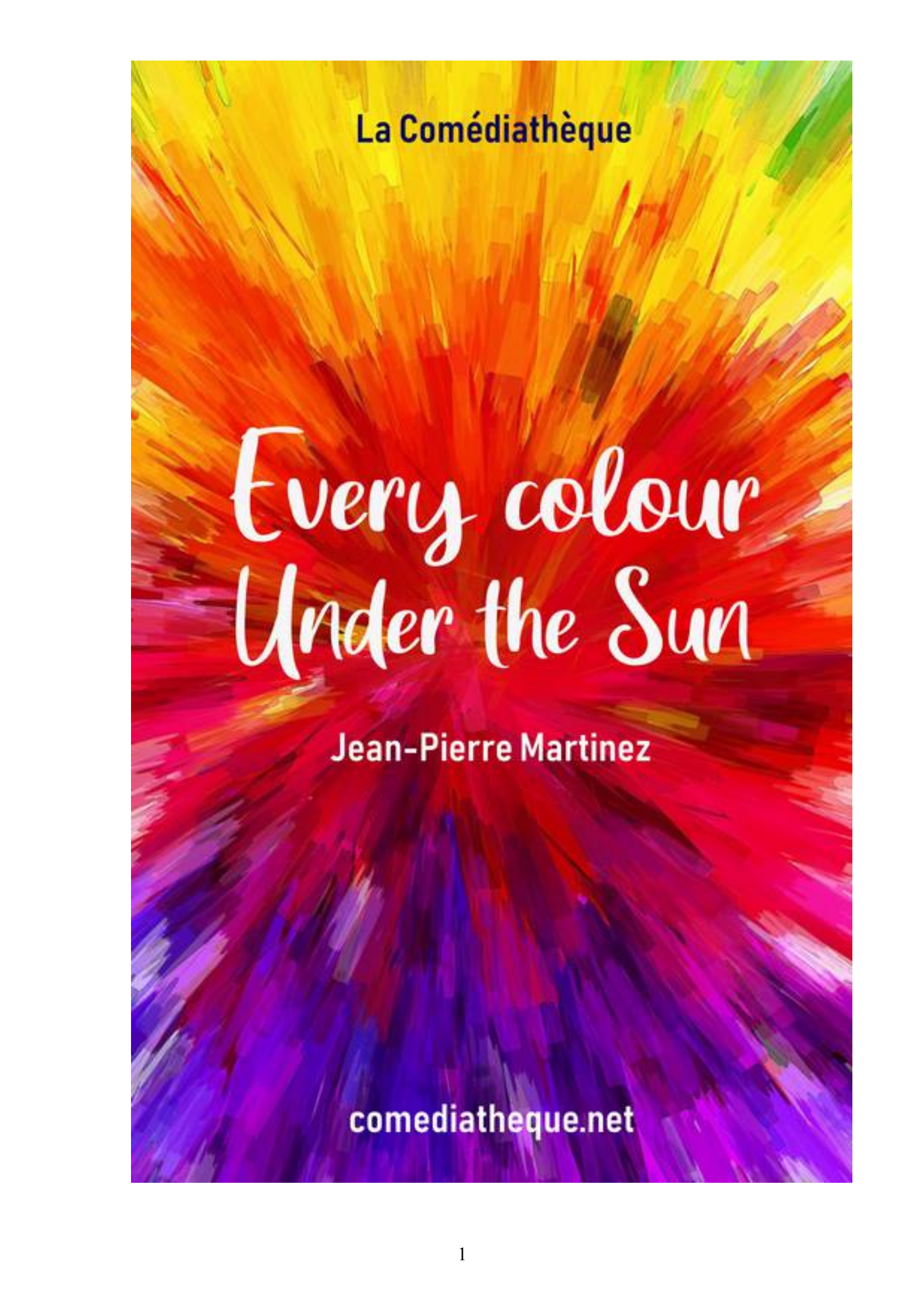




La Comédiathèque

Every colour Under the Sun

Jean-Pierre Martinez

comediatheque.net

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Every Colour Under the Sun

A collection of short comedies

Jean-Pierre Martinez

Up to 30 characters (male or female)

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1. In Full Colour

One character is waiting. Another enters carrying a swaddled baby.

One – Congratulations! It's a girl.

Two – How wonderful.

She takes the baby.

One – And what are you going to call her?

Two – I was torn between Clementine and Plum, but in the end I settled on Violet.

One – Violet... That's... That's lovely.

Two – It was my grandmother's name...

One – Ah, yes... *(He opens a file.)* Right... Well, I think everything is in order.

Two – So I can take her home?

One – Of course. She's all yours. *(He takes a document from the file and hands it to her.)* Here you are: the warranty certificate.

Two – Thank you...

One – If you have the slightest problem, don't hesitate to bring her back. Our after-sales service has an excellent reputation worldwide. In the highly unlikely event of a fault, rest assured that we can arrange a standard replacement.

Two – I certainly hope it won't come to that... I think I'm already getting attached to this one...

One – Of course, of course... *(He takes one last look at the file.)* But... I see you haven't selected the “full-colour vision” option... Was that an oversight, or...?

Two – Full-colour vision?

One – Yes... So that your child can see the world in all the wonderful colours nature has given it...

Two – I... I'm terribly sorry... I didn't realise it was an optional extra...

One – It's not essential, of course, but it's certainly a very worthwhile enhancement. We offer several quality levels depending on the number of pixels. And, of course, on the price of the subscription...

Two – Oh, so it's a subscription...

One – I'm afraid nothing in this world is ever truly permanent, is it? But I can assure you the premium version is absolutely fantastic.

Two – In my mother's day, colour wasn't an optional extra...

One – Quite right. In the past, full-colour vision came as standard. Unfortunately, as you know, times have changed...

Two – Yes... These days, you have to pay for everything.

One – Fortunately, 3D still comes as standard.

Two – 3D?

One – As for colour, it's not too late to put matters right. A quick return to the maternity unit, a touch of electronic surgery, two transgenic injections, and our medical technicians can enable this delightful child to see life in full colour...

Two – Unfortunately, I don't think that's possible just now. We hadn't budgeted for it, and...

One – I understand... Sadly, not every baby born today has the good fortune to have wealthy parents.

Two – And health insurance barely covers anything any more...

One – Come now, it's not the end of the world... For the time being, the child will simply have to see everything in black and white, that's all. And once you've managed to save a little... Remember, the option can be added at any point in her life. Christmas, a birthday, a bat mitzvah... There's the perfect present for your dear Violet!

Two – All right. I'll think about it.

She is about to leave with the baby.

One – And don't forget, if you wish, our finance department can arrange a small loan over fifteen or twenty years...

2. Vote Blank

Two characters are looking at an imaginary election poster.

One – Blank... Funny name...

Two – It inspires confidence. Blank... Sounds like a brand of laundry detergent.

One – But when you're standing for election... “Vote Blank”... There are better campaign slogans.

Two – Then again, he doesn't exactly have a detailed platform...

One – Do you think he could actually get elected...?

Two – He perfectly embodies the aspirations of the silent majority. He'll bring the non-voters to the polls. And he looks completely ordinary. People see themselves in him. It reassures them.

One – But what will he do if he gets into power?

Two – Oh, he's made that perfectly clear. Nothing! And he's sworn that, for once, an election promise will actually be kept.

One – Then why exactly is he standing?

Two – To make his ideas prevail!

One – His ideas...?

Two – He's been campaigning for years to have blank ballots recognised as valid votes in their own right... Since nobody would listen, he decided to stand himself. You have to admit, it takes courage. At least he's following his argument through to the end...

One – So what do you think?

Two – I'm in two minds...

One – Are you going to abstain?

Two – That's what I've done for years, but this time... It would almost look as though I supported him. No, I still haven't decided...

One – I feel much the same... These days, when you have genuine convictions... it's hard not to have someone appropriate them for their own ends...

3. Raven Black

Two characters.

Vincent – Do you know why Van Gogh cut off his ear?

Paul – Who?

Vincent – Van Gogh!

Paul – The painter?

Vincent – Why? Do you know another Van Gogh who's a hairdresser, a butcher or a racing cyclist?

Paul – No...

Vincent – Strange, really...

Paul – That there isn't a single butcher called Van Gogh?

Vincent – Cutting off his ear!

Paul – Why did he do it?

Vincent – That's what I just asked you...

Paul – How would I know?

Vincent – Apparently he gave it to Gauguin, wrapped in newspaper.

Paul – He'd have been better off giving it to Beethoven.

Vincent – Beethoven wasn't a painter.

Paul – No. But he was deaf. Haven't you ever read an absurdist play?

Vincent – No...

Paul – Mind you, Van Gogh didn't sell a single painting in his lifetime.

Vincent – Not surprising if he was writing plays.

Paul – Van Gogh! Maybe that's why he cut his ear off.

Vincent – Out of despair?

Paul – I must admit, I've never heard of anyone trying to kill themselves by cutting off an ear...

Vincent – Maybe he tried to cut his throat, missed, and the ear took the hit. Some people are clumsy.

Paul – And then he made up the whole story so he wouldn't look incompetent? Sounds a bit far-fetched, doesn't it?

Vincent – Besides, Van Gogh wasn't even born when Beethoven died. I don't see how he could have given him his ear...

Paul – Or maybe he cut himself shaving. Then everybody made a huge fuss because it was Van Gogh.

Vincent – When I cut my ear, nobody writes about it...

Paul – His paintings aren't bad, but still... Are they really worth what people pay for them?

Vincent – If nobody bought them while he was alive, maybe there was a reason.

Paul – They were probably right. A Van Gogh wasn't worth a nail. Not even the nail you'd hang it on...

Vincent – Or the rope you'd hang him with.

Paul – Did he hang himself?

Vincent – Who?

Paul – Van Gogh!

Vincent – No. Why?

Paul – Forget it...

Vincent – What about Beethoven? Did people buy his music while he was alive?

Paul – Yeah, but Beethoven... He mostly did classical music...

Vincent – Classical music always sells.

Paul – It's never exactly fashionable, so it doesn't date as quickly.

Vincent – That's what I always tell my wife. Classics never go out of style.

Paul – But Van Gogh...

Vincent – Hasn't aged well.

Paul – Same as Picasso.

Vincent – Who loved bullfighting...

Paul – Well, he was Spanish.

Vincent – They say it may actually have been Gauguin who cut off Van Gogh's ear. With a sword... Maybe that's even why he cleared off to Tahiti.

Paul – Gauguin liked bullfighting too?

Vincent – Why? Do they have bullfights in Tahiti?

Paul – The ear! And the sword...

Vincent – You think Gauguin had a moment of madness, imagined he was Picasso, and mistook Van Gogh for a bull...?

Paul – Gauguin wasn't mad. Van Gogh was.

Vincent – Proof is, he killed himself...

Paul – You can kill yourself without being mad...

Vincent – He shot himself out in the fields.

Paul – Didn't he shoot himself in the heart?

Vincent – Yes, out in the fields. With the crows. It was even the last painting he did.

Paul – And does the painting show Van Gogh shooting himself?

Vincent – No, just the crows circling around him.

Paul – Like vultures...

Vincent – They sense these things... Instinct... Did you know they live a very long time?

Paul – Vultures?

Vincent – Crows!

Paul – Longer than painters, anyway...

Vincent – Depends. Look at Picasso. He lived to nearly a hundred.

Paul – Right, enough of this. I've got work to do. What are we having today, Vincent...?

Vincent – The usual, Paul.

Paul – Nice and short around the ears?

Vincent – Not too short...

Paul – All right. I'll leave the ears on.

Vincent – That's the idea.

Paul – But if I have to cut one off, which one would you rather keep?

Vincent – Which ear did Van Gogh cut off?

Paul – The left.

Vincent – Then leave me the right... If I want any chance of going down in history. Have you got the newspaper?

Paul – To wrap your ear in?

Vincent – To read...

Paul – If I cut off one ear, do you think it'll make the papers?

Vincent – No...

Paul – What if I cut off both?

Vincent – Not necessarily...

Paul – What if I cut off both ears and your tail?

Vincent – In Spain, maybe...

4. Seeing Pink

One character enters and stops in front of another who is already there.

One – Doctor, I can't take this any more. You have to help me.

Two – I'm listening...

One – Well... I don't know how to put this... For some time now... I've been seeing everything in pink.

Two – Ah... That is unusual. Most people come to see me because everything looks black to them.

One – No, Doctor, in my case it's not just a figure of speech. I mean it literally. Everything really is pink.

Two – I see...

One – My house is pink, my car is pink, my wife is pink, my dog is pink...

Two – All right... And your name is Mr...?

One – Rose.

Two – Rose?

One – Yes. I know. Under the circumstances, it's almost too appropriate.

Two – I was just wondering whether there might be some connection.

One – None that I know of. Do you think there could be?

Two – Goodness, anything is possible...

One – No, but Doctor, it isn't just when I'm happy or in love that I see the world through rose-coloured glasses. It's permanent, do you understand?

Two – I understand... And... are you taking any medication at the moment, Mr Rose?

One – No... Nothing...

Two – Forgive me for asking, but... no hallucinogens?

One – Nothing, I swear... To be on the safe side, I've even stopped drinking wine. Especially rosé, obviously... But it hasn't made any difference.

Two – Very strange... And so... it bothers you.

One – Of course it bothers me! It's incredibly disabling, you have no idea! It can even be dangerous! Say I'm driving and I come to a traffic light. To me, every light is pink! So what do I do? Stop and get honked at? Drive through and get a ticket?

Two – I see...

One – Can you imagine me explaining to the police, “Sorry, officer, I went through on pink”?

Two – I understand...

One – And seeing everything in pink is fine for five minutes... But after a while it gets terribly monotonous...

Two – And monotony can soon become quite depressing.

One – When you go to the cinema, you want to see a film in colour, don't you? I only see pink.

Two – Have you tried black-and-white films?

One – Yes... To me they're pale pink and dark pink.

Two – I see... What about dark glasses?

One – Pink through dark glasses.

Two – I see...

One – Could you stop saying “I see”? It's getting on my nerves, you see?

Two – Sorry...

One – I can see perfectly well that you can't see the problem at all!

Two – Medicine still doesn't have all the answers, unfortunately. And I have to admit... this must be an orphan disease...

One – An orphan disease?

Two – One of those genetic conditions nobody gives a damn about because it affects only one or two people in the entire world.

One – Thanks for cheering me up, Doctor. That's a great help.

Two – Come now, don't look at everything so bleakly... Sorry, I mean... Have you ever thought about suicide?

One – You think that's the only option I've got left?

Two – I'm sorry, that's not what I meant at all. But if you're having dark thoughts... I could prescribe an antidepressant.

One – Hmm... And some medical leave?

Two – You think...?

One – A bit of rest never hurt anyone, did it?

Two – Do you feel overworked?

One – Now that you mention it, Doctor, I suppose... I am on the verge of burnout.

Two – I see... And how much time do you think you'd need? I mean, before you stop seeing everything in pink...

One – I don't know... Do you think a week would be enough?

Two – Goodness, in your case...

One – All right, if you insist, let's say a month. Better to be safe.

Two (*writing out the medical certificate*) – Four weeks it is, then.

One – It's not as though I'm looking forward to it, but... I think it'll do me good, don't you?

Two – Come back and see me when you return from your holiday, and we'll see whether your condition has improved.

One – I'll send you a postcard, I promise.

Two – And what about the antidepressants? You know, you can see everything in pink and still have dark thoughts.

One – Thanks, but I think I'll try without them. We already spend enough on antidepressants as it is. I don't want to add to the health service's bill.

Two – Your civic spirit does you credit, sir. (*He hands him the medical certificate but drops it on the floor.*) Sorry... (*He picks up the paper and stands again.*) Right, then... Have a good holiday, Mr Rose.

One – Thank you, Doctor. Just talking to you has made me feel better already.

The doctor hesitates again before handing him the certificate, which the other man is eager to take.

Two – You're not seeing everything in pink any more?

One – I am... But at least now I know why...

Two – One last question, Mr Rose... Where are you going on holiday?

One – Jaipur. I've never been, and I got a very good deal.

Two – Jaipur...

The doctor takes back the certificate.

One – Is there a problem?

Two – Jaipur... the Pink City... (*He tears up the certificate.*) I'm terribly sorry, Mr Rose, but in your condition that seems completely contraindicated...

5. BlueCard

A woman in blue, including blue stockings, is pacing up and down. Her slightly provocative outfit and the way she is lingering on the pavement could suggest that she is a sex worker looking for clients. A man in a suit enters. He hesitates, then approaches her.

One – Good evening... Sorry to ask, but... do you take BlueCard?

Two – No. American Express only.

One – Ah... I'm sorry, I'm completely out of cash... Is there an ATM around here?

Two – An ATM?

One – Yes... Somewhere I can get cash. Banknotes.

Two – Around the corner. There's a Northbridge Bank.

One – Thanks. That's handy, I'm with Northbridge myself... I'll go there now...

Two – Whatever you like...

One – Right... Although I've suddenly had a terrible doubt. You are Lola, aren't you?

Two – Er... yes... Obviously that's not my real name, but...

One – Perfect. So you are the one I ordered... I mean, the one I spoke to on the phone... All right, don't move. I'll be right back...

He walks away. She continues pacing. Her phone rings and she answers.

Two – Yes? Where the hell are you? Couldn't you find anywhere to park? Okay... No, I'm outside the house. I can't find my keys. I must have left them in the glove compartment. Yes, yes, I'm fine... Well... I just got chatted up by some man. Admittedly, I'm not exactly dressed for wandering around alone at night, but you'll laugh: he thought I was a prostitute... No, don't worry, not aggressive at all. Very polite, actually. The good news is I apparently look like an expensive prostitute. He asked if I took BlueCard... I don't know, businessman type... He must have booked an escort for the evening. Someone called Lola, apparently... I didn't have the heart to disappoint him by admitting my real name was Mildred. *(The man returns.)* Sorry, he's coming back now, I have to go. No, don't worry, you have to have a laugh sometimes... But don't take too long, all right?

She puts her phone away.

One – I'm terribly sorry... The ATM is out of order...

Two – You're really not having much luck tonight, are you?

One – No...

Two – Unfortunately, in my line of work... you can imagine what would happen if we started giving clients credit...

One – I understand... But this is very awkward...

Two – Yes... I imagine it was urgent?

One – Normally I use professionals. They take BlueCard. But tonight... I thought I'd try something different.

Two – So you could tell straight away I was only an amateur.

One – I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you. I'm not questioning your abilities in the slightest.

Two – No, no, don't apologise... I prefer to take it as a compliment.

One – And what do you do the rest of the time? Since this isn't your real job?

Two – Now you're getting personal...

One – Sorry, you're right. It's just that normally... I mean... I don't usually come across women like you...

Two – Really?

His phone rings.

One – Excuse me... Hello? What do you mean, Lola? But I'm with her now... Oh... No, there must be some misunderstanding... All right, I'll wait for you...

Two – Problem?

One – No, no, I... I booked a taxi, and... the driver told me her name was Lola and that she'd be in blue.

Two – She must have meant the car...

One – The car?

Two – The colour of the car... the taxi...

One – Of course... Look, I'm terribly embarrassed... This must be a dreadful misunderstanding. Although in the circumstances, "dreadful" may not be quite the right word...

Two – You didn't happen to take me for a prostitute, did you?

One – Certainly not! Besides, you're the one who...

Two – Are you suggesting that I think I'm a prostitute?

One – I'm not saying that, but... you have to admit...

She looks towards a figure approaching through the darkness.

Two – Fine. You can discuss it with my husband. Here he comes now...

One – But... *(He looks towards the approaching figure.)* That's not your husband, that's a woman. It must be my taxi. Lola? *(The woman apparently walks past without stopping.)* No, apparently she isn't called Lola...

Two – You certainly have a vivid imagination when it comes to taxi drivers... And you're forgetting one detail...

One – What now?

Two – You don't have any cash.

One – Oh yes. That's true...

Two – Next time, you should use a professional. One who takes BlueCard...

6. Red Skin

One – Can you imagine? If those peasants had actually managed to take the Bastille in 1789...

Two – Indeed, Your Lordship. Today the Bastille might be nothing more than a metro station, and the French flag would probably be a tricolour...

One – And instead of our good King François III, some commoner would be presiding over the destiny of France.

Two – I hardly dare imagine what state our kingdom would be in today.

One – Thank God that revolution turned out to be nothing more than a revolt.

Two – Just another peasant uprising, Your Lordship.

One – “All men are born and remain free and equal in rights”... Imagine the madness such a principle might have led to! In theory, one might even have seen a Black man become head of state!

Two – Not in France, Your Lordship. Let's not get carried away. Still, the thought sends a chill down my spine. Shall I turn up the heating?

One – Go and fetch my slippers instead.

Two – Very good, Your Lordship.

He brings him his slippers.

One – Thank you, my good man.

The other hands him a newspaper.

Two – Would Your Lordship care to glance at the papers?

One – The Daily Moron... Is that a new newspaper?

Two – It would appear so.

One – In the present climate, I don't suppose it will be short of readers...

Two – If Your Lordship prefers, I could read it aloud?

One – No, thank you. I don't even want to know what's in the papers any more. What's the point? I understand nothing about all these wars. Why send our armies to the other side of the world to fight barbarians when we have the English right next door?

Two – England is no longer a kingdom, but thank God it is still an island.

One – Quite right. Thank heavens we never let them dig that tunnel under the Channel. By now the English would have invaded Normandy and every one of them would own a holiday home there.

Two – Since England became a republic, there isn't a gentleman left in the country.

One – Obviously. They cut all their heads off!

Two – How can you trust people who eat peas with mint?

One – The truth is perfectly simple, my dear fellow. Catholic school teaches us that mankind is divided into four races: white, black, yellow and red. And if God created a white race, it is obviously because it was meant to rule over the other three. Otherwise, why would white be the colour of royalty?

Two – Perfectly clear, Your Lordship.

One – You, for example, belong to the red race. It would never occur to you to question that obvious fact.

Two – Of course not, Your Lordship.

One – One of my ancestors brought your grandmother back from America after a journey among the Red Indians in the last century. Naturally, he didn't know she was pregnant. Otherwise, as you can imagine, he'd have left her there...

Two – Unless it was your ancestor who got her pregnant on the voyage home. Sea crossings can be long and rather dull...

One – Regrettably, my good man, that is not entirely impossible. It would explain why you are not quite as red as the rest, and rather brighter than the average member of your race.

Two – Your Lordship always has an explanation for everything. Shall I bring your pills?

One – What pills?

Two – Your memory pills, Your Lordship.

One – Memory pills? How curious. I'd forgotten I was supposed to take them.

Two – That is why Your Lordship employed me.

One – Why did I employ you, my good man?

Two – To remind you to take your pills.

One – You won't convince me you're not one of those Red Indians. Never mind, I'll keep you anyway. It's so difficult to find a decent servant these days.

Two – Your Lordship is too kind. (*He hands him the pills.*) One, two, three... There we are.

The other looks at the pills.

One – Do I really have to swallow all of these?

Two – I'm afraid so, Your Lordship. Look: blue, white, red...

The other takes the pills one by one.

One – I don't know why, but the red one is always the hardest to swallow...

7. Dare to Go Yellow

One – Yellow?

Two – Yellow.

One – Why yellow?

Two – Why not yellow?

One – I don't know, but still. Yellow is a bit...

Two – A bit what?

One – When you say yellow, do you mean really yellow, or...?

Two – Yellow yellow. There's only one yellow, isn't there?

One – No, yellow makes me think of...

Two – Of what?

One – I don't know, of...

Two – Exactly! Yellow is yellow.

One – Yellow, you really think...?

Two – Yellow. I'm certain.

One – Yes, I hear you, yellow, but...

Two – You'll see, yellow is...

One – Yellow takes a bit of nerve, though...

Two – Exactly. Let's dare to go yellow!

One – Yellow, all right, but... are people ready for it?

Two – People are never ready for yellow.

One – Yellow or no yellow...

Two – That is the question.

One – What if, instead of yellow, we tried...

The other shoots him a murderous look.

One – Yellow, why not? But maybe a sort of yellow...

Two – Yellow.

One – Okay. Yellow.

8. Green Sky

One – Look at that. The sky is completely clear.

Two – Yes. You can see millions of stars.

One – And they've just discovered another one. (*A pause*) Do you know what they call us?

Two – Who?

One – Over there, in the Milky Way. The ones orbiting that new star they just discovered. The Sun.

Two – Oh yes, that primitive species they mentioned on the news yesterday. Earthlings. So what do they call us?

One – Little green men.

Two – Why little?

One – Who knows...?

Two – Do they know we exist?

One – You'll laugh, but they think they're alone in the universe.

Two – You're joking.

One – I swear.

Two – But how can they call us little green men if they don't think we exist?

One – In their science-fiction films. What they call extraterrestrials are always little green men. In real life, though, they're convinced they're the only ones out there.

Two – That's unbelievable...

One – Wait, there's more. It isn't just that they think they're the only intelligent creatures in the universe. They're still debating whether even a simple microbe has any right to exist beyond their own planet.

Two – Well... I don't know who put those idiots into orbit around the Sun, but they'll be going round in circles for a long time yet...

One – I read an article about it. Most Earthlings think a God created them, all on their own, on that tiny planet in that tiny solar system in that tiny galaxy.

Two – What's a God?

One – Some kind of superhero who, naturally enough, exists only in their children's stories.

Two – So they believe in a Creator when they have no objective reason to think such a being exists, but refuse to believe that other creatures might inhabit the universe?

One – I told you, they're primitives. Obsessed with finding a first cause. Instead of accepting once and for all that the universe has always existed in one form or another, they keep inventing religions to explain where it came from.

Two – And how do they explain where their God came from?

One – They don't. They call that the mystery of faith.

Two – So they explain one mystery with another mystery...

One – It's hard to believe anyone could be that stupid. You're right. They'll be going round in circles for a very long time...

Two – Although... are we sure Earthlings still exist?

One – The signal has travelled a very long way... several thousand light-years... Last we heard, they'd already managed to turn their planet into a rubbish dump. Not to mention the fact that they spend most of their time killing one another.

Two – Hard to imagine idiots like that surviving another thousand years.

A pause.

One – Anyway, it's a beautiful night. Not a cloud in sight. Look. The sky is completely green.

Two – Yes. It'll be fine tomorrow.

9. A Very Ripe Orange

Two characters. The first approaches the second.

One – You know why I've stopped you.

Two – No...

One – You went through on orange.

Two – Orange? You mean amber?

One – Orange, amber... whatever you call it, you went through it. Do you deny that?

Two – Maybe I went through on orange, but between you and me, traffic lights are very badly designed.

One – Excuse me?

Two – However carefully you go through on green, there comes a moment when the light itself changes from green to orange. So sometimes, while you're still going through on green, the light is busy changing to orange.

One – I see... So it wasn't you who went through on orange, it was the light. Perhaps I should give the traffic light a ticket instead. What do you think?

Two – That's up to you...

One – All right. Let's say you went through on green while the light went through to orange. The problem is that by the time you went through on orange, that orange was very ripe...

Two – That makes no sense!

One – Why not?

Two – Because an orange, even a very ripe one, is still orange. Have you ever seen a red orange?

One – Well...

Two – An orange goes from green, when it isn't ripe yet, to orange when it reaches maturity. That's why it's called an orange.

One – You're not making fun of me, are you?

Two – Not at all! I'm simply pointing out that colours matter. And this fine is going to leave a very bitter taste.

One – Your documents...

The other hands them over.

One – You were born in Orange...

Two – You're not going to fine me for that, are you?

One – Your name is Clementine...

Two – I admit it.

One – And you're a wholesale fruit and vegetable dealer.

Two – I realise that may count as an aggravating circumstance.

One – Aggravating? So you admit the offence?

The other thinks for a moment.

Two – All right, I was a bit too eager and I went through an orange. Can I at least leave with my dignity intact...?

10. Violets

Two characters. One approaches the other carrying a small bouquet.

One – Here. As a token of my love, I offer you this modest bouquet...

Two – Yes... “Modest” is certainly the word.

One – You know the old rhyme: “Roses are red, violets are blue...”

Two – Yes, I know. But... where did you get this bouquet?

One – Well... I picked it in the woods... It's violet season.

Two – Violet season? Right... So you didn't actually buy the bouquet. You just picked it in the woods...

One – Well, yes, but...

Two – So it didn't cost you anything.

One – It cost me two hours in traffic getting back from the woods outside town.

Two – Yes, fine, let's not play with words. It didn't cost you anything.

One – That doesn't mean it has no value.

Two – Really?

One – I could sell it.

Two – Sell it? People buy bunches of violets?

One – When they're in season, there are always street sellers offering them near the station entrances.

Two – And how much do you think you could get for your bunch of violets?

One – I don't know... They sell them for two euros...

Two – You seem remarkably well informed about the price. You didn't happen to buy your violets from one of those street sellers, did you?

One – What difference does it make? They still came from the woods!

Two – Two euros?

One – The bunches were tiny, actually. I bought two of them. So it would look bigger.

Two – A bigger bunch? You should have brought me a bunch of radishes instead. At least I could have eaten them!

One – Perhaps, but... radishes aren't exactly a symbol of love.

Two – For God's sake. A bunch of violets bought from a street seller for two euros.

One – Four euros in total...

Two – From a street seller!

One – I thought I'd be doing someone a good turn at the same time...

Two – You didn't just think you'd save yourself the price of a proper bouquet from a ridiculously expensive florist?

One – Maybe that too, a little... I thought I could use the difference to take you to a nice restaurant...

Two – A nice restaurant? What's a nice restaurant to you? Last time you took me out, we went to Burger King!

One – Oh, come on! That's enough! You know I could always give these violets to someone else. Someone who'd appreciate what they're worth...

Two – Two euros.

One – Four!

Two – About the price of a large portion of fries at Burger King.

One – Honestly, all you ever think about is food!

Two – Oh really? Well, do you know what I'm going to do with your bunch of violets?

Two snatches the bouquet from One and starts eating the violets one by one, as though eating fries from a paper cone.

Two – Want one?

One – Are they good?

Two – Edible.

Two holds out the bouquet. One takes a few violets and puts them in their mouth.

One – Thanks.

Two – You're welcome.

They both chew.

11. Black Is Black

Two characters. The first is trying on a black item of clothing.

One – I don't know what I'm supposed to wear any more...

Two – Does it really matter that much?

One – It's strange. I've imagined this moment so many times. How old I'd be when it happened. What I'd feel. What great final words I'd come out with to mark the occasion.

Two – I suspect you've prepared a few in advance so you wouldn't be caught short.

One – And now here we are. Suddenly practical details are taking over from the existential questions... What am I going to wear?

Two – Will it rain?

One – Will everyone turn up?

Two – What on earth am I going to say to them?

One – I thought that once I was free of him, I'd instantly become someone else. As if by magic. But no. Life goes on...

Two – The dead are like stars. They go on shining through their absence.

One – So you've prepared a few unforgettable lines too.

Two – You don't think Armstrong improvised when he stepped onto the Moon, do you? He had his line ready as well.

One – You could rather tell, actually.

Two – He was a better astronaut than an actor... (*Pinching his nose to imitate the transmitted voice*) One small step for man...

One – I thought his death would free us from a certain kind of gravity.

Two – We're not exactly floating in space yet, but I do feel a little lighter.

One – We should have a party the night before a funeral. People celebrate the end of bachelorhood. Why not celebrate the end of childhood?

Two – Do you think you stop being a child the day you lose your parents?

One – Only children believe they'll stop being children one day. Are you going dressed like that?

Two – Why not? It's what I usually wear.

One – That's the point. You're not supposed to dress as usual. Mourning clothes are like Sunday best or stage costumes. You should feel slightly uncomfortable in them. It helps you play the part...

Two – My shoes are a little too small... By the time I've walked from the church to the cemetery, my feet will be killing me. Watch out, I may end up looking even sadder than you.

One – What if we just didn't go?

Two – Seriously?

One – We could go and see a good film instead... A comedy, preferably...

Two – The last cinema around here closed more than ten years ago. Remember? The Paradise...

One – Then let's go and have a decent beer at the Station Café. Don't tell me that's closed too?

Two – We won't do it.

One – No. Why not?

Two – Deep down, we'd be too afraid of missing something fundamental.

One – Or committing some unforgivable sacrilege that God, if there is one, would make us pay for sooner or later.

Two – Skipping the funeral... It's like walking under a ladder. You don't really believe it'll bring bad luck, but at the same time, what does it cost to walk around it?

One – They'll all be there, you'll see.

Two – All of them?

One – Everyone we only ever see at funerals.

Two – You wonder what they do between deaths.

One – At every funeral, they look ten years older.

Two – And you think maybe next time it'll be us they're burying.

One (*taking out another item of clothing*) – What about this?

Two – That's black too...

One – I thought it was slightly less black...

Two – Black is black. Right... Shall we go?

One – Let's go.

They leave.

12. Grey Matter

The first approaches the second, carrying a broom in one hand and an X-ray in the other.

One – Professor, prepare yourself for the Nobel Prize in Physics. Our laboratory has finally identified the famous dark matter believed to make up a large part of the universe.

Two – You don't say...

One – It appears that dark matter is actually grey matter.

Two – Grey matter?

One – God's brain, in a sense. We ourselves would be no more than a few of its neurons. For thousands of years, human beings have tried to think about the universe. Today we discover that the universe is thinking about us.

Two – Sometimes I wonder whether it's forgotten about us altogether... And this grey matter, have you actually managed to see it? You know me: seeing is believing.

One – Absolutely, Professor. Here, look.

One hands over an X-ray resembling an image of a brain.

Two – Extraordinary. You can clearly make out the two hemispheres...

One – That's the most astonishing part of the discovery, Professor. The image produced by our synthetic imaging device is blindingly clear on this point: the universe is shaped like a skull.

Two – Yes... Most peculiar... A skull, certainly. In fact, I think I recognise my own...

One – You mean... Professor, I've always thought of you as a god... Ever since you invited me to come and work here in your laboratory...

Two – I'm afraid, my dear fellow, that your Nobel Prize may have to wait until next year. This is an X-ray of my brain. I have a hospital appointment in two hours, and I've been looking for it all morning.

One – Professor, we mustn't forget that great discoveries sometimes arise from precisely this kind of domestic accident.

Two – I agree entirely. Think of Newton and his famous apple.

One – So this minor setback must not distract us from a theory that, I am certain, will revolutionise astrophysics: the universe contains us, yet we can contain the universe in our minds. It holds us, and still we can grasp it. I'm going back to work...

Two – Do try to get some rest as well, my dear fellow. After all, this is only a work placement with the cleaning department.

One (*about to leave*) – Of course, Professor. But you know what it's like when you're motivated...

Two – And thank you for leaving me my X-rays. I may still need them...

One – Back to work.

One leaves. The other looks at the X-ray again.

Two – Mind you, it's not entirely stupid...

13. The Mauve Room

Inspector Ramirez, dressed in the rumpled manner of an old-fashioned television detective, enters the reception area of a luxury hotel. He approaches the receptionist, who watches him with a superior expression.

Receptionist – If you're looking for somewhere to spend the night, my good man, I would suggest you try...

Inspector – Inspector Ramirez... You called about a jewellery theft.

Receptionist – Ah, yes... My apologies, Inspector... The manager called you. One of our guests' rooms was entered this afternoon, and a necklace worth several hundred thousand euros was stolen.

Inspector (*to himself*) – I see...

Receptionist – And... what exactly do you see?

Inspector – Clearly, the thief is either a member of the hotel staff... or one of the guests.

Receptionist – And what makes you say that, Inspector Sanchez?

Inspector – Ramirez.

Receptionist – Sorry?

Inspector – Inspector Ramirez. That's my name.

Receptionist – And... what makes you think the culprit could be someone from the hotel?

Inspector – There's a security guard at the door. Even after I showed him my police identification, I had trouble convincing him to let me in...

Receptionist (*dryly*) – Quite. You're in a no-go area here, Inspector, and we have our lookouts too. These days it's almost as hard for the police to get into the lobby of a luxury hotel as it is to get into a rough housing estate.

Inspector – So it seems unlikely that a complete stranger could have entered the hotel without being noticed at once. Was the lock on the room forced?

Receptionist – I don't believe so...

Inspector – In that case, that makes you the principal witness in this affair, my good man. Not to say the number-one suspect.

Receptionist – But Inspector...

Inspector – You're the receptionist. You have the keys to every room. You could easily have gone into one of them and helped yourself.

Receptionist – Me...? Help myself...?

Inspector – And you were ideally placed to know when guests were coming and going. You could have acted without fear of being disturbed...

Receptionist – I assure you, Inspector, I would never...

Inspector – You have the keys to all the rooms, yes or no?

Receptionist – Of course! It's part of my job! When a guest leaves the hotel for a while, they leave their key at reception. I hang it on the board until they return. That's all there is to it...

The inspector looks curiously at the rainbow-coloured key board behind the receptionist.

Inspector – Why the rainbow? Is this a gay-friendly hotel?

Receptionist – Each room in this hotel is named after a colour. There's the Blue Room, the Yellow Room, the Pink Room, the Green Room, the...

Inspector – Yes, all right, I think I've grasped the principle...

Receptionist – Each room key has a key ring in the corresponding colour, and every key ring has its proper place on this multicoloured board. The theft took place in the Mauve Room. But I swear, Inspector, I...

The inspector shakes his head doubtfully.

Inspector – In that case... could someone other than you, a hotel guest for example, have... borrowed the key without your knowledge, then put it back after committing the theft?

Receptionist (*embarrassed*) – For the peace of mind of our guests, I'd like to say no, Inspector. But honesty compels me to admit that I can't rule it out completely.

Inspector – I see...

Receptionist – I do occasionally have to leave reception for a few moments to deal with one problem or another...

Inspector – And this afternoon, did you have many problems to deal with?

Receptionist – At about four o'clock I left my post for a minute or two to smoke a cigarette outside. Then once more at around five to go to the lavatory...

Inspector – Two occasions of abandoning your post in the same day, then... (*The receptionist looks mortified.*) Did you notice anything unusual?

Receptionist – Not the first time. But the second time, when I came back, I noticed that the key to the Mauve Room was hanging where the Brown Room key should have been. I didn't think anything of it at the time, even though I never make that sort of mistake myself.

Inspector – And what conclusion did you draw from that?

Receptionist – None! I put the key back in its proper place and thought no more about it. But after what's happened... yes, it's possible someone borrowed the key to the Mauve Room while I was away...

Inspector – I see... A member of staff, perhaps?

Receptionist – The theft happened in the middle of the afternoon, which rules out the housekeeping staff. They only have access to the rooms until two o'clock.

Inspector – Good... That leaves the hotel guests. We shall start with the victim. The guest in the Mauve Room...

Receptionist – Ah, you're in luck, Inspector... Here she is now. She's the widow of a wealthy Swiss shipping magnate.

Inspector – I didn't know Switzerland had shipping magnates. As far as I know, it doesn't have a sea...

Receptionist – Switzerland also has more banks than people, and yet those people hardly manufacture anything at all.

Inspector – Perhaps they're imaginary cargo ships sailing under flags of convenience...

Receptionist – You can ask her yourself, Inspector...

Inspector – Good afternoon, madam... My respects... I'm here to investigate the theft of which you were the victim. Would you be kind enough to answer a few questions?

Widow – As a Swiss citizen, cooperating with the police is second nature to me. You may ask anything you like, provided it doesn't concern banking secrecy. On that subject I shall be as silent as a safe. *(She takes a chocolate from her bag and offers it to him.)* Chocolate, Inspector? They're filled with liqueur...

Inspector – Never while I'm on duty, thank you... Now... what time did you leave your room this afternoon?

Widow – Let me see... I left the hotel at about half past two to visit a friend who's feeling rather low.

Inspector – Her husband left her, perhaps...

Widow – You could put it that way. He's just been sent to prison for misusing company funds. He was counting on parliamentary immunity to keep him out of trouble, but unfortunately he wasn't re-elected...

Inspector – Voters are so fickle, you know... You simply can't rely on anyone any more. As you have discovered to your cost...

Widow – In any case, I'm certain the necklace was still in its drawer when I left. I considered wearing it, then changed my mind.

Inspector – It was rather careless not to put jewellery of that value in the hotel safe.

Widow – I agree, Inspector. But what can I say? *(She casts an accusing look at the receptionist.)* I assumed that in an establishment of this standard... Any other questions?

Inspector – No... Well, yes. Can you confirm that Switzerland has no sea?

Widow – Inspector, we have something better than the sea... We have Lake Geneva!

Inspector – Thank you. That will be all for the moment. *(The widow leaves.)* She doesn't seem terribly upset about losing her necklace...

Receptionist – Her fortune gives her a certain sense of proportion. And her insurer will probably reimburse her despite her carelessness. Whereas I had to fight my insurance company over a simple water leak... But forgive me, I'm wandering off the subject.

Inspector – Right. I'll have to question all the other guests in the hotel...

Receptionist – In order not to damage the reputation of our establishment, I'd be grateful if you could spare our guests the humiliation of being summoned to the police station. Unless, of course, you have very strong suspicions about one of them.

A man walks past reception. The inspector glances at his socks, which are different colours.

Inspector – Don't worry. That may not be necessary. *(Calling to the man)* Sir?

Guest – Yes...?

Inspector – Inspector Martinez...

Receptionist – I thought it was Ramirez...

Inspector – May I ask you a few questions?

The man approaches cautiously.

Inspector – May I see your hands?

Receptionist – Don't tell me you're a fortune-teller as well...

Surprised, the guest holds out his hands. The inspector immediately handcuffs him.

Guest – Inspector! What on earth...?

Receptionist – And I asked you to be diplomatic...

The inspector searches the man's pocket and produces a necklace, to the receptionist's astonishment.

Guest – How did you know it was me?

Inspector – On the key board, the thief put the key to the Mauve Room back where the Brown Room key belonged. *(To the receptionist)* Why do you think that was?

Receptionist – Because he was in a hurry, perhaps...

Inspector – Or perhaps because he was colour-blind!

Guest – But how did you know I was colour-blind?

Inspector – The moment you walked past me, my dear fellow... and I saw your socks.

Guest – My socks?

Inspector – They're different colours!

Receptionist – Well, Inspector, I take my hat off to you. When I first saw you walk in, I thought you were a bit of an idiot... I have to admit I was very far from the truth.

14. Golden Brown

Charles is sitting in an armchair reading the Workers' Weekly, an unlit pipe in his mouth. He is wearing a striped sailor's jumper and a cap. Rosalie enters from outside, dishevelled and with her clothes in a mess, carrying a bag.

Rosalie – That was close... I got the last one.

Charles – The last what?

Rosalie – The last Epiphany cake in the bakery! There was only one left...

Charles – Oh yes... the cake... Good grief, it's enormous.

Rosalie – I didn't have a choice. It's meant for twelve.

Charles – Twelve? There are only three of us... assuming Fred doesn't stand us up like last year.

Rosalie – I told you, it was the last one! I practically had to fight for it!

Charles – All right, don't get worked up...

Rosalie – I'm not getting worked up. I'm explaining.

Charles – We can always freeze half of it for next year...

Rosalie – What?

Charles – If nobody gets the lucky charm this year... Like a lottery jackpot. If there's no winner, you roll it over to the next draw.

Rosalie – Have you completely lost your mind?

Charles – Fine. Then we'll each eat six slices.

Rosalie – Did he call to say he wasn't coming?

Charles – No.

Rosalie – There you are, then.

Charles – I'd better finish marking these papers before he gets here...

Rosalie – You're going to work? It's Saturday...

Charles – You're already making me celebrate Epiphany. You're not going to make me observe the Sabbath as well! I'm a foot soldier of the secular state, me! A crusader for secularism...

Rosalie – Oh, honestly...

Charles – You have to admit, for a communist schoolteacher, all this business with an Epiphany cake is hardly orthodox.

Rosalie – Oh yes? Why not?

Charles – Epiphany, the Three Wise Men... It's a Christian tradition!

Rosalie – Not at all! It's a pagan tradition the Church tried to appropriate. Like plenty of others.

Charles – A pagan tradition...?

Rosalie – Of course! Before it was a celebration of the Nativity, it was basically a fertility celebration.

Charles – I see... So that's where the expression “putting a bun in the oven” comes from, I suppose...

Rosalie – That's pregnancy, not Epiphany.

Charles – Same principle. They put a filling in the cake too.

Rosalie – This one's filled with almond paste...

Charles – Still, if they call it Three Kings' Day... you won't convince me it's very republican.

Rosalie – Right... In the meantime, put your newspaper away, you old sea captain.

Charles – I was aiming more for Stalin, actually, but never mind...

Rosalie – You stopped smoking five years ago. Perhaps it's time you gave up the pipe as well. Even if it isn't lit...

Charles – It's my version of a vape. At least I don't produce any greenhouse gases.

Rosalie – Says you.

He folds the newspaper and gets to his feet.

Charles – I'm telling you, he isn't coming.

Rosalie – Why wouldn't he?

Charles – Spending Saturday eating Epiphany cake with his elderly parents? Don't you think a man his age might have better things to do?

Rosalie – Don't exaggerate. He's still our little boy.

Charles – Our little boy... He's grown up, you know.

Rosalie – He'll always be my baby...

Charles – I still think it might be time to take the stuffed toys off his bed.

Rosalie – You think so? (*A pause*) Sometimes I wonder whether we should have had him so late in life...

Charles – You think there's something not quite normal about him?

Rosalie – He's an actor... And he's still not married... I don't know... Do you think he could be a little...?

Charles – A little what?

The doorbell rings.

Rosalie – Ah! See? He came!

Fred enters. He is wearing a ridiculous costume and mask, like a superhero from a very cheap film. He kisses his mother.

Rosalie – We were starting to worry.

He kisses his father.

Fred – Why?

Charles – Your mother bought an Epiphany cake for twelve people.

Rosalie – I'll put it in the oven. It'll be better warm.

Fred – Will that take long? I haven't got much time...

Rosalie – You're always in a hurry... No, it'll only take a minute.

Fred – In a microwave, maybe. Not in that ancient gas oven of yours...

Rosalie leaves with the cake.

Charles – So you're working nearby?

Fred – We're filming three blocks away. I came over between takes.

Charles – What is it? An art-house film?

Fred – An episode of Dumber Days.

Charles – Dumber Days? Never heard of it.

Fred – It's a series. We're shooting the pilot.

Charles – Have you got an important part?

Fred – I'm the lead actor's double. For the stunts...

Charles – It's not a blue movie, is it?

Fred – Dad... I'm a stuntman!

Charles – You can have stunts in bed too...

Rosalie returns.

Rosalie – It'll be ready in five minutes. What are you talking about?

Charles – Cinema...

Fred's phone rings. He answers.

Fred – Hello? Right... No, no... Okay, I'm coming straight back... *(He puts away his phone.)* Sorry, I have to go...

Rosalie – Why?

Fred – The actor I'm doubling for... he's agoraphobic. They need me for the scene on the crowded metro...

Rosalie – But... the cake's hot!

Fred – Sorry... Maybe next year... The show must go on...

He rushes out.

Rosalie – An actor...

Charles – He's not an actor. He's a stuntman.

Rosalie – A stuntman... That's even worse than an actor, isn't it?

Charles – Tom Cruise does his own stunts.

Rosalie – And if he ever takes a train, I suppose he rides on the roof.

Charles – Right... Looks like we'll have to eat the cake ourselves.

Rosalie – A cake for twelve...

Charles – And we don't have doubles.

Rosalie – We'll start with one slice each. The first person who finds the charm, we stop. Agreed?

Charles – Assuming indigestion doesn't kill us first.

Rosalie – With a bit of luck, we'll find it straight away... Let's leave it to chance.

Charles – I feel as though we're about to play Russian roulette...

Rosalie – I'll fetch the ammunition.

She leaves.

Charles – She's right about Fred... Sometimes I wonder whether he might be a bit... stupid.

She returns with the cake.

Rosalie – A bit what?

Charles – Nothing. I was saying... Yes, it looks very well filled.

Rosalie – Shall we open a bottle of cider to help it go down?

Charles – Why not? Let's live dangerously!

15. Crystal Clear

Maria is facing Inspector Ramirez.

Maria – That's what I get for being honest! I should have thrown that wallet straight in the bin.

Ramirez – So you still maintain that you found it on the floor, behind a bench, at your place of work?

Maria – Of course I do. It's the truth!

Ramirez – And yet when my colleagues stopped you in the street for a routine check, the wallet was in your bag. More than three days after its owner had reported it missing...

Maria – I kept it for a while in case someone came back to the club looking for it. But I was just about to bring it to the police station!

Ramirez – Of course...

Maria – Prejudice, that's what it is... Your colleagues wouldn't listen either. Apparently I'm "known to the police"...

Ramirez – You have to admit that part isn't untrue...

Maria – Maybe I'm known to the police... but not as a pickpocket!

Ramirez – If you'd opened the wallet, you could easily have identified the owner and called him. There was a business card inside.

Maria – Hey, I'm not the police! A wallet is private. Like a handbag. And I didn't touch the cash either. Not a cent is missing. Ask the man yourself whether any money is missing from his wallet!

Ramirez – We'll ask him together. We called him, as it happens. He should be here any minute.

Maria gives a sigh of relief.

Maria – There you are! He'll be so pleased to get his papers back. You'll see, he'll thank me. Who knows, he may even give me a small reward...

Ramirez – I wouldn't celebrate too soon... He filed a complaint.

Maria – A complaint? What for?

Ramirez – Robbery.

Maria – He's saying I stole his wallet off him?

Ramirez – You or someone else. We'll find out. That's what an identification is for...

Maria – Then there's no problem. He can't identify me because I didn't steal his wallet!

Ramirez – If you say so...

Maria – You'll see. He'll say it wasn't me and he'll apologise. You will too, I hope...

The inspector gives her a meaningful look. His phone rings and he answers.

Ramirez – Yes, Sanchez... Fine, send them in... (*Turning to Maria*) Moment of truth...

A dignified older man enters with his rather forbidding wife. Ramirez gets up to greet them.

Ramirez – Come in, please.

Man (*embarrassed*) – Thank you, Inspector...

Woman (*seeing Maria*) – So that's her...

Maria – Yes, I'm the one who found your husband's wallet. Good afternoon, sir...

Man (*timidly*) – Madam...

Maria (*to Ramirez*) – You can tell at once he's not the sort of man who'd send an innocent woman to prison.

Ramirez – So, Mr Delmar... Do you recognise this woman?

The man hesitates, increasingly embarrassed.

Man – Well, I...

Maria – I have the feeling I've seen you somewhere before. At work, perhaps. But I see so many people come and go...

Woman – Go on, then. Tell him it's her!

The man looks extremely uncomfortable.

Ramirez – Sir, I'm waiting... Is this the woman who stole your wallet, yes or no?

Man – I... I don't remember very well... It was dark...

Ramirez – Dark? You stated that the robbery took place in broad daylight! As far as I know, there hasn't been an eclipse around here recently...

Man – No, no, of course... I said dark... It's more that my mind's gone blank. I mean, it all happened so quickly. In any case, this woman is not the person who attacked me, Inspector...

The inspector does not seem convinced.

Ramirez – You're sure?

Man – Absolutely.

Maria – There! You see!

Ramirez – Let me remind you, Mr Delmar, that you reported the offence as having been committed by a person unknown.

Maria – A person unknown?

Ramirez – If you're saying this merely to keep this woman out of trouble with the law, that would amount to giving false evidence.

The man casts an anxious glance at his wife and finally decides to speak.

Man – Listen, it was earlier that I lied. *(His wife glares at him, but he carries on.)* Nobody stole the wallet. The truth is... I lost it...

The inspector takes a moment to absorb this before replying sternly.

Ramirez – In that case, you made a false report. That's a serious matter, you know. You could be prosecuted... Why did you lie?

The respectable old gentleman looks rather lost.

Man – When I told my wife I'd lost my wallet, she advised me to report it as stolen. It made things simpler with the insurance, you understand?

Woman *(embarrassed)* – I assumed whoever found the wallet would keep it...

Ramirez – That is what usually happens...

Woman *(aggressive again)* – Besides, I thought the police had better things to do than investigate a petty theft. With everything going on these days...

Ramirez – Unfortunately for you, honest people still exist. And occasionally the police do their job properly... *(The man looks down at his shoes, chastened.)* Very well... I won't pursue the matter this time.

Woman – Thank you, Inspector...

Man – Our sincere apologies, Inspector. Truly...

Maria – And what about me? Doesn't anyone owe me an apology?

The inspector looks down at the original report.

Ramirez – There's one last thing that puzzles me, Mr Delmar... You said this imaginary robbery took place in the street near your home.

Man – That's where my wife and I live...

Ramirez – Yet this woman found your wallet, completely intact, under a bench at the establishment where she works, right in the city centre. It didn't get there by itself...

Man – I... I don't know, Inspector.

Ramirez – Did you also have a reason to lie about where you lost the wallet?

His forbidding wife looks at him in surprise, waiting for an explanation too.

Maria – Oh yes, now I remember where I've seen the dirty old man. At work!

The woman turns to Maria.

Woman – At work? Would you be so kind, madam, as to tell me what sort of establishment employs your particular talents?

Maria – I'm a stripper! I work in a cabaret in the entertainment district!

The woman gives her husband a murderous look.

Ramirez – I think everything is crystal clear now...

16. In Black and White

Two characters are looking at the sky, towards the back of the auditorium. The second should be, or appear, older than the first.

One – I've never seen anything like it. What is it?

Two – It's called a rainbow...

One – A rainbow?

Two – It's a fairly rare phenomenon. Sometimes it happens when the sun comes back very quickly after rain. Rarer and rarer these days. We hardly ever see the sun now...

One – It's beautiful. All those shades of white, grey and black.

Two – Yes... It used to be much more beautiful still.

One – More beautiful?

Two – It was in colour.

One – In colour? You mean like at the cinema, when you rent special glasses to see the film in colour and 3D?

Two – Exactly. In my great-grandmother's day, it was the cinema that was black and white and 2D. Real life had depth and it was in colour. Now it's the other way round.

One – Really? I can hardly imagine that... So in those days the whole world was colourised? What happened?

Two – It happened little by little. Nobody saw it coming. First they made us pay for the water we drink. Then they made us pay for the air we breathe. Now we have to pay for the cinema as well if we want to see life in colour.

One – A rainbow in colour? In actual real life?

Two – It sounds unbelievable.

One – Are there still people who see life in colour?

Two – A privileged few, yes. But it isn't available to everyone, and it costs a fortune...

One – Then we'd need to go backwards somehow.

Two – Yes... We'd need to rewind. To find the moment when they first started reeling us in... To work out exactly where and when everything started going to hell...

Blackout.

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 websites :

<https://jeanpierremartinez.net/>

<https://comediatheque.net/>

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Jean-Pierre Martinez is represented by the French Society of Authors (SACD).

To get in touch with Jean-Pierre Martinez and request authorization to perform one of his works, please use the contact form on his websites :

<https://jeanpierremartinez.net/en/contact-2/>

<https://comediatheque.net/contact-form/>

Other plays by the same author translated in English:

Monologues

Happy Dogs
Like a fish in the air

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
Russian Roulette in Kremlin
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
Cards on the Table
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
Once upon a time on the web
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
Such a lovely village
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

Apocalypse, a musical
tragicomedy
Backstage Bits
Don't panic
Enough is Enough
Ethan and Eve
For real and for fun
Funny Stories
Him and Her
Killer Sketches
Lockdown Shorts
Lost time Chronicles
No sens off limits
Open Hearts
Park bench Shorts
Sidewalk Chronicles
Stage Briefs
Stories to die for

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