

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing

THE PERILS OF LULU



Comedy by
WILLIAM
GLEASON

THE PERILS OF LULU

“Wonderful! It fits every need. Flexible casting. Very entertaining. The funniest show we’ve done in years.”

(Brenda MacNair, Jetmore High School, Jetmore, Kan.)

Comedy. By William Gleason. *Cast: 7m., 7w.* Little did Lulu Barnes know or suspect that she would be caught up in an incredible series of events while delivering a bag of goodies to her granny. The sweet, the innocent, the innocuous Lulu skips along the way merrily missing a maelstrom of malevolent coincidence. Her errand of mercy is complicated by every imaginable disaster. You name it, she goes through it! There are fires, floods, killer bees, airplane crashes, boats that turn upside down, international terrorists, extraterrestrial invaders, hurricanes, tornadoes and heartburn. Turn your bare stage into a vast panorama of terror with disasters that are relatively easy to manage. *Bare stage w/props. Production notes are available in the script containing details on casting and props. Approximate running time: 80 minutes. Code: P51.*

ISBN-10 1-58342-323-4
ISBN-13 978-1-58342-323-7



9 780871 293237 >

The Perils of Lulu



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098-330
ph: 800-448-7469

www.dramaticpublishing.com

A Full-Length Comedy

The Perils of Lulu

By

WILLIAM GLEASON



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

***** NOTICE *****

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed anytime it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 129., Woodstock, Illinois 60098

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication, and reading are reserved. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

"Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois"

©MCMLXXXI by
WILLIAM GLEASON

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved

(THE PERILS OF LULU)

ISBN 0-87129-323-4

PERILS OF LULU

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED

NOTE: The play is divided into scenes and, with the exception of a few characters, doubling is possible. The characters are listed by episode.

IN EVERY SCENE

WALTER WINSLOW	Radio Commentator
LULU BARNES	Heroine
LANCE HEPPLWHITE	Her boyfriend

ON THE FARM (TORNADO)

LILA BARNES	Lulu's mother
LUKE BARNES	Lulu's father

K.G.B. HEADQUARTERS

LOVAK	Head of Russian K.G.B.
LUDMILLA LINSKI	Russian agent (in every scene but one)
Assorted Russians	

THE NEPTUNE ADVENTURE

CAPTAIN LIVINGSTON	Captain of the Neptune
LOUELLA LANGELLA	Bronx housewife
LENNY LANGELLA	Her husband, retired cop
FATHER LANFORD	Priest
LAUREN and LEX	Honeymoon couple
SAILOR	

THE BIG FISH THAT BITES

LULU
LINSKI
LANCE

CHARACTERS

THING THONG

LARRY	Production assistant
LISBETH LAMAY	Movie star
LINK LARUE	Director
NATIVES	
CAMERAMAN	
MAKE-UP PERSON	
WARDROBE PERSON	

FLIGHT TO NOWHERE *

* LINSKI not in this scene.

CAPTAIN LAMAR (played by Walter Winslow)	Airline Captain
LIBIDO OSPREY	Flight Attendant
LOU EVERS	Salesman
LAURA WILKINS	Elderly lady
LANK LAMONICA	Ex-football player
LORENE	His fiancée
LONNIE ATKINS	Little boy
LOTTIE ATKINS	His mother
MR. SMITH, MR. JONES	Mideastern terrorists
FEAR and LARGO (both played by same person)	One an Emotion. The other an Android.

HOME AT LAST

KILLER TERMITES
(three or four)

WEDDING

ENTIRE CAST

For possible doubling see production notes.

PRODUCTION NOTES

1. **MAGMA PROTON SYNTHESIZER.** A cardboard cutout or large cardboard box with dials painted on it. It should have a small opening for Lulu to insert the flower. For the Magma Protons, confetti can be used.
2. **TORNADO.** Attached to a broomstick or pole are four wires, fastened at one end of the pole. To the wires are attached a toy house, a toy car, a girl doll and a small shrub or toy tree. The cast member playing the tornado simply holds it over his head and twists it in his hands making the objects spin around.
3. **THE NEPTUNE.** A series of three or four flats are used. Painted on the flats are tables and chairs on the bottom and light fixtures on the top. At the stage right and stage left ends of the flats, waiters are painted, holding trays. When the ship turns upside down, the flats are reversed.
4. **SHARK.** Simply a large cutout fin large enough for a cast member to be concealed behind it. At the bottom of the fin, attach blue cloth to conceal the bearer's feet and to represent ocean water. The boat can be a cardboard cutout with two chairs facing each other for the girls to sit in.
5. **THING THONG.** Thong's hand is a large cutout. It is always inserted from stage right. It should be large enough to conceal two people from the waist down. The **HAIRY TREE SLOTH** can be burlap or a blanket with several mop heads sewn to it, dyed brown. It should be large enough to conceal Ludmilla. The **FLEA** is a black rubber ball with a string tied to it to represent its legs.
6. **PLANE.** Walter Winslow's desk becomes the cockpit. He turns his chair toward stage left and has a steering wheel for control. The other seats are arranged behind him, facing stage left. Libido's seat faces stage right and is back to back with Walter's. The seats are arranged in the following manner:

1 2 3
(aisle) Walter's desk cockpit
4 5 6
7 8 9 of Captain Lamar Prince

Attached to the seats are straps for seat belts.

7. **FEAR.** As described by Captain Lamar. Green face, yellow stripe down his back, and sweatshirt with "Fear" written across the chest. As **LARGOS**, he wears a cape to conceal a shirt and goofy space hat with springs on it.

8. **KILLER TERMITES.** Antennae on their heads. They have mustaches. Large dark circles are painted around their eyes.

9. **LULU'S BASKET.** Should actually be four different baskets: one new, one worn, one looking the "worse for wear" and one almost destroyed. The latter is presented to Granny.

SUGGESTED DOUBLING

(Based on a cast of seven males and seven females.)

MALES:

1. Walter Winslow, Captain Lamar
2. Lance Hepplewhite
3. Luke, Lex, Lou
4. Lovak, Sailor, Lank, Killer Termite Leader
5. Captain Livingston, Larry, Mr. Smith
6. Lenny, Link, Mr. Jones
7. Priest, Cameraman, Fear, Largos

FEMALES:

1. Lulu
2. Lila, Makeup Attendant, Laura
3. Ludmilla Linski
4. Louella, Lorene
5. Lauren, Lonnie (a young boy)
6. Lisbeth, Lottie
7. Wardrobe Mistress, Libido, Granny

In addition, cast members double as Russians, Natives and Termites.

Act One

SCENE: The stage lights are on and curtain open as the house enters. Chairs for the cast are arranged upstage L. and R. in two separate groups. Each chair has its cast member's name on it. To each chair is assigned a box, also with the actor's name on it, which contains personal props and costume pieces. The set pieces and large props are arranged for easy access upstage C. and offstage. The D. L. corner of the stage is devoted to Walter Winslow's radio booth. It is a desk on which are a microphone and his personal props, noise-makers, etc. Above the desk hangs a sign featuring the radio station call letters, "WDDT." As the house is being seated, cast members can be warming up, checking their props, sets, etc. All cast members, with the exception of Walter Winslow, should wear the same basic outfit (jeans and T-shirts or something to that effect). By the time the house is in, all actors should be onstage. When the house-lights dim, the actors assume places by their chairs, standing. A drum roll begins.

CAST (singing, radio-style). WDDT is proud to present Walter Winslow. (They gesture toward stage C.)

(WALTER, wearing a loud coat and floppy fedora, enters and passes between them.)

WALTER. That's fourteen-ninety on your radio dial.

CAST (singing). Walter Winslow.

WALTER. WDDT, polluting the airwaves with all the news that's unfit to print.

CAST (singing and gesturing). Walter Winslow.

WALTER. From high atop the Xanadu Towers in beautiful downtown (name of town), it's time for another magical, mystical, whimsical ride on the roller coaster of human experience. So, fasten your seatbelts, hold on tight, define your space and tell Laura I love her. 'Cause it's time for . . .

CAST (singing). The Walter Winslow Show.

WALTER. Featuring yours truly.

CAST. And a cast of thousands.

WALTER (to CAST). Ready, gang?

CAST. Ready as we'll ever be, Walt.

WALTER. Well, then, (rubs his hands together) let us proceed. Places! (CAST sits. WALTER turns to the audience. He takes off his hat and covers his heart.) The story you are about to see is false. The names, however, have not been changed . . . so the guilty can get the shaft they deserve. (He replaces his hat and strides toward the radio booth.)

CAST MEMBER (looking at watch). Five seconds to air, Mr. Winslow. (WALTER is at his desk, sitting.) Four, three, two, one . . . on the air. (CAST MEMBER gestures to CAST.)

CAST (singing to the tune of "The Hallelujah Chorus").
Walter Winslow, Walter Winslow, Walter Winslow . . . (They stop.)

WALTER (into the microphone). Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, moms and pops, street urchins, beauty queens, John Q. Public, in general, and Mrs. Robin Anderson of Miami, in particular.

CAST. Robin Anderson?

WALTER (covering the mike). I'll explain later. (Into mike.) This is Walter Winslow speaking to you from high atop the Xanadu Towers in the opulent Byzantine Ballroom where the good, the bad, and the ugly dance nightly to the harmonic accordians of Bob Wheeler and his brother, Stern. And, if you find that hard to believe . . . who cares? Tonight, another episode in our continuing series . . . (He gestures.)

CAST (singing). Ta Da!

WALTER. Fiction is stranger than truth! And why shouldn't it be? And now to our story. It is a story of frenzy, terror, rage, madness, and puppy love. It is a story of courage,

honor, pain, and, finally, stupidity. But more than stupid, it is a story of bizarre circumstance and unbelievable coincidence. It is the story of . . . Lulu Barnes. LULU (rising and putting on a surgical cap). A seventeen-year-old honor student from Rising Falls, Kansas. Born and bred in the nation's heartland. (She smiles.) Very cute.

WALTER. Very cute indeed. The girl had more curves than a mountain goat path in the Himalayas.

LULU (stepping downstage). It was the summer between my junior and senior years in high school. I had received a research grant to study the effects of Magma Protons on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds. (She holds up a flower. A CAST MEMBER follows her with a panel covered with paintings of dials and switches. The CAST MEMBER puts the panel down and gets behind it.)

WALTER. Yes, Lulu had a brain. She was working on her research project at the highly respected Nuclear Technologies Center or, as the students called it, "Nuke Tech." Lulu felt she was on the verge of something profound.

LULU (holding up a flower). If my calculations are correct, Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds will be the energy source of the future. Now for my final checklist. (She pulls out a paper.)

WALTER. But wait! A tragic mistake. Instead of her checklist, she mistakenly pulled out a recipe for marshmallow crunch balls that she had cut out of "Happy Teen Magazine" that very morning. It was a mistake that would have far reaching implications.

LULU (reading). Preheat to 475 degrees. (She turns the dial, and continues reading.) Whip savagely for five seconds or until wrist is tired. (She whips the flower against the panel, stops and pants.) Shape into rough nuggets similar in size to golfballs. (She mashes the flower.) Bake until sweat beads on upper lip at a distance of five feet from the oven. (She inserts the crumpled flower and moves back from the panel. She feels her upper lip.) This could take some time.

WALTER. But the Magma Proton Synthesizer was never designed for such a temperature. It started to hum loudly and shake violently. (CAST hums loudly as person behind the panel starts to shake it. See Production Notes for a more complete description.)

LULU. Never seen it do that before. (She reads.) Remove crunch balls and roll in cinnamon sugar. Garnish to taste. (She realizes her mistake and slaps her head.) Silly me! This isn't my final checklist. It's a recipe for marshmallow crunch balls. I'd better turn this thing off and start over. (She crosses toward the panel.)

WALTER. But it was too late! The machine overheated . . . (CAST makes the sound of hissing steam. LULU touches it and pulls her hand back, yelping.) . . . and the hapless young girl was sprayed with supercharged Magma Protons. (The person behind the panel throws confetti on LULU. Lights flicker and LULU staggers around. Humming and hissing stops. She looks at the confetti.) Oh heck! (She brushes herself off.) I'll never get these Magma Proton stains off without pre-soaking. Wouldn't you just know it. (LULU returns to her seat and the panel is removed.)

WALTER. Lulu shrugged the incident off. But over the next few days, strange and ominous things began to occur with alarming regularity. For the first time in the history of Kansas, it snowed in July . . . but only on Lulu. Birds within a five mile radius of Rising Falls started flying upside down. And three-thousand common houseflies attacked a plumber who had just left the Barnes' farmhouse. The plumber barely survived the attack, but local authorities refused to take the matter seriously. They attributed the attack to a lack of personal hygiene and the matter was quickly forgotten. (LULU, in chair, completely covers herself with a sheet, even her head. LILA rises and puts on an apron. Two chairs are placed D. C. LILA crosses down and places a picnic basket on one chair, then mimes cooking.)

WALTER. For Lulu Barnes, the morning of Saturday, the seventeenth of July, started out like any other. The sun came up. Lulu was gently roused from her slumber by the lilting voice of her mother.

LILA (stops her cooking, half-turning; screams). Lulu!

WALTER. And Lulu awoke with the bright-eyed enthusiasm of youth. (LULU drops the sheet, with an agonized, sleepy face, and moans loudly.)

LILA (screaming). Lulu!

LULU. I'm up! I'm up already.

LILA. Make tracks, girl. Your cornflakes are gettin' soggy.

WALTER. Radiating with unbounded energy, Lulu lept from her bed. (LULU falls out of the chair and staggers to her feet.) Always neat, she made her bed with great care. (LULU roughly throws the sheet over the chair. She gets her toothbrush and comb from a box.) Next, she danced into the bathroom. (LULU staggers D. R., moaning.) Where she vigorously brushed her teeth. (LULU drags the toothbrush through her hair twice.) And, finally, totally vibrant with the joy of life . . .

LULU. Yech!

WALTER. She performed her strenuous morning exercises.

LULU (raising her arms in the air). One. (Lowers arms.)

Two. (She crosses slowly, deposits the comb and toothbrush in the box, and staggers to the chair downstage.)

WALTER. And tripped happily into the kitchen for a wholesome, farm breakfast.

LULU (sitting). You expect me to eat this slop?

WALTER. To which her mother replied with characteristic, mid-western good humor . . .

LILA. Shut your face and eat 'fore I throw it to the hogs. (LULU mimes eating.) Your grandmother Weaver has been feelin' poorly.

LULU. She's always feelin' poorly.

LILA. Well, she's feelin' poorlyer than usual. I fixed her up a basket of goodies and I want you to take it over there this mornin'. (LULU rolls her eyes.) And while you're there, I want you to stay and visit a while.

LULU. Aw, Ma!

LILA. And I want you to compliment her paint by the number pictures, too.

LULU. Aw, Ma!

LILA. Shush up and do what I say.

LUKE (putting on a straw hat and crossing D. C.). Mornin', Lila, Lulu. (He is troubled.)

LULU. Mornin', Pa. (LUKE moves the basket out of the other chair and sits with a perplexed look on his face.) Somethin' wrong, Pa?

LUKE. Ain't never seen the likes of it.

LILA. The likes of what?

LUKE. Crazy, that's what it is. Plum crazy. The chickens are out in the pasture eatin' hay. The cows are layin' eggs. The tractor started all by itself and took out half a mile of fence. And it started rainin' when there wasn't a cloud in the sky.

LILA. Been like that all week. One crazy thing after another.

LULU. I'm sure there's an explanation.

LILA. There's an explanation all right. We done been cursed.

LULU. I mean a logical explanation.

LILA. Ain't nothin' logical about what's been goin' on around here. It's downright supernatural. Ever since you came home with those Magma stains on your smock . . . (LUKE and LILA look askance at LULU.)

LULU. Oh sure! That's right! Blame it all on me.

LUKE. Come to think of it, that was when all this weirdness started. It wasn't five minutes after you got home that those frogs ate Rover.

LULU. Coincidence.

LILA. And when I cleaned your clothes, the washing machine melted. You call that a coincidence?

LULU. You're both being silly. I'm a trained high school scientist. If there was a connection, I'd be the first to notice. (CAST stomps their feet in unison. LANCE rises and fixes his hair and approaches downstage.)

LUKE. Someone's comin'.

LILA. Wonder who it could be? (She winks at LUKE.)

LULU (blushing). Aw, Ma!

LUKE (slapping his knee). As if we didn't know. (He winks at LULU.)

LULU. You two stop it. (The stomping stops.)

LANCE. Mornin', Lila, Luke . . . (He smiles.) . . . Lulu.

FAMILY. Mornin', Lance.

LANCE. Mind if I come in?

LUKE. Heck, no. (LANCE steps forward, a bass drum sounds once, and LANCE acts as if he ran into something.) But you better open the door first. (Chuckles.)

LANCE (opening an imaginary door, smiling). Done bumped my head. (He rubs his head.)

LUKE (rising). You can have my seat. I got chores to do. LILA. I'll help you, Luke. (To LULU.) Don't forget to take your granny the goody basket.

LULU. I won't.

LILA (as she and LUKE cross back). You two lovebirds be good, y'hear? (She runs into the imaginary door and a drum sounds.)

LUKE (laughing). Open the door, Lila. (LILA does and she and LUKE exit to chairs.)

WALTER. Yes, it was no secret. Lance and Lulu had been going steady since the first grade. What started as a case of the hots had evolved into a profound and mature relationship.

LANCE. Hi, Lovey-ducks.

LULU (patting an empty chair). Have a seat, Huggy-bunny.

WALTER. A relationship based on the intellect as well as physical attraction.

LANCE (sitting, baby-talking). Iz you woves me?

LULU (nodding). Ga ga ba ba da da.

WALTER. Could wedding bells be far behind?

LANCE. You sure look pretty today.

LULU. I'm a mess and that's a fact. Didn't expect to be seein' anybody this morning. Why aren't you at work?

LANCE. Called in sick.

LULU. Shame on you, Lance Heppelwhite. You told a lie. You're not sick.

LANCE. Am, too. Got the fever. (He reaches for her hand.)

LULU (pulling her hand away). You just keep your cooties to yourself. If you got a fever, don't be givin' it to me.

LANCE. This is a different kind of fever. It's the fever of love. I'm love sick. (CAST sighs deeply. LANCE and LULU look over their shoulders and then back.)

LULU. Well, take two aspirin and call me in the morning.

LANCE. I'm serious, Lulu.

LULU. I know you're serious, Lance. Heavens to Betsy, we've been goin' steady since the first grade. I got three

closets stuffed with love letters. I got your letterman's jacket, your letterman's sweater, your senior ring, all three of your Spiedel I.D. bracelets, and a ring binder full of poems you copied off the Rod McKuen records. I know you're serious. I'm serious, too.

LANCE. Then how about a kiss?

LULU. You know the rules, Romeo.

LANCE. I'll still respect ya. Honest I will.

LULU. Ain't no kisses 'til we're Mr. and Mrs. or at least engaged.

LANCE. Just a little one?

LULU. No such thing as a little kiss. A kiss is like a smokin' cigarette butt in a dry forest. A forest fire is easy to start and darn near impossible to stop. So . . . before your lips on mine do linger, I expect a genuine, store-bought ring on my finger. Case closed. (LANCE slumps.) However . . . (LANCE perks up.) . . . I will let you hold my hand if you promise not to go completely bananas. (LULU sticks her hand out.)

LANCE (rising angrily). 'Fraid that just won't cut it, Lulu. I'm a man now. I have certain . . . yearnings.

LULU. Okay. Okay. We can play footsies if you promise not to tell the other boys.

LANCE. Footsies ain't the yearnings I was talkin' about.

LULU. You lusting swine.

LANCE (reaching into his pocket). Lookie here what I got. A ring.

LULU (rising). Oh, Lance!

LANCE. Fourteen karat gold with three actual diamond chips stuck to it.

LULU. It's beautiful.

LANCE. Aren't you gonna put it on?

LULU. You're supposed to do that, silly. (She holds out her hand.)

LANCE (putting it on LULU). With this ring, I do thee engage.

LULU. My heart's thumpin' louder than a cheap washing machine full of bowling balls.

LANCE. Guess it's okay to kiss you now?

LULU. Guess there's nothing filthy, nasty or degrading about a kiss between fiances . . . but it's debatable.

LANCE (emotionally). Oh, Lulu! You just don't know what this kiss means to me. I've been waiting since the first grade for this moment. And now, at last, I shall feel your lips on mine. (He puckers.)

LULU (aside). Oh, brother.

LANCE. Kiss me quick before my lips get tired. (They stand at arm's length, their eyes burning with passion, their lips moving sensuously. CAST begins to make the sound of rising wind.)

LULU. What's that?

LANCE. I don't hear anything. (The wind sound builds.)

LULU. The wind is picking up.

WALTER. To put it mildly. At that very moment, a massive and angry tornado was cutting a wide swath across the Kansas plains, heading directly for Lulu's house. (At this time, a CAST MEMBER rises and prepares the tornado. It is a broomstick handle or long pole with four wires attached to one end. Attached to the wires are the following items: a toy house, a toy car, a small doll, and a toy tree. The CAST MEMBER holds the pole up and begins to spin it, causing the objects to swing around, as if caught in a tornado. The rest of the CAST accompanies with increasing wind sounds. See Production Notes for a more complete description.)

LANCE. Don't worry about it. Just kiss me before I lose my mind. (The CAST MEMBER holding the tornado begins to move about the stage.)

LULU. I'm gonna kiss you like you've never been kissed before.

LANCE. Good. (He puckers, she puckers, and they move toward each other. Just as their lips are about to touch, LUKE runs in interrupting them.)

LUKE. Tornado! Run for your life!

LULU (screaming and pointing at the tornado). Tornado!

LANCE. Who cares? Kiss me.

LUKE. Into the shelter, quick. (He pulls them upstage.)

LULU (pulling away). Wait! The goody basket. I forgot the goody basket. (She runs back and picks up the basket and

the tornado closes on her. She stands next to the CAST MEMBER and the stuff swirls over her head. She screams, the basket clutched to her.) Oh! Oh! The tornado done got me! (She flows off L with the tornado, her voice fading.) Help! Hellp! Heeeeellllp! (She exits.)

LUKE (running down with LANCE and LILA, looking off L).
Lulu!

LILA. The tornado done got her.

LANCE (sobbing emotionally). Don't you worry, Lulu! Lance is comin'. Lance is gonna find ya, honey! Hang on, y'hear! (He charges off L.)

WALTER. Lulu was gone, but not forgotten, spinning into the stratosphere at 750 revolutions per minute. She was horrified, she was terrified, but most of all . . . she was dizzy. Little did she know that this was just the beginning. Yes, it was going to be . . . one of those days. Meanwhile, in the depths of a secret Soviet Spy Center, events were taking place that were to have a profound effect on Lulu's life. (CAST MEMBERS remain seated, sternfaced, with their arms crossed. They wear hats with red stars. LOVAK paces back and forth. He sneezes.)

CAST. Bless you, Comrade Lovak.

LOVAK. I do not require your blessings.

CAST. We are sorry, Comrade Lovak.

LOVAK. I do not require your apologies.

CAST. What do you require, Comrade Lovak?

LOVAK. Glad you asked. I am requiring Comrade Linski. But look around you. (The CAST looks around.) Is anyone seeing Comrade Linski?

CAST. No, Comrade Lovak.

LOVAK. That is because Comrade Linski is not here.

CAST (understandingly). Ah!

LOVAK. Comrade Linski is late-ski. This is counter-revolutionary.

CAST. Long live the revolution.

LOVAK. To pass time, I shall tell joke, yes?

CAST. Oh goody.

LOVAK. If you do not think is funny, you do not have to

laugh, but if you do not laugh . . . (He gestures throat cutting.) How many American Imperialist Dogs are required to screw in light bulb? (CAST shrugs.) Three. One to hold light bulb. (He chuckles.) And other two are for closing door! (He laughs.)

CAST (in unison). Ha, ha, ha! You are a funny guy.

(LINSKI enters.)

LINSKI. You are Comrade Lovak?

LOVAK. Linski?

LINSKI. Yes. Ludmilla Linski.

LOVAK (sternly). You are late! (He smiles.) But you are also beautiful. Perhaps we can work something out?

LINSKI. I am late because of lunch date with Commissar Lovoba.

LOVAK. My superior?

LINSKI. Yes . . . (She smiles.) . . . and my steady boyfriend who calls me his favorite little Leningrad lovebird, Tweet-Tweet.

LOVAK (in a businesslike manner). Let's get to business, Tweet-Tweet . . . I mean Comrade Linski. Our agents in Rising Falls, Kansas have noticed something very unusual. It seems a young Imperialist female was sprayed with Magma Protons. Now, everywhere she is going, strange things happen. We want you to find this girl and bring her back here so that we might study her as a possible weapon system.

LINSKI. And where is this girl?

LOVAK. She was last seen in tornado. Satellite pictures show tornado put down in Atlantic Ocean.

LINSKI. Then girl is drowned by now or at least very wet.

LOVAK. No. Girl was picked up by ocean liner.

LINSKI. Name of boat?

LOVAK. Neptune.

LINSKI. I leave at once. (She crosses off.)

LOVAK (waving). Happy trails to you.

LINSKI. Likewise, I'm sure. (LOVAK watches her leave and sneezes again.)

CAST. Bless you, Comrade Lovak.

LOVAK. Oh, shut up. (The scene changes.)

WALTER. Yes, it was true. Lulu had been dropped in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean directly in the path of the Neptune, the world's most top-heavy ocean liner. Miraculously, she was spotted by a passenger who was losing his chowder over the aft railing. As a special treat, she was invited to eat at the Captain's Table that afternoon. (Extras not in the play hold a series of flats upstage with tables and chairs on the bottom and light fixtures on the top and other items such as window drapes and two painted waiters with serving trays. See Production Notes for a more complete description. In front of the flats, wearing appropriate costume props, are the following: CAPTAIN LIVINGSTON, FATHER LANFORD, LENNY and LOUELLA LANGELLA and LAUREN and LEX, a honeymoon couple. They stand around sharing idle chatter.)

LOUELLA (crossing to CAPTAIN). Oh, Captain Livingston?

CAPTAIN. Yes, Mrs. Langella?

LOUELLA. Please, not so formal. Call me Louella.

CAPTAIN. Yes . . . Louella?

LOUELLA. I thought the girl we fished out this afternoon was going to have dinner with us.

CAPTAIN. She is. The ship's doctor is just checking her out. She should be here shortly.

LAUREN (to no one in particular). I mean it is so totally far out that we found her.

LEX. It just blows my mind.

LENNY (looking at them with disgust). What're you? Weirdos or somethin'? You talk like hippies.

LAUREN. I feel negative karma, Lex.

LEX. Let's just define our space and ignore him.

LENNY. Ding dongs. Real ding dongs.

LOUELLA. I think it was Divine Providence, Father Lanford. Don't you agree?

LANFORD (laughing bitterly). Everybody wants to believe in miracles.

LOUELLA. Oh, definitely. I sense the presence of unseen hands, y'know. (She nods upward.) Mr. Big.