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Dramatic Publishing

THE PORTRAIT THE WIND THE CHAIR

**A Play
by
Y YORK**



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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"Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois"

"First Commissioned and Produced by the Seattle Children's Theatre,
Directed by Mark Lutwak. The Cast included Annette Toutonghi as
Lucy; Olga Sanchez as Terroba and Minnie;
and Eric Ray Anderson as The ChairMan."

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(THE PORTRAIT THE WIND THE CHAIR)

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for r,
sweet and low

THE PORTRAIT THE WIND THE CHAIR held its world premiere at Seattle Children's Theatre on March 3, 1995 with the following:

Lucy *Annette Toutonghi*
Terroba/Minnie *Olga Sanchez*
The ChairMan *Eric Ray Anderson*

Director *Mark Lutwak*
Dramaturg *Deborah Lynn Frockt*
Set Designer *Edie Whitsett*
Costume Designer *Melanie Burgess*
Lighting Designer *Michael Wellborn*
Sound Designer/Composer *Jim Ragland*
Prop Master *Mark Rogers*
Stage Manager *Tammie Schlieff*
Production Manager *Silas Morse*
Technical Director *S. Mark Hoffman*
Assistant Stage Manager *Charles Harrison*
Understudies *Susanna Burney & Susan Ehlerman*

THE PORTRAIT THE WIND THE CHAIR

A Play in Two Acts
For Two Women and One Man

LUCY (f) worried, impertinent, 10

TERROBA (f) stuffy, nervous, 14
Also plays MINNIE in the dream, fearless, fun, a tomboy

CHAIRMAN (m) a chair, ageless

TIME

The present.

PLACE

A combination living/dining room in an old house.
This room is slightly transformed to become a
little island in the middle of a creek.

ACT ONE

SCENE: *The living room/dining room of a house, a little run-down, simply furnished and with a lot of house plants. There is a life-size portrait of a teenage girl with short, curled hair, white socks, saddle oxfords, flare skirt, sweater, and pearls [circa 1950]. It is a comfortable room. The sound of a ferocious wind storm. Winter.*

AT RISE: *LUCY, carrying her book bag and the mail, opens the door, sticks in her head, shouts.*

LUCY. *Terroba! (Pause.) Hey! (Pause. LUCY comes in cautiously, carefully locks the doors behind her. She stands there a moment, not knowing what to do. Then she uses her coat as a barrier between herself and the portrait, as she goes to the kitchen.)* Don't look at me like that. I don't even see you up there. And your stupid chair isn't going to get me either. *(She punches the chair.)* So there! *(Exits to kitchen.)*

(TERROBA enters. She looks exactly like the girl in the portrait. She is angry with herself.)

TERROBA. Stupid, stupid, stupid. *(She hangs up her coat, then self-mocking.)* "Hey Emily, wanna come over and do homework like the old days." Stupid, stupid, stupid.

(Unseen, LUCY stands in the kitchen doorway, still with letters, book bag, and also a broom.)

LUCY. Who you talking to? *(TERROBA screams. LUCY screams.)* Don't scare me! Don't scare me!

TERROBA. Scare YOU?! *(Beat.)* What are you doing here?! You have tutoring!

LUCY. No tutoring. Because of the storm.

TERROBA *(starts upstairs. With finality)*. I've got homework. *(LUCY remains where she is with coat on, throws newspaper and mail on the floor. TERROBA stops.)* What? What now?

LUCY. You know what.

TERROBA *(sighs)*. You have to get over this.

LUCY. Well, I'm not over it yet. Okay?!

TERROBA *(opens closet. Over-loud for LUCY's benefit)*. What have we here? Coats coats and more coats. And overshoes, and boots. And coat hangers. All monsters have taken up residence elsewhere. *(TERROBA starts to close closet.)*

LUCY. Not so fast. *(LUCY pokes in closet with broom. She jumps back frightened.)* Oh!

TERROBA. What?

LUCY *(realizing)*. Oh, it's just a jacket. Okay.

TERROBA. Give me your coat. *(Tries to take LUCY's coat.)*

LUCY. Don't touch me.

TERROBA. I was just going to hang it up.

LUCY. Here. *(LUCY tosses the coat on floor. TERROBA hangs it up.)*

TERROBA. You are so messy. Put that stuff [letters] on the table.

LUCY. I don't know why I have to bring in the letters every day.

TERROBA. Because it's your job.

LUCY. I'm not allowed to read them, why should I have to bring them in?

TERROBA (*for the tenth time*). You bring them in so the house looks occupied. If you leave letters in the box, we're sitting ducks.

LUCY. We're sitting ducks just from letters?

TERROBA. Letters in the box make you a target.

LUCY. Then the mailman shouldn't leave them!

TERROBA. It's his job to leave them. It's your job to bring them in so the house looks occupied. I'm going upstairs.

LUCY (*worried*). No. Poke under the chair first. (*LUCY holds out the broom. TERROBA takes it and pokes under the chair.*)

TERROBA. Poke, poke, poke. Okay?

LUCY. You'll thank me when there's something under there some day.

TERROBA. There's nothing under anything, Lucy. Should I poke under the sofa?

LUCY. Why?

TERROBA. In case there's something under it!

LUCY. Don't be ridiculous. Nothing's under the *sofa*. (*LUCY kicks the chair.*)

TERROBA. Lucy!

LUCY. Who cares! It's a crummy old chair. Send it to the dump.

TERROBA. Gramma liked it. (*TERROBA sits and sinks down into the chair.*)

LUCY (*to chair*). Oh no. Let her go! You let her go!

TERROBA. What?!

LUCY. Give me your hand! I'll pull you out!

TERROBA. I can get out. Lucy, calm down.

LUCY. Oh. I thought it was pulling you down.

TERROBA. No. It's not pulling; it's fine. (*Bounces.*) A little lumpy maybe, but fine.

LUCY. It's *a lot* lumpy. How could Gramma even stand to sit in it?

TERROBA. Maybe the lumps fit her behind.

LUCY. Well they don't fit mine.

TERROBA (*to chair*). You sure are a lumpy chair.

LUCY (*mad*). Oh great, now *you're* talkin' to the chair! Are you gonna turn loopy like Gramma before she died? "Looks like it's just you and me; these grandchildren are just too busy for us. Don't mind me, Lucy, me and my old chair are having a little chat."

TERROBA. Probably because *you* wouldn't talk to her.

LUCY. Stop blaming me!

TERROBA. Nobody's *blaming* anybody. (*Beat, examining chair.*) This chair is a wreck. Maybe we could get it reupholstered or something.

LUCY. I hate it.

TERROBA. We'll add it to the list of stuff you hate around here. (*As she starts upstairs.*) Don't make a mess. Mom's gotta talk to the chairman today.

LUCY. She's gonna be in a bad mood.

TERROBA. That's why don't make a mess.

LUCY (*to keep TERROBA in the room*). Yeah, she hates the chairman.

TERROBA (*returning*). She doesn't *hate* him. Where do you come up with these things?

LUCY. She does. Because of the suit thing—the suit thing.

TERROBA. What—? ...Suit affliction?

LUCY. Yeah; he's got *suit affliction*. A fatal case.

TERROBA. Lucy—Suit affliction is a *joke*—when nobody respects you, you put on a suit to get some respect.

LUCY. I don't hear a joke in that.

TERROBA. You're too little.

LUCY. You hate the chairman, too. He makes you so nervous you can't study.

TERROBA. I don't hate him; he doesn't *have* to give money for getting A's.

LUCY. Would he give me a hundred dollars for college if I get an A?

TERROBA (*exasperated*). It's a program. Any kid gets an A, gets a hundred dollars. But the way you study, his hundred dollars is pretty safe. (*Heading upstairs.*) No mess, Lucy, no kidding.

LUCY. Let me come be in your room.

TERROBA. No.

LUCY. I'll be silent. Not a word. Zip.

TERROBA. That's what you said last time. (*TERROBA exits upstairs, leaving the broom behind. LUCY gets an idea. She takes the broom for protection, makes threatening gestures to the chair and portrait as she goes. LUCY drags dining room chairs away from the table, takes an afghan from the back of the sofa, tosses it on the chairs to make a cave. Goes to the closet with her broom, gingerly opens it, pokes inside, takes out Mom's suit jacket and ties up the chair with it. All of her unspoken activities are punctuated by her own soundtrack [humming].*)

LUCY (*to chair, while tying it up*). You won't stay in our house if I have anything to say about it. You'll go right in the soonest garbage truck. There! That should hold you forever. (*She pulls an old suitcase from the closet, opens it, takes a half slip from inside and puts it on her head, wearing the slip like it's hair; takes out alligator shoes, growsl at them, places them strategically. Walks in a queenly fashion.*) The Queen of the Amazon proclaims tomorrow a no-school day for all public school children in America.

(TERROBA enters with her book.)

TERROBA. Do you want something to eat—what's on the chair?

LUCY. That is not a chair; that is a prisoner of war. Caught trying to assassinate her highness.

TERROBA (*unties the chair and hangs up the jacket*). You're gonna ruin Mom's good jacket.

LUCY. She never wears it.

TERROBA. You're still not allowed to play with it.

LUCY. The Queen of the Amazon may play with anything she likes.

TERROBA. The Queen of the Amazon wears a slip on her head?

LUCY. This is my long flowing hair. (*Big voice.*) You must obey my every commandment.

TERROBA. Like: thou shalt not slay thy bossy little sister?

LUCY (*big voice*). Don't enrage the Queen, or you will be sorry.

TERROBA. Is this the mess I told you not to make? (*Suspicious.*) Where did you get Grandma's alligator shoes?

LUCY. Not shoes. Dangerous man-eating reptiles along the river bank.

TERROBA. Is that Grandma Minnie's slip?

LUCY. Hair!

TERROBA. Is it Grandma's?

LUCY. It was in her suitcase.

TERROBA. You're not supposed to be in Grandma's stuff.

LUCY. Why? She doesn't need it.

TERROBA. Chill, Lucy. Just chill.

LUCY. I can play with it if I want.

TERROBA. Mom won't like it.

LUCY. Well, who's going to tell her, snitch face? (TERROBA crosses and looks in suitcase as LUCY gets large books from the bookcase which she spreads along the floor in a long path. She steps from book to book. They talk over the action. LUCY, lying.) Besides, Gramma said I could have anything I want. Anything in her suitcase. She said so.

TERROBA (suspicious). When did you two have this conversation?

LUCY. Before she died. When do you think? Yesterday?

TERROBA. You never even went in her room. The whole time she was sick.

LUCY. I'm little; I don't have to talk to sick people.

TERROBA. It was fun to talk to her.

LUCY. It wasn't fun. It was scary.

TERROBA. You weren't too scared when she took you to the lake. You weren't too scared when she took you to the movies.

LUCY. I was too scared. The whole time.

TERROBA. You weren't. Not 'til she got sick. As soon as Gramma couldn't take you places—Zip!—you don't go in her room. I don't know why she wanted you to have anything.

LUCY. She didn't give me anything.

TERROBA. She gave you this house.

LUCY. Mom still has to pay the mortgage, and besides she didn't give it to me; she hated me.

TERROBA. If she hated you then why did she want you to have the ring with the beautiful blue stone?

LUCY. Because the ring with the beautiful blue stone doesn't exist, that's why. It's easy to give somebody something that doesn't exist.

TERROBA (to herself). She gave me the tiny little diamond.

LUCY. There's no tiny little diamond, either. It was fever dreams.

TERROBA. I know! (*Beat.*) She was pretty sick there at the end.

LUCY. Sick and mean.

TERROBA. What did Gramma ever do to you?

LUCY. She *died*, she died to me.

TERROBA. ...She couldn't help it. You are a crumb.

LUCY. I'm not—listen, if she wanted me to have a ring with a beautiful blue stone, she for sure wanted me to have her *slip*.

TERROBA. You better not hurt Mom's law books.

LUCY. I must step carefully from rock to rock so I don't get eaten. (*Referring to shoes.*) The River Amazon is full of alligators.

TERROBA. Not really. It's too full of pollution now.

LUCY. Well, *my* River Amazon is full of alligators!

TERROBA (*thoughtful, at suitcase*). Maybe Gramma always wanted a tiny little diamond, or something. Hey! Maybe there's a secret hidden compartment. For rings. (*They go to the suitcase. They poke around; find pearls, scarves.*)

LUCY. It's just an old cardboard suitcase. There's no secret compartment.

TERROBA. She let me wear these pearls once.

LUCY. Big deal.

TERROBA (*at portrait*). No, they're very old. She's got them on in her picture. That's how old.

LUCY. How come you got to wear them?

TERROBA. It was for the Halloween. I was an oyster.

LUCY. Oh, yeah, *weird!*

TERROBA. No, it was very clever. It was Gramma's idea.

LUCY (*mad*). Yeah, she's the one talked me into being a mushroom. (*Takes a cushion from the sofa and puts it on her head. It makes her look remarkably like a toadstool.*)

TERROBA. I thought that was your own stupid idea.

LUCY. Nope. (*Points to portrait.*) Hers. She guaranteed nobody else would be one. (*Sarcastic.*) She was right!

TERROBA. Let's put this stuff away. You've turned the living room into a dump.

LUCY. No I haven't; dumps are outside. Let's play with it before we put it away.

TERROBA. The house has to be nice for when Mom gets home.

LUCY. Come on, just for a little while. Then I'll help you straighten up. Come on. (*LUCY tempts TERROBA with a second slip.*)

TERROBA (*checks clock*). Oh, all right, but just for a little while. (*TERROBA puts slip on head. LUCY is excited that she's tricked TERROBA into playing.*)

LUCY. I'll be in my queen cave. You must come and pay my homage.

TERROBA. Pay your homage?

LUCY. Yeah, come to my cave and pay it. You can pay it with your fabulous silken scarves.

TERROBA. That's not what pay homage means.

LUCY. Who cares?

TERROBA. Well, not you, if your vocabulary score is evidence.

LUCY. Be careful of the alligators. Step only on the rocks.

TERROBA. I, Terroba, Queen of the lesser Amazon, come to the cave of Lucy—(*LUCY threatens TERROBA with the alligator shoes; she growls.*) Are you a queen or alligators? (*LUCY growls.*) Alligators are silent, Lucy.

LUCY. Don't call me Lucy. Lucy is too stupid for a queen.

TERROBA. Not as stupid as Terroba. I told Mom and Dad to call you Lucy or don't bring you home from the hospital.

LUCY. It's stupid.

TERROBA. It was the best I could do on short notice. Mom and Dad were going to call you End-all-war.

LUCY. Call me something better.

TERROBA. I, Terroba, Queen of the lesser Amazon, come to the cave of *Lucinderoba*, (*LUCY squeals with delight and runs to cave.*) Queen of the Major Amazon, to pay homage and give her my fabulous silken scarves.

LUCY. Hum something. (*TERROBA hums as LUCY marches along the rocks in a grand fashion.*) I, Lucinderoba, Queen of the Amazon, do take your fabulous homage. (*A terrible crash. The GIRLS scream and grab each other. Then, LUCY gains control of herself.*) Let me go.

TERROBA. You hugged me first. (*TERROBA crosses to the door.*)

LUCY (*worried*). Where are you going?

TERROBA. I want to see what that was. (*They are at the front door. Open it. It's monstrously windy, loud. They see that a tree has fallen. They are impressed and scared. Close door.*)

LUCY. Man! That was close!

TERROBA (*to cover fear*). It's not so close.

LUCY. It almost fell on the house!

TERROBA. It wouldn't have fallen on the house even if it fell the other way.

LUCY. Right into the living room! (*LUCY runs toward the upstairs steps.*)

TERROBA. Don't go up there.

LUCY. I want to take a picture of the tree.

TERROBA. You don't need a picture; you can see it.

LUCY. No, so we can show everybody at school.