

La Comédiathèque

Memoirs of a Suitcase

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comediatheque.net

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Memoirs of a Suitcase

A sketch comedy

If an old suitcase could speak, it might have some funny stories to tell...

From 2 to 20 actors or actresses.
Highly adaptable cast in terms of number and gender,
with each actor capable of playing multiple roles,
and all roles open to being portrayed by either male or female performers.

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1. Lack of Audience

Two characters are there, on either side of a suitcase. They seem to be waiting.

One – Do you think they'll come?

Two – Who?

One – People!

Two – People? You mean the audience...

One – The spectators, yeah!

Two – Ah, yes, the spectators...

One – We can't put on a show if there's no audience.

Two – Well, no... That's precisely why we're not performing right now.

One – So, we agree, we're not acting?

Two – Are you acting?

One – No...

Two – There you go. That's what I was saying. We're not going to perform when there's no one around.

One – Okay... But why are we here, then?

Two – And who are we?

One – Nobody...

Two – We're two characters in search of an audience.

A moment.

One – Why wouldn't they come?

Two – Oh, you know, the audience... They always seem to have a good excuse not to come to the theatre.

One – You're right. They never lack imagination for that.

Two – It's a transportation strike...

One – It's school holidays...

Two – There's a crucial match on TV...

One – There was just a terrorist attack...

Two – There could be a terrorist attack...

One – It's too nice out, we'd rather go for a stroll...

Two – It's too nasty out, we'd rather stay home...

One – It's not recommended by the critics, so I won't go.

Two – It's recommended by the critics, so it must be boring.

One – It's too expensive, I'd rather go to the movies.

Two – It's practically free, it must be awful.

One – I would have liked to come, but I've got a wedding.

Two – A funeral.

One – A baptism.

Two – A first communion.

One – Religion has always done a lot of harm to the theatre.

Two – When it comes to finding a good alibi, they never lack ideas.

One – For that yes... Because for the everything else...

A moment.

Two – We're not asking for much, after all.

One – We're not expecting to fill a huge theatre.

Two – But a small venue like this.

One – Even half a venue.

The second one seems to notice the presence of the audience.

Two – And who are those?

One – Where?

Two – There, in the dark.

One – I can't see anything.

Two – Over there, way in the back.

One – Oh, you're right... I hadn't seen them come in, those...

Two – Yeah, me neither...

One – We've lost the habit so much.

Two – Can you believe it? They came anyway!

One – They're not very numerous, but they came.

Two – They braved strikes, bad weather, critics...

One – We should give them a medal.

Two – That's true. They're heroes.

One – Yes... If only we had known...

A moment.

Two – And now, what do we do?

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

Two – Now that the spectators are here! We have to do something.

One – Well, I haven't prepared anything. Have you?

Two – No.

One – We didn't expect this.

Two – It's so sudden...

One – We didn't believe it possible anymore...

Two – After all this time.

One – It's their fault too...

Two – They could have warned us.

One – You don't go to the theatre on a whim.

Two – It's not something that you should just decide to do.

A moment.

One – Maybe some of them made reservation.

Two – You think?

One – It's possible.

Two – Well, yeah, but they don't inform us either!

One – If we have nothing to show them, they'll be disappointed.

Two – It'll be another good excuse for them not to come next time.

One – We could, I don't know...

Two – We could sing something for them.

One – Can you sing?

Two – Yes... But I don't know any songs. And you?

One – Yes, I know some songs... but I can't sing.

A moment.

Two – I'm starting to wonder if we did the right thing by coming...

One – You're right... we should have found an excuse not to come too.

Two – In the meantime, we'd better hit the road.

One – Haven't we forgotten something?

The other looks around and sees the suitcase.

Two – The suitcase!

He picks up the suitcase.

One – Let's go...

They start to leave, sneakily.

2. The contract

A character is there. There's a knock at the door. He goes to open it.

One – Yes?

Two – Good morning! Mind if I steal five minutes of your time?

The first character hesitates but eventually lets the second in, who is carrying a suitcase.

One – Come in for a quick moment, but I'm pressed for time.

Two – Oh , really? And what's the rush? It's Sunday, after all... The Lord's day....

One – Well... There's always stuff to do...

Two – Of course... But trust me, you won't regret letting me in.

One – You're not about to preach to me, are you?

Two – Relax, it's not God who sent me. In fact, quite the opposite. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm the devil.

One – You scared me... I thought you were a Jehovah's Witness. They usually travel in pairs, but...

Two – What I have to offer you is much more interesting... And I always work alone...

One – Fine, but I want to make it clear upfront... I don't need anything.

Two – Who knows... But let me at least lay out our proposals for you.

One – My soap opera is about to start, and I need to reboot the box. The building's got a lousy connection.

Two – I promise not to take up too much of your time.

One – Alright, go ahead, but make it quick.

Two – I would like to propose a pact.

One – A package, you mean?

Two – No, no... I said pact.

One – What exactly does that involve?

The second character opens the suitcase and shows him its contents.

Two – I offer you love, glory, and beauty.

One – Oh, you know, at my age...

Two – It's an extra feature, but if you insist, I can throw in youth as well.

One – Eternal youth?

Two – Eternal... Let's not exaggerate... What truly lasts forever in this world?

One – Yes, you're right... It's more like programmed adolescence these days.

Two – You mean programmed obsolescence, I suppose.

One – Love, glory, and beauty... Sounds like it'll cost me an arm and a leg.

Two – You're mistaken, my dear sir. That's where my offer becomes truly diabolical.

One – How much are we talking about?

Two – It won't cost you an arm, at least... Just your soul.

One – Oh, really?

Two – But don't worry, you can pay in instalments.

One – I'll need some time to think this over.

Two – Selling your soul to the devil, you know, it's quite a common transaction these days.

One – If you say so...

Two – And what would you do with it anyway?

One – What?

Two – Your soul!

One – It's true that lately... I haven't really been using it.

Two – So why not trade it for something useful?

One – On the other hand... You never know... I might still need it.

Two – Well, since I see you hesitating, it's time for me to unveil our promotion. But be warned, it's only valid for twenty-four hours...

One – And what's your offer, then?

The second character takes a catalogue out of the suitcase.

Two – As a welcome gift, I'm offering you a high-speed cable subscription with a bouquet of 563 channels, absolutely free... for three months.

One – Oh, really?

Two – At least... you won't have to worry about missing your favourite soap opera due to a lousy internet connection.

One – And for the rest, I can pay in instalments?

Two – We'll deduct a bit of your soul every month. You won't even notice, trust me.

One – Can I take a look at the contract?

Two – It's all laid out in the document... Though, I must warn you, the print is quite small and it's rather technical.

One – Indeed... And I can't seem to locate my glasses...

Two – Do you trust me? Just sign at the bottom of the pact...

One – Fine...

Two – And don't forget to initial every page...

One – I hope it's not too lengthy; my soap opera is about to begin...

Two – Don't worry. With your new box, you can watch it on replay! As many times as you desire. For eternity. And this, complimentary, for the first three months...

One – Alright... So, where do I put my signature?

3. On the Grass

One character is there. Another arrives with a suitcase.

One – Where are you going with that suitcase?

Two – Nowhere... I just bought it. It was on sale.

One – Planning a getaway?

Two – No, not really.

One – Then why did you buy a suitcase?

Two – I told you, it was a great deal.

One – Okay... (*A moment*) It's not getting better for you.

Two – You never know when having an extra suitcase might be useful.

One – Useful for what? If it's not for a trip.

Two – Where do you want me to go?

One – I don't know... You're the one who bought a suitcase. Are you stupid or something?

Two – Can't we just have a conversation?

One – About what?

Two – If you had a suitcase, where would you go?

One – If I had a suitcase?

Two – Do you have a suitcase?

One – What the hell am I supposed to do with a suitcase?

Two – You could go somewhere...

One – Where?

Two – I don't know...

One – Anyway, I don't have a suitcase.

Two – Want me to lend you mine?

One – What for?

Two – In case you want to go somewhere.

The other looks at him with astonishment.

One – But... Where are we going with this?

Two – I don't know. But at least we already have the suitcase.

One – Aren't we fine here?

Two – Yeah... Well... We're not exactly sure about the situation elsewhere either.

One – Elsewhere?

Two – Maybe it's better.

One – Elsewhere might be better?

Two – Well, yeah! Don't you think? We've never experienced it; we've never left this place.

One – Yeah, well... You know what they say...

Two – What?

One – The grass is greener elsewhere.

Two – We can't really claim there's much grass here anyway.

The other looks around.

One – Yeah, that's right.

Two – We could go where there's grass.

One – In the countryside, you mean?

Two – Where there's grass.

One – Why?

Two – To just lie in it. I can't remember the last time I lay down in the grass.

One – They sell grass here, but it's not for lying on.

Two – That would be too expensive.

One – There's a patch of grass in the town square.

Two – Yeah... But there are lots of dog droppings.

One – Yeah... And we're not even allowed to roll in it.

Two – Roll in what?

One – In the grass!

Two – So, are we going?

One – Where?

Two – To the countryside!

One – The countryside... Where does the countryside start anyway?

Two – I don't know... Where the subway stops, I guess.

One – Well... Why not? We'll go all the way to the terminus then. We'll see if we reach the countryside.

Two – And what do we pack in the suitcase?

One – What do you want to put in the suitcase? Just take the subway...

Two – True. If we find something interesting there, we can always put it in the suitcase.

One – Which line are we taking?

Two – I don't know. The one heading south, perhaps...

One – You're right. Southward bound. Towards better weather!

Two – Come on, let's hit the road!

They exit.

4. Excess Baggage

One character is there. Another arrives.

One – Good morning, I would like to buy a suitcase, please.

Two – Certainly, Sir. And is it a suitcase for a specific destination?

One – For a specific destination? What does it matter?

Two – Ah, but it makes all the difference!

One – A suitcase is a suitcase, isn't it?

Two – You are mistaken, dear Sir! There are all kinds of suitcases. The suitcase for going on a journey, for example, has nothing to do with the suitcase for leaving home after a separation, or for leaving one's country and going into exile, does it?

One – Into exile?

Two – I completely agree with your perspective. Exile takes on various forms. A fiscal exile, for instance, bears little resemblance to either economic or political exile.

One – Well... Let's consider it as luggage for a journey, then.

Two – Leisure trip or business trip?

One – Leisure.

Two – Alone or accompanied?

One – But really, that's none of your business!

Two – I beg your pardon, but if it's a suitcase for two people, the size becomes crucial. Especially when sharing with a woman... In that case, I would suggest considering a trunk.

One – It's just my stuff in this suitcase. My wife left me. We recently got divorced...

Two – I'm truly sorry to hear that your wife packed her bags without you...

One – Thanks...

Two – How long is your trip?

One – Just one week.

Two – The destination?

One – I feel like I'm already at customs...

Two – or a trip to Africa, you'd need a more robust and less soiling suitcase compared to Switzerland.

One – Switzerland?

Two – Are you going to Switzerland?

One – I never said that!

Two – Well, if it's about transporting cash, you'd need a more secure suitcase than just for underwear and a few pairs of socks.

One – You're delirious! Who told you I'm off to Switzerland to stash my savings?

Two – It's just a wild guess.

One – I'm actually going to Portugal for my daughter's wedding, if you must know.

Two – Civil or religious ceremony?

One – Religious.

Two – Which religion?

One – Seriously, what does that have to do with the suitcase?

Two – Nothing. This time, it was just curiosity. My apologies.

One – Fine...

Two – So, we were saying Portugal, for a week, solo, honeymoon... Well, I mean, a trip in view of a wedding... Are you planning to fly or sail there?

One – Does it make a difference for the suitcase?

Two – Let's say that for a somewhat fancy cruise, I wouldn't recommend the same suitcase style as for a simple flight. Unless you're traveling business class, of course.

One – I'm flying. Economy class.

Two – Accompanied baggage or checked?

One – Checked. Is that all?

Two – That's all for now... and I think I have just the thing you need.

He goes out.

One – I had lost hope...

The other returns with a completely ordinary suitcase.

Two – Did you ask me so many questions just to recommend this suitcase?

One – We strive to meet our customers' specific needs.

Two – What's so special about this suitcase then? I mean, what makes it particularly suitable for a trip to Portugal for your daughter's wedding?

One – Nothing special. For such a straightforward journey, an ordinary suitcase suffices.

Two – But why choose this one in particular?

One – Because it's the only model we have left.

Two – The only one? Is this some kind of joke? Why did you put me through all those questions then?

One – I wanted to make sure you weren't a special customer... But apparently not...

Two – Special? Like the ones going on a Titanic cruise and needing an unsinkable suitcase?

One – So, are you taking this suitcase or not? Time's ticking.

Two – Lucky for you, I don't have time to go to another store. I'll take it.

One – Perfect. Will you be paying by cheque or in cash?

Two – By cheque.

One – From which bank?

5. Ice cream

Two characters seated side by side, the second one has a suitcase on their lap.

One – Have you been here before?

Two – Yes, but it was a long time ago. And you?

One – No, it's my first time. What did you see?

Two – Oh, I don't remember very well... It was with... What's his name again... He's a very famous actor...

One – Oh, yes...

Two – I think he passed away.

One – Really?

Two – I think so.

One – That's a unfortunate. Did he have a family?

Two – Yes, I suppose. Just like everyone else.

One – Well... And so, he... he was very famous...

Two – Oh yes, indeed... He had quite a presence in movies. Later on, it was mostly on TV. Eventually, he became more active in the theatre. And towards the end, he practically disappeared from the public eye.

One – Not at all?

Two – He had somewhat faded into obscurity, as they say.

One – It happens, unfortunately.

Two – Yes...

One – At our age, we're not even sure if it's the famous people who are forgotten, or if it's us who are losing our memory...

A pause.

Two – What does "airplane mode" mean?

One – What?

Two – The usher earlier said to turn off your mobile phone completely. "Even in airplane mode."

One – Oh yes, that's true.

Two – What does that mean?

One – I don't know... I never take the plane. And you?

Two – Me neither. Besides, I don't have a mobile phone.

One – Me neither.

Two – That way, we won't risk forgetting to turn it off.

A pause.

One – And did you come with your suitcase?

Two – I never part with it. Since...

One – Since what?

Two – I forgot it on the train. The bomb squad came. I arrived just in time. They were about to blow it up!

One – No?

Two – The fear I had... Just imagine leaving it at home, the police dogs come to sniff it out all the way to my doorstep, and the bomb squad breaks down the door to blow it up?

One – You're right, it's safer to keep it with you... (*A pause*) This suitcase really has an unusual smell, though...

Two – You think so?

One – Shouldn't it have started by now?

Two – Yes, you're right...

One – They asked us to turn off our mobile phones a while ago.

Two – Or perhaps it has already begun.

One – How could it have started already? Nothing seems to be happening.

Two – You know, with modern theatre...

One – Do you think this is modern theatre?

Two – I'm not sure... It's sponsored by the town hall, though...

One – That's the same reason I came. I didn't realize it was modern theatre.

Two – Do you think there's an intermission?

One – Do intermissions even exist anymore?

Two – I have no idea... It probably depends on the play's duration.

One – Do you think it's lengthy enough to warrant an intermission?

Two – Well, it wasn't mentioned in the program.

One – It's been quite some time already, hasn't it?

Two – Indeed, we've been waiting for it to start for quite a while.

One – What if we ended up dozing off?

Two – Both of us at the same time? I doubt it.

One – Perhaps it's already intermission...

Two – Or maybe the whole thing is already finished.

One – It can't be over when it hasn't even begun!

Two – With modern theatre, you never know...

One – So, what's the plan?

Two – Let's give it a little more time... It would be too absurd to leave now.

One – You're right.

A moment of silence.

Two – If only the ushers would bring us ice cream.

One – Isn't it the cinema where they usually have ice cream?

Two – Oh, I'm not sure...

One – Neither am I.

Two – Even at the cinema these days, I'm not sure ushers still offer ice cream.

One – So, you're thinking at the theatre...

Two – It's a shame. I bet more people would come to the theatre if the ushers served ice cream.

One – That's quite possible...

Two – Let's give it a bit more time...

One – And then, if it still doesn't start, we can go grab some ice cream.

Two – Let's not hold back! We should have gone there straight away...

One – Just think about the ice cream we could have bought with the price of the ticket.

Two – Well, it's offered by the town hall.

One – Yes... The town hall... They should have offered us ice cream too...

Two – Okay, that's enough.

They both stand up.

One – Come on, let's make a run for it.

Two – Let's go grab a couple of ice creams.

One – A couple?

Two – Two scoops!

One – Oh yes... And don't forget your suitcase...

Two – You're right...

They exit.

6. Desperate

The first character stands at the stage's edge, holding a suitcase, slightly leaning forward and looking down. The second character arrives in a hurry.

Two – You're not going to jump on me, are you?

One – Uh... No... Not if I can avoid it...

Two – Sorry, I meant... you're not thinking of jumping... over the railing?

One – Oh... Uh... No... Not if I can help it...

Two – Too bad... I mean, good for you!

An awkward silence lingers.

One – Do I appear that desperate?

Two – I don't know... And me?

One – Yes, a bit... You seem to have come from...

Two – I just left my dentist's office.

One – And it didn't go well.

Two – Well... He stood me up.

One – You're dating your dentist?

Two – No, I mean... He canceled the appointment.

One – I see... And why was that?

Two – He had a toothache.

One – Oh, really? Well, I've always wondered where dentists go when they have a toothache.

Two – And hairdressers, where do they get their hair done?

One – You know what they say... The shoemaker's children always go barefoot.

Two – As a result, I always have a toothache... What about you?

One – No, my teeth are fine...Ironically, they're the only thing going well right now.

Two – So, that's why you were thinking about...

One – Thinking about...?

Two – You know... jumping.

One – My plan wasn't that elaborate. I just wanted to make sure that if I took the plunge, it would be from a height that gave me a fair shot at not surviving. I mean, if the outcome is just ending up crippled...

Two – Imagine that. You're already down, try to end it, and then you're stuck as a paraplegic.

One – That's even more depressing.

Two – No kidding.

One – That's why I preferred to check.

Two – So, you were scouting, in a way.

One – Exactly.

Two – And?

One – What?

Two – Is it high enough?

One – I don't know... What do you think?

Two – I'm not used to this...

He comes closer and examines.

One – Watch your step, though...

Two – You're right; that would be too ridiculous.

One – So?

Two – It's not that high... Maybe if you took a headfirst dive...

One – And it's grass.

Two – If only it were concrete.

One – Grass is quite soft. Especially after heavy rain.

Two – We haven't had much luck with the weather lately.

One – No, it's really depressing.

Two – Whatever you do, make sure you get it right. There's no second chance.

One – Excuse me?

Two – When you shoot yourself, if you miss with the first shot, you can always make up for it with the second. Just press the trigger again. But when you jump into the void...

One – That's true.

Two – Picture climbing back up the stairs with a broken leg and a fractured skull just to jump again.

One – No way...

Two – I know that ridicule doesn't kill, but still... there are limits...

One – Right, I'd rather go out with some dignity.

Two – Well, I'll have to leave you. Sorry, this toothache is killing me.

One – Thanks for the advice, though.

Two – Anytime. By the way, do you know where the 24-hour pharmacy is? It's for the toothache...

One – Yes, I think... I'll join you... I'll try medications instead...

Two – You're right... The advantage of medications is that if you mess up...

One – You always get a second chance...

They exit together.

7. Seventh Heaven

One character is present. The other enters, dragging a suitcase.

Two – Hello, I've come for... You know what, right?

The other doesn't seem to know.

One – Oh, right, assisted suicide! No, wait, it's actually because... It's a bit funny, but we also handle sperm donation. (*The other remains unamused.*) My bad, I should've picked up on your expression, you're clearly not here for...

Two – No...

One – Also, for sperm donation, people usually don't bring a suitcase.

Two – True.

The other hands over a paper.

One – Here, you need to fill out the form. Let me double-check I didn't mix it up with the other one... No, that's the right one... So, name, address, phone...

Two – Phone?

One – Well, technically, it's optional... I mean, we won't be calling you after, that's for sure. Anyway, social security number, emergency contact in case of non-death...

Two – In case of non-death, are you sure about that?

One – In theory, it's one hundred percent reliable, but you know... Perfection isn't of this world. Did you bring the check and a photo ID?

Two – Here... (*He hands over the required documents.*) The photo isn't the most recent, but...

The other looks at the photo.

One – Ah yes, indeed... But how old were you?

Two – Six months.

One – Well, they didn't specify "recent photo." Have you been sponsored?

Two – Excuse me?

One – If someone who's already used our services sponsored you, half of the fees go to their family. Didn't know that?

Two – No.

One – Too bad, you could've benefited your own folks. No one in your circle with suicidal tendencies?

Two – I don't know...

One – Well, it's a bit late to reconsider now. Maybe next time... I mean... There's also a little test we need to go through...

The other hands over another form.

Two – Please don't tell me you need a genius-level IQ to qualify for assisted suicide?

One – No, don't worry. Everyone has the right to end their life. Even idiots. It's just to ensure you're mentally sound and fully aware of what you're doing.

Two – Right...

One – Just mark the right boxes. It's pretty straightforward. We haven't had anyone fail the test so far

He looks at the test and starts ticking the correct answers.

Two – Ah, got it... What's 1 plus 1? What's the colour of the king's white horse? Is there life after death?

One – You're entitled to a lifeline.

Two – Well, for the last one, I'll come back to give you the answer in due time.

One – Fair enough, just a heads up, we haven't implemented any after-sales service yet!

He hands back the completed test.

Two – Is that all for the formalities?

One – Almost... Have you written a letter of demotivation?

Two – No...

One – Just kidding, no need to stress.

Two – So, what's next?

One – Everything's in order. I'll announce you...

Two – Announce me? You mean... up there?

One – Yes, if you'd like. It's on the seventh...

Two – The seventh heaven?

One – The seventh floor! The department that handles...

Two – Ah, got it. My bad.

He takes out his phone.

One – Yes, Christine, your appointment has arrived... Okay, I'll tell them to wait... (*He hangs up.*) We're running a bit late. Winter is our peak season, and with the weather this year... It's so depressing...

Two – I've got all the time in the world...

One – Not me, unfortunately... I've got a busy day... But first, I'll make my way to the coffee machine. Skipped my morning cup today; my alarm decided to play tricks on me. Want me to bring you one?

Two – Bring me what?

One – A coffee!

Two – Sure, why not...

One – Don't worry. If you're not around when I come back, I'll enjoy it myself.

Two – Thanks for everything.

One – You're welcome. And... don't forget your suitcase.

8. The Spitting Image of His Son

One character is already there. Another arrives and begins to gaze at him, at first discreetly, then more openly.

One – Have we met before?

Two (*extending his hand*) – Anthony!

One – Anthony? But my name isn't Anthony...

Two – Anthony! That's my name! We did theatre together.

One – Theatre?

Two – Don't you do theatre?

One – Well, I did... But that was a while back. And not for very long.

Two – In Brighton.

One – Yes...

Two – At the Theatre School of Brighton.

One – Yes, that's it...

Two – We worked on a Shakespeare scene together. "Romeo and Juliet."

One – Really?

Two – I played Juliet.

One – No way?

Two – The teacher was a bit eccentric...

One – Probably why I didn't stick around. I don't recall doing that scene.

Two – But you did!

One – Well, it must have made an impression on you.

Two – But you remember me, right?

One – Yes, yes, of course... But... well...

Two – It doesn't make us any younger...

One – Well... You haven't changed.

Two – Me? No, I'm good... But you...

One – Me?

Two – I almost didn't recognise you.

One – It's been a few years.

Two – Still. It's crazy.

One – What?

Two – How much you've aged.

One – Well... But you'll get over it, I hope.

Two – Yes, yes, sorry... It's just that... it's weird to see you like this.

One – I see.

Two – And what about me, do you think I haven't changed?

One – Excuse me, but... are you really sure we did theatre together?

Two – Absolutely. I have a good memory for faces. Otherwise, I wouldn't have recognised you. You've aged so much...

One – In Brighton, then?

Two – Well yes... Romeo and Juliet.

One – Okay... It's coming back to me now.

Two – What?

One – I went to that class just to check because my son was enrolled there.

Two – Your son?

One – Fred. It's probably with him that you played that scene.

Two – Fred, isn't that you?

One – He's my son. He's the same age as you. I stayed in the class for two weeks. Just enough time to realise that theatre wasn't for me. And doing theatre with my son... After that, I left.

Two – That's probably when I arrived. I was on the waiting list... As a spot opened up...

One – Yes... And you played that scene with Fred, my son. We do look a lot alike, but still...

Two – I thought so too. How could he have aged so much in five years? So, how old are you, actually?

One – I could be your father...

Two – Well... Honestly, you look much younger...

9. Last journey

One character is already present. Another arrives with a suitcase.

Two – Good morning, I've booked a rental car online...

He hands the other a paper, which the latter quickly examines.

One – Very well... Can I see your driving license?

The other hands over his license.

Two – There you go...

One – This is a boating license.

Two – Oh yes, sorry.

He takes back the first document and hands another to him.

One – So... So, you want to rent... a hearse, correct?

Two – Yes, that's right.

One – Okay... And how long are you thinking of renting it for?

Two – Just a day should be sufficient.

One – Is it for accompanying a relative to their final resting place?

Two – Yes, in a certain way...

One – In a certain way?

Two – Actually, it's for me.

One – I see. And is it for the journey from...

Two – From my home to the cemetery. Since I've opted for a Do It Yourself coffin, I figured a self-driven rental hearse would be fitting...

One – Certainly...

Two – I thought about getting an Uber, but then...

One – Alright. So, I assume the unlimited mileage option isn't something you're interested in?

Two – I don't think it's necessary.

One – I see that you also skipped the Serenity Assistance option...

Two – I... No... What's that?

One – Well... If there's a breakdown, we handle everything, and if necessary, we provide you with a courtesy vehicle. Well... a courtesy hearse.

Two – I... I'm not sure... It's only five kilometres... The risk seems quite minimal anyway...

One – Oh, you know, by definition, breakdowns... It could also be an accident.

Two – An accident? While driving the hearse to my own funeral?

One – That would indeed be unfortunate, I admit...

Two – Unless it's a fatal accident, of course.

One – It could just be a simple puncture...

Two – A puncture?

One – It's not mandatory, but it would be more prudent.

Two – Don't tell me that the spare tire is also an option?

One – No, of course not... Well, I don't think so... Well, it's up to you...

Two – I think I'll take the risk.

One – In that case, here are the keys.

The second takes the keys.

Two – Very well.

One – All that's left is to wish you a safe journey.

Two – Thank you.

One – And... drive carefully.

The other leaves with his suitcase.

10. Release

Two characters. The second one is buckling a suitcase.

One – So, today's the big day?

Two – Yes... The moment of liberation has arrived.

One – Forty years...

Two – Almost a lifetime.

One – It's inhumane. Regardless of the crime, no one deserves this.

Two – And on top of it, I'm innocent.

One – We all claim that...

Two – How much time do you have left to serve?

One – Twenty-five years, seven months, and three days.

Two – Did you account for leap years?

One – I hate leap years...

Two – Well, now I might appreciate them a bit more.

One – And what are you going to do with your freedom?

Two – I don't know. I'm not used to it anymore...

One – You're not going to mess things up, are you?

Two – Mess things up? What kind of mess?

One – The kind of mess that could land you back here.

Two – No, don't worry.

One – You won't forget about us?

Two – Of course not.

One – I'm not asking you to come visit us. I'm not expecting that.

Two – You're right. It would hurt both of us.

One – I'll miss you.

Two – I'll miss you too... Even though I would have preferred our meeting to be under different circumstances.

One – What time exactly is your release?

Two – At 5 p.m.

One – Are they picking you up, or...

Two – No one is picking me up. I pack my things, and I leave by subway all alone. Like a grown-up.

One – As long as we have our health...

Two – Forty years, and it all fits in that old suitcase. Can you believe it?

One – Are you sure you haven't forgotten anything?

Two – I'll leave the coffee machine for you...

One – That's kind.

Two – Now, I'll probably have my coffee at the local bar.

One – You're lucky...

Two – Unfortunately, I'll probably have it alone. Over the years, you lose touch with everyone.

One – Is this bar really still open?

Two – You think?

One – They all close, one after the other.

Two – Back in the day, that place was our hangout. We'd all gather around the foosball table. The owner may not have had a childcare qualification, but when we crossed the line, he knew how to lay down some discipline.

One – If we hadn't pulled so many stunts in our youth, maybe we wouldn't be stuck here...

Two – True. We could've been bankers or lawyers.

One – Well, it's too late now... The die is cast.

Two – And the wheel has stopped turning.

One – The director didn't call you in for a meeting?

Two – What for? To plan a farewell party?

One – You're right. Just make your exit without any farewells.

Two – Seeing him again? I'd rather steer clear.

One – Come on, it's about time.

Two – When it's time to go, it's time to go.

They embrace emotionally.

One – Well, then... Enjoy your retirement, my old friend!

Two – I'll do my best...

The second one exits with his suitcase. The first one stays behind.

One – Damn... Another twenty-five years to endure.

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

A Thwarted Vocation
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
Pentimento
Preliminaries
Running on empty
The Costa Mucho Castaways
The Joker
The Rope
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
The Way of Chance

Comedies for 4

A Cuckoo's nest
A hell of a night
A Skeleton in the Closet
Back to stage
Bed and Breakfast
Casket for two
Crisis and Punishment
Déjà vu
Family Portrait
Family Tree
Four stars
Friday the 13th
Gay friendly
How to get rid of your best friends
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
Perfect In-laws
Quarantine
Strip Poker
Surviving Mankind
The Deal
The Fishbowl
The Perfect Son-in-Law
The Pyramids
The Smell of Money
The Tourists

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
Traffic Jam on Graveyard Lane

Comedies for 7 or more

At the bar counter
Backstage Comedy
Blue Flamingos
Check to the Kings
Christmas Eve at the Police Station
False exit
In flagrante delirium
Just like a Christmas movie
Miracle at Saint Mary Juana Abbey
Music does not always soothe the savage beasts
Neighbours'Day
Nicotine
Of Vegetables and Books
Offside
Open Hearts
Reality Show
Save our Savings
Special Dedication
Stories and Prehistories
The House of Our Dreams
The Jackpot
The Performance is not cancelled
The Worst Village in England
Welcome aboard!
White Coats, Dark Humour

Collection of sketches

Backstage Bits
Don't panic
Enough is Enough
Ethan and Eve
For real and for fun
Him and Her
Killer Sketches
Lost time Chronicles
Open Hearts
Sidewalk Chronicles
Stage Briefs
Stories to die for

Monologues

Happy Dogs
Like a fish in the air

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