

La Comédiathèque



**HANDLE  
WITH CARE**

Jean-Pierre Martinez

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# **Fragile, handle with care**

**Jean-Pierre Martinez**

*Translation by the author*

After being dumped once again, Fred swore to his best friend that no girl would sleep over at his place until the end of the year. A few months later, he is on the verge of winning his bet and the hefty cheque that came with it. But on the eve of Christmas, one is never safe from a surprise gift...

## **Characters**

Fred  
Natacha  
Sam

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## Scene 1

*A modest two-room living area. A sofa in the back. In front, a coffee table. Some moving boxes are placed on the side. The doorbell rings. Fred enters in a bathrobe.*

**Fred** – Yes, yes, I'm coming... (*He crosses the room to open the door and returns followed by Sam.*) Hey, Sam. Sorry to receive you like this in my bathrobe, I didn't have time to get dressed...

**Sam** – Hey Fred! Sorry for showing up like this. I was passing by in the neighbourhood...

**Fred** – No, no, you did the right thing. It's been a while since we last saw each other, right?

**Sam** – Since your last move...

**Fred** – Right... Do you want some coffee or...

**Sam** – That's okay, thanks... I can only stay for five minutes...

**Fred** – How are you doing?

**Sam** – Listen, I'm doing great. I'm fully into the casting for my new play. But I think I found the actress I wanted. You'll see, she's really talented...

**Fred** – Talented...? You mean...

**Sam** – Talented actress! It's true that she's not bad-looking either, but well...

**Fred** – That wouldn't surprise me...

**Sam** – In the play, she has to seduce a guy who has taken a vow of chastity! To make it believable... she has to be irresistible, of course.

**Fred** – And the guy she has to seduce is you, I imagine.

**Sam** – I wrote the play, I'm an actor, I'm not going to give the lead role to someone else...

**Fred** – And what's the title of this play?

**Sam** – Fragile, handle with care! By the way, can I count on you for the poster?

**Fred** – Of course... And... for free, as usual?

**Sam** – Otherwise, what's the point of having a graphic designer friend? (*He takes an envelope out of his pocket and hands it to Fred.*) Here, I brought you a file... For now, there's no summary of the play because I haven't written the ending yet...

**Fred** – For the poster, you'll still have to give me a little idea of what it's about. (*He places the envelope on the coffee table.*) But when you say a guy who has taken a vow of chastity, do you mean a priest?

**Sam** – Not exactly, I'll explain... And how about you, how are things going?

**Fred** – Well... things are going.

**Sam** – Things are going?

**Fred** – I was actually taking a bath...

**Sam** – Come on, you can tell me everything, you know... I'm your best friend, right?

**Fred** – Yeah...

**Sam** – Are you still thinking about Justine, is that it...?

**Fred** – Three months of living together, you don't forget it just like that.

**Sam** – In a way, it's fortunate that you've never managed to keep one for more than three months. It would be even harder...

**Fred** – Thanks for your support, it lifts my spirits...

**Sam** – Listen, Fred, you have to hold yourself together a bit. You can't move every time you get dumped! I can't keep up anymore. This is the fourth time you've moved this year!

**Fred** – You're exaggerating... It's only been three times...

**Sam** – Yeah... but we are only October 1st.

**Fred** – What can I say, everything here reminds me of Justine. I still see her little panties drying on the balcony... I smell her scent everywhere...

**Sam** – Her scent? How long has she been gone for?

**Fred** – Three weeks...

**Sam** – Well... She must have had a pretty tenacious scent... (*Sniffing the air*) I don't smell anything.

**Fred** – No, but I mean her scent... Her perfume, if you prefer...

**Sam** – I don't know... You should clean everything with bleach.

**Fred** – With bleach... I'm not like you, I'm a romantic...

**Sam** – If being romantic means getting dumped four times a year, I'd rather be who I am, you know...

**Fred** – A serial dater, then.

**Sam** – Do you want some advice on how to avoid getting dumped every three months?

**Fred** – No.

**Sam** – You dump them after a month.

**Fred** – Thanks, I think that'll help a lot... But I've made another decision to try and keep my next apartment longer than the others.

**Sam** – Oh yeah? What is it?

**Fred** – No girl will sleep over at my place until the end of the year, I swear.

**Sam** – Are you kidding?

**Fred** – No.

**Sam** – You won't last three months. You can't stand living alone for more than a week! That's why you always fall for the first squatter that comes along.

**Fred** – Do you want to bet?

**Sam** – Alright. How much?

**Fred** – Three months' worth of rent. Let's say 5000 pounds.

**Sam** – If a girl spends even one night at your place before the end of the year, you will give me 5000 pounds?

**Fred** – And if I win the bet, you will give them to me.

**Sam** – Okay. Deal.

**Fred** – Are you sure?

**Sam** – Absolutely. It works out well, I could use some money right now.

**Fred** – Be careful... I'm highly motivated. The new apartment I found is absolutely amazing. Same price as this one, but bigger and in a much better location. I fully intend to keep it for a while. By the way, can I count on you for the move? It's next Sunday.

**Sam** – Your move? Yeah, yeah, of course, you can count on me...

**Fred** – Otherwise, what's the point of having a buddy who's a bit muscular and can drive a van?

**Sam** – Damn, Fred... Three moves this year! That's why I suggested bleach, you know. To get rid of the smell of your exes...

**Fred** – Don't worry... This time I made a good resolution, and I'll stick to it...

**Sam** – You're not going to become a monk, are you?

**Fred** – If I meet a girl, we can still go to a hotel.

**Sam** – You, the romantic, going to hotels to hook up with girls?

**Fred** – Okay, then I'll clarify my bet. No girl will sleep in my new apartment before the end of the year... unless this time it's the real deal, and I marry her.

**Sam** – You won't last three weeks, I'm telling you... (*He looks at his watch.*) Well, I have to go, I have a date... with my actress, actually.

**Fred** – You have a tough job, indeed... Alright, see you on Sunday.

**Sam** – Okay... See you on Sunday...

*Sam exits.*

*Fade out.*

## Scene 2

*Another living room, similar to the previous one. The same couch is at the back, in front of the same coffee table. On one side, there is a large box that can fit a refrigerator, labeled "top," "bottom," "fragile, handle with care." On the other side, there is a decorated Christmas tree with a few gift boxes beneath it. The doorbell rings. Fred enters, dressed. He crosses the room to open the door and returns, followed by Sam.*

**Fred** – Hey, buddy.

**Sam** – Are you still surrounded by boxes? It's been three months since you moved in here...

**Fred** – Oh, no... That's my new fridge. It was just delivered.

**Sam** – Alright...

**Fred** – The old one didn't survive my last move, don't you remember? You dropped it down the stairs when we got here...

**Sam** – If you're not happy with my services, you should hire professionals.

**Fred** – We found it two floors down, but the door was missing.

**Sam** – Well, a fridge without a door is much less practical, that's for sure.

**Fred** – It's fine during the summer... when you don't have air conditioning. But in the winter...

**Sam** – It must be especially unpleasant at night, with the light constantly on.

**Fred** – Yeah... That's why I had a new one delivered.

**Sam** – So, how about you? How are things?

**Fred** – I'm okay...

**Sam** – I'm not interrupting anything, am I? Are you alone?

**Fred** – Yes, yes, don't worry, I'm always alone.

**Sam** – Alright...

**Fred** – You came to ask if I prefer a check or cash, is that it?

**Sam** – Hey! It's only December 24th! There's still a week left... And we agreed that the night of the 31st counts too, right?

**Fred** – No problem.

**Sam** – Since we've known each other, every New Year's Eve, you bring home a drunk girl, and she overstays her welcome for a few weeks before dumping you. Remember?

**Fred** – I've been practicing abstinence for almost three months, I can hold out for another week.

**Sam** – Abstinence, huh... Alcoholic promises, I see...

**Fred** – We'll talk about it on January 1st, okay? And how about you? How's it going with your new play?

**Sam** – Great! By the way, thanks for the poster.

**Fred** – If you had told me what it was about instead of just giving me the title...

**Sam** – It's a suspense comedy, I didn't want to spoil the plot for you.

**Fred** – Of course.

**Sam** – Well, anyway, I won't tell you about it now. You're coming for the premiere on December 31st, of course. After that, I'm hosting a big party at my place with the whole cast. There will be plenty of girls...

**Fred** – I see where this is going...

**Sam** – What?

**Fred** – It's a setup! You'll get me drunk, then put one of your actress friends in my arms, she'll bring me home completely wasted, and you'll win your bet!

**Sam** – Seriously, Fred, I'm offended... Do you really think I'm capable of scheming like that against my best friend? Just to win 5000 pounds?

**Fred** – I don't know about winning them... but definitely not losing them...

**Sam** – Come on! You're not going to spend New Year's Eve all alone just because of a stupid bet...

**Fred** – No way. A bet is a bet. This year, I'm staying holed up at home. And I won't come out until noon on January 1st.

**Sam** – But you're completely crazy! This is becoming obsessive, this whole thing.

**Fred** – 5000 pounds, remember?

**Sam** – Alright... And what are you doing for Christmas tonight?

**Fred** – My parents aren't here anyway. They treated themselves to a trip to the tropics for their wedding anniversary. I'll be having a turkey all by myself at home.

**Sam** – A turkey?

**Fred** – I wrapped a few gift boxes under the tree; I'll open them tomorrow morning... I can't wait to see what's inside. With the 5000 pounds you're going to give me soon, of course. I spoiled myself...

**Sam** – You know you're a real lunatic, right?

*Fred turns to the large box.*



**Fred** – Speaking of packages, I need to unpack my new fridge.

**Sam** – Well, I'll leave you then...

**Fred** – By the way, thanks.

**Sam** – For what?

**Fred** – It was you who tipped me off about the fridge, right? It's true that it's cheap... And they delivered it in 48 hours flat, just as promised in the ad.

**Sam** – Okay... I have to run, I'm already late... I have a rehearsal... Well... Merry Christmas, buddy... just the two of you, with your new fridge.

**Fred** – Yeah, Merry Christmas to you too... Don't overdo it...

**Sam** – Bye, Fred...

**Fred** – Why don't you come over for a drink at my place on January 1st... and don't forget your checkbook.

*Sam exits. Fred looks at the large box.*

**Fred** – Where did I put my scissors...?

*He leaves and returns with scissors. Whistling, he starts cutting the tape sealing the top of the box. Before opening the flaps, he turns around to place the scissors on the coffee table. He looks back at the box when a woman's bust pops out of it, like a jack-in-the-box. He lets out a scream of surprise and falls backward onto the couch.*

**Fred** – Aaahhh!!!

*The girl screams in a similar manner upon seeing him and hearing his scream.*

**Natacha** – Aaahhh!!!

**Fred** – What the...?

*The girl completely emerges from the box. She is pretty and looks as frightened as he is.*

**Natacha** (with a Russian accent) – Oh my God! Where am I?

**Fred** – Where?

**Natacha** – And who are you?

**Fred** – But... you're in my house! It's me who should be asking who you are!

**Natacha** – I'm sorry... My name is Natacha.

**Fred** – Natacha?

**Natacha** – Natacha. And you?

*She extends her hand with a disarming smile, he hesitates and shakes it.*

**Fred** – Fred...

**Natacha** – I'm really sorry for showing up like this at your place, but...

**Fred** – But you're completely crazy! I almost had a heart attack!

*Natacha looks around.*

**Natacha** – We're in England, right?

**Fred** – In England, yes... But what are you doing in this box! And who let you into my house!

**Natacha** – Listen to me...

**Fred** – You wanted to rob me, is that it... (*He takes out his mobile phone.*) I'll call the police, I'm warning you...

**Natacha** – Please, don't do that! Let me explain everything to you...

*He hesitates and puts away his phone.*

**Fred** – You won't explain anything to me at all, I don't want to know anything. Okay, I won't call the police, but you better get out of my house, right now!

**Natacha** – Tak, tak...

**Fred** – Tac tac?

**Natacha** – Tak! It means yes in Belarusian. Alright, I'm leaving...

*She pretends to walk towards the door.*

**Fred** – Hey! Wait a minute... But where is my fridge?

**Natacha** – Your fridge?

**Fred** – My fridge! The one that was supposed to be in this box! What did you do with my fridge? You're not leaving here until you give it back to me!

**Natacha** – Your fridge... it's still in Belarus.

**Fred** – Excuse me? Where?

**Natacha** – In Belarus! Please, let me explain...

*Fred collapses onto the couch.*

**Fred** – I'm listening...

**Natacha** – My name is Natacha. I'm Belarusian, and I fled my country hidden in this box, which was supposed to contain your refrigerator.

**Fred** – In Belarus? And what was my fridge doing in Belarus?

**Natacha** – That's where they are manufactured! I have a friend who works in that factory. He hid me in this box, and here I am!

**Fred** – And my fridge?

**Natacha** – It stayed there. In Minsk.

**Fred** – In Minsk?

**Natacha** – Minsk! The capital of Belarus!

**Fred** – In Minsk... That's crazy... And who is going to reimburse me for my fridge? You?

**Natacha** – When I'm gone... you can file a complaint. They will probably send you another one...

**Fred** – And you made this whole trip from Russia, hidden in this box?

**Natacha** – Not Russia. Belarus!

**Fred** – Yeah, well, Belarus, Russia, it's all the same, isn't it...

**Natacha** – Not at all! It's not the same at all!

**Fred** – And do you expect me to believe such a story?

**Natacha** – But it's the truth, I swear!

**Fred** – And how did this box come here? By boat?

**Natacha** – Not only by boat. There's no sea in Belarus!

**Fred** – Oh really? There's no sea? That's probably why no one ever goes there on vacation... So how did this fridge get here? I mean, you, in this box?

**Natacha** – By truck!

**Fred** – By truck?

**Natacha** – 48 hours flat! Just like in the advertisement...

**Fred** – And why didn't you come to England by plane like everyone else, with a visa?

**Natacha** – Belarus is a dictatorship. You can't leave the country so easily. And England doesn't give visas.

**Fred** – Well then, I don't know... You should have just stayed in Belarus!

**Natacha** – Impossible! I'm wanted by the police...

**Fred** – Don't tell me you've killed someone...?

**Natacha** – I'm marked by the secret police as an opponent of the regime. I had to leave. Immediately. Otherwise, they would have thrown me in prison. Or worse, maybe...

**Fred** – Listen, I don't know what to say... But regardless, you're staying illegally in England. You can't stay here.

**Natacha** – You could hide me... at least for a few days.

**Fred** – Hide you? But that's impossible! It's aiding the stay of a foreigner in an irregular situation in England! I'll end up in prison!

**Natacha** – I'm begging you... If they send me back to my country, they will kill me.

**Fred** – In that case, we need to inform the police! They will tell you what to do. If you're a political refugee, you can apply for asylum in our country, and they will provide you with documentation.

**Natacha** – What they will do is put me on the first plane to send me back to Belarus. And there, there won't be a trial...

**Fred** – I understand, but... what can I do about it?

**Natacha** – Just one night! Just one night! Tomorrow I'll leave. And no one will ever know that I spent a night with you.

**Fred** – With me?

**Natacha** – I mean at your place... (*He seems hesitant.*) So, is that a yes?

**Fred** – Well... I promised to...

**Natacha** – You have a fiancée, is that it?

**Fred** – No! No, actually, I... Alright, fine. One night, but not more.

*She jumps into his arms and kisses him on the mouth.*

**Natacha** – Thank you, thank you!

**Fred** – Okay, but... you don't have to kiss me on the mouth, you know?

**Natacha** – That's how we kiss in Belarus!

**Fred** – Alright... Like in Russia, then... (*Fred turns to the box.*) But anyway... how did you manage to survive for two days locked in this box? From Moscow...

**Natacha** – Minsk!

**Fred** – Yeah, well... You're not a fridge!

**Natacha** – Look, it says "Fragile! Handle with care"...

**Fred** – Without eating or drinking?

**Natacha** – I had a little bottle of water with me, but it's true. I haven't eaten anything for 48 hours flat...

**Fred** – I would tell you that I'll go see what's in the fridge, but...

**Natacha** – I'm sincerely sorry...

**Fred** – I'm all alone... I didn't have anything special planned for Christmas Eve. I thought I would order something to eat, but I don't know... What do Belarusians eat? Do you like sushi?

**Natacha** – Sushi? I don't know... What is it?

*He gives her a surprised look.*

*Fade to black.*

### Scene 3

*Fred and Natacha are seated in front of the coffee table. She has placed her jacket on the back of a chair. They are finishing the tacos that Fred had delivered.*

**Fred** – So, do you like tacos?

**Natacha** – I thought they were sushi.

**Fred** – Ah yes... No, but sushi wasn't available... They must be closed for the holidays. Besides me, who would want to have sushi on Christmas Eve? With a Belarusian woman who came out of a fridge box...

**Natacha** – And tacos, are they the traditional dish for Christmas dinner in England?

**Fred** – Not really either... But well... I couldn't manage to have a turkey delivered at home. I mean... apart from you.

**Natacha** – So, what are sushi then?

**Fred** – They're kind of like tacos but... cold, with raw fish inside.

**Natacha** – Tacos are very good... Thank you so much, really. *(She stands up and kisses him on the mouth again.)* You're amazing...

*He is obviously taken aback.*

**Fred** – I don't have vodka, but... Would you like to try tequila?

*He pours a drink for himself.*

**Natacha** – Another English specialty?

*He raises his glass to toast.*

**Fred** – Cheers, Merry Christmas!

*Before they can drink, the doorbell rings.*

**Natacha** – Are you expecting someone?

**Fred** – No... It must be Sam... *(A bit panicked)* I am going to ask you to wait in the bedroom for a moment...

*She still has her glass of tequila in her hand. He pushes her into the bedroom and goes to open the door. He comes back with Sam.*

**Fred** *(uneasy)* – Hey Sam, how are you doing?

**Sam** – I'm good, and you? You look strange...

**Fred** – Me? Not at all.



**Sam** – Listen, I've reconsidered this bet thing, it's ridiculous. You're not going to spend Christmas Eve alone at home eating sushi...

**Fred** – They're tacos.

**Sam** – What I mean is... if you want to come spend Christmas Eve with me at my parents' place. We've known each other for so long, you're almost like family...

**Fred** – Yes, that's very kind, but... no, really, I assure you.

**Sam** – No, but don't worry, you won't be bringing a girl to your place. My sister is married, she has three kids. The only available woman in the family is my grandmother, who lost her husband three years ago...

**Fred** – It's true that it's tempting, but...

*Sam turns his back to him. Natacha's cough can be heard from beside.*

**Sam** – You're not alone, are you?

**Fred** – Yes...! But, yes, of course...

**Sam** – I heard someone cough...

**Fred** – Oh, no, it's... *(He forces himself to cough.)* It's me... It's the tequila, I'm not used to it anymore. It's strong stuff... Do you want some?

**Sam** *(suspicious)* – No, thanks, I'm driving...

**Fred** – Of course...

**Sam** – You would tell me if you weren't alone. A bet is a bet...

**Fred** – But of course...

**Sam** – In that case, come celebrate with us!

**Fred** – No, I assure you, it's really nice, but... I need to figure things out...

**Sam** – Alright... If you change your mind, will you call me?

**Fred** – Sure... Merry Christmas... And give my regards to your grandmother...

*Sam leaves. Fred goes to fetch Natacha from the bedroom.*

**Natacha** – Tequila is strong. Even stronger than vodka!

**Fred** – Yes...

**Natacha** – Was he your boyfriend? Is he jealous?

**Fred** – My boyfriend? Not at all...

**Natacha** – Homosexuality is forbidden in Belarus. They put homosexuals in prison. And in the streets... they get beaten up.

**Fred** – No, I'm not homosexual at all, really!

**Natacha** – You don't like homosexuals?

**Fred** – No, not at all! I mean, yes, I love homosexuals, but...

**Natacha** – So you love homosexuals... Is your friend also homosexual?

**Fred** – Look, nobody is homosexual, okay? All I'm asking is that you don't tell anyone that you slept with me? I mean... at my place. It would take too long to explain, but it's very important to me.

**Natacha** – Alright... I wouldn't want you to get in trouble with your boyfriend because of me...

**Fred** – Well, I think it's time to go to bed now.

**Natacha** – Go to bed?

**Fred** – Yes... And since I only have one bed, you'll take the bedroom, and I'll sleep on the couch.

**Natacha** – No way! I don't want to take your bed!

**Fred** – You've been sleeping in a box for two days...

**Natacha** – I'll take the couch, it'll still be more comfortable than standing in a box, I assure you...

**Fred** – Okay... then... Goodnight.

**Natacha** – Goodnight...

*Fred leaves. Natacha waits for a moment and takes out her mobile phone. She now speaks without an accent.*

**Natacha** – Sam? It's okay, I'll spend the night at his place...

**Sam** – Great! So, I won my bet!

**Natacha** – Yeah, but don't forget our little deal. I want half: 2500 pounds.

**Sam** – You'll have them, I promise.

**Natacha** – What you're making me do...

**Sam** – I chose you to act in my play, I knew you were a good actress and that you would play your role perfectly.

**Natacha** – Yes, but I feel a little guilty. Your friend is quite nice... A bit naive, but... he's a good guy.

**Sam** – Don't tell me you're falling in love with him!

**Natacha** – Not at all...

*Fred returns with a towel in his hand and overhears the last word of the conversation. She quickly puts away her phone.*

**Fred** – Do you have a mobile phone?

**Natacha** (*without an accent*) – Of course! You know, in Belarus, we don't have sushi or tacos, but we have fridges and mobile phones...

**Fred** – And you don't have a Russian accent anymore?

*Natacha is obviously caught off guard.*

**Natacha** – The Russian accent?

**Fred** – Earlier, you were speaking with a Russian accent.

*Natacha tries to regain her accent.*

**Natacha** – You mean... the Belarusian accent?

**Fred** – An accent, huh... And earlier, on the phone, you were speaking without an accent.

**Natacha** – Well, I have the accent... only when I'm very nervous...

**Fred** – So, you're a bit nervous again now...

**Natacha** – Yes... Maybe it's you who's making me nervous...

**Fred** – But by the way... where did you learn to speak our language so well? With or without an accent...

**Natacha** – I learned at the British Institute in Minsk.

**Fred** – And you've never been to England before?

**Natacha** – Never.

**Fred** – Well... I studied German for seven years in high school, I've been to Germany half a dozen times, and I wouldn't even know how to order sauerkraut in a restaurant in Munich during Oktoberfest...

**Natacha** – I'm very talented with languages.

**Fred** – I can see that... So, without being indiscreet, who were you on the line with?

**Natacha** – With my friend who stayed in Belarus.

**Fred** – But when you say your friend, you mean...

**Natacha** – The one who packed me up.

**Fred** – Packed you up?

**Natacha** – In that box! Instead of your fridge... He wanted to know if everything was fine. If I arrived safely... If I had a good trip...

**Fred** – Okay, but... why are you speaking to him in English?

**Natacha** – Why?

**Fred** – Since he's Belarusian, like you...

**Natacha** – Well... so that the secret police doesn't understand our conversation! They probably tapped our phones, you know.

**Fred** – Of course... *(They smile at each other, and it's clear that they are somewhat attracted to each other, but he resists.)* It's strange...

**Natacha** – What?

**Fred** – I feel like I've seen you somewhere before.

**Natacha** – Oh really...? In a magazine, perhaps. In Belarus, I'm a model... I do photoshoots for magazines...

**Fred** – What kind of magazines?

**Natacha** *(with an innuendo)* – Apparently, the kind of magazines you sometimes read... Secretly, maybe...

**Fred** – But you told me you were involved in politics?

**Natacha** – One can be a model and be involved in politics.

*Slight embarrassment.*

**Fred** – I came to bring you a towel... and a toothbrush.

**Natacha** – Thank you...

**Fred** – Well then... goodnight.

**Natacha** – Goodnight.

*Fred leaves. She picks up her phone again and calls Sam.*

**Natacha** *(in a low voice)* – Alright, you won your bet, that's enough. Tomorrow morning, I'm leaving.

**Sam** – Wait! Not so fast... Now, we have to seal the deal.

**Natacha** – Seal the deal? Are you kidding me? I was supposed to spend the night at his place, we never discussed anything else. Who do you think I am?

**Sam** – You don't like him?

**Natacha** – That's not the point! I'm an actress, I'm not a whore!

**Sam** – Right away with the strong words...

**Natacha** – Sleeping with a guy for 2500 pounds, what do you call that?

**Sam** – I call it... a high-class escort.

**Natacha** – Go fuck yourself!

**Sam** – Well, in any case, I need proof!

**Natacha** – Fine, tomorrow at breakfast, I'll take a selfie with him, send it to you, and then I'm out of here, done!

**Sam** – Okay, okay... Now, if you like my friend, don't hold back.

**Natacha** – Sure... Merry Christmas to you too! (*She puts away her phone and remains pensive for a moment.*) He's actually quite attractive, but well... (*Collecting herself*) No, it's out of the question!

*Fade out.*

## Scene 4

*Fred places a breakfast tray on the coffee table. Natacha enters from the bathroom, draped in the bathrobe we saw on Fred at the beginning. Fred is somewhat surprised.*

**Natacha** – I borrowed your bathrobe.

**Fred** – Ah yes, I can see that...

**Natacha** – I can take it off if you want.

**Fred** – Take it off...? Uh...

**Natacha** – No, I mean... I can go get dressed right away. To return your bathrobe.

**Fred** – No, no, please... Keep it on.

**Natacha** – Thank you for the towel... and the toothbrush.

**Fred** – Was the water not too hot?

**Natacha** – No, why?

**Fred** – I don't know... In Belarus, I imagine you don't have hot water every day.

**Natacha** – It's true that at home... The water is rather lukewarm... And even then, when we're lucky to have water from the tap!

**Fred** – Breakfast is served!

**Natacha** – Thank you very much! It looks wonderful...

*They start having breakfast.*

**Fred** – I suppose you would have preferred to spend Christmas with your family...

**Natacha** – Unfortunately, I didn't have a choice... (*She looks at the presents under the Christmas tree.*) I see that Santa Claus brought you some gifts...

**Fred** – I was mostly expecting a big one yesterday, with my fridge inside, but well...

**Natacha** – I'm sorry... I'm really sorry...

**Fred** – In the end, maybe I didn't lose out...

*She seems slightly troubled.*

**Natacha** – Aren't you going to open them?

**Fred** – There's one for you.

**Natacha** – For me?

**Fred** – The red one.



**Natacha** – What is it?

**Fred** – Open it...

*Natacha opens the package and finds a book.*

**Natacha** – The Highway Code?

**Fred** – Sorry, I didn't have a chance to go out. It's all I had at hand.

**Natacha** – Thank you, that's very kind...

**Fred** – If someday you want to get your driver's license in England... It's a bit outdated, but the Highway Code... It probably hasn't changed much.

**Natacha** – I'll keep it safe...

**Fred** – Do you have the same road signs as us in Belarus, or...?

**Natacha** – I... I don't know, I don't have a driver's license.

**Fred** – But you still have road signs, right?

**Natacha** – Yes, probably... But I won't bother you any longer. I'll finish getting ready and... then I'll leave.

**Fred** – At least finish your coffee!

*She finishes her coffee.*

**Natacha** – I have one last favour to ask...

**Fred** – I'm listening.

**Natacha** – I'd like to take a photo. As a souvenir...

**Fred** – A photo?

**Natacha** – With my phone! A selfie! You and me...

**Fred** – Alright.

*She takes out her phone and extends her arm to take the selfie. They both look at the camera.*

**Natacha** – Now, look at me. (*She kisses him on the lips and takes another photo.*) Best regards from Belarus... (*He is taken aback but regains his composure.*) I'll go get dressed...

*She prepares to leave.*

**Fred** – "I will sleep over at yours" do you know that show?

**Natacha** – No...

**Fred** – It's a guy who travels alone to different countries all over the world. Every time, he makes a bet to spend the night at a stranger's house.

**Natacha** – A bet?

**Fred** – And he films himself to prove that he won his bet... When you took that selfie, it reminded me of that...

**Natacha** – Oh, I see...

**Fred** – It's not for a show like that, is it?

**Natacha** – A show?

**Fred** – For a Belarusian version of "I will sleep over at yours? You mentioned that you're a model, so you must also work for TV...

**Natacha** – No, it's not for a TV show. *(She takes on a more serious tone.)* By the way... I didn't tell you yesterday so as not to worry you, but my friend warned me that...

**Fred** – What?

**Natacha** – The Belarusian secret police... They found out how I left the country, hidden in that fridge packaging. They found the order receipt, and they know that I was delivered to your place...

**Fred** – No way?

**Natacha** – I have to leave immediately. Those people are very dangerous. They could harm you too.

**Fred** – Harm? But we're in England! We're protected by the English police...

**Natacha** – The Belarusian secret agents operate outside the law, even abroad. Their specialty is poisonings with radioactive substances...

**Fred** – I hope the tacos we had yesterday weren't radioactive... The delivery guy did have a strange look...

**Natacha** – I'll get dressed and leave...

*She exits. She left her jacket on the back of a chair. He searches the pockets, finds some papers, and examines them.*

**Fred** – Charlotte... Actress... The bitch, I suspected it... She must be a friend of Sam's... The little bastard...

*He puts the papers back into the jacket pocket and finishes his coffee with a pensive look. Natacha returns, with a tragic expression.*

**Natacha** – Thank you, Fred... I'll never forget what you've done for me... Farewell...

*She prepares to leave. He stands up decisively and stands in her way.*

**Fred** – No way, I won't let you down.

**Natacha** – Pardon?

**Fred** – You don't know anyone in this country! Where could you possibly go to spend the night?

**Natacha** – Don't worry about me... I'll do as in that show you told me about...

**Fred** – That's exactly why I'm worried about you! You're a woman! And a very beautiful woman... You shouldn't just follow the first stranger who invites you to stay with him. It's dangerous!

**Natacha** – I know how to defend myself, you know.

**Fred** – And what are you going to do to make a living?

**Natacha** – I'm a model... If necessary, I know how to make money.

**Fred** – By doing fashion photos? But in England, it's not that easy. When you don't have connections...

**Natacha** – I wasn't thinking about that kind of photos...

**Fred** – It's out of the question... You're going to stay here, with me.

*His phone rings, and he answers the call.*

**Fred** – Yes, Sam.

**Sam** – Hey buddy, I'm in your neighbourhood. Can I come up for a coffee?

**Fred** – Sorry, but... no, it's not convenient right now.

**Sam** – Again! I'm starting to get suspicious... You swear there's really no girl at your place?

**Fred** – I have to go. I'll explain later... I'll call you back...

*He puts his phone away. Natacha is becoming increasingly uncomfortable.*

**Natacha** – I don't want you to have a falling out with your friend because of me...

**Fred** – I have to confess something...

**Natacha** – Oh yeah...?

**Fred** – I made a bet with this friend not to have any girls over at my place until the end of the year. That's why I didn't want to let you stay here.

**Natacha** – A bet?

**Fred** – 5000 pounds.

**Natacha** – That's a lot of money...

**Fred** – Yes, but I don't care... I won't throw you out on the street. Especially on Christmas Day. You can stay here as long as you want.

**Natacha** – But as you said, by hiding an undocumented person, you could get into trouble with the English police!

**Fred** – During the war in France, people hid English soldiers in their cellars. I can certainly hide a Belarusian resistance fighter... who also happens to be a top model!

*Natacha is clearly taken aback.*

**Natacha** – I don't know what to say... You're truly a hero...

**Fred** – Anyone would do the same in my place... If you were deported to fall back into the hands of the Belarusian secret police... I would never forgive myself.

**Natacha** – Of course, but...

**Fred** – Don't say anything more! I'll keep you here until next year. We'll also spend New Year's Eve together.

**Natacha** – New Year's Eve...? But... you must surely have plans! I don't want to ruin your evening!

**Fred** – I have no plans. I was planning to spend New Year's Eve alone to avoid temptations... About that bet I told you about...

**Natacha** – And you're going to lose 5000 pounds? Because of me?

**Fred** – Don't insist, it's decided. I'll keep you here, and no one will harm you. I won't take my eyes off you for a single second...

**Natacha** – But eventually... I'll have to leave one day...

**Fred** – Of course... What you need is papers. Let me think... How can one become English, or at least obtain a residency permit?

**Natacha** – I don't know...

**Fred** – You would need to do something heroic, for example, like... saving a child from drowning, or something like that.

**Natacha** – We're not going to throw a child into the Thames just to give me an opportunity to perform a heroic act.

**Fred** – No, you're right...

**Natacha** – Especially since I swim very poorly... I told you, there's no sea in Belarus.

**Fred** – I've got it!

**Natacha** – What?

**Fred** – I could adopt you!

**Natacha** – Adopt me? Like a dog, you mean?

**Fred** – Like my daughter!

**Natacha** – We're the same age! More or less... And besides, I already have parents...

**Fred** – I don't know... There must be a solution... I'll think about it...

**Natacha** – Fine...

**Fred** – By the way, did I tell you? I studied some Russian in high school!

**Natacha** – No...?

**Fred** – Yes, yes... Of course, I don't really speak it, but... just a few words. Actually, I went to Moscow a few years ago, I bought a method to learn Russian...

**Natacha** – Oh, really...?

*Fred searches through a box.*

**Fred** – I don't know what I did with it... With this move...

**Natacha** – No need to look...

**Fred** – Here it is! Lucky me...

**Natacha** – Oh, yes...

*He opens a method for learning Russian or any other guide with ready-made phrases for traveling in Russia.*

**Fred** – So... (*Reading a phrase in the guide phonetically*) Panidielnik, ftornik, sreda, tchitvierk, piatnistsa, soubota, vaskrisenia...

*She is obviously embarrassed, not understanding.*

**Natacha** – Sorry, I...

**Fred** – It's probably my accent. Wait, let me repeat it with more focus...

**Natacha** – Oh no, but I'm not Russian. Belarusian is a completely different language. We don't understand each other at all with Russians. That's why we often have conflicts with them...

**Fred** – I see...

**Natacha** – And what does it mean?

**Fred** – It means... (*He looks at the method or travel guide*) Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Like the seven days of the week we'll spend together until next year!

**Natacha** – Okay...

*He smiles at her with a silly look.*

*Fade to black.*

## Scene 5

*The same living room. The refrigerator box and the Christmas tree are gone. Natacha is alone, flipping through the Russian method or travel guide. The doorbell rings, and she goes to open it. She returns with Sam.*

**Sam** – Is he not here?

**Natacha** – He went grocery shopping. He'll be back soon.

**Sam** – Then I won't stay. If he sees us together, it's over. And I'd like to keep teasing him until January 1st...

**Natacha** – We need to end this joke, Sam. I've been stuck here at your best friend's place for a week, speaking with a Russian accent...

**Sam** – Admit it, we're having a good laugh, though...

**Natacha** – Yes, well... mostly you! I managed to escape occasionally for rehearsals, but I remind you that tonight is December 31st. I have a play to perform! And so do you, by the way...

**Sam** – Don't worry, you'll perform it. But anyway, he already lost his bet, so why are you staying?

**Natacha** – I don't know... I don't know how to get out of this, Sam... I don't want to disappoint him, you understand...?

**Sam** – Uh, no... I'm not sure I understand. Unless...

**Natacha** – What?

**Sam** – Unless you've really fallen in love with him...

**Natacha** – Nonsense... Well, you have to leave now, he could come back any minute...

**Sam** – Okay, I'm off...

*He leaves. She immerses herself in her method. Fred arrives with grocery bags.*

**Fred** – I ran into Sam in the staircase... you did well not to let him in.

**Natacha** – I did as you told me... I don't open the door to anyone... But didn't he find it strange that you didn't let him in?

**Fred** – He seemed in a hurry... Tonight is the premiere of his play...

**Natacha** – Yes, I know.

**Fred** – And how do you know?

**Natacha** – Well, no, I don't know... you must have told me...



**Fred** – I bought some groceries so we can properly celebrate New Year's Eve together... Do you like oysters?

**Natacha** – Oysters?

**Fred** – You don't know what they are either? Oh yes, that's right, you don't have the sea in Belarus...

**Natacha** – No...

**Fred** – We don't have a refrigerator, but... I'll put them on the windowsill for now. With the cold weather... You'll see, oysters are a bit special, but they're delicious...

**Natacha** – Thank you, that's very kind of you. But for tonight...

**Fred** – Ah... You've lost your Belarusian accent again...

**Natacha** – Yes... One could almost believe I'm English...

**Fred** – That works out well because I have a proposition for you.

**Natacha** – A proposition?

**Fred** – Please, have a seat...

*She sits down, somewhat worried.*

**Natacha** – I'm listening...

**Fred** – I've been thinking about your future...

**Natacha** – Oh yes...?

**Fred** – You speak English perfectly. And you're already a model. How about doing some theatre?

**Natacha** – Theatre?

**Fred** – I have a friend who is a director and actor. Would you like me to introduce you to him?

**Natacha** – I'm not sure if... And besides, I don't have any papers. I would never be able to work in English without papers...

**Fred** – That's exactly why I've thought of a way for you to obtain a residency permit.

**Natacha** – Adoption...

**Fred** – Adoption takes too long and is too complicated. But there's another solution, much simpler.

**Natacha** – Which one?

**Fred** – Marriage!

**Natacha** – Marriage? With whom?

**Fred** – With me!

**Natacha** – With you?

**Fred** – You're not already married, are you?

**Natacha** – No...

**Fred** – Then you could become my wife?

**Natacha** – Are you willing to marry me just so I can have papers?

**Fred** – Why not? A sham marriage.

**Natacha** – A sham marriage?

**Fred** – It will be your Christmas gift...

**Natacha** – That's really kind, but... I can't accept.

**Fred** – And why is that?

**Natacha** – Well, because...

**Fred** – No, but don't worry, nothing will happen between us.

**Natacha** – Nothing at all?

**Fred** – A sham marriage, you know what that is?

**Natacha** – Yes...

*She seems very disturbed and emotional.*

**Fred** – Now, if you prefer that...

*They both seem hesitant.*

**Natacha** – Yes... At the very least... I prefer...

*They embrace each other and kiss passionately.*

*Blackout.*

## Scene 6

*Fred and Natacha return from the bedroom. They both look very uncomfortable.*

**Natacha** – I'm sorry, I don't know what got into me...

**Fred** – No, it's me...

**Natacha** – Yes... So, you... You were proposing a sham marriage?

**Fred** – It's the first time I sleep with a girl right after proposing a sham marriage.

**Natacha** – And do you do this often? I mean... is it a flirting technique?

**Fred** – It should be, because it seems to work...

*Awkward smiles.*

**Natacha** – I have to confess something...

**Fred** – I think you've completely lost your accent... It's a shame, I liked it...

**Natacha** – That's actually what I wanted to talk to you about...

**Fred** – I'm listening.

**Natacha** – It's not easy to say...

**Fred** – What?

**Natacha** – I can't stay with you tonight for New Year's Eve.

**Fred** – And why is that?

**Natacha** – Because... I'm performing in a play.

**Fred** – A play? Which play?

**Natacha** – Sam's play...

*A moment of pretending to understand the truth, which he already knows.*

**Fred** – Alright... So, you...?

**Natacha** – I'm an actress. Sam asked me to play this little act for you... But I didn't know you, you understand...

*He pretends to be offended.*

**Fred** – Both of you really fooled me... So, it was a setup to extort money from me... And you helped him...

**Natacha** – I'm truly sorry. I didn't think that...

**Fred** – And I suppose he paid you for it?

**Natacha** – He offered to split it, that's true... But of course, that's no longer an option... I'll tell him that...

**Fred** – I can't believe it... You accepted money to sleep with me?

**Natacha** – No, not at all! That wasn't part of the plan. I was only supposed to spend one night at your place, just so he could win his bet!

**Fred** – I'm very disappointed, Natacha... Even though I imagine your name isn't really Natacha either. I believed in this story... In our story...

**Natacha** – But I did too, I swear.

**Fred** – Sorry, but I can never trust you again...

**Natacha** – I understand... I'll finish getting ready and leave... You won't see me again, don't worry...

*She exits. Fred takes out his phone and dials a number.*

**Fred** – Sam?

**Sam** – You're calling to savour your triumph, right?

**Fred** – What do you think?

**Sam** – Alright, you've won your bet... I owe you 5,000 pounds.

**Fred** – What if we forget about this stupid bet?

**Sam** – No kidding? Mr. Generous is too kind. But hey, I have a little gift too. A photo of you with the Russian doll sleeping in your bed for a week. Well, when I say sleeping...

*Fred looks at the selfie Sam just sent him.*

**Fred** – That bitch...

**Sam** – So, do you admit to it?

**Fred** – Yes...

**Sam** – So, it's you who owes me 5,000 pounds, my friend!

**Fred** – And that photo, she sent it to you, of course.

**Sam** – Doesn't matter. In order to win a bet, anything goes, right?

**Fred** – Don't bother, she told me everything...

**Sam** – Oh yeah? In bed, perhaps?

**Fred** – You little bastard...

*Sam laughs.*

**Sam** – Alright, I confess, she's a friend of mine. She's the actress who's performing in my play.

**Fred** – I know...

**Sam** – Come on, Fred, don't take it so seriously. It was just a joke. You don't owe me anything, obviously. But admit it, it was funny...

**Fred** – No, no, the bet still stands. I got caught, my own fault. And I keep my word.

**Sam** – Are you sure?

**Fred** – Well... I should actually thank you for letting me sleep with such a bombshell.

**Sam** – Ah, because you really spent the night together? You're luckier than me then... I've been trying to woo her for six months with no success...

**Fred** – It cost me 5,000 pounds.

**Sam** – I hope for that price, at least, you're going to see her again?

**Fred** – I don't know...

*Natacha arrives at the doorstep and overhears the conversation but doesn't reveal herself.*

**Sam** – Come on, Fred, I know you... Are you really more foolish than I thought, or did you understand everything from the beginning and take advantage of the situation?

**Fred** – Alright, I admit... I also played a trick on her. That's why I feel bad now...

**Sam** – Honestly, Fred, it was just a joke... I never thought this would go so far...

**Fred** – Well, I have to go... She's leaving now... I'll try to fix things.

**Sam** – I hope it was worth it... for that price.

*Fred puts away his phone. Natacha enters. She pretends to leave.*

**Natacha** – I'm leaving...

**Fred** – Sam just sent me this.

**Natacha** – What?

*Fred shows her the screen of his phone.*

**Fred** – The selfie we took together on Christmas morning.

**Natacha** – Yes, I sent it to him, it's true. But that was a week ago... A lot has happened since then...

**Fred** – Yeah...

**Natacha** – I regret that it's ending like this between us. I apologize...

*She pretends to leave.*

**Fred** – Wait...

**Natacha** – I betrayed your trust, Fred... You're a good guy... I don't deserve you...

**Fred** – I don't want us to part like this...

**Natacha** – No, you're right... We can't start a relationship based on such a lie. Sam talked a lot about you to me... I know that girls have disappointed you a lot... It's better for me to leave now...

*She heads towards the door.*

**Fred** – Charlotte!

**Natacha** – How do you know my name is Charlotte?

**Fred** – I don't know... Sam must have told me...

**Natacha** – Isn't it because you went through the pockets of my jacket?

**Fred** – Absolutely not!

**Natacha** – Stop it, I overheard the end of your conversation earlier. You both played me for fools...

**Fred** – I assure you, you're mistaken.

**Natacha** – You knew everything from the beginning. Did Sam tell you? Did you both scheme this up so that I would end up in your bed?

**Fred** – Sam didn't tell me anything, I figured it out on my own... I have to admit, your story was a bit far-fetched, wasn't it?

**Natacha** – Or maybe I'm not such a good actress after all...

**Fred** – At first, I really believed it...

**Natacha** – I didn't do it for the money... I took it as a challenge...

**Fred** – And we had a good laugh, didn't we?

**Natacha** – Yes, but in the end, it's you who manipulated me.

**Fred** – Hey, let's not reverse the roles, shall we?

**Natacha** – You knew, and you took advantage of it to seduce me, to use me.

**Fred** – Use you? You're exaggerating a bit, aren't you?

*They lock eyes in a defiant manner, but their mutual attraction is stronger.*

**Natacha** – Don't you want to use me a little more?

**Fred** – Yes...

*They passionately kiss again.*

*Blackout.*

## Scene 7

*Fred is working on his laptop. Natacha enters. They kiss.*

**Natacha** – Happy New Year, my love.

**Fred** – Happy New Year, Charlotte! Unless you want me to keep calling you Natacha?

**Natacha** – Only in certain circumstances, then...

**Fred** – And will you take on a Russian accent to whisper dirty things in my ear?

**Natacha** – The Belarusian accent! It's much more erotic...

**Fred** – Well, congratulations on your performance in the play last night. You're truly an excellent actress, I assure you.

**Natacha** – Thank you.

**Fred** – Fragile, handle with care... It's curious, actually... The plot of that little comedy strangely reminded me of our story...

**Natacha** – Yes, I think our story was already somewhat written in advance. By your friend Sam...

**Fred** – We still have to write the ending, the two of us...

**Natacha** – I'm ready to write it with you...

**Fred** – Since I lost my bet anyway, you can move in here, you know...

**Natacha** – Okay. But do you think it's big enough for both of us?

**Fred** – If not, we'll move. I have a friend who will be happy to help us... He owes me that much...

**Natacha** – So he hasn't given up on his 5000 pounds?

**Fred** – I insist on giving it to him. A bet is a bet.

**Natacha** – Half of it was supposed to come to me. I'll give it to you as a gift. So you only owe him 2500 now.

**Fred** – Yes...

**Natacha** – What?

**Fred** – Well, I do have an idea to save that money, but... I don't know if you'd agree.

**Natacha** – Go ahead and tell me...

*The doorbell rings. Fred goes to open it and returns followed by Sam.*

**Sam** – Hey, Charlotte...



**Natacha** – Hey...

**Sam** – I just wanted to wish you both a happy new year...

**Fred** – And incidentally, collect your cheque.

**Sam** – I told you, I don't want your cheque.

**Fred** – And I'm telling you, a bet is a bet...

**Sam** – Let's just say it's for all the posters you made for me for free.

**Fred** – No way. I consider it a matter of honour. Like in poker...

*He takes out his checkbook, fills one out, tears it up, and hands it to Sam.*

**Sam** – As you wish...

*Just as Sam is about to take the cheque, Fred changes his mind.*

**Fred** – But wait a moment, I'm reconsidering something...

**Sam** – What?

**Fred** – Do you remember the suspensive clause?

**Sam** – What clause?

**Fred** – I would lose my bet if a girl slept at my place before the end of the year... unless this time it was the right one and I married her.

**Sam** – So what?

*Fred turns to Natacha.*

**Fred** – It's too late for a sham marriage, but... would you agree to a white wedding?

*She kisses him in agreement.*

**Natacha** – If it can save you 5000 pounds...

*Sam smiles.*

**Fred** – Sorry, buddy, but in the end, you won't get your cheque...

**Sam** – Alright! But then I want to be your witness.

**Fred** – That wasn't the idea you had in mind when you delivered that Russian doll to me wrapped in a box, was it?

**Sam** – Who knows...

**Fred** – Oh, by the way, I have one more bad news for you.

**Sam** – What?

**Fred** – As a result, the apartment will be too small for both of us, so... I'll have to move.

**Sam** – I hope it'll be the last time... before the family expands.

**Natacha** – Well, let's not rush too much anyway...

*Sam chuckles.*

**Sam** – I brought a bottle of champagne to celebrate the new year... and your engagement.

**Fred** – With all this, I still don't have a fridge to chill your champagne!

**Sam** – Don't worry. It's downstairs in my van, your fridge. It's been there for three months now! Just need to plug it in.

**Fred** – Thanks, Sam... (*He turns to Natacha*) So, is it a yes?

**Natacha** – Tak.

**Sam** – Tak?

**Fred** – I think it means yes in Belarusian.

*Fred and Natacha kiss.*

**Sam** – It's incredible the way we met, isn't it?

**Fred** – If you didn't have the idea for this twisted joke...

**Natacha** – Yes, well... It wasn't just him...

**Fred** – What else?

**Natacha** – I have one last thing to confess to you.

**Fred** – I fear the worst...

**Natacha** – Sam showed me pictures of you, and... he really spoke highly of you. Like the guy so disappointed by women that he's ready to join a convent.

**Sam** – Convents are for women. Although, it would be just his style, that little pervert, to go retire in a convent...

**Fred** – I see... So you decided to take up the challenge...

**Sam** – Women are always motivated by hopeless cases.

**Natacha** – I would have never agreed to do this with just anyone. And I was convinced you wouldn't believe it for more than fifteen minutes.

**Fred** – Alright, I admit... I didn't believe it for more than five minutes either...

**Natacha** – So we both pretended to believe it.

**Fred** – When two people want to believe in a lie, it's already a bit of the truth, isn't it?

**Natacha** – Yes, it's a good definition of love.

*They kiss.*

*Blackout.*

**The end.**

## *About the author*

Born in 1955 in Auvers-sur-Oise (France), Jean-Pierre Martinez was first a drummer for several rock bands before becoming a semiologist in advertising. He then began a career writing television scripts before turning to theatre and writing plays. He has written close to a hundred scripts for television and as many plays, some of which have already become classics (*Friday the 13th*, *Strip Poker*). He is one of the most produced contemporary playwrights in France and in other francophone countries. Several of his plays are also available in Spanish and English, and are regularly produced in the United States and Latin America.

Amateur and professional theatre groups looking for plays to perform can download Jean-Pierre Martinez's plays for free from his website La Comédiathèque (<https://comediatheque.net/>). However, public productions are subject to SACD filing.

For those who prefer reading or working from books, printed versions of his plays can be purchased from Amazon for a price similar to that of photocopying this document.

***Other plays by the same author translated in English:***

*A Cuckoo's nest*

*A simple business dinner*

*An innocent little murder*

*Casket for two*

*Cheaters*

*Crisis and Punishment*

*Critical but stable*

*Four stars*

*Friday the 13th*

*Him and Her*

*Is there a pilot in the audience?*

*Just a moment before the end of the world*

*Lovestruck at Swindlemore Hall*

*New Year's Eve at the Morgue*

*One marriage out of two*

*Quarantine*

*Running on Empty*

*Strip Poker*

*The Ideal Son-in-Law*

*The Window across the courtyard*

*The Worst Village in England*

*Welcome aboard!*

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