

## Document Citation

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UP, DOWN, FRAGILE  
**Haut bas fragile**

**Jacques Rivette**

FRANCE/SWITZERLAND, 1994

169 minutes ■ Colour/35mm  
 Production Company: **Pierre Grise Productions/Carac Films/George Reinhart Productions**

Executive Producer: **Martine Marignac**

Producer: **Maurice Tinchant**

Screenplay: **Jacques Rivette,**

**Laurence Côte, Nathalie Richard,**

**Pascal Bonitzer, Christine Laurent**

Cinematographer: **Christophe Pollock**

Editor: **Nicole Lubtchansky**

Production Designer: **Manu de**

**Chauvigny**

Sound: **Florian Eidenbenz**

Music: **François Bréant**

Principal Cast: **Marianne Denicourt,**

**Nathalie Richard, Laurence Côte,**

**André Marcon, Bruno Todeschini,**

**Wilfred Benaïche, Anna Karina, Enzo**

**Enzo, Stéphanie Schwartzbrod**

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Veteran director Jacques Rivette continues to surprise with his latest film. *Haut bas fragile* could hardly be more different from his most recent work, revealing a relaxed, genial sensibility. The film is a bright, sometimes frivolous romp through Paris in the summertime, a musical comedy about the adventures of three young women over a hot, lazy month in the City of Love.

Ninon, a streetwise hooker, leaves her trashy boyfriend and gets a job with a courier company. Fascinated by dancing, she hangs out in a nightclub run by the mysterious Alfredo Garcia. Louise checks into a hotel; she recently emerged from being in a coma for five years, and discovers her aunt has died and left her a house. Ida is a librarian in a decorative-arts reading room. Tormented by the fact that she is an adopted child, she obsesses over an old pop tune that might hold the key to her parentage. Linking these three stories is the enigmatic Roland, a friend of Louise's late aunt who habituates the library where Ida works, and who falls for Ninon, whose office neighbours his.

Rivette effortlessly brings the stories together over the course of the film. Nothing feels contrived, and the plot becomes more convoluted as the film progresses. As the characters' lives intertwine, the past casts a shadow over the present, forcing them to confront what they want from life. And just when things appear to be getting too serious, Rivette's protagonists break into impromptu song-and-dance numbers.

Bursting with energy and full of buoyant music, *Haut bas fragile* is beautiful to behold, from its sun-drenched streets and gardens to its breathtakingly staged nightclub dance sequences. By letting the three leads write their own parts, Rivette has captured the intricacies of intersecting lives.

■ **Piers Handling**

**Jacques Rivette** was born in Rouen, France, in 1928. A writer at first, he began working in film as an assistant to Jean Renoir and as a cameraman for short films by Eric Rohmer and François Truffaut. He also made numerous shorts of his own. He made his feature debut with *Paris nous appartient* before serving as editor-in-chief of "Cahiers du cinéma" from 1963 to 1965. Features include: *Paris nous appartient* (60), *La religieuse* (66), *L'amour fou* (68), *Out 1* (70), *Out 1: Spectre* (71), *Céline et Julie vont en bateau* (74), *Duelle* (76), *Norôit* (76), *Merry-Go-Round* (78), *Le pont du nord* (81), *L'amour par terre* (84), *Hurlevent* (86), *La bande des quatre* (88), *La belle noiseuse* (91), *Jeanne la pucelle I. Les batailles II. Les prisons* (93) and *Haut bas fragile* (94).

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