

LOTTO DATE

By Jerry Rabushka

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CHARACTERS

THE SHOW STAFF

JUKE ROCKER	Host of the show.
APHRODITE GONZALES	Co-host.
PRISCILLA VALENTINE	Commentator, Editor of <i>Whiny Girl</i> Magazine.

CONTESTANTS

LARIOPE	Female
CASSIE	Female
SAPPHO	Female
XANTHUS	Male
QUENTON	Male
ZAK	Male

COMMERCIAL ACTORS

NORA
GINA
GREG

EXTRAS

CHARLIE	A cowboy.
OLD WOMAN	At the opera.
MARLIESE	A waitress.
USHER	At the opera, M or F.
XANTHUS' MOTHER	
GUY	
GIRL	

PROP LIST

A couple of small boxes and paper to write everyone's name on

A small can of Antiperspirant

Three cell phones

Restaurant table

Menus

Plates

Napkins

And other fine restaurant settings

A pen and order pad (Marliese)

A potato

A mirror

PRODUCTION NOTES

Lotto Date has many small sets. One area of the stage can be the studio, which needs to stay as is throughout the play, as many of the characters watch the action from there. The rodeo, the opera, and the restaurant can all be on the same part of the stage, some simple backdrops or resetting the chairs can set the scene. The commercials don't really need a backdrop at all; on the other hand, a more elaborate staging can play up the studio, the opera, the rodeo, the restaurant, and the commercial sets. The company may also produce the play with minimal props and set pieces according to the company's needs.

There are many "small skits" within the play, allowing for doubling of roles, and also casting many players in medium sized roles that give them a chance to shine while onstage. As a take off on the familiar reality show format, much of the humor can be found in how the characters act like personalities already on TV, or in other instances how they deviate from it. The many different scenes allow the play to pace itself like a TV show.

Opera music and country music are needed for the background of certain scenes, game show music is optional.

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ACT I

SCENE 1

Introduction

***AT RISE:** The characters who will be going on a date, LARIOPE, CASSIOPEIA, SAPPHO, QUENTON, XANTHUS, and ZAK are onstage. They can be seated on chairs, standing in various alluring positions, whatever works best. Lights can be a general wash, or the players can be highlighted. These are all 20-something “hip” people who are trying very hard to make a good impression on TV, even if they come across as idiots. Much of the set for the “studio” should be on one side of the stage, so that the dating action can take place on the other side, thereby allowing actors in the “studio” to watch and comment on the dates on TV monitors.*

LARIOPE: I'm Lariope [*pronounced La-RY-oh-pee*], and I want a man who knows how to show this country girl a hootin' hollerin' good time..

CASSIE: I'm Cassiopeia, and I want a date that'll take me to a concert . . . rock, maybe R.&B. (*thinking*) But mainly, he should have money, and plenty of it. And he should spend it all. . . on me.

XANTHUS: I'm Xanthus, and I'm looking for a girl who's crazy about these (*pointing*) lips!

LARIOPE: (*interrupting*) Well keep looking – ew!

XANTHUS: (*points again to lips*) These babies have built-in-GPS. They know the exact location of your lips.

LARIOPE: You're fixin' to know the exact location of my boot!

XANTHUS: Come on. I thought that was a smooth line.

LARIOPE: Think again.

QUENTON: I'm Quenton, and (*sings as the others wince*) I love the operaaaaa! I want to sinnnnnnnng my way into a girl's heart. Operaaaaa. . .

SAPPHO: (*stops him*) I'm Sappho, and I want a man. . .

XANTHUS: (*waits for her to continue*) A man who. . .

SAPPHO: No, that's it.

Lotto Date - Page 5

ZAK: **(a bit desperate)** I'm Zak. I'm looking for a woman who understands me. Who wants to look deep into my heart and soul and get to know the real Zak. The lonely, desperate, despondent Zak who wants to reach out and understand what true love is. . . what true love can be.

SAPPHO: **(The other women aren't impressed, but SHE is.)** Oh, I'm all about that!

ZAK: **(sulking)** I doubt it. I'm beyond anyone's help.

XANTHUS: **(trying to get a word in)** I'm looking for a girl who likes to have fun.

SAPPHO: I'm all about *that*, too.

XANTHUS: Locking lips. . . that's my kind of fun.

SAPPHO: I'm *not* all about that!

JUKE: **(The show host, enters jovial. The contestants take seats, men together and women together.)** I'm Juke Rocker, and we're all about *Lotto Date*, where love is left up to chance, and chance is what we love. Where your partners are decided by the luck of the draw! And here's our co-host, the lovely Aphrodite Gonzalez!

CASSIE: She's not that lovely.

JUKE: **(joking)** Yes, she is.

CASSIE: No – she really isn't.

JUKE: **(under his breath to her, threatening)** I said *lovely*, now can it.

APHRODITE: I'm all about lovely!

CASSIE: You're all about plastic surgery.

(APHRODITE tries to attack CASSIE but JUKE pulls them apart on his next line.)

JUKE: **(laughing it off)** Now, you all know the rules. . .

SAPPHO: No.

XANTHUS: Not really.

LARIOPE: **(can't believe it)** Haven't you seen the show? It's on all the time!

SAPPHO: My TV is stuck on the history channel. I don't really know about anything that's happened since 1789.

LARIOPE: Fine. **(to JUKE)** Off with her head, please.

JUKE: In *Lotto Date*, it all happens by chance.

ZAK: **(starts to chant)** Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. . .

JUKE: **(correcting him)** Chance!

ZAK: That's what you said. Chants!

JUKE: Not chants, chance!

ZAK: That's the inner me. That's the Zak I want someone to find.

LARIOPE: I don't think anyone wants to find that Zak.

Lotto Date - Page 6

JUKE: Come now, you might find yourself kissing that Zak by the end of the night.

LARIOPE: I'd rather drink out of a prison toilet.

JUKE: **(tired of her)** Annnd you might find yourself doing that too, here on Lotto Date! Here's what happens: on our first nine episodes, three couples vie for the crown of "best date of the evening." The nine winners play off in the next three episodes, and those winners come on our show one more time for a chance to win the grand prize – marriage! **(The contestants are aghast.)** That's right. In a few short weeks, one of you might find yourselves walking down that aisle of nuptial bliss with someone you barely know. Now, the lovely Ms. Gonzales will pass out a sheet of paper, and you'll all write your name down and put it in the secret mixing box! Then... by lot... we pick your date for the evening.

SAPPHO: Good. I can't pick a man myself anyway.

XANTHUS: I still want a woman who likes to have fun – *my* kind of fun. **(points to lips)** Pucker up ladies.

CASSIE: **(creeped out, as are the other women)** Do you rehearse that?

LARIOPE: Do not make me go out with this man!

JUKE: You know the rules. You go out on the date we select – and you can't leave until the date is over! **(Contestants get scared again.)**

APHRODITE: **(collecting names from a frightened bunch)** No... matter... what.

XANTHUS: Now that's *my* kind of fun. I like a girl who kisses good, washes my car, and cleans my room.

LARIOPE: And you're single... mystery solved.

JUKE: Settle down. The fun is just beginning.

APHRODITE: **(puts the men's names in one box and the women's in another)** Because while *you* might not be having fun, the rest of America is going to have a great time, as we play... .

CONTESTANTS: **(like puppets)** Lotto Date!

JUKE: Where, not only is your date drawn by lot, **(indicates another small box)** but out of *this* box, we draw where you go and what you do... because...

APHRODITE: Life is a game of chance! **(reaches into a box and pulls out a paper)** Lariope! You're going out with... **(pulls paper out of the other box)** dad a da daaaaaaaaaa! Xanthus!

LARIOPE: Oh yuk!

XANTHUS: My kind of—

LARIOPE: **(aggressively)** Your kind of yuck!

JUKE: **(the more miserable they are, the happier HE is)** And where are they going, Aphrodite?

Lotto Date - Page 7

APHRODITE: **(reaches into the third box and pulls out a slip of paper)** Well yippie-yi-yay they're going to play cowboy, with a trip to the rodeo and then an evening of country dancing!

XANTHUS: **(upset)** We're going to the what?

LARIOPE: **(excited)** Cowboys! Now that's *my* kind of fun.

XANTHUS: That's not fun at all. Rodeo.

LARIOPE: Yee haw. Buck up, bucko, we're gonna have a good ol' time.

APHRODITE: You better hope someone else doesn't rope your girl away! If you lose the date, you don't get the prize.

JUKE: Our next couple. . .

APHRODITE: **(drawing)** Quenton. . . you're going out with. . . **(draws out of the other box)** . . . Cassie!

QUENTON: **(kisses her hand and raises it up high)** Bellissimo!

JUKE: And where are they going?

APHRODITE: **(picks out of another box)** Me me me me meeeeeeee! To. . . the. . . opera!

CASSIE: I wanna go to a rock concert!

QUENTON: Bravo! Bravissimo! You'll love the opera!

CASSIE: My mother was a soprano, and so was my stepfather. Every night they sang the love duet from Monteverdi's **(in a very Italian accent)** *L'Incorinazione di Poppea*. **(as if this ruined her for life)** Every night. **(QUENTON takes a breath to sing.)** Don't you dare!

APHRODITE: And finally, Sappho and Zak, you're going to **(picks one more paper out of a box)** *L'Haute Cuisine*. . . only the finest French restaurant in town, and the sponsor of our show. . . along with of course the Championship Rodeo Association and the Grand Opera Foundation. Funny how that works, don't you think? **(explains to the audience)** Now, we're going to follow our couple through their dates, and we're going to record everything for you at home to watch and vote on.

CASSIE: What if we need a private moment?

JUKE: You'd better not.

ZAK: **(meekly)** I'm a private person.

JUKE: **(laughs)** No you're not.

ZAK: **(scared)** No, I am.

JUKE: Just pretend the cameras aren't even there. Tonight, our special "Rate-A-Date" guest analyst is Priscilla Valentine, editor of *Whiny Girl* Magazine. **(PRISCILLA enters as they all applaud her.)** She's going to assess our couples and rate their chances for success. If she can correctly predict the audience vote at the end of the night, she wins one hundred thousand dollars. If she's wrong. . . well. . . **(starts to laugh)** well. . . well. . . **(approaches her eerily)**

PRISCILLA: Stop it!

Lotto Date - Page 8

JUKE: Sorry, that's *my* kind of fun. (*aside, to PRISCILLA*) Look, you get it wrong, you don't get squat. (*back in character*) Now, tell us a bit about *Whiny Girl*, and what qualifies you as an expert in the dating habits of today's young people?

PRISCILLA: (*very educated, almost snooty*) *Whiny Girl* magazine was developed for the young lady who's extraordinarily selfish. Who thinks it's all about her. We give her the means and the motivation to continue in her quest for money, career, and expensive gifts, no matter who she has to step on, crush, or mangle in her climb to the top. Needless to say, we have a circulation of 17 million.

APHRODITE: Okay. . . (*to the audience*) Let's hear it for who you like best! (*As SHE names people, SHE gets each woman, JUKE gets each man, and they bring the couples together.*) Xanthus and Lariope. . . (*applauds and encourages the audience to do the same*) Quenton and Casseopia. . . (*again, looks for applause*) and finally, Zak and Sappho. Off you go, to play. . . *Lotto Date!* (*nobody moves*) Come on, off you go. (*JUKE and APHRODITE start hustling them off, to their dismay.*) Get. . . out. . . now!

(The contestants finally exit.)

JUKE: Now, Priscilla, your analysis.

PRISCILLA: (*confused*) I think this year's elections are in the bag, the Super Bowl was fixed, and if there's any justice in television, I shall win an Emmy Award for this episode of "Lotto Date."

JUKE: The couples! Analyze the couples!

PRISCILLA: Why didn't you say so? (*shaking her head*) Politics and sports, on a dating program. (*back to business, a bit like a sportscaster*) Xanthus and Lariope. They have a chance. She's a sourpuss, but he might just win her over to his kind of fun. Now, I'm not all about Zak and Sappho. She's vapid. Like a vacuum cleaner with an empty dirt bag. If they *did* like each other, they wouldn't know how to express it. Now, Quentin and Cassie. Opera. It might be a comedy onstage, but it's a tragedy in the seats.

JUKE: It's a tragedy onstage.

PRISCILLA: What is?

JUKE: The opera. It's a tragedy.

PRISCILLA: Okay, then it's a comedy in the seats. I'm easy on the analysis. You might say I'm a coloratura analyst. (*far too amused with herself, so JUKE has to cut to commercial*)

JUKE: Back in a minute – as we play. . . *Lotto Date!*

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

AT RISE: *The contestants are onstage, talking as if to a cameraman/interviewer before their dates. Again, they can be positioned any way for maximum effect.*

CASSIE: He loves the opera. I don't want to seem like a sourpuss, but frankly I'd rather take my brother to the high school prom.

QUENTIN: **(tries to put an arm around CASSIE, who pushes him off)**
She hates the opera. Now. But I'll change her. And she'll thank me for it.

CASSIE: I'll thank him to take me home at intermission.

QUENTIN: Which intermission? There's four acts! Four long, luxurious acts!

SAPPHO: French. Can you eat French if you can't speak it? *Parlez vous pate?*

ZAK: **(smiles)** French food is so fine. **(loses the smile)** It's just going to make me look bad.

XANTHUS: I don't care – A rodeo is *not* my kind of fun. I'm urban – sophisticated – debonair. I should be going to that French joint.

LARIOPE: **(pulls him off stage)** Git your high-falootin' self in the car and let's go rooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo. Yeeeeee Hawww!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 3

AT RISE: *Lights back up on the show set.*

PRISCILLA: The way to ensure a successful date is to dress for it. *Dare* to dress for it. You can't go to the rodeo dressed for the opera, any more than you can wear white at a Goth wedding.

APHRODITE: And to help the couples look their best, we've supplied each of them with a killer wardrobe to go with their evening out. Priscilla, will this make them more compatible?

PRISCILLA: In the case of Zak and Sappho, yes. Zak needs the boost to his ego. For Xanthus, putting him in country clothes will make him squirm like a calf in a lariat toss. Prone to wild outbursts. Ahh. I can't wait! My kind of fun!

APHRODITE: And we're all about having fun.

JUKE: And what our couples don't know is, tonight we're sending in special guests – people to rattle their mettle. To sabotage the date. You've done that yourself, haven't you, Aphrodite?

Lotto Date - Page 11

NORA: Ask your doctor. And if you have to phone him, do it on. . .

Phonex! After 7 PM, of course.

GREG: He's closed after 7 PM.

NORA: Leave a message!

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