

La Comédiathèque

music
doesn't
always

soothe
the savage
beasts

Jean-Pierre Martinez

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Music does not always soothe the savage beasts

Jean-Pierre Martinez

Mr. and Mrs. Camembert have just bought the dilapidated castle of Moulinrouge, and they have invited the local high society for a dinner concert. They hope this will gain them admission as members of the town's highly exclusive Philanthropic Club. But soon, the pianist's head appears floating in the pool. And to think we're barely at the appetisers..

Characters

Roger Camembert
Brigitte Camembert
Samantha Camembert
Edmond Martini de la Riviera
Marianne Martini de la Riviera
Charles Martini de la Riviera
Gregory Badminton
Conchita Badminton
Charlotte Kowalski
Fatima
Joseph
Frederick Laccordion
Mark Antony
Cesar
Rosalie
Inspector Ramirez
Sanchez

From 14 to 17 actors

Charlotte, Laccordion, and Mark Antony can be played by actors with other roles.
Fatima, Laccordion, Ramirez, and Sanchez can be played by either men or women.

14 actors: 9M/5F, 8M/6F, 7M/7F, 6M/8F

15 actors: 10M/5F, 9M/6F, 8M/7F, 7M/8F, 6M/9F

16 actors: 11M/5F, 10M/6F, 9M/7F, 8M/8F, 7M/9F

17 actors: 11M/6F, 10M/7F, 9M/8F, 8M/9F, 7M/10F, 6M/11F

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Courtyard of a crumbling castle. Roger and Brigitte Camembert, in faux-casual but genuinely vulgar attire, sit on a bench, staring into the distance. The church bell chimes seven times.

Brigitte – It's seven o'clock.

Roger – Yes... Maybe...

Brigitte – Didn't you hear it?

Roger – I heard the bells. But how can we be absolutely sure it's exactly seven o'clock?

Brigitte – But the church bell just rang seven times!

Roger – That doesn't prove anything.

Brigitte – It doesn't prove anything?

Roger – There might have been a mistake.

Brigitte – How could they be wrong?

Roger – The Church has been wrong plenty...

Brigitte – In any case, it's never been wrong about the current hour! The bell tower will always be to doubting souls what a lighthouse is to sailors in a storm...

Roger – If you say so...

Brigitte – For a true Christian, the hour is the hour. And when seven bells ring from the Moulinrouge bell tower, it's because it's seven.

Roger – That's what they call a butcher's faith.

Brigitte – A coalman's, you mean.

Roger – Professional bias.

Brigitte – True Christian faith isn't being sure the bells ring at the right hour. It's believing the right hour is when the bells ring.

Roger – Anyway, I'll check on my latest model mobile.

He checks his phone screen.

Brigitte – And besides, we do know the priest, after all.

Roger – Yes... That's precisely the problem...

Brigitte – True, there have been quite a few rumours about him...

Roger – And he just got out of custody for indecent exposure.

Brigitte – Right...

Roger puts away his phone.

Roger – In any case, it's seven.

Brigitte – And none of our guests have arrived yet... Do you think they'll come?

Roger – What time did we put on the invitation cards?

Brigitte – Seven.

Roger – Nobody arrives at seven for a seven o'clock invitation.

Brigitte – They don't?

Roger – Not in the upper crust, anyway. Actually, I'm not even sure it's appropriate to invite people for seven o'clock...

Brigitte – You think?

Roger – They'll turn up around half-past seven.

Brigitte – But it's just a cocktail party, right? They're not going to show up at eleven at night.

Roger – Didn't we say it was a cocktail concert?

Brigitte – A cocktail is less intimidating than a full dinner. Our guests are quality people. They have a very specific idea of what it means to have a good evening.

Roger – You're right. Seeing "cocktail" on the invitation card, they'll think: if it's boring to death, we won't be obliged to stay...

Brigitte – Not "cocktail" but "cocktail concert".

Roger – For sure.

Brigitte – Serving them a glass of sangria and grilling some sausages won't be enough for them to say as they leave: we've had a good night.

Roger – And besides, we can't claim to host a fancy dinner in town. We're not members of Moulinrouge's Philanthropic Club.

Brigitte – Not yet, unfortunately. And that's the whole point of tonight: to find a sponsor who will get us admitted to this prestigious Moulinrouge institution.

Roger – Anyway, if we had put "dinner" on the invitation card, no one would have come.

Brigitte – It's obvious.

Roger – We're still not qualified for dinners...

Brigitte – In fact, we only put "cocktail concert" and nobody's here...

Roger takes a card and looks at it.

Roger – Ah, I think there's a little typo. Instead of "cocktail" it says "Cooktail". Look...

Brigitte – Oh yes, you're right... Anyway, it's almost the same. In "cooktail" we hear "cook".

Roger – And "tail" ...

Brigitte – And since we will also be serving them food alongside the drinks.

Roger – And we're providing them with a pianist.

Brigitte – We didn't skimp on that.

Roger – We did things properly.

Brigitte – And moreover, we're hosting them in our castle.

Roger – For sure. Can you believe it? We're now the proud owners of Moulinrouge Castle.

Brigitte – There's still a bit of work to make it perfectly livable, but well. It's true, after all. We're the Lords of the Castle.

Samantha arrives, looking punk or gothic.

Roger – And here's our princess...

Brigitte – Honestly, Samantha, you could have made an effort to dress up for our guests... You look like you just stepped out of a zombie movie.

Samantha – When are we eating?

Roger – Right after the cocktail.

Brigitte – And after the concert.

Samantha – The concert? I suppose it's not rap. What is it? A jazz band?

Brigitte – It's a top-notch tenor, specially flown in from Paris on the high-speed train.

Roger – It cost us an arm and a leg.

Brigitte – He'll sing some great opera arias while accompanying himself on the piano.

Samantha – Ah yes... So, we're not eating anytime soon, then...

Roger – This is about getting us into Moulinrouge's high society, Samantha.

Brigitte – By becoming benefactors of Moulinrouge's Philanthropic Club.

Roger – The piano and opera are entirely appropriate to launch us into society, my dear.

Brigitte – And why not take the opportunity to find yourself a well-to-do husband?

Samantha – A husband... Okay... I feel like I'm acting in a late 19th-century boulevard play.

Roger – And yet, this one's from the early 21st century.

Brigitte – At least you can still hope to change your name by marrying...

Samantha – Camembert... It's true that a name like that makes you want to marry the first one that comes along.

Brigitte – I never got used to the idea of being called Mrs. Camembert.

Roger – What can you do, Brigitte? That was my parents' name, and before them, my grandparents, and before them...

Brigitte – And I don't blame you for it, Roger. But it's a fact that people named Roger and Brigitte Camembert don't get invited into high society. Unless they're really wealthy.

Roger – Or if they give opera recitals.

Samantha – But we are rich! We even have a castle!

Brigitte – Yes... A crumbling castle...

Roger – But a listed castle!

Brigitte – Besides having a difficult-to-bear name, your father inherited from his parents a sausage factory. But Roger Camembert is not exactly Bill Gates. We can't afford to throw money out the window.

Samantha – If only we had windows...

Roger – All this costs a fortune, darling... And we're not going to put PVC windows on the facade of a castle where, they say, Louis XIV spent a night.

Brigitte – In our own room, you realise, Samantha? The Sun King!

Samantha – Oh yes, by the way, I wanted to tell you: it rains in my room. Fortunately, I have a canopy bed... But if it keeps ups, I'll need a tent.

Roger – Alright. I'll call the roofer as soon as we've paid the caterer.

Brigitte – And the fee for this outrageously expensive musician.

Samantha – What's the name of this virtuoso?

Roger – Frederick Laccordion.

Samantha – Laccordion and he plays the piano?

Brigitte – Your father's name is Camembert and he sells sausages.

Roger – And these sausages made us rich.

Brigitte – By the way, dear, we've invited Mr. and Mrs. Martini de la Riviera. And I think they'll come with their son Charles...

Samantha – Charles? So what...?

Roger – He's studying medicine in Paris, but he's on vacation with his parents at the moment.

Samantha – Medicine...?

Roger – He wants to be a forensic doctor.

Samantha – And that's what you call a good catch? Alright, I'm out, the Camemberts.

Brigitte – And please, dear, dress a bit more elegantly to receive our guests.

Samantha – Sure thing. Give me a shout when your guests arrive. To see if the turkey is to their liking...

Samantha leaves.

Roger – Did you plan for a turkey?

Brigitte – No...

Roger – I wonder if there wasn't a subliminal message...

Brigitte – Can you imagine, by marrying Charles, our daughter would become Mrs. Martini de la Riviera? Maybe even a Baroness one day...

Roger – Yes... But I wonder if we did right by naming her Samantha...

Brigitte – Why?

Roger – I don't know... Lady Baroness Samantha Martini de la Riviera...

Brigitte – It still sounds better than Samantha Camembert.

Roger – In any case, this concert will give the Camembert the cultural touch they still lack to be accepted in Moulinrouge's high society.

Brigitte – The problem with classical music is that it's not cheap.

Roger – I hope at least this guy sings in tune and plays the piano well.

Brigitte – They guaranteed us that he's a virtuoso, didn't they?

Roger – We have to believe them... Because, honestly, I don't know anything about classical music...

Brigitte – Nowadays, most nobles are broke... They're forced to sell their castles just to avoid having to work for a living.

Roger – At least it allowed us to buy ours for a decent price.

Brigitte – Unfortunately, Roger, we have to admit that we don't have the appearance or manners of true castle lords.

Roger – It's true, Brigitte. We have to be realistic. The Camembert still don't have all the attributes needed to shine in society. So, if we want to convince someone to sponsor our application to the Club...

Brigitte – And find a husband for our Samantha with tasseled loafers and a noble title...

Roger – We'll have to entertain all these people a bit if we hope to keep them around past the cocktails.

Brigitte – Indeed...

Roger – Fortunately, I found the solution.

Roger – Oh yeah?

Brigitte – I invited Mark Anthony.

Roger – Mark Anthony?

Brigitte – You know, that painter the Ratatouille told us about.

Roger – The Ratatouille?

Brigitte – Or Cassoulet, I don't remember. They live in that Greco-Roman style villa on the edge of town!

Roger – I don't see...

Brigitte – Oh come on, you know! Mark Antony painted that trompe-l'œil at the bottom of their pool.

Roger – Oh yes, I see now... A reproduction of the Sistine Chapel ceiling...

Brigitte – Exactly. Well, it seems this Mark Anthony is very funny.

Roger – Indeed...

Brigitte – He's a very clever guy, with immense culture. At least, that's what the Ratatouille say.

Roger – I hope he charges less than the pianist, though.

Brigitte – Oh no, he does it for free. I don't think he even realises that people invite him just to liven up their parties. We were lucky he was available because he's in high demand. There are so many dinner parties in town.

Roger – I see. So, these Moulinrouge dinners are the opposite of the "Dinner Game".

Brigitte – How so?

Roger – We invite this Mark Anthony because he's witty. And we're the fools...

Brigitte – You know, this guy was Dalí's assistant.

Roger – No? The one with the big moustache who did chocolate ads?

Brigitte – They even say Mark Anthony painted most of the Maestro's paintings. Old Dalí just signed them.

Roger – No?

Brigitte – According to Mrs. Ratatouille, in Dalí's paintings, the only genuine thing is the signature.

Fatima arrives, as the maître d'hôtel. Grand attire, perfect posture, and ceremonial air, but ambiguously gendered (the character can be played by a man or a woman).

Brigitte – Ah, Fatima. So, have our first guests arrived?

Fatima – No, ma'am. But Mr. Laccordion called. He says he'll be a bit late...

Roger – Very well, Fatima. Did he say why?

Fatima – His high-speed train suffered a passenger-related incident when leaving Paris.

Brigitte – A passenger incident... I see... That's what they say when someone attempts suicide and gets split in half by a train.

Roger – Damn... Just our luck. He couldn't have picked another day to commit suicide, that idiot.

Fatima – Oh, and Mr. Laccordion also mentioned to Mr. and Mrs. that he won't be able to stay very long.

Brigitte – And why is that?

Fatima – Because he's also expected at Mrs. Kowalski's house.

Brigitte – But Fatima, what would Mr. Laccordion do at the Kowalskis'?

Fatima – Isn't Madam aware? The Kowalski are also hosting a cocktail party tonight. In fact, Mrs. Kowalski asked if I could do a shift at her place tonight...

Brigitte – Tonight?

Roger – The bitch...

Fatima – She even offered to double my wages for the evening.

Brigitte – And you refused to be bribed, Fatima. Bravo! We will be eternally grateful to you. Right, Roger?

Roger – Given how much this evening is already costing us, I can't offer you a bonus for tonight, but... (*He rummages in his pockets.*) Here. I bought a lottery ticket at the betting shop this morning. (*He hands her the ticket.*) This is for you. Even if it's a winning ticket. Fortune favours the bold, Fatima...

Brigitte – And a hundred percent of winners have tried their luck!

Fatima (*taking the ticket*) – Thank you, sir.

Brigitte – You can leave us, Fatima.

Fatima – Very well, ma'am.

Fatima exits.

Roger – I still don't understand why this servant dresses like a man.

Brigitte – Because we hired her as a maître d'hôtel, Roger.

Roger – Kowalski... It rings a bell...

Brigitte – They're the ones who bought the other castle in Moulinrouge...

Roger – Right. Kowalski... Do they have a daughter to marry off as well?

Brigitte – A son... But it's much worse than that...

Roger – Worse?

Brigitte – I think the Kowalskis are also looking for a sponsor for Moulinrouge's Philanthropic Club.

Roger – No way? But that's impossible! The Kowalskis! With a name like that!

Brigitte – I remind you that our name is Camembert...

Roger – At least it's a French name.

Brigitte – Be that as it may, there's only one vacant spot to welcome a new member in the Club.

Roger – Do you think the Kowalskis might try to snatch it from us?

Brigitte – I wouldn't be surprised with those people... They're only interested in money! If they want to join the Club, it's to get the mayor's authorisation to turn their classified castle into a 4-star hotel and make the park an 18-hole golf course.

Roger – No? The mayor is part of the Club?

Brigitte – He's the president!

Roger – Did you invite him too, I hope?

Brigitte – Of course! The whole point of this concert is to honour him!

Roger – Yeah, I heard he's a huge music lover.

Brigitte – The bitch... That woman... Do you think that after trying to poach our maid, the Kowalskis would have the nerve to bribe the same virtuoso we've hired?

Roger – Laccordion... That bastard probably hopes to have two gigs in the same night.

Brigitte – Kowalski... How can we trust those people? It's a nightmare...

Roger – And what if the Kowalskis had the audacity to also invite the Martini de la Riviera?

Roger – Well, you know, I wouldn't be all that surprised. And, between you and me, I hear the Martini de la Riviera are completely bankrupt. They eat at any table they can find!

Fatima returns.

Fatima – Mr. Mark Anthony has just arrived, sir. What shall I do with him?

Brigitte – Bring him in!

Fatima exits.

Roger – At least, Mark Anthony is here. We'll have a bit of laughter.

Mark Anthony arrives, dressed as a jester.

Mark Anthony – Mr. Camembert. Madam, my respects...

Roger – Good day, Mark Anthony... Your reputation precedes you. We've heard good things about you...

Mark Anthony – I wish I could reciprocate, but unfortunately, I've never heard of you, Mr. Camembert.

Roger – I manufacture unbranded sausages for mass distribution.

Mark Anthony – Ah, that must be why your name is unfamiliar to me... I must say, I was quite surprised to receive your invitation, and I thank you. It meant a lot to me.

Roger – But of course, Mark Anthony. And please, call me Roger.

Mark Anthony – Good evening, Mrs. Camembert.

Brigitte – If you would allow me, I prefer you to call me Brigitte as well.

Roger (*eyeing Mark Anthony's attire*) – Tell me, dear friend... It's true we invited you to entertain our guests while we wait for the concert, but are you sure you haven't overdone it a bit?

Mark Anthony – Is it an cocktail concert? I thought it was a costume party...

Brigitte – A costume party?

Mark Anthony – Since the card said "Coocktail", I wasn't sure...

Brigitte – So, you came as a jester.

Roger – Very funny...

Brigitte – It's just a misunderstanding, but never mind.

Mark Anthony – Anyway, it's kind of you to have invited me. I'm feeling so down right now. With what's happening to me...

Roger – And what's happening, my friend?

Mark Anthony – My wife just left me.

Brigitte – Ah, ah, ah, very funny!

Roger – He's priceless, isn't he? (*Seeing from Mark Anthony's expression that he's not joking*) Seriously?

Mark Anthony – I knew it would end up like this sooner or later, but well... I still hoped for a miracle... We were about to celebrate our wedding anniversary, can you believe it?

Roger (*whispering to Brigitte*) – Are you sure this is the right Mark Anthony?

Brigitte – If someone mentioned a Mark Antony living in Moulinrouge, would your first thought be that there might be two of them?

Roger – I'll try to discreetly find out... And how's the painting business going, buddy? Because if it's anything like sausage...

Mark Anthony – Painting? Good Lord, yes, you're right. I could repaint my place. That would take my mind off things. Do you know a good painter?

Roger – Then you're not a painter.

Mark Anthony – A painter? What a strange idea. No... I'm an accountant.

Brigitte – Oh no... Roger... An accountant... The evening is ruined... What could be more depressing at a party than an accountant?

Roger – I don't know... Maybe a dentist...?

Fatima returns.

Fatima – Mr. and Mrs.'s first guests have just arrived.

Roger – The first guests? Who are they?

Fatima – I didn't ask... Should I have?

Brigitte – Show them in, Fatima, show them in! This is a disaster...

Edmond and Marianne de Martini de la Riviera arrive, preceded by Fatima, who announces them with pomp.

Fatima – Mr. Baron Martini de la Riviera and Mrs. Baroness.

Roger – At least, these ones aren't at the Kowalskis'... But do come in, please.

Marianne – We took the liberty of bringing our son, Charles.

Roger – Ah yes, Charles, very well.

Brigitte – But what have you done with him?

Marianne – He's parking the Bentley. You know how those cars are, very comfortable but very difficult to park...

Edmond – Unfortunately, we can no longer afford a proper chauffeur with a cap.

Marianne – A guy who would be bored all night waiting in the car park while we stuff ourselves with your canapés.

Brigitte – Yes, it's a crisis for everyone.

Marianne – For us, the crisis began in 1789 with the French Revolution... when they guillotined Louis XVI, who was one of our direct ancestors.

Edmond – The beginning of the end of privileges for the nobility in France...

Marianne – And throughout Europe...

Brigitte – In any case, you did well to bring your son. Our daughter Samantha will be delighted to meet him.

Edmond – You have a beautiful castle, Mr. Camembert. A castle that feels very familiar to me. Although it no longer belongs to my family...

Roger – Yes, this pile of rubble cost me an arm and a leg, but I think I got a good deal.

Brigitte – But we didn't know that...

Marianne – Alas, we only own it in paintings now...

Edmond – Didn't anyone tell you it belonged to my ancestors?

Roger – Well, no, I was unaware...

Brigitte – In that case, it's up to you to reintegrate it into your family's heritage...

Marianne – Well, well...

Brigitte – After all, we have children of the same age and different sexes...

Roger – And we're neighbours too!

Edmond – That just proves you can be neighbours and not be from the same world...

Marianne notices Mark Anthony.

Marianne – But we haven't been introduced to Mister...

Roger – Ah yes, quite right, I almost forgot about him...

Brigitte (*whispering to Roger*) – How do we get rid of this fool and bring the real Mark Anthony?

Roger – The real one?

Brigitte – The one who's funny!

Roger – Let me introduce you to... Mark Anthony... He's an accountant...

Mark Anthony – Good evening, Mr. Baron. Mrs. Baroness.

Edmond – You look like you're on the verge of suicide, my good fellow. Just a professional deformation or are the Camemberts that boring? If so, we won't be staying long!

Marianne – My husband is joking, of course...

Edmond – So, my friend, what could make an accountant so depressed? Did your calculator break?

Mark Anthony – My wife just left me.

Marianne – Oh my dear...

Brigitte – It's a catastrophe...

Roger – Shall I show you around the castle?

Edmond – Yes, I'd enjoy seeing it again... Did you know that Marshal Pétain slept here one night?

Roger – Really? I was told it was Louis XIV...?

Marianne – Marshal Pétain, Louis XIV... You know... They tell so much nonsense when it comes to selling a dilapidated castle.

Edmond – Anyway, if it was the real estate agent who told you about Louis XIV, you were misled, old chap.

Roger – This way, please...

Brigitte – Excuse me. I still have some preparations to finish...

Roger – Of course, you're aware: it's just a cocktail party, not a dinner.

Brigitte – A dinner... We wouldn't dare.

Roger – Not yet.

Roger leaves with Edmond, Marianne and Mark Antony. Brigitte takes out her phone and dials a number.

Brigitte – Mrs. Ratatouille? Yes, it's Brigitte... Yes, Mrs. Camembert... I'm calling about this Mark Anthony you recommended to us. Yours was a painter, not an accountant, right? I see, what a dreadful mistake...

She exits with her cell phone. Fatima returns accompanied by Charles, dressed in a Lacoste polo shirt, pleated pants, and tasseled loafers.

Fatima – I'm very sorry, sir, Mrs. Camembert was here just a moment ago...

Charles – I'll wait for her.

Fatima – Very well. I'll let Mr. and Mrs. know.

Fatima exits. Charles's cell phone rings.

Charles – Yes... Yes, Mrs. Kowalski... No, I mean... Listen, we're currently at the Camemberts' and... Yes, of course, we appreciate your invitation but... Very well, we'll try to pop by after the concert... What, you weren't aware? Mr. Laccordion is giving a recital tonight at the Camemberts'... Oh, I see... At your place it's a dinner-concert... Alright... Yes, see you later, then...

He hangs up. Samantha arrives, having swapped her gothic outfit for something sexier, verging on vulgar. Samantha is surprised to find herself face to face with Charles.

Samantha – Oh... Sorry... I was looking for my parents...

Charles – Charles Martini de la Riviera. But if you prefer, you can call me Charlie...

Samantha – Samantha Camembert. Please call me Sam. But if you prefer, you can just whistle...

Charles is a bit taken aback by Samantha's comment.

Charles – I'm confused, I... The dress code wasn't indicated on your invitation.

Samantha – Oh... Didn't they tell you... I'm sorry, this isn't a costume party...

Charles – But I...

Samantha – Right, I've put my foot in it again... So you're not in costume... I thought you'd dressed up as a mini-golf player or something.

Charles – You mustn't be too hard on me, you know... I was born this way...

Samantha – I understand... A long lineage often means heavy heredity.

Charles – And yourself? Weren't you informed either?

Samantha – About what, dear?

Charles – That it's not a costume party.

Samantha – Oh no... I dressed up as a hooker, but if you prefer, I'll go change...

Charles – No, no, it suits you just fine... I mean...

The Camemberts and the Martini de la Riviera return.

Brigitte – Oh, excellent. So you've already met...

Samantha – Hello. Yes, your son is quite the gentleman. He was just complimenting me on my outfit...

Edmond – Good day, miss. My son is absolutely right.

Marianne – Yes. It's very elegant, really.

Edmond – And what does this young lady do?

Marianne – Is she going to take over daddy's sausage factory?

Samantha – I want to be a model.

Edmond – Ah yes... A model... That's good...

Marianne – And... I suppose you don't need to study to become a model?

Samantha – Well, no... Just like to become a psychoanalyst or a prostitute. You learn by doing...

Edmond – I see...

Brigitte – I'll leave you for a moment, I'm going to see what the maid is doing with the appetisers...

Samantha – I'll help you... (*Privately to her mother*) Anything rather than staying a moment longer with these degenerates.

Brigitte and Samantha leave.

Edmond – So, Mr. Camembert, you work in the entertainment industry?

Roger – Uh, no... In the sausage business...

Edmond – I see...

Roger – And what about you, Mr. Baron?

Edmond – One could say that... I'm in real estate.

Roger – Do you have an agency in town?

Edmond – Actually, I just sell my own properties and other family jewels... Unfortunately, we'll be soon out of stock...

Roger – I'll leave you for a moment... As you know, we're expecting a virtuoso... I'm not sure what's keeping him...

Marianne – But of course.

Roger leaves.

Marianne – I told you. They're quite a laugh, aren't they?

Edmond – A sausage seller... That's all we needed... Are they wealthy, at least?

Marianne – Not so much, apparently.

Charles – Still, they did manage to buy our ancestors' castle.

Marianne – But they did not manage to restore it...

Edmond – Do you think we can still hope to squeeze some money out of that sausage seller?

Marianne – Are you planning to propose investing in your wind turbine business?

Edmond – Wind is all we have left to sell. Besides our name, of course. In the person of our dear son...

Charles – Thanks for that...

Edmond – Well, let's make a move towards the buffet... Aren't you hungry?

Marianne – Thankfully, there are still buffets, otherwise, the Martini de la Riviera would have starved long ago...

Mark Anthony returns.

Mark Anthony – Did I tell you why my wife left me?

Edmond – I don't think so, my good fellow, but we'd be quite amused to find out.

Mark Anthony – My wife suffers from nymphomelomania.

Marianne – Well, that's a new one. What's it all about? Is it serious?

Mark Anthony – It's mostly very embarrassing for me...

Charles – And what are the symptoms, if I may ask?

Mark Anthony – Well, when she goes to a concert, and unfortunately she can't help going every week, my wife gets an uncontrollable urge.

Marianne – An urge?

Mark Anthony – Especially when the concert is good, obviously.

Charles – But you mean an urge to...

Mark Anthony – To sleep with the musicians, yes. Especially with the virtuosos, of course.

Marianne – A music lover turned nymphomaniac by classical music?

Mark Anthony – Hence the name of this strange condition.

Edmond – Nymphomelomania...

Marianne – Have you seen a doctor? I mean, for your wife...

Mark Anthony – It's absolutely incurable, I'm afraid. And since it's not life-threatening, the medical profession doesn't take it very seriously, as you can imagine.

Edmond – Goodness...

Mark Anthony – The problem is that some take advantage of it.

Edmond – Of what, my friend?

Mark Anthony – Of my wife! At first, it was just chamber orchestras.

Marianne – Orchestras?

Mark Anthony – My wife started cheating on me with a string quartet, then a quintet and a sextet. Now it could be the Vienna Philharmonic or the Grand Orchestra of the National Guard...

Edmond – Good heavens...

Mark Anthony – She left me yesterday to go on tour with the Red Army Choir.

Marianne – The Red Army Choir... Oh yes, of course...

Mark Anthony – Which means I'm now afflicted with a phobia myself.

Marianne – A phobia, you don't say. And which one, dear friend?

Mark Anthony – As soon as I see a musician or hear classical music, I feel like killing.

Charles – Really?

Mark Anthony – I have a particular hatred for bass players. When I see one with his instrument between his legs playing the strings with his bow, I feel the beast inside me awaken.

Charles – Damn...

His parents give him a surprised look upon hearing this crude word.

Mark Anthony – But I especially hate pianists, I don't know why. Especially when they play a grand piano. I get sudden urges to cut them...

Marianne – To cut them what...?

Mark Anthony – The head!

Marianne – Ah, yes, of course.

Mark Anthony – I always have a chainsaw in the trunk.

Edmond – Well...

Marianne – Right...

Edmond – Pleasure meeting you, dear Sir.

Marianne – Let's take a walk by the pool, I think that's where the buffet is, and we haven't eaten anything in three days.

Mark Anthony – I'll catch up with you in a moment. Anyway, thank you for listening to me, it did me a lot of good. But I still have to take my medication...

Marianne – Very well, see you later then...

Edmond – Well, I think tonight should be quite lively after all.

Edmond, Marianne, and Charles leave. Mark Anthony takes a pillbox out of his pocket, but he shakes so much that the box slips from his hands and ends up behind a bush. He walks behind the bush to retrieve it. Roger and Brigitte return, not seeing Mark Anthony.

Brigitte – So, did you manage to reach the real Mark Anthony?

Roger – Yes, and I invited him to join us. It was a bit rushed, but he didn't seem offended. He'll be here in a moment.

Brigitte – Well, then everything is sorted out.

Roger – Yes, the evening is off to a good start, isn't it?

Brigitte – We just need to get rid of this pain in the ass.

Roger – Who?

Brigitte – The accountant!

Mark Anthony approaches them.

Mark Anthony – Ah, Mr. and Mrs. Camembert...

The Camemberts startle.

Brigitte – You scared us...

Mark Anthony – Did I tell you that my wife suffers from a horrible illness?

Roger – Listen, buddy, you can see that this is not the time. Your wife left you, fine. Look on the bright side!

Brigitte – You're single now! Try to distract yourself a bit!

Roger – Take advantage of the pool!

Mark Anthony – I don't know how to swim.

Brigitte – Oh, what a burden...

Samantha arrives.

Brigitte – Ah, just in time. Would you like to show the buffet to the gentleman? (*Privately to Samantha*) If you could push him into the pool on the way so he drowns, I'll double your pocket money this month...

Samantha – I'll see what I can do.

Mark Anthony (*to Samantha*) – Good evening, miss. Did I tell you that my wife was cheating on me with the Red Army Choir?

Samantha – Well, no... Tell me about that...

Samantha exits with Mark Anthony.

Brigitte – And the virtuoso?

Roger – Still not here. I don't know what he's doing...

Brigitte – He insisted on traveling first class. I hope at least he didn't miss his high-speed train.

Fatima returns with Federico Laccordion.

Roger – Ah, there he is...

Brigitte – He looks fatter than in the photo, doesn't he?

Roger – Mr. Laccordion! We were just waiting for you to get the party started...

Laccordion – Good evening, Mr. Camembert. Madam, my respects. (*He kisses her hand.*) Apologies for being a little late.

Brigitte – I hope you had a good trip at least.

Laccordion – Very good, thank you. Although I've literally been harassed by a fan lately.

Brigitte – Such is celebrity...

Laccordion – She chased me all the way to the train station. She threatened to throw herself onto the tracks of my train if I didn't agree to give in to her advances again...

Roger – Again...?

Laccordion – I shouldn't tell you this, but almost the entire orchestra has already had a go at her.

Roger – Well, well!

Laccordion – It started with the brass, then the strings, and then the percussion...

Brigitte – I thought women only threw their panties at rock concerts. Does this happen at the opera too?

Laccordion – She chased me into the train toilets. She wanted me to take her wildly against the electric hand dryer. But I'm a pianist, not a contortionist.

Roger – No way...?

Laccordion – It took three inspectors to get her off the platform... Anyway, we managed to depart, but the train was delayed a bit, obviously. Hence this little setback for which I apologise

Brigitte – The important thing is that you're here.

Laccordion – Yes... Well...

Roger – But didn't you bring your instrument?

Laccordion – How do you expect me to transport a grand piano on a train?

Roger – Ah, yes, of course...

Laccordion – You don't have a piano? That would definitely solve the problem because...

Roger – I was joking... Of course, we have a piano! (*To Brigitte*) We'll have to find him a piano... I hadn't thought about that at all...

Brigitte – Me neither...

Roger – Laccordion... It must have been his name that threw me off...

Laccordion – Anyway, I'm very sorry to say that... I won't be able to stay long.

Roger – How's that?

Laccordion – I promised Mrs. Stravinsky, who is an old friend of mine...

Brigitte – I thought it was Mrs. Kowalski.

Laccordion – Kowalski, that's it... Stravinsky is my dentist... Anyway, I completely forgot... I promised to play at her house tonight and...

Roger – Tonight? But that can't be...

Brigitte – How much?

Laccordion – Well, it's just that...

He leans in to whisper the number to Roger.

Roger – I'll offer you double.

Laccordion – I'm not sure...

Roger – Triple.

Laccordion – I'll call Mrs. Polanski immediately to cancel.

He takes out his mobile phone and dials a number.

Laccordion – Yes! Mrs. Kawasaki?

He exits.

Brigitte – Triple what, exactly?

Roger whispers something in her ear.

Brigitte – Ah, yes... That much...

Fatima arrives.

Fatima – Mr. Mark Anthony, the second of his name, has arrived.

Roger – Well, introduce him, introduce him!

Fatima – You want me to introduce him?

Roger – Just bring him in!

Fatima exits.

Brigitte – Mark Anthony, we're saved! The party can finally get started...

The second Mark Anthony, who is actually named Cesar, arrives, with an artistic air, followed by his friend Rosalie, with an ethereal style.

Cesar – My dear Camembert, do you recognise me?

Roger – No.

Cesar – Me neither. I guess this is our first time meeting then.

Roger – But how should I address you to avoid mixing you up with the other one?

Cesar – The other?

Brigitte – The other Mark Anthony.

Cesar – Just call me Cesar.

Roger – Why would I call you Cesar?

Cesar – Because my name is Cesar.

Roger – Your name is Cesar? But you're a painter, right?

Cesar – Yes, of course.

Brigitte – You scared us.

Roger – I get it now... Cesar, Mark Antony... I must have mistaken...

Cesar – Let me introduce you to Rosalie, the author of the play we're currently performing.

Roger – Ah, pleased to meet you.

Rosalie – Mr. Camembert, very honoured. I love what you do.

Roger – I make sausages.

Rosalie – Yes, that's what I was saying. Mr. Camembert, your sausages are famous. I hope you'll do us the honour of letting us try some tonight...

Roger – Well, if you insist, we could always improvise a barbecue.

Rosalie – I also bet you're the kind of man who appreciates a good sangria.

Brigitte – Well, we hadn't planned on it, but...

Rosalie – Ah yes, but sangria isn't something you can improvise. It's like septic tanks or dinner parties. For the blend to reach its full potential, the ingredients need to marinate for a good while in their juices.

Roger – I'll see what I can do about the sangria.

Rosalie – Yes, otherwise, we'd be very disappointed.

Cesar – Surely you don't think we're here tonight only to listen classical music.

Brigitte – Of course, not...

Rosalie (*to Cesar*) – They're really quite silly.

Brigitte (*to Roger*) – You must admit, they're funny, aren't they?

Roger – More so than the accountant, in any case...

Brigitte – You can't get any funnier than them, that's exactly what the Ratatouille told me about you...

Rosalie – The Ratatouille?

Brigitte – The ones who had the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel painted at the bottom of their swimming pool!

Cesar – Ah... Those ones... I thought their name was Cassoulet...

Rosalie – I have a feeling we'll soon be bored to tears here.

Cesar – Mr. Camembert, as a painter, let me say you have a very expressive face.

Roger – Thank you...

Cesar – And as for you, Mrs. Camembert, your silhouette reflects a natural nobility that categorically contradicts the ridiculousness of your surname.

Brigitte – Thank you.

Cesar – Would you like me to make a portrait of the Roquefort family?

Roger – It's Camembert.

Cesar – You could hang it in the grand staircase of your castle alongside those of your ancestors.

Roger – Well... I'm not sure... Is it expensive?

Cesar – It would be a unique piece.

Fatima returns.

Fatima – Mr. and Mrs. Badminton are here. They asked to be introduced.

Cesar – Dear Badminton! Do you know he was the ambassador of Panama to the Vatican?

Brigitte – That's precisely why we invited him.

Mr. and Mrs. Badminton enter. He's all in white, wearing a Panama hat. She's dressed in a Latin style

Brigitte – Welcome to our humble, ruined abode.

Gregory – Thank you. It's a period castle, right?

Roger – Exactly.

Gregory – But from which period exactly...?

Roger – Now that's a tricky question. In any case, Marshal Pétain slept in my bed.

Conchita – I hope not with your wife...

Brigitte – Mrs. Badminton, I presume.

Conchita – Hi. But call me Conchita, please.

Roger – What a strange idea... Why should I call you Conchita?

Conchita – Conchita, because it's my name! Conchita de Bourbon Badminton Mr. Camembert, we descend directly from Louis XIV.

Rosalie – Through the chambermaids, no doubt...

Roger – Louis XIV? You mean the Sun King? Can you believe it, Brigitte?

Brigitte – Oh, yes, quite impressive...

Conchita – The King of Spain is a distant cousin of my father.

Brigitte – I see... And you, Mr. Badminton, I imagine it was your ancestors who invented that noble game?

Gregory – What game?

Brigitte – The racket game! The game of badminton.

Roger (*quietly to Brigitte*) – I told you they were very decent people...

Conchita – But tell me, Mr. Camembert, do you at least have a ghost in your castle?

Brigitte – Not yet, Mrs. Badminton..

Roger – None that we're aware of...

Conchita – What a pity. A haunted castle... It would add more value to this ruin.

Brigitte – A ghost... I don't know... It would require a horrible crime to take place here.

Conchita – You never know, maybe tonight's the night.

Gregory – In any case, if you ever sell your castle, do let me know.

Brigitte – Are you planning to settle here permanently?

Gregory – No, it's to pack up all these old stones, ship them to Panama, and rebuild your listed castle in the park of our ranch in Panama City.

Roger laughs loudly.

Roger – Very funny.

But apparently, the Badmintons aren't joking.

Gregory – In any case, thank you for the invitation. We're very much looking forward to hearing Mr. Laccordion.

Conchita – But you haven't told us anything about the programme...

Brigitte – The programme for the evening? Well, we'll start with some drinks...

Gregory – The concert programme! The Maestro! What's he going to sing?

Brigitte – Ah... Well... I believe it's a surprise.

Roger – But given his fee, I suppose he'll perform the opera's greatest hits.

Samantha arrives.

Brigitte – And here's our daughter Samantha.

Gregory – Good evening, Miss Camembert.

Roger – She'll show you to your seats for the concert, around the pool.

Samantha – Tips are allowed... Don't forget the usher!

Brigitte – We've set up the stage on the five-meter diving board. That way, everyone can have a good view.

Conchita – In that case... the Maestro just has to take the plunge.

Roger – Samantha, have you seen the virtuoso?

Samantha – No...

Brigitte – Yet he's quite large.

Samantha – This way, sir, ma'am...

Samantha leaves with Gregory and Conchita.

Roger – But what's Laccordion up to?

Rosalie – We're already bored to death.

Roger – I remind you that you're supposed to be entertaining us!

Brigitte – I'll go check...

Cesar – You know, the Badmintons are very influential people.

Roger – Do you think they could sponsor our application to the Moulinrouge Philanthropic Club?

Cesar – Surely. It's even said that the Badmintons once played tennis with the President of Costa Rica.

Roger – Really?

Cesar – Conchita's father knew General Pinochet quite well. She even showed me a signed photo of Mussolini her grandfather left her one day.

Roger – That's fantastic.

Brigitte returns accompanied by Mrs Charlotte Kowalski.

Brigitte – Mrs. Kowalski honours us with a brief courtesy visit...

Roger – Mrs. Kowalski, what a surprise!

Charlotte – Good evening... But please, call me Charlotte.

Brigitte – And if I may ask... what brings you here, Charlotte?

Charlotte (*under her breath*) – A foul wind, you witch...

Brigitte – Excuse me?

Charlotte – No, I was saying... I just dropped by quickly to say hello. We're neighbours, after all. From one château to another, we should be able to do each other small favours, shouldn't we?

Brigitte – Of course!

Roger – But please, stay with us a while. We've invited Mr. Laccordion to play some grand arias for us. You know him, I believe...

Charlotte – Yes, absolutely... In fact, I don't understand. He was supposed to be playing at my place tonight...

Brigitte – No way! Ah yes, that's surprising. Must be a little misunderstanding...

Charlotte suddenly grabs Brigitte by the neck.

Charlotte – You piece of trash! I predict a grim future for you if you don't give me back Laccordion immediately. And let me warn you: I'm willing to kill to get the spot that just opened up at the Philanthropic Club of Moulinrouge...

Brigitte – Come on, violence never solved anything... I'm sure we can find an arrangement.

Charlotte releases Brigitte, regains her composure, and returns to a softer tone.

Charlotte – Meanwhile, if you don't mind, I have a word or two for Mr. Laccordion...

Brigitte – Please, go ahead... The concert will start soon. It's this way.

Roger, Brigitte and Charlotte leave.

Rosalie – Between the old rich and the new, I don't know which I prefer.

Cesar – At least the new rich have money. Otherwise, Camembert would never have been able to afford a Laccordion recital.

Rosalie – Fair enough, the Camemberts have a knack for finding talent. It's true that Laccordion is a virtuoso at the peak of his art.

Cesar – Pigs can smell truffles too, but you wouldn't let them eat the truffles, would you? (*Sighing*) The peak of his art...

Rosalie – In any case, right now, he's at the peak of the diving platform.

Cesar and Rosalie exit. Roger and Brigitte return.

Roger – All set, I ordered a piano to be delivered.

Brigitte – How did you manage that?

Roger – Piano Presto. I found it online. The two delivery guys should be here any minute. It's mad. Nowadays you can get a piano delivered as easily as you get a pizza.

Brigitte – Perfect. But where is that virtuoso?

The noise of a chainsaw is heard.

Brigitte – What's that noise?

Roger – Fatima!

Fatima arrives.

Fatima – Sir.

Roger – Tell the gardener it's not the time to cut the trees in the park with a chainsaw or trim the hedges. The concert is about to start.

Fatima – Understood, sir, I'll go check...

Brigitte – I didn't know we had a gardener.

Roger – Neither did I, that's what worries me...

Samantha returns.

Brigitte – So, dear, everything okay?

Samantha – Yes, thank you.

Brigitte – I meant... with Charles. What do you think of him?

Samantha – Let's be clear, Mom. I have nothing against arranged marriages, but I'll never accept a forced marriage to a guy who wears tasseled loafers.

Roger – But, my dear, he's a Martini de la Riviera! His parents are members of the Club!

Fatima returns.

Fatima – We found Laccordion.

Roger – Ah, thank goodness! And where is he?

Fatima – In the pool!

Brigitte – Did he jump into the pool?

Roger – From the five-meter diving board?

Brigitte – The concert is about to start any moment! This is not the time for a swim!

Fatima – Unfortunately, Laccordion has taken his last breath, ma'am.

Roger – What do you mean his last breath? Do you mean he's dead?

Rosalie passes by like a zombie.

Rosalie – He probably died of boredom.

Fatima – He's in the pool, with his body on one side and his head on the other. The water is red with blood. It looks like a giant sangria...

Brigitte – Oh my God, no! Oh my God, no! We said no sangria!

Roger – Let's go take a closer look... Maybe there's still time to put the parts back together...

Fatima, Roger and Brigitte exit. Mark Anthony, with a chainsaw in hand, and Charlotte, her dress stained with blood, return.

Mark Anthony – I'm afraid I got a bit carried away.

Charlotte – A bit? You chopped off his head!

Mark Anthony – But it was you who was holding him by the feet...

Charlotte – I just wanted to make sure he honoured his contract!

Mark Anthony – Were you sleeping with him too?

Charlotte – He was supposed to give a concert at my house! Now, it'll be much more difficult, of course.

Mark Anthony – You were the one who asked me to help you...

Charlotte – To catch him, yes! I didn't think you'd want to chop him in half! Why did you do that?

Mark Anthony – I recognised him immediately. He's my wife's lover. Well, him and half the Opera Orchestra.

Charlotte – Laccordion, are you sure?

Mark Anthony – If it's not him, then it's his brother. A good musician is a dead musician, believe me.

Charlotte – Alright... What do we do now?

Mark Anthony – We could make the most of the buffet. A little glass of wine might help calm our nerves. I don't know if it goes well with my medication, but oh well...

Charlotte – After all... You're right, given the circumstances.

Mark Anthony – Let's act like nothing happened.

Charlotte – Like nothing happened? This happened on the five-meter diving board, all those people gathered for the concert saw us.

Mark Anthony – We'll say it was an accident.

Charlotte (*pointing to the chainsaw*) – Anyway, you'd better go put this away before heading to the buffet.

Mark Anthony – You're right... I'll put it back in my boot. It might come in handy again...

They exit. The Badmintons return.

Gregory – So? What do you think of the butcher and two blood sausages?

Conchita – The Camembert?

Gregory – A bit... greasy, aren't they?

Conchita – In any case, they have a very nice castle...

Gregory – Yes. I could see it fitting well in the park of our ranch in Panama City. What do you think?

Conchita – We didn't know what to get ourselves for our wedding anniversary! It'd be a great reminder of old Europe!

Gregory – The castle's already in ruins, so it should be easier to dismantle. Do you think they'd be willing to sell it to us?

Conchita – If we agree to sponsor them for the Moulinrouge Philanthropic Club, it might put them in a good mood.

Gregory – Did they mention that to you?

Conchita – They'd sell their daughter to be part of the Club!

Gregory – We can't possibly let those people in among us.

Conchita – Can you imagine? Roger Camembert, sausage maker, a member of the Moulinrouge Philanthropic Club.

Gregory – If only he sold a lot...

Conchita – You're right. Once you hit a hundred million in revenue, sausage or burger, it becomes quite noble.

Gregory – It's a fact that nowadays, the names Herta or McDonald's have practically become titles of nobility.

Conchita – But still... Camembert...

Gregory – They don't belong in our world, that's obvious. Did you see how they dress?

Conchita – I agree with you...

Gregory – These people are vulgar...

Conchita – But then, what do we do with the castle? To move this historical monument to Panama, we would at least need authorisation from the mayor.

Gregory – The mayor is also a member of the Club, right?

Conchita – He's even the honorary president!

Gregory – Among benefactor members, we can do each other small favours

Conchita – What if we ask the mayor to classify this ruin as unfit for habitation?

Gregory – We get the Camemberts expropriated, then buy the castle from the council for a friendly price.

Conchita – These nouveau riches don't belong in an old castle, it's clear. So what do we do, Gregory?

Gregory – What if we snuck out quietly, Conchita?

Conchita – After all, it's not a dinner, just a cocktail. I'll follow you...

But Brigitte returns, quite upset, crossing their path.

Conchita – Is everything alright, Mrs. Camembert?

Brigitte – Yes, yes, everything's fine. By the way, if you want to enjoy the pool. Uh, no, sorry, we just set up the robot, there were some dead leaves...

Gregory – In this season?

Brigitte – But please, go to our room.

Conchita – Excuse me...?

Brigitte – The one Louis XVI slept in it! If you want to see it...

Gregory – Louis XVI, really? I had no idea. He's actually my direct ancestor...

Brigitte – Or maybe General De Gaulle, I can't remember.

Conchita – Shall we take a look, Gregory?

Gregory – Please lead the way, my dear.

The Badmintons exit. Roger returns.

Brigitte – What are we going to do about Laccordion? We can't just leave him like that! After diving into the pool, leaving the rest of his body on the diving board...

Roger – I got the head with the net and put it in our bedroom for now.

Brigitte – In our room?

Roger – The castle's full of people! It's the last place anyone would think to look...

Brigitte – Makes sense...

Samantha returns.

Samantha – Well... I thought this evening would be boring as anything... Turns out it's a remake of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*...

Roger – Massacre... such strong words... It might just be a simple accident... These things happen...

Samantha – How does one accidentally get decapitated by a chainsaw?

Brigitte – A murder, you think? But by who? And why?

Samantha – Maybe someone desperate to escape the concert...

Brigitte – Oh my God, that's true... The concert! We already didn't have a piano, and now we have a headless pianist...

Roger – Don't worry, darling. After all, there are more important things in life, right?

Samantha – I remind you we just found a dead body. Maybe we should think about calling the police...

Roger – The police? You think?

Brigitte – It might dampen the mood.

Samantha – And a head without a body floating in the middle of the pool, don't you think that's a mood killer?

Roger (*to Samantha*) – And you, can't you do something?

Samantha – I'm not a surgeon! Reattaching a head to a body is very delicate operation. If I knew how to do it, I would have already found you a donor for a brain transplant.

Roger – Okay, I'll call the police.

Roger exits. Joseph enters wearing a cassock.

Joseph – The door was open, so I took the liberty of coming in...

Brigitte – Oh, hello...

Samantha – If it's for the last rites, you're a bit late, Father...

Joseph – Someone has died, my child?

Brigitte – Uh... yes, but calm down. It might just be temporary...

Joseph – Temporary?

Samantha – A little domestic accident, nothing much. The important thing is to keep one's head, right?

Joseph – In any case, if someone needs the help of religion, I'm here.

Brigitte – Thank you, Father, but we've already called the police.

Joseph – Miss Camembert, I presume.

Brigitte – Samantha, here's Father Joseph.

Joseph eyes Samantha lasciviously.

Joseph – I don't think I've seen you at confession yet...

Roger returns.

Roger (to *Brigitte*) – What's this guy doing here?

Brigitte – I invited him to give the evening a touch of respectability... Father, let me introduce you to my husband, Roger.

Joseph – Good evening, my son.

Samantha (to *Brigitte*) – If he calls Dad son... he'd be my grandfather.

Cesar and Rosalie arrive, quite drunk.

Brigitte – And here are our friends Cesar and Rosalie. You see, they're quite funny. At least, that's why we invited them...

Rosalie – Hello Father. So, how was police custody? Not too strenuous?

Joseph – Good Lord, when one has a clear conscience...

Brigitte – Oh, but you know each other.

Rosalie – Father Joseph is a friend of contemporary theatre.

Cesar – And of modern art!

Joseph – One has to keep up with the times. And we must admit that religion hasn't always adapted quickly enough to new ideas.

Cesar – You're right, Father. Religion is like royalty: those old things offer comfort, but eventually, you have to admit they're pointless.

Rosalie – If the French had guillotined the pope along with Louis XVI, the problem with Catholicism would've been solved long ago.

Brigitte – That's funny...

Joseph – Are you sure it was a joke?

Cesar – I'm not sure... That's her thing, especially after she's had a few drinks. She's convinced that if you guillotine half the planet, the other half would be better off.

Joseph – Ah, I see...

Cesar – I quite agree with her in principle, but we sometimes disagree on which half should be guillotined...

Charles arrives.

Rosalie – Let's start by shortening anyone who wears Lacoste shirts.

Cesar and Rosalie exit.

Charles – Good evening, Mr. Mayor.

Samantha – Mr. Mayor?

Joseph – Sorry, Mr. and Mrs. Camembert, I'm failing in all my duties. Allow me to introduce myself: Joseph Martin Duval. I serve as both the priest and the mayor of this town.

Charles – That's quite a radical way of solving the problem of separating church and state...

Samantha – And it ensures the priest can hear the mayor's confessions without worrying about leftist judges wiretapping the confessional.

Charles – The Priest-Mayor is also the Honorary President of the Moulinrouge Philanthropic Club.

Joseph – At your service.

Charles – By the way, Mr. Mayor, do you have a candidate for the Club? You know, a spot just opened up after the death of the Marquis de Karlsberg Kronenbourg.

Joseph – How could I forget? I administered the last rites to him myself.

Brigitte nudges Roger.

Roger – Mr. Priest, I mean Mr. Mayor, my wife and I would be greatly honoured if...

The police officers Ramirez and Sanchez arrive (men or women). Charles exits.

Roger – Ah, here are the deliverymen... Gentlemen, I'm not sure if you need to unload the piano from the truck, the pianist...

Brigitte – The pianist lost his head.

Ramirez – The piano..? I'm Inspector Ramirez, and this is my assistant Sanchez.

Roger – My apologies, Inspector, I mistook you for the delivery people...

Brigitte – We're hosting a piano recital tonight, and my husband forgot the piano.

Roger – Please make yourselves at home. And if you could conduct your investigation discreetly, we don't want to upset our guests too much.

Brigitte – They're people of a certain standing, you see? They came for a concert, not for an interrogation...

Roger – We don't want to ruin their night, you understand?

Sanchez – If the pianist is dead, they'll figure out sooner or later that there's no concert, won't they?

Roger – Yes, of course...

Brigitte – By any chance, do you play the piano, Inspector?

Ramirez – I'm sorry, but no. I play a bit of harmonica in my free time.

Brigitte – I'll call the deliverymen to cancel the piano.

Ramirez – So, Mr. Camembert, could you explain exactly what's going on here?

Roger – I'll tell you everything, Inspector Ramirez.

Ramirez – Okay. But first, tell me, Camembert.

Roger – Yes, Inspector.

Ramirez – Camembert... You must've had a tough time as a kid with a name like that.

Roger – Ah, Inspector, if you only knew... And don't get me started on my wife.

Sanchez – Your wife?

Roger – Mrs. Camembert...

Ramirez – She must have loved you a lot to agree to become Mrs. Camembert. What was her maiden name?

Brigitte – Miss Baguette.

Ramirez – I see... You were destined to meet, then...

The Badmintons return alarmed.

Gregory – My God, we just saw the ghost of Marie Antoinette!

Ramirez – Marie Antoinette?

Conchita – I assure you! She was holding the head of Louis XVI in her hands.

Gregory – Since you said they'd slept in your bedroom, we recognised them straight away!

Conchita – In the bedroom!

Roger – Oh no, it's just that...

Sanchez – Marie Antoinette? Who's that now?

Ramirez – I must say, Camembert, it's a real butcher's shop in your house...

Roger – For the head, I plead guilty, Inspector... I placed it on the side table in the bedroom, so as not to frighten our guests.

Brigitte – A bloody head floating in the pool, you can understand how...

Roger – But as far as Marie Antoinette is concerned, I assure you I know nothing...

Ramirez – Let's go and have a closer look, Sanchez...

They exit. Edmond and Marianne return.

Marianne – In the end, we didn't get bored at the Camembert's.

Edmond – And to think we've barely started with the appetisers.

Charles arrives.

Charles – I'm starting to get hungry, aren't you?

Edmond – Unfortunately, we'll have to wait. For now, we can't access the buffet.

Charles – And why's that?

Marianne – Because it's part of the crime scene! Haven't you seen the yellow tapes they just put up?

Edmond – Lucky us...

Marianne – Did you talk to Camembert about your windmill project?

Edmond – I haven't had the chance yet, actually. And with what just happened, it won't be easy to find a smooth transition...

Charles – You think so?

Marianne – And you, with the young Camembert, how's it going?

Charles – Unfortunately, I fear I'm not her type.

Marianne – Not her type? A Martini de la Riviera? She's got some nerve!

Edmond – And what is her type, then?

Charles – Who knows... maybe the female type?

Marianne – No way?

Edmond – As you see, my dear... You don't need a fancy surname and a tittle of nobility to belong to a family of degenerates...

They are about to exit.

Marianne – Edmond, I think it's time to find other ways of subsistence than Moulinrouge dinners...

Charles – By the way, I forgot to mention, Mrs. Kowalski invites us for a musical aperitif.

Edmond – Another aperitif... All very nice, but when are we going to eat?

They exit. Roger and Brigitte return.

Brigitte – It's a catastrophe.

Roger – Now it's obviously going to be much more difficult to find a sponsor for the Philanthropic Club.

Brigitte – And to find the perfect husband for our daughter!

Samantha returns.

Brigitte – So, dear, what do you think of Charles?

Samantha – But you're crazy! We just found a headless corpse in our pool, and you're worried about who to give my hand to?

Roger – At least tell us how you see him.

Samantha – Listen... I don't think it's going to work.

Roger – But he's a nice boy.

Samantha – Yes, but... I'm a lesbian, that's all!

Brigitte – No...

Roger – Oh my God, Samantha, that's dreadful! And who's the father?

Brigitte – She said lesbian, Roger... Not pregnant...

Roger – Lesbian? What do you mean, lesbian? No way... You mean... This is terrible.

Brigitte – It's true that it'll be much harder to marry her off now.

Roger – And... have you met someone? I mean... A woman...

Samantha – Yes.

Brigitte – Is she from a good family, at least?

Roger – After all, a son-in-law or daughter-in-law. If she's a baroness.

Samantha – She's not a baroness... It's... It's the maid!

Brigitte – Oh my God, Roger, the maid...

Roger – The maid? The one who dresses like a man?

Ramirez and Sanchez return.

Roger – Inspector, you'll never guess what happened to us...

Ramirez – What's going on now?

Brigitte – Our daughter is a lesbian.

Ramirez – Well, Mr. Camembert, I don't think that's a matter for the police...

Sanchez – I remind you that we have two dead bodies on our hands.

Brigitte – Two? Oh yes, that's right, I forgot. Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette...

Roger – So, who is this Marie Antoinette?

Sanchez – According to the documents I found about her, her name is actually Rosalie.

Brigitte – Rosalie? The playwright?

Sanchez – That name rings a bell, boss.

Ramirez – Of course, she's the author of the play we're performing right now.

Sanchez – That's it!

Ramirez – But who would want to murder a playwright? And why?

Sanchez – To avoid paying royalties, boss?

Ramirez – That's a serious lead, indeed, Sanchez... We'll have to consider interrogating the producer and the director of this play.

Rosalie returns, with a sheet and a head in hand.

Brigitte – Heavens, the ghost of Marie Antoinette, with her husband's head between her legs! I mean, in her hands...

Rosalie looks at the head she's holding.

Rosalie – I have the feeling I've seen this head somewhere before...

Cesar arrives behind her.

Cesar – But yes, Rosalie, it's Laccordion, we met him last year at a dinner at the Martini de la Riviera's. We ate very badly, by the way...

Ramirez – If I understand correctly, the second corpse isn't dead.

Cesar – Excuse her, Inspector. However, I already told her not to mix alcohol with cocaine.

Ramirez – Sanchez, take them into custody.

Sanchez – Take the playwright into custody, boss?

Ramirez – Not her! The head! It's a piece of evidence.

Sanchez – Ah yes... It's even part of the victim...

Cesar and Rosalie exit. Gregory and Conchita Badminton arrive.

Gregory – But, what's going on here?

Ramirez – And who's this joker now?

Roger – Gregory and Conchita Badminton, Inspector. Mr. Badminton is the ambassador from Panama to the Vatican, or maybe it's the other way around, I'm not entirely sure.

Brigitte – He's also the Vice President of the Moulinrouge Philanthropic Club.

Ramirez – Right, we're going to interview everyone here... No one is to leave without my permission.

Gregory – But come on... I'm an ambassador! I can violate a nun and kill a police Inspector, or vice versa, with total impunity. What's the point of a diplomatic passport otherwise?

Ramirez – Tie this clown to a radiator until he calms down a bit. We'll interrogate him later.

Gregory – You have no idea what you're doing, Inspector. I'll complain to the Foreign Office!

Sanchez – Show me your passport...

Gregory hands over his passport.

Sanchez – Panama... The Vatican... This has international drug trafficking written all over it, Boss... He's probably the one supplying cocaine to the playwright.

Ramirez – How do you know that the author of this play is addicted to cocaine, Sanchez?

Sanchez – Boss, how could someone write such a bonkers story without being on drugs like caffeine or Coca-Colaïne?

Ramirez – Good point, Sanchez... And does Conchita have a residence permit?

Conchita – I didn't bring my passport! I didn't expect to be interrogated by the police at the Camemberts' party. I'll remember this...

Brigitte – This is a disaster, Roger...

Ramirez – You say you're the wife of the ambassador and your name is Conchita.

Conchita – Yes!

Ramirez – Of course, Conchita... Cuff her, and put her on ice, Sanchez. Another Puerto Rican coming to work illegally here.

Joseph arrives.

Joseph – My son, in the name of the Lord, I urge you to show a bit more compassion.

Ramirez – I know this one already...

Sanchez – Do you go to mass, boss?

Ramirez – We arrested him yesterday outside the high school for indecent exposure. Don't you remember, Sanchez?

Sanchez – Oh yes, now that you mention it... Must be the outfit... Fully clothed, I didn't recognise him...

Ramirez – Take this pervert away and tie him to the radiator with the others.

Sanchez – I hope the radiator is big enough...

Joseph – I'll inform the Pope. You'll be excommunicated...

Ramirez (*referring to the head*) – And get rid of this head. It keeps looking at me funny, and it makes me uncomfortable...

Sanchez prepares to leave but examines the head.

Sanchez – Boss, did you notice? It's missing its dentures...

Ramirez – I'm not sure that stealing dentures was the motive for the crime, but we'll look into it. First, we'll interrogate the maid. Trust me, Sanchez: in a house, it's always the staff who know the most.

Sanchez leaves with the Badmintons and Joseph, while Roger makes them a final offer.

Roger – In the meantime, there's some good news: with the Inspector's permission, the buffet is open... If you'd like to help yourselves...

Brigitte – But remember, it's not a dinner, right? Since we're not yet members of the Club, we wouldn't dream of it, would we, Roger?

Roger – It's just a buffet. It's only cold meats...

Sanchez exits with the Badmintons and Joseph.

Roger – Inspector, we're in the midst of a tragedy.

Ramirez – Tell me, Camembert, have you ever done theatre?

Roger – Theatre? Not really, Inspector.

Ramirez – That's what I thought... You act really badly...

Sanchez returns with Fatima.

Ramirez – There's Snow White.

Sanchez – Snow White? I thought her name was Fatima...

Ramirez – It's a joke, Sanchez. Snow White and the Three Little Pigs, never heard of it?

Sanchez – The three little pigs? I thought it was the seven dwarfs...

Ramirez – Never mind... Right, it's you and me, Fatima. So, you're a transsexual, are you?

Fatima – What?

Ramirez – You can tell us anything, you know. The police are very open-minded nowadays.

Sanchez – I myself, before joining this noble institution, was in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Fatima – Did you stop drinking?

Sanchez – No, but since I've been with the police, I don't have to hide anymore.

Ramirez – Anyway, let's get back on track. So, Fatima, how long have you been a dyke?

Fatima – But I'm not a lesbian.

Ramirez – Then why do you dress like a man?

Fatima – Well... because I am one!

Sanchez – How's that? Fatima, isn't that a woman's name?

Fatima – Yes! But my name isn't Fatima...

Ramirez – But your bosses call you Fatima, right?

Fatima – I never understood why, and I didn't dare correct them. And since my actual name is a bit tricky, I thought Fatima would be easier to get hired.

Ramirez – And what's your name?

Fatima – My name is Jesus.

Sanchez – It's true that Jesus, for a transgender person, isn't an easy name to bear...

Fatima – But I'm not transgender!

Sanchez – Right, and regarding the pianist we found sliced in half in the pool, do you know anything about that?

Fatima – I think Mrs. Kowalski also wanted him to play tonight at her house.

Ramirez – Kowalski? A rather suspicious name for a citizen of this country, Sanchez. We'll also interrogate her... Go fetch the next witness.

Sanchez exits.

Ramirez – You may go, Mr. Fatima.

Fatima – Thank you, Inspector.

Fatima is about to leave.

Ramirez – Oh, one last thing... How much do you charge for the night?

Fatima – I told you I'm not a drag queen!

Ramirez – I just need a housekeeper!

Fatima – For the night?

Ramirez – Since I often work nights, I'm looking for someone to vacuum between three and five in the morning. I sleep during the day, you see. It would bother me...

Fatima – Excuse me, Inspector. I'm a bit on edge. Here, take my card. Give me a call...

Ramirez – Jesus... A strange name for a cleaning lady...

Fatima exits. Sanchez returns with the baroness.

Marianne – I warn you, I am a Baroness, and I descend directly from Henry IV on my mother's side.

Ramirez – Of course, and I descend directly from Paris by high-speed train. I've just been transferred to the region. Sanchez, search the Baroness.

Marianne – I object!

Sanchez frisks the baroness.

Ramirez – What's all this?

Sanchez – Boss, silver teaspoons, an advertising ashtray, some cheese snacks... There's even a denture!

Ramirez – Laccordion's dentures!

Sanchez – Theft and possession of false teeth... Mrs Martini de la Riviera, do you have any idea how serious this is?

Marianne – I'm sorry... I'm a kleptomaniac...

Sanchez – Of course. That's what all denture thieves say when we catch them.

Ramirez – And for the pianist, obviously, you'll tell us you saw nothing?

Marianne – Do you mean about the performance?

Sanchez – Performance?

Marianne – Yes, those contemporary artists who did an artistic intervention by the Camembert's poolside!

Ramirez – What exactly did you see?

Marianne – Well... It happened on the five-meter platform. A woman pushed the pianist onto the diving board as if it were a guillotine blade, and a man cut off his head with a chainsaw. I don't know how they did the trick, but it looked so real!

Ramirez – And then?

Marianne – The head fell into the pool. The body remained suspended on the board by the suspenders. It went up and down like a puppet on a string. It was quite spectacular, believe me. I have to admit, the Camemberts scored a point there. I thought they were total hicks, completely unaware of contemporary art....

Ramirez – We must have a different understanding of modern art...

Sanchez – Boss, so all we have to do is identify the two suspects and our investigation will be over.

Ramirez – Let's not trust appearances, Sanchez. For both the artist and the con artist, reality is just the appearance of reality...

Sanchez – Uh... Yes, boss...

The baron arrives.

Edmond – Good heavens! You don't treat a woman like this, Inspector. (*To Marianne*) Everything alright, darling?

Marianne – Yes, yes... I even managed to save some canapés...

Ramirez – Anyway, this seems more complicated than it seems. We shouldn't rule out a spy case, Sanchez. Laccordion traveled a lot with his job. Especially to the East. He might have been a spy working for the Pope.

Sanchez – It is even said that this Badminton plays mini-golf with His Holiness...

Ramirez and Sanchez exit.

Roger – Mr. Martini de la Riviera, when you have a moment...

Edmond – Yes, my friend.

Roger – Could you sponsor us for the Club? We know a spot just opened up...

Edmond – I'll have to talk to the President... But if you invest in my wind farm business, it would certainly help.

Roger – And why is that?

Edmond – Don't tell me Camembert that you're not concerned about the future of our planet?

Roger – Of course, but...

Edmond – As you know, the Moulinrouge Philanthropic Club has a very strong ecological sensitivity. We try to consume mainly organic products, and our caviar comes from fair aquaculture.

Roger – Really?

Marianne – Do you have your chequebook with you?

They exit. Ramirez and Sanchez return.

Ramirez – What do you think, Sanchez?

Sanchez – The case is closed, boss. This Mark Anthony and this Kowalski confessed.

Ramirez – The motive?

Sanchez – Laccordion couldn't decide between the two castles for the concert. Kowalski cut him in two.

Ramirez – The judgment of Solomon, so to speak... And the accomplice?

Sanchez – According to several consistent testimonies, this Mark Anthony harbours a pathological hatred towards grand piano virtuosos.

Ramirez – Chamber music bores me to death too, but to take it this far...

Sanchez – Goes to show, music doesn't always soothe the savage breast, Boss. In any case, here's a case swiftly resolved.

Ramirez – Not so fast, Sanchez. It could also be a domestic accident.

Sanchez – A domestic accident?

Ramirez – Here's how I see it. The maid wants to trim a bush with an electric hedge trimmer. She accidentally cuts off Laccordion's head while he was discreetly relieving himself among the begonias. After that, the maid disguises this unfortunate accident as a murder...

Sanchez – Usually, it's a murder that's disguised as an accident, Boss.

Ramirez – Hence the difficulty of this investigation, Sanchez...

Fatima returns with Roger.

Fatima – Inspector, we've just found Mrs. Badminton in the castle's cold room, in a state of advanced hypothermia.

Roger – Someone trying to open up a second spot for the Club?

Ramirez – Perhaps you...

Roger – Inspector! I assure you that...

Sanchez – Boss, I'm the one who put her in the cold room.

Ramirez – But why?

Sanchez – You told me to keep her on ice...

Ramirez – I meant that figuratively, Sanchez!

Roger – Inspector, this is a serious diplomatic incident! So, do you want to unleash a war between our country and Panama? Or worse, with the Vatican!

Ramirez – At least those are two wars our country's army could still win despite the defence budget cuts.

Sanchez – I'm really sorry, boss.

Ramirez – I'll let it slide this time, Sanchez. But if you want a career in the police, you'll have to learn not to take everything I say literally...

Sanchez – Yes, boss...

They exit. Joseph arrives with Gregory.

Gregory – This castle is unhealthy, Mr. Mayor, I hope you're convinced now.

Joseph – It's obvious, Mr. Ambassador. The police, over which I've resumed control as the city's Attorney General, have just found spoiled meat in the cold room.

Gregory – It was my wife, Father.

Joseph – Really? These people are cannibals too? I'll immediately order their expulsion from the town and their excommunication from our Holy Mother Church.

Gregory – Come on, dear friend, let's be magnanimous. At least let's wait until the end of this party.

Joseph – You're right. After all, aren't we both members of a Philanthropic Club? But don't worry, dear friend, you'll be able to take your castle to Panama, with the blessing of the town hall and the Vatican.

Joseph crosses himself.

Ramirez and Sanchez lead Mark Anthony and Kowalski away in handcuffs. Roger and Brigitte return.

Ramirez – And that's the end of the story...

Joseph – Well done, Inspector. You can be sure I'll remember this. I'll take care of your promotion...

Ramirez – Thank you, Father.

Roger – To you, Inspector. Thanks to your intervention, our little party can continue with joy and good humour.

Ramirez – At your service. We're here to protect honest citizens.

Sanchez – Ladies and gentlemen... Have a good night.

Brigitte – But please, have a drink with us. We're friends of the police.

Ramirez – You know the rule, dear lady. Never while on duty.

Brigitte – We made a giant sangria in the pool. It's very light...

Ramirez – Well, then just one drink for the two of us. Sanchez, I'll have the sangria, and you can eat the fruit, alright?

Sanchez – Okay, boss...

Samantha serves them two glasses of sangria. Cesar and Rosalie return. Cesar is carrying a painting.

Cesar – Here's your family portrait, my dear friend.

Rosalie – The Camembert family.

Brigitte – Thank you, but...

Roger – I don't quite recognise myself.

Cesar – It's contemporary art, you know.

Brigitte – And how much does it cost?

Cesar – Come on, Camembert! When it comes to art, money isn't the most important thing. It's a unique piece!

Roger – How much?

Cesar whispers something in his ear.

Roger – Oh, really... I'm not sure if we'll take it then...

Brigitte – Oh, Roger! It's like Samantha's class photo at her school. We're obliged to take it...

Ramirez approaches.

Ramirez – I've had a lot of sangria in my life, but this one is truly excellent. You'll give me the recipe.

Brigitte – It's a secret, Inspector. Just know that this sangria lives up to its name very well...

Ramirez – You intrigue me, dear Madame.

Brigitte – Please, also try the barbecue.

She offers him a plate, and he tries a skewer.

Ramirez – Excellent! It's the best skewer I've ever tasted.

Sanchez – Yes, it melts in your mouth.

Roger – Anyway, I think the concert's off this time.

Brigitte – With a headless pianist and no grand piano.

Roger – To think that guy cost us a fortune. Well, we still managed to get something out of it.

Ramirez – Oh yeah?

Brigitte – He was as fat as a pig, and without a head, we can really take him for a porker.

Roger – After all, we paid for it.

Brigitte – We did it barbecue-style.

Ramirez – That's funny.

Sanchez – I'm not sure it was a joke, boss.

Joseph returns, with an accordion or a bandoneon.

Joseph – We don't have a grand piano... but we still have the accordion piano!

Joseph starts playing and singing.

Brigitte – How classy!

Edmond – Don't forget that in addition to being a priest, mayor, and prosecutor of this friendly town, he's also a teacher, real estate agent, tax inspector, and doctor.

Brigitte – My God! He's a one-man band, then!

Mark Anthony makes an appearance with his chainsaw.

Ramirez – If there's no corpse anymore, then there's no crime. Come on, let's be magnanimous. Let's release all these fine people!

Sanchez – There has still been a murder, Boss... And we know it was the accountant who delivered the fatal chainsaw blow.

Ramirez – Don't be so rigid, Sanchez. Although personally, I think we should put all accountants in jail.

Joseph – The Lord has already forgiven him.

Ramirez – We'll make it look like a barbecue accident.

Rosalie – Goes to show it's always useful to have friends in the police.

Brigitte nudges Roger with her elbow.

Brigitte – And about our membership in the Club, Mr. Mayor, could you do something about it?

Joseph – Listen, dear friend, just pop by after my Mass at City Hall tomorrow. We can discuss all this more calmly...

Roger – Thank you so much, Mr. Mayor.

Joseph – And don't forget your chequebook.

Joseph walks away.

Cesar – After all, this party is turning out quite well, don't you think?

Roger – Are you part of the Club?

Cesar – Are you joking? Jesters aren't part of the club. They just get to eat for free at the buffet while making fun of their hosts.

Roger – Ah, I see.

Cesar – And I tend to agree with Marx: I would never want to join a club that would have me as a member.

Roger – I didn't know Karl Marx said that.

Rosalie – Not Karl, my friend. Groucho Marx!

Cesar and Rosalie walk away.

Charles – Are you really gay?

Samantha – Why? Want to try your luck?

Charles – I'd like to know if it's worth the risk first.

She kisses him unexpectedly, he lets it happen and seems to enjoy it. She releases her embrace.

Samantha – What do you think?

Charles – Will you marry me, Samantha?

Samantha – I should warn you, my father sells sausages.

Charles – I should warn you, my father only has me left to sell.

They kiss again. Roger and Brigitte watch them, bewildered.

Roger (to Brigitte) – Do you think we still have a chance of being admitted to the Club?

Brigitte – Who knows...?

Joseph arrives with the tricolour sash draped over his cassock.

Joseph – In the absence of extreme unction, I offer to celebrate this marriage immediately.

Samantha – Civil and religious marriage at the same time. It's a double sentence, but at least it will be quicker!

Fatima returns with a tray of skewers.

Fatima – Dinner is served!

Brigitte – It's just a snack...

Cesar – Well... We came here to eat, so let's eat.

Gregory – It's very good, what is it?

Roger – It's Laccordion.

Gregory – I meant the barbecue.

Roger – Yes, me too...

Fatima leaves. They continue eating.

Joseph – With all this, we still don't have a serious candidate to replace the distinguished Club member who recently departed...

Fatima returns with a suitcase in hand.

Brigitte – But, what are you doing with that suitcase, Fatima?

Roger – Going on vacation to Morocco?

Brigitte – The party's not over yet.

Fatima – I'm resigning, Mr. Camembert.

Brigitte – Don't tell me you finally accepted a bribe from that witch Kowalski.

Fatima – No, ma'am, rest assured.

Roger – What's wrong then, my dear? Don't you like it here?

Fatima – I do, but the lottery ticket you gave me, Mr. Camembert, it's a winning ticket

Brigitte – Don't tell me...

Roger – How much?

Fatima – 63 million.

Brigitte – 63 million of what? Dirhams?

Fatima – Euros.

Joseph – 63 million...? Well, Mr. Fatima... Welcome to the Club!

Roger – How's that?

Joseph – Once you hit 50 million, you automatically become an honorary member of the Moulinrouge Philanthropic Club.

Brigitte – But, Mr. Mayor... I mean, Mr. Priest... Fatima is Arab. And therefore probably Muslim, too...

Joseph – Don't worry about that. Once you have over 50 million in assets, we rich people are all brothers. And we're guided by a very ecumenical spirit.

Edmond – A good match for you, Charles... Instead of these cheap sausages sellers.

Charles – Mr. Fatima..? But we're not even sure it's a woman!

Marianne – Nobody's perfect...

Edmond – When nobility reaches a certain level of poverty, they shouldn't be too picky about who will restore their fortune

Marianne (*to Charles*) – Well, Charles, go ahead!

Joseph starts playing the accordion again. Charles invites Fatima to dance. Everyone dances in pairs. Except Cesar and Rosalie.

Rosalie – Dear friend, the world is a dinner game.

Cesar – And we are its jokers...

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:

Comedies for 2

EuroStar
Heads and Tails
Him and Her
Is there a pilot in the audience?
Last chance encounter
New Year's Eve at the Morgue
Not even dead
Preliminaries
Running on empty
The Costa Mucho Castaways
The Joker
The Window across the courtyard

Comedies for 3

A brief moment of eternity
A simple business dinner
An innocent little murder
Cheaters
Crash Zone
Fragile, Handle with care
Friday the 13th
Ménage à trois
One small step for a woman, one giant leap
backward for Mankind

Comedies for 4

A Cuckoo's nest
A hell of a night
Back to stage
Bed and Breakfast
Casket for two
Crisis and Punishment
Family Portrait
Family Tree
Four stars
Friday the 13th
Gay friendly
Is there a critic in the audience?
Is there an author in the audience?
Just a moment before the end of the world
Lovestruck at Swindlemore Hall
One marriage out of two
Quarantine
Strip Poker
Surviving Mankind
The Deal
The Perfect Son-in-Law
The Pyramids
The Smell of Money

Comedies for 5 to 6

All's well that starts badly
Christmas Eve at the Police Station
Crisis and Punishment
Critical but Stable
In lieu of flowers...
King of Fools

Comedies for 7 or more

Backstage Comedy
Check to the Kings
Christmas Eve at the Police Station
False exit
In flagrante delirium
Just like a Christmas movie
Miracle at Saint Mary Rogera Abbey
Neighbours'Day
Open Hearts
Save our Savings
Special Dedication
Stories and Prehistories
The Jackpot
The Performance is not cancelled
The Worst Village in England
Welcome aboard!
White Coats, Dark Humour

Collection of sketches

Him and Her
Lost time Chronicles
Open Hearts
Sidewalk Chronicles
Stories to die for

Monologues

Happy Dogs
Like a fish in the air

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