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The French Chair

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The French Chair

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

In

Film, Theatre, and Communication Arts

Creative Writing

By

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Acknowledgements

To everyone who always enjoyed reading me and encouraged me to pursue my dream.

To my dream of becoming a writer, to my dream of making people laugh, to my dream of obtaining an MFA degree in Creative Writing.

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Abstract

This play is a comedy, which revolves around the importance of a French Chair (Louis XIII) in the life of a family. A young newlywed woman discovers that her husband has a "secret" half sister born out of wedlock. Her mother-in-law has had an affair with a French man, but her husband always believed she had been abused. The young lady senses something is not clear and decides to look for her "half" sister-in-law. She does and manages to organize a get-together to bring everyone in the same place and finally understand what really happened. Eventually, her mother-in-law, now a widower, falls in love again with her ex-lover and they decide to marry. The French Chair was a reason of fights in the young couple and with the mother-in-law. But at the end we learn that young lady's half sister-in-law was conceived on this chair.

Keywords: play, French, Roberta, Grossi, international, culture

THE FRENCH CHAIR

DOROTHY A woman in her early 30's, married to Brad

BRAD A man 34-years old

JUNE Brad's mother, around 60 years old.

JULIE Brad's half sister, June's and Jacques' daughter. She is 25 and an aspiring writer. She's French and speaks with an accent.

JACQUES A Frenchman, 65 years old. He's June's ex-lover, Julie's father.

Stage directions

In Act 2, the stage is cut in two parts, during this act, lights will go on the half where the scenes take place while on the other half the setup is made. This allows for characters going from one scene to another in a different setting to almost immediately appear in the following scene.

Regarding clothes, they can wear clothes in layers and quickly transform their look by taking off one layer of clothes.

ACT I

Scene 1

A living room with a table set for two. The room is decorated with old furniture. There are pictures of older people on walls and on a large piano. There is a mixture of old and modern furniture. A large staircase decorated with brass in the corner leads to a second floor. The lights go on an old chair, Louis Treize style. A woman, JUNE, puts her hand on the back of the chair and slowly slides it down to the arm. She sits in it and stares at the pictures on the piano. She wipes a tear. Noise is heard from behind a door. June gets up and runs up the stairs while a young woman, DOROTHY, rushes in carrying a big salad bowl. She trips on a carpet. Her bowl falls on the Louis Treize chair. She takes the salad bowl, grabs the few leaves left on the chair and kicks the chair.

DOROTHY

That old chair! Should be in the fireplace!

A man, BRAD, walks in the apartment, coming from outside carrying a suitcase. Dorothy runs to the door to welcome him with a kiss. Dorothy wears a sexy dress and high heels. Brad has a bouquet of red roses in his hands. They sit at the table. They have a glass of wine in a fine crystal glass. They hold hands.

DOROTHY

This feels good after a long week of hard work.

BRAD

I hate being far from you.

DOROTHY

I do too. I wish your work didn't take you away from me so often.

Dorothy moves towards him and gives him a short but passionate kiss. He runs his hand along her back.

BRAD

Will we get through dinner?

DOROTHY

(With a sensual tone) Maybe not.

Brad lets his hand go to her leg. She gets closer.

BRAD

Hmmm.

Dorothy slowly sits back. Brad tries to hold her. She lets out his grip. She takes a beautifully decorated dish from a nearby tray and hands it to him.

DOROTHY

Food first. I cooked all afternoon.

BRAD

You had time to do all this? This meal looks amazing. You're amazing.

DOROTHY

I know.

Dorothy takes one shoe off and plays footsie with Brad.

BRAD

(Giggling) I can't concentrate on food.

DOROTHY

You shouldn't.

BRAD

We'll have dessert later?

DOROTHY

(Again, very sensual) Much later.

BRAD

When we have our house, we'll have dinner by our very own fireplace.

DOROTHY

My dream.

BRAD

I want to find our house soon.

DOROTHY

I know. Three years is a long time to live with your mother.

BRAD

Well, it's had its advantages. Cheap rent?

DOROTHY

Cheap? And we have to live with old furniture.

Dorothy gets up, points at some old armchair. She shakes it.

DOROTHY

That Trees chair is so old that if I sit in it I'll become old, and you'll have to cart me off to a nursing home.

BRAD

It's a Louis XIII (treize) chair. Trees grow in the woods.

DOROTHY

That's where it belongs. With the trees.

BRAD

Treize! The French king! My French great-grandmother left it...

DOROTHY

Your French great-grandmother left it for you. It's worth ten thousand dollars, I know, but I'd rather have simple chairs and a new house with a nice swimming pool.

BRAD

What do you need a swimming pool for?

DOROTHY

To swim. I like swimming.

BRAD

You have one here and you never use it!

DOROTHY

I am afraid of getting a disease. We're not the only ones who use it.

BRAD

That's mean.

DOROTHY

Oh come on, there's no intimacy. And when we have our home, I'll do what I want in it.

BRAD

What are you going to do?

DOROTHY

Swim naked.

BRAD

I'm starting to like this idea.

Dorothy takes her glass of wine. She rubs it slightly against Brad's hand. She then takes a sip and puts the glass down. She sends an air kiss to Brad.

DOROTHY

And swimming is not the only thing I have in mind.

BRAD

We'll get a pool.

DOROTHY

(pointing to different directions in the room) Sell that chair. And the piano. And that old closet. And that old creepy scary statue.

BRAD

That's twenty-thousand dollars worth of creepy. And Eisenhower gave them to my cousin's uncle.

DOROTHY

I don't like museums, and I don't want to live in one.

BRAD

And that picture, fifteen thousand dollars.

DOROTHY

We're rich!

BRAD

We?

DOROTHY

If you sell everything, we can buy a house with a pool.

BRAD

I'm not selling off my family history.

DOROTHY

I'm your family.

BRAD

I want our kids to have all of this.

Dorothy gets closer to Brad.

DOROTHY

So we need money.

BRAD

Where we can keep these things for them.

DOROTHY

I didn't marry your family history. I married you. I love you.

BRAD

Love me, love my history.

DOROTHY

I'll love your history, if it gives us a house with a pool.

BRAD

You really want to sell *my* stuff?

DOROTHY

We'll take some pictures for the kids.

BRAD

No way!

DOROTHY

You prefer a bunch of old wood to my warm and wet naked body in a crystal-blue pool?

Brad gets up. He walks around the room. He looks at all the furniture. He sits on the old Louis XIII chair. He gets up again and paces around the room. A piece of lettuce remains stuck on his trousers.

BRAD

I can't do this to my mother.

DOROTHY

Oh, not your mother again.

BRAD

I thought you liked this stuff.

DOROTHY

With this money we could get a bigger house.

Brad gets closer to her. He pulls his chair and sits in front of her.

BRAD

The houses we looked at were too cheap for you, weren't they?

DOROTHY

What do you mean?

BRAD

We saw some good houses.

DOROTHY

Yes, we saw two. But one was in the middle of nowhere, and the other one was too dark.

BRAD

There will never be a perfect house.

DOROTHY

Why not?

BRAD

Nothing is perfect.

DOROTHY

(joking) Not even me?

BRAD

Sweetie, we'll never find one this way.

DOROTHY

Why not?

BRAD

You say no for the smallest detail. And now you want a pool. And to sell my furniture.

DOROTHY

You are the one who gives in too easily. A house is a lifetime investment. Yes, the houses we saw are too cheap.

BRAD

If we go on this way we'll never invest in anything, and we'll keep wasting money on rent.

DOROTHY

You're so impatient.

BRAD

I am not. We can't afford the kind of house you want.

DOROTHY

When you don't get what you want right away, you pout and give up.

BRAD

I do not!

DOROTHY

Yes you do. Remember when I wanted a blue car and the dealer didn't have one at the time? You refused to wait a couple of months for one to come in. So we bought a white car because you couldn't wait.

BRAD

And you're happy with it.

DOROTHY

I could have waited.

BRAD

If it were up to you we would wait for everything. I bet you want to have kids when we turn 50.

DOROTHY

Oh, please.

Dorothy takes her hand away from Brad's. Brad with a gesture invites her to give him her hand again. She doesn't.

BRAD

Okay, now you're turning this romantic dinner into a fight.

DOROTHY

I'm turning this into a fight?

BRAD

Yes.

DOROTHY

How?

BRAD

By accusing me of being impatient.

DOROTHY

Is it my fault if I have a white car and will end up with a house that is dark, far from everything, without a pool, and this bunch of old furniture that falls into pieces? And you're calling me a perfectionist?

BRAD

I won't wait ten years. In ten years, I'll have wasted over two hundred thousand dollars!

DOROTHY

Wasted?

BRAD

What do you call rent?

DOROTHY

A living expense.

BRAD

We can put the money into a mortgage.

DOROTHY

I know, I know. But the difference is, I want a perfect place for our family.

BRAD

So do I.

DOROTHY

Really? We've been sitting on a fortune. How much is this table worth? You'd settle for any kind of house. And this glass? How much for the glass?

BRAD

A couple of tiles for the pool.

DOROTHY

Funny.

BRAD

What was wrong with the house we saw last Saturday?

DOROTHY

That's the house in the middle of nothing. We only have one car. And it's not a blue car.

BRAD

See?

DOROTHY

What?

BRAD

One small detail and you reject the whole house.

DOROTHY

What happens when we're out of coffee and you have the car? Do you expect me to walk?

BRAD

No, I'll go buy it myself.

DOROTHY

Like last week, when you laid on the couch and told me you had no energy to come to the table and eat.

Dorothy mocks Brad. She sits, casually imitating how tired and unwilling to move he is. Her legs are spread as if she were a man wearing jeans.

DOROTHY

Sweetie, can we eat in the living room?

BRAD

That was an unusual day.

DOROTHY

A couple of times a week?

BRAD

I have to get up at five every morning.

DOROTHY

I know...

BRAD

You make it difficult.

DOROTHY

Oh, forgive me! I don't want to make it difficult for you. I'll look for a nice house, with a pool, on my own.

BRAD

Perfect. You look for *your* house and I'll look for *mine*.

DOROTHY

Perfect. We'll see who finds one first.

BRAD

I'll find one next week and you'll never find one and end up poor and homeless.

DOROTHY

Nonsense.

Noise coming from upstairs is heard. A door slams, JUNE, walks down the stairs and enters the living room in her nightgown.

JUNE

What the hell is going on here?

BRAD

Mom, what are you doing here?

JUNE

What's all this noise?

DOROTHY

June, go back to sleep.

JUNE

How can I sleep with all this fighting?

BRAD

Mom, we're sorry. Go back to bed.

JUNE

This is my house, and I do what I want son. Got it?

DOROTHY

This is also our house, we pay you a rent.

Dorothy gets up. Walks to the Louis XIII chair. Pointing to it with a disgusted expression.

DOROTHY

We pay for sitting on this Louis trees things.

JUNE

Treize. And you pay less than half of what is worth.

BRAD

Mom, please.

BRAD

(to Dorothy) See?

DOROTHY

(to Brad) See what?

BRAD

(to Dorothy) We need a house.

DOROTHY

(Screaming) I know that!

JUNE

Will you two stop screaming?

DOROTHY

(screaming) I'm not screaming.

JUNE

I always told you this woman has no manners.

BRAD

Mom, please.

JUNE

Won't you say anything?

BRAD

Dorothy.

DOROTHY

What? You let your mother talk about me that way? Won't you say anything?

BRAD

Oh my God.

DOROTHY

You think God has time for you?

BRAD

I think you two need to talk.

DOROTHY

Now? You must be joking.

BRAD

I'm treating myself to a hot bath. Nice treat on a Valentine's Day.

Dorothy takes another sip of wine. June tries to stop Brad who rushes out without a word. June sighs. Dorothy cries. June walks towards Dorothy. Dorothy turns away. The noise of water filling the bathtub is heard from behind the scene. June puts the chandelier from the table back on the fireplace.

DOROTHY

What are you doing?

JUNE

It's my chandelier.

It's in my home.

DOROTHY

It's my house.

JUNE

We pay rent.

DOROTHY

My son pays the rent.

JUNE

I pay my share.

DOROTHY

I can't imagine very much.

JUNE

Don't worry. We're moving out soon.

DOROTHY

I hear you're picky.

JUNE

Are you listening to our conversations?

DOROTHY

It's not difficult, the whole neighborhood hears you.

JUNE

*Suddenly water starts coming
through the ceiling.*

Oh my God. Brad, the water! Turn off the water! It'll ruin
the furniture!

JUNE

*Dorothy runs and grabs some
blankets and tablecloths and tries
to cover the furniture.*

Good thinking!

JUNE

Saving my pool...before this living room becomes one.

DOROTHY

What do you mean?

JUNE

Nothing.

DOROTHY

Brad runs down all wet, wearing a towel around his waist.

BRAD
I can't even take a bath in peace. What's the matter?

JUNE
The ceiling is leaking. Hurry, turn off the faucet. Run!

BRAD
Oh God! What a mess! What happened?

DOROTHY
Stop asking questions, do something! Quick!

JUNE
Turn off the water.

DOROTHY/JUNE
Run!

Brad looks at the Louis XIII chair with hesitation.

BRAD
The chair is getting soaked.

DOROTHY
Oh no. Give me your towel!

She pulls the towel off of Brad. He is naked. June screams when she sees him naked. Dorothy puts her hands on her cheeks in embarrassment.

The lights flicker, short circuit and go out.

The characters are in darkness. Dorothy screams.

DOROTHY
What happened?

BRAD

The water...the electricity. Ladies, do not try to go anywhere.

JUNE

I'm glad the lights went out when they did. You have no decency, son.

BRAD

No what?

JUNE

Decency! Exposing yourself like that is not acceptable.

BRAD

Who gave birth to me? I was born this way.

JUNE

Everything was smaller then.

(Beat)

BRAD

Mom, you've seen naked men before.

JUNE

(sighing) It's been a long time...

DOROTHY

Well...

JUNE

I would like to change the subject.

DOROTHY

Could someone do something about the lights?

JUNE

If it wasn't for the two of you fighting, we wouldn't be standing in the dark all wet and some of us acting indecently.

No response from either Dorothy or Brad.

BRAD

(to Dorothy) Hmm, sweetie, I love your touch...feels so good.

JUNE

What are you doing?

DOROTHY

Brad, stop that.

Silence. Then some noises of steps and movements on stage are heard.

JUNE

Whatever the two of you are doing, stop it!

Still silence and noises of steps are heard.

JUNE

Where are you?... Answer me or I will cut you off from your inheritance...Dorothy?...Say something, or I'll evict you from this house.

DOROTHY

You can't evict us. We have a lease.

Lights come back on. June is in a corner of the room. Dorothy is still covering Louis XIII chair with Brad's towel and giggling to herself. Brad comes in through a door, now wearing a pair of jeans. His chest is bare. Dorothy laughs out loud.

BRAD

What's funny?

DOROTHY

While you were gone...

She laughs so hard she can't talk.

JUNE

Don't!

Dorothy keeps laughing.

JUNE

Oh, stop that.

DOROTHY

She thought that you and I... (laughs), in the dark (laughs more)...naked... were...(laughing) doing it.

BRAD

What in the world...

JUNE

What else should I think?

BRAD

I shut off the water and put some pants on.

JUNE

You forgot your shirt.

BRAD

I know, I didn't have any hair either when you gave birth to me.

JUNE

Let's clean up the mess.

Dorothy is wiping the Louis XIII chair and June the statue. Brad goes to the table and starts eating the dessert that was left from their unfinished dinner.

DOROTHY

Brad, aren't you going to help us?

BRAD

(speaking with a full mouth) I already have.

DOROTHY

Taking a bath?

BRAD

Turning off the water.

JUNE

Stop eating and get us a bucket.

BRAD

I'm in my own house and I have two women yelling at me. Where did I go wrong?

DOROTHY and JUNE

(in unison)

Where you went wrong?

June and Dorothy exchange a look of complicity and half smile.

JUNE

This is not your house. You just live here.

DOROTHY

We also pay rent.

JUNE

Stay out of this. (To Brad) Maybe one day. And I say maybe, this house will be yours and Julie's.

DOROTHY

Julie? Who's Julie?

JUNE

His half sister.

DOROTHY

You never told me you have a half sister.

BRAD

There's nothing to tell.

JUNE

Nice way to talk about your sister. She has your blood.

BRAD

She may have my blood, but she won't get anything else.

DOROTHY

Why, I mean, what...where...

JUNE

(to Dorothy) Good. Finally the cat's got your tongue.

DOROTHY

What's wrong with Julie?

JUNE

Nothing's wrong with Julie. Brad's jealous of her.

BRAD

I'm not jealous of that insignificant little...woman who travels the world with your money.

JUNE

(to Dorothy)

See? Jealous.

Dorothy kneels down to wipe the floor.

BRAD

I'm not jealous. I'm angry. She's a freeloader. You give her your money, and she does nothing with her life.

JUNE

She's still so young and she is an artist. Difficult life. Poor child.

BRAD

How about me? I have to work hard to get the same money, and pay you rent.

JUNE

Your lifestyle choice. And you got married.

BRAD

What does marriage have to do with paying you rent?

JUNE

I heard that.

DOROTHY

You always hear what you shouldn't.

JUNE

If you had married Rose things would be different.

DOROTHY

Who is Rose?

BRAD

Mom, why do you have to...

JUNE

(with a big smile) Rose was Brad's college sweetheart.

BRAD

Mom, stop! This is personal. It's not up to you, it's up to me to explain these things.

DOROTHY

Indeed it is! But since you've kept this from me too, please June, I'm all ears.

JUNE

Rose was a beautiful, petite brunette. So well-educated, proper, always well-dressed. And nice. She loved me.

Dorothy smirks.

JUNE

(giggling) She was so cute. One day she asked is she could call me Mom.

DOROTHY

I would've called you Mom but you wouldn't allow it.

JUNE

Only she could. She was perfect for my son.

DOROTHY

You mean perfect for you.

BRAD

Rose was crazy. She was possessive and controlling. I couldn't go anywhere without her checking up on me. She called me at least ten times a day. It was suffocating. She wasn't perfect for me.

JUNE

She really loved you.

BRAD

You call that love?

JUNE

She was very rich.

DOROTHY

Wonderful. The furniture, the money, the rent, the statue. Brad you should have married a real estate agent.

JUNE

Exactly. Rose has become a very successful real estate agent.

DOROTHY

Shit...

JUNE

I heard that.

BRAD

I don't care about money. Rose is history and I didn't love her. If you like her so much, mom, then you should marry her. I love Dorothy.

Dorothy smiles and gets close to Brad. She hugs him.

DOROTHY

I love you too, darling.

Dorothy and Brad kiss.

JUNE

Please, I'm standing right here. Control yourselves.

Dorothy turns to her still holding tight to Brad.

DOROTHY

We're allowed to kiss, we're in our home.

They kiss.

JUNE

It's still *my* house.

Brad turns to her still holding tight to Dorothy.

BRAD

You're being ridiculous, Mom. (to Dorothy, kissing her.) I don't want to fight with you.

DOROTHY

Don't stop.

They kiss.

JUNE

I'm standing right here. You're not alone.

Both Dorothy and Brad look at her.

DOROTHY and BRAD

(in unison) Right, so (pause) leave us alone, will you?

They kiss passionately. June throws the sponge she had in her hand on the floor. She kicks the Louis XIII chair which falls and a

leg comes off. As she walks away she stops and comes back and puts the leg back. Then she leaves with a loud sigh.

DOROTHY

Do I kiss better than Rose?

BRAD

No one can ever kiss better than you.

They kiss again. Then, suddenly, she steps back.

DOROTHY

Why didn't you tell me about Julie?

BRAD

What for?

DOROTHY

What for? This is your family. Even if you don't get along.

BRAD

She just doesn't exist in my mind. When I think about her, I feel sick.

DOROTHY

Jealous?

BRAD

Not you too.

DOROTHY

So she doesn't work and your mother supports her. So what? She still has the same blood as you.

BRAD

She has my Mom's blood.

DOROTHY

And your stepfather's.

BRAD

Exactly the problem. That dirty pig.

DOROTHY

What? I thought you were close to your stepfather.

BRAD

I don't want to talk about him.

DOROTHY

Your half sister is not your stepfather's?

Brad remains silent. He goes to the table and eats some leftovers with his hands. Dorothy moves closer to him. She puts a hand on his shoulder. Rubs his back a little.

DOROTHY

Tell me what's going on?

BRAD

Don't want to talk about it.

DOROTHY

Brad, I'm your wife. Don't you think I should know?

BRAD

No.

Dorothy backs up. She stares at him. He turns around. Looks at her. He hugs her very strongly. He starts sobbing.

BRAD

That bastard!

DOROTHY

Who?

BRAD

He seduced my mom.

DOROTHY

Who, what, to your mom?

BRAD

She was so young and beautiful and happily married to my stepfather. He saw her at the supermarket and told her she should be in movies.

Dorothy starts laughing trying not to be noticed.

BRAD

She went to the studios where he worked. No one was there but him.

DOROTHY

He raped her?

BRAD

No, but he auditioned her on his couch and told her that it was the only way to get into a movie. He promised her a leading role with Robert Redford.

DOROTHY

(holding her laughter) And she believed him?

BRAD

Yes. That Jerk. Taking advantage of her dream to be a movie star. With his stupid French accent, he played his role very well.

DOROTHY

Did she ever meet Robert Redford?

BRAD

No, Julie came instead.

*Dorothy starts laughing but
hides it coughing.*

BRAD

Mom always felt guilty towards her. I'm not sure she loved her. I didn't.

Silence

BRAD

I can't accept her.

DOROTHY

It's not her fault.

BRAD

Sometimes I wonder. She keeps spending mom's money and doesn't even try to make her own. Spoiled rotten girl. Taking advantage of mom's guilty feelings. Just like her dad! Must be the French culture!

DOROTHY

French?

BRAD
He's French, no morality, folies bergeres, French can can..

DOROTHY
French kiss?

BRAD
I don't trust frogs.

DOROTHY
(whispering) She thinks she will inherit the house?

June slowly comes down the stairs. Brad and Dorothy look at her. June is angry.

JUNE
Why did you tell her?

BRAD
She's my wife.

JUNE
It's my life.

BRAD
It's mine too.

JUNE
Not hers.

BRAD
She's my life.

JUNE
Not mine.

BRAD
She's in your life too.

JUNE
Just in my house.

DOROTHY
I'm sorry?

JUNE
My secrets belong to me.

DOROTHY
I would like to meet Julie.

JUNE
No you wouldn't.

BRAD
No you wouldn't.

JUNE
Finally, my son makes sense.

BRAD
I don't want to see her either.

JUNE
You have no right to contact her.

DOROTHY
She's my sister-in-law and I want to meet her.

JUNE
Don't.

DOROTHY
I will.

JUNE
Stay away from her.

DOROTHY
I won't.

JUNE
You will.

DOROTHY
No, I won't.

*June gets close to Dorothy
in a threatening way.
Dorothy remains still.
Dorothy makes a disapproving face
expression to her and goes to
Brad.*

JUNE
You knew very well this is a family secret.

BRAD
She is family.

JUNE
Not our blood.

BRAD
Our kids will change this.

JUNE
You don't have kids.

DOROTHY
But we will.

JUNE
When you're fifty.

BRAD
Mom, you keep listening to our conversations.

DOROTHY
It will happen sooner.

BRAD
Yes of course it will.

JUNE
Rose would have already given you babies.

BRAD
Mom please don't.

JUNE
This one (pointing at Dorothy) will only give you trouble.

DOROTHY
You can't say that. You don't know me well.

JUNE
Oh, I sure do.

June points at the Louis XIII chair she had broken before leaving the scene earlier.

JUNE
I prefer my chair broken than to be sold so you can buy her a pool...(to herself) swim naked...

BRAD
You heard that too?

JUNE
Walls have ears.

DOROTHY
Very big ears.

BRAD
Mother, I'm not a child, I'm old enough to make my own decisions.

JUNE
You will always be my baby.

DOROTHY
And when we have kids?

JUNE
You won't have kids.

DOROTHY
Why not?

JUNE
Because you're a perfectionist, and the time will never be right for you.

BRAD
That's not fair Mom. Kids come when it's time.

JUNE
And at times when it's not time.

BRAD
Sorry.

*Dorothy gets closer to Brad.
She takes him by the arm. She
looks at June. She rubs her
stomach.*

DOROTHY
May be sooner than you thought.

*Dorothy looks at Brad. Brad looks
at her puzzled. Then his eyes*

light up.

Dorothy, you... you are...	BRAD
I am!	DOROTHY
You are?	BRAD
You are what?	JUNE
She is!	BRAD
I sure am!	DOROTHY
You are nuts!	JUNE
We are not.	DOROTHY
So what are you...	JUNE
A baby!	BRAD
What baby?	JUNE
Our baby.	BRAD
We're having a baby.	DOROTHY
We are?	JUNE
You're not. We are.	DOROTHY
Yes we are...grandma.	BRAD

June goes towards the couch. She lets herself drop on the couch, which is soaked. She is quickly wet. She screams.

Brad and Dorothy laugh and cry at the same time while looking at her.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT II

Scene 1

Lights on.

A beautifully decorated living room. Soft inspirational music plays. JULIE smiles as she types at her computer. She stops to take a sip of tea. The door bell rings. Startled, she jumps up and walks to the door.

JULIE

Who is it? *(She waits. Louder)*. Who is it? What? I can't hear you.

Julie nervously opens the door. Dorothy stands in front of her.

DOROTHY

Julie?

JULIE

Yes, and who are you?

DOROTHY

Sorry if I am disturbing you. Oh, you don't know me.

JULIE

Why are you here if I don't know you?

DOROTHY

Well, I know you.

JULIE

How can you know me if I don't know you?

DOROTHY

This is a bit complicated. That's why I am here.

JULIE

Oh la la, if this is a prank it's not funny.

DOROTHY

No, no. I will explain. May I come in?

JULIE

Mon Dieu, why would I let someone I don't know in my home?

DOROTHY

Because we're related.

Julie quickly pushes Dorothy out and looks behind her.

DOROTHY

What are you doing?

JULIE

Where are they?

DOROTHY

Who?

JULIE

This is not one of those terrible and stupid tv shows where a secret sister appears thirty years later and all the cameras are there to film you in tears, and looking at family pictures and all that crap!!

DOROTHY

Oh no no, don't worry. I'm not your sister! And there are no cameras!

JULIE

Who are you then?

DOROTHY

Your sister-in-law!

JULIE

Ah! Dorothee, Voilà! You're not my sister, no! You're *just* my sister-in-law. God! And for your knowledge, Brad is not my brother, just my half brother, thank goodness. Spoiled rotten kid.

Dorothy finally pushes her way in but the door stays open.

DOROTHY

You're speaking about my husband, please.

JULIE

And so you're the one living at Mom's house, and he's little mama's boy, who can't leave the nest. Or just too stingy to get his own house.

DOROTHY

You don't seem to know him very well. He's a very mature man now, responsible, and we're looking for our house.

JULIE

Ohh, Brad buying a house? Let me guess, he married rich. You're the daughter of a famous entrepreneur.

DOROTHY

(giggling) No no, come on. I'm not rich. I wish.

JULIE

Bon, thank you for your visit. Say hello to my mom.

DOROTHY

Are you kicking me out?

JULIE

Don't tell me you want a cup of tea, do you?

DOROTHY

I'd love to. Thank you!

JULIE

I just...

DOROTHY

With a slice of lemon, please.

JULIE

But I...

DOROTHY

And a spoonful of sugar, please.

Julie leaves the room. Loud noises of slamming doors from the kitchen are heard. Dorothy walks around and looks at her typewriter trying to read what she was writing. Julie walks in with a tray and tea in her

hands. She puts it on a small table.

DOROTHY

Thank you. Beautiful tea set.

JULIE

(mumbling) I only have sweetener.

DOROTHY

That'll be fine.

Julie sighs loudly, and she shows her an arm chair where to sit down. Julie goes to the one next to it. Julie screams.

JULIE

No not that one!

Dorothy jumps up scared.

JULIE

Mon Dieu! It's a Louis quatorze (XIV).

DOROTHY

May I sit in this one?

They drink in silence. They don't speak for some time.

DOROTHY

It was quite a surprise to hear you existed.

JULIE

Quoi? You never knew I existed?

DOROTHY

No, not until two days ago.

JULIE

Should have stayed that way.

DOROTHY

Why?

JULIE

What for?

DOROTHY

Family!

JULIE

My mom's family. Only mom.

DOROTHY

Brad is also your mom's son. He is family.

JULIE

I don't like him.

DOROTHY

That's not fair, he's adorable, caring and generous.

JULIE

I told you that your little husband is a spoiled rotten kid.

DOROTHY

Who has a job, and who is going to buy a house with me. From what I hear, you cannot do that yourself without *mama's* money.

JULIE

You have nothing to tell me about my mother.

DOROTHY

I sure do. She's my mother-in-law.

Julie goes to a nearby table and takes a shot glass, she pours some cognac in and drinks it up, then she fills it up again.

DOROTHY

Cognac at this time of day?

JULIE

My French habit. Do you mind?

DOROTHY

Just trying to be nice. What have I done?

JULIE

You married Brad, you must be like him.

DOROTHY

Drinking is bad for your health.

JULIE

Would you please mind your own business and leave?

DOROTHY

I haven't finished my tea.

JULIE

I asked you to leave.

DOROTHY

I'm trying to build a relationship with my mother-in-law. Suddenly, I find out you exist and I thought it would help to meet you. I'm sorry we didn't start off on the right foot.

JULIE

Let's make your departure more successful, please go.

DOROTHY

I suppose you don't want to hear what I learned about you and your father.

JULIE

My father? You're not related to my father. He's not Brad's father, so you have nothing to do with him. Got it?

DOROTHY

Brad is my husband. His happiness is important to me. How Brad feels about you and how Brad feels about your father affects him and therefore affects me. Got it?

JULIE

Oh la la, what is this, a tongue twister?

DOROTHY

Please give me five minutes to explain. Please!

JULIE

It's been a long time I haven't seen Brad. I doubt he changed. But I know *I* changed a lot.

DOROTHY

How?

JULIE

Je ne sais pas. I mellowed down. I cry when I see love comedies. I daydream a lot and I don't get upset anymore.

DOROTHY

You don't?

JULIE

As long as I'm not told what to do. I hate that!

DOROTHY

Who doesn't?

JULIE

Dad. He's been a doormat to every woman he has met.

DOROTHY

Does this include your mother?

JULIE

You know her, don't you?

DOROTHY

(giggling)

You bet.

JULIE

How do you manage living in her house?

DOROTHY

We're moving out. I told you.

JULIE

I can't imagine Brad moving out. No way.

DOROTHY

He changed I guess.

JULIE

Maybe. Love can do miracles, L'amour! Ah l'amour!

DOROTHY

How about you? You're not married?

JULIE

Oh la la. L'amour, what a pain!

DOROTHY

What happened?

JULIE

Nothing. Nothing happened. That's the problem.

*Julie gets up and takes
another drink. She comes back*

and sits down without looking at Dorothy. Dorothy leans towards her.

DOROTHY

I love your French accent! I could never learn French. Just took one year in college.

JULIE

My dad's French but I lived all my life here, well almost. I was in Paris with him as a teenager. J'aime Paris!

DOROTHY

That's exciting.

JULIE

Yes maybe, but I really didn't have a family. I have two parents and I feel like an orphan.

DOROTHY

Wouldn't it be nice for all of us to get together?

JULIE

What for?

DOROTHY

Family! We're family!

JULIE

Again? I told you we're not.

DOROTHY

Some of us are 100%, some 75%, some 50%, so...

JULIE

Some are 5%.

DOROTHY

Who?

JULIE

Me!

DOROTHY

You're more than that. Come on. It'll be great to get together. We're all so lonely. You live alone. Your mom will soon live alone. Your dad lives alone. Brad and I will also live alone. What kind of a life is that?

JULIE

A good life.

DOROTHY

Give it a try. Maybe some day we'll have kids.

JULIE

I won't.

DOROTHY

How do you know?

Julie lowers her voice again.

JULIE

I just do.

DOROTHY

Well, okay, I was going to wait. Brad and I are having a baby!!

Julie jumps up. Gets a close look at her tummy. Puts her glasses on and looks again.

JULIE

You are not!

DOROTHY

I am! It just doesn't show yet. Two months only.

JULIE

Petit Brad a father? Oh la la. That's a good one.

DOROTHY

You're welcome to see the baby any time. Auntie Julie.

JULIE

Bon. You sure are more fun than Brad.

DOROTHY

He's adorable...but so stubborn.

JULIE

Stubborn. Yes, that's Brad, bien sûr.

Dorothy stands up and quickly grabs her purse.

DOROTHY

Let's go auntie Julie.

JULIE

Where?

DOROTHY

Time to go home.

*Julie gets up, closes her
computer, grabs a jacket, a
purse.*

JULIE

Do I look okay? I haven't been there in a while.

DOROTHY

You don't go see your mom?

JULIE

We meet for coffee, go shopping, but I know Brad is there, so...

DOROTHY

You'll see now how grown up he is!

Julie puts a fancy hat on.

JULIE

Voilà, let's go see my little Brad brother.

Lights off

END OF SCENE

SCENE 2

Lights on the other half of the stage.

*Brad and Dorothy's apartment.
Julie and Dorothy are talking
around the Louis treize chair.*

JULIE

I didn't know mom still had this chair!

DOROTHY

She would kill for this chair.

*The doorbell is heard and
the door opens. Brad walks in.*

BRAD

It's pouring. I ran from the bus station. I forgot my umbrella...What...what are you doing here?

JULIE

Oh la la! You look like you've seen an alien!

BRAD

I have!

JULIE

Always so charming, petit rat.

BRAD

Don't call me that!

DOROTHY

Petit rat?

JULIE

He always looked like a little rat.

BRAD

I am no "petit rat"!

JULIE

Oooh, sensitive.

BRAD

What the hell are you doing here?

JULIE

She invited me.

BRAD

Why in the world did you invite her?

DOROTHY

Brad, she's your sister.

BRAD/JULIE

Half sister.

DOROTHY

Sister, half sister. It doesn't matter. She's family. You're family. Family is important, and I want to get to know her better. I want to get to know you better, Julie.

BRAD

So get to know her better, without me.

JULIE

Adorable.

BRAD

Look Julie, I don't want you in my home. Compris? Capich?

JULIE

It's my mother's home.

BRAD

She's my "mother" too.

JULIE

Yeah, petit rat cannot leave his petite maman.

BRAD

Shut up. You do nothing except travel the world using her money.

JULIE

I am an artist!

BRAD

Ha! An Artist. Real artists are poor and live with a skinny cat. They don't live in luxury and do nothing.

JULIE

You know nothing about me. My book will be published next year.

DOROTHY

A book? Wow, that's awesome.

BRAD

Don't get involved, please.

DOROTHY

Brad, shut up, will you? What's the book about?

JULIE

Uh, some sort of autobiography.

DOROTHY

Great. You can beef it up now that you've reunited with your family.

JULIE

It's not that kind of autobiography.

DOROTHY

What kind is it?

JULIE

A psychological autobiography.

DOROTHY

Have you got a publisher?

JULIE

Oui oui, it's the Editions Lafarge.

DOROTHY

French editors?

JULIE

The biggest French editor. I'll fly to Paris for the Salon du Livre, the biggest book fair in France.

DOROTHY

But then you're writing your book in French.

JULIE

Bien sûr. What else?

DOROTHY

We won't be able to read it!

JULIE

Pas de probleme, I plan to get a translator.

DOROTHY

Wow. Brad, your sister is about to become famous.

Brad gives Julie a nasty look.

BRAD

Ha! Don't make me laugh.

JULIE

You are jealous. Petit rat has always been jealous.

BRAD

I'm not jealous, I'm upset!

DOROTHY

This is silly. You both have the same mother.

BRAD

That's the problem.

DOROTHY

What's the problem?

BRAD

That we have the same mother.

DOROTHY

That's not her fault.

JULIE

What's not my fault?

BRAD

That we have the same mother.

JULIE

I know we have the same mother, idiot.

BRAD

Don't call me an idiot.

JULIE

Idiot.

BRAD

See Dorothy.

JULIE

Yes, see Dorothy.

BRAD

You don't understand. You weren't there when it all happened. It makes me sick to think about it.

JULIE

When what happened?

DOROTHY

Your arrival on Earth.

JULIE

She knows my story?

BRAD

She's my wife!

JULIE

Mon Dieu, why did you tell her?

BRAD

She's my wife.

JULIE

This is personal.

DOROTHY

It's terrible how your father abused June. She was young and naïve.

JULIE

Naïve? My dad was the naïve one. He thought mom loved him. But she left my dad with his baby in her womb!

DOROTHY

He made her believe she would be in movies with Robert Redford!

BRAD

Yeah!!

JULIE

Mais non, who told you such idiocies?

BRAD

It's true! My poor mother, she just wanted to be in movies! You know that.

JULIE

Oh la la, you must be joking! She lied to you.

BRAD

Why would she lie. Your father is the liar.

JULIE

The real story is that they met at the gym and fell madly in love. A year later maman got pregnant and she dumped him.
(choking up)

BRAD

I don't believe you.

JULIE

Mon papa is not a liar!

BRAD

He is alright! Oui oui!

JULIE

Non non!

DOROTHY

Stop it. You're like two bratty little kids. (mocking them)
Your Mom's a liar. No, your Dad is. No, you're wrong. No you are. (seriously) They need to meet and clarify all this.

JULIE

Non non, stay out of it.

DOROTHY

You don't want to know the real story?

BRAD and JULIE

I know the real story.

DOROTHY

Not again. Uh, Mon Dieu. It's obvious one of you got the wrong version of the real story. Maybe both. Don't you want to know the truth?

JULIE

Petit rat should indeed know the truth, so he'll finally understand.

BRAD

I cannot imagine that my mother would lie to me all my life.

JULIE

And I cannot imagine mon papa lying to me all my life.

DOROTHY

I'm sure their intentions were good. They didn't want to hurt you. They each told a story that wouldn't upset either of you.

BRAD

I don't like how she was treated.

DOROTHY

Yes, but suppose Julie has the real story, your mom would have not told you. It's a possibility.

BRAD

Yeah, I guess.

DOROTHY

Julie, Brad. Why don't we organize a surprise meeting.

JULIE

Mon Dieu, I am not sure he will accept.

DOROTHY

We won't tell them. They'll meet, it will be too late, and they'll have to tell us exactly what happened.

BRAD

Mom could get very angry.

JULIE

I say yes, don't worry petit rat.

DOROTHY

I'm used to her being upset. At least this is for a good cause.

BRAD

Gee, I had a nice life with my wife, about to buy a house, good career, preparing to raise a family. Why did you interfere with all this?

DOROTHY

(upset and raising her voice)

For our babies.

BRAD

Babies?

DOROTHY

We're having twins!

Lights off

END OF SCENE

SCENE 3

Lights on the other half of the stage.

*Dorothy and Brad are in their
bedroom preparing to go to bed.*

DOROTHY

What a day!

BRAD

I'm not sure about all this.

DOROTHY

Everything is going to work out.

DOROTHY

Why didn't you ever tell me about Julie?

BRAD

I told you. That belongs to the past. And I don't like what happened to my mother. Julie is the result of something just terrible. The less I think about it, the better.

DOROTHY

But it's your sister.

BRAD

So what?

DOROTHY

She's family. You know how I feel about family.

BRAD

Now you know how I feel. The worst things happen in families. Murder, sexual abuse, violence..

DOROTHY

That's awful. What a terrible outlook you have?

BRAD

It happens a lot, Baby.

DOROTHY

Don't Baby me.

BRAD

Jesus, you're touchy about this.

DOROTHY

Yes, because my family should be a harbor of peace.

BRAD

A harbor of peace?

DOROTHY

What's wrong with that?

BRAD

Yes, let's pretend we're the cute little perfect American family. We'll call ourselves...let's see...The Brady Bunch!

DOROTHY

I'm not pretending.

BRAD

Sweetheart, be real. Let's drop the whole idea. It's upsetting us. For the baby's sake, you need to rest.

DOROTHY

I can't rest in such a messy family. And the babies can't either.

BRAD

Let's go to sleep. I'm done talking about it.

DOROTHY

You drive me crazy sometimes. Done talking. Such a typical male. You're so boring.

BRAD

Thank you. Can I go to sleep now?

DOROTHY

No. I want to know what other secrets you have.

BRAD

We had a normal life until a few weeks ago. Can't we go back there, look for our house, get our pool?

DOROTHY

Oh Brad, yes of course. But first I want to meet Julie's father, and understand what happened with your mother. It doesn't bother you that Julie's story is different than yours?

BRAD

No.

DOROTHY

How come you and Julie have the same Mother and not the same story?

BRAD

Don't know. Don't care.

Brad gets close to Dorothy and starts touching her hair, giving her small kisses on the neck.

DOROTHY

Julie's heard the Robert Redford Story.

BRAD

Robert who?

DOROTHY

Robert Redford. Brad stop. I'm not in the mood. How could your Mom make up a story like this, and—

BRAD

I love your body.

DOROTHY

How could Julie not believe her but believe her father?

BRAD

I love your body in all its shapes.

DOROTHY

And sizes?

BRAD

All sizes.

DOROTHY

Soon I'll have a big tummy.

BRAD

I love big tummies.

DOROTHY

We need to be careful.

BRAD

Don't worry, I won't wake the babies

DOROTHY

Come on. I don't feel like it. I'm serious.

BRAD

I'm serious too.

DOROTHY

I won't have sex if you don't listen to me!

*Brad sighs and sits on the bed,
looking at her faking patience.*

BRAD

After I listen can we have sex?

DOROTHY

Yes, after you listen and agree with me.

BRAD

Ha! So you only want me to agree with your silly ideas.

DOROTHY

They're not silly. I want to have a big family.

BRAD

Good. That means we have to have lots of sex. (He pulls her to him until she falls over him on the bed). Come here, Babe.

DOROTHY

Why don't you love your sister?

BRAD

I love you. I love your body. I love making love. Let's make love.

DOROTHY

No, because you'll fall asleep. And we won't talk about this.

BRAD

Okay, I'll agree to organize the surprise party.

DOROTHY

You will?

BRAD

Yes, I think it's a brilliant idea. Can we have sex now?

DOROTHY

You're just saying that.

BRAD

I'll do whatever you say, sweetie. I'll help you set everything up and make sure mom does not suspect anything.

DOROTHY

Oh sweetheart, you're wonderful.

Brad starts kissing her and the lights go off.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 4

Lights on the other half of the stage.

In the street, in front of a building. Julie is walking in the street with her father JACQUES, grey hair, tall, thin, elegant.

JULIE

Thank you for coming papa.

JACQUES

Why are we not having dinner at the restaurant cherie?

JULIE

I have a little surprise.

JACQUES

Cherie, I love surprises.

Jacques gives her a hug.

JULIE

Papa, you haven't seen the surprise yet.

JACQUES

Maybe you autograph your first book?

JULIE

I wish! Soon, hopefully.

JACQUES

Cherie, tu parles trop anglais, tu es française, speak our beautiful language.

JULIE

Lazy, and then people think I'm snobbish. Everyone tells me I fake the accent to sound interesting. C'est pas vrai!

JACQUES

Oui ma cherie, not true.

JULIE

I miss France. Remember when we lived on the French Riviera?

JACQUES

Saint Tropez.

JULIE

Going to the beach every day after school.

JACQUES

Sailing to the islands.

JULIE

Singing La Vie en rose.

JACQUES

Eating baguette bread.

JULIE

Sipping champagne.

JACQUES

Letting the stars wish us good night.

JULIE

Looking for love.

JACQUES

Not finding any.

JULIE

Not letting go.

JACQUES

Feeling cheated.

JULIE

Being cheated.

JACQUES

You deserve better than that Stephane.

JULIE

Made me believe he was in love.

JACQUES

And just wanted your money.

JULIE

Your money.

JACQUES

Our money.

JULIE

You should have re-married.

JACQUES

How could I?

JULIE

All those women running after you.

JACQUES

Couldn't cheat.

JULIE

She was married papa!

JACQUES

Not in my heart.

JULIE

Celine was such a nice woman. I could see her as my step-mother.

JACQUES

Couldn't stand her dog.

JULIE

Foufou?

JACQUES

Foufou, calling your dog pussy, mon Dieu.

JULIE

Everyone stopped staring at her when, in the street, she'd scream Foufou, come here!

JACQUES

Come here...

JULIE

(laughing very loud) Come here...pussy!

JACQUES

And he would pee on my shoes every time we met.

JULIE

Jealous.

JACQUES

Julie, you want to go back to France?

JULIE

Oui papa. As my book will be published there, maybe I will stay in Paris for some time.

JACQUES

I come with you. I miss France and we can get a flat in Montmartre. You'll be in the artist area.

JULIE

Oh papa! Will I meet love some day?

JACQUES

Ma petite. You are all I have in life. Je t'aime.

JULIE

Moi aussi je t'aime. But I meant love like I get married and have kids.

JACQUES

Oui Julie. You deserve an intelligent French gentleman.

JULIE

You'll meet a nice elegant madame yourself papa.

JACQUES is walking along the street next to Julie. Julie puts her arm under his. They walk silently into a building. The stage goes dark and lights come back on in Brad's and Dorothy's living room. Brad and June are setting the table.

JUNE

Why all these secrets? Who is coming for dinner?

BRAD

If I told you, it wouldn't be a secret.

JUNE

Why can't you tell me?

BRAD

Because there is something I want to know.

JUNE

What?

BRAD

We'll find out soon.

JUNE

We?

The doorbell rings. Brad nervously sets the last glass on the table. He runs to the door. June rushes out of the room and goes upstairs.

JUNE

I'll go get my evening shoes.

June runs up the stairs and Brad puts his jacket on. He opens the door.

BRAD

Good evening.

JACQUES

Good evening...sir.

BRAD

Brad, my name is Brad.

JACQUES

Oh mon Dieu, you are Brad, the Brad?

BRAD

The Brad.

JACQUES

Cherie, if this is the surprise I don't like it.

Julie walks in. Dorothy enters the room. Jacques looks at her with admiration and smiles politely.

JACQUES

Bonsoir Mademoiselle.

DOROTHY

Bonsoir.

JACQUES

Oh, vous parlez français?

DOROTHY

No no. I just took one year of French in college and got a C-.
Couldn't pronounce the r, I spit instead.

JACQUES

Cherie, what are we doing here?

DOROTHY

It was my idea. I am Brad's wife. Please come in. I will explain.

*Jacques hesitantly walks in,
he looks around,*

DOROTHY

I've been married to Brad for three years, and I wanted to meet everyone related to him.

JACQUES

I am not related to him.

JULIE

Papa, have a seat.

*Jacques gets closer to the
Louis XIII chair which is in
pieces.*

JACQUES

Mon Dieu, the Louis XIII chair! I knew it would not be taken good care of.

DOROTHY

You know the chair?

JACQUES

(embarrassed) Well, oui, yes, it was mine. A rarity.

*Jacques picks up the pieces
and tries to put them back
together. He shakes his head
in a clear disappointment.*

JACQUES

This chair has been murdered!

June storms into the room.

JUNE

I will murder you!

*Jacques drops the chair and
one arm falls off. He's shocked.*

JACQUES

June!

JUNE

Get out of my house, get out, now!

JACQUES

I...I... mon Dieu, but...I...

DOROTHY and JULIE

(to June) Calm down, we invited him.

JUNE

You (to Dorothy), since you came to this house you have only created trouble!

JACQUES

June, I promise I did not know you were here. Julie said there was a surprise. And I thought that meeting Brad and his wife was the surprise.

JUNE

You know you are not welcome here.

JACQUES

I understand. But Julie is here. Oh la la, we have never been together all the three of us! It's the first time.

JUNE

And the last time, too!

JACQUES

Well, we...

JUNE

I said out!

JACQUES

I apologize for my presence. I shall go now.

JUNE

Good.

JULIE

(to Jacques) Please don't go. Mom. It's important.

DOROTHY

Please June, give us a chance to explain.

JUNE

Explain what? There's nothing to explain. Out!

JULIE

I never saw you in the same place at the same time. Mom, I need this. Papa, please sit down.

JUNE

There's nothing to say. I have nothing to say.

JULIE

Of course. But papa will.

JACQUES

I will?

JULIE

Papa, I need to know more about my parents, you two. But with both of you in the same room.

JUNE

Not with Brad and Dorothy here.

JULIE

They're family, mom.

Dorothy smiles. June sits down, not convinced. Jacques sits down not looking comfortable.

JULIE

Papa, you didn't promise mom that she would play in a movie with Robert Redford, did you?

JACQUES

I did what?

BRAD

You tricked my mom into that stupid lie just to seduce her.

JUNE

Stop it. Everyone out of here. Now!

JACQUES

Pardon? What's this all about?

BRAD

Mom believed you. You took advantage of her innocence.

Jacques starts laughing out loud, in a very French way (with a snoring noise).

JACQUES

Mais ça va pas! What is this, a joke?

JUNE

You stop it and get out I said! Will no one listen to me? This is my house!

JACQUES

No, you listen. What have you told the kids?

Brad, Julie, and Dorothy gather around her, next to Jacques. They stare at her. June looks very embarrassed.

JUNE

The truth.

JACQUES

Which is?

JUNE

You promised I would act in a movie with Robert Redford.

JACQUES

And?

JUNE

I never did, but I was pregnant with Julie.

JACQUES

Why?

JUNE

Why. What do you mean, why? Why do you think? You made me believe I would be in movies with Robert Redford, and become rich and famous. And you, you...

June starts crying.

BRAD

Mom...

Brad gets close to June, he hugs her. He gives a nasty look at Jacques.

BRAD

You should be ashamed of yourself.

JACQUES

June, I truly loved you.

BRAD

Don't. Jerk!

JACQUES

I did! I wanted to have our baby and live with you.

BRAD

Bastard! She was married to my dad!

JACQUES

I didn't know.

Jacques frowns in pain. Julie goes near him and hugs him. Now Jacques is facing June. Julie comforts Jacques. Brad comforts June. Dorothy looks at both sides as if she was watching a ping-pong match.

BRAD

What a jerk. How dare you?

JUNE

Brad.

DOROTHY

Jacques.

JULIE

Papa.

JACQUES

Sorry.

JUNE

Jacques.

JACQUES

June...when you left with unborn Julie, I felt the world was falling apart.

June stares at him and tears come down her cheeks.

JUNE

I didn't...

JACQUES

I started to drink...lost my job.. attempted suicide..

BRAD

What...

JUNE

I..I..didn't know...

JACQUES

How could you know?

JUNE

I know.

BRAD

You know...what?

JUNE

I was in love with you too.

Brad lets go of his mother. Dorothy opens her mouth with surprise. Julie scratches her head. Jacques stares at her.

BRAD

But you told me that he..

JUNE

(sighing) I was married, you were a little boy.

BRAD

So what?

JUNE

I would not leave you and your dad. How could I?

BRAD

But did you love dad and...(pointing at Jacques) him?

JUNE

I was confused.

DOROTHY

I'm confused now.

JULIE

(lying down on the couch) Wake me up when you're done. Then give me a summary of the story.

BRAD

What about the Robert Redford story?

JACQUES

It's true that I tried to give her the leading role in *Out of Africa*.

BRAD

See?

JACQUES

But the producer decided that she was too tall and Robert Redford would have looked bad, being shorter than her.

*Dorothy laughs out loud.
Everyone stares at her in disapproval. She stops.*

DOROTHY

(whispering) He must be a dwarf.

JUNE

I heard that.

Brad goes to a closet, takes a coat and puts it on.

BRAD

I'm going for a walk.

June runs towards Brad trying to stop him. He pulls away. She pulls him back.

JUNE

Brad, I did it for you. Because I loved you.

BRAD

You cheated on dad because you loved me. That's interesting mom. And you lied to me for thirty some years. Very interesting, indeed.

JUNE

I stopped cheating on your father because I loved you and wanted to keep our family together.

DOROTHY

You loved a lot of people.

JACQUES

Your graceful walk, your sparkling eyes, and your sweet voice never left my heart.

BRAD

Gross!

Brad looks at him in complete disapproval, he walks out the door and slams it loudly. Julie gets up.

JULIE

Poor papa.

DOROTHY

Sorry, Jacques.

JUNE

Poor papa and sorry Jacques? What do you think? He saw me at the supermarket, I was shopping for diapers, he invited me for an audition, he suggested I take the main role in a movie with Robert Redford, he promised to make me rich. Poor papa and sorry Jacques? And what did I get?

JULIE

Me.

June gives Julie a big hug.

JUNE

I love you, you're my baby girl. You know I love you so much. I am so sorry for all this.

JULIE

Why haven't you told me this?

JUNE

My dear, how could I ever?

JULIE

I have been in therapy for the past twenty years. I never understood what happened. My real dad was my 'uncle' when I was with you. And the man I called 'dad' at home was not my real dad. And when speaking of him to my real dad I should make sure not to say he was my dad.

DOROTHY

My head is spinning.

JUNE

I know it wasn't easy. I know so well, my dear.

JULIE

My book is my therapy. Trying to put all this in words. So hard.

JUNE

I wish I could have given you a better life. You're my only daughter.

JACQUES

My only child.

June looks at him surprised.

JUNE

You had no other children?

JACQUES

I couldn't.

JUNE

You never married?

JACQUES

I couldn't.

*June lets go of Julie.
Dorothy gets close to Julie,
whispers in her ear. They
slowly walk away from Jacques
and June who do not notice that.*

JUNE

You could have had any woman you wanted. How...

JACQUES

Could but didn't.

JUNE

Why?

JACQUES

I never stopped thinking about you and never being able to see Julie, until she was eight, killed me a little every day.

JUNE

I'm sorry. I didn't know. I thought you had many women. All those girls in love with you.

JACQUES

Just wanting to get in pictures. They'd sell their mother to be in movies.

JUNE

I couldn't tell my husband what happened, may his soul rest in peace.

JACQUES

He died?

JUNE

Ten years ago.

JACQUES

And you did not re-marry?

JUNE

What for? The kids were growing, keeping me busy, and...

JACQUES

And...

JUNE

And what?

*Jacques gets closer to her
attempting to take her hand.
She doesn't reject him.*

JACQUES

I was... alone too.

I didn't know.

JUNE

What if you had known?

JACQUES

I don't know.

JUNE

I wish I had known.

JACQUES

(softly) So do I.

JUNE

But...

JACQUES

I couldn't forget that night when you ran after me trying to catch me.

JUNE

You took my shoe and promised to throw it in the river.

JACQUES

Their tone starts becoming joyous and they laugh.

JUNE

You were so funny (mimicking him) Arrete arrete whatever that was...

JACQUES

That meant stop, stop.

JUNE

Oh, and you took off the other shoe, then your socks and threatened to make me eat them.

JACQUES

They were new shoes, I had just bought them.

JUNE

Not sure about the socks...

JACQUES

(giggling) they smelled?

JUNE

And then you grabbed my sleeve.

JACQUES

How did you ever do that? I fell down and found your blazer in my hands without you inside.

JUNE

You pulled it so hard.

Jacques pulls her sleeve and they are now very close. He brings his lips next to hers. She remains still.

JACQUES

I finally grabbed you.

JUNE

It was the most sensual moment of my life.

JACQUES

I was trembling when I felt you close to my body.

JUNE

I could hardly breathe.

JACQUES

Your eyes were glowing.

JUNE

We held each other very tight.

JACQUES

And our lips started to dance.

Jacques starts singing La Vie en Rose. They kiss. The music continues in the background. The kiss lasts the time of the entire song.

JUNE

And our story began.

JACQUES

But the end came too early.

JUNE

It never ended for me.

JACQUES

For me either.

JUNE

Remember that ring you gave me?

JACQUES

I thought you'd thrown it away.

JUNE

I didn't.

She shows it on one of her fingers. Jacques holds her hand for a while.

JACQUES

Je t'aime.

JUNE

Moi aussi.

They kiss.

JUNE

I sat on your Louis XIII chair whenever I thought about you.

Jacques gently takes her close to the chair.

JACQUES

Remember when we made love in it?

JUNE

It was the beginning of Julie.

Jacques picks June up. He sits on the chair and they both fall while the chair is now scattered around the room in many small pieces. They both look at the pieces. They look at each other. They laugh out loud. They start kissing and rolling on the floor like teenagers. Julie and Dorothy run on to see what the crash was all about. June and Jacques do not see them.

Brad returns from his walk. Jacques and June still don't see anyone. But as Brad gets closer he trips on the carpet and a glass from the top of the table falls and breaks. Jacques and June stop and look at them. They remain on the floor.

JUNE

It's not what you think!

JACQUES

Yes it is... children.

Lights off

END OF SCENE

SCENE 5

Lights on the other half of the stage.

A few months later. Dorothy and Brad are in June's living room. Lots of packed boxes around a sofa where they sit. The Louis Treize chair is repaired.

DOROTHY

I never thought we'd make it.

BRAD

Our new house! The most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

DOROTHY

I told you we'd find it.

BRAD

Yes, you were right. I must say I was skeptical.

DOROTHY

I knew the right house was somewhere waiting for us.

BRAD

Well, we saw seventy-eight houses before we found it, and we're spending sixty percent more than we thought.

DOROTHY

There you go, we were not looking for the right one.

BRAD

We'll have to live for twenty-five years on a small budget.

DOROTHY

I'll get a job after the babies are a bit grown. Don't worry. You're such a good engineer.

BRAD

It may not be so simple. We'll see.

DOROTHY

I'll get another degree while I take care of the twins.

BRAD

In what?

DOROTHY

I was fascinated by Julie's writing. What a talent she has!
I'd love to learn how to write.

BRAD

It's difficult to break in.

DOROTHY

She did it. Did you hear about the Lumiere Films being
interested in her story?

BRAD

I still don't know what her book is about.

Julie comes down the stairs.

JULIE

Little rat, so you are interested in my book?

BRAD

Where are you coming from?

JULIE

Helping mom pack.

DOROTHY

Pack?

June comes down the stairs.

JUNE

Paris! Je vais a Paris!! La Tour Eiffel, l'arc de triomphe,
les folies bergeres!

BRAD

Mom, are you alright?

JUNE

Je suis heureuse. Je suis, tu es, il est, nous sommes...

BRAD

What is she saying?

DOROTHY

Sounds like my French class in college. I should have studied
it more seriously. My father told me I would regret it some
day. But how could I guess I would be surrounded by French
speaking people? How did he know that? Freaky.

*June takes the Louis treize chair
and starts dancing with it
singing La Vie en Rose with a
very bad accent.*

BRAD

Mom.

DOROTHY

That's cute.

BRAD

Silly.

DOROTHY

Brad, aren't you happy to see your mom happy?

BRAD

Well, knowing why she is happy, I'm not sure.

*Jacques walks in from the main
door.*

JACQUES

Bonjour tout le monde.

DOROTHY

Why do I feel like I was abducted by aliens while driving home
and woke up in France?

JACQUES

Cherie, you should come to France and visit us.

BRAD

Are you moving there?

JACQUES

Non non, just for the honeymoon.

BRAD

Honeymoon?

DOROTHY

Oh congratulations! I'm so happy.

BRAD

Happy? Mom, what in the world are you...

JUNE

I'm in love.

JACQUES

Always have been with you my darling.

BRAD

You're going to be my stepfather?

JACQUES

Oui, isn't that fantastique my little boy?

BRAD

I don't think...

Dorothy gives him a kick.

BRAD

Ow! I hope you're both happy.

JACQUES

Merci mon petit.

BRAD

Oh, please.

JACQUES

We'll be back before our little grandchildren are born!

BRAD

Your what?

DOROTHY

Brad, give him a chance. Jacques, vous etes tres gentil.

JACQUES

Ma cherie, you are adorable. What a lovely young lady. June you must be so happy your son married this gorgeous and well-mannered, intelligent young girl.

(Beat)

JUNE

Hum...yeah...oui...yes, she's a doll. She is. No, really. Such a lovely young woman.

DOROTHY

You mean it?

JUNE

I...guess so. See, I mean, well. Thank you for doing all this. Thanks to your stubborn... I mean, thanks to your persistence, I feel twenty years younger now.

June hugs Dorothy. She gives her a kiss.

JULIE

Thank you Dorothy. And to think I was about to kick you out of my apartment.

DOROTHY

You did!

JULIE

But you sure were tough enough to refuse. Well done. Petit rat needs a woman like you.

JACQUES

Ma petite Dorothee, you made a miracle happen.

DOROTHY

Well, it was just...

BRAD

Sounds like you got what you wanted darling.

DOROTHY

Are you not happy about it?

BRAD

Of course I'm happy. If you're happy, and mom's happy, then I'm happy.

JULIE

Petit rat?

BRAD

And if Julie's happy, then I'm happy.

DOROTHY

This is the best day of my life.

JUNE

Vive la France.

DOROTHY

Vive les bébés.

JACQUES

Vive l'amour!

JULIE

Vive la vie!

Brad takes the keys out of his pocket. They're glittering as they're brand new. He shakes them in front of Dorothy's eyes.

BRAD

Vive la swimming pool and our maison.

June and Jacques pull out a big box from a closet.

JUNE

Jacques and I want to give you this gift for your new house.

DOROTHY

Oh, thank you. What is it?

BRAD

Open it.

Dorothy and Brad open the bog and they pull out two very old-looking not so nice-looking chairs. They look at each other puzzled.

DOROTHY

(Politely) How nice, thank you.

JACQUES

Two original Louis Treize chairs, for your living room!

Dorothy and Brad look at each other. They sit in the chairs, next to each other, they kiss, they hug, they fall out of the chairs as these come apart. June and Jacques scream picking up the pieces.

Lights off

THE END

VITA

Roberta Grossi is an Italian writer and playwright living in Paris, France. She is fluent in ten languages and works as a trainer in communication skills in multinational companies and teaches in international universities. She has studied in the USA and where she earned an MA in Speech Communication, an MBA in International Marketing, an MA in Adult Education and a BA in journalism. Roberta has written and produced many short plays, contributed to cross-cultural publications, and wrote several papers, which she presented at international conferences in the fields of communication and cultural differences.