

ACT 1

SCENE 1

1910's soapbox. Lights up. MAXWELL stands behind a large painted POSTER that reads 'The Lucky Man: 8 O'Clock.' BAILEY enters and struts in front of Maxwell. Both are acting over-the-top, advertising.

BAILEY

(Loudly)

What a nice day! I really would love to see a show *tonight at eight o'clock*.

MAXWELL

Madam, you're in luck! We've got one here for you tonight. Ladies and gents, fulfill your wildest dreams and see magical feats bigger than every before!

Three colorful housewives enter. DAISY, LUCY, and RACHAEL. They are very giddy.

DAISY

Girls, lookie here! A show!

RACHAEL

Oh, I love a good performance.

LUCY

How much are the tickets?

MAXWELL

Ten cents a piece, dearies. It's a steal!

RACHAEL

Well that's certainly reasonable.

DAISY

Attainable.

LUCY

Formidable.

(beat)

Or, not formidable. Informidable, actually.

DAISY

Hush.

RACHAEL

I'll buy one!

MAXWELL

Wonderful! Attention all sorts! Come and see the Lucky Man and his attractive feats!

JANICE LEE enters. She is gallivanting from opposite side of the stage.

Young lady, what's your name?

JANICE LEE

Why, my name is Janice Lee.

MAXWELL

Well, Janice Lee, how about a show tonight? You and your man can come on down.

JANICE LEE

(To the crowd, overacting)

Oh, I don't have a man.

MAXWELL

No way, a young lady like you, gallivanting around town without a man on your arm?
(loudly)

Maybe you'll find yourself a lad at the show tonight!

JANICE LEE

I'll be there!

DAISY

(To her friends)

Now isn't she one of those actress-types?

RACHAEL

She was in that one show.

LUCY

What show?

RACHAEL

The one with the music.

LUCY

Which one?

DAISY

Rachael, I think you're right. I remember her up on that stage. Now why would an actress want to see a show when she's already in them?

RACHAEL

Well I'd imagine it'd be for pleasure's sake.

LUCY

For their own entertainment.

RACHAEL

Ask her. Maybe she knows.

DAISY

(To Janice Lee)

Ma'am, sorry to interrupt, but do you entertain yourself often?

JANICE LEE
Excuse me?

LUCY
Pleasure yourself.

Beat.

DAISY
We just mean that--

RACHAEL
You're an actor, and-

JANICE LEE
I'm not sure I'd like to keep your company much longer.

RACHAEL
We didn't mean to be rude.

DAISY
Not one bit.

LUCY
We wanted to know if you watch shows. If you're an acting type person...

DAISY
Do actresses watch shows?

JANICE LEE
...Yes... indeed they do.

DAISY
Well I just thought with all the performing you're doing if you'd have the time.

JANICE LEE
Well, I'm performing in the Lucky Show.

RACHAEL
Didn't you just say you were going to buy a ticket?

JANICE LEE
I said I'd be there.

LUCY
Well I'd say that's misleading.

JANICE LEE
It's marketing, miss.

Janice Lee walks off.

LUCY
Well I'll be-- That was the most handsome woman I've ever seen.

RACHAEL

Absolutely stunning.

MAXWELL

Tickets here, for the amazing Lucky Show! Get 'em while they're hot!

DAISY

I'll take three!

Lights down.

SCENE 2

*Lights shift to the front room of an office
where Janice Lee and Bailey Donahue are
chatting in the corner.*

BAILEY

What is it about the grey sky that just makes you want to kick something?

JANICE LEE

It's gotta be something in the air. My father told me once that grey skies are like a blanket on the world. Except it's more of a backwards kind of blanket that you put on and you just get colder.

BAILEY

Who on earth would buy a backwards blanket?

JANICE LEE

I'm sure they'd enjoy it somewhere hot. Or somewhere cold but not as cold as the individual might prefer.

BAILEY

Huh?

JANICE LEE

I'm just saying, if you're from Siberia then our weather won't be cold in the slightest. This is their summer, you know.

BAILEY

Hot, cold, blue, grey, I still want to kick something.

JANICE LEE

It's not ladylike to kick things.

BAILEY

Maybe not, but your face is a welcome target right about now.

JANICE LEE

Bailey!

MAXWELL (O.S.)

(Calling)
Bailey!

Coming, Max!

BAILEY

Bailey starts off stage very excitedly.

Damn.

JANICE LEE

She piddles around the room. She kicks something, pauses, and picks it back up, wondering why she's kicked it.

It's the grey skies.

She slumps down into a chair. From offstage, Bailey screams from joy.

Bailey enters with Maxwell on her arm.

Oh, Max, tell Jan what you just told me!

BAILEY

What?

JANICE LEE

I got you two a gig!

MAXWELL

Isn't it wonderful, Janice Lee?

BAILEY

It's a shiny gentleman called "The Lucky Man" He saw you two singing at the cabaret last week and wants you two to be his "Lucky Stars."

MAXWELL

We're gonna be *rich*.

BAILEY

Really? And this is a paid gig?

JANICE LEE

You bet. I got Bailey in on it too. You're both gonna be the greatest thing that ever hit the off-Broadway.

MAXWELL

More like off/ off...

JANICE LEE

/We get it. But it's better than our past few gigs. We've been scraping the bottom of the barrel, and we've found gold.

MAXWELL

Diamond.

BAILEY

Necklace. MAXWELL

Jewelry. BAILEY

Um, clothes. MAXWELL

Clothes? BAILEY

I'll work on it. MAXWELL

Oh, I'm all giddy. BAILEY

Hadn't noticed. MAXWELL

Don't play coy, Maxie. BAILEY

I could never be coy while you're so happy. MAXWELL

Listen, lovebirds, save it for the nest. JANICE LEE

Sorry, just happy. BAILEY

Me too! 'The Lucky Man.' How luxurious. JANICE LEE

Can you think of it? Our name up on the marquee, shining like anything? BAILEY

You won't have to think for long, he wants you at the show tomorrow. MAXWELL

When? JANICE LEE

Eight O' Clock sharp. MAXWELL

That's not enough time! I can't learn lines, and dances, and whatever else he'll want us to do. Oh, he'll want to hear me sing! What if my voice cracks? What if I do that thing where my face goes all wonky when I'm not paying attention? JANICE LEE

She makes a face.

Like that. Bailey, you've seen when my face does that,

She makes the face again.

Right?

BAILEY

Relax.

She puts her hands on Janice Lee's shoulders.

You are Janice Lee. The greatest great to ever be. Don't beat yourself up.

MAXWELL

We'll make time. For now, keep your head on straight. I'll go talk to Franklin, there's some leftover champagne from last week if you want it. Celebrate!

He kisses Bailey and then leaves. Janice starts to pout.

BAILEY

Isn't it grand?

JANICE LEE

Grand.

BAILEY

Isn't it everything you've dreamed?

JANICE LEE

Oh, I'm beaming, Bailey.

BAILEY

What's getting you down? Less than a second ago you were smiling past your cheeks.

JANICE LEE

Nothing.

BAILEY

Tell me.

JANICE LEE

Nothing, I swear.

BAILEY

You swear about everything.

JANICE LEE

Well this time I mean it. I swear.

BAILEY

Okay.

JANICE LEE
(Pause)
...It's Max.

BAILEY
Isn't he cute?

JANICE LEE
As a button.

BAILEY
So what if he's been sweet on me lately?

JANICE LEE
So what is that he's not right for you.

BAILEY
No?

JANICE LEE
I don't know.

BAILEY
He's not a bad guy.

JANICE LEE
No. But bad for you.

BAILEY
Oh?

JANICE LEE
He's got his own kinda world, and you've got yours. I just think you're man should be...
Should be...

BAILEY
Stronger? Smarter? What?

JANICE LEE
You can be a woman taking on your own man. Instead of, say, a man taking you on as his
woman, you know?

BAILEY
I don't follow.

JANICE LEE
I just want... You're a great person, and I want... Never mind.

BAILEY
Thank you, dear, for letting me know how you feel. I love that you're always looking out
for me, like a Mamma bird, but I think it's time you look up for once in your life! Take
things for their positive side. Optimism.

JANICE LEE

Sorry. I wasn't trying to be negative. I've been wanting to tell you. About him. And you. It's—

BAILEY

Janice Lee are you *jealous* of Max and I?

JANICE LEE

Well—

BAILEY

You are! You're blushing! Look at you, Miss Bashful.

JANICE LEE

Hush.

BAILEY

Oh, you're charming enough. I'll bet every penny there is that if you find yourself someone smart and upright like you, you won't need to pine for anyone.

JANICE LEE

I'm not pining.

BAILEY

Isn't there a guy uptown you've been eyeing?

JANICE LEE

A guy?

BAILEY

You were talking last week about a fella...

JANICE LEE

Oh, yes, right.

BAILEY

Go for him! The world is an oyster with pearls and all, and nobody's gonna turn you down. And it's not like you can't draw a crowd. If I recall, Franklin has been admiring you like a portrait in the Louvre.

JANICE LEE

Well shouldn't they approach me first?

BAILEY

You can't expect men to appear out of thin air unprompted.

A knock on the door.

Unless this is your mystery man.

They open the door to reveal a tall, charming, handsome gentleman in a top hat, who has already blasted past them into the room with grace. This is THE LUCKY MAN.

THE LUCKY MAN

Good day, good day. Excuse me.

He smacks his lips.

Dear, the dust in this room really coats the palate upon entry, no?

The girls are stunned. He examines the room.

Oh what a quaint set up. You two are the lovely actresses, no doubt?

BAILEY

We are.

THE LUCKY MAN

Which one of you is Janice Lee?

JANICE LEE

That's me.

BAILEY

And who are you?

THE LUCKY MAN

I'm The Lucky Man, if it's all the same to you. You must be Baleen.

BAILEY

Bailey.

THE LUCKY MAN

Oh. How bland and unfortunate a name. I pity a name that has no good shortcut.

JANICE LEE

I call her Bay, sometimes.

THE LUCKY MAN

Reminds me too much of the harbor.

BAILEY

And Baleen doesn't?

THE LUCKY MAN

Baleen whales live nowhere near the harbor, too many boats.

JANICE LEE

Now you're the man who's hired our company?

THE LUCKY MAN

To put on my show! Indeed.

JANICE LEE

Oh, how exciting.

BAILEY

They call you the lucky man?

THE LUCKY MAN

That's my title, don't fight it.

BAILEY

So you're lucky?

THE LUCKY MAN

Oh I am indeed.

JANICE LEE

How so?

THE LUCKY MAN

Do you really want to know?

JANICE LEE & BAILEY

Yes!

THE LUCKY MAN

Sit, sit, and I'll relinquish my tale: I've got the power of luck.

JANICE LEE

What does that do?

THE LUCKY MAN

It's a gift given to me by a magi on the Mediterranean sea. We were in a boat, and as lightning struck our sail, I found myself suspended in midair, time moving slow. He caught me by the arm,

He grabs Janice Lee's arm.

And whispered to me a phrase I cannot forget. 'May the powers of luck be bestowed unto thee.' Then, he fell into the frothy waters and I sailed the boat to shore alone.

JANICE LEE

Okay. But what does it do?

BAILEY

It makes him lucky, he's getting to it.

JANICE LEE

I get that. Is it magic? Or more like your odds of achieving anything are higher than average?

THE LUCKY MAN

It's luck.

JANICE LEE

As we've established, but is it a rabbit feet and redheads kind of deal, or more in the vein of karma... yin and yang and all that?

THE LUCKY MAN

Janice Lee, was it? You've got a brain in that pretty little head of yours.

BAILEY

She's real smart. She does the accounting around here, balances the books.

THE LUCKY MAN

Well isn't that wonderful! Oh dear.

He coughs melodramatically.

Appears I've got a bit of amphibian in my esophagus. Janice, dear, would you do me a favor?

JANICE LEE

Oh. Of course!

THE LUCKY MAN

Could you fetch me a glass of water with ice.

JANICE LEE

Got it.

THE LUCKY MAN

And a lemon slice, and one of those little pastries you had back there? The triangle ones? No rush. Please, and thank you.

She exits. He waits to see she's gone, then leans in on Bailey.

Now, Bailey. I love that bracelet, is it new?

BAILEY

It's my sister's actually. She lent it to me a few years back. Told her I lost it.

THE LUCKY MAN

Well it's gorgeous.

BAILEY

Thank you, sir. I like to think so. I sometimes look at it while upside down and/

THE LUCKY MAN

/Now you're one of the actresses in this troupe?

BAILEY

Correct. Me and Janice Lee.

THE LUCKY MAN

Janice Lee is nice. Smart. Her man must be lucky to have her.

BAILEY

Oh she's free as a bird right now. Seems to me she's enjoying herself. She's meeting people, she says it's a lot of fun and that I should join her, but Max is good to me.

THE LUCKY MAN

I'm glad. So you and Max are together?

BAILEY

Oh. He doesn't like to say the word 'together' because it implies the wrong kind of thing. There's a business relationship that we're supposed to uphold, so he likes to say 'friends.' But in that kinda way where you wink with your voice? Like '*friends*' you know? Says it sounds more professional. If we get married he may go public, though. Not sure yet.

THE LUCKY MAN

I see. He must be real smitten with a girl like you.

Janice Lee steps into the room with the WATER, but steps out in order to eavesdrop.

BAILEY

Real sweet, he is. Sends me lots of gifts. I like the kinds of gifts you get where they're wrapped real tight to the shape of the gift so that I know what it is, that way I don't have to wonder for very long.

THE LUCKY MAN

Tell me more about Janice Lee.

BAILEY

Oh, she's smart. Got her head in whatever the opposite of the clouds is. The dirt, I guess. She never stops thinking about the problems. With work, with me, with the people we meet on the street. Some call it judgmental, I like to call it aggressive courtesy. Because she means well, she just gets all antsy about things. Thinks too much. I say she just needs a good gentleman--

THE LUCKY MAN

It's amazing how one man can affect a girl's life.

BAILEY

She talks to me all the time about this guy she knows from cross town. It's funny to me because *his* name is Bailey also. It's one of those types of names that boys can get too, isn't that the most interesting thing? I have a friend named Lou who's the same way-

THE LUCKY MAN

Have you met him?

BAILEY

Lou? She's a woman. That's what I mean by it can go either way. Louise or Louis.

THE LUCKY MAN

No, I meant Bailey.

BAILEY

Oh. No, says he's too busy with work and everything. She can only see him on Friday evenings when he gets off of work, and that's when I go to visit my mother, so I never get the chance. He seems nice though. She needs someone to take care of her.

THE LUCKY MAN

Well I'm happy that she's finding a guy alright. I like you, Bailey. Are you excited for the show?

BAILEY

Oh, am I ever? I hope we get to sing, because Janice Lee and I have been practicing a little thing. Hold on.

She stands and goes to the doorway.

Janice! Janice Lee!

JANICE LEE (O.S.)

Hold on!

She scrambles to be upright when Bailey swings the door open.

Sorry it took so long. Had trouble finding the lemon.

END OF EXCERPT -

To finish reading the play contact the playwright:

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