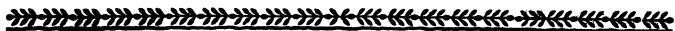


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A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

ANITA LOOS'

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

DRAMATIZED BY

KRISTIN SERGEL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

A Comedy in Three Acts

FOR SEVEN MEN, TEN WOMEN AND EXTRAS

CHARACTERS

LORELEI LEE	<i>whom gentlemen prefer</i>
DOROTHY	<i>her best friend</i>
MR. LEE ("Daddy")	<i>Lorelei's father</i>
BERT	<i>a tennis player</i>
SAM	<i>a would-be writer</i>
THE CAPTAIN	<i>of the "Majestic"</i>
MRS. VAN OSBORNE	<i>a social climber</i>
SYLVIA	<i>her eligible daughter</i>
MRS. VAN AUSTIN	<i>another social climber</i>
MARGARET	<i>her eligible daughter</i>
MRS. SPOFFARD	<i>who is very rich</i>
HENRY SPOFFARD III.	<i>her sought-after son</i>
MISS CHAPMAN	<i>a companion</i>
AUNT DOLLY	<i>a free thinker</i>
MR. BROUSSARD, SR. }	<i>of Broussard & Son</i>
MR. BROUSSARD, JR. }	
CHAMBERMAID	<i>and an astute one</i>
THREE YOUNG MEN }	<i>extras</i>
THREE YOUNG GIRLS }	
TWO STEWARDS }	
PORTER }	
HOTEL MANAGER }	

PLACE: *Here and abroad.*

TIME: *The Roaring '20's.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE, Scene One: *A sitting-room in a New York City hotel suite. Summer.*

Scene Two: On the deck of the "Majestic," bound for Europe. Several days later, morning.

ACT TWO, Scene One: *A small sitting-room in a hotel in Paris. A few days later.*

Scene Two: The same. Mid-afternoon, about a week later.

ACT THREE: *The same. The following morning.*

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

LORELEI: She is a dazzling blonde with the most wonderful mixture of sweetness, naïveté and downright practicality to be found in one person. Lorelei is seldom perturbed by any situation; her ample and utterly amazing fund of philosophic knowledge always saves the day. To say that she has a "way" with men is a complete understatement. Throughout the play she wears an eye-filling collection of clothes of the period.

DOROTHY: Dorothy is an attractive brunette; she is a good-natured sport with a somewhat caustic sense of humor. Although she is Lorelei's best friend, she continues to be baffled at the workings of that girl's mind. Dorothy, too, wears an assortment of good-looking clothes of the period.

DADDY: Daddy is a big, gruff, rawboned man with a Middle Western twang. He can be hardheaded in a business deal, but Lorelei has no trouble wrapping him around her finger. He wears expensive clothes, but never seems quite comfortable in them.

BERT: He is an attractive young man, dressed for deck tennis.

SAM: Sam is a flamboyant young man who imagines himself a writer. In Scene Two of Act Two he goes "artistic" in dress, appearing in very tight dark trousers, white shirt with open collar and a beret.

THE CAPTAIN: The captain is a stern, rather "stuffy" individual who manages his ship with an iron hand. He wears a captain's uniform.

MRS. VAN OSBORNE and SYLVIA: Mrs. Van Osborne is an aggressive, middle-aged woman with social aspirations. Her daughter is a typical flapper of the period.

MRS. VAN AUSTIN and MARGARET: Mrs. Van Austin, like Mrs. Van Osborne, is a social climber. Margaret is a meek, plain-looking girl.

MRS. SPOFFARD: She is a sweet, elderly lady who is hardly allowed to take a deep breath for herself without permission. There is a constant air of bewilderment about her. Her clothes are expensive but cheerless.

HENRY: Henry is a very naïve, proper young man. He has been brought up in "the lap of luxury," and has rarely known what it is to make a decision for himself. Lorelei finally manages to change all that. He dresses well.

MISS CHAPMAN: She is around thirty-five, a militant woman who is never bewildered by anything. She wears severely tailored suits and shirtwaists with collars and ties. Her hair is made up in a tight bun at the back. In Act Two, Scene Two, she has been to the beauty salon and appears in a frizzy bob which protrudes just below her ears and is capped by a low tiara across her forehead. Her face is extremely made up.

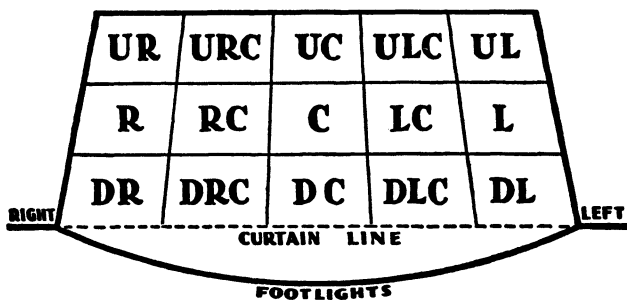
AUNT DOLLY: Aunt Dolly is a squarely-built, middle-aged woman—the crusader type. She declaims rather than speaks. Her clothes are practical rather than fashionable.

BROUSSARD, SR. and BROUSSARD, JR.: Both are dapper little Frenchmen; one is the father, the other the son. The elder Broussard has a moustache. Both are voluble and use their hands a great deal. They are impeccably dressed, spats and all.

CHAMBERMAID: She is young, friendly and astute. She wears a plain dress with an apron, and a small maid's type cap on her head.

EXTRAS: The Young Men and Young Girls wear colorful summer clothes of the period. The Stewards wear dark trousers and short white jackets. The Porter is a very excitable man; he wears a rumpled suit. The Hotel Manager is a very correct young man. He wears a flower in his buttonhole.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL: *Sitting-room, New York hotel suite:* overstuffed easy chair; phonograph on end table; phonograph record; desk and chair; telephone on desk; two large wardrobe trunks partially packed with feminine clothing; several partially packed suitcases; miscellaneous articles of women's apparel strewn about the room, on chairs, desk, etc.; book on a chair. *Deck of the "Majestic":* five deck chairs with cushions and blankets; two shuffleboard poles and shuffleboard disc; life preservers (optional). *Room in Paris hotel:* drapes on window; small table and telephone; table and two occasional chairs; small settee with pillows; desk with drawers; desk chair; rugs; on table L C (Act Two, Scene Two): manicure kit with (among other things) a hand mirror, box of candy; add for Act Three: vase on table L C; key under one corner of rug in front of settee and a yellow pawn ticket under opposite corner of same rug; in desk drawers: passports, nightdress, various pieces of lingerie, envelope, jewelry box, Lorelei's diary (with lock).

DOROTHY: Newspaper, bouquet of flowers, five-dollar bill, hand luggage, wad of franc notes and street map in purse, sheet of paper (hotel bill).

LORELEI: Red scarf, bouquet of flowers, purse with slip of paper inside (on deck chair, Act One, Scene Two), hand luggage, wad of franc notes in purse (Act Two, Scene One), several strands of beads (Act Two, Scene One), huge diamond ring, hat with pink roses (offstage, Act Two, Scene Two).

FIRST STEWARD: Tray with several cups of bouillon, handkerchief, blanket, dust cloth.

SECOND STEWARD: Tray with several cups of bouillon and plate of cookies.

MRS. VAN OSBORNE: Purse.

PORTER: Luggage.

AUNT DOLLY: Wads of franc notes in purse, large pasteboard placard, handkerchief.

HOTEL MANAGER: Hotel bill, yellow pawn ticket.

CHAMBERMAID: Feather duster, towels, hatbox, beaded dress.

DADDY: Small coin, roll of money.

MRS. SPOFFARD: Handkerchief.

BROUSSARD, SR.: Large document covered with seals.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only with the express purpose of snapping up cues.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING about *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

“Many ‘character’ parts appropriate for high-school student. Witty dialogue, entertaining romantic developments. Very popular with students and families.”

*Margo Benedetto,
Centralia High School,
Centralia, Wash.*

“*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* was extremely well received by the audience. This fun look back at the simpler times of the 1920s was filled with quips that prove that while times change, human nature doesn’t.”

*Laurel M. Cortellino,
Methuen High School,
Methuen, Mass.*

“The audience truly enjoyed this classic comedy.”

*Martha Gates,
Wichita High School Southeast,
Wichita, Kan.*

“This is a fun show. My students enjoyed learning the dances of the ’20s and creating characters that were over the top. The audiences loved the show; we had more people attending than usual.”

*Cathy Archer,
Rutland High School,
Rutland, Vt.*

ACT ONE

Scene One

SCENE: *The sitting-room in a New York hotel suite. Only the few essential furnishings are needed. There is a large overstuffed easy chair L C. On a small end table D R is a phonograph. A desk is D L. On the desk is a telephone; in front of it is a small chair. There are doors R and L, leading to the bedrooms, while a door U C opens into the hotel corridor. Two large wardrobe trunks stand at R C, their contents spilling out from half-opened drawers. Also, scattered about the room, on chairs, the desk and floor are partially packed suitcases and miscellaneous items of feminine clothing.]*

BEFORE RISE OF CURTAIN: *The phonograph is playing some tinny music of the 1920's—the "vo-do-dee-oh" sort of thing.]*

FIRST YOUNG MAN [*singing loudly and slightly off-key, to tune of "Mademoiselle from Armentières"*]. Da-da-da-da, da-da da-da—

FIRST GIRL [*a squealing voice*]. Now, Jerry! . . .

FIRST YOUNG MAN [*encouraged to put words to it*]. Mesdemoiselles from Little Rock—

SECOND GIRL [*also squealing*]. Don't start that again!

SECOND YOUNG MAN. Par—lay—voooooo! [*Curtain begins to rise.*]

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *LORELEI and DOROTHY are near the doorway U C, saying good-by to a group of friends who are standing in the doorway, just leaving. The group consists of two young men and three young girls.]*

THIRD GIRL. You'll be sure and write?

LORELEI. We will!

DOROTHY. Both of us!

FIRST GIRL. Let us know what it's like over there.

FIRST YOUNG MAN [*singing*]. Over there! Over there——

SECOND GIRL [*shrieking, giving him a poke*]. Oh, Jerry-y-y-y!

DOROTHY. We'll send postcards from every place we go.

LORELEI. London! Paris—Geneva—Venice—Rome——

THIRD GIRL [*thrilled*]. Can't you just *see* all the labels on their suitcases!

DOROTHY [*holding up a newspaper*]. Thanks for bringing us the Little Rock paper. [*Gaily tosses it in general direction of R C.*]

FIRST GIRL. You're on page two, Society Section.

SECOND YOUNG MAN. The home town cares about you, so be a credit.

FIRST YOUNG MAN. Don't come back with a foreign accent!
[*Laughs appreciatively.*]

SECOND YOUNG MAN. And watch out for those guys with a title—you know, the kind wanting to hitch up with a Yankee girl so her daddy'll buy a new roof for the family cha-teau.

FIRST YOUNG MAN. Hey, don't give them ideas!

SECOND YOUNG MAN. And get this—whether you're in Holland or in France—don't take any wooden *sous*! [*Collapses with mirth.*]

SECOND GIRL [*joining laughter*]. Oh, honestly, you *kill* me!

THIRD GIRL [*when they have recovered*]. Well, good-by, Lorelei—[*Kisses her.*]—good-by, Dorothy. [*Kisses DOROTHY.*]

FIRST GIRL. We'll be down on the pier. [*Now she kisses LORELEI and DOROTHY.*]

LORELEI. Will you *really*?

SECOND GIRL [*as she gives LORELEI and DOROTHY effusive kisses*]. We wouldn't miss it for anything!

THIRD GIRL. We're going to wave till you're out of sight!

LORELEI [*unhitching a long red scarf hanging from her dress*]. We'll wave right back. [*Waves scarf wildly.*]

- DOROTHY [*leaning out doorway, as group starts to leave*]. Bye bye, kids!
- SECOND GIRL. Bon voyage! [*Others repeat this, and FIRST YOUNG MAN fades off with "Mesdemoiselles" as LORELEI shuts door.*]
- LORELEI [*leaning back against door with an ecstatic expression*]. "Bon voyage"!
- DOROTHY [*crossing D R, turning off phonograph*]. Whew—I'm all worn out! [*Collapses on floor D R.*]
- LORELEI [*coming C*]. The French say things so nicely. I mean, "bon voyage" sounds so much better than "have a nice time."
- DOROTHY [*sbrugging*]. Well, it's shorter.
- LORELEI [*bugging herself ecstatically*]. Doesn't it make you feel terrific? Like nothing'll spoil our trip. [*Suddenly.*] I hope they don't start another war in Europe—
- DOROTHY [*raising her head off floor*]. Well, honestly, Lorelei!
- LORELEI [*sbrugging it off*]. It's silly to think about a war in Europe—because they've already had one.
- DOROTHY. You think too much, Lorelei. That's your trouble.
- LORELEI [*seriously*]. You can't help it if you're a girl like I. [*Briskly, moving D L.*] Anyway, they wouldn't dare start a war with Daddy over there.
- DOROTHY [*getting up quickly*]. Your daddy! The packing—we'd better get with it. [*Moves to a trunk and starts re-packing it.*]
- LORELEI [*crossing R C, standing before trunks with a lost expression*]. My goodness—I seem to have forgotten where I was.
- DOROTHY [*a trifle impatiently, as she continues to pack*]. The idea is to get the clothes into the suitcases and trunks.
- LORELEI [*picking up beaded dress from top of her trunk*]. Now—don't confuse me. [*Telephone rings. She looks from telephone to dress, then back again; telephone continues to ring, and LORELEI finally hurries D L and answers it.*] Hello? . . . Well, it's Mr. Lee's room but he isn't here. . . . Very

soon. . . . He's having his hair cut because he doesn't trust those foreign barbers. . . . Have him call Mr. McDonald in—*Philadelphia*? [*A bright, fascinated tone.*] Are you really in Philadelphia? You sound so close! . . . Yes, I have the message—good-by. [*Hangs up, takes puzzled look at beaded dress, shrugs and tosses it on a heap of dresses—by far the largest collection—on easy chair L C.*]

DOROTHY [*looking rather hopelessly at stack of clothes she is trying to pack*]. I once decided to run away—with all my possessions tied up in a handkerchief. What was I thinking of? [*LORELEI has meanwhile gotten interested in the Little Rock paper, which she has picked up from floor.*]

LORELEI. Look, Dorothy—Jean Morrison got married!

DOROTHY [*glancing over LORELEI's shoulder*]. Not the Jean Morrison back in seventh grade? Imagine!

LORELEI [*scanning paper*]. Hm-m-m—"Nuptials Planned for Rose Perkins"—

DOROTHY. Where's the story about us? [*Goes back to her packing.*]

LORELEI. I'm looking—Here. "Mr. Jeremiah Lee, prominent Little Rock citizen, is traveling to Europe this summer accompanied by his daughter, Lorelei, and Miss Dorothy Gilbert."

DOROTHY [*eagerly*]. Go on.

LORELEI. That's all.

DOROTHY [*coming over to take a look*]. There's a whole column about Rose Perkins' nuptials.

LORELEI. What do you expect? Naturally it's more important when a girl gets married than when she travels. Traveling is so temporary.

DOROTHY [*pointing to another item*]. Look—"Gwendolyn McNeill announces"—Sounds as if everybody in Little Rock is getting married.

LORELEI [*nodding*]. Or engaged.

DOROTHY. Lorelei—don't you think we're too young to get tied down?

LORELEI. It depends on to whom we get tied down—[*Amending; grammar often puzzles her.*—with.

DOROTHY [*trying to convince herself, as she goes back to her packing*]. I mean, aren't we lucky to be seeing the world first—doing some living? A girl can always go back home and get married. [*Second thought.*] If there's anybody left!

LORELEI. As far as I'm concerned, death would be preferential. [*Starts in packing her trunk, haphazardly. As scene continues, both girls pick up various articles of clothing strewn about room and pack them in trunks and open suitcases. LORELEI'S packing methods are especially vague and unorthodox.*]

DOROTHY. What?

LORELEI. The fact that a girl was born in Little Rock doesn't mean she has to go back there and marry whom is left. Anyway, how could there be—when there wasn't anybody in the first place?

DOROTHY. Wasn't anybody?

LORELEI. Who admired something besides good looks and charm and a nice disposition. Who had something to offer—*mentally*.

DOROTHY. The only boy that ever offered me anything mentally was the kid I copied from in math tests.

LORELEI. It's really time we looked elsewhere. Like, for instance, Europe—which must be full of—[*Draws word out.*] —“intreeging” gentlemen. [*Holds up a rather extravagant-looking hat, can't seem to find a place to fit it, so tosses it back on top of a suitcase.*]

DOROTHY. So that's what's on your mind!

LORELEI [*ignoring this*]. Cultured, refined gentlemen who know how to admire Brain. After all, they have so many museums.

DOROTHY [*brightening*]. Maybe an Englishman?

LORELEI [*likewise*]. Maybe a continental!

DOROTHY. Like a member of the dying aristocracy!

LORELEI [*qualifying this with a tone of realism*]. Who held onto his money.

DOROTHY [*with increasing fervor*]. A chateau here—a villa there—

LORELEI. In good condition, because Daddy would not like the idea of buying a new roof—

DOROTHY. In very good condition!

LORELEI. Now you're getting the spirit. [*Starts packing things rapidly now.*]

DOROTHY. His family's trying to force him to marry his cousin—

LORELEI. With whom he is not in love—especially when you consider his children'd all be bleeders, or something—

DOROTHY. Hemophiliacs.

LORELEI [*agreeing, but in the dark as to meaning of word*]. Yes.

DOROTHY. Bet he knows how to treat a girl.

LORELEI [*clasping her hands*]. With reverence—as if she were a lady. [*They pause, drinking in this mental picture for a moment.*]

DOROTHY [*sighing*]. Golly, do you really think we'll meet someone like that?

LORELEI. I think it's fate. [*Sits on especially well-stuffed suitcase, jiggles up and down to close it and then snaps lock.*]

DOROTHY. Fate!

LORELEI. And he'll probably have a brother.

DOROTHY. Why's that so important?

LORELEI. We couldn't have fate happen to just one of us. There ought to be a brother for you.

DOROTHY. Oh. [*Telephone rings.*]

LORELEI [*jumping up, crossing D L*]. Or maybe a close friend. [*Picks up telephone.*] Hello? . . . [*In a warm, chummy tone.*] Oh, hello, Mr. McDonald! How are you? . . . Not yet. . . . Probably he's having a conversation with the barber. You'd be surprised how well acquainted they are with topics of the day. . . . Yes, I'll tell him. . . . [*Starts to*

hang up, then picks up receiver again and adds hastily.]

And it was sweet of you to call back. [*Hangs up.*]

DOROTHY. What does your father think about all this?

LORELEI. Hmm?

DOROTHY. The intriguing gentlemen in Europe.

LORELEI [*coming c again*]. My goodness, I wouldn't discuss such a thing with *Daddy*.

DOROTHY. Why not?

LORELEI. It would upset him terribly. This trip is for education.

DOROTHY [*raised eyebrow*]. *Just* education?

LORELEI. Yes. *Daddy* wants us to spend all our time seeing architecture and points of historical interest and speaking French in the country wherein it is the mother tongue—you know, improve our minds.

DOROTHY [*a bit shocked*]. Good grief!

LORELEI. He wouldn't understand that intreeging gentlemen can also improve a girl's mind.

DOROTHY. It doesn't look good.

LORELEI. *Daddy* has devoted his life to seeing that my brain becomes educated, and I wouldn't want him to think he'd been wasting his time.

DOROTHY. I wish you'd explain how we're going to meet intriguing gentlemen in Europe if we're supposed to improve our minds all day long.

LORELEI. Well, there are evenings. . . . [*Picks up a showy evening dress from among her things.*]

DOROTHY [*pausing*]. I don't get your optimistic tone.

LORELEI [*holding dress next to her*]. Haven't you found out, Dorothy, that things always turn out for the best—[*Slightly hard tone creeps in.*—if you arrange them a little bit? [*Moves D L C, appraising dress as she holds it to her.*]

[*DADDY enters U C quickly.*]

DADDY. Here I am, girls.

LORELEI [*tossing dress on chair L C, rushing U C, giving him an affectionate hug*]. Daddy!

DADDY [*looking about*]. Not finished packing yet?

LORELEI [*quickly, bringing him C*]. Some kids from Little Rock dropped in to wish us "bon voyage," and they just stayed and stayed—and of course we couldn't be *rude*. . . . [*Clings to his arm and blinks up at him.*]

DADDY [*mollified*]. Not very well. Not my little girl! [*Pats her arm.*]

LORELEI [*exclaiming*]. What a perfectly adorable haircut!

DADDY. Thought the fool barber never would stop chattering. [*Telephone rings, and LORELEI hastens to pick it up.*] It'll be a relief to go to a barber who can't speak English.

LORELEI [*into telephone*]. Hello? . . . Just a minute. [*Covers receiver and turns to DADDY.*] By the way, Daddy, a message came while you were out.

DADDY. What message?

LORELEI. You're supposed to call Mr. McDonald in Philadelphia.

DADDY [*frowning*]. McDonald? . . . Well, cut that short, whoever it is. [*Waves at telephone.*]

LORELEI. It's Mr. McDonald.

DADDY. Oh! [*Hurries D L and takes telephone.*] Jeremiah Lee speaking. . . . Hello, Henry. What's up? . . . Why should I sit down? I feel fine! . . . [*Holds receiver some distance away, making a humorous face at girls. A rasping, agitated voice is heard at other end. The words are unintelligible.* LORELEI *perches on left arm of chair L C. DOROTHY is R C, by trunks.*]

LORELEI [*a loud whisper*]. I tried to cheer him up—he sounds so depressed.

DADDY [*who is doing a slow take on what he hears over telephone; suddenly sitting down at desk as voice stops*]. Henry, will you repeat that—slowly? . . . [*Listens with a growing expression of alarm, finally murmurs:*] No. . . . [*Listens, then in slightly louder tone.*] No! . . . [*Listens, then ex-*

claims in horror.] No! . . . Right away! I'm taking the first train. [*Hangs up and speaks in a weary tone of finality.*] I suppose you've guessed the meaning of that conversation.

LORELEI [*a bright, cheerful tone*]. Well, now, I think I can! . . .

DADDY. Thank goodness you're an understanding daughter.

LORELEI. Mr. McDonald was trying to sell you something. Because you kept saying "no." And finally, to get rid of him, you explained you were going to Europe right away. [*Suddenly puzzled.*] Only you shouldn't have mentioned a train. I mean, he wouldn't believe you, because everyone knows trains don't go to Europe.

DADDY [*after a pause, heavily*]. No, they don't. [*As LORELEI gives him her wide-eyed, questioning look, he comes over and puts his hands on her shoulders.*] Lorelei—you're a sensible girl—old enough to understand. . . . [*Takes a deep breath.*] I'm being sued.

LORELEI. Sued?

DADDY. McDonald's my attorney in Philadelphia. Some crackpot down there makes a hobby of suing people—[*A helpless shrug.*]—hasn't got a case—but if I don't defend myself I could lose everything. I could be ruined. Wiped out. [*Drops his hand and moves c.*] That's why I've got to go to Philadelphia.

LORELEI. But, Daddy—couldn't you be sued in Europe just as well?

DADDY. If I go to Europe right now, I'll return as a poor immigrant.

LORELEI. A poor immigrant! . . .

DADDY. Penniless. I'd have nothing left.

LORELEI [*moved*]. Oh, Daddy! [*Runs c and clings to him.*]

DADDY. I hoped you'd understand. [*In pain.*] You'll never know what it means to me—to give up this trip—

LORELEI [*as it begins to sink in*]. Give up the trip! . . . You can't do that—we already have the tickets!

DADDY. I'll cancel the tickets.

LORELEI. And the hotel reservations!

DADDY. They can be canceled, too.

LORELEI [*frantically*]. But I've been vaccinated! [*Exposing her arm.*] You can't cancel a smallpox vaccination—

DOROTHY [*interceding*]. Lorelei, stop! If we can't go, we can't go.

DADDY [*to himself, moving toward door L*]. I've got to think—make plans. [*Turns.*] Wish you girls could go on alone. . . . But that's out of the question. . . . [*Girls are silent, this thought not having occurred to them.*] Absolutely out. [*Moves over in front of chair L C, speaking front.*] I couldn't let you run around Europe without a chaperone. . . . [*Girls look at each other.*] Downright dangerous. . . . Take the food, for instance—a lot of indigestible messes, and that French pastry! [*Covers his eyes in horror, but girls begin to widen theirs.*] A person can get poisoned just drinking tap water in the hotel room! . . . And you'd be easy prey to all those foreigners—especially the men. . . . Why, those chaps would take one look at you innocent girls and—you'd be chased all over the capitals of Europe! [*As he says this, girls' expressions have become quite wild with anticipation.*] No one to see you get in at a reasonable hour, like nine-thirty. [*He has become quite worked up.*] It's unthinkable! [*There is a silence, as DADDY shakes his head back and forth, overwhelmed at the unthinkableness. LORELEI, whose look has altered slightly to one of craftiness, comes over to him, moving rather like a cat on the prowl.*]

LORELEI [*in her sweetest, lowest voice, fingering his lapel*]. Daddy. . . .

DADDY [*patting her, consolingly*]. Yes, dear.

LORELEI. I'm all broken up.

DADDY. I know, I know. [*DOROTHY, at R C, leans on one of the trunks, watching, fascinated.*]

LORELEI. Because education means everything to me.

DADDY. I've devoted my life to your education.

LORELEI. And now, to think you've been wasting your time. [*Sighs heavily.*]

DADDY [*dubiously*]. Well. . . .

LORELEI. Even if I could go to Europe just with Dorothy—if it weren't so *unthinkable*—[*Gives him a look.*]—how could I get along without you? [*Leans her head on his shoulder.*]

DADDY. I daresay you'd keep busy.

DOROTHY [*quickly*]. Yes, what with spending our time in museums—

LORELEI. And cathedrals—

DOROTHY. And tombs—

LORELEI [*looking up at him*]. Only we'd feel terrible because you couldn't see them. [*Blinks appropriately.*]

DADDY [*touched*]. Well, now . . .

LORELEI. Of course we'd send postcards—and descriptions.

DOROTHY [*coming toward them*]. Detailed descriptions—about the Tower of London—

LORELEI. And the Tower of Eiffel—[*Pronounces it "Eye-ful."*]

DOROTHY. Rue de la Paix—Montmartre—

DADDY [*somewhat carried away*]. I can practically see them.

LORELEI [*picturing it, with gestures*]. There we are, promenading through the Circus of Piccadilly—with our guidebooks!

DADDY. Yes, there you are—[*Stops.*] Wait a minute! I'm talking as if it weren't ridiculous for you two children to go to Europe alone. [*Paces R C.*]

LORELEI [*indignantly*]. Children?

DOROTHY [*likewise indignant*]. Mr. Lee—we know enough to come in out of the rain.

LORELEI [*with a toss of her head*]. After all, we've graduated!

DOROTHY [*sounding very competent*]. We certainly wouldn't be passing the time of day with strange men.

LORELEI. Unless they didn't have a watch—

DOROTHY [*quickly*]. And as for eating foreign food—or drinking *tap* water—

LORELEI. Everybody knows it's only safe to drink *wine*. [DOROTHY gives LORELEI a warning poke.]