

La Comédiathèque

Gay Friendly

Jean-Pierre Martinez



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Gay Friendly

A bag full of banknotes can help to provide a lavish gay wedding for one's son.
However, ill-gotten gains never bring lasting benefits...

Characters

Gaby: man (or woman)

Alex: man (or woman)

Sam: man

Vic: woman

Gaby and Alex can be either women or men, but since they are a gay couple,
they must be of the same gender.

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Lounging on the couch, Gaby leisurely peruses a travel catalog, relishing the flavour of an exotic cocktail. Beside him, a muted television beams an unseen program. His gaze fixates on a page in the catalog.

Gaby (*with enthusiasm*) – The United States, perhaps? Las Vegas... Caesars Palace... Slot machines... (*His grin diminishes*) Five thousand euros for a week? That's a hefty sum... I'd practically be broke before setting foot in the casino...

His focus abruptly shifts to the television screen. Gaby grabs the remote and unmutes the sound.

Presenter – The numbers to hit the EuroMillions jackpot were 5, 9, 12, 17, and 24. For the stars, 6 and 11. The lucky winner will walk away with the modest sum of 50 million euros...

Gaby mutes the sound once again, contemplating.

Gaby – I wonder why I keep playing... (*His phone rings*) Sam, my darling, how are you? Laundry day, is it? How did I guess? You only drop when you're out of clean underwear! Of course, I'm exaggerating... It's the Jewish mother in me... So, found a job? Any big news to share? Don't tell me you're getting married, for heaven's sake! Sort of? You've either spilled too much or not enough, spill the beans... Well, if you want to keep us in suspense... Okay, see you later... I love you too. (*Gaby puts away his phone and sighs*) "Sort of" ... How can one get married "sort of"?

Alex arrives sporting a Louis Vuitton bag, discreetly tucking it away in a corner before giving Gaby a kiss. Alex notices the cocktail.

Alex – Treating ourselves, aren't we?

Gaby – It's cheaper than a plane ticket and that makes me feel like I'm on vacation. Care for one too?

Alex – Maybe later...

Gaby – How was your day, my love?

Alex – Let's just say it was a day filled with...

Gaby – Emotions, you mean?

Alex – Yes, that too... I'll fill you in on the details.

Gaby – Well, I've got the perfect spot for our honeymoon.

Alex – Honeymoon? We'd need to be married first... and I haven't said yes yet.

Gaby – We fought for years for the right to get married!

Alex – Sure, it's a right. But it's not a necessity! It's like abortion. It's good that we have the right to do it, but if we can avoid it, even better.

Gaby – So, for you, marriage is like abortion? Romance is truly in the air...

Alex – We've discussed this before, Gaby... I find the idea of gay marriage a bit ridiculous, excuse me...

Gaby – Ridiculous?

Alex – I mean, who would wear white, for example?

Gaby – I would, obviously!

Alex – At your age... Isn't that a bit too girlish?

Gaby – Thanks for highlighting my age, very delicate of you...

Alex – I apologise..

Gaby – And you can be gay and girlish, you know...

Alex – A honeymoon... at our age... (*Gaby gives him a disapproving look*) Besides, if it's just for a trip, we don't have to get married for that, right? Where would you want to go, anyway?

Gaby – What about Las Vegas?

Alex – Las Vegas... Usually, Americans go there to get married between two witnesses. And save on the honeymoon, precisely. Why Las Vegas?

Gaby – I don't know... I've always dreamed of going to one of those casinos, with rows of slot machines as far as the eye can see... I feel like one is waiting for me somewhere with the jackpot...

Alex – The jackpot...

Gaby – Unfortunately, I'm not sure if we can afford Las Vegas right now... Especially if our son, who's currently jobless, has decided to tie the knot too...

Alex – Excuse me?

Gaby – Sam just called. He's on his way over. He told me he's getting married... sort of.

Alex – You see? We're not going to get married at the same time as him!

Gaby – Why not?

Alex – Getting married at the same time as your kids would be even more ridiculous, wouldn't it? (*Pause*) Hold on, what exactly do you mean by getting married... sort of?

Gaby – That's what he said...

Alex – And what do you think he means by that?

Gaby – Maybe he's gay...

Alex – You think?

Gaby – Dogs don't make cats.

Alex – Especially when it's two males or two females...

Gaby – We've never seen him with a girl.

Alex – We've never seen him with a boy either.

Gaby – Maybe he just never dare to introduce them to us.

Alex – When you're raised by gay parents, I don't think coming out is really that overwhelming, right?

Gaby – Or maybe it's the other way around... He's straight, and he never dared to tell us, fearing he'd disappoint us...

Alex – Disappoint us? You're delusional...

Gaby – When you have gay parents, maybe it's not that easy to tell them you're straight, who knows...

Alex – Do you think we might have traumatised that poor child so much? I wonder if the pope is right after all. Maybe we shouldn't be allowed to raise children...

Gaby – And now, I'm starting to wonder if one can be both gay and homophobic... You were already against gay marriage, and now you're against adoption too!

Alex – I'm not against gay marriage; I'm against marriage altogether! I have the right to find it outdated, don't I?

Gaby starts to sniff the air suspiciously.

Gaby – It smells strange in here since you arrived...

Alex – You think so?

Gaby – A hint of cheap cologne... (*Dramatically*) You're leaving me for someone of the opposite sex!

Alex – But no! What are you talking about...

Gaby – You're hiding something from me, Alex... I know you... What's going on?

Alex (*after a hesitation*) – Well... It's possible that we might have the means to go to Las Vegas after all.

Gaby's face lights up with a smile.

Gaby – Did we hit the EuroMillions jackpot? (*His smile fades*) But that's impossible; I just listened to the results on TV... We lost again!

Alex – It's a bit more complicated than that...

Gaby – Spit it out...

Alex retrieves the Vuitton bag and sets it on the coffee table.

Gaby – So, it's this bag that reeks of cologne! What are you carrying in there?

Alex – I found it in the subway...

Gaby – A Vuitton bag? Great... But I thought you found that vulgar...

Alex – It depends on what's inside...

Gaby – And what's inside?

Alex – Cash.

Gaby – Cash...?

Alex – Look...

Gaby opens the bag, reaches in, and pulls out a stack of bills.

Gaby – Don't tell me these are real...

Alex – I didn't believe it at first either... I even thought it might be a prank for a hidden camera show... That the bag was rigged with an alarm that would go off as soon as I grabbed the handle... Or attached to an elastic band... Or to a bucket of water set up above my head. But no...

Gaby – And how many stacks are there, like that?

Alex – I didn't have time to count... But one thing's for sure, the bag is full of them.

Gaby – And you found this in the subway? (*With a suspicious look*) But when you say found... You didn't steal it, did you?

Alex – The bag was next to me on the seat... I thought it belonged to one of the two fake blondes sitting across from me... I even found it quite rude to take up a seat for a bag... Even a Vuitton bag... The train was crowded... But no, the two blondes got off at the next station, and the bag stayed on the seat.

Gaby – And then?

Alex – When an old lady wanted to sit down, I instinctively took the bag and put it on my lap...

Gaby – Instinctively...

Alex – Anyway... When it was time to get off, since no one was claiming the bag, I got off with it... On the platform, I thought I would look inside to see if there was an address or a phone number to contact the owner.

Gaby – And?

Alex – The only numbers inside, believe me, are the serial numbers of the bills...

Gaby – That's crazy... But what do you plan to do with it?

Alex – I don't know... For now, it feels like I've won the lottery... Let me savour it a bit...

Gaby – Yes, well... This money belongs to someone...

Alex – There's no address, I'm telling you! What do you want us to do? Place an ad in the newspaper: "Found Vuitton bag full of banknotes, thank the owner to contact us at this number to retrieve it all..." The phone would never stop ringing...

Gaby – There's still the police...

Alex – Of course, I thought about that too... But you have to admit it hurts, doesn't it?

Gaby – Come on, Alex, we can't keep this money... It's not ours!

Alex – And what guarantees us that the police will find the real owner of the bag? Maybe he won't even dare to come forward!

Gaby – To claim a bag full of cash?

Alex – If it's money he was hiding from the tax authorities, for example, and was about to transfer to Switzerland.

Gaby – In the subway?

Alex – I don't know... What do you suggest, then?

Gaby – It's true that it's tempting, but we can't keep this money. Especially if it's dirty money!

Alex – Money is always a bit dirty, you know... Any psychoanalyst will tell you that... And this one smells pretty good, doesn't it?

Gaby – When they say money has no smell... It's true that this scent is rather strong...

Alex – It's worth thinking about for five minutes, isn't it?

Gaby – And what if they're counterfeit bills after all... Can you imagine? We'd get caught as soon as we tried to pass them off...

Alex – In any case, we need to decide quickly... If we don't inform the police now, we could be accused of hiding stolen money.

Gaby – One thing's for sure, this money wasn't deposited in front of you in the subway by an anonymous benefactor...

Alex – And why not after all? Our guardian angel, who knows... So that we can give our son a beautiful gay wedding...

Gaby – Unfortunately, as you say, we're too old to believe in miracles... And I don't know if angels are very favourable to gay marriage.

Alex – Who knows... Now there might be a gay-friendly heaven...

Doorbell rings.

Gaby – Oh my God, it must be Sam...

Alex – I'll put this away for now, and we'll talk about it later, okay?

Alex puts the stack back in the bag and closes it. Gaby is about to go open the door.

Gaby – I can't wait to find out if it's a boy or a girl...

Alex – Is his girlfriend already pregnant?

Gaby – No! To find out if Sam is going to introduce us to a boy or a girl!

Alex – Oh yes, that's right... Excuse me, my mind is elsewhere...

Alex puts the bag in a corner of the room. Sam arrives, also with a bag in hand.

Sam – Hello, Dad, hello, Mom.

Gaby – Ah, very subtle...

Sam gives Alex a kiss on the cheek.

Alex – Hello, Sam.

Sam – How are you?

Gaby – Well, yes, why are you asking?

Sam – I don't know, you both seem weird...

Alex and Gaby exchange an embarrassed look.

Alex – Well then, you're alone!

Sam – Uh, yes...

Gaby takes Sam's bag.

Gaby – Give me your dirty laundry; I'll take care of it.

Alex – We really didn't raise him well, Gaby! Aren't you ashamed, at your age, to still bring your laundry to your parents to wash?

Sam – It gives me an excuse to visit you regularly.

Gaby – That's kind...

Alex – Do you want us to gift you a washing machine for your birthday?

Gaby – Otherwise, you can put it on your wedding registry...

Sam – My wedding registry?

Alex – So? Where's the lucky lady?

Gaby – Or should I say the lucky gentleman?

Alex gives Gaby an intrigued look.

Sam – Well, that is...

Alex – Really... You're keeping us in suspense...

Sam – About what...?

Alex – Gaby was worried that...

Gaby – Forget it, it's completely ridiculous.

Alex – And besides, the important thing is that you're happy, right?

Sam – I see... So, you already suspected something...

Gaby – When you told me you were getting married... sort of.

Sam – Yes, it's... It's a kind of union, indeed. But in celibacy...

Alex – Excuse me...?

Sam – But I thought you understood...

Gaby – A union in celibacy?

Alex – Sounds like a crossword puzzle definition.

Gaby – You mean a civil partnership? No worries, it doesn't bother us at all...

Sam – That's good.

Gaby – So?

Sam – Well, yes, I solemnly announce to you: I've decided to become a priest.

Stunned parents.

Gaby – Can you repeat that?

Sam – I've thought about it deeply, and my decision is made. I'm entering the seminary.

Gaby – Tell me this is a joke...

Sam – I knew you'd react like this, but my faith is unwavering. And faith can move mountains...

Alex – Your faith? But the last Mass you attended was on the occasion of your grand-dad's funeral!

Sam – The ways of the Lord are inscrutable... It's true that my conversion is sudden and late, but it's sincere. I had a revelation...

Gaby – A revelation?

Alex – Did you see the Virgin Mary?

Gaby – Remember when he was little, he had his mystical phase.

Alex – That's true... He heard voices... Like Joan of Arc...

Gaby – I wonder if I would have preferred him to be gay, after all...

Alex – Wait a minute... Priest and gay, that's not necessarily incompatible.

Sam – Well, it's not like I'm announcing I have brain cancer, either.

Gaby – At least sometimes that can be treated.

Alex – So, I'll have to call you Father?

Gaby – Priest... Is this to punish us, is that it?

Sam – Well, one doesn't take up the holy vocation to reprimand their parents, but rather to serve the Divine.

Gaby – Oh, absolutely...

Alex – What can we say to that?

Gaby – Well, he could still officiate our wedding in the church.

Alex – Let's not forget that the Church frowns upon same-sex marriage...

Gaby – Perhaps he'll make a special exception for us, right, Sam? A church wedding has more dignity, doesn't it?

Sam – Is it just me, or is there a peculiar fragrance lingering? Did someone accidentally unleash a torrent of cologne?

Gaby – Oh yes, that's right, I almost forgot about that...

Sam – Forgot what?

Alex – Committing a major sin wouldn't be too bad if we had someone reliable to confess to...

Gaby – But I don't know... Wouldn't you rather be a pastor? At least, you could get married.

Alex – Mormon bishop, there you go... You could even have multiple wives...

Gaby – At least you'd have a more conventional sex life...

Alex – Well, as conventional as it gets for a Mormon bishop.

Gaby – They even say there are gay pastors in America.

Alex – Well, we're not in America, so...

Sam – It's tempting, no doubt... But I remain faithful to the Catholic and Roman Church.

Alex – Alex – Let's spin it positively. Sam was jobless... A priest, that's a steady gig, isn't it? It's akin to being a professor. There seems to be a scarcity of contenders for that as well. I mean, teaching has evolved into a genuine vocation. In the grand scheme, Sam's onto something. Nowadays, it's more advantageous to be a rural priest than a suburban educator. So, where are you thinking of settling?

Sam – I'll go wherever God calls me...

Alex – If I were in your shoes, I'd steer clear of becoming a worker priest... given the current layoffs in the industry. But hey, with the crisis in vocations, I don't reckon God is in a position to downsize anytime soon...

Overwhelmed, Gaby seeks a distraction.

Gaby – I'll put your dirty laundry over there and splash some water on my face...

Dejected, Gaby leaves with the bag of dirty laundry.

Alex – Besides that, how's everything going?

Sam – It's okay...

Alex – I'll fetch us some drinks; I think we all need a little pick-me-up. What can I get you? Whiskey, Port... Sorry, I think we're out of altar wine...

Sam – Anything you have is fine... I'll pray a bit for the salvation of your souls while waiting...

Alex – Certainly...

Alex departs. Sam's phone rings, and he answers. Unnoticed by Sam, Gaby returns to discreetly take the Vuitton bag. But Gaby, about to leave, overhears the start of the conversation and stays to listen to the rest.

Sam – Yes? Yes, I'm already here. Do you have the address? Great, I'll wait for you... (*He laughs*) No, no, it's just that... Listen, you won't believe it, but I told them I'm considering joining the clergy, and... I don't know, it just came to me, as a joke... Yeah! Crazy, isn't it? It almost freaks me out that my parents believe I could actually become a priest... Can you imagine? But what image do they have of me? (*Alex also returns with bottles and glasses, and listens as well*) No, I swear, it was hilarious... You should have seen their faces... I don't know, there's a weird vibe today... Otherwise, how could they swallow such a huge lie... Hope it's not some money issue... I wonder if today is really the right day for... (*He turns around, noticing Alex and Gaby giving disapproving looks*) Okay, I'll wait for you, see you in a bit...

Sam puts away his phone.

Gaby – You played a trick on us, huh? Aren't you even a bit ashamed?

Sam – Sorry, but I couldn't resist the temptation... You seemed so eager for me to announce some happy news...

Alex – You're trying to give us a heart attack, is that the plan? To speed up the inheritance process!

Sam laughs.

Sam – Seriously! How could you believe such nonsense?

Gaby – So, is your friend arriving soon?

Sam – Yes, I just spoke to my friend on the phone.

Alex – When you say your friend, you mean...

Gaby – Your boyfriend or... your girlfriend?

The doorbell rings.

Sam – I'll get it...

Alex – We'll finally find out...

The friend arrives, dressed in biker gear, jeans, and leather, with the head covered in a helmet, making it impossible to determine if she's a boy or a girl. She holds a bottle of champagne and hands it to Sam.

Sam – Let me introduce you to Vic, the friend who... lives with me.

Gaby – And Vic, is it for... Victor or Victoria? (*Vic removes her helmet*) Victory, it's a girl!

Alex shakes hands with Vic and winces.

Alex – What a grip... (*To Sam*) You, who are so sensitive...

Sam – Vic is a black belt in karate...

Gaby – Thank God, my son isn't gay...

Sam and Vic exchange an embarrassed look.

Alex – Sometimes, I wonder if you're more homophobic than I am...

Vic – Nice to finally meet you.

Gaby – Finally? If I understand correctly, Sam has been hiding you from us for a long time...

Vic (*embarrassed*) – Well, that is...

Sam – Anyway, rejoice; soon you won't have to wash my dirty laundry anymore.

Alex (*to Vic*) – So, you're the one washing his underwear? I don't congratulate you, miss; it's not exactly progress for the feminist cause...

Gaby – We've given him very bad habits, you know...

Sam – I meant that we're going to buy a washing machine... And even several.

Alex – Several?

Sam – I'll tell you about it later...

Gaby – Please, Vic, have a seat. You're at home here.

Sam hands the bottle to Gaby.

Sam – Vic didn't want to arrive empty-handed...

Alex – Great? After all, we have lots of things to celebrate...

Sam – Oh, really? You too?

Gaby – Well... We're getting married too. Isn't that right, Alex?

Vic – You too?

Sam – Getting married... You mean... together?

Alex – Very funny...

Vic – Well, we're basically roommates and business partners.

Alex – See? I told you. They also believe that marriage is a bit outdated! They're more into the whole domestic partnership thing.

Gaby – Domestic partnership... How romantic...

Alex – True, it might sound more like a tax return than a love letter, but well...

Gaby – If you could take care of our guests for a moment...

Alex (*to Vic*) – Feel free to make yourself at home. Would you like me to take your coat?

Vic – Thanks, I'm good...

Gaby – I hope you found it easy to come to our place.

Vic – Yes, yes... I'm a bit late, sorry, but there are lots of cops downstairs...

Sam – Oh yes, the street is completely blocked...

Gaby – Really?

Sam sees the bag.

Sam – Whose Vuitton bag is this? I thought you found it vulgar?

Gaby – Should we tell him?

Sam – Tell me what?

Alex – What's the deal with the swarm of cops downstairs?

Vic – Seems like there's been a break-in at a fancy mansion nearby. At the widow's place of some wealthy billionaire.

Alex – No kidding...

Sam – A wealthy billionaire, you say? I didn't realize there were broke billionaires... Must be the crisis...

Vic – It looks like the burglars made a getaway using the subway.

Gaby – The subway?

Sam – Well, they shut down the station downstairs, that's for sure.

Vic – Fortunately, I came on my motorcycle.

Gaby (*to Alex*) – But you took the subway, didn't you?

Alex – I must have just passed through...

Gaby tries to push the Vuitton bag behind the couch.

Sam – By the way, what were you going to tell me?

Alex – I can't recall... Probably wasn't anything crucial. It might come back to me later.

Vic takes a seat on the couch where the bag is discreetly hidden.

Vic – It does smell nice in here...

Sam – Yes... Where's that scent coming from?

Alex and Gaby exchange an embarrassed look.

Alex – So, are we popping open that champagne or what?

Sam – Oh, right, the champagne...

Vic – Not sure if it's properly chilled.

Gaby – I'll grab some glasses.

Sam – No worries; we'll handle it... Vic, mind lending a hand?

Sam and Vic leave.

Alex – The good news is that these bills are genuine...

Gaby – The bad news is that they're definitely stolen bills...

Alex – We really need to stash this away somewhere until we figure out what to do...

Gaby – I think we've stepped into a mess, Alex. Look at us! We're already in deceit and concealment... Even with our own son...

Alex – If he hadn't brought that biker here, we could have had a family meeting to discuss it, but now... We hardly know this Vic! We don't even know if it's really a woman...

Gaby – You're right. And we have no clue about what she does. She might as well be a police officer or a tax inspector...

Alex – Police officer? You have these old-fashioned expressions sometimes...

Gaby – What?

Alex – It's a bit antiquated. Sounds like something from the time they called Blacks "coloured men" and gays "inverts"...

Gaby – Coming from you, with your domestic partnership! Just so you know, we now say "free union"!

Sam and Vic come back with nothing in their hands.

Sam – You're not arguing again, are you? Sorry, I couldn't find the glasses...

Gaby – Oh yes, I rearranged the cupboards a few days ago... I put them somewhere else...

Alex – Always rearranging things... You see, now we can't find anything...

Gaby – Don't move, I'll go...

Sam takes a few steps and stumbles over the Vuitton bag.

Sam – Anyway, you'd better put away this bag, it's a bit in the way. I almost fell over... (*He picks up the bag*) And it's quite heavy, too... Are you going on a trip?

Gaby – We're not entirely sure yet...

Sam – But whose bag is it, by the way?

Alex and Gaby share an embarrassed glance.

Gaby – We're not entirely sure yet...

Sam – What do you mean, you're not sure yet?

Gaby attempts to steer the conversation in a different direction.

Gaby – How about grabbing a bite to go with the champagne...

Vic – Sure, why not?

Sam – If you have crackers or...

Vic – Ladyfingers.

Gaby – Sorry, we only have peanuts

Sam – Not the ideal champagne pairing, but well...

Gaby exits.

Alex (*to break the silence*) – So, what do you do for a living, miss?

Vic – I work as a delivery driver...

Gaby – For...?

Vic – Delivering pizzas.

Alex – Oh, that's interesting...

Silence ensues.

Vic – Well, it's just temporary, I assure you... Once our venture with Sam takes off... (*Silence*) I know... When you hear delivery driver...

Alex gives an anxious look to Sam, who still holds the Vuitton bag.

Alex (*diverting*) – Don't worry... We're very open-minded here... Besides, you don't exactly give off a police officer or tax inspector vibe. I'll go help Gaby.

Alex exists. Sam places the bag in a corner.

Sam – So, what do you think of my parents?

Alex – I don't know. I find them a bit... peculiar.

Sam – Peculiar... You mean gay?

Vic – More like they're hiding something, don't you think?

Sam – Yeah... It feels like there's something on their minds...

Vic – Maybe it's your straight coming out. Your parents might be upset that you're not gay...

Sam – You know, parents always wish their kids would carry on family traditions.

Gaby comes back, placing some appetisers on the table.

Gaby – Everything good with you, lovebirds?

Sam – All good...

Gaby – I'll head back to assist Alex...

Gaby exits.

Vic – I can't shake the feeling that I walked into a trap... You mentioned introducing me to your parents to discuss our project. You didn't mention you were going to present me as... your fiancée.

Sam – I didn't say anything!

Vic – You didn't correct them either!

Sam – They looked so thrilled... Plus, if we're presented as a couple, it might make them more inclined to invest, you know? It adds a touch of trust...

Vic – You're right, they can just slip the check into the wedding fund... But do you realise it might lead to complications...

Sam – How so?

Vic – Because we're both gay!

Sam – Yeah... Second-generation gays, we've tried everything to blend in, and we're still facing discrimination...

Alex enters with a champagne bucket, placing the bottle inside. Gaby follows, carrying the glasses.

Alex – Let it chill for about five minutes, okay?

Gaby – Help yourselves to some peanuts in the meantime.

Vic – Thanks.

A slightly awkward silence follows. They all eat peanuts. Vic signals Sam to begin.

Sam – So, the reason I brought Vic here is to... discuss the project we share...

Gaby – Your project... of marriage, you mean?

Vic shoots Sam a fierce glance.

Sam – Of partnership, actually... Well, I... We have a very innovative project in mind...

Alex – A startup?

Vic – Better than that...

Sam – A chain of laundries!

Gaby – Laundries?

Vic – Well, starting with one or two...

Sam – We'll see how it goes...

Alex – Okay...

Gaby – Ah, yes, it's... quite an unexpected idea...

Alex – Especially considering someone who brings their dirty laundry to their parents' every week.

Sam – That's precisely what inspired this concept, you see.

Gaby – What concept?

Sam – The intersection of laundry and family ties!

Vic – The idea is to rekindle the magic of laundry, to inject laundromats with the symbolic and emotional significance they used to have.

Sam – Transforming them into social spaces.

Vic – Laundromats have become completely anonymous and impersonal.

Sam – We want to turn them into community hubs.

A pause.

Alex – This is another joke, right?

Gaby – Like when you declared you wanted to become a priest.

Sam – Not at all! It's very serious.

Vic – Although it is indeed tied to the notion of re-sanctifying the place where one washes their dirty laundry...

Sam – I won't go as far as to say people would visit our laundromats like they used to attend church, to gather and commune together, but there's a hint of that.

Alex – Of course...

Sam – And between us, a laundromat is fantastic. It practically runs itself! You just need to swing by once a week to retrieve the money from the cash registers...

Alex – Like with prostitutes or slot machines... Now I understand the metaphor better... Being a laundry owner is the ideal job! Better than a priest, at least. It's a bit like a pimp, really...

Sam – Except that it's entirely legal!

A pause.

Gaby – But there are already a lot of laundromats, right?

Sam – That's where our original concept of a gay-friendly laundry comes in.

Vic – To segment the market and exploit an untapped niche...

Sam – After that, potentially, it's a concept that can be diversified.

Vic – Organic laundry, eco-friendly laundry...

Alex – Kosher laundry, halal laundry...

Gaby – And did you come up with this genius idea while delivering pizzas?

Vic – I also have a degree in business management...

Alex – Ah, I see...

Sam – Do you know what proportion of gay couples have met at the laundromat?

Alex – No...

Sam – Me neither, but probably quite a few.

Vic – In any case, that's where Sam and I met!

Awkward moment.

Sam – Anyway, you've caught on; our concept is more than just a laundromat. It's a genuine social club..

Vic – A bit like speed dating, but for the time it takes to do a wash.

Sam – The Time of a Wash! That could even be the name of this new brand.

Alex and Gaby exchange a concerned look.

Gaby – Well, we're happy for you...

Alex – And we wish you all the success...

Gaby – But... how does it directly concern us?

Sam – Well... You won't believe it, but oddly enough, our banker isn't too thrilled about funding this promising project...

Vic – You know, banks are pretty cautious these days.

Alex – It's the crisis...

Gaby – We don't promote entrepreneurship enough in our country, that's clear.

Sam – So... We thought about getting you involved too...

Vic – To let you benefit from this exceptional opportunity.

Sam – As minority partners...

Vic – A kind of moral and financial guarantee, so to speak... Well... mainly financial...

Sam – I know you don't have substantial savings, but...

Gaby's attention is drawn to the TV screen.

Gaby – It seems like they're talking about that burglary again...

Alex – Turn up the volume, quick!

Gaby – Do you mind?

Gaby turns up the sound, surprising Sam and Vic.

Speaker – Following the break-in at this private mansion, the thieves supposedly fled via the subway, carrying their loot, possibly stashed in one or maybe two Vuitton bags. The stolen items were picked up in a subway car by an accomplice, as revealed by surveillance footage... Limited clues at the moment, except for a broken bottle of perfume discovered at the burglary site...

Alex turns off the sound once again.

Alex – We're not going to watch TV when we have guests, after all.

Gaby – Do you think the police will catch them?

Vic – It depends on the evidence they have, I guess... Like a description, for example...

Sam – It's for sure that the contents of an elderly billionaire's safe could boost our project...

Vic – No doubt...

Sam – Imagine, a Vuitton bag like that one, filled with banknotes...

Vic – Even half of it would be sufficient for us...

Alex and Gaby stare at the bag with a worried look.

Sam – So, what do you think of our idea?

Gaby – What idea?

Sam – Our idea of gay-friendly laundromats! We have to act quickly, you know! Before someone else steals the concept...

However, Gaby and Alex are clearly preoccupied.

Alex – Oh yes, of course...

Sam – So?

Gaby – Why not, huh Alex? At least it would be for a good cause...

Alex – We'll see... Actually, we just had an unexpected windfall...

Vic observes Gaby and Alex's strange behaviour.

Vic – A windfall? Did you win the lottery?

Alex – Perhaps...

Sam – What do you mean, perhaps?

Gaby – We're waiting for the draw.

Sam – Well, that's a bit shaky as a financial guarantee...

Gaby – So, are we popping this champagne?

Alex is about to uncork the bottle.

Alex – Come on, let's raise a toast.

Gaby – To all our projects!

As the cork pops, the scene is suddenly plunged into darkness.

Alex – Damn, a power outage!

Sam – Or maybe you knocked out the bulb with the champagne cork.

Alex – It's the weak circuit breaker. Whenever we use the oven and toaster at the same time, it trips.

Sam – We should reset the button. Do you have any candles?

Gaby – I don't remember where I put them... Oh, yes...

Gaby fumbles in the dark and eventually lights a candle.

Gaby – The circuit breaker is in the kitchen...

Alex – Stay here, I'll go...

Sam – Vic, are you still here?

Vic – Where else would I be...

Gaby – He has always been afraid of the dark.

Sam – Nonsense...

Vic – It's like that horror movie I caught on TV recently... It kicks off with a blackout, exactly, and...

Sam – Excuse me, but I'm not sure I want to know the details...

The light comes back.

Sam – Ah!

Gaby – There you go, my love, no harm done....

Sam – Oh, come on...

Alex returns and blows out the candle.

Alex – Time for a new round, let's raise our glasses.

Alex pours the drinks. They sip.

Sam – So, you would be willing to invest some money in our venture? That's cool...

Gaby – I don't know... Alex?

Alex – Yes, of course... Why not put some of our savings into an innovative family project.

Sam – I always knew you both had a bit of a business angel vibe...

Vic – Well, at least, you are angels...

Alex – The thing is, much like angels, we defy easy categorization...

Gaby – What do you think, Alex? We should chat about it a bit before before making a decision.

Sam shares a knowing look with Vic.

Sam – I'll go grab a smoke on the balcony...

Vic – I'll join you...

Alex – This way, I'll bring you an ashtray...

They go out.

Gaby – Phew! We can finally stash the loot. Where can I hide this...

Gaby heads towards the bag.

Alex (off) – Where did you put the ashtrays?

Gaby – In the hallway cupboard!

Gaby looks into the bag, and his face freezes.

Gaby – It can't be true! The money is gone... (*Gaby starts searching everywhere*) It's not possible...

Alex returns.

Alex – What?

Gaby starts turning the sofa cushions.

Gaby (*shouting*) – The Vuitton bag! It's empty! Someone took off with our cash during the power outage!

Alex can't respond because Sam and Vic return too.

Sam – I heard shouting... What's happening?

Gaby – Oh, nothing, just... I misplaced the remote, that's all!

Vic grabs the remote, left in plain sight, and hands it to Gaby with an ironic look.

Vic – Here it is...

Sam – Nothing gets past her...

Gaby (*with suspicion*) – I can see that...

They sit back around the table.

Alex – More champagne?

Vic – Absolutely...

Sam – So, for our project, you're on board? That's fantastic!

Gaby – Well, we're not entirely certain if we can commit the funds, and...

Sam – But earlier, you seemed to suggest...

Alex – And you're not even familiar with operating a washing machine! Consider the shift to a chain of laundromats...

Gaby – Why not get sponsored by a major detergent brand instead?

Sam – A detergent brand? Which one?

Alex – Omo...

Sam – Ah, OK... I see...

Gaby – Sorry, but... We got a bit carried away...

Sam (*hurt*) – It's okay, we'll figure something else out... Right, Vic?

Vic seems equally surprised by this turnaround.

Vic – Is there something you're not telling us, maybe?

Sam – Are you facing some issues at the moment?

Alex – Not at all, what makes you say that?

Vic grabs the remote and increase the TV volume.

Vic – Ah, it looks like they're talking about that burglary again... (*Ironic*) Since I noticed that you were interested in it.

Speaker – Here is the composite sketch of the person who reportedly fled with the loot in the subway, created from the surveillance camera images.

Sam – It's funny, it looks a bit like Alex...

Vic – Yes, it's striking.

Gaby mutes the TV again.

Gaby – Come on, we're not going to spend the evening watching TV...

Vic – Funny, reminds me of a movie plot I saw recently...

Gaby – Again? You're a true cinephile, tell me...

Vic – It's about someone finding a suitcase full of cash in the subway...

Alex – Oh yeah?

Gaby – And how does it end?

Vic – In prison... Because all the bills were marked...

Alex – Oh yes, that's dumb...

Vic – Yes...

Sam senses the tension rising and stands up.

Sam – Come on, we won't disturb you any longer.

Gaby stands in front of Vic, aggressively.

Gaby – But you're not leaving like this!

Vic gazes at Gaby, who eventually steps aside.

Vic – We'll clear up first, don't we...

Alex – Please, let it go...

Sam – I'll help you.

Sam and Vic exit with the glasses.

Gaby – We're in trouble...

Alex – Relax...

Gaby – But where's the cash? It's surely that bitch who took it from us. And on top of that, she's making a fool of us!

Alex – I took the money, and I put it in a safe place...

Gaby – You?

Alex – After plugging everything in the kitchen to blow the fuses.

Gaby – Where did you stash the cash?

Alex – In a spot even a cop wouldn't consider, trust me...

Gaby – In the microwave?

Alex – In the washing machine.

Gaby – But that's crazy! I could've accidentally turned it on!

Alex – No one would think to check there. Especially not Sam.

Sam returns, followed by Vic, holding a bag of dirty laundry.

Sam – You're going to be proud of me.

Gaby – Oh yeah?

Sam – I managed to start the washing machine!

Alex – No way?

Sam – Well, Vic helped a bit... If we're going to start a laundromat empire, I need to get my hands dirty, right?

Consternation from Gaby and Alex.

Gaby – What program?

Vic – The long cycle. Heavy-duty laundry.

Alex and Gaby rush out.

Sam – I don't know what's going on with them...

Vic – I do... (*Sam gives him a surprised look*) The cash from that burglary nearby... It's here...

Sam (*incredulous*) – Are you accusing my parents of a heist?

Vic – The burglars must have abandoned their loot in the subway, and Alex stumbled upon it by chance.

Sam – No way?

Vic – Didn't you recognise Alex in the police sketch on TV?

Sam processes this information.

Sam – Stumbled upon, you say? But it's not like it's a theft...

Vic – Do you believe that? It's called receiving stolen money, you know.

Sam – I call it a stroke of luck. But do you have any evidence to back up your claim?

Vic sniffs the air, and approaches the Vuitton bag.

Vic – This is the bag that was used to transport the loot.

Sam – Okay... (*Sam opens the bag*) But the bag is empty!

Vic shows the contents of the laundry bag.

Vic – I took this out of the machine before starting it...

Sam – No...?

Alex returns.

Alex – Sorry, a little problem with the machine...

Alex goes back to help Gaby.

Vic – Do we keep everything, or do we share it with your folks?

Sam – But it's theft, come on! I'm not going to steal from my own parents...

Vic – I remind you that this money, they already stole it from thieves.

Sam – And we might get into big trouble, right...?

Vic – At the same time, if we get rid of your parents' money before the police comes to search their apartment, it's them we're saving from big trouble.

Sam – It's true, there are cops everywhere downstairs...

Vic – Yes... That's what worries me more...

Sam – Turn up the volume, they're talking about it on TV...

Vic presses the remote control.

Speaker – The police has just arrested the culprits of the burglary that took place a few hours ago. The stolen items were discovered hidden in a Hermès bag: gold bars, diamonds, and various other pieces of jewelry.

Vic mutes the sound.

Sam – So, what's the money Alex found in the subway?

Vic – To empty a billionaire's safe, it seems that one bag isn't enough... But it's true that it eases the pressure...

Sam – What do you mean?

Vic – If this money isn't supposed to exist for the tax authorities, the old lady won't file a complaint to recover the second bag... And the thieves won't either.

Sam takes a stack of bills and looks at it.

Sam – Do you think the bills are traceable?

Vic – I doubt it... These are small used bills...

Sam – In that case, if no one comes forward to claim this money... In a year and a day, we could consider it ours...

Vic – Or we could view it as a tax adjustment, and become the tax collectors.

Sam – Exactly... A sort of wealth tax, you know...

Vic – Taking money from a billionaire isn't really theft.

Sam – In a way, we'd be a bit like Robin Hood.

Vic – That's right... Taking money from the rich...

Sam – And keeping it for ourselves.

Strange noises from the other side, as if someone is hitting something metallic. Gaby returns.

Gaby – It's almost done... But believe me, it's hard to stop a machine once it's started...

Gaby leaves again.

Vic – Now we just need to figure out how to launder this money?

Sam – We'll start a chain of laundromats!

Vic – Laundering money by buying laundries?

Sam – That's what Al Capone did during Prohibition... The term money laundering comes from there, right?

Vic – Al Capone? So he's your role model now? I thought you were a communist...

Sam – Does a blind person who regains sight still go to church every day begging for a miracle? But if you insist, we can make a donation to a charity.

Vic – And what about your parents?

Sam looks at the travel catalog.

Sam – They probably would have lost everything in Las Vegas anyway...

Vic – You're right. It's better to invest in washing machines than in slot machines, it's more prudent...

Sam – Let's get out of here now to avoid a body search.

Vic – Okay.

Sam – Come on, it hurts me a bit. Let's leave them a tip anyway.

Vic – Fine, but just one stack then... (*Vic throws a stack into the bag*) For the staff, as they say in the casino...

Sam – We can't leave like this without saying goodbye... I'll leave them a little note...

Sam scribbles something on a paper, placing it on the table, and they leave. Gaby and Alex return, dismayed, with the laundry that they hang on a line.

Alex – I don't understand, this money couldn't have completely melted in the machine and gone down the drain...

Gaby – Who knows...

Alex – Where did they go?

Gaby – The bills?

Alex – Sam and his biker girl!

Gaby – I don't know...

Alex – They left like thieves...

Gaby – It hits me hard that he's getting married anyway... He won't come to air his dirty laundry with the family anymore...

Alex – We still have the Vuitton bag. *(Alex looks into the bag and his face lights up)* Look, we didn't lose everything. I forgot a stack in there!

Gaby – At least we can buy two plane tickets to Las Vegas. Let's go for the slot machines! I feel like luck is turning...

Alex – Wait, there's a note on the table... *(Alex takes the note and reads)* I'm gay. Signed, Sam...

Gaby – What a day!

Alex – And to think it's not over yet...

A police siren is heard, and Gaby gives Alex a worried look.

Gaby – Do you believe there's such a thing as gay-friendly prisons?

Fade to black.

Alex – Damn, the power's out again...

The sound of the police siren grows louder before abruptly stopping.

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 brief moment of eternity
A Cuckoo's nest
A Hell of a Night
A simple business dinner
All's well that starts badly
An innocent little murder
Back in the spotlight
Bed and Breakfast
Casket for two
Cheaters
Check to the Kings
Crash Zone
Crisis and Punishment
Critical but stable
Eurostar
Four stars
Fragile, handle with care
Friday the 13th
Heads or Tails
Him and Her
In lieu of flowers
Is there a pilot in the audience?
Is there an author in the audience?
Just a moment before the end of the world
Just like a Christmas movie
Last chance encounter
Lovestruck at Swindlemore Hall
Miracle at Saint Mary Juana Abbey
New Year's Eve at the Morgue
One marriage out of two
Preliminaries
Quarantine
Running on Empty
Strip Poker
Surviving Mankind
The Costa Mucho Castaways
The Ideal Son-in-Law
The Jackpot
The Joker
The perfect Son-in-Law
The Performance is not cancelled
The Smell of Money
The Window across the courtyard
The Worst Village in England
Welcome aboard!

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