

A Lively Journey Through Plays

by

LUDOVIC COUTAUD

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to
my beloved parents and sister.

SHOWCASES

One Day, A Series of Original Short Plays

Hell Week: One at a Time, Please!

A Very Abstract Night

An Evening with Women

Original Bonus Scenes

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The following collection of original stories
were born while I was living in New York City
between the years of 2011 and 2018.

Throughout my artistic path, I had the support of
many of my friends, the ones who showed
up to the showcases produced, who listened to
my various stories and believed in my style.

These friends remain and have my eternal gratitude.

Dinner Table, I Need You, Penniless, Each Minute Counts received their world premiere during the showcase *ONE DAY, A Series of Original Short Plays* at The Players Club in New York City on July 25, 2012. It was also directed and produced by Ludovic Coutaud.

Dinner Table

First part

(JOEL is sitting at a table waiting for LULU, his girlfriend.)

LULU: Oh my God. I'm so sorry.

JOEL: That's fine. I mean...

LULU: No, really. It's the train, I messed up. I took the six uptown and anyway...

JOEL: Whatever. How are you, apart from that?

LULU: Good, good. I need to talk to you about something.

JOEL: Oh, okay... That sounds serious.

I Need You

Scene 1

(A bench. A woman, JULIE, seated, texting.)

JULIE: Thank you so much for the invitation! I'm free tomorrow after 5 pm. What about you? (She waits for an answer.) Good then. What do you think about an Italian restaurant?! No, delete... French, it's more exotic. Where do you live? (She waits. He replies.) Wow, he is quick. I like that! Upper West Side. Geez! He is rich! We could meet at...

(Suddenly, a woman, CATE, runs and sits next to JULIE without noticing her.)

CATE: Jesus... I'm gonna quit. I'm telling you, I'll quit soon.

(JULIE pretends to text. She observes CATE. CATE feels her phone vibrating.)

CATE: Shit! No... (She picks up, faking being sick.) Marc...? Hi... I'm... (She coughs.) Ouch... Oh, Marc, I am feeling really weak right now. What? ... I know... Marc... What? Sure... I'll take care of it... Oh my God Marc, it's so painful...What? (She freezes.) I have... Errr...

JULIE (whispering): The flu...

CATE: The flu! Yes, that's the flu. I forgot the word. In Australia, we're just sick... I have to get some rest... (Beat.) Thank you, Marc... You're a sweetheart... (She hangs up, yelling at her phone.) Fuck you, Marc! I hate you! Jesus! I need to quit this job! (She turns to JULIE.) Thank you so much. That was nice... Sorry, I'm loud. I'm not like that usually... I mean... I'm Cate, from Australia!

JULIE: I can tell. I'm Julie, from here.

CATE: That's good too!

JULIE: So... Are you gonna be okay?

CATE: What do you mean?

JULIE: Well, you've got the flu...

(They both laugh.)

CATE (faking being sick): I'll be fine... (Coughing.) Are you waiting for somebody?

JULIE: Well... I just texted a guy... It's like... Well, we chatted on a... Dating site... And...

CATE: Really?!

JULIE: What?

CATE: No. Nothing. Carry on.

JULIE: We started texting, like, actually before you got here, and I just want to meet him first before I get into, you know, something serious... But, he doesn't answer anymore... I don't understand...

CATE: I see. Well, first, take a deep breath and just wait a little. It's just been two minutes since you answered I'm sure. Let him think about it and he'll let you know.

JULIE: How do you know that?

CATE: I know. Jesus, I've been through all kinda shit.

JULIE: That's not reassuring at all...

CATE: No, what I mean is that I failed and succeeded in relationships with people, and men are just a unique species!

JULIE: Okay...

CATE: Don't freak out. Look, the guy I was talking to, Marc. Well, he is my ex-boyfriend. We just broke up. We were together for seven years. Seven long years. And, one morning, this moron discovered a new side of himself... He said: "Cate, baby, you have to understand. I'm not gay, it's just that I'm sensitive and open to the world!" What the fuck, right? I said: "Marc, I mean, that's fine. Good for you, I guess. Better sooner than later". (To JULIE.) At that point, we both wanted to have a baby... Anyway... So, did he answer?

JULIE: YES! Oh my God! You're so good.

CATE: Well, I told you. Let him process it and think about it. So, what did he say?

JULIE (sobbing): He's saying that he doesn't want to commit to any serious relationship. He is confused about personal stuff...

CATE: Oh, Jesus... Julie, he is gay... Done, move on!

JULIE: What do you mean he is gay?! He is not gay? He can't be gay!

CATE: Personal stuff? Julie...

JULIE: We met at the Premiere of...

CATE: What?

JULIE: Oh my God, he is gay... What do I do now?

CATE: What do you mean "what"? You keep doing this! You keep meeting new people and having fun. Why are you here by yourself?

JULIE: I don't have any friends...

CATE: But you said you were from here... Oh, you're not...

JULIE: I'm from Nebraska... (She starts crying.)

CATE: Don't cry, it's okay. I understand that you feel homesick. I've never been to Nebraska but I guess it's different and quieter...

(JULIE cries more.)

CATE: Come on... (Beat.) Give me the phone.

JULIE: What? Why? No!

CATE: Give it to me.

JULIE: What for?

CATE: I'm trying to help you.

JULIE: But...

CATE: Trust me. How could it be worse? Hm?

JULIE: Well... (She gives the phone to CATE.)

CATE: His name is Fritz?!

JULIE: He is from Germany.

CATE: Jesus... (She calls his number.)

(JULIE doesn't feel confident.)

CATE (on the phone): Fritz? It's Julie! (She changes her voice.) What's your problem dude?! (Beat.) Oh, really? She is wonderful... (Looking at JULIE.) Sexy and nice. (Beat.) Fritz (With her normal voice.) It's Cate, are you serious? Don't pretend you don't recognise my voice?!

JULIE: What? Hey!

CATE (to JULIE): Wait, two minutes... (To FRITZ.) Fritz, listen, she just wants to take you out, have dinner with you and chat a little bit. (Beat.) Well, we're not sure about that yet... Geez, we talked about it already!

JULIE: Cate, what are you doing? This is so embarrassing... Please, give me the phone.

CATE: Wait.

JULIE: Give it to me, please.

CATE: I'm talking to...

JULIE: GIVE ME THE FUCKING PHONE! NOW!

(JULIE takes it and hangs up.)

(Silence.)

CATE: Okay...

JULIE: I mean... I'm sorry... I'm really... This date is making me tensed and I need to relax. I mean, you know Fritz, that's just... Well, so weird...

CATE: I know... Well...

JULIE: What? Wait... No...

CATE: Touché.

JULIE: Cate, so you are his girlfriend and he is not gay. You just made this up to become friends with me or something. Fuck you!

CATE: No, I'm not his girlfriend but he really is gay. I'm helping him to, you know, come out of the closet. Like now, he is more into: 'I'm opening the closet door and closing it, I'm opening, should I go out?' He is scared.

JULIE: Okay, right. He should just talk to me then. We're good friends and he used to be more talkative. I don't know.

CATE: That's huge though. This is a step forward for him. (Beat.) I'm sorry Julie, I shouldn't have put my nose in your business. But, by the way, Marc does exist and I really fucking hate him.

JULIE: Thank you. I'm gonna call Fritz, and tell him that if he wants to take his time, that's all right with me. And, I have a friend who actually might be better for him than me, you know...

CATE: Really? That's nice of you. But, first, don't forget that he thinks he is in love with you and attracted to you.

JULIE: Right. (Beat.) Wait. I have an idea that might be tricky and could make him sad, but also help him realise who he is.

CATE: Okay.

JULIE: Let's set up a scene. When I meet him, you'll be there and we'll both be lesbians.

CATE: What? No, no, no... I'm not... Sure.

JULIE: No, listen, you're attractive and so am I. We just have to kiss.

CATE: Just have to kiss? I don't think it's gonna make him say he's gay though...

JULIE: It will.

Scene 2

(A table. A FRENCH WAITRESS comes in.)

FRENCH WAITRESS: Bonjour... Em... Hi guys! What do you like to drink?

CATE: You're French, I love it! I'll get a vodka-orange.

JULIE: Water. A glass of water.

CATE: Really?

JULIE: I don't want to have smelly breath.

CATE: Oh! You're getting into it.

JULIE: Ah! He is here. COME! (She jumps on CATE and kisses her. CATE doesn't have time to react but finally gets into it. FRENCH WAITRESS is stunned but excited by the kiss. FRITZ gets in.)

FRITZ: AAAAAAAHHHHH!!! JULIE! What are you doing?! With? AAHH! CATE! WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING HERE! I know what you're trying to do... I hate you, Cate. How can you do that to me? Both of you! Julie, I have to tell you something...

JULIE: I know.

FRENCH WAITRESS: WOW! CONGRATULATIONS! C'EST SUPER!

Dinner Table

Second part

JOEL: What?

LULU: What?!

JOEL: What do you mean we can't get married?

LULU: Listen, Joel. It's just... You're a foreigner.

JOEL: Hush, please. This is so humiliating. Don't say anything... I don't understand.

LULU: There's nothing to understand. Listen, I need to take a break from this.

JOEL: Wait, wait, wait! No, that's too easy. I mean, I am also in this relationship and I should have the chance to express my opinion.

LULU: All right, well, go for it.

JOEL: Thank you.

Penniless

NARRATOR: Pierre is a young writer who lives in New York City, in a small room, in the Lower East Side. He works as a waiter in an Italian restaurant in Midtown. He is strong-minded, talented, serious, generous and open to the world. He was born in Nice, France. He studied Literature and decided to live abroad for at least a year to try; New York City or London, and finally New York was picked. Pierre is single and frustrated. Women aren't his forte. He wants a relationship, but can't keep one because of his passion, and especially his temper.

(A bed, a small table, a chair, a bin, a little dresser with a recorder on it, papers on the table, a little lamp, a glass and a bottle of water.)

(PIERRE is writing and struggling. He mumbles words to himself. He throws papers in the bin or throws them away. He pauses, tries to concentrate and drinks water. He closes his eyes and imagines a SEXY 30-year-old WOMAN, standing to seduce him. The character appears, he suddenly opens his eyes, the SEXY WOMAN disappears.)

PIERRE: Merde...

(PIERRE gets up and looks away as if he was looking through a window. A WOMAN walks to him, a MAN calls her.)

MAN: Miss?!

(WOMAN turns around. She is pretty and looks naive. She is wearing a beautiful skirt and a top that has the same colour.)

MAN: Your scarf.

WOMAN: Oh?

MAN: Is that yours?

WOMAN: Can I see?

MAN: Of course.