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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **LAST MINUTE**

By  
**BARRY KORNHAUSER**

Inspired by the Fourth Commandment

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For David and Lee

\* \* \* \* \*

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR, female

ELECTRIC GUITAR PLAYER, female

ELECTRIC BASSIST, male

DRUMMER, male

The three actors portraying the musicians each need to be able to play sixty seconds of a hard-rock sound (although not necessarily well). This same minute of music is repeated in various permutations throughout the scenes. If that cannot be accomplished, it is possible for the sound to be pre-recorded with the actors miming the action of playing their instruments.

SETTING: A stage.

TIME: Seven minutes from Now.

## Last Minute

AT RISE: *A dimly lit stage. Lingerin UC is a heavy-metal teen band comprised of a female ELECTRIC GUITAR PLAYER, male ELECTRIC BASSIST and male DRUMMER. Once they begin playing, their music should have a sound Rolling Stone magazine once described as “dinosaurs eating cars.” Over the musicians’ heads, across the width of the stage, hangs a single string of unlit Christmas lights. Downstage to one side, the set model of this production sits on a podium. Other than this, the stage is bare, void of any apparent design—all of which is replicated on the model, of course. A teenage female NARRATOR, carrying a clipboard and wearing a stop-watch around her neck, enters opposite the podium.*

### SCENE 1

NARRATOR *(starting the watch; addressing the audience).* One. *(After assuring that the watch is running, she turns her attentions to the clipboard’s checklist, and calls.)* House up! *(The houselights turn on. The NARRATOR makes an affirmative checkmark on the clipboard list.)* House out! *(The houselights turn off again. The NARRATOR marks another check.)* Works, please! *(The stage brightens in a bland wash of work light. Another*

*check.) Works out! (The stage dims even more darkly than before. Check again.) Dimmer check! (A pin spot comes up on the NARRATOR who makes another mark of approval.) Next! (A light comes up on the band. The GUITAR PLAYER begins a solo. Pleased, the NARRATOR makes another mark.) Next! (A special comes up on the set model. The NARRATOR looks at it, then the rest of the lit stage, and lastly into the darkened house. She makes her check, then lowers the clipboard.) Good! (She crosses to the model, the spotlight following her, places the clipboard inside the podium, and again addresses the audience.) In theater, an important tool of the scenic designer is the set model. (A brief but distinctive guitar flourish serves as a “fanfare.”) On this model of our set, built to scale, one inch equals one foot. If this play were to have a temporal model, one minute would equal one day. (The NARRATOR looks at her watch. When sixty seconds have passed, she stops it.) Time!*

*(The GUITAR PLAYER stops.)*

## SCENE 2

NARRATOR *(starting the watch).* Two. *(A drum solo begins.)* In attempting to accomplish the task of interpreting the Word on the page as Action on the stage, we struggle to render in performance the text’s very atmosphere *(reaching into the podium, she produces an aerosol air freshener which she then sprays over the stage)* and also to actively engage you, the audience, in the process. *(She produces a Super-Soaker and sprays it across the audience. After a good squirting, the NARRATOR*

*puts the water toy away and looks once again at her watch. When sixty seconds have passed, she clicks it off.) Time!*

*(The DRUMMER stops.)*

### SCENE 3

NARRATOR *(starting the watch)*. Three. *(The BASSIST begins his solo. The NARRATOR removes a large flowerpot and places it on the podium, then loads it with a few spadefuls of dirt also drawn from inside the podium. She plants a seed in that soil and then starts to cross the stage with the flowerpot. As she does so, she also begins speaking.)* In the building of this piece... *(She exits, but immediately reenters, crossing opposite and carrying what appears to be the same flowerpot, only now a small plant is growing in its soil. She continues speaking as she does so.)* ...we have worked slavishly... *(She exits again and instantly reenters with the plant, which has now grown considerably. In fact, it is so large it is cumbersome to carry. Once again, she continues as she crosses.)* ...to assemble and/or construct... *(She exits one last time, only to return right away, this time pulling a rope tied to a wheeled platform upon which sits that same flowerpot—now containing a young tree! One apple grows on its leafy branches. As she maneuvers the cart into position, she finishes her speech.)* ...production elements that are both utilitarian and aesthetically apt. *(She readjusts the tree's position until satisfied and then looks at her watch. When sixty seconds have passed, she stops it.)* Time!

*(The BASSIST stops)*