

La Comédiathèque

Crash Zone

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Crash Zone

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Translation by the author

They gather at a crash site to pay tribute to their missing brother. But what truly occurred? And who exactly are they?

Characters

Three characters of unspecified gender
(in this version, one man and two women)

Dom
Fred
Yan

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Fred arrives. He doesn't seem to know where he is. Dom arrives shortly after.

Dom – Ah, you're here?

Fred – Yes.

Dom – I thought I had lost you... (*They look around a bit.*) So this is it? Are we there?

Fred – Yes.

Dom – Well...

A pause.

Fred – It's not very warm, is it?

Dom – No...

Dom approaches the edge of the stage.

Fred – Watch out, I think we're right on the edge of the abyss.

Dom – The abyss?

Fred – I mean the cliff.

Dom takes another cautious step and looks towards the audience.

Dom – Ah, I see... Yes, it's... It's high.

Fred joins him.

Fred – Yes... We can't even see the bottom...

They look ahead in silence for a moment.

Dom – I wonder what we're doing here, though...

Fred – This is where he disappeared. Apparently...

Dom – Here?

Fred – More or less...

Dom – One thing is for sure, we won't find him here.

Fred – No...

A pause.

Dom – But when you say here...

Fred – The plane exploded in mid-air. At a fairly high altitude, it seems. They discovered debris in a corridor approximately two kilometres wide and eight kilometres long.

Dom – So far, then.

Fred – After the cliff, it's... We don't know.

Dom – Okay, so, it's not... exactly here.

Fred – He didn't jump with a parachute. He disintegrated in the sky. So, obviously...

Dom – Two kilometres wide, six kilometres long...

Fred – Eight.

Dom – That's sixteen square kilometres.

Fred – More or less...

Dom – So, we're talking more about... It's in this area that he was vaporized, you know...

Fred – Exactly.

Dom – Well, I mean... pulverized.

Fred – No remains of his body were found in the spraying zone.

Dom – The area where...

Fred – Nothing that could be identified by DNA analysis, in any case.

A pause.

Dom – What the hell was he doing on that plane?

Fred – I don't know... God is everywhere...

Dom – Sorry?

Fred – No, I mean... It's fate. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time, that's all.

Dom – It's true that he was a bit like God, after all... Never in the right place at the right time... At least when we needed him...

Fred – Maybe we should have brought flowers or... I don't know... a wreath.

Dom – Yes... We'll have to think about that next time.

Fred – Next time? You mean... the next time we come here to pay tribute to him?

Dom – Well... Yes. Not the next time he crashes in a plane, right?

Fred – No.

Dom – Well, it was a figure of speech. We're not going on a pilgrimage to Brest every damn year, right?

Fred – No, obviously.

Dom – He's our brother, we're here to give him a final goodbye, it's only natural. But you know... He wasn't exactly the unknown soldier. And honestly I'm not really into commemorations...

Fred – Yeah... No, no, me neither... Not to mention it's not just around the corner...

A pause.

Dom – A flight from Paris to Brest... You have to admit it's a bit ridiculous... Why go to Brest by plane?

Fred – Especially him, who never took a plane...

Dom – And what on earth was he doing in Brest?

Fred – We'll probably never know...

A pause.

Dom – And... are we absolutely sure he was on that plane, at least?

Fred – Yes, pretty sure...

Dom – How can we be so sure? There was no sign of him in the crash area.

Fred – We couldn't find any sign of him anywhere else either...

Dom – Well, he wasn't exactly the type to leave a lasting impression...

Fred – True, he was more of the absent-minded kind... I mean, he kept to himself...

Dom – You could even say he was the type to blend into the background... That's why his death is so shocking...

Fred – It's out of character for him. Yet, his name was on the passenger list... There's no doubt about that.

Dom – He could have missed his flight at the last minute.

Fred – No, that's definitely not something he would do.

Dom – True, he was a rather punctual man.

Fred – Yes... Almost manic about it...

Dom – A man who sets his alarm for midnight so he won't miss the springtime change.

Fred – No, he couldn't have missed that plane. Unfortunately... And if he had, we would have heard from him by now.

A pause.

Dom – Alright, so... what are we supposed to do?

Fred – I don't know... We're just here to... pay our last respects.

Dom – Okay...

Fred – Mum seemed to care about it.

Dom – Too bad she ultimately couldn't make it.

Fred – She wasn't feeling well... You can understand her...

Dom – Yes... For her, obviously... it's a shock.

Fred – He was her son, after all.

Dom – But since she gave up on this trip, we could have canceled...

Fred – I was the one who bought the tickets. They were non-exchangeable and non-refundable.

Dom – I see... So... we're here just to make sure the tickets don't go to waste, then.

Fred – Exactly.

Dom – And what about Mum's ticket?

Fred – I gave it to... Yan.

Dom – Really? Is Yan here too?

Fred – Well, she is part of the family after all.

Dom – If you say so... But... we didn't see her on the train! Did we?

Fred – It was a plane ticket... Mum insisted on redoing the same journey as him... To find out...

Dom – Find out what?

Fred – I don't know...

Dom – I see... Like those people who redo the twelve stations of the cross, in shorts and flip-flops, carrying a small backpack with a cold drink... To find out...

Fred – Yes... Or the Camino de Santiago, taking it in small parts each year, and staying in guesthouses every night.

Dom – So, in the end, it was Yan who inherited his Paris-Brest...

Fred – I don't know what happened... She should have arrived before us.

Dom – So... she was traveling on the same airline? I mean, the shitty airline whose plane crashed here?

Fred – Rainbow Discount Airways... Yeah...

Dom – Well... I hope that for her, at least, we'll find a few pieces.

Fred – Let's hope they're not too big, and that they don't hit us on the head... Because this is heavy stuff..

They burst into laughter. Yan arrives in a rather extravagant outfit, not really appropriate for the last tribute to the deceased.. She carries a small pastry box. The other two try to regain their composure.

Yan – Oh, you're already here?

Dom – Yes, and... actually, we were getting a little concerned that you hadn't arrived yet.

Fred – Did you have a good trip?

Yan – You know... Paris-Brest... They don't even have time to serve us a hot meal on the plane... (*Pointing to the package*) I got this from a pastry shop on the way...

Fred – Ah, I see...

Yan – So, is this the place?

Dom – Seems like it.

Yan looks around and takes a few steps towards the room.

Fred – Don't get too close.

Dom – It would be foolish if you were to fall off a cliff while paying tribute to the victim of a plane crash, especially if someone is standing below...

Yan – I wanted to bring flowers, but on the plane... And then, there was no florist.

Dom – But fortunately, there was a pastry shop...

A moment of solemnity.

Yan – Obviously, you haven't found anything, right?

Fred – We didn't really look.

Dom – That's not why we came, is it?

Yan – In fact, I'm starting to wonder why we came.

Dom – To pay our final respects, it seems.

Yan – Okay... And how do we do that?

Fred – We were wondering the same thing before you showed up.

Yan – That's when religion can come in handy. (*The other two look at her surprised*) I mean, for the rituals...

Dom – Yes, because... I can't see us saying a little prayer.

Fred – Especially as we don't know any.

Dom – Does anyone have another idea?

Yan – I don't know... A minute of silence?

Fred – Okay...

They remain silent for a while. Dom looks at his watch.

Dom – I'm getting a bit hungry... (*Looking at the pastry box*) So, you've brought us some cakes?

Yan – I only took one, but well... We can share.

She opens the box.

Fred – What is it?

Yan – A Paris-Brest.

Dom – A what?

Yan – A Paris-Brest. It's the name of a French cake.

Dom – Ah yes, it's... It's quite appropriate...

Yan – I don't know how we're going to cut this into four.

Dom – Into four?

Yan – I mean into three. There are three of us, right?

Fred – I always carry a knife with me...

The other two give him a slightly worried look. He takes out a knife and cuts the cake into three pieces.

Dom – Well, there you go... It will be a kind of Republican communion.

They each take a third of the cake and start chewing.

Yan – It's true that we could have cut it into four, but well...

Fred – It's not that big already ...

Dom – Yes, a kind of sacrifice... It's a ritual practiced in quite a few religions... God's share....

Yan – Or the devil's share.

Dom – The Father's, the taxman's, and the Holy Spirit's share.

Fred – The poor man's share...

Dom – I hope it won't sit heavy on our stomachs.

A pause.

Dom – It did rain quite a bit.

Fred – We're in Brittany.

Dom – It doesn't really look like Brittany, does it?

Yan – I don't know.

Dom – I mean, well... it could be anywhere. It doesn't look like anything.

Fred – There are cliffs...

Yan – Yes, but I can't see the sea. Can you see the sea?

Fred – No.

Dom – It's very dark. And the cliffs look very high.

Fred – I wonder if they had time to see the sea before...

Dom – I don't know...

Yan – We'll never know...

Dom – But you, who took the same plane? Could you see the sea?

Yan – I don't know... I... I fell asleep...

Dom – Okay... We offer her a pilgrimage by plane, and she falls asleep. We were counting on you to tell us... How are we supposed to mourn now?

A pause.

Fred – The rain has stopped.

Yan – Yes. It's clearing up a bit.

Fred – Looks like there's going to be a rainbow.

Dom – They say the human body is mostly made up of water.

Fred – So what?

Dom – Maybe it's him.

Yan – Who?

Dom – The rainbow... (*The other two look at him, not understanding.*) As you said, he was vaporized...

They all look at the rainbow again.

Yan – It's like an apparition, then.

Fred – Yes, it's kind of like we found him.

Dom – Yes... Kind of...

They admire the rainbow while finishing the remaining bites of their Paris-Brest.

Yan – We'll just have to tell Mum about it. About the rainbow... It will make her happy.

Fred – It's true that it's a beautiful symbol...

Yan – Yes... The rainbow...

Dom – The family reunited at last...

A pause.

Fred – Maybe we could take a photo?

Dom – Do you think so?

Yan – It'll be a memento.

Dom – Okay...

Fred – Let's take a selfie.

They position themselves with their backs to the audience to take a selfie.

Yan – Cheese...

Fred takes the photo and they change their position.

Dom – Can we go now, then?

Yan – I've just arrived!

Fred – We can stay a bit longer.

Yan – It will help us to...

Fred – To mourn...

Yan – That's why we came, right?

Dom – Well...

Fred, who took the photo, looks at the result on his screen.

Fred – All I can see is the rainbow... I don't know why, but well... That'll do.

Dom – Let me see... (*Fred shows him the screen*) Oh yes... It looks like the logo of...

Fred – The LGBT movement...

Dom – I was thinking more of an advertisement for an insurance company, or a bank...

Yan – Or an airline...

Dom – Rainbow Discount Airways...

Yan (*looking around*) – I've never been to Brittany before. And you?

Fred – Yeah, I have.

Yan – We'll have to come back. In the summer.

Dom – Isn't it summer?

Yan – Oh, right, maybe... It's because of the weather...

Fred – Actually, it's raining again.

Yan – Yes, the rainbow's disappeared.

Dom – That's a sign, isn't it?

Fred – A sign of what?

Dom – That we might be able to go now. The miraculous hologram has disappeared. That's enough, right?

Yan – I don't know...

Dom – I'm fine, I've done my mourning, haven't you?

Fred – Okay. Let's go.

Yan opens an umbrella.

Dom – You even thought to bring an umbrella!

Yan – What would you do without me?

The other two stand under the umbrella, on either side of Yan.

Yan – It gave us a chance to spend some time together, at least.

Dom – Yes... Ultimately, this painful experience brought us closer, together.

Fred – How long has it been since we last saw each other, anyway?

Yan – I don't know... A long time...

Fred – Wait, the last time was...

Dom – Which way is it, by the way?

They hesitate for a moment.

Fred – I think it's this way...

Dom – Are you sure?

Yan – We should have left breadcrumbs on the way, like Hansel and Gretel...

Fred – Let's try this way, we'll see.

They are about to leave when Yan notices something on the ground and picks it up.

Fred – What is it? A stone?

Yan – A ballpoint pen.

Dom – Well... You didn't come all this way for nothing....

Yan examines the pen.

Fred – What's wrong?

Yan – It's a promotional pen.

Dom – So what?

Yan (*handing him the pen*) – Here, take a look...

Dom takes the pen and examines it as well.

Dom – Barclays Bank...

Yan – He worked at a bank... At Barclays, I believe...

Fred – You mean that...

Dom – No, but wait... Thousands of people work at Barclays! Not to mention its millions of customers!

Fred – Yeah... But we're at the crash zone...

Dom – A zone of sixteen square kilometres! The police experts didn't find any trace of him, but we would have found his pen?

Yan – Why not? Miracles do happen, don't they?

Dom – Oh, really? I thought they didn't exist, actually...

Fred – Even without a miracle... Sometimes you find a needle in a haystack.

Dom – I think we're getting a bit delirious here. It must be the fever. We must have caught a cold.

Yan takes back the pen and examines it again.

Yan – It's the address of a Barclays agency in the 16th district of Paris.

Fred – He lived in the 16th district?

Yan – Well, he lived in Paris. And we're in Brittany.

Dom – Yeah...

Yan – Maybe he left a message...

Dom – A message...?

Yan – If he had his pen in his hand when the plane went into a nosedive... Maybe he had time to write a message, sensing the end was coming...

Dom – Of course... And why not throw a message in a bottle too? Through the window.

Fred – Still, that pen didn't get here by itself...

Dom – In a case like this, nowadays, you pick up your phone to leave a message, right? You don't grab a pencil and paper to write your will...

Yan – Well, you know he didn't have a cell phone!

Dom – Oh really... He didn't have a cell phone? No, I didn't know that...

Fred – The last time he called me, it was from a phone booth. But we got cut off. We didn't even have time to talk... I didn't even get to say goodbye.

Dom – Why would you say goodbye to him? You didn't know what was going to happen to him!

Yan – Additionally, cell phone usage is prohibited on planes due to potential interference with the pilot's communication and air traffic control.

Fred – Who knows... Maybe trying to leave his farewell message caused this air disaster...

Dom – Oh yes, that's... That's impeccable logic.

Yan – What he means is that... it could have caused the plane to crash.

Dom – I know this guy had a streak of bad luck and seemed to bring misfortune to anyone who got close to him, but seriously...

Fred – Yeah, personally, if I had the choice, I would have steered clear of flying with him on Friday the 13th.

Dom – For sure, if he had been alive back then, his name would have surely been on the Titanic's passenger list.

Fred – So, what do we do now?

Yan – We could take a quick look...

Dom – A look? At what?

Yan – If the pen fell here, the paper might not be far away.

Dom – Is this a joke?

Fred – Now that we're here... What do we have to lose?

Yan and Fred start looking. Dom looks on in dismay.

Yan – We can't see much...

Fred (to Dom) – Come on, help us, it'll be faster!

Dom rolls his eyes.

Dom – I can't believe it...

He pretends to search a bit.

Yan – Have you looked over there?

Fred – I'll do it...

Yan – I'll look on the other side. Dom, you take this corner.

Fred – If the pen fell here, the paper might not be far away.

Dom – Except that paper flies. Much better than a pen. Much better than a plane, anyway...

Dom shrugs, when suddenly his eyes are drawn to something. He bends down and picks up a piece of paper, reading it.

Yan – What is it?

Fred – No way... Is that it?

Yan – His will? I mean... his farewell letter?

Dom – I don't know... There are a few scribbled words... It's not signed.

Fred – Maybe he didn't have time.

Yan – But is it his handwriting?

Dom – Do you know his handwriting?

Yan – No.

Fred – He wasn't the type to write very often.

Dom – No, he wasn't. In fact, even when he was alive, he was mostly the type to play dead.

Yan – But what does it say?

Dom (*reading*) – "This note to tell you that I won't be coming home tonight..."

Fred – That's it?

Dom – That's it.

Yan – And it's not signed?

Dom – No.

Fred – But who is it addressed to?

Dom – Who knows...

Yan – Maybe to his wife.

Fred – Was he married?

Yan – Not to my knowledge.

Fred – Maybe he was gay...

The other two look at him with surprise.

Dom – Why do you say that?

Fred – I don't know... It just came to me... Since he wasn't married.

Dom – Just so you know, nowadays you can be gay and married.

Fred – You're right. I don't know why I said that.

Yan – Yeah... I wonder if we really knew him that well, actually.

Dom – No, do you think so?

Fred – How can we know if this little note is from him or not...?

Yan – Let me see...

She takes the paper from Dom, takes out the pen, and draws a line on it.

Yan – The ink is the same colour as the pen.

Fred – What colour?

Yan – Blue.

Fred – Does that mean this note was written with this pen?

Dom – It's a thin piece of evidence, isn't it? One pen out of two writes in blue!

Yan flips the paper over.

Yan – It's written on the back of a flyer...

Fred – And what is it an advertisement for? The Barclays?

Yan – An African marabout... Neutralizing bad luck, bringing back good fortune, success in love, professional success, happiness for couples and families...

Dom – If he was really on that plane, it didn't work for him.

Yan – "This note to tell you that I won't be coming home tonight"... Still, it does look like a farewell message, doesn't it?

Dom – Yes... It could also be a message left on the kitchen table by a husband to tell his wife that he's away on business. Or from a wife to her husband, telling him she just dumped him.

Yan – Here? In the middle of nowhere?

Dom – I'll say it again: paper does fly... sometimes.

Fred – So, what do we do?

Dom – What do you mean, what do we do?

Fred – Even if this note wasn't written by him, it must have been written by another passenger. We need to find out who it was.

Dom – What for?

Yan – To give it to the person it was intended for, of course!

Dom – Can you imagine us conducting a handwriting analysis to determine which of the plane crash victims might have written this message and to whom it was addressed?

Fred – Obviously, we won't be the ones performing the analysis. But we can hand this document over to the forensic police experts.

Dom – Of course... All this effort just to eventually deliver this final message from someone's beloved, who passed away, to a widow or orphan in six months or a year: "This note is to tell you that I won't be coming home tonight." I think they're starting to suspect that, right?

Fred – Yeah, well, now that you mention it...

Yan – It's true, looking at it that way...

Dom – But obviously!

Fred – So, what do we do with this paper?

Dom – Let's just put it back where we found it, and that's it.

Yan – Alright... (*She puts the paper on the ground*) Was it here?

Dom – I don't know... Maybe a little further... Does it really matter?

Fred – So, nothing will have changed... In a way... we're in a sanctuary here.

Yan – That's true... It's a place inhabited by the ghosts that haunt it... Don't you feel their presence?

Fred – Yeah... A little...

Dom – Yes, if you say so...

Yan gently puts down the paper and remains frozen for a moment in contemplation.

Yan – I'm going to keep the pen anyway.

Dom – You're right... It could always come in handy... Especially if you're coming back by plane. You never know, with the law of averages... Do you have any paper too? I have some if you need...

Yan puts the pen away.

Yan – Alright, let's go then.

Dom – That's it, let's go...

Fred hesitates once again.

Fred – Excuse me, but...

Dom – What is it now?

Fred – I just need a minute.

Dom – What time is the damn train? We're going to miss it if this keeps up. It's already getting dark.

Fred – No, don't worry, it will only take a second.

Yan – Alright... We're listening.

Fred – It's about what I said earlier...

Yan – What? What did you say?

Fred – When I said... that he might be gay.

Yan – So what? Do you have new information on that too?

Dom – Well, now that he's dead... It really puts his sexual orientation into perspective, doesn't it?

Fred – Actually... I have good reasons to believe that he was...

Yan – Gay?

Dom – Oh my god, it all makes sense...

Yan – Yes, the rainbow! When we said it was a sign...

Dom – No, this is a nightmare... We're not going to spend the night here. Discussing our brother's posthumous coming out while his remains are scattered over an area of sixteen square kilometres!

Yan – We have the right to know, even after his death, who he really was. He was our brother, after all.

Dom – Alright, so our dear brother was gay, yes or no?

Yan – What I meant to say is that I have good reasons to believe that he wasn't really our brother.

Dom – Oh damn... We'll never figure this out...

Yan – Not our brother? You mean... he was adopted or something.

Fred – Not even that.

Dom – What do you mean, not even that?

Fred – He was about the same age as us. Maybe a little older. We always thought he was our older brother. But well...

Yan – It's true that I would have never thought to directly ask him the question.

Fred – Especially since he wasn't the talkative type.

Yan – No... I admit I even wondered if he was mute...

Dom – So, in your opinion, this guy we always saw at home, he wasn't our brother?

Fred – We have to admit that it was never explicitly stated.

Dom – Indeed... That leaves me speechless... It was never explicitly stated...

Yan – But if he wasn't our brother, then who was he?

Fred – Be careful, I didn't say I was sure.

Dom – You said you had good reasons to think so.

Yan – Yes, and what are those good reasons?

Fred – Well... first of all, to begin with, he didn't resemble us much.

Dom – The three of us don't look very much alike... And yet we're brother and sister.

Yan – Yes, that's true.

Dom – Well, who knows... Maybe we're not brother and sister after all...

Yan – You think so?

Dom – Nah, just kidding... Although... It was never explicitly stated either.

Fred – That's true...

Dom – But don't you think we're going a bit too far here?

Yan – It's starting to give me the creeps, what about you?

Fred – Yeah...

Dom – When you mentioned that he didn't resemble us much, do you have other reasons to think that he might not be our brother?

Fred – Well... His first name, for example...

Yan – His first name... It's true that... What was his name again?

Dom – Loïc.

Yan – That's right. I always had trouble with that name. Even now, I'm not really sure how to spell it.

Fred – Loïc? It's spelt the way it's pronounced, isn't it?

Yan – Yeah... But precisely... Do you put a diaeresis on the i or not? Because otherwise, it wouldn't be pronounced Loïc. Usually...

Fred – That... (*To Dom*) Would you put a diaeresis, or not?

Dom – I don't know... And I confess that until today, I never wondered about it... And since I never wrote his first name...

Fred – Well yes, we didn't have many opportunities to write to him. He was always there...

Yan – And even regarding the pronunciation... We have to say that we didn't often call him by his first name.

Fred – No. And when we did call him, he didn't often answer.

Dom – I even wondered if he was deaf.

Yan – Loïc...

Fred – It's a Breton name.

Yan – Oh really?

Fred – Well yes! It's even a brand of cider, I think.

Dom – That's strange... I always thought it was Polish.

Yan – Why Polish?

Dom – I don't know... Loïc... Ending with an "ïc". It sounds Polish to me...

Yan – My name is Yannick, and I'm not Polish. Well, not to my knowledge...

Fred – In any case, whether it's Breton or Polish, it's not a French name... I mean, not like ours. Dominique, Frederick, Yannick...

Dom – Your name is Frederick?

Fred – Of course it is! Didn't you know?

Dom – No...

Yan – Neither did I...

Dom – We've always called you Fred.

Fred – Fred is a nickname. For Frederick.

Dom – Well, anyway, he had a Breton first name. We have to wonder why.

Yan – But that doesn't mean he's not our brother...

Dom – We can always ask Mum when we get back.

Yan – Yeah... Even if it's not the kind of question that's easy to ask your mother...

Fred – I wanted to do a DNA test, but he died before that.

Yan – Without asking for his permission, you mean?

Fred – It's still possible to find a piece of... Today, it's not complicated.

Dom – Obviously, now it's going to be more difficult. Sixteen square kilometres, and not a single visible piece with the naked eye...

Yan – Loïc... Maybe that explains the Paris-Brest...

Dom – What do you mean?

Yan – If it's a Breton name! Maybe he still had connections to Brittany...

Dom – Now that you mention it, I often saw him eating crepes and drinking cider.

Yan – Is that true?

Dom – No, I'm just joking... You can see we're in the middle of something crazy here.

Yan – Still... It's all very strange...

Dom – What? What's strange?

Fred – For starters... Why didn't Mum come, for example?

Dom – You told me yourself that she wasn't feeling well.

Yan – It could have been an excuse not to come.

Dom – That's it... And maybe she's not our mother either...

Yan – I didn't say that...

Dom – Earlier, we were wondering if we were really brother and sister. If we're not brother and sister, then Mum isn't our mother either.

Fred – Whose mother would she be then?

Yan – Maybe Loïc' mother?

Fred – Well, there you have it! In fact, he is the true child of the family. And the fake brothers and sisters are us.

Fred – But then what are we doing here? I mean, what would we have been doing in this family for so many years? If we're not part of the family, that is...

Dom – Who knows...

Yan – Maybe we were there as foster children.

Dom – That's it... Our parents never came to get us. And the woman we called Mum kept us. Out of Christian charity.

Yan – And she never dared to tell us that we weren't really her children.

Fred – It's true that she never clearly told us that we were her children.

Dom – Well, there you have it! And since her legitimate son was deaf-mute, he couldn't say otherwise either.

Fred – That would explain a lot of things...

Yan – Yes, everything is clear now...

Dom – You think so?

A pause.

Yan – There's still one detail that bothers me, though.

Dom – No kidding?

Yan – Does that mean that all our parents died at the same time?

Dom – What do you mean?

Fred – If we were in foster home, and she adopted us because our parents died. It means that our own parents all died at the same time.

Yan – Since we're not brother and sister.

Dom – Oh yeah...

Yan – In an accident, then.

Fred – Yes... They might have been on the same plane...

Dom – What plane?

Yan – I don't know... The one that crashed here?

Dom – Here?

Fred – But how long ago was this crash, exactly?

Dom – Exactly, I don't know. And I have to admit that I'm starting to get a bit confused. Don't you want us to forget this hypothesis and just stay brother and sister?

Yan – You're right... We shouldn't exaggerate. We are indeed brother and sister, it's obvious...

A pause.

Fred – I have another hypothesis.

Yan – What?

Fred – What if he was our father, instead?

Dom – Who?

Fred – Loïc!

Dom – Here we go again.

Yan – He was a bit young to be our father, wasn't he?

Fred – Young? That depends... At what age?

Dom – And we never saw him with... I mean, he didn't sleep in the same room as our mother.

Fred – That would have definitely caught our attention.

Yan – Actually, I wouldn't be able to say in which room he slept.

Fred – Yeah... Or in which plate he ate.

Yan – Or in which closet he kept his clothes.

Dom – In short, we wouldn't be able to confirm if he really existed.

General consternation.

Fred – Loïc...

Yan – Our father...

Dom – Our father who art in heaven...

Yan – After disappearing without a trace in a plane crash. Before being able to give us life.

Dom – Before?

Yan – If he doesn't exist, it means we're not his children.

Dom – Or that we don't exist either...

Yan – It's Loïc... I mean, it's logical...

A pause.

Fred – So that's it... We are the children our mother never had.

Fred – It's true that she didn't talk to us much either.

Yan – No... And we have to admit that where she lives, there's only one bedroom, right?

Fred – Hers.

Yan – Yes, it's obvious... Mum has always lived in a studio.

Dom – Soon you'll be telling me she was a virgin too... Or a nun...

Fred – Do you think that studio could be a convent cell or something like that?

Dom – That's it... She joined a convent because God the Father crashed into the sea before immaculate contraception...

They all remain stunned for a moment.

Fred – I'm going to take another photo.

Dom – A family photo? What for? It doesn't seem very relevant anymore, does it?

Yan – To find out if we really exist. Earlier, we weren't in the photo.

Dom – I'm not sure...

Yan – What?

Dom – If I want to know...

Fred steps back a bit, towards the backstage area, to get some perspective.

Fred – I'll take both of you to make sure... Move a little closer...

Dom and Yan move closer to each other, feeling a bit uncomfortable. Fred moves back even further, until he disappears. A moment's hesitation. The light changes.

Dom – I think I remember.

Yan – It wasn't an accident.

Dom – It wasn't a terrorist attack either.

Yan – It was...

Dom – Some kind of suicide.

Yan – That's it. A mass suicide.

Dom – Well, it wasn't really a suicide.

Yan – The pilot plunged them all into the abyss with him.

Dom – They should have never boarded that plane.

Yan – But how could they know? When you board a plane, you don't choose the pilot.

Dom – No.

Yan – You blindly trust someone you don't know. And you put your life in their hands.

Dom – Like children who rely on their parents. Because they have no choice.

Yan – But adults... It's madness.

Dom – Yes.

Yan – We should always know which airline we're flying with and who's in control.

Dom – We should never be able to say afterwards: "I didn't know."

Yan – They're all dead.

Dom – And we were never born.

Yan – That's why no bodies were found.

Dom – We were simply erased.

Yan – But where are we exactly?

Fred – I don't know... It looks like a prison...

Dom – An open-air one, then...

Yan – More like a cemetery.

A pause.

Dom – Weren't we three earlier?

Yan – Earlier?

Dom – Frederick! Don't you remember? We called him Fred.

Yan – Oh yes, maybe.

Dom – He went that way.

He goes to check towards the wings. And returns.

Yan – So?

Dom – Nothing. It's the edge of the cliff.

Yan – Is it the same there too?

Yan walks around the stage.

Yan – Actually, we're not at the edge of the abyss... We're surrounded by emptiness.

Dom – We're in the middle of nowhere. And something tells me we won't be leaving anytime soon.

Yan – It's like we're on an island surrounded by nothingness.

Dom – Don't get too close to the edge!

Yan – It's the edge that's getting closer...

The light starts to fade.

Dom – It's getting darker and darker.

Yan – Does anyone have a taper?

Dom – You mean a candle?

Yan takes out a candle from her bag.

Yan – I always carry one. But I don't have a lighter...

Dom – What's the point of always carrying a candle if you don't have a lighter?

Yan – Do you have a lighter?

Dom lights the candle.

Dom – It feels like a candle auction...

Yan – If the candle goes out before they come to get us, we'll never be born.

The candle burns for a moment.

Dom – So, no one?

Yan – Seriously, no regrets?

Dom – No remorse...?

Yan – Is there a pilot in the audience?

A moment of silence.

Dom – We are the children of no one.

Yan – In no place. And in no case.

Dom – We only have the freedom to decide when... to return to nothingness.

Dom blows out the candle.

Black.

The End.

About the author

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

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

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

Other plays by the same author translated in English:

A Cuckoo's nest

A simple business dinner

An innocent little murder

Casket for two

Cheaters

Crisis and Punishment

Critical but stable

Four stars

Friday the 13th

Heads or Tails

Him and Her

Is there a pilot in the audience?

Is there an author in the audience?

Chris a moment before the end of the world

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 Ideal Son-in-Law

The Smell of Money

The Window across the courtyard

The Worst Village in England

Welcome aboard!

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