

the Portrait the Wind the Chair
Y York

In this wonderfully imaginative play, [redacted] Lucy and her older sister, Terroba, find themselves stranded in their "gramma's" old house during the worst windstorm of the century. As the storm intensifies, nothing remains the same: an old chair develops a mind of its own. Gramma pops out of her portrait, and Lucy grows in her understanding of fear and the power of love.

Two Females

In the two scenes that follow, which open the play, Lucy and her sister, Terroba, begin their night in Gramma's old house.



This living room/dining room of a house, a little run-down, simply furnished, and with a lot of houseplants. 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. Wind. 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.)

LUCY: 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!

SCENES III



ll make lots of smoke,
eps breaking wood and
d, don't we? (Joining in,
io; put that on, we don't
s working!
be fire. A great cloud of
belly of the whale. The
shudder and we hear the
eze coming on.)
their heads and listen
e! Papa — the whale is
to him.) Hold on to me,
! Hold on!
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mounted to one, gigantic
upstage as lights simulta-
nd on the scrim we see fly-
nd debris. The sound of
distinct cries of Pinocchio
s names.)

(Exits to kitchen. Terroba, fourteen, 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.)
TERROBA: *(With finality.)* I've got homework.
(Lucy remains where she is with coat on, throws newspaper and mail on the floor. Terroba stops.)
TERROBA: What? What now?
LUCY: You know what.
TERROBA: *(Sighs.)* You have to get over this.
LUCY: Well, I'm not over it yet. OK?!
(Terroba opens closet.)
TERROBA: *(Overloud 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.)
LUCY: Oh!
TERROBA: What?
LUCY: *(Realizing.)* Oh, it's just a jacket. OK.
TERROBA: Give me your coat.
(Terroba 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 the 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. OK?
LUCY: You'll thank me when there's something under there someday.
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 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 to 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 As.

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.

STREET

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 chairs away from the table, takes the 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 its hair; takes out alligator shoes, growls, places them strategically. Walks in a queenly fashion.)

LUCY: 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.)

TERROBA: 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 wilt be sorry.

TERROBA: Is this the mess I told you not to make! *(Suspicious.)*

Where did you get Gramma's alligator shoes?

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

TERROBA: Is that Gramma Minnie's slip?

LUCY: Hair!

TERROBA: Is it Gramma's?

LUCY: It was in her suitcase.

TERROBA: You're not supposed to be in Gramma'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 book case 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: *(In a kid voice.)* 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.
(*Lucy goes 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 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.

(*Lucy 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 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 cage. You must come and pay my homage.

TERROBA: Pay your homage?

LUCY: Yeah, come in 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.*)

TERROBA: Are you a Queen or alligators?

(*Lucy growls.*)

TERROBA: Alligators are silent, Lucy.

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

TERROBA: Not as stupid as Terrora. 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 grand fashion.*)

LUCY: I, Lucinderoba, Queen of the Amazon, do take your fabulous homage.

(*These is a terrible crash. The girls scream and grab each other.*)

LUCY: (*Gaining 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 cross to the front door. Open it. It's monstrous 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!

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