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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references at the end of each chapters.
Nota di contenuto	Comic Character as Homo Ludens -- Agon in Groundhog Day and Feds -- Alea in Spies Like Us, Bowfinger, Taking Care of Business, and Brewster's Millions -- Mimicry in iThree Amigos!, Austin Powers, and HouseSitter -- Ilinx in Rush Hour and Showtime -- Conclusion.
Sommario/riassunto	This book reveals the hitherto critically disregarded ludic elements in popular American comedy films, building on and expanding the theories developed by Johan Huizinga in his classic study Homo Ludens (1938) and Roger Caillois in Les jeux et les hommes (1958). To address the lack of attention paid to the play principle in film comedy studies, this book focuses exclusively on the elements typical of play that can be found in movies. It introduces two new categories describing play: óneiros and pragma, which allow analysis of how play in comedies is influenced by the relations between the player and non-players. The text is supplemented by the use of the author's drawings, which, because of their analytical and selective nature, are used as a tool for visual study. The play principle has a long tradition in American humor and the films examined here were chosen for their popularity and wide appeal, often acting as vehicles for Hollywood stars (e.g.Chevy Chase, Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray, Steve Martin, Eddie Murphy, Goldie Hawn, Mike Myers, Jackie Chan or Chris Tucker). The actors' status allowed

the filmmakers to construct situations in which the protagonists distanced themselves from the fictional situation. It is argued that the playful detachment from reality, typifying many of the fictional characters portrayed by actors with star status, is characteristic of the play principle in film. Another major consideration is the hotly debated notion of the accomplishment of goals in playful activities, and the book strongly supports the position that in narratives, play can (but does not have to) yield important results. The introduction of the categories of *óneiros* and *pragma* in play serves to highlight the complex relation between playfulness and practicality in the films discussed. Building on a comprehensive analysis of the ludic elements in selected popular American comedies, the book makes an important contribution to film studies, providing a unique perspective through its focus on the concept of *homo ludens* as a comic hero.
