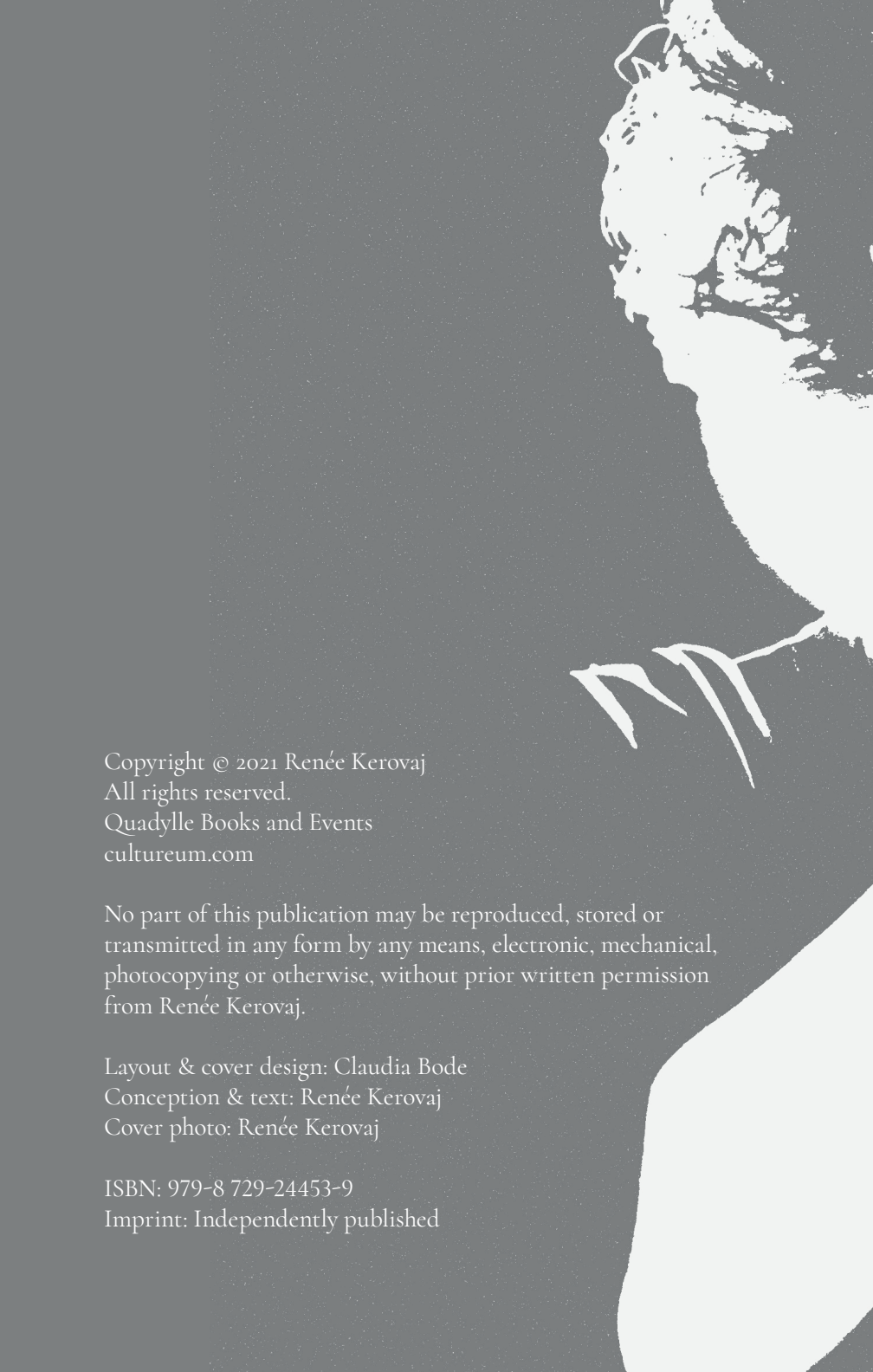


Renée Kerozaj

*Joann Thornton
and Her Last Will*

A COMEDY
in Three Acts

ÉDITIONS QUADYLLÉ



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JOANN
As I told you on the phone, I really wanted to give myself a retirement gift. And somehow it seemed ... There were so many scenarios, so many situations I didn't have the chance, or the courage, or the opportunity to live out. And you can't very well tell your students that you have always dreamed of them being smarter, or more motivated ... That before you retired, just once you wanted them to really understand one of your jokes, or to be truly inspired by one of your lessons ...

LIST OF CHARACTERS:

JOANN	- Professor Dr. Dr. JOANN Thornton, 65 years old, grey haired old lady
PAUL	- PAUL MacPherson, owner of the Play It All theater, young, charismatic, nervous, somewhat unethical
MAGGIE	- actress at the Play It All theater; she will play the student who is “on the same wavelength” as JOANN
RAMONA	- actress at the Play It All theater; she will play one of the students who is “smart and challenging”
ALLISON	- actress at the Play It All theater; she will play the other “smart and challenging student”
KIARA	- actress at the Play It All theater; she will play the “doting student”
JIMMY	- actor at the Play It All theater; he will play the “student to seduce and be seduced by”

AMY - actress at the Play It All theater;
she will play the “student to abuse”

DR. BROWN - elderly cardiologist, white hair, white
beard; he is distinguished and handsome,
and has a deep, calm, intellectual voice

PODCAST_ANNIE- dominant young woman, many tattoos
and piercings, walks with a swagger,
speaks loudly

LITTLE_ABODE - an elegantly dressed, stylish older lady
with an Italian accent

NURSE 1

NURSE 2

ASSISTANT 1

ASSISTANT 2

Several characters can be played by the same actor/actress.

TIME AND SETTING:

ACT I	Play It All theater one evening and the next day
ACT II	hospital room two weeks later
ACT III	studio of a TV show – live recording

ACT I

SCENE 1

Evening.

Play It All theater.

PAUL is sitting at a desk, sipping coffee.

He has a small dog on his lap.

Throughout the play, PAUL carries the little dog everywhere with him. The dog can be a real dog or a stuffed animal. The doorbell rings. PAUL goes to open the door stage left. JOANN enters stage left.

PAUL You must be Joann Thornton.
It's lovely to meet you.

JOANN Good evening.
(to PAUL's dog on his arm) Oh, hello.

PAUL This is Sergeant Peppo.

JOANN (petting the dog on PAUL's arm) Hello Peppo.
(to PAUL) Thank you for agreeing to meet
with me on such short notice.

PAUL Well, I was intrigued. I must say, most of
the jobs we get are far less exciting.

JOANN Really? Is my little fantasy so exotic?

PAUL Well, a bit more elaborate than most! Occasionally, we do get clients who hire our actors to serve as a date, when they absolutely need to have one for an important business dinner with spouses, for example.

JOANN And people don't notice?

PAUL We have a professional group of actors. They never drop character. In fact, they don't go out of character until one hour after their assignment.

JOANN Are they paid for one hour after they actually leave?

PAUL Yes. You pay for quality!

JOANN I see.

PAUL For example, we have the occasional teenager who wants an impressive date for a dance or something. Well, the date ends, but we allow our actors to act according to character for one hour after they have signed out, so to speak. This way, there is more of an emotional transition. It is very difficult to slide into people's lives and slide out again, as if you were a robot.

JOANN I am sure it is. For the clients as well, I'm sure.

PAUL Yes. *(pause)* But really, most of the time, people hire our actors to help with their

business seminars, you know, with role-playing games, to help employees train assertiveness, or negotiations skills.

JOANN A bit more like real theater.

PAUL Yes, and the theater is our true love.
We don't like the jobs that resemble the services of an escort service, but one does have to make a living.

JOANN I understand.

PAUL But we are very proud. We even cooperate with a university, you know.

JOANN Oh? How does that work?

PAUL We send our actors out to medical seminars to play patients to medical students.

JOANN That could be dangerous!

PAUL No, not at all. Medical students have to practice doctor-patient dialogues in a realistic setting, before they actually have a real consultation with a patient.

JOANN Oh yes. Actually, I've heard about that.
Very good idea, indeed.

PAUL One cardiologist has been most helpful, Dr. Brown, from the university medical center. He encourages his students to truly engage with the patients. And he likes Sergeant Peppo.

JOANN Dr. Brown?

PAUL Do you know him?

JOANN The name rings a bell.

PAUL But you didn't teach medicine, did you?

JOANN No, I was a political science professor.
Well, I guess I still am, for three more days.

PAUL Three more days, and then happy retirement.

JOANN Yes! I am ready to retire. But then, I realized, my career just wasn't long enough, not to live out all my fantasies. I'm a little embarrassed to even say it, though.

PAUL We are a professional agency.
Your privacy is completely protected.

JOANN That's very important.

PAUL You just let yourself go and tell us exactly what you need from our actors, and we will serve you well.

JOANN As I told you on the phone, I really wanted to give myself a retirement gift. And somehow it seemed ... There were so many scenarios, so many situations I didn't have the chance, or the courage, or the opportunity to live out. And you can't very well tell your students that you have always dreamed of them being smarter, or more motivated ... That before you retired,

just once you wanted them to really understand one of your jokes, or to be truly inspired by one of your lessons ...

PAUL How you must have suffered! Teaching really is one of the hardest jobs on Earth!

JOANN I am so glad you understand.

PAUL But of course!

JOANN So you see, I have to live out these fantasies while I am still a professor, while it could theoretically be real.

PAUL Say no more. I was inspired by your story. This is very exciting for us as well, you know.

JOANN Thank you for taking such interest in my case.

PAUL Right after we talked, I selected a group of actors, several very versatile young actresses and our most talented young actor. Some of them had already been assigned to other clients, but I freed them all up, and they will all be here for you tomorrow.

JOANN Thank you. But you will be here as well, won't you?

PAUL I will guide you through this every step of the way.

JOANN Thank you. I know it's my fantasy, but it's

rather difficult to let down my guard.

PAUL We will start you off slow. You just let your emotions and your dreams guide you. You have my guarantee that the team I have selected will be able to fulfill every teacher's fantasy you might come up with.

JOANN So I don't have to tell you exactly what I want right now.

PAUL You couldn't possibly know where tomorrow evening will take you. Our job is based on improvisation. We will follow your whims and desires. ... Do you see this buzzer? You simply ring the buzzer when you want something new. You can switch from one fantasy to the next within minutes. We do, of course need some time for changes in set and costume.

JOANN Of course.

PAUL What an adventure! What an adventure!

JOANN I can't believe it's happening!

PAUL Well, there is still the matter of the \$3,000 payment up front ... if possible, in cash ...

JOANN Oh, naturally ...

(We fade out, as JOANN takes out the money and starts counting it out to PAUL.)