

synopsis rc

***The Rocking Chair***

Harry Pauley is a Navy veteran of WWII. He has a B.A. from Columbia College, M.A. from Columbia University, Ph.D. from the University of Missouri. He taught at New Hampton School, the University of Minnesota/Duluth, and Stephens College. He is Professor Emeritus from Shippensburg University where he taught the Shakespeare course for 18 years.

*The Rocking Chair*, a play in 3 scenes. Running time—55 minutes. 3 women, 1 man. A single set: A bed, a table, two chairs, a dresser, a rocking chair.

Lucille, late sixties, is in a nursing home to be near her terminally ill husband, Andrew. Dorothy is her daughter. Charlie is the man she loved years ago. When Andrew dies, Charlie wants Lucille to go with him to Rome. Dorothy wants her to stay in the nursing home. That conflict reflects the conflict within Lucille.

*Lucille.* So that's why I'm here. And I'm going to stay. I'm selling the house, and I'm going to stay here...I'm tired.

*Charlie.* You're tired of living.

*Lucille.* No. I want to live. Safe. Secure. Untroubled. Easy. Quiet.

*Charlie.* Disgusting.

*Lucille.* Mind your own business, Charlie.

*Charlie.* You haven't changed.

*Lucille.* I'm old, Charlie.

*Charlie. Laughs.* That's what you said when you married Andrew.

I'm getting old, Charlie. You were twenty-two....

*Lucille.* Yes, I loved you, Charlie. I guess I still do.

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*Dorothy.* These flowers are really special. Why did that man bring you special flowers.

*Lucille.* We were friends. A long time ago. And he works in the garden.

*Dorothy.* What kind of friends?

*Lucille.* Lovers. I loved him. I still do.

*Dorothy.* What are you saying?

*Lucille.* I'm saying what's true. As you get older, it's easier to tell the truth.

*Dorothy.* Have you been seeing him?

*Lucille.* This is the first time I've seen him in forty years.

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*Lucille.* This time he's going to Rome.

*Dorothy.* Why Rome?

*Charlie.* I've never been.

*Dorothy.* You've never been to Rome.

*Charlie.* No. Strange, isn't it? Oh I passed through. A few hours at the airport. A fast trip into the city and back between planes. But this time I'm going to stay and see it.

*Lucille.* I'd like to see the Pope.

*Dorothy.* The Pope?

*Lucille.* Yes. The Pope.

*Dorothy.* Whatever for?

*Lucille.* I don't know. I've never seen the Pope.

*Dorothy.* But you're not even Catholic.

*Lucille.* What does that have to do with anything? I also am not French, but I'd like to see the Eiffel Tower too. On the way back from Rome. First the Pope.

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*Dorothy.* Are you going to leave with him?

*Lucille.* No. I don't have that kind of courage.

*Dorothy.* Courage.

*Lucille.* Yes. Courage. Charlie is going to fly to Rome. From there he hasn't decided yet. He'll think about it. Maybe he'll stay in Rome for a

while. Mybe he'll come back here. Or go to Athens. Or Spain or Africa.

Whatever he feels like doing.

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*Dorothy.* Mother, I want what's best for you.

*Lucille.* And what is that?

*Dorothy.* Stay here. You're comfortable. You have good care. Good food. Friends. I can visit you.

*Lucille.* I'm miserable here.

*Dorothy.* Now you are. The shock of Father's death will wear off. The grief will get duller. You'll be fine.

*Lucille.* I'll be dead. And Charlie....

*Dorothy.* Charlie. Charlie. Damn Charlie.

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*Lucille.* All right, Dorothy. But. But. But. This place is for the living dead.

*Dorothy.* This is a nice place. A good place.

*Lucille.* The place for me. The living dead.

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*Lucille.* No. No. Nothing.

*X to bed UC. Sits.  
Stares into space.*

*Dorothy.* What are you doing?

*Lucille.* Nothing. Practicing. Rehearsing.

*Dorothy.* Rehearsing what?

*Lucille.* The rest of my life.

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*Charlie.* Why doesn't she want you to leave?

*Lucille.* Common sense. Good ordinary common sense.

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*Charlie.* Why does she want to keep you here? Not in your home. Not in her apartment. But here. Why here? Why in this tomb?

*Lucille.* It's not a tomb. Most of the people here need this place. It's life for them.

*Charlie.* For them. Not for you. For you it's death. Lucille, why does Dorothy want you here?

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*Dorothy.* I want you to come home with me.

*Lucille.* You want me to go home with you until the danger as you see it is gone. Until Charlie is gone and then—zip!—back in here with me. No.

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