

## **Paradise Community Theater "Boeing-Boeing" Auditions -**

Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup> from 2-4, Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30 and Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 in the Rehearsal room downstairs.

Director Nate Chesney is looking for a cast of 2 men and 4 women 18 and older. Please bring your schedule to auditions. Rehearsals begin February 7, 2022— Performance dates are April 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 at 7:30 and April 3 at 2:00. *All cast will be required to be vaccinated.*

The play is set in the 1960s, and centers on bachelor Bernard, who has a flat in Paris and three stewardesses all engaged to him without knowing about each other. Bernard's life gets bumpy, though, when his friend Robert comes to stay, and complications such as weather and a new, speedier Boeing jet disrupt his careful planning. Soon, all three stewardesses are in the city simultaneously and catastrophe looms.

### **CAST:**

**Bernard:** Male, 20 - 50. An American playboy living in Paris, Bernard is happily engaged to three different women, none of whom know about the others.

**Robert:** Male, 20 - 50. An old time friend of Bernard's from Wisconsin, Robert shows up unexpectedly at Bernard's Paris home.

**Berthe:** Female, 30 - 70. Bernard's French housekeeper, Berthe is always exhausted and exasperated.

**Gloria:** Female, 20 - 40. An American airline stewardess, Gloria is engaged to Bernard. She is a go-getter and works for TWA.

**Gabriella:** Female, 20 - 40. An Italian airline stewardess, Gabriella is engaged to Bernard. She is feisty and works for Alitalia.

**Gretchen:** Female, 20 - 40. A German airline stewardess, Gretchen is engaged to Bernard. She is strong minded and works for Lufthansa.

Ages are for the characters. If actors can play the age range listed, they are encouraged to audition.

Questions: Director Nate Chesney [ntchesney@gmail.com](mailto:ntchesney@gmail.com) 507-475-1338 and Producer Kathy Rush [Kathyarush@gmail.com](mailto:Kathyarush@gmail.com) 507-363-6720.

BERNARD. What? What? What is it now?  
 BERTHE. Nothing...nothing...  
*(She exits to the kitchen.)*  
 GLORIA. That woman's always in such a bad mood.  
 BERNARD. Is she?  
 GLORIA. It's getting annoying.  
 BERNARD. No. It's just her way. Don't worry about it.  
 GLORIA. I do worry. If it goes on like this we'll just have to get rid of her, honey.  
 BERNARD. Berthe, why?  
 GLORIA. I don't think she likes me.  
 BERNARD. Now, darling, of course she likes you. It's just all this food you eat. It seems to upset her. It gives her a kind of indirect indigestion.  
 GLORIA. What time is it, darling?  
 BERNARD. Between twenty and a quarter to ten.  
 GLORIA. I don't know - when I'm with you it just whistles by.  
 BERNARD. It's sweet of you to say so.  
 GLORIA. It's true. Is it the same for you?  
 BERNARD. Of course.  
 GLORIA. And does it drag when I'm away?  
 BERNARD. It's terrible. Never-ending.  
 BERTHE. *(entering)* Mademoiselle's pancake and "red stuff."  
 GLORIA. How marvellous. Thank you, Bertie.  
 BERTHE. And will that be all?  
 BERNARD. No. Some more coffee for me, please, Berthe, and another lemonade for you, darling?  
 GLORIA. No, darling. Truly, I've had enough.  
 BERTHE. Well, thank the Lord for that!  
*(She exits.)*  
 GLORIA. You see - she doesn't like me.  
 BERNARD. Darling!

## ACT I

*(BERNARD and GLORIA are breakfasting.)*  
 GLORIA. Bernard darling, do you think I've time to eat another pancake?  
 BERNARD. *(looking at his watch)* I should think so - if you hurry, Bertie!  
 GLORIA. I adore pancakes for breakfast, don't you?  
 BERNARD. Not especially.  
 GLORIA. But back home, in America, all our dieticians agree that a big breakfast prevents neurosis all day long.  
 BERTHE. *(entering)* Did you call, Monsieur?  
 BERNARD. Another pancake, Berthe.  
 BERTHE. For Mademoiselle?  
 GLORIA. Please, Bertie.  
 BERTHE. And more of that "red stuff" to pour on it?  
 GLORIA. Yes, please. But it's not "red stuff," it's ketchup - very good for the complexion.  
 BERTHE. Well, I don't know what it's for, but I suppose it's all right. I don't like the look of it myself, but then I'm not here to reform the world.  
 BERNARD. Well, that's a relief. So, just get busy with the pancake.  
 BERTHE. Right. But don't blame me if it makes her ill.  
 BERNARD. Are you going to eat it?  
 BERTHE. No.  
 BERNARD. So, there's no need to argue about it. Just hurry up - Mademoiselle Gloria hasn't got much time.  
 GLORIA. Please Bertie, do hurry. I will miss my plane.  
 BERTHE. All right. I'm going. But it isn't easy, you know.

BERNARD. I know - it's wonderful, isn't it? Now hadn't you better rush?

GLORIA. You want to get rid of me?

BERNARD. Darling, of course I hate to see you go. But time passes. Planes take off.

BERTHE. (*entering*) Here's your coffee.

BERNARD. Thank you, Berthe.

GLORIA. Bertie, dear? Will you do me a favour?

BERTHE. Depends.

GLORIA. It's Mr. Bernard. Will you take good care of him till I get back on Monday?

BERTHE. I'll do my best. But he's a big boy now, you know.

GLORIA. Yes, but they're all just kids at heart.

BERTHE. I don't know about that. There aren't too many like Monsieur. He's in a class of his own.

BERNARD. Yes. Yes. Very good. That'll do, Berthe.

GLORIA. See how much she appreciates you, darling?

BERTHE. Oh, I spend my life appreciating Monsieur.

BERNARD. Well, could you appreciate me somewhere else?

BERTHE. She asked me a question and I answered it.

BERNARD. And we're all very grateful.

GLORIA. Well, don't appreciate him too much. You could end up falling in love with him, and I'll be very jealous.

BERTHE. I doubt it'll come to that.

BERNARD. Mercifully. And you'd better hurry, darling.

GLORIA. I'll go and get dressed.

(*She exits #1.*)

BERNARD. What's for lunch?

BERTHE. The American's flying out?

BERNARD. Yes. Well?

BERTHE. I'm waiting for my orders. Monsieur has his timetables. And the menus change according to the timetables. All the time! They change. They change round all the time.

BERNARD. All right. Take it easy. Now then, Mademoiselle Gabriella will be here for lunch.

GLORIA. She doesn't. Whenever I get home she's always on edge. While I'm here, she's kind of okay. But when it's time to go, she's downright hostile.

BERNARD. Well, she's sad you're going?

GLORIA. Because I'm your fiancée?

BERNARD. Of course.

GLORIA. Oh. And if I was here all the time, she'd be all right?

BERNARD. Absolutely! Then we'd all be happy.

GLORIA. I'd better get dressed quickly, or I'll miss the plane.

BERNARD. That would be bad.

GLORIA. No, it would be terrible.

BERNARD. Terrible. Tell me, darling, when do you get back?

GLORIA. Well - it's Saturday today. I'll be in New York at 17:08, then San Francisco - but straight there and straight back.

BERNARD. And when will you be back here in Paris?

GLORIA. We arrive back in Paris Monday evening. And off again on Wednesday.

BERNARD. Monday. Monday. Monday. (*taking out notebook*)  
What time on Monday, darling?

GLORIA. 18:30 local time.

BERNARD. Excellent. So whatever happens in San Francisco, you'll be back in Paris on Monday?

GLORIA. That's right.

BERNARD. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good.

GLORIA. It's so sweet how you always have to write it down.

BERNARD. So, I don't get it mixed up.

GLORIA. Get what mixed up?

BERNARD. My arrangements. My business arrangements. I'm a busy man. I've got work to do. I want to make sure that it's all done by the time you get back here so I can spend Monday to Wednesday with you.

GLORIA. You're a genius.

BERTHE. Ah! Well, that's all right then. Think I can cope with that one. But it isn't easy you know. I find it very difficult to keep track of them all. I don't know how you manage it. It isn't easy.

BERNARD. I know it isn't easy. You don't have to keep reminding me.

BERTHE. Well, as long as you appreciate me. That's all I ask, just a little appreciation. So what do you want for lunch?

BERNARD. You're the cook. You please yourself.

BERTHE. Mademoiselle Gabriella? What about salimbocca alla romana?

BERNARD. We had a salimbocca last Saturday.

BERTHE. Of course we did. Mademoiselle Gabriella was here last Saturday. She liked it. She told me so.

BERNARD. All right, you win. Salimbocca alla romana.

BERTHE. And what about dinner? A nice roast? Lamb, perhaps?

BERNARD. Roast Lamb? Yes, excellent.

BERTHE. With olives?

BERNARD. (gets his notebook out) Yes - er, no, no, wait a minute. Can't be done.

BERTHE. No olives?

BERNARD. No. No roast lamb either. That was close, Berthe. You see it's Mademoiselle Gabriella for lunch, but it's Mademoiselle Gretchen for dinner. She arrives at 19.06.

BERTHE. I see. No need to say any more. No roast lamb. Back to sauerkraut and frankfurters.

BERNARD. I'm afraid so. Sorry about that.

BERTHE. Just one thing after another. I don't know. (BERTHE exits.)

ROBERT. You rascal! I must say you've done yourself very well. That's an incredible girl - gorgeous!

BERNARD. Yes. She's pretty good, isn't she?

ROBERT. Much better than that. If I can find myself something half as good I'd be like...delirious.

BERNARD. Well, let's have a quick drink shall we? Whisky?

ROBERT. Whiskey, at this time of day?

BERNARD. Why not?

ROBERT. Okay, let's go. What a lovely girl. Hey Bernard, what a fantastic view you've got from up here, Bernard. You can see all Paris. (approaches forestage and surveys auditorium)

BERNARD. It's all right.

ROBERT. Are you still in the architect business?

BERNARD. Still at it - you know. It's good to see you again, Robert, it really is. Tell me again, what brings you to Paris?

ROBERT. Well, you always said, "Come and see me when I'm fixed up in Paris," and here you are, all fixed up, so here I am.

BERNARD. Good old Robert.

ROBERT. And if you give me the address of your realtor, I'm going to fix myself up too. Bernard - I want a place just like this. Same layout, same fantastic view, I need a place because I'm going to get married.

BERNARD. You're not!

ROBERT. I am.

BERNARD. Who are you engaged to?

ROBERT. No one, not yet. But I know a girl over here you see, well, we're vaguely acquainted. She's one heckuva girl. I haven't actually asked her yet. In fact, I'm not completely sure where she lives, but I should think it'll be all right. I'd like to get married, I can't go on living alone much longer.

BERNARD. You look perfectly all right to me.

ROBERT. Of course I'm all right. So are you for that matter.

BERNARD. You're still young.

ROBERT. Well, so are you. You're young, you're in good shape, and you're going to get married.

BERNARD. I certainly am not.

ROBERT. Not? But I thought - well, this charming T.W.A. girl, just now - she said you were engaged. Wait a minute, you agreed with her. I heard you.

BERNARD. Well, if you want to be technical I suppose you could say we were engaged. Yes.

ROBERT. Then you're going to get married.

BERNARD. No.

ROBERT. Look Bernard, I'm set to tell you, if you're engaged, you're going to get married. It's not only technical, it's logical! Isn't it?

BERNARD. It is not. And anyway, why do you want to get married? Do you love this girl?

ROBERT. I don't know. I'm not raving mad about her. I don't write poems or refuse to eat or any of that sort of thing. But it would be nice. I mean, think of the social advantages. They're not to be sneezed at, are they?

BERNARD. I can't think of *one*. Still if you have to get married, get married my way.

ROBERT. Your way?

BERNARD. Polygamy.

ROBERT. Polygamy?

BERNARD. It's the ideal life - pleasure, variety...it's fabulous. You ought to try it!

ROBERT. Polygamy? You mean lots of wives?

BERNARD. Not wives, fiancées. You have all the advantages of married life with none of the drawbacks. Fiancées are much friendlier than wives. And you don't need all that many. I do very well with three.

ROBERT. Three?

BERNARD. Three is the ideal number. Less than three would be monotonous. More than three is way too tiring. Three is the dream.

ROBERT. But, Bernard, that's immoral.

BERNARD. Immoral? But my dear Robert, they all think they're the only one. *They* don't think it's immoral, so why should I? You've all the pleasures of the harem, but right here in the middle of Paris.

ROBERT. They say you have your hands full with one woman, but three!

BERNARD. Not me.

ROBERT. Three fiancées?

BERNARD. The whole secret is order. I am organized, - beautifully organized.

ROBERT. But, Bernard, - isn't it incredibly complicated?

BERNARD. Not in the least. All you need is a timetable.

ROBERT. A timetable?

BERNARD. A special kind of timetable. An airline timetable.

ROBERT. What, to get out in a hurry?

BERNARD. Not at all. Look - here it is. The timetables of all the major airline routes - all in one volume.

ROBERT. One volume.

BERNARD. You understand?

ROBERT. Yes.

BERNARD. You don't really, do you?

ROBERT. No.

BERNARD. But it's so simple, a child could see it. Someone just had to think of it. My three fiancées are all air hostesses.

ROBERT. All three?

BERNARD. Yes.

ROBERT. Air hostesses?

BERNARD. All three.

ROBERT. You're talking crazy now! Three air hostesses.

BERNARD. That's the trick. And they're all fantastic girls.

ROBERT. Fantastic. If T.W.A. was anything to go by, they're knockouts.

BERNARD. And the other two are just as good. Of course they are. You see, they've all been tried and tested.

ROBERT. They've been what?

BERNARD. They're hand-picked through the employment procedures of the different airline companies. In every respect! Physical, moral, intellectual. So, all the work's done for me. I'm choosing from a pool which has already been supersifted. Not bad, huh?

ROBERT. Not bad.

(BERTHE enters.)

BERTHE. Monsieur Bernard.

BERNARD. (on telephone) Yes, darling. Love you, yes. (She replaces the telephone.) Ah, Berthe. Cancel the frankfurters.

BERTHE. Germany's delayed?

BERNARD. Stuck in Stuttgart.

BERTHE. But, I've bought the sauerkraut.

BERNARD. Too bad.

BERTHE. Oh, Mon Dieu! This is no life for a maid. (She starts to go out - comes back.) And another thing -

BERNARD. Well!

BERTHE. There's something I have to tell you.

BERNARD. Out with it then.

BERTHE. I've forgotten what it is now. It's all this coming and going.

BERNARD. It'll come back to you.

BERTHE. Then I'll come back.

BERNARD. Yes. That's right.

(GABRIELLA enters from the bathroom.)

GABRIELLA. Was that the telephone?

BERNARD. Yes, darling.

GABRIELLA. It wasn't for me?

BERNARD. No - why? Were you expecting someone?

GABRIELLA. They may make a change in the flights - because of the weather.

ROBERT. Change in the flight?

GABRIELLA. Yes, they've already cancelled the V.C.10 to Beirut.

ROBERT. Gosh, it's really fascinating to hear how all this aeronautics works.

BERNARD. Yes. They won't change your flight, will they darling?

GABRIELLA. No. Instead of leaving at 15:00, we'll take off at 16:00.

BERNARD. Oh good.

GABRIELLA. Why do you say "oh good"?

BERNARD. Did I say "oh good"?

ROBERT. Yes, you definitely said "oh good."

BERNARD. Well, I said "oh good" - because I instantly realized it would mean an extra hour with you.

GABRIELLA. Oh! Sei bello! So who was it, then?

BERNARD. Who was who?

GABRIELLA. On the telephone. It wasn't another woman?

BERNARD. How on earth could it be another woman! You know I adore you. Don't I, Robert?

ROBERT. Of course you do.

GABRIELLA. Cross your heart?

BERNARD. But Gabriella! No, really, you mustn't be so silly. It upsets me.

GABRIELLA. Alright. So you can tell me.

BERNARD. Tell you what?

GABRIELLA. Who it was.

BERNARD. Who was what?

GABRIELLA. On the telephone.

BERNARD. Oh. On the telephone! It was a wrong number.

ROBERT. Yes, that's right. A wrong number.

(GABRIELLA sees the letter.)

GABRIELLA. And what's this?

BERNARD. What's what?

GABRIELLA. This letter. It's addressed to Miss Gloria Hawkins.

BERNARD. Letter? I don't know anything about a letter.

GABRIELLA. It's here. On your desk.

BERNARD. Nothing to do with me, darling. I've been talking to Robert.

ROBERT. I only just got here. I only just arrived.

GABRIELLA. And it just appeared from nowhere?

(BERTHE enters.)

BERTHE. I've just remembered what it was.

GABRIELLA. Morning, Berthe, how are you?

BERTHE. Much the same, Mademoiselle.

BERNARD. What is it you've just remembered, Berthe?

BERTHE. Lunch is ready.

GABRIELLA. Grazie. Oh, Berthe! What's this? (*holds up the letter*)

BERTHE. A letter.

GABRIELLA. I can see that. But it's addressed to a Miss Gloria Hawkins. Do you know her?

BERTHE. Never heard of her.

GABRIELLA. Well, what's it doing here?

BERNARD. Well, Berthe?

BERTHE. Ah! Yes! I've just remembered. The old fool downstairs – the concierge – he muttered something about me taking a letter belonging to someone else in the block. By mistake, you see.

BERNARD. There. That makes sense. Everything's sorted out.

ROBERT. Yes. Everything explained – really well, too.

BERTHE. My mistake all along. I'm sorry about that, Mademoiselle. Sorry Monsieur.

BERNARD. We all make mistakes, Berthe.

BERTHE. If you'd like to give it to back to me, Mademoiselle, I'll slip it downstairs after lunch. Well, it's all ready when you want it. Lunch, that is.

GABRIELLA. Grazie, Berthe. You're a marvel. You run the flat as if it were your own.

BERTHE. That's exactly right, Mademoiselle. But it isn't easy.

(*She exits.*)

BERNARD. It isn't easy my darling, but we do our best. You arrive, you wash your hands, have a drink, and – hey presto! – lunch is ready. All you have to do is to sit down and eat.

ROBERT. Family life. It's a wonderful thing.

GABRIELLA. You're right, Roberto dear. You ought to try it. Copy Bernardo. Find yourself a fiancée.

ROBERT. Yes, as a matter of fact – I've been thinking about it – quite seriously.

GABRIELLA. Mio dio. It's already twenty-five to. We must hurry. Let's have lunch.

(*She exits #2.*)

BERNARD. So, you see how it's done?

ROBERT. Phenomenal. Absolutely phenomenal.

BERNARD. Yes, right, come and eat, Italian cuisine today.

ROBERT. Bernard, these air hostess uniforms. You know, they're so beautifully cut. They're really very handsome.

BERNARD. Handsome? They're dazzling! Irresistible!

ROBERT. Good old Bernard!

BERNARD. Good old Robert!

(*They exit laughing after GABRIELLA.*)  
(*curtain.*)

ROBERT. Goodness, me! If you don't mind me saying, you're not very welcoming to your boss's guests, are you?

BERTHE. I'm only telling you for your own good. Just you wait and see, people coming and going all the time. You'd have been better off at the station and there'd have been more room for your bags!

ROBERT. I'm a guest. I have been invited, you know.

BERTHE. It's not a hotel.

ROBERT. It all seems beautifully organized to me.

BERTHE. Organized. That's just it. It's too organized. Shall I tell you what I think?

ROBERT. Well - I don't know.

BERTHE. It's not human! That's what I think. It's all very well for Monsieur Bernard giving out invitations, left, right, and centre, but I have to do all the work. What with you and your luggage and now Germany.

ROBERT. What about Germany?

BERTHE. She's just rung to say she's on her way.

ROBERT. Well, that's all right, isn't it? Mademoiselle Gabriella has just taken off.

BERTHE. I know, but Germany wants to stay for three days. She just said it to me, thinking it'll be a nice surprise for Monsieur.

ROBERT. For me?

BERTHE. No. For Monsieur. My Monsieur.

ROBERT. You have a Monsieur?

BERTHE. Of course I have a Monsieur.

ROBERT. Oh, I see.

BERTHE. My boss, I mean.

ROBERT. Oh, Bernard. Right.

BERTHE. (*under her breath*) Ces Américains...

ROBERT. So, what does it matter if she stays three days?

BERTHE. There may be the (*She looks for the word.*) friction... Well, it's nothing to do with me, of course. But Mademoiselle Gloria - that's the American -

## ACT II

(*Afternoon. There is no one on stage. Door #1 is open. From there we here the sound of a vacuum cleaner. The telephone rings. The vacuum cleaner stops. BERTHE enters and answers phone.*)

BERTHE. Hello. Yes, that's right. No, he isn't here at the moment. It's Berthe. Oh! It's you, Mademoiselle Gretchen! You're in Paris? Already! Oh you are early. Yes, Three days! Oh I see, right, right. Well, then, see you later. Mon Dieu! Trois jours avec l'Allemagne...

(*She hangs up then exits #1 just as the doorbell rings;*

BERTHE *re-enters and makes an exclamation in French.*)

Who can that be? All this coming and going. It's no life for a maid, no life for anyone. (*She answers door.*)

ROBERT. (*off*) It's only me.

BERTHE. (*off*) Oh. It's you, Monsieur. (*She enters.*)

(*ROBERT enters with cases.*)

ROBERT. Could you?

BERTHE. No, I couldn't.

ROBERT. There was a line a mile long at the station. You have to wonder why there are so many people in Paris. It's much more peaceful back at home in Wisconsin.

BERTHE. It wouldn't be so crowded in Paris if the Americans didn't keep piling in.

ROBERT. No, I suppose not.

BERTHE. And what do you want with all these bags? I thought you were only here on a visit.

ROBERT. I always believe in being prepared.

BERTHE. I hope you're not going to stay too long.



BERTHE. (*indicating the rest of Robert's luggage*) Put these bags in there too. They're in the way here. I'd help you with them myself but when I was a little girl the doctor told my mother - "She's a great trier, your daughter, but not very strong, she must be very careful not to lift anything."  
ROBERT. Not to lift anything. (*exiting with luggage out Door #5*)

BERTHE. So I try to be careful. And when you think about it, the body's not much of a thing, is it? Very feeble. It gets tired. It wears out.

ROBERT. (*re-enters*) That's absolutely true, Berthe.

BERTHE. So I let other people wear themselves out.

ROBERT. I see what you mean. You are quite a cheerful person at heart?

BERTHE. Thank you. You don't often meet people who appreciate a maid's personality, do you?

ROBERT. Quite, quite! Well, see you later.

BERTHE. Oh, has monsieur had enough of me?

ROBERT. No, no. Not at all!

BERTHE. Oh yes. You've had enough of me. When people say, "See you later," especially to a maid, it always means they've had enough.

ROBERT. No, I assure you.

BERTHE. I'm getting on your nerves.

ROBERT. Nonsense.

BERTHE. Yes. I'm getting on your nerves.

ROBERT. You are not getting on my nerves, look...

BERTHE. Oh yes. Oh yes. Monsieur Bernard's exactly the same. Always brushing me off. Never wants to talk. But, you know monsieur, conversation is the only thing that separates humans from beasts. If human beings didn't speak they'd be beasts.

ROBERT. Uh, yes. Yes, that's right. Beasts.

BERTHE. It must be awful to be a beast.

ROBERT. Huh!

ROBERT. Yes, I know. I've seen that one.

BERTHE. Well, she's due back on Monday.

ROBERT. Yes. Well, that's all right. It's only Saturday. Bernard will have plenty of time to work something out. (*He picks up his trunk leaving several cases behind.*) Where shall I put my bags?

BERTHE. You put them where you like.

(*ROBERT crosses to Door #1.*)

No, not that one. That's Monsieur and his wives' bedroom. So, not that one.

(*ROBERT crosses to Door #7.*)

Not there, there won't be enough room there. Over there if you like. (*indicates Door #5*) It's quieter there on the courtyard. Oh, just make yourself at home.

(*ROBERT drops his trunk in front of Door #5.*)

ROBERT. Thanks very much, Berthe. That's very kind of you. (*He leaves some coins on the coffee table then crosses toward Door #5.*)

BERTHE. No, it's not. I'm just doing what I'm told. I've got enough to do, thank you very much, without being kind to all Monsieur's guests.

ROBERT. If you don't like it here, why don't you change your job?

BERTHE. No! New job, new problems. What's the point?

ROBERT. Well that's an optimistic view.

BERTHE. Look Monsieur, I'm a cheerful soul at heart. I like a bit of fun, but this place goes too far. But what can you expect if you're in domestic service? I mean there's no dignity in being a maid.

(*ROBERT leaves the rest of his coins on the table.*)

ROBERT. (*crossing to Door #5*) Right. Well, if you'll excuse me, I'll get settled in. (*He exits Door #5 with trunk.*)

BERTHE. Don't you think?

ROBERT. Yes, yes, I suppose. I don't know anything about it.

BERTHE. Well, I don't know anything about it, but I'm guessing... I sense it! A beast! What is a beast? Even less than a maid. That just about says it all! It's lucky I'm an optimist. That's what keeps me going.

ROBERT. Could I have a bit of ice?

BERTHE. No!

ROBERT. Why?

BERTHE. I'm defrosting the fridge.

ROBERT. Oh. Right

BERTHE. So, there's no ice.

ROBERT. Well, that's alright then because I can do without.

BERTHE. Well, you'll have to. Is Monsieur in business?

ROBERT. Yes.

BERTHE. Same business as Monsieur Bernard?

ROBERT. No.

BERTHE. Ah. There are so many different businesses but its all business, isn't it?

ROBERT. That's right.

BERTHE. Are you married?

ROBERT. No.

BERTHE. Perhaps you should be.

ROBERT. Why?

BERTHE. You're still quite nice.

ROBERT. Thank you very much indeed, Berthe.

BERTHE. But old age is fast approaching.

ROBERT. I've got a few good years ahead of me!

BERTHE. That's what they all say. You take my advice. You get married while you're still worth it.

ROBERT. I intend to, but now I've seen Bernard's setup. I think I'll wait a little while.

BERTHE. That's a mistake. This isn't the life for you, you're not the type. You have to have your wits about you. You have to be in your physical prime.

GRETCHEN. I love him so much! Every time I come home, I seem to love him more, and every time I go it just tears me to tiny pieces.

BERTHE. You're very intense, aren't you?

GRETCHEN. I'm worse than that - I'm passion itself.

BERTHE. Don't get yourself into a state. Save your passions for Monsieur Bernard. He'll be back soon.

GRETCHEN. Ja. Ja. You're right. Oh r6, I have forgotten to buy cigarettes. Would you, could you, would you?

BERTHE. Straight away. I'll be back in five minutes.

GRETCHEN. You're a darling, Berta. I'll get settled in while I'm waiting. I'm mad with happiness, Berta, mad with happiness!

BERTHE. And so am I, Mademoiselle, so am I!

(GRETCHEN goes out Door #1 and closes the door as BERTHE goes out Door #4. Enter ROBERT Door #5. He goes to the bathroom and washes his face. With a towel round his shoulders he impersonates Bernard. He tries some of Bernard's aftershave which he accidentally sprays in his eyes. He sits down with the towel over his head to remove the aftershave. GRETCHEN comes out of Door #1 and not recognizing ROBERT throws herself at him.)

GRETCHEN. My love! My darling lover! You're home.

ROBERT. Oh God!

GRETCHEN. Excuse me. Sorry, sorry.

ROBERT. No, really. Don't mention it.

GRETCHEN. But, oh Monsieur, I'm so sorry.

ROBERT. No harm done, Mademoiselle, on the contrary.

GRETCHEN. What are you doing in my flat?

ROBERT. Your flat? Don't you mean Bernard's flat?

GRETCHEN. If you like. But it's still mine - mine or Bernard's, it's the same thing.

ROBERT. I'm an old friend of Bernard's. An old school friend.

GRETCHEN. Oh?

ROBERT. My name's Robert - I've forgotten my own name.  
Robert Lambert.

GRETCHEN. How do you do?

ROBERT. How do you do? And you must be Gretchen?

GRETCHEN. He's told you about me?

ROBERT. Told me! Oh, you bet. It's Gretchen this, Gretchen that; here a Gretchen, there a Gretchen. It's Gretchen - Gretchen - everywhere.

GRETCHEN. How divine!

ROBERT. He hardly mentions anybody else.

GRETCHEN. But how come you are here when he's not?

ROBERT. Well - Bernard had to go out.

GRETCHEN. On business.

ROBERT. Yes, that's right! - on business. And he told me to wait for him. I just arrived - you see - I'm on my way to Aix to visit my uncle's home.

GRETCHEN. In Aix!

ROBERT. Yes.

GRETCHEN. It's not true!

ROBERT. Oh! Yes, it's true - this afternoon on a train - to Aix.

GRETCHEN. But that's marvellous.

ROBERT. Yes, I like trains.

GRETCHEN. My mother lives in Aix.

ROBERT. Not really.

GRETCHEN. She's lived there for years. Whereabouts is your uncle in Aix?

ROBERT. Near the station. Number 27.

GRETCHEN. It's not true! The Bahnhofstrasse!

ROBERT. The Bahnhof what?

GRETCHEN. The Bahnhofstrasse.

ROBERT. Oh! You mean the station.

GRETCHEN. You must know my mother's house. It's on the corner of the Friedenstrasse.

ROBERT. The Frieden - what?

GRETCHEN. The Friedenstrasse.

ROBERT. I never heard of that one...

GRETCHEN. But you have. It's the next street down from the Bahnhofstrasse.

ROBERT. Well possibly so...

GRETCHEN. Come on! You know it.

ROBERT. Know it! I can't even pronounce it.

GRETCHEN. Well, you know the corner? Where Napoleon is?

ROBERT. Napoleon?

GRETCHEN. You're not trying.

ROBERT. I am trying.

GRETCHEN. Napoleon, the chap on a horse. Enormous!

ROBERT. I've never seen it. I assure you.

GRETCHEN. Liar!

ROBERT. Please! I swear! I'll tell you everything I know. My family has lived all their lives in Aix! I can show you my papers, I can show you my credentials. My great grandfather made olive and sunflower oil, my grandfather did almond oil and my uncle walnut. Walnut oil I mean. My family's oiled the whole of Provence! But I haven't been there yet!

GRETCHEN. Provence?

ROBERT. Yes. Aix is in Provence, isn't it?

GRETCHEN. But I was talking about Aix-la-Chapelle in Germany.

ROBERT. I was talking about Aix-en-Provence in France.

GRETCHEN. Obviously.

ROBERT. So both our families are from Aix, but not the same Aix.

GRETCHEN. I suppose so. I really am very sorry.

ROBERT. It's too disappointing. You would have made a marvellous new neighbour.

GRETCHEN. You're very kind.

GRETCHEN. But it would be awful of me to do it again! I'd have no excuse for my mistake this time and I'd regret it for the rest of my life.

ROBERT. Let's not exaggerate.

GRETCHEN. I see you do not know the German soul.

ROBERT. Uh, no...not very well.

GRETCHEN. That's why you do not know what the knowledge of good and evil is like.

ROBERT. Evil? But when you get married you'll have to kiss all of Bernard's friends.

GRETCHEN. Not on the mouth! And anyway, when the bride kisses the friends of the groom, it's in front of her husband. He's there watching.

ROBERT. I never thought that was quite fair, have you? There are particular circumstances. Ours for example.

GRETCHEN. I don't see that our case is so special. In fact, I think we should both feel very guilty. We are all alone in my fiancé's flat -

ROBERT. Please don't make a tragedy out of it. It's not enormously important.

GRETCHEN. Then why are you insisting?

ROBERT. Because both our families are from Aix.

GRETCHEN. But not the same Aix. Not the same Aix at all! Aix-la-Chapelle.

ROBERT. Aix - Aix - Aix. All you can talk about is Aix. Can't you allow yourself one innocent kiss?

GRETCHEN. It would be the second.

ROBERT. I didn't count the first. That was just my way of saying hello.

GRETCHEN. You really are very incorrigible.

ROBERT. You really are very beautiful.

GRETCHEN. But I am engaged to Bernard.

ROBERT. Exactly. You won't get another chance. And neither will I. Here in France everyone kisses each other at the drop of a hat and nobody seems to care at all. No one cares at all! So while we're in France why shouldn't we be like the French? After all, France is a great country.

GRETCHEN. So is Germany.

(Chorus enters.)

#### BOEING BOEING

ROBERT. Not at all, Mademoiselle -  
GRETCHEN. Gretchen. You may call me Gretchen, since you're a friend of Bernard's.

ROBERT. And I'm Robert Lambert.

GRETCHEN. I shall call you Robert.

ROBERT. Good. Gretchen. How do you do?

GRETCHEN. How do you do? You won't say anything to Bernard about me kissing you, will you?

ROBERT. Only by mistake, unfortunately.

GRETCHEN. A mistake yes...but a kiss all the same.

ROBERT. Don't worry. I won't say a word. But even if it hadn't been a mistake, I wouldn't have told him anything.

GRETCHEN. Thank you, you're a gentleman...But if there hadn't been a mistake I wouldn't have kissed you, so...

ROBERT. Yes, and mistakes like that, well, they don't really count, anyway. It was so sudden. I've forgotten about it already.

GRETCHEN. Didn't it mean anything then?

ROBERT. You didn't give me much time. And there was no anticipation and I think that's very important. So -

GRETCHEN. So?

ROBERT. So to ensure my complete silence and my absolute discretion, perhaps you'd better give me another one.

GRETCHEN. Another one?

ROBERT. Another kiss. 'Cause I really liked the first one.

GRETCHEN. Because you weren't expecting it...It's the element of surprise.

ROBERT. Hmm...Yes...but it could have been a nasty surprise...whereas it was a nice one and I wasn't able to get the full benefit, you see, completely...That's why if you wouldn't mind doing it again...

GRETCHEN. Again?

ROBERT. Just once.