

# Château La Roach

By Lauren Wilson

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## CHÂTEAU LA ROACH

By LAUREN WILSON

### DEDICATION

For those who inspired it:

Lindsay, Stefan, Erin, Brittany, Kelsey, Quintin,  
Emily, Calvin, Elizabeth, Hallie, Kelly, Robyn, Noah,  
Halley, Jackie, Gretchen and Justine.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

	<i># of lines</i>
MIMI LAROCHE..... hotel proprietress	196
FRANÇOIS LAROCHE..... hotel proprietor, Mimi's husband	219
ROBIN WREN..... bellhop (male or female)	65
PAOLO QUINTI..... Italian chef	69
HAPPY LAMPERSON..... elevator operator (female or male)	38
ELSIE WELKS..... maid	85
GINA RETCH..... waitress	106
ROSKEL T. GOOMEY..... exterminator (female or male)	72
JOSIE NACKERLY..... newlywed	75
JIP NACKERLY..... her husband	62
ENIRA DE CAN..... widow	57
MADAME ZILLINDA..... her psychic advisor	70
NIGEL HAVIC..... British cyclist	73
LOLA ST. BRITTANIA..... child star manager	66
RONNIE ZIRCON..... 10-year-old child star	65
HANULA BING..... a travel writer	38
LIZA BETHINGIL..... nun	35
COCKROACH..... also plays RAT	29

## SETTING

TIME: The present.

PLACE: Château Laroche, a small hotel on the shores of a lake.

There are five STAGE EXITS: A swinging door DOWN LEFT which leads to the kitchen; a door DOWN RIGHT which leads outdoors (both sides of the door should be visible to the AUDIENCE); a window beside the DOWN RIGHT door which can be climbed through; an elevator with sliding doors UP CENTER (doors can be operated manually from OFFSTAGE); two UPSTAGE EXITS leading to the stairway STAGE RIGHT and the Laroches' rooms STAGE LEFT.

The following props are ONSTAGE: Hotel desk (strong enough to sit or stand on) with a desk bell, telephone, bowl of "mints," phone book and newspaper on top (STAGE LEFT); bench or "poof" (CENTER); a fern on a table next to the "poof"; an indication of an elevator button on the wall next to the elevator (UP CENTER). NOTE: additional tables and chairs will be brought on for ACT ONE, Scene Three.

See PRODUCTION NOTES for more details about the set.

# CHÂTEAU LA ROACH

## ACT ONE

### Scene One

AT RISE: The lobby of the Château Laroche. A scream is heard from OFFSTAGE, followed by several thuds. MIMI ENTERS UP LEFT in a panic.

**MIMI:** François! François! (*Crosses to the window, opens it and calls out.*) François, come quickly!

**FRANÇOIS:** (*APPEARS in window, holding binoculars. He speaks with a French accent.*) What is it, Mimi? Can you not see I am watching the birds?

**MIMI:** Forget the stupid birds! Something terrible has happened!

**FRANÇOIS:** Terrible? Do not move. I will be right there! (*Goes to the door, tries to open it. Returns to window.*) The door is stuck! (*They both struggle to open it.*) Lift up on the handle!

**MIMI:** I am!

**FRANÇOIS:** (*Returns to window.*) Never mind! I will come through the window! (*Steps through.*) That idiot bellhop! I told him to unstick the door, did I not?

**MIMI:** François—

**FRANÇOIS:** Once again he has taken my words into one ear and dropped them out the other!

**MIMI:** François, we have worse troubles than the bellhop.

**FRANÇOIS:** That maid. She has eaten the mints again?

**MIMI:** No, worse than that. François, there's a bug in the bathroom.

**FRANÇOIS:** A bug?

**MIMI:** Yes, a huge cockroach!

**FRANÇOIS:** Oh, Mimi, that could not be. I am sure it was just a moth. (*Pronounces "moth" with a particularly heavy accent.*)

**MIMI:** A what?

**FRANÇOIS:** A moth. You know, with the wings? It flies to the flame and— (*Makes sizzle sound.*)

**MIMI:** I believe I know a moth when I see one, and this was definitely not a moth! If you don't believe me, go and see for yourself!

**FRANÇOIS:** Very well, I will go and look at your little bug, but then I return to the bird watching! (*EXITS UP LEFT. From OFFSTAGE.*)

Perhaps you should go back to bed, Mimi. These hallucinations may be caused by a fever or some sort of— (*Screams. Several thuds. RE-ENTERS UP LEFT, shaken.*) Sacré bleu...

**MIMI:** Did you see it?

**FRANÇOIS:** It? There was not an “it,” Mimi. There was a “them.”

**MIMI:** You mean, more than one?

**FRANÇOIS:** Three!

**MIMI:** What were they doing?

**FRANÇOIS:** Looking at me. They gave me a look that I cannot describe—a look which reached into my very soul...

**MIMI:** Then what?

**FRANÇOIS:** I killed them. (*MIMI gasps.*) Well, two of them. The third, he picked up a hairbrush and threw it at me. (*Rubs head.*)

**MIMI:** Oh, how awful! Are you hurt?

**FRANÇOIS:** It’s just a bump. But the hurt, it goes deeper, you know?

**MIMI:** Yes, of course. François, we have to do something about this. There are guests checking in this afternoon, and one of them is Hanula Bing.

**FRANÇOIS:** Bing? You mean, of Bing’s Travel Books?

**MIMI:** That’s right. She wants to write about us in her new book. I can just see it now: “Château Laroche on the shores of Lake Likawomba. A charming European-style get-away, particularly if you’re fond of cockroaches running along the furniture!”

**FRANÇOIS:** Let us not panic. Perhaps it was a mere, how do you say—

**MIMI:** Fluke?

**FRANÇOIS:** No.

**MIMI:** Anomaly?

**FRANÇOIS:** No.

**MIMI:** Something that happens once and never again?

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, that’s it.

**MIMI:** Well, let’s hope so. In the meantime, I’m going to go finish my makeup. (*EXITS UP LEFT to bedroom.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Fine, fine. I will alert the staff. Where is the staff? We have guests arriving! They should be scurrying up and down like squirrels in the oak tree! (*Rings bell.*) Robin! (*Rings again.*) Robin! (*Crosses DOWN LEFT.*) Robin!

**ROBIN:** (*ENTERS through the kitchen door, which hits FRANÇOIS hard.*) Sorry, sir.

**FRANÇOIS:** Robin, where have you been?

**ROBIN:** Oh, well, you see, I was—

**FRANÇOIS:** Never mind! Come with me. (*They cross to the desk.*) Robin, do you see this bell?

**ROBIN:** Yes, sir.

**FRANÇOIS:** Très bien. And tell me, Robin, what is the meaning of the word “bellhop”?

**ROBIN:** Someone who carries suitcases? (*FRANÇOIS regards him with displeasure.*) Someone who carries luggage?

**FRANÇOIS:** Robin.

**ROBIN:** Bags?

**FRANÇOIS:** Robin! The meaning it is simple! When the bell rings, you hop!

**ROBIN:** I don’t know, sir. I have weak ankles, and—

**FRANÇOIS:** Not that kind of hop! The hop, it must happen here— (*Pokes ROBIN’S chest.*) When the bell rings, your heart, it must spring up like the chipmunk! The cry of the bell, it is like the cry of the baby bird to its mother: Come feed me! Come feed me! Do you understand me, Robin?

**ROBIN:** (*Thinks briefly.*) No.

**FRANÇOIS:** I am talking about instinct! When you hear the bell, you must come touch the desk without delay, without thinking!

**ROBIN:** Without thinking?

**FRANÇOIS:** Touch the desk, Robin! (*Rings bell.*)

**ROBIN:** But I already am.

**FRANÇOIS:** Do not think! Touch the desk! (*Rings bell. ROBIN clutches desk.*) Good! Now go! (*ROBIN steps back. FRANÇOIS rings bell.*) Touch the desk! (*ROBIN does.*) Good! Now go! (*ROBIN steps back. FRANÇOIS rings bell.*) Touch the desk! (*ROBIN does.*) Very good. I believe we begin to see the light at the end of the bridge.

**ROBIN:** You mean the tunnel.

**FRANÇOIS:** Do not think, Robin.

**ROBIN:** All right.

**FRANÇOIS:** Robin?

**ROBIN:** Yes, sir?

**FRANÇOIS:** Tell me, have you seen any little insects around here?  
(*ROBIN pauses.*) You may think now.

**ROBIN:** Okay. No, I haven't seen any little insects.

**FRANÇOIS:** Good, good.

**ROBIN:** I've seen some pretty big cockroaches, though.

**FRANÇOIS:** Mon Dieu! It is as I feared. Robin, we must gather the staff. Go and get the maid and the little person who runs the elevator up and down, up and down.

**ROBIN:** Yes, sir.

**FRANÇOIS:** I will get the others. Tell them to gather in the lobby!

**MIMI:** (*ENTERS UP LEFT.*) Good morning, Robin!

**ROBIN:** Morning, ma'am. (*EXITS DOWN LEFT through swinging door.*)

**MIMI:** Oh, François, Paolo wants to speak with you.

**FRANÇOIS:** Sacré bleu! What is it this time?

**MIMI:** Something about the toothpicks. He seems upset.

**FRANÇOIS:** Oh là là! I tell you I have had it up to here with that Italian nut cake. Could you not talk to him?

**MIMI:** I'm going down to get the mail. Anyway, he says he'll only speak to you. He's in the kitchen, under the counter. (*EXITS DOWN RIGHT.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Oh là là. (*Crosses DOWN LEFT to the swinging door and opens it. Calls OFFSTAGE.*) Paolo! Paolo, come out from there!

**PAOLO'S VOICE:** (*From OFFSTAGE, with a heavy Italian accent.*) I come out, sì. But first you promise to dock her pay!

**FRANÇOIS:** Dock whose pay?

**PAOLO'S VOICE:** (*From OFFSTAGE.*) That no-good excuse for a waitress!

**FRANÇOIS:** What has she done this time? Filled the water glasses too full?

**PAOLO:** (*Appears in doorway, then ENTERS DOWN LEFT.*) You mock me. I can tell. Paolo, he is sensitive to these things.

**FRANÇOIS:** Sensitive. That is one way to put it.

**PAOLO:** Last night, I make the calzone al pollo, it take me six hours—I put my soul onto the plate. And that waitress—you know what she has the nerve to do? She take my soul and stick a toothpick in it!

**FRANÇOIS:** A toothpick.

**PAOLO:** With a little pink frill on top! I say to her, “Take that thing out!” She say to me, “It looks better this way.” I say to her, “It looks like a Happy Meal!” She say to me, “Go stuff it, buddy.” What means this “stuff it, buddy”? Stuff what? Stuff it where?

**FRANÇOIS:** Paolo, Paolo. You must calm yourself.

**PAOLO:** Sì, sì.

**FRANÇOIS:** These Americans, they are not like you and me. They have no taste.

**PAOLO:** Sì, it’s true what you say.

**FRANÇOIS:** You have seen the clothes they wear. The t-shirts, the sweatpants?

**PAOLO:** Dio mio. (*Crosses himself.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** But that is why we must help them, mon ami. We must be patient. We must not lose our tempers.

**PAOLO:** Not lose our tempers. Is this possible?

**FRANÇOIS:** You must find a hobby, Paolo. Something to relax you. Like me, I have the bird watching.

**PAOLO:** A hobby, sì. Like knitting. My mama in Napoli used to knit me the little sweaters, even though it was 90 degrees.

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, like knitting or basket making. (*PAOLO stomps on floor.*) Or dancing...

**PAOLO:** I was not dancing. There was a cockroach on the floor.

**FRANÇOIS:** Sacré bleu!

**PAOLO:** Sì, and this morning, a whole family of them in the kitchen. They make a little pup tent out of the napkin. But not to worry—I smashed them to a pulp with the frying pan!

**FRANÇOIS:** Oh là là.

**PAOLO:** It was strange, you know. They give to me a look, a look I cannot describe.

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, yes, I know this look. (*They clutch each other, notice and pull away.*) I tell you, we must do something about these insects!

**PAOLO:** Sì, perhaps we should alert the staff.

**FRANÇOIS:** Oui. The staff! That idiot bellhop—I tell him to gather the staff, it lands in one ear and runs out the other! (*Rings bell.*) Robin! (*Rings again.*) Robin! (*Goes DOWN LEFT to the swinging door and calls.*) Robin!



**ROBIN:** (*ENTERS through the swinging door, which hits FRANÇOIS.*)

The staff is on the way down, sir.

**FRANÇOIS:** Thank you! (*ELEVATOR BELL RINGS and the DOORS OPEN. Inside are ELSIE, crying into a handkerchief, and HAPPY, who is operating the ELEVATOR.*)

**HAPPY:** Lobby.

**ELSIE:** So then I said, “Well, if that’s how you feel, why don’t you just take the engagement ring back?” And do you know what he said?

**HAPPY:** No.

**ELSIE:** He said, “Fine.”

**HAPPY:** He’s a jerk. You’re better off without him.

**ELSIE:** I know. I keep telling myself that, but it doesn’t really seem to—

**FRANÇOIS:** Pardonnez-moi!

**ELSIE:** Oh, hi, François. (*Blows her nose.*)

**HAPPY:** Going up?

**FRANÇOIS:** No, Happy, I am not going up. We are having a staff meeting.

**ELSIE:** If it’s about the mints, I swear it wasn’t me. The bowl was empty when I got here this morning.

**FRANÇOIS:** It is not about the mints. It is about a little insect problem we are having.

**HAPPY:** Oh, the cockroaches.

**FRANÇOIS:** You know about them? Are they in the elevator, too?

**HAPPY:** Well, they usually just ride up to the third floor and get out. You know, there’s a good view of the lake up there.

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, I am familiar with the view. You mean, they are in the rooms of the guests?

**ELSIE:** The rooms and the bathrooms.

**HAPPY:** And the hallways.

**ELSIE:** And the basement.

**HAPPY:** The basement. Boy, oh boy. It’s like the Wild Kingdom down there.

**GINA:** (*ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.*) Sorry I’m late.

**PAOLO:** Bah! Twenty minutes late today! You should dock her pay!

**FRANÇOIS:** Paolo...

**PAOLO:** Sì, sì. I am calm. But still, you should dock her pay!

**GINA:** What's everybody doing down here? Is this about the mints, because—

**ELSIE:** It's not about the mints.

**GINA:** Oh, good.

**ROBIN:** It's about the cockroaches.

**GINA:** Oh, them. Yeah, someone should really do something about that. *(ALL agree.)*

**MIMI:** *(ENTERS DOWN RIGHT with mail and crosses to desk.)* Good morning, everyone!

**ALL:** Good morning.

**MIMI:** How are you all today? *(ALL respond over each other.)*

**FRANÇOIS:** Staff! Staff! Mimi, if you please, we are trying to have the staff meeting!

**MIMI:** Well, don't mind me. I'm just opening the mail.

**FRANÇOIS:** Everyone line up! I see we must impose the order to get anything accomplished. *(STAFF lines up, slouched and sloppy.)* Oh là là. They look like the thing that the cat has dragged in! You are the employees of Château Laroche! *(They adjust their posture according to the following lines.)* Stomachs in! Shoulders back! Heads high! That is better! *(Turns away. They resume their previous postures.)* Now, staff, we have a very serious problem on our hands. The Château Laroche, it is infested with the bugs, and we must get rid of them!

**MIMI:** Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Look at this. *(Holds up a letter.)*

**FRANÇOIS:** Mimi, as I said, we are in the middle of the meeting—is that a pink envelope? Tell me that is not a pink envelope.

**MIMI:** It's a pink envelope.

**FRANÇOIS:** Sacré bleu!

**GINA:** What's the big deal about a pink envelope?

**ROBIN:** It's from the health department.

**HAPPY:** Uh-oh.

**MIMI:** *(Reads.)* "To the management of the Château Laroche. We will be sending a representative from the health department to inspect your establishment on *(Today's date.)*. Our representative will pose as an average guest in your hotel so as to more accurately gauge the health and hygiene standards therein. You will be informed of our findings upon completion of the inspection."

**HAPPY:** Well, we might as well start packing.

**ROBIN:** I remember the old lodge across the lake. They found rats in the pantry and closed the place down that same day.

**ELSIE:** You mean, we might lose our jobs? (*Starts to cry.*) I can't believe it. I just lost my fiancé and my job in one day!

**GINA:** What? You mean, the wedding's off?

**ELSIE:** I gave him the ring back.

**ROBIN:** You deserve better than him, Elsie.

**ELSIE:** Thanks, Robin.

**GINA:** I agree. That guy was a loser.

**ELSIE:** But he had such nice hair.

**HAPPY:** She's got a point there.

**PAOLO:** I don't know. I've seen better. It was sort of greasy, you know? (*ALL agree.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Staff! Could we stick ourselves to the subject! Who do we have staying in the hotel this weekend?

**MIMI:** (*Looks through papers.*) Well, there's the travel writer, Hanula Bing, and a young couple on their honeymoon. There's a Mrs. Enira de Can—she sounds very strange on the phone, and apparently she travels with her own personal hypnotist. Then there's the British fellow—he's riding his bicycle across the country.

**FRANÇOIS:** So one of these people must be the inspecteur. The problem, it is worse than I thought. This means that before the guests arrive today, we must somehow dispose of the cockroaches. I will now take suggestions from the staff.

**PAOLO:** We could smash-a them to a pulp with the frying pan.

**GINA:** We could, like, paint everything brown so the roaches wouldn't show up.

**HAPPY:** Nah, they're too big—they'd still show up.

**ELSIE:** We could put collars on them and pretend they were dogs.

**ROBIN:** I think they're too small for dogs. They look more like mice.

**GINA:** That would be so cute! Like little circus mice!

**PAOLO:** Circus mice! I tell you, we should smash them to a pulp!

**ELSIE:** But why do we have to hurt them? We could leave a trail of food leading out to the lake, and set up a nice warm place for them to go, like a little hotel—just for them.

**GINA:** Oh, my gosh, that is such a good idea.

**ELSIE:** Do you really think so? (*ALL agree.*)

**ROBIN:** Instead of Château Laroche, it could be Château La Roach.

**GINA:** With a tiny lobby where they checked in!

**PAOLO:** Sì, sì. And a little restaurant with tiny plates—I think I'm-a going to cry! (*The STAFF discusses this excitedly.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Please excuse me, Mimi. I am now going to the roof to plunge to my death.

**HAPPY:** Did you want the elevator?

**FRANÇOIS:** No, thank you, Happy, I will take the stairs. Mimi, you will perhaps conclude the staff meeting for me?

**MIMI:** François, there's no need to be dramatic.

**FRANÇOIS:** Au contraire, Mimi. There is every need! We have the plague of insects, we have the health inspecteur, and instead of a staff, we have the bunch of clowns!

**GINA:** Clowns! (*Gestures and accidentally hits the person next to her, who hits the next, and so on down the line, in circus clown fashion. This clown routine should involve ALL the STAFF and FRANÇOIS, and repeat itself until interrupted. During the action, someone places the fake roach on FRANÇOIS'S back for upcoming dialogue. FRANÇOIS should keep his back out of sight of AUDIENCE until appropriate time. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*)

**MIMI:** Wait a minute, wait a minute, everyone. I think I have an idea. Since we can't get rid of these roaches ourselves, we'll simply have to call an exterminator.

**ELSIE:** An exterminator? But wouldn't he kill them?

**MIMI:** Well, technically, yes, but I'm sure they wouldn't feel any pain. An exterminator uses chemicals and things—you know, poison gases, little powders. It's all very scientific. (*Gets phone book from behind desk LEFT and starts looking through it.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, Mimi. The science it is all well and good, but how much does it cost?

**MIMI:** (*With the phone book open.*) Well, it can't be much—listen to this one: "Roskel T. Goomey, Exterminator. Safe, fast, odorless. Special price for roaches. If they don't go away, neither do we."

**FRANÇOIS:** Hmm. "Special price"—I like the sound of this. Bon, it is decided! We will hire this Goskel Boomey, and we will gas the little

creatures to Timbuktu! (*Pronounces “Timbuktu” with a particularly heavy accent.*)

**ELSIE:** Where?

**HAPPY:** Timbuktu.

**GINA:** Must be someplace in France.

**ROBIN:** I don't know. I still like the little hotel idea.

**PAOLO:** Sì, and I was a going to knit the tiny curtains...

**FRANÇOIS:** Silence! Mes amis, this is not the time to give in to the sentimentalité. We must be strong. We must not let our emotions cloud our vision. Yes, the little creatures, they look at us with the eyes which seem to say, “Don't hurt me.” But this is not the point! Our very lives are at stake. It is either them or us, and my friends, we are outnumbered. Even as we speak, they are breeding, growing, moving closer. We must stop them! We must destroy them before they destroy us! (*ALL cheer.*)

**GINA:** Is someone going to tell him there's a roach on his back?

**HAPPY:** I was hoping it would just fall off.

**FRANÇOIS:** What? On my back? (*Turns UPSTAGE and reveals large roach.*) Kill it! Kill it!

**PAOLO:** I will get the frying pan!

**FRANÇOIS:** Mimi!

**MIMI:** (*Picks up the phone.*) Yes, François. I'm calling, I'm calling... (*LIGHTS DOWN.*)

End of Scene One

Scene Two

LIGHTS UP: The lobby. MIMI is looking OFFSTAGE UP LEFT towards the bedroom.

**MIMI:** What's she doing now?

**FRANÇOIS:** (*Pokes head OUT UP LEFT.*) She is listening to the bathroom wall.

**ROSKEL'S VOICE:** (*From OFFSTAGE.*) Quiet out there!

**MIMI:** Sorry!

**FRANÇOIS:** (*ENTERS UP LEFT. Motions MIMI DOWNSTAGE.*) It has been three hours. She should have exterminated something by now!

**MIMI:** I agree. The guests could arrive any minute. I'll call her out here. (*Calls OFFSTAGE.*) Oh, Roskel, could you come out here for a minute, please?

**ROSKEL:** (*ENTERS UP LEFT.*) Yeah?

**MIMI:** Roskel, we're a little—well, I don't know how to put this...

**FRANÇOIS:** Fed up.

**MIMI:** We're concerned. You see, we have quite a few guests arriving today, including a health inspector—

**FRANÇOIS:** And the cockroaches, they must be gone! (*ROSKEL slaps FRANÇOIS in the face.*) She has hit me? Do you hit me? She has hit me!

**ROSKEL:** Sorry, there was a roach on your face.

**MIMI:** Oh, wait—there it goes. (*Stomps.*) Darn it, it got away!

**FRANÇOIS:** I've got it! (*Stomps.*) Zut!

**ROSKEL:** Nah, it went through the floorboards. You see, folks, we're dealing with some highly intelligent insects here in what appears to be a Phase Four type of situation. Most people, they call me at Phase One, Two at the latest. But you people have let this thing get way out of control. For all I know, we could even be approaching Phase Five.

**FRANÇOIS:** I don't understand all this Phase One, Four, Five. I pay you to kill them, do I not? So kill them! Kill them!

**ROSKEL:** I can see you're upset. But let me explain what we're up against here. In Phases One through Three, the bugs, they're still just visiting, they come and go, they don't really think of the place as theirs yet. But then after awhile, they start to put down roots, raise a family—and then we enter Phase Four, also known as the Homebuilding Phase.

**MIMI:** But how can you tell which phase we're in?

**ROSKEL:** You've been seeing more and more of 'em, haven't you?

**MIMI:** Yes...

**ROSKEL:** You sometimes hear a sound like little shovels behind the walls?

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, yes. What is that sound?

**ROSKEL:** It's little shovels. They're clearing the way for their houses.

**MIMI:** Houses! But I thought they lived in piles of garbage and dumpsters and things!

**ROSKEL:** (*Laughs.*) Dumpsters! That's a good one! (*Stops laughing.*)  
Shh! (*Puts stethoscope to wall.*) We just hit Phase Five. They're building a dinner theater.

**FRANÇOIS:** Mon Dieu!

**MIMI:** And what, pray tell, will happen in Phase Six?

**ROSKEL:** In Phase Six they build a fort and start whittling spears. You'll know you're at Phase Six when your matches and toothpicks start disappearing.

**FRANÇOIS:** And seven?

**ROSKEL:** Seven is full-out invasion. They come through the walls, take hostages, burn and pillage. We don't much like to talk about Phase Seven in the exterminator business, but I won't lie to you, it's been known to happen. (*Listens to wall.*) Yep, they're doing (*Insert name of any popular musical*). I can hear the tap dancing. You have any small children in this place?

**FRANÇOIS:** No.

**ROSKEL:** Pets?

**FRANÇOIS:** No.

**ROSKEL:** Birds?

**FRANÇOIS:** No.

**ROSKEL:** Fish?

**FRANÇOIS:** No!

**ROSKEL:** Good. Sometimes they respond negatively to the chemical assault.

**MIMI:** What do you mean, negatively?

**ROSKEL:** Oh, you know, children tend to grow tentacles and things. Dogs give birth to cats—the standard stuff.

**MIMI:** But I thought these chemicals were supposed to be safe!

**ROSKEL:** They're completely harmless—as long as you're above the minimum body weight. You want my recommendation?

**BOTH:** Well...

**ROSKEL:** We waste no time. We start today and mount an all-out attack. We use the Radon 13, the strongest stuff on the market. We spray the liquid in here, we use the gas behind the walls, we sprinkle the powder in the basement. Twenty-four hours later, the problem is gone. But be warned—there's no turning back once we start. This

type of attack needs your total commitment, even when it starts to get ugly. What do you say? Should I get my gear?

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, Roskel, whatever it takes. Just don't let them take my hotel away.

**ROSKEL:** You're in good hands with me, Frenchie. I haven't lost a Phase Four yet.

**MIMI:** Phase Five. (*FRANÇOIS slaps ROSKEL.*)

**ROSKEL:** Did you get him?

**MIMI:** No, he's over here. Oh, my! Yes, he's got a little top hat and cane. (*Stomps.*) Missed him.

**ROSKEL:** I've got him! (*Stomps.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Get him, Roskel! Kill him! Kill him! (*ALL THREE stomp across the floor in pursuit of the "roach."*)

**JOSIE:** (*ENTERS DOWN RIGHT with JIP. They both carry suitcases.*) Oh, my gosh, Jip! Get the camera out! The locals are doing a dance!

**JIP:** Hey, neat! I knew this would be better than Amish country!

**MIMI:** Oh, hello there!

**FRANÇOIS:** (*Recovers.*) Welcome to the Château Laroche. I am François Laroche, the concierge.

**JOSIE:** What did he say?

**JIP:** He's speaking French—I'll handle this, honey. (*To FRANÇOIS, loudly and slowly.*) Bonjour! I'm Jip Nackerly! And this is my wife Josie!

**MIMI:** Oh, you're the Nackerlys. How wonderful to meet you, and we're so pleased you chose us for your honeymoon. Won't you come over to the desk, and I'll get you checked in? (*FRANÇOIS hastens ROSKEL OFF DOWN LEFT.*)

**JOSIE:** (*Sees this.*) We don't want to interrupt. We could wait on the porch.

**FRANÇOIS:** Oh, not at all, that was just the uh... the...

**MIMI:** Maid.

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, exactly. She was just leaving. So you will be with us for the weekend? (*Stomps.*)

**JIP:** That's right. And boy, are we glad to be here! Phew!

**JOSIE:** You know, the wedding was so crazy—all those people!

**JIP:** Plus, we're sort of outdoorsy types—just give us a lake and a trail, and we're happy as clams!



**JOSIE:** Unless they have windsurfers.

**JIP:** Oh, right, we'd like to rent some windsurfers. (*MIMI slams her hand down on a "bug" on the desk.*) Okay, then, how about a canoe?

**FRANÇOIS:** Please excuse my wife. She has no control over her limbs. (*MIMI slaps a "bug" on the back of FRANÇOIS'S head.*) One canoe rental. (*Slaps himself.*) Will you be taking breakfast in your room or the café? (*Stomps.*)

**JOSIE:** Oh, I... uh... Jip, could I speak to you for a moment?

**JIP:** Sure, Josie. We'll be right back.

**MIMI:** We'll be right here!

**JOSIE:** (*Takes JIP aside.*) Jip? Do you think this is all part of the dancing? Because—I mean, I don't want to be negative, but it seems sort of strange to me. (*FRANÇOIS violently pummels the desk.*)

**JIP:** I know what you mean, Josie, but let's not let them know we notice anything unusual. We don't want to hurt their feelings. (*To FRANÇOIS.*) We'll take breakfast in our room, please. About six a.m.

**JOSIE:** Don't want to miss the sunrise!

**JIP:** We like to begin our morning exercises at dawn.

**MIMI:** Yes, yes. Well, I'll just find your key here—

**FRANÇOIS:** The bellhop will attend to your luggage. (*Rings bell.*) Robin! (*Rings again.*) Robin! (*Crosses DOWN LEFT to the swinging door. Remembering being hit, he steps to other side.*) Robin! (*ROBIN ENTERS DOWN LEFT, rushes to desk and touches it.*) Very good, Robin! (*Steps in front of the door.*) The Nackerlys are now ready to go to their room. They will be in the— (*ELSIE ENTERS DOWN LEFT through the swinging door, which hits him from behind.*)— the Honeymoon Suite.

**ELSIE:** Sorry, François. Um, I was just wondering, since she's sprinkling that powder stuff all over the floor, do I have to vacuum today?

**FRANÇOIS:** (*Laughs.*) But of course! Of course you must vacuum today, Elsie! We vacuum every day here at the Château Laroche! Sometimes twice a day!

**ELSIE:** (*Sees the NACKERLYS.*) Oh, right! Twice a day! Vroom, vroom!

**MIMI:** This is our maid, Elsie.

**JOSIE:** Oh, another maid!

**JIP:** Wow, this place must be pretty darn clean! (*ALL agree eagerly, then fall silent.*)

**ELSIE:** Another maid?

**FRANÇOIS:** Robin, could you push the elevator button, please?

**ROBIN:** You mean, now?

**FRANÇOIS:** Yes, I think now would be a good time. As long as the Nackerlys are ready to go up?

**JOSIE:** Oh, yes, we're ready!

**JIP:** What do you say, Josie—shall we take up our bags and head out for a hike?

**JOSIE:** Oh, Jip, you read my mind! Can you believe it? Here we are on our honeymoon!

**JIP:** It's all been so amazing—like a dream! I keep thinking someone's going to pinch me, and I'll wake up!

**MIMI:** Oh, we won't pinch you, don't worry.

**ELSIE:** And neither will anything else.

**JIP:** I sure hope not! (*ALL laugh forcedly. ELEVATOR BELL RINGS.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Oh, good, here's the elevator. (*ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN, revealing HAPPY, who is beating the wall with her shoe.*)

**HAPPY:** (*Sees them and stops.*) Lobby.

**FRANÇOIS:** Well, then, we'll see you two kids at dinner! (*ROBIN, JIP and JOSIE EXIT through ELEVATOR.*)

**ROBIN:** Honeymoon Suite.

**JIP:** Now, remember, nobody pinch me!

**JOSIE:** (*Laughs.*) Oh, Jip! (*ALL laugh. ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE.*)

**FRANÇOIS:** Sacré bleu! What do you mean coming in here talking about the powder! That could be the health inspector!

**ELSIE:** (*Starts to cry.*) I'm sorry, I didn't see them!

**MIMI:** Somehow I don't think one of them was the health inspector, François.

**FRANÇOIS:** No? But that is the beauty of the disguise—no one would suspect them! We must be on guard against everyone! We must not let ourselves be fooled, and above all we must not run around like the idiot screaming about poisoned powder on the floor! (*ENIRA DE CAN ENTERS DOWN RIGHT, wearing an elaborate hat.*) Bonjour, madame. Welcome to the Château Laroche.

**ENIRA:** Good afternoon. I am Enira de Can.

**MIMI:** Hello, Mrs. Can. We've been expecting you. I'm—

**ENIRA:** Not “Can”—“de Can.”

**FRANÇOIS:** François Laroche. You are perhaps from France, Madame de Can, like myself?

**ENIRA:** No, I am not, thank goodness. Madame Zillinda!

**MIMI:** It’s Laroche, actually.

**ENIRA:** I am not addressing you, you little church mouse. I am addressing my spiritual advisor. (*MADAME ZILLINDA ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.*) Madame Zillinda travels everywhere with me. Since my husband was plucked from the rooftop of our villa by a bald eagle, I never make a move without her.

**ZILLINDA:** I am getting a strange feeling from this house. It is coming from... the floor. (*Gets down on her hands and knees.*)

**ELSIE:** Oh, you don’t want to get down there, ma’am. I just used the carpet cleaner—it probably smells funny. (*Helps her up.*)

**ZILLINDA:** Yes, perhaps that is it.

**ENIRA:** Madame Zillinda and I will need adjoining rooms. We intend to contact the spirit of my dead husband from the dank seclusion of this wretched rural locale.

**ELSIE:** You mean, you’re having a séance?

**ZILLINDA:** Yes, that is correct. Have you ever been in contact with the other world, my dear?

**ELSIE:** Well, I went to Disneyland once.

**ZILLINDA:** That is not precisely what I mean.

**FRANÇOIS:** We shall put you in our very best rooms. The keys, Mimi? I am sure you will find our hotel to your satisfaction, mesdames. (*Stomps.*) If there is anything we can do, please—

**ENIRA:** There is something you can do. My car is in need of repair.

**MIMI:** Well, I’m sure we could find someone to look at it. Did it break down?

**ENIRA:** Not exactly. We ran over some sort of bicyclist.

**MIMI:** Oh, how terrible!

**ENIRA:** Yes, the paint has a hideous scratch in it all along the driver’s side. Of course, Madame Zillinda had seen the whole episode in her crystal ball.

**ZILLINDA:** I saw the car speeding along the country road, the odd little man waving at us, pushing the bicycle slowly across our path, the flock of geese obscuring our view...

**End of script preview.**

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE: Hotel desk, desk bell, telephone, bowl of “mints,” phone book, newspaper, a fern on a table.

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene One: Fake cockroach (must be placed on FRANÇOIS during clown bit without AUDIENCE noticing); mail, including pink envelope (MIMI).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Two: Suitcases (JIP, JOSIE, MIMI); stethoscope, exterminator’s equipment (hoses, gas tank, mask, etc.) bicycle basket, small tape recorder (NIGEL); cell phone and purse containing slingshot (LOLA); fountain pen (HANULA).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Three: Five tables set with silverware, napkins and glasses, ten chairs (STAGEHANDS); chef’s hat, plate of “squid” (ROSKEL); menus, six plates of spaghetti [white yarn and red paint works well], two plates containing large dates to represent roaches, serving tray, a cheese shaker and a shaker of bug-killer [both the same shape and size with white flour inside] (GINA); bowl of “soup,” frying pan (PAOLO).

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene One: Exterminator’s chemical represented by a clear plastic plant sprayer filled with green-colored water (ROSKEL); suitcases (JIP); purse with wad of “money” (JOSIE); small notebook, pencil (NIGEL).

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Two: Crystal ball (ZILLINDA); Nigel’s notebook (ELSIE); small cardboard box labeled, “Live Cockroaches” (JIP); “dynamite” (HAPPY); mail, including pink postcard (ROBIN).

### FLEXIBLE CASTING

The characters of ROBIN, ROSKEL and HAPPY can all be played as either male or female.

### COSTUMES

For the ROACH costume, be creative and have fun with it. Feel free to use anything from a stuffed fabric costume to a foam exoskeleton and headpiece. For the RAT costume, a stuffed fabric costume with a rat tail, nose and ears will work, along with makeup, large whiskers, etc. See the script for other characters’ costumes.

## SOUND EFFECTS

Elevator bell, thunder, cell phone ringing.

## SPECIAL EFFECTS

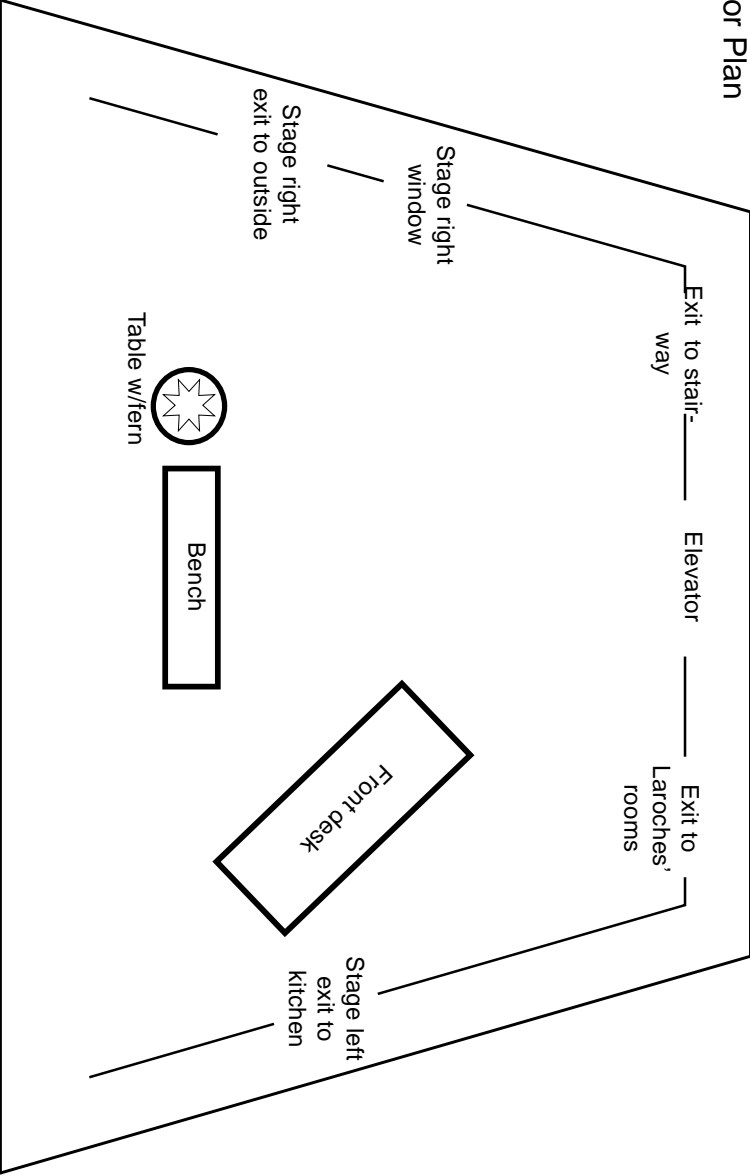
**NOTE ON THE SETTING:** As with many farces, a great deal of physical humor requires sturdy set pieces. The front door, window, elevator doors and kitchen door need to be practical and reliable. Ideally, the set would be made of hard-wall flats, framed by 2x4 lumber or metal studs. The facing could be masonite, plywood or gypsum board. Avoid having real glass in the window, for safety reasons. Actual door hardware with a latching doorknob will be needed for the front door, so it can appear to be “stuck.” The kitchen doors require swinging door hardware so the doors swing shut again after the actors enter. The elevator doors can be simple panels set in tracks above and below and operated by a stagehand on each side. The stagehands will have to practice the timing, so the doors open and close in unison. Also, since several actors stand on the hotel desk, it will need to be extra sturdy as well.

**BUG ON THE WALL:** Attach a length of fishing line to a large fake bug (available in most novelty stores, or make your own). A stagehand pushes the bug over the top of the wall and slowly lowers it to the desired level. When MIMI slams the bug with the paper, stagehand releases the fishing line and the bug drops to the floor, out of sight.

**BUG ON FRANÇOIS’ BACK:** The bug can be hidden on the hotel desk, behind books, or in the pocket of the actor placing it on his back. The bug should have a sticky undersurface, which could be Velcro or duct tape. The actor placing the bug must be subtle, and the director will want to stage something interesting elsewhere onstage during the transfer, as a diversion.

**THE WILTING FERN:** The potted plant should be placed up against the back wall. Cut the plant into several pieces, then “reattach” the segments by taping green yarn or fabric over the cuts. Attach a length of fishing line to the top of the plant stem, and run it through a hole in the wall. On cue, a stagehand feeds fishing line through the hole, and the plant collapses.

**CHÂTEAU LA ROACH**  
Basic Floor Plan



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