happy because now at least he has the love of his life. Caring for a cause is good, but being in love is better.



Style and Cinematography

Bringing Up Baby is pure fun all the way through. Viewers get to watch some of their favorite actors act "crazy" throughout this screwball comedy. Director Howard Hawks is known for his hilarious yet intelligent comedies.

The actors and actresses really make this film. Cary Grant shows his range by at first playing a stoic museum curator and then turning into a fun-loving guy by the end. Katharine Hepburn, on the other hand, plays the outgoing and demanding Susan, who always gets her way. They make a hysterical pair and keep the laughs going throughout the film.

The use of two leopards also makes the film interesting. Baby and the other leopard make the film even more fun as David and Susan chase the leopards down and try to make Aunt Elizabeth happy.



Motifs

Journey

The journey motif is used in numerous books and movies. Authors and filmmakers never get tired of using it because people are able to relate to it so easily. A journey is a metaphor for change, and as characters travel along their respective paths, they find out important truths about themselves. Many films depict serious journeys, but in *Bringing Up Baby*, the journey is funny and sweet.

David and Susan's journey toward love begins with a simple trip to the golf course. David wants to get a million dollars for the museum while Susan just happens to be at the club. After she sees him, though, she steals his car so that he can't get away from her. Instead, he has to follow her so that he cannot have any chance at getting the money from Aunt Elizabeth.

As the two main characters continue on their journey, they learn a lot about life and love. First, they discover that neither is always easy, but it's usually during the most inappropriate times that love truly grows. David discovers that his work isn't nearly as important as he imagined. Finally, they learn that the most important thing to them is their relationship with each other.

Searching for Something

Goals determine actions, and Susan's first goal is to win David. She realizes that many men like to be heroes, and she uses the search for Baby to give David a reason for being around her. In addition, she remains his only chance to get the million dollars for the museum, so he has little choice but to do as she wishes.

David and Susan become completely focused on finding Baby and keeping her hidden from Aunt Elizabeth. In the process, David's bone is lost, so they have to keep looking for it. Over the course of the day, David forgets to attend his own wedding and begins to forget about his fiancée altogether.

When David and Susan return to their normal lives, David is unable to forget her. She finally charges back into his life complete with the million dollars that they each wanted so desperately. After searching for everything else, David and Susan find what they were really searching for: each other.

Changing Focus

When the audience first meets David, he has but one focus, the museum. Although he is excited to be getting married, he is primarily concerned with finishing his dinosaur and



raising money for the museum. This single-mindedness doesn't last long because he quickly gets distracted.

Susan enters David's life and proceeds to turn everything upside down. She demands his attention first by stealing his car and later by trying to help him get the money back. She also uses Baby to distract David from his work and his upcoming marriage.

By the end of the film, Susan has successfully changed David's focus from marrying Alice and succeeding at the museum to marrying Susan. After Susan gets the money from her aunt, she offers both the money and herself to David.



Symbols

Million Dollars

Bringing Up Baby is a hilarious look at David's quest for a million dollars for his museum and the woman, Susan, who gets in his way and pursues him. As they continue on their crazy escapades, they end up finding a new life and love together.

The million dollars in the film is symbolic of desire. David desires the money for his museum while Susan desires it for herself. She also desires David and uses the million dollars to help keep him in her grasp.

In the process of trying to get the million dollars, though, David and Susan realize that they desire something else even more: each other. When Susan finally arrives at the museum with the money, the two embrace passionately and decide to spend the rest of their lives together.

Baby

Baby is the leopard that Mark, Susan's brother, sends up for Aunt Elizabeth. When Baby arrives, though, Susan is shocked and doesn't have a clue why Mark sent the animal. She decides that she must hide the leopard and begs for David's help, which he gives only because he might have a chance to get the million dollars.

Baby is symbolic of the wild nature of the experience. David leads a very normal life, and he plans to marry a very boring woman, Alice, who wants him to focus only on his work. When Susan and Baby come into his life, David's life is turned completely upside down.

Like Susan and David's relationship, Baby is adventurous and exciting. Baby also helps bring the couple together because Susan has a great reason to keep David close to her. Finally, everything falls into place as Aunt Elizabeth gets her leopard, and Susan and David find each other.

Falling Brontosaurus

At the end of the film, David has gone back to work but has no plans to marry Alice now. He instead goes back to working on finishing his brontosaurus with the bone that he received on his wedding day. Although he seems happy enough back at work, he is also missing Susan desperately.

Suddenly, Susan comes rushing in and announces that she has the million dollars and both it and she are all his. When she climbs the ladder across from him, he tries to get

her down, but she refuses. Instead, she becomes so excited that she makes the ladder sway, knocks down the brontosaurus and is saved by David.

As the brontosaurus falls, the audience realizes that it is symbolic of the barriers between the two, which have completely fallen, and now they can truly enjoy their romance. Instead of being upset, David seems excited by the event, and he's thrilled to have Susan back in his arms again.



Essay Questions

What is David's job? Why is this an appropriate job for his character?

How does Alice view her impending marriage to David? What does this say about her and David?

What happens when David tries to get the million dollars?

Describe the relationship between David and Susan. How does it change throughout the film?

What is David supposed to do the day after the film begins? How are his plans interrupted?

How does Susan get David to her house?

Who is Baby? Why is Baby important to the film?

Why does Susan want to hide Baby?

Why are David, Susan and the others arrested?

What happens with David and Susan at the end of the film?