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*Dramatic Publishing*

A ONE ACT PLAY

**Planet of the**  
**Perfectly Awful People**

BY  
JOSEPH ROBINETTE



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(PLANET OF THE PERFECTLY AWFUL PEOPLE)

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# PLANET OF THE PERFECTLY AWFUL PEOPLE

*A Far-Out One-Act Comedy for Children*

by

Joseph Robinette

## C H A R A C T E R S

ABBIE ANDERSON                      a girl from the planet Earth

ZEBULON ZOOK                      a boy from the planet Mirth

LORD GROUCHO                    )

)

LADY GRUMBLE                    )                      perfectly awful people

)

SIR GROAN                         )

The Time: Now.

The Place: On a far, distant planet.

Casting Note: The show may be played by all males or all females, or any combination thereof by substituting the following names: AMOS ANDERSON, ZELDA ZOOK, QUEEN GROUCHO, PRINCE GRUMBLE, MISTRESS GROAN.

## THE STORY

Abbie Anderson of Peach Grove, Pennsylvania, is chosen to be the first girl into outer space. Her rocket ship, heading for Venus, goes off-course and crash-lands on the planet of Meanus, home of the perfectly awful people who try to change the happy, generally contented Abbie. She and a young boy, Zebulon Zook, who also lands on the planet, attempt to change the Meanusites. In a literal battle of wits - - including jokes, anecdotes and vaudeville routines -- the two youngsters out-duel their adversaries who eventually realize that it's more fun - - and a lot less work -- to be good-natured rather than contrary all the time.

## PLANET OF THE PERFECTLY AWFUL PEOPLE

Scene: When the house lights are at half, an ANNOUNCER's voice is heard over a loudspeaker. The house lights slowly fade out during the following speech.

ANNOUNCER (offstage). Ladies and gentlemen, stand by for blast-off! In a few moments, on this very historic day, Miss Abbie Anderson from Peach Grove, Pennsylvania\* will be speeding on her way to that far, distant planet Venus. Abbie was selected for this mission because of her sunny smile and warm disposition. In fact, she was the winner of the first annual Sunny-Smile-And-Warm-Disposition contest. Therefore, Abbie will be our goodwill ambassador. If there are people on Venus, we are depending on Abbie to make friends with them. And now, the countdown is about to begin. Ready, tower?

(The entire opening sequence of VOICES, except for ABBIE's, may either be on tape or projected live through a public address system.)

\*Abbie can be from the state where the production is being presented. A fictitious town with a native fruit or vegetable in the name (i.e.) Tomato Junction, New Jersey, or Cucumber Falls, California may be used.

1ST VOICE (offstage). Ready!

ANNOUNCER. Ready, ground control?

2ND VOICE (offstage). Ready!

ANNOUNCER. Ready, Abbie?

(A special light picks up ABBIE sitting on a stool either in front of the curtain or just behind the curtain line with the curtains slightly open. ABBIE is a young, pretty girl who, at this moment, is quite nervous.)

ABBIE. I - - I think so.

ANNOUNCER. And now we bid a fond farewell to Abbie Anderson of Peach Grove, Pennsylvania as she flies to Venus, a planet which may very well have life on it.

2ND VOICE. It'll certainly have life on it when Abbie gets there. (He chuckles.)

ANNOUNCER. Was that you, ground control?

2ND VOICE. Yes, sir.

ANNOUNCER. Control yourself.

2ND VOICE. Sorry, sir.

ANNOUNCER. Let the countdown begin. Ten - - nine - - eight - -

ABBIE. Good-bye, Mom - - good-bye, Dad!

MOTHER (offstage). 'Bye, honey. Don't forget to dress warm.

ABBIE. But they say it's hot on Venus.

1ST VOICE. Then no matter how she dresses, she'll dress warm. (A low chuckle.)

ANNOUNCER. Ground control, I said control yourself.

2ND VOICE. That wasn't ground control, sir. That was the tower, sir.

ANNOUNCER. Tower, control yourself!

1ST VOICE. That's ground control's job, sir.

ANNOUNCER. Can we please get on with the countdown?

(More calmly.) Seven - - six - - five - -

ABBIE. Mom, keep the baby out of my room while I'm gone!

MOTHER. I will, dear.

ANNOUNCER. Four - - three - - two - -

ABBIE. I forgot my toothbrush!

MOTHER. We'll mail it to you, honey!

ABBIE. Mom, I don't think they deliver mail on Venus!

ANNOUNCER. One! And now, the first girl into outer space!

Blast-off! (A loud "explosion" is heard. Space music may follow the blast. Special lighting effects may be projected onto the curtain and ABBIE, or played over the audience until the curtain opens.) Earth to Abbie  
- - Earth to Abbie! Can you hear us?

ABBIE. Loud and clear, Earth!

ANNOUNCER. What's it like up there?

ABBIE. It's beautiful. Earth looks like a bright blue ping-pong ball.

ANNOUNCER. Good.

ABBIE. And now I can see Mars. It's red!

ANNOUNCER. Terrific!

ABBIE. And way over there is Saturn. I can see the rings!

ANNOUNCER. Marvelous!

ABBIE. And out there to the left - -

ANNOUNCER. Wait a minute! Abbie, you shouldn't be seeing Mars or Saturn. They're in the opposite direction of Venus!

ABBIE. Oh, no!

ANNOUNCER. Abbie, you're off course!

ABBIE. Oh, no!

ANNOUNCER. You're going the wrong way!

ABBIE. I'm passing Jupiter. I can see the moons. (Static is heard.)

ANNOUNCER. What's that, Abbie?

ABBIE. I said I'm passing - - (More static and garbled mechanical sounds are heard.)

ANNOUNCER. Abbie, Abbie! Come in, Abbie!

ABBIE. Hello-hello, Ground Control. Oh, no. I've lost contact! Help! Help!!

(The lights go out. In the darkness, the static is followed by louder sounds -- eerie and strange. They culminate in a loud crash. A moment later all is silent as the curtain opens. The setting is a flat area surrounded by rocks and craters. The background reveals a multi-colored sky dotted by distant stars and planets. ABBIE enters. She is shaken from the crash. She carries a small suitcase, a lunch box and other "travel items," as desired. She dumps her gear at center. During the following speech, she smiles, and occasionally whistles, trying to cheer herself up.)

ABBIE. Wow! What a trip! (Looking offstage.) That poor space ship - - I'm sure it'll never fly again. Hey, maybe I made it to Venus after all. It looks like Venus - - I guess. But I wouldn't really know. Well, I'd better set up camp. (She begins to unpack.) Let's see - - lunch - - soap and towel - - I wish I had my toothbrush - - Books! Good, my favorites - - "Tom Sawyer" and "Little Women" - - "The Down-to-Earth Cookbook". The TV Guide - - I wonder if they have cartoons up here. What's that? Chewing gum! (She pulls it out.) Oh, no - - it's already been chewed. I'll bet the baby

did that as a joke. (She surveys "her camp".) Well, now -- I'm all set to explore. Wait a minute. They told me I'd need my oxygen mask on Venus -- so I could breathe. But I'm breathing quite well without it. (She takes a deep breath.) They also said I'd have to wear a hat here, because the sun is so hot. But it's really nice and cool. And they said I'd probably find *people* here, but this place looks deserted. I guess they just didn't know much about Venus after all.

LORD GROUCHO. (from behind a rock). Maybe that's because you're not *on* Venus, after all.

ABBIE. Well, that's possible. After all, I *was* going in the wrong direction.

GROUCHO. Correction! One never goes in the wrong direction -- one merely goes to the *wrong* place in the *right* direction.

ABBIE. Hey, I never thought of it that way before.

GROUCHO. Then start thinking about it that way before -- and after.

ABBIE. I -- think I will. Hey, wait a minute. (Suddenly frightened.) Was I talking to myself?

GROUCHO. You were talking to *my* self. (He jumps from behind the rock.)

ABBIE. Who -- who are you?

GROUCHO. I am -- *me* -- that's who I am. Who are you?

ABBIE. I -- I'm me.

GROUCHO. You can't be me. *I'm* me.

ABBIE. I know, but what I meant was --

LADY GRUMBLE (from behind a rock). Neither of you is me. *I* am me. (She appears as ABBIE gasps.)

ABBIE. Who are you?

SIR GROAN. Did someone call -- *me*?

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ALL (except ABBIE). I'm me -- this is me -- you are not me -- me is me, etc.

GROUCHO. Silence! I am the leader here. I will settle this. I am me -- you are you -- he is he -- she is new.

GROAN (to ABBIE). Who are you anyway?

GROUCHO. I'm the leader. I'll ask the questions. Who are you anyway?

ABBIE. I -- I'm Abbie Anderson from Peach Grove, Pennsylvania.

GROUCHO. Where is that?

ABBIE. It's -- it's -- on earth.

GROUCHO. What's an earth?

ABBIE. It's a planet -- just like this one.

GROUCHO. *No* planet is just like this one.

ABBIE. Uh, do all of you have names, too.

GROUCHO. Of course. If we didn't each have a name -- we'd all be the same. And if we were all the same -- we wouldn't need a name.

ABBIE. I don't understand.

GRUMBLE (aside, to ABBIE). No one can understand him. That's why he's the leader.

GROUCHO. I am Lord Groucho.

GRUMBLE. I am Lady Grumble.

GROAN. I am Sir Groan.

GROUCHO. And you --

ALL (except ABBIE). Are under arrest!

ABBIE (shocked). Under arrest?

GROUCHO. Of course. You know the rules here.

ABBIE. But I just got here. I didn't know there were rules on Venus.

ALL (except ABBIE). Venus?

GROUCHO. Young lady, this is not Venus.

ABBIE. It's not?

GROUCHO. This is --

ALL (except ABBIE). Meanus!

ABBIE. Meanus?

GROUCHO. Meanus! The meanest planet in the universe.

GRUMBLE. Home of the perfectly awful people.

GROAN. And I'll bet you thought nobody was perfect.

GROUCHO. Now, Miss Abbie -- whatever your name is --  
from wherever Pennsylvania -- on the planet whichever  
it is -- you are under arrest for breaking the following  
laws on Meanus. Bring me the law book, Sir Groan.  
(GROAN hands it to him.)

GROAN. Here it is, Lord Groucho.

GROUCHO. Read it, Lady Grumble.

GRUMBLE (taking the book and reading). "It is against the  
law to mock a monkey on Monday. It is against the  
law to tease a toad on Tuesday. It is . . ."

GROUCHO. Lady Grumble, you're on the wrong page.

GRUMBLE. Oh, sorry. (Turning to the correct page.) "It  
is against the law to laugh or smile, even once in a  
while. To whistle or sing about anything. To tell a  
joke to any folk. To be happy or glad, not even a tad.  
In short, on the planet Meanus, it is against the law to  
be anything but --"

GROUCHO. M --

GROAN. E --

GRUMBLE. A--

GROUCHO. N --

ALL (except ABBIE). Mean!

ABBIE. Mean?

ALL (except ABBIE). And we mean it!

GRUMBLE. "It's also against the law to thrash a thrush on  
Thursday."

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