

THIS IS AN ONLINE SAMPLE
OF THE FIRST TEN PAGES OF
LULU FABULOUS
By Callie Kimball
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A blight never does good to a tree,
and if a blight does not kill a tree but it still bears fruit,
let none say that the fruit was in consequence of the blight.

—*William Blake*

For Grammy
(and for Rex & Tex, of course)

PRODUCTION HISTORY

LULU FABULOUS was first produced
by Phoenix Theatre at 1409 Playbill Café
in Washington DC on May 6th, 2005
with the following cast:

LULU FABULOUS.....Mary C. Davis

LULU PERKINS, GRAMMY,
AMY, ETHEL, SPEED-DATING
COORDINATOR, VITA,
MALAMALAMA.....Rose M^cConnell

EDITH, MOM, WOMAN # 1
PETSMART ASSOCIATE,
NALA, HILDA, TERI,
MONICA.....Shelby Sours

OB-GYN, MAN 1, 3, 5, 7, 9,
11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23,
TEX, YOGA BISCUIT GUY,
CHARLIE, BOB, NURSING
HOME AIDE, HOSPICE
CHAPLAIN, PERRY.....Patrick Bussink

SHORT STOCKBROKER,
DAD, EVEN-NUMBERED MEN,
REX, YOGA GUY, HANK,
HOSPICE NURSE, SAL, ED.....Alex Perez

It was directed by Bridget O’Leary.
Set by Bridget O’Leary.
Costumes by Jennifer Tardiff.
Lighting by Marianne Meadows.
Sound by Bridget O’Leary.

The Production Stage Managers were Meredith Spisak and Elizabeth Darby.
It was produced by Kimberley C. Kissoyan.

A workshop reading of the play took place November 15, 2004,
with Michael John Casey, Misty Demory, Kimberly Gilbert,
Brent Lowder, Adrienne Nelson, and Peter Wylie.

SETTING

Winter 2002 to Fall 2004.
Washington DC, Kittery ME, Orlando FL, and Lenox MA.

CHARACTERS

LULU FABULOUS—early 30s
AMY—early 30s, Lulu’s best friend
REX—Luu’s pet Betta fish
TEX—Rex’s archnemesis
HILDA—90, one of Grammy’s cousins
ETHEL—79, Hilda’s sister
VITA—20s, a young Jehovah’s Witness friend of Grammy’s
ED—late 50s, lives in Lulu’s childhood home
MALAMALAMA—40s, leader of the Sharing Circle at Kripalu
SAL—late 40s, an accountant on vacation at Kripalu
PERRY—20s, a yoga junkie doing a year of service at Kripalu
MONICA—late 30s, housewife on vacation at Kripalu
TERI—30s, a speed-dater
CHARLIE—30s, a speed-dater
HANK—30s, a speed-dater
BOB—30s, yet another speed-dater
SPEED-DATING COORDINATOR
NALA—Hot Yoga instructor
MEN 1-23—Lulu’s dates in DC
SHORT STOCKBROKER—30s, Lulu’s unboyfriend
LULU PERKINS—Lulu’s great-great grandmother, as a young woman
EDITH—Lulu’s great-grandmother as a young woman
GRAMMY—Lulu’s grandmother as a young woman
MOM—Lulu’s mother as a young woman and then in her 50s
DAD—Lulu’s father as a young man
OB-GYN
PETSMART ASSOCIATE
YOGA GUY
YOGA BISCUIT GUY
NURSING HOME AIDE
HOSPICE NURSE
HOSPICE CHAPLAIN

SCENES

Act One

Scene 1: A Late Bloomer—Lulu’s Memory

Scene 2: “I Swear”—Lulu’s DC Apartment

Scene 3: Dating Tennis—Lulu’s Memory

Scene 4: Rex & Tex—Lulu’s DC Apt. and PETsMART

Scene 5: Hot Yoga & a Side of Biscuits to Go—Yoga Studio

Scene 6: Moving On—Lulu’s DC Apt.

Scene 7: What Did She Say?—Nursing Home in Maine

Scene 8: Winter—Lulu’s Maine Apt.

Scene 9: Speed-Dating—A Pub in Maine

Act Two

Scene 1: Winter Continues—Lulu’s Maine Apt.

Scene 2: Like a Pea in a Pod—Nursing Home in Florida

Scene 3: The Sharing Circle—Kripalu Yoga Retreat

Scene 4: Amy Visits—Lulu’s Maine Apt.

Scene 5: The Big Brown House—Lulu’s Childhood Home

Scene 6: Always Have a Backup Plan—Lulu’s New DC Apt

NOTES ON THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The original set was a back wall with a door and two windows. Three large purple boxes served as various seating and were rearranged by the actors, already in character for the next scene.

Dating Tennis was staged as a sort of boxing match instead of a tennis match. This worked well.

The way the original cast shared the characters among themselves was probably the best solution in terms of quick changes.

While I intended for there to be an intermission after the speed-dating scene, the original production had no intermission and ran 100 minutes. Depends on how comfortable the seats are and how much you want to sell concessions at intermission.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Although this is a comedy, the people who inspired some of the characters in this play were simply being their best, most earnest selves. Which is probably why they were so funny. Some reviewers of the original production referred to the play as hyperbole or satire. Funny thing is, it was just the way it was. Not that this is autobiographical, of course. My name is not and has never been Lulu and these characters in no way are meant to represent any particular people, living or dead.

During the writing of this script, many people supported me with direct feedback during development or simply with encouragement. They include: Joe Banno, Patrick Bussink, Steve Carpenter, Michael John Casey, Kathleen Coons, Mary C. Davis, Misty Demory, Sarah Denhardt, Paul Donnelly, Michael Dove, Kimberly Gilbert, Carlie Guttery, Pat & Bobbie Guttery, Ruth Kimball Guttery, Lindsey Haynes, K. Clare Johnson, Susan & Mark Rhea, Kimberley & Vaskin Kissoyan, Brent Lowder, Sayed Mansour & Jeff DeMontier, Tricia McCauley, Rose McConnell, Scott McCormick, Chris McKenzie, Adrienne Nelson, Alex Perez, Nancy Schoenberger, Shelby Sours, Mark Sullivan, Andy Wassenich, Michelle Weiss, Abby Wood, Peter Wylie, and, above all, Bridget O'Leary who served as my sturdy and willing doula.

LULU FABULOUS

ACT ONE**Scene 1**
A Late Bloomer

(Stage is dim. "Que Sera, Sera" plays, and LULU and SHORT STOCKBROKER enter, sweetly dancing. Then they start having quite vigorous sex, LULU cheering and offering various, "Oh, God"s and "Oh, yes"es.)

SHORT STOCKBROKER

Oh, God. Oh, God, Lulu. Oh, God. Oh. Oh. OH! *(SNAP goes the sound of elastic breaking.)* Uh-oh. *(Lights full up. LULU steps forth in her robe to address the audience. During her following monologue, various characters pop in and out of windows and doors of the set.)*

LULU FABULOUS

Accidents happen. I come from a long line of accidents. My great-great-grandmother, Lulu Perkins, of Perkins Cove, Maine, got knocked up when she was fourteen and pushed out my great-grandmother, Edith *(sound of spank and baby cry)*. Four years later, Lulu went legit, got married, and had like thirty more kids. Edith learned from her mother's slutty example to keep her knees together on dates, and waited 'til she got married to have my grandmother *(sound of spank and baby cry)*. Grammy was a whopper. Ten pounds.

Grammy started out on the right track. She got married, had a kid. But then, at 32, she became a Jehovah's Witness. Depending on which version you believe, she either fell in love with or was raped by a fellow worshipper. That was how my mother came along *(sound of spank and baby cry)*. Grammy was promptly divorced. From that point on, Grammy's slavish devotion to her chosen religion would have to make up for all that it had cost her. Mom remembers begging Grammy to love her without asking her to be a Witness. Grammy's response was to fling a pan of hot water at her. Grammy's moralistic rants must have made an impression on my mom, because she waited 'til her wedding night to give it up. Ten months later there I was. As she repeatedly pointed out to me as I was growing up, I *wasn't* planned and her only reaction when her doctor said she was pregnant was to correct him.

MOM

No, doctor, you must be wrong.

OB-GYN

I'm quite sure you're pregnant. Congratulations. Now, you'll need to start taking vitamins and drinking lots of milk....*(trails off.)*

LULU

Dad didn't take the news much better.

DAD

(Pops head in.) Oh, shit.

LULU

I think my birth was Mom's most traumatic life event. As I was growing up, she frequently reminded me that I was three weeks late, that she was in labor for over thirty hours, that she was in so much pain she bit someone's arm, that our heart rates slowed down so much we almost died, that halfway through the delivery I decided to be a transverse baby, which I guess means I crawled back inside, stretched out sideways, stuck my arms and legs straight out, and refused to budge. She cites all this as proof that somehow karmically I didn't *want* to be born. I think it was more that I sensed I wasn't welcome. Oh, yeah, I was also an Rh baby, which means that my mother's body made antibodies to destroy me. We were at war from the start.

MOM

(Eating and furious.) WHAT. WAS. THE MORAL. OF THE SHOW?????!!!!

LULU

(Whispering.) Ummm, I don't know...

MOM

THE MORAL!?! WHAT DID PA TEACH LAURA INGALLS?!?! It's EASY!! (LULU starts to cry as MOM takes a bite of her salad). How did you wash the lettuce?

LULU

With Ivory Liquid? *(MOM slams something and leaves.)* My mother wishes I could remember all the wonderful times we had. I only remember being afraid of her. The slightest infraction could bring on a tirade—playing too long in the tub, sneezing, coughing, or taking too long to fall asleep. These daily episodes were always in private and were interwoven with extravagant emotional displays.

MOM

(MOM pops back in.) I love you so much You're the whole reason I'm alive I couldn't live without you I do everything for you You're so smart and I love you so much I don't know what to do I never *wanted* to be a mother I don't date I work nonstop I've gained weight but I love you so much I wouldn't trade you for the world I just don't know if I can take all this much longer I feel like I'm going to *die*. *(MOM leaves.)*

LULU

People told me I was lucky to have a mother that loved me so much. Because we moved constantly—I went to twelve schools—there was no sense of place in my life. No sense of belonging. We were two scraggly-ass refugees from the land of emotional neglect. Oh, don't get squirmy. This isn't *that* kind of play. I'm just telling you stuff now so things'll make more sense later. The few friends I've told my story to tell me that I am who I am *because* of

all these experiences. I tell them I am who I am in *spite* of them. Enough said. I was a late bloomer. I'm thankful I bloomed at all.

Scene 2
“I Swear”

(AMY is in LULU's living room, drinking wine and finishing up a reading with her Tarot cards. LULU is offstage, getting dressed for a date.)

AMY

So, where are you meeting this guy?

LULU

(Offstage.) Gazuza.

AMY

God bless you.

LULU

No—*Gazuza*. It's a bar in Dupont. *(LULU enters in robe, holding an outfit in each hand.)* Okay, I've narrowed it down to these two options. Amy. Focus.

AMY

Uhhh, that one. *(LULU exits to change as AMY checks out her cheekbones in the mirror.)* Is today Groundhog Day?

LULU

Tomorrow, I think.

AMY

I swear I saw the faint outlines of my long-lost cheekbones struggling to emerge from hibernation this morning.

LULU

So does that mean six more weeks of winter? *(LULU enters, dressed.)* God, I don't know why I'm even bothering. I had the crappiest day today. My boss said I'm "too valuable" and he can't let me out early for rehearsals, so I don't know what I'm gonna do. How's this?

AMY

It's just community theatre anyway. Try a different top. I mean, how much boobage are you going for? Who is this guy, anyway? NOT another actor, I hope?

LULU

Hell, no. The Actor Embargo continues. Some lawyer I met online. I put his info on a sticky over there in case I'm never heard from again.

AMY

Good. What's your part in the play?

LULU

Hermia. My boyfriend's the dude who says, "The course of true love never did run smooth."

AMY

Tru dat.

LULU

Yeah, so, it's funny, so get this. In the first five minutes of the play, she's forced to choose between marrying a big dork or facing banishment to a nunnery. *Or death*. She runs away with her true love into the woods, only to have him try to seduce her. Then she wakes up from nightmares to find he's abandoned her. She stumbles through the dark forest alone. She finds him, but now he's hooked up with her best friend and they're calling her names. She wanders off and cries herself to sleep.

AMY

This is a comedy?

LULU

Exactly. How is this a comedy? It's a fucking *tragedy* for Hermia. So I thought about it for a long time, then I realized the difference between comedy and tragedy is hope. In tragedy, there's a resignation to inescapable doom. In comedy, there's an eagerness to believe, to hope that things will turn out okay even at their darkest.

AMY

Huh.

LULU

But then, I realized that it's *still* a fucking tragedy for Hermia. I mean, her boyfriend comes back to her with this line like, "Dude, I don't know *what* got into me. I must've had too much to drink or something. I *totally* pick you over Helena, hands down." And she's like all happy and shit 'cause she got her man back, no questions asked.

AMY

I'm guessing it ends up being more of a starter marriage for Hermia. Huh. I'm gonna text message Paul.

LULU

Which one is Paul?

AMY

The Weatherman.

LULU

I thought you didn't like him anymore.

AMY

(Starts to text-message vigorously.) I don't. 'D'ja ever hear from Argyle Boy?

LULU

Not after that last email. Yet another false start. God, why am I so bitter? Bitter is not attractive. How's this?

AMY

Oooh, Shorty's bringing her A game tonight! Nice rack!

LULU

I swear to god, I don't know why I'm even going.

AMY

You're going because, even though you've had a string of *stunningly* bad luck with men, you realize that you'll never find someone if you sit in your tiny apartment night after night eating ice cream and watching "Friends" reruns. And you realize that, even though you are an emotionally strong, financially independent woman, people in relationships tend to live longer, have better complexions, larger incomes, and shinier hair than single people.

LULU

I hate you sometimes. God, Amy, it's been so long that I'm in that dangerous place of all-touch-good-touch.

AMY

This is just a first date, Lulu. Behave.

LULU

Just in case, I'm wearing one of my date thongs.

AMY

Smuthussy.

LULU

Look who's talking.

AMY

Hey, as long as I keep it to one guy per birth control pack I've got it under control.

LULU

I swear on my Shu Uemura eyelash curler (*AMY gasps*), if this date sucks, I'm moving to Siberia.

AMY

Don't be so dramatic. I've told you what your problem is: you're too nice. Too accepting. You get all the loser guys who know better than to hit on anyone else.

LULU

I don't date losers. I just see the good parts in people.

AMY

How many addicts? Cheaters? Stalkers? *Ex-cons*?

LULU

Hey, he was in reform school.

AMY

Just because *you* had a hard life doesn't mean you have to rescue every straggling orphan you meet, Miss Bleeding Heart.

LULU

I know. So what do the cards say about me getting a little lovin' tonight?

AMY

Here. Pick a card. (*Fans out the Tarot cards, blows on them to "clear" them before offering them to LULU, who picks one. AMY looks at it for a long second, then puts the card back in the deck without telling LULU what it said.*)

LULU

Great. That's really great.

AMY

(*Obviously lying:*) They're just stupid cards. They're for entertainment purposes only. They don't mean anything.

LULU

(*Consoles her cleavage.*) Sorry, girls.

AMY

(*Stares at LULU's breasts as she primps.*) Are they real?

LULU

Oh my god, are you kidding me?

AMY

Come on, you can tell me. They're just so like perfect.

LULU

Really? Shut up.

AMY

You've gotta know they are.

LULU

Well, thanks. They mostly just get in the way. I *have* discovered a new purpose for them.
(*Looks at her ass in the mirror.*)

AMY

Oh?

LULU

No matter how big my ass gets, they're always there to counterbalance the excess real estate.

AMY

I'm sure men love them.

LULU

Yyyyeahhh.

Scene 3 Dating Tennis

LULU

My dating life up until that point was largely anecdotal with a few long dramatic pauses. It was as if my dating life were a sitcom created for the vicarious enjoyment of my girlfriends. (*AMY pulls up a chair and starts eating popcorn. She reacts to the following scene. Or perhaps she could play line judge on a tennis court. Whatever's funnier.*) I was almost twenty-three before I had sex. See, I was convinced Fate would reenact the whole unexpected-single-mom thing. Eh, some fears you just need to get over. (*The rest of the scene is played as a sort of tennis match, with Lulu in the middle, quickly turning from man to man. SFX of tennis balls being ponged back and forth.*)

LULU

(*Is getting it on with MAN #1.*) Oh. Oh!

MAN #1

Shhh. Don't make any noise. The neighbors might hear us.

LULU

(*Whispering loudly.*) Oh. Okay. (*PONG.*)(*To MAN #2*) I had a great time tonight. Thanks for dinner.

MAN #2

Listen, I have something I have to tell you: I'm gay.

LULU
Oh. Okay.

MAN #2
No, I'm kidding. I am engaged, though.

LULU
Are you *kidding* me? (*PONG.*)

MAN #3
I'm married but I *really* like you. (*Kisses LULU before she can object. She just stands there.*)

LULU
(*FEEBLE PONG.*) (*MAN #4 drops a note at her feet. She opens and reads it.*) You are a very pretty lady and I would like to take you out. I am the guy who was in the room just now when you were there. The one who stumbled over his words? If you are interested, here is my number. (*Sighs and crumples the letter. PONG.*)

MAN #5
You're the best. You know, I felt so badly all those times I cancelled on you when we were first dating. And I'm so glad you stuck around. You're the best. I mean, I was such a jerk. Did you know that I was canceling so I could smoke weed?

AMY
Oh, no, he dihun't.

LULU
No. (*PONG.*)

MAN #6
I'm a virgin so we can't have sex. But can I please just touch them? (*Is staring at her breasts.*)

LULU
No. (*PONG. Taps MAN #7 on the shoulder.*) I am soooo drunk. Hey, wanna go out sometime?

MAN #7
Sure. (*PONG.*)

MAN #8
I know it's only been three weeks, but I love you. Once my divorce is final next month, we can get married.

LULU

Oh!

MAN #8

But you'd better never ever leave me 'cause I'll have to hire someone to hunt you down and kill you. (*LULU takes one giant step backwards.*) (*PONG.*)

MAN #9

Gotta get back to my video game.

LULU

Oh. Okay. (*PONG.*)

MAN #10

I may be in my 60s but I still have desires. Did I mention I was published in *The New Yorker*?

LULU

Yep. (*PONG.*)

WOMAN #1

Can I buy you a drink, pretty lady?

LULU

Sorry, I like dick too much. Unfortunately. (*PONG.*)

MAN #11

I'm sorry. I think I might be gay.

LULU

Oh. Okay. (*PONG.*)

MAN #12

I'm sorry, it's this damn Prozac. I can't.

LULU

That's okay. We can do other things. (*PONG.*)

MAN #13

I'm sorry, it's not you, it's the condom. I can't.

LULU

Oh. Okay. (*PONG.*)

MAN #14

I'm sorry, I just broke up with my girlfriend. I can't.

LULU

Oh, of *course*. No need to rush things. (*Actually, there is a need. She's crazy horny. PONG.*)

MAN #15

I'm sorry, I'm too nervous. I've never done this before.

LULU

Really? Well, I'd be happy to teach you! (*To AMY*) I will say, at least they were getting younger.

AMY

(*To the audience.*) Younger men are hot but they're a little skittish. They're like feral cats—sudden movements frighten them. (*AMY makes a sudden movement and, sure enough, the men jump.*) But on the upside, since younger men were raised in a less overtly sexist generation, many of them by single moms, they are much less threatened by strong, independent, sexually confident women.

LULU

(*To the audience*) When you think about it, the older-woman-younger-man dynamic makes a lot of sense. See, women in their twenties are a bunch of nutjobs.

AMY

Amen, sistah.

LULU

They operate in passive-aggressive mode because they were never encouraged to operate in aggressive-aggressive mode. They don't know how to ask for what they want. Women over thirty have worked all that out. They know what they want, how to ask for it, and don't pout if they don't get it. Now, *men* in their twenties still believe in true love.

AMY, LULU, and BOYS

Awwwwww.

LULU

However, men over *thirty* are bitter because they spent their twenties dating all those nutjobs.

AMY

That's all I'm saying. (*LULU reenters the game.*)

MAN #16

Are you sure? I want to hear you *say* the words so there's no question later that this was consensual.

LULU

Oh. Okay. Well, yes, I'm sure. (*PONG.*)