



# TEN CHIMNEYS

BY JEFFREY HATCHER



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The World Premiere of  
TEN CHIMNEYS  
was originally commissioned and produced by  
Arizona Theatre Company, Tuscon/Phoenix, Arizona  
(David Ira Goldstein, Artistic Director; Kevin E. Moore, Managing Director).

In addition, all programs must include approved biographies for Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Sydney Greenstreet and Uta Hagen. These, along with information concerning the Ten Chimneys Foundation, are available at [www.dramatists.com](http://www.dramatists.com).

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*For Sean Malone*

TEN CHIMNEYS received its world premiere at the Arizona Theatre Company (David Ira Goldstein, Artistic Director; Kevin E. Moore, Managing Director) in Tucson, Arizona, opening on January 22, 2011. It was directed by David Ira Goldstein; the set design was by John Ezell; the costume design was by Marcia Dixcy Jory; the lighting design was by Dennis Parichy; the original music and sound design were by Josh Schmidt; and the production stage manager was Glenn Bruner. The cast was as follows:

UTA HAGEN . . . . . Anna Bullard  
LYNN FONTANNE . . . . . Suzanne Bouchard  
ALFRED LUNT . . . . . Steve Hendrickson  
LOUISE GREENE . . . . . Naomi Jacobson  
HATTIE SEDERHOLM . . . . . Linda Stephens  
CARL SEDERHOLM . . . . . Marcus Truschinski  
SYDNEY GREENSTREET . . . . . Michael Winters

## **CHARACTERS**

ALFRED LUNT, 40s

LYNN FONTANNE, 50

UTA HAGEN, 20s

HATTIE SEDERHOLM, 70s

SYDNEY GREENSTREET, 60s

CARL SEDERHOLM, 30s

LOUISE GREENE, 40s

## **PLACE**

The pool area and studio of the country home of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in Genesee Depot, Wisconsin.

## **TIME**

Act One, Scene 1: A late August afternoon in summer 1938 — pool area.

Act One, Scene 2: Two days later. Afternoon — pool area.

Act Two, Scene 1: The next evening — inside the studio.

Act Two, Scene 2: Some years later. April, 1945 — inside the studio.

# TEN CHIMNEYS

## ACT ONE

### PROLOGUE

*A spot comes up on Uta Hagen.*

UTA. Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* is considered by many to be the most comedic of the Russian dramatist's major plays. There are many theories as to why this might be the case, but the simplest explanation may be that in *The Seagull*, Chekhov was writing about the people he knew best — artists, actors and writers; and those who aspire to be. (*Lights fade on Uta.*)

## Scene 1

*The pool area at Ten Chimneys in Genesee Depot, Wisconsin. We can't see the pool, but its presence can be felt. Especially on this summer afternoon.*

*We can also see some of the exterior of the rustic-styled studio that serves as a rehearsal room: dark brown logs, very Scandinavian in design. At rise: Louise, care-worn but trying not to be seen as such, is looking out front. She wears a flowered print dress.*

*Carl enters. He wears a rumpled jacket and work pants. He holds something behind his back.*

CARL. Why do you always wear black?

LOUISE. *(Turns to look at him.)* What?

CARL. Because you're in mourning for your life. *(Off Louise's stare.)* I say, "Why do you always wear black," and then you're supposed to say ...

LOUISE. "You're in mourning for your life."

CARL. "I'm in mourning for my life."

LOUISE. We're agreed, you're in mourning for your life.

CARL. No, *you're* in mourning for *your* life, and *you* always wear black.

LOUISE. I'm not wearing black.

CARL. Well, you should, you're in mourning. *(Carl takes a script from behind his back and opens it.)* The play's first line is "Why do you always wear black?" The reply: "I'm in mourning for my life." This is a cheerful bunch. *(Louise takes the script from Carl.)*

LOUISE. You're not supposed to have this.

CARL. It was sitting around.

LOUISE. That doesn't mean it's for you to take. *(Points to page.)* It's got their notes on it. See? "Three beats not four, one octave lower."

CARL. There's music in it?

LOUISE. She's referring to her voice. (*Louise drops the script to the ground with a thud.*)

LYNN. (*From off.*) Yoo hoo! Has anyone seen my script?

LOUISE. See what you've done? (*Picks up script.*) Here, put it somewhere, or she'll — (*Lynn Fontanne enters in her stylish version of summer country lounging clothes.*)

LYNN. There it is! Naughty script, you let Louise steal you from me. Carl, your sister will be taking my parts from me if we don't watch out. (*Lynn trills a laugh and takes the script from Louise.*)

LOUISE. I didn't take the scr —

LYNN. (*Already on a new track.*) Oh, Carl, darling, heaps of favors: G-string is coming in on the one o'clock train. Would you be a dear and sweep him up?

CARL. G-string?

LYNN. I'm sorry, Carl, I can never remember who's in the club and who isn't. Mr. Greenstreet. He's part of the company, coming in from New York.

CARL. How will I know him?

LYNN. He weighs three hundred pounds and has a head like a cannonball. Although, in Wisconsin that's not an unknown type. You'd better hurry if you're going to change.

CARL. Change what?

LYNN. Clothes.

CARL. To pick someone up at the station?

LYNN. Well, if *that's* what you wear to meet guests, that's what you wear. (*Moves the best chair to a different position.*) Has anyone seen Alfred?

LOUISE. He went off to pick raspberries.

LYNN. Oh, dear. His fingers will be stained red for days.

CARL. We'll be able to dust you for prints.

LYNN. (*Gives Carl a baleful glance.*) Oh, Carl, you're so what you are.

CARL. (*Hard to bring up.*) ... Oh. The car ...

LYNN. Yes? What about the car?

CARL. It needs ...

LYNN. To be washed? Yes, please, do, I've been telling Alfred to ask you.

CARL. It needs gas.

LYNN. Oh, you need money! I don't have my change purse. Is Hattie still up in her room?

CARL. She was having breakfast a few minutes ago.



LYNN. In the kitchen? I didn't see her.

LOUISE. She waited until you'd left. (*Lynn gives Louise a brief look.*)

LYNN. I'll see if there are some ducats in the studio. (*Lynn goes off to the studio.*)

LOUISE. Why did you have to take her script? I'll never hear the end of it now. Did you read it?

CARL. Some. Masha's in love with Treplev who's in love with Nina who's in love with Trigorin ... It's like musical chairs played real slow. (*Lynn reenters and hands Carl four quarters.*)

LYNN. Looky, looky, a whole dollar.

CARL. Thank you, Lynn.

LYNN. Not at all, Carl. And that wash wouldn't go amiss.

CARL. Yes, Lynn. (*Carl goes off. Lynn nods at the script.*)

LYNN. Did you enjoy the play?

LOUISE. I wasn't rea —

LYNN. You can read a play as much as you like, it never comes alive until it's performed.

LOUISE. Lynn, I didn't —

LYNN. If you want to know what it's about, I'll tell you. It's about a beautiful actress and how she and the man she loves descend upon an estate causing havoc and heartbreak among the provincials.

LOUISE. I need to *read* about that?

ALFRED. (*From off.*) Hark! What bright paradise is this that greets a rustic return'd from his fields? (*Alfred enters. he's wearing a wide-brimmed panama hat, shirt, suspenders, work pants and boots.*)

Hello, darling! Hello, Lou! Where's Hattie?

LOUISE. She's having breakfast.

ALFRED. Past noon? Sort of late for her, isn't it? And Carl?

LYNN. I sent him to the station to pick up Sydney.

ALFRED. Good, good. (*To Louise re: script.*) I see you're reading the play.

LOUISE. Alfred, I did not —

ALFRED. Like it? Most people don't like Chekhov, but I think it's because we get him wrong, always playing him moody and depressed, like he's Strindberg or Ibsen, one of us Scandinavian types! He's really very funny.

LYNN. But sad.

ALFRED. That's what I meant. Have you ever *seen* it, Louise?

LOUISE. No, and I —

ALFRED. It's about this famous fellow and his two women — an older actress and a younger one — and the whirlwind of life at their country estate. You know, I think we should rehearse out here. The first two scenes take place out of doors: a twilight performance on a makeshift stage and then the picnic. It'll be good for us to get the feel of what it's like.

LOUISE. What *what's* like?

ALFRED. To be outside. You know how it is, you have a scene set out of doors — it could be a desert or a forest — then the curtain rises, and the actors walk on stage like a bunch of actors walking onto a stage! How do you walk when it's humid? Or when the wind comes up? We'll have the experience of it, then we'll file it away to remember for later.

LOUISE. And that helps?

ALFRED. Unless there are mosquitos. Then all the actors get the idea to play the scene as if they're swatting away at them. (*Slaps at imaginary insects.*) It starts to look like a Milwaukee Slap Band.

LYNN. Your brother's very fond of the real. Of course, there are limits. Hats, for example.

LOUISE. I beg your pardon?

LYNN. One wears a hat outside because of the sun, but if you wear a hat on stage it creates awful shadows. The audience can't see your face. And if they can't see you they can't hear you.

ALFRED. Psychological thing.

LOUISE. So what do you do if you want things to seem real but you can't wear your hat?

LYNN. You come on wearing a hat just so the audience gets a sense that's what *would* happen, then you take it off to brush away a fly or fan yourself. After that, you put the hat down, and no one notices for the rest of the play.

LOUISE. I shall remember that the next time I see a play filled with hats. (*Hattie enters. She's big, theatrical and wears a huge hat tilted back slightly so we can see her face.*)

HATTIE. Sweet boy!

ALFRED. Hattie, love!

LOUISE. Morning, Mother.

HATTIE. Did someone die? Carl's wearing a suit.

LOUISE. He's picking up Sydney from the depot.

ALFRED. Mother, do you need a chair?

HATTIE. Oh, no, Lynn's will do. (*Hattie makes her way over to the*

*chair Lynn has been adjusting most of the scene.)*

LOUISE. Mother, Alfred and Lynn are going to be rehearsing here.

HATTIE. I know! I heard! — I was near an open window — I can't wait to watch.

ALFRED. Well, I don't know if that's —

LYNN. Alfred, it's perfectly all right with me if your mother wants to watch. With Chekhov there's always a large, dark presence looming about. It'll be good to have your mother here. To see if we unearth it, I mean.

HATTIE. (*Seethes; then.*) Which will it be, the first scene or the picnic scene?

LYNN. You know the play?

HATTIE. Of course I do!

LOUISE. What do you think it's about?

HATTIE. It's about a wonderful house where these fascinating people welcome friends and family with open, outstretched arms, even though they always leave a mess when they go. (*A phone can be heard ringing far off.*)

LYNN. It might be Carl calling from the depot. (*The phone keeps ringing. Nobody moves.*) If there's a problem ... (*Louise realizes she's going to have to play servant.*)

LOUISE. I'll go.

ALFRED, LYNN and HATTIE. (*In unison.*) Thank you, Louise. (*Louise fumes and exits.*)

HATTIE. (*To Alfred.*) Has Louise spoken to you yet?

LYNN. About what?

HATTIE. I'm sorry, Lynn. Family matter.

LYNN. I've been married to Alfred for fifteen years. We come here for three months every summer.

HATTIE. Yes, three full and joyous months with my boy, my lovely, darling child!

LYNN. Has anyone seen my copy of *Oedipus*? I'll just go see if it's inside. I want to make sure how it ends. (*Lynn exits.*)

HATTIE. *Oedipus*! Does she think I don't get the reference? We're not at all like that.

ALFRED. Aren't we?

HATTIE. Not at all. There's no third-wheel gumming up things in *Oedipus*.

ALFRED. Still and all, thou doth provoke my good lady wife.

# TEN CHIMNEYS

by Jeffrey Hatcher

3M, 4W

Summer, 1938. Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, the two most revered stars of the Broadway stage, have decided to perform Chekhov's masterpiece, *The Sea Gull*. But first they must retreat to "investigate" the play at Ten Chimneys, their sprawling Wisconsin estate, surrounded by actors, family and hangers-on. When a young actress named Uta Hagen arrives, a romantic triangle begins to mirror the events in Chekhov's play about passion and art. The result is a funny, poignant and revealing look at private lives that never really leave the stage.

*"TEN CHIMNEYS imagines the offstage life of the stars ... as a combination of theatrical boot camp and backstage soap opera. Mr. Hatcher provides generous doses of arch quipping in the Coward mold. Mr. Hatcher's affection for the Lunts and the golden age of American theater shines throughout."*  
—The New York Times

*"TEN CHIMNEYS is charming, frothy ... achieving an air of glittering lightness reminiscent of Noel Coward. The witticisms fly like darts."*  
—Associated Press

*"Jeffrey Hatcher's enjoyable comedy ... glows with an affectionate warmth for the fabled life and stage partners."*  
—The New York Daily News

*"TEN CHIMNEYS is a revealing look at Lunt-Fontanne home life. I'd move in tomorrow. A must-visit!"*  
—BackStage

*"A stirring reminder of why theater matters."*  
—The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

*"Jeffrey Hatcher's layer cake of a script is an engrossing romp that reveals delicious trade secrets of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne."*  
—The Cleveland Plain Dealer

*"TEN CHIMNEYS is irresistible."*  
—Talkin' Broadway

*"TEN CHIMNEYS is The Seagull with a Cowardly touch. The play combines the charm and wit of Coward's frothy hits during the 1930s and '40s, with the complexity and intensity of Seagull. Playwright Jeffrey Hatcher deserves some sort of reward for this delicious script. Hatcher's script is smart and funny. It no doubt will have ... a good life indeed."*  
—The Arizona Daily Star

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