

HOW TO GET THE GIRL

By Peter Lancaster Walker

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CHARACTERS

7 Females, 2 Males

RAY	handsome, young and devious
PEARL	good looking, young and devious
HENRY	middle aged top politician, nervous.
ICE CREAM SALESPERSON	female, very miserable.
ANNA	young and free spirited
KATE	young and free spirited
LINDA	young and free spirited
JANE	young and free spirited
CELIA	a little older than Ray and a very serious photographer.

*Additional non speaking bathers may be added if the producer wishes.

PROPS AND COSTUMES

Beach wear for Pearl, Ray and the four girls.

Shirt and shorts for Henry

Casual dresses for ICS and Celia.

Ice creams

Two Deckchairs on set.

Beach Ball

PRODUCTION NOTES

Make it fast paced and make Henry genuinely scared he is to be kidnapped or killed.

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The scene throughout the play is a beach. There are two deckchairs on stage. PEARL is in modest swimwear and SHE is in the arms of RAY, who is a lifeguard. HE puts her down.

PEARL: My first day in Miami and I find you. You may hold my hand if you wish.

RAY: Thank you. You've got long fingers.

PEARL: I play the piano a lot. You need long fingers to play the piano.

RAY: You've big toes too.

PEARL: Big toes run in the family.

RAY: How long are you here for?

PEARL: It's not definite. You see, my father is a politician. He's here for a conference on Global Warming.

RAY: So, he's very rich and famous?

PEARL: Yes. I suppose he is.

RAY: I'd know him if I saw him then?

PEARL: He is instantly recognizable.

RAY: That big, eh?

PEARL: Yes, we're very rich.

RAY: You're very beautiful.

PEARL: Thank you, Ray. What can I say? So, what do you do for a career?

RAY: I'm a Lifeguard.

PEARL: Oh, dear, that isn't a career, Ray . . . Look, if we are going to date properly this week, I must know what you do for a living. You have to be something important to impress my father. A Banker or a Lawyer would be OK. A Doctor would be great. I might say yes if you were a TV Producer, or if you owned a yacht.

RAY: There's something in your eye.

PEARL: You're an Optician! That's all right.

RAY: There is something in your eye. Hold still. I'm a Lifeguard. I didn't have time to put on my whistle.

(PEARL pulls away.)

PEARL: A lifeguard! You're really a Lifeguard?

RAY: I saved your life, didn't I?

PEARL: I wasn't really drowning. I saw you standing on the edge of the beach and just pretended there was a shark chasing me.

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RAY: I know.

PEARL: I didn't fool you?

RAY: This isn't the shark season.

PEARL: My father still won't like you. He's a ruthless man. No one likes him . . . not even me. I have to pretend to like him for financial reasons.

RAY: I am not interested in your father.

PEARL: A father/daughter relationship is very important. I love my daddy. Particularly when he has all the money.

RAY: I see. So a poor college student like me stands no chance?

PEARL: I am afraid not, Ray . . . I will have to let you go.

RAY: You don't want to go out with me.

PEARL: Not unless you have lots and lots of money.

RAY: Money isn't everything, Pearl.

PEARL: Maybe not . . . convince me.

RAY: It isn't.

PEARL: Keep saying it.

RAY: It isn't.

PEARL: No, It isn't sounding better.

RAY: I'm sorry.

PEARL: So am I. I wish it was different. I'd love to go out with you but I've been brought up to be greedy and grasping. I guess I'm pretty horrible. I couldn't do anything openly to annoy my father. And I'm afraid you'd annoy him quite a lot.

RAY: What's this guy's name?

PEARL: Henry Neal, Junior.

RAY: The . . . Henry Neal, Junior? THE Henry Neal Junior?

PEARL: Afraid so.

RAY: I saw him on TV last night.

PEARL: He loves television. He's always combing his hair and looking in mirrors. Vanity runs in the family. (*combs back her hair*)

RAY: So, it's no to a date tonight?

PEARL: Absolutely. There is no way my father would let me go out with a Lifeguard. You will have to go.

RAY: Pity.

PEARL: It is. It is. You mustn't take it personally. We're just too far apart on the social ladder.

RAY: What if I got him to agree to a date?

PEARL: He wouldn't go out with you.

RAY: I want a date with you.

PEARL: It's a pity but it's not possible. You must go now. He said he'd try and join me on the beach. He can't find me with a Lifeguard.

RAY: I have just had an idea. Would you mind if I played a little trick on him?

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PEARL: Why, no. I don't actually like him.

RAY: It's mean. It is very mean.

PEARL: So is he. He cut my dress allowance to 1000 dollars a week.

What can a girl wear for that money?

RAY: I have an idea.

PEARL: Have you?

RAY: Trust me.

PEARL: Of course, I trust you. You'd better hurry up with your big idea.

RAY: Why?

PEARL: My father is walking across the beach now. I'll just wave to him. (waves) Goodbye, Ray. Off you go.

RAY: We have a date tonight. OK.

PEARL: My father will never agree.

RAY: I think he will. I will be back.

PEARL: Yes, goodbye Ray . . . Doesn't my father look rich?

(RAY leaves PEARL and SHE sinks into a deckchair. A woman selling ice cream stops by. SHE may have a cart and actual ice cream, or SHE may mime either or both.)

ICE CREAM SELLER: (shouts) Chocolates, Ice Cream! Lovely ice cream. Lovely ices. Cornets and creams, whips, whirls and wonderful surprises. Buy an ice cream?

PEARL: Sorry. Nowhere to carry any money.

ICS: You're all the same. No one wants my ice cream today. I hate them. I hate them all, I tell you.

PEARL: Maybe that's why no one likes them.

ICS: Ah-I might as well go and throw myself in the Fridge. This is South Beach Miami Beach. We have the hottest summer on record and I cannot sell ice cream! Everyone's sun burnt, sun kissed and swollen, parched tongued, dehydrated and dieting, and I cannot sell ice cream. I am a failure, a failure. That's what I am- a failure . . .

PEARL: Excuse me, you're dripping all over me . . .

ICS: I'm not good at this selling business. I told my mother I was no good, but did she stop me? No. You can do it, Shirley, she said. That's my name . . . Shirley . . .

PEARL: Oh . . .

ICS: Look at my sales today? I've only sold two vanilla ones and a strawberry supreme, and I bought all three myself . . .

PEARL: You probably enjoyed them.

ICS: I hate strawberry . . . I prefer vanilla.

PEARL: Eat another vanilla then.

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ICS: I sell more of vanilla. I sold six blocks of Vanilla yesterday. But not today. Today I've sold nothing, nothing . . . nothing . . . *(bursts into tears)*

PEARL: Please don't cry. It brings me out in a rash.

ICS: I've nothing to live for . . .

PEARL: That isn't my fault, is it? Stop it! You're blocking the light and dampening the sand with your tears.

(Four girls, LINDA, JANE, KATE and ANNA walk by.)

LINDA: Look- ice cream!

ANNA: Me first!

KATE: Do you fancy one?

JANE: Oh, yes . . .

ICS: What can I do for you?

ANNA: Are ice creams fattening?

JANE: Not if you eat them fast.

ANNA: I'm not a fast eater.

LINDA: What do you think, Jane?

JANE: Vanilla.

KATE: What have you got?

ICS: I have strawberry and vanilla.

LINDA: Sounds good.

JANE: Sounds good to me.

ANNA: How many calories?

LINDA: Anna, live a little.

ANNA: Go on then! I'll risk it.

ICS: Sounds very good to me.

JANE: Four strawberry and vanilla.

ANNA: Wait a minute, I am thinking.

JANE: We haven't time. Four please.

ICS: My biggest order today! Maybe the sun is shining on me? *(gets ice creams ready or mimes doing so)*

KATE: Not for me. I'm going on Daddy's yacht this afternoon. I need to look my best. He might give it to me for my birthday.

LINDA: A yacht?

KATE: He's got six. He won't miss one.

ANNA: I wish my Daddy had a yacht. I wish my Daddy had a car.

KATE: They do say it's better to be poor and happy.

ANNA: I bet I know who said it.

JANE: Three strawberry and vanilla. Come on, you three . . .

KATE: I don't want to put on weight.

JANE: What did you say, Kate?

ICS: Ignore her.

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LINDA: Is it fattening?

KATE: Ice 'cream.'

LINDA: I hadn't thought of that.

KATE: Full of calories. One bite and you're up a dress size.

ANNA: Not for me then. I can't take too many risks.

JANE: I don't want to take any risks. I'm anticipating a big Dinner.

LINDA: You've convinced me as well. Sorry, no ice cream for me.

ICS: She's exaggerating.

KATE: I am not. Jenny Smart ate three in a week and her fiancé cancelled the wedding.

LINDA: He did catch her with someone else.

KATE: An ice cream salesperson, actually.

LINDA: Really?

JANE: A good-looking Italian?

LINDA: Possibly

KATE: I can't risk over- indulgence.

ICS: Please . . . please take a risk. You can always go on a diet . . .

JANE: Not for me.

LINDA: Not for me.

ANNA: Nor me. Sorry.

KATE: I was never really tempted.

LINDA: That's not what I heard.

ICS: Please . . . half price . . . a quarter price . . . Buy something. Buy ice on a stick. Buy a stick!

(The GIRLS walk off and sit down not far away.)

ICS: I don't care any more . . . my life is destroyed.

(ICS walks off; PEARL's father arrives.)

HENRY: Hello, darling.

PEARL: Hello . . . Daddy dear.

HENRY: May I join you?

PEARL: Please. No guards?

HENRY: I slipped out the side entrance of the hotel. I am safe here, on a beach. I'm also wearing a false moustache

PEARL: You're not wearing anything, Dad.

HENRY: It must have fallen off!

PEARL: Someone will find it.

(There is a scream)

PEARL: I think someone's found it! I have a chair for you.

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(HENRY sits in chair.)

HENRY: I haven't sat in one of these for ages.

PEARL: Don't fall out!

HENRY: I'm fine. I'm OK. *(relaxes)*

PEARL: Daddy?

HENRY: Be quiet for a minute.

PEARL: You're not going to sleep?

HENRY: I thought I might drop off. *(nearly falls off the chair)*

PEARL: I want to discuss a major problem.

HENRY: Of course, darling. That's what fathers are for. Make it brief, I've had a tough morning arguing with the President.

PEARL: *(points off)* Over there.

HENRY: He can't be. He was in Washington half an hour ago! I was on the telephone to him. Don't tell me he was able to see me and lip read what I really meant?

PEARL: No, no- a big, handsome lifeguard.

HENRY: The one flexing his muscles?

PEARL: Yes, that's the one!

HENRY: Pearl, stop staring at the . . . at the lifeguard. Have I taught you nothing? A Neal doesn't associate with a man of low income. It's un-American.

PEARL: Isn't he handsome, though, an Adonis? Oh, look. He's coming this way.

HENRY: The man's coming over! Now what are we going to do?

PEARL: He looks so strong.

HENRY: Rubbish! It's all muscle.

(RAY comes to talk.)

RAY: Hi there . . .

HENRY: Hi. Go away.

RAY: The tide's coming in.

HENRY: Our Administration had nothing to do with it.

RAY: You ought to move, sir.

HENRY: I've only just got here. Go away. *(to PEARL)* He's after your money!

PEARL: I don't think so.

HENRY: Look at his eyes. He knows who I am.

PEARL: I'm doing it. I am looking at his eyes.

HENRY: Go away!

RAY: I know who you are, sir.

HENRY: You see!

RAY: You're in danger.

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HENRY: Well, I'm not who you think I am.

RAY: No?

HENRY: I look a bit like him. But I am not him.

RAY: Yes, you are.

HENRY: My nose is shorter.

PEARL: It's getting longer.

HENRY: Nonsense. *(feels)*

PEARL: You see.

RAY: Over here, sir. This is not for your daughter's ears

(HENRY gets up and walks a little way with RAY.)

HENRY: All right. What is it? Be quick.

RAY: Someone is going to kidnap you or kill you, sir.

HENRY: What! Do I have a choice?

RAY: Someone is going to kidnap you or kill you. That's all I can say.

HENRY: I don't want to be kidnapped or killed.

RAY: Quiet, please, sir. It's just a routine assassination.

HENRY: It may be routine to you, but it's life and death to me. Who are you? Who are you? You're just a Lifeguard.

RAY: C I A . . .

HENRY: Now I know I'm in danger.

RAY: We'd like this to be a smooth operation, sir.

(PEARL walks over to them.)

PEARL: Daddy!

HENRY: Someone wants to kidnap me or kill me. .

(RAY shakes his head to re-assure PEARL.)

PEARL: Oh . . . This is awful! You have made a will?

HENRY: Of course I've made a will!

PEARL: Is everything left to me?

HENRY: Of course it is. You get the Rochester Estate, the Neal Empire, three poodles and my golf clubs.

(PEARL fakes tears.)

RAY: Don't cry, miss. Who are you?

PEARL: I'm Pearl. *(whispers to RAY)* What are you doing?

RAY: Ray Webb, CIA.

PEARL: Really? I mean . . . CIA? You are pretending?

RAY: *(whispers to PEARL)* Yes, I am pretending. Do you understand?

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PEARL: I do, I do, RAY. What a clever idea. (*floods of fake tears*)

RAY: Permission to comfort your daughter. She seems very distressed.

HENRY: Yes, yes, carry on.

(RAY and PEARL hug.)

What about me?

RAY: Sorry.

(RAY hugs HENRY.)

HENRY: What are you doing?

RAY: A standard CIA hug.

HENRY: (*pushes RAY away*) When is this crazy person going to strike?

RAY: Two o'clock, sir.

(PEARL wails; more hugs from RAY)

HENRY: That's in . . . ten minutes!

RAY: Yes, we've plenty of time.

HENRY: *You* might have!

RAY: Relax, sir.

HENRY: How can I relax?

RAY: It could be worse. You've had your lunch.

PEARL: Did you eat well, Daddy? Last meal and that sort of thing . . . ?

HENRY: Yes, thank you . . . I had roast pheasant.

RAY: I think I should take your daughter out of the danger zone, sir.

HENRY: Where's the danger zone?

RAY: Right here, sir.

HENRY: This is where it's going to happen?

RAY: Yes, of course. There are a lot of people on the beach; one is the kidnapper and possible assassin.

HENRY: Including you! It could be you. I don't like the look of you. It could be you!

RAY: I'm CIA.

HENRY: Of course. That makes me feel much better!

RAY: Permission to escort Pearl away. Just in case there are gunshots and a bullet damages her beautiful skin.

HENRY: Thank you. That's considerate, I guess.

RAY: Just doing my job.

PEARL: Kiss me goodbye, Daddy. Just in case they . . . leave your credit cards if you have them with you.

HENRY: I haven't gone, yet!

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PEARL: We want to get in a last farewell, don't we? Just in case of accidents. I shall always remember you, assuming you have provided for me in your Will. Thank you for the lovely 40,000 dollar car you bought me for my birthday. It has been such a lovely day today.

HENRY: It isn't over, yet. Who is after me?

RAY: It's not terrorists.

HENRY: That's a relief.

RAY: Or organized crime.

HENRY: That's a relief. I'd hate it to be a criminal

RAY: It's some crazy focus group or someone you've upset.

PEARL: Daddy doesn't care about anything. He's a politician. He's upset everyone.

HENRY: Please, darling, they might put that on my tombstone.

PEARL: They may want a ransom.

HENRY: I'll pay the ransom.

PEARL: You always tell people never to pay the ransom.

HENRY: Do I?

PEARL: All the time. The victim's family should never pay the ransom.

RAY: It is a sign of weakness, sir.

HENRY: I don't care what it is. Pay the ransom.

RAY: We don't recommend it, sir.

HENRY: Pay the ransom!

RAY: The sands of time are running out, sir.

HENRY: Say goodbye to your Aunt Esmeralda for me.

PEARL: I will. She'll be so upset. She'll be in mourning for . . . days.

HENRY: You don't look worried that I might be gone in . . . seven minutes.

PEARL: You always told me that worrying never made anything better.

HENRY: You could pretend a little. You could try, Pearl. It's not a lot to ask.

PEARL: I know Ray has plans to save you. He is a very clever man; if you live can we have a date?

HENRY: I'll think about.

PEARL: Don't take long.

RAY: Go and hide behind that windbreaker, Pearl. I'll be with you in a few seconds.

PEARL: Good luck, Daddy. Bye . . .

RAY: Bye . . .

PEARL: Bye . . .

RAY: Bye . . .

HENRY: I don't have time for these fond farewells.

PEARL: See you later . . . I hope

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(PEARL walks off, waving.)

HENRY: Look, wouldn't it be better if I made a run for it? I can still run pretty fast. You have to in my job.

RAY: I didn't think you were who we say you are, sir.

HENRY: I might be.

RAY: I see.

HENRY: I might be, that's all.

RAY: We don't recommend running away, sir. She can run very fast.

HENRY: SHE? It's a woman!

RAY: We believe so, sir.

HENRY: Why a woman? I've always supported women. I divorced four of them. This is unfair.

RAY: I know, sir.

HENRY: There are thousands of women on the beach.

(The four GIRLS walk by playing with a beach ball)

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