

# **JUST A LITTLE CRAZY**

A Play in Two Acts

By Renee C. Rebman

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***Dedication***

*For my mother, Joan Zajack.*

*The playwright,  
Renee C. Rebman*

**STORY OF THE PLAY**

Nola goes back to her parents' home after a disagreement with her boyfriend, Quincy, to find some peace and quiet to sort through her problems. But what she finds instead is a circus of confusion. Her mother, Audrey, is dealing with repairs and redecoration of the house; her father, Lawrence, refuses to help and escapes to work; and an energetic neighbor, Helen, helps watch over Aunt Maggie, Lawrence's somewhat vague sister who recently moved in after possibly poisoning her own cat - and her late husband.

Between the hidden money that turns up missing and Quincy's arrival and bout with food (?) poisoning, these lovable characters try to overcome the differences between the sexes and the generations to keep their relationships in tact and Aunt Maggie out of trouble! Lighthearted, hilarious, and vastly entertaining. One interior set.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS** (2 m, 4 w)

**NOLA TUPPER:** A woman in transition. Always practical and helpful, she suddenly realizes these qualities aren't getting her the things she wants out of life.

**LAWRENCE TUPPER:** Nola's semi-retired, semi-perceptive father. He likes to have things his way, running smoothly and with a minimum of conflict.

**AUDREY TUPPER:** Nola's sweet-natured, dizzy mother. She often bears the family's burdens and they have learned to depend on her.

**AUNT MAGGIE:** Lawrence's sister. She has recently moved into the Tupper home after her questionable mental condition led them to believe she needed supervision.

**HELEN CLARK:** A neighbor, currently hard at work helping Audrey redecorate and repair the Tupperts' old Victorian home. Brash and self-sufficient, she gets along fine with the odd family.

**QUINCY REARDON:** Nola's uptight, computer genius boyfriend. He lacks sensitivity, and although he loves Nola, he has yet to commit to marriage.

**PLACE:** The Tupperts' slightly shabby, Victorian dining room.

**TIME:** The present.

**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

Act I

Scene 1: Summer morning.

Scene 2: Later that evening.

Act II

Scene 1: A few moments later.

Scene 2: Early the following morning.

### **SETTING**

The slightly shabby dining room of the Tupperts' old Victorian home. A large table and chairs are off CSR. The walls are lined with unmatched, overstuffed bookshelves, chairs and an old sideboard. USR is the entrance from the kitchen area. USL is the exit to the unseen back hallway and backstairs leading up to the bedrooms. DSL is the exit leading to the front parlor and front door of the home.

### **PROPS**

NOLA: Small suitcase, crumpled brown paper bag full of money, bag containing ice cream, glass of water.

HELEN: Coffee cups, etc., big platter of toast, coffee pot, strawberry jam.

MAGGIE: Old photo album, tea, platter of toast.

AUDREY: Dish towel, old bathrobe.

LAWRENCE: Newspaper, keys.

**SOUND EFFECTS:** Cat screeching.

**ACT I**  
**Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: NOLA is seen sneaking quietly into the room from DSL. She carries a small suitcase which she places on the table and opens. She pulls out a crumpled brown paper bag and from that extracts a large bundle of money. She holds the money and looks around the room. Stuffing the bundle back inside the bag, she tiptoes over to a bookcase, pulls out a few dusty volumes and pushes the bag to the back of the shelf. She replaces the books carefully, trying to make them look as if they hadn't been disturbed. She returns to the table and closes her suitcase quietly, then puts it out of the way on the floor along the wall. She walks over to the USL exit and pauses to listen. Satisfied that all is quiet, she crosses SR towards the kitchen. She hears a noise.)*

HELEN: *(Offstage - sarcastically.)* Looks like I'm making the coffee ... again. Late sleepers, that's all there is to it. Depending on good old Helen to take care of everything.

*(Surprised, NOLA does not recognize the voice and panics, skittering around in circles before stopping abruptly and freezing in place DSR. HELEN enters from the kitchen, crosses to USL and listens.)*

HELEN: Audrey? *(SHE listens, shrugs and turns seeing NOLA. Surprised, she screams. Nola screams in reaction.)*  
Who are you?

NOLA: Who are you?

HELEN: *(Irritated.)* I asked you first.

AUDREY: *(Entering from USL.)* What's going on?

HELEN: I just got here a minute ago and found this woman snooping around.

AUDREY: That's no woman, Helen, that's my daughter! Hi, honey! *(SHE goes to NOLA'S side and hugs her.)* This is Nola. You've seen her picture, the one in the gold frame hanging by the parlor window. She's standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

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NOLA: Hello, Mom.

HELEN: (*Studying NOLA.*) You look different, maybe it's your hair. Have you changed your hair?

NOLA: I would hope so. That picture is ancient. I was only about fourteen years old.

AUDREY: Well, it's always been one of my favorites because you look real nice. And Lincoln does too. He was a great leader, I've always admired him.

HELEN: You can hardly see Lincoln, all you can see are his legs.

AUDREY: I still know it's him, that's what counts.

NOLA: Excuse me, but we haven't met yet.

AUDREY: (*Laughing.*) Such a sense of humor. You can't tell me you've forgotten your own mother. (*To HELEN.*) She's exaggerating. It's only been about a year since her last visit.

NOLA: Eight months, Mom. And I meant her. (*SHE gestures towards HELEN.*)

AUDREY: Don't be ridiculous, Helen is here all the time.

HELEN: She means you haven't introduced me and her.

AUDREY: Oh, dear. I misunderstood. I do that a lot. More so in the mornings. I find that strange.

HELEN: (*Taking matters in hand.*) I'm Helen Clark, Nola. I live down the street a few houses.

AUDREY: (*Helpfully.*) The cream-colored house with the green trim, a lovely old oak tree shading the driveway.

NOLA: (*Shaking HELEN'S hand.*) I didn't notice your house, but I'm sure it's beautiful.

AUDREY: Oh, it is! She's got a wonderful way with these old Victorian homes. That's why I hired her to help redecorate this elephant. It needs more work than we realized when we bought it.

HELEN: I need a new roof.

AUDREY: On her house, not this one. Our roof is fine.

HELEN: That's why I'm working for your mom. The extra money will come in handy. My husband, Greg, is a teacher. Underpaid -- they all are.

NOLA: So I've heard.

AUDREY: (*Surprised.*) You know Greg?

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NOLA: No! I meant teachers in general.

AUDREY: Dear me, I misunderstood. Well, it's early.

HELEN: *(To NOLA.)* Excuse me, but how did you get in?

AUDREY: I gave you a key, didn't I, dear?

HELEN: We changed the locks last month, remember? The old ones kept jamming all the time.

AUDREY: They did! How did you get in?

NOLA: The front door; it wasn't locked.

AUDREY: *(Alarmed.)* Helen, please run upstairs and see if she's in bed.

HELEN: I'm on my way. She wasn't in the backyard, but you'd better check out front.

AUDREY: Right. I hope she hasn't done anything drastic.

HELEN: Don't worry about that yet. Let's find her.

NOLA: Can I help?

AUDREY: Just stay put, honey.

*(HELEN and AUDREY rush out the exits. NOLA is bewildered. She walks around the room, checking things out, staring thoughtfully at the books she hid the money behind. Audrey comes rushing back into the room from DSL. Nola jumps.)*

AUDREY: Did Helen find her?

NOLA: She hasn't come back downstairs yet. Find who, Mom?

AUDREY: *(Distracted, speaks to HERSELF, pacing.)* This isn't good, not good at all. But then, she's only left once before - just the one time. Maybe I just forgot to lock up. Maybe that's all there is to it.

NOLA: *(Holds AUDREY by her shoulders, stopping her.)* Who, Mom? Who are you looking for?

AUDREY: Aunt Maggie.

NOLA: Aunt Maggie is here? *(AUDREY nods yes.)* You mean she lives here?

AUDREY: She moved in about two months ago.

NOLA: But she has her own house!

AUDREY: Your father has persuaded her to sell it. There's a very nice couple from Vermont interested in it.

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