

# LUCY

BY ERICA SCHMIDT

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LUCY  
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LUCY was originally commissioned and produced by Audible at the Minetta Lane Theatre in New York City in February 2023. It was directed by Erica Schmidt, the scenic design was by Amy Rubin, the costume design was by Kaye Voyce, the lighting design was by Cha See, the sound design was by Justin Ellington, the casting was by the Telsey Office, the technical supervision was by Hudson Theatrical Associates with general management by Baseline Theatrical's Andy Jones and Jonathan Whitton, and the production stage manager was David Lurie-Perret. The cast was as follows:

MARY ..... Brooke Bloom  
ASHLING ..... Lynn Collins  
LUCY ..... Charlotte Surak

## CHARACTERS

### MARY

Mary is in her early forties. She is a successful radiologist in a prestigious hospital. Mary dresses in business-appropriate, flattering, timeless clothes—she has a classic, simple style. Her hair and makeup are always the same—tasteful and super quick and easy. She is organized and focused. She is headstrong and insecure. She compensates for being serious by being warm. A hard-working single mother.

### ASHLING

Ashling looks to be in her early forties. She moves like an ex-dancer with a fluid energy and relaxed, comfortable vibe. She is very self-possessed; confident; self-satisfied. She takes up space in the room. She wears long dresses that resemble old-fashioned nightgowns with thin straps that expose her back and shoulders—layers of thin, soft, delicate fabric—and on top, oversized large cozy sweaters that hang off her shoulders, chunky boots or ballet flats. Her hair is always down—it's long and hangs forward around her shoulders and down her back with short, childlike bangs. She has tattoos. She smiles and laughs easily and often. She wears a heavy body musk scent. Sometimes her eyes glaze over and it's hard to tell if she is still listening or even in the room. A career nanny.

The name Ashling is Irish in origin from *aislinge* and means “a dream” or “a vision.”

### LUCY

A six-year-old girl. Willful and bright.

### MAX

A baby. From four weeks old to nine months old. Should be played by a series of extremely well-executed and properly weighted dolls with voice box for sound inside them.

## SETTING

Takes place over the course of nine months from August to April in Manhattan.

## NOTES

The pace should be fast—leave no air to breathe.

The “lights out” should be abrupt. The passage of time should be marked by the growth of the baby and the changes of clothes. The seasons should pass through the layers the women take off and put on to enter and exit the apartment. But time should feel like it jump cuts—as time does under sleep deprivation—so it can almost be played like one continuous conversation with short, sharp—hopefully surprising—“lights out” jump cuts. This is a comedic thriller.



# LUCY

*A modern apartment in a medium-size doorman building in Manhattan. An open kitchen and a living room are filled with light from floor-to-ceiling windows. A hallway leads to three small bedrooms and a bathroom off. It is very spare and modern. There are family photos of a mother and daughter on the bookcase; a modest television. It is not a large space but big enough by New York City standards.*

*Mary is in the kitchen cleaning. She's in her forties; a successful radiologist at a prestigious hospital. She's dressed in basic, black urban functional. Mary is in the last weeks of her pregnancy and moves slower than usual.*

*The door buzzes and Mary jumps a little—she looks at the clock and wipes her hands. She goes to the buzzer and presses it.*

**MARY.** Yes?

**DOORMAN VOICE.** *(Russian accent.)* Hi Mary. Ashlee McMahan is here?

**MARY.** Send her up please Ivan. Thank you.

*Mary looks in the large mirror. She fixes her hair and puts on some lip gloss. (Throughout this first scene, Mary is very warm and smiles often—she has been told she can come off as cold/clinical and so she works very hard to present as warm and kind and generally happy even when discussing difficult things. This is a trick/habit she has learned from her work.)*

*There is a knock at the door. She goes to it and opens it. Ashling stands in the doorway. She has long hair that she wears down and short, childlike bangs. She wears layers of long, flowing, sheer thin-strap dresses—the straps fall from*

*her shoulders and her back is revealed and bare. She almost floats into the room.*

Hi. I'm Mary.

**ASHLING.** Ashling.

**MARY.** Come in.

**ASHLING.** Thank you.

*Mary offers her hand. Ashling gives her a hug.*

**MARY.** Oh. I thought it was pronounced *Ashlee*

**ASHLING.** Most people do. It's Irish. *Ash-LinG*. My mother loved Ireland...the mother country you know?

**MARY.** Were you born there?

**ASHLING.** What?

**MARY.** In Ireland?

**ASHLING.** Oh no no no...I never lived there—no—but I mean... it's in my nature... Great view!

**MARY.** Thank you. So your mom immigrated?

**ASHLING.** No. Her mother's mother's mother way back when...

**MARY.** Oh!

**ASHLING.** When she was a *wee lass*.

**MARY.** Oh. Uh—

**ASHLING.** I know. I *know* what you're thinking... I get it *all the time*. I'm American. I'm white. I'm a career nanny. Believe me, I get it. I'm a unicorn.

**MARY.** Well—I mean—yes, you are...

**ASHLING.** Are you looking for a unicorn? *hahaha* I'm kidding. I'm kidding.

**MARY.** So I have your resume. Thanks for sending the updated one—

**ASHLING.** Of course!

**MARY.** Would you like anything? Coffee? Water?

**ASHLING.** Tea?

**MARY.** I think I have tea—



*Mary goes to the kitchen and starts to make tea.*

**ASHLING.** “Just a wee cuppa tea.”

*Ashling laughs merrily...*

**MARY.** You have a lot of experience.

**ASHLING.** Yes I do.

**MARY.** And your references are just—amazing—

**ASHLING.** Oh!! That’s so nice to hear!

**MARY.** Liz?

**ASHLING.** Yes! Liz.

**MARY.** She adores you.

**ASHLING.** Well I’ve been working for Liz a long time.

**MARY.** And Amber was very helpful as well—

**ASHLING.** You spoke to Amber!

**MARY.** I did. I called all of your references—

**ASHLING.** Wow.

**MARY.** Well—

**ASHLING.** No no—I get it!

**MARY.** I’ve met with a lot of—with *so many* candidates—and—I due diligence every time—not just—you—I mean—it’s—it’s hard to know someone from one meeting, I really want to find the right fit you know?

**ASHLING.** I know I know.

**MARY.** What do you like about childcare?

**ASHLING.** (*Laughing.*) It keeps me young!

**MARY.** That’s funny. My daughter is definitely making me old. Fast.

**ASHLING.** All parents say that. I’m like a kid myself—at heart—I guess. I love to help people and I love kids. So. I feel that this is my “angel wings” you know? This is how I save the world—just a little bit...every day. I help you do what you do by doing what I do...you know?

**MARY.** You’ve been with your current family, with Liz, for fifteen years?

*Mary brings Ashling's resume and her tea to the couch and sits with her.*

**ASHLING.** Yup.

*Ashling spills a tiny bit of tea. Mary gets up and hands Ashling a paper towel.*

Oooo you do paper towels?

**MARY.** Is that? What?

**ASHLING.** No. It's great! Love it!! Liz is strictly no paper towels. Ever. Cloth everything.

**MARY.** Oh. Maybe I should be doing that?

**ASHLING.** No no—you do you—all good.

**MARY.** Why are you leaving?

**ASHLING.** Well I've been with Henry, their boy, from the time he was born and he's fifteen now and much more independent—I mean, they want me to stay but I think it's time for me to move on.

**MARY.** You wrote here that you “co-parent”?

**ASHLING.** Yup. When Mom and Dad are gone all the time and I'm with the child from the time they are a baby—for years—I do the sleep training—I do the elimination training—the rule enforcement, the homework help, the doctor visits, I play with them, I pick them up when they fall... I consider that a co-parenting thang, you know?

**MARY.** Oh—

**ASHLING.** I mean if you ask Liz, Henry's mom, she would say the same...

**MARY.** I did—and—

**ASHLING.** She did?

**MARY.** She did—I'm curious about these other moms, that aren't references—“co-parenting” is such an intimate—way to—phrase—

**ASHLING.** What I do?

**MARY.** Yes.

**ASHLING.** Yes. It is intimate. I see my job as helping the family in whatever way the family needs help. Sometimes families don't know what they need—I mean, they don't know what to ask for or *how* to ask for help so I...just listen and figure it out...

**MARY.** You mean childcare...uh—style?

**ASHLING.** Yes. But also all the other things—cooking and cleaning and everything—whatever—I do a lot of closet organizing for Liz... those kids have a lot of stuff...you know...chaos in the mud room... she's a lawyer Liz (you know), very busy, always working...so I'm just—whatever needs doing!

**MARY.** Liz mentioned she has girls too?

**ASHLING.** Yes. A five-year-old girl, a one-year-old girl; an eight-year-old boy and Henry.

**MARY.** But—don't you look after them as well?

**ASHLING.** Oh no. No. Oh honey. They have a nanny for each child.

**MARY.** Oh! Wow.

**ASHLING.** Yesss honey. Time for me to make a change. Don't get me wrong. I love them. I love the family—

**MARY.** I think I understand.

**ASHLING.** But it is a major corporation run out of a—very nice—Upper East Side townhome.

**MARY.** Oh—that's not—I'm not—

**ASHLING.** (*Looking around the apartment.*) I know! I mean—I can tell—I'm looking for a place with a family where I am needed, where I can really *help*.

**MARY.** (*Smiling.*) Well I need help.

**ASHLING.** And I really want a baby! I *love* babies. Baby boys are just *the best*. They love they mamas. (*Laughs.*) I really need something more intimate than doing the closets...

**MARY.** You're not just doing—organizational??—you also—still—*nanny* Henry right?

**ASHLING.** Of course! I take him to school and pick him up and take him to his activities. Get his dinner. The works. You betcha.

**MARY.** Well—I—I certainly—could use—I don't have any help—with *anything* so—

*Mary laughs awkwardly.*

**ASHLING.** Not even a hairdresser?

**MARY.** (*Touching her hair.*) Oh right—I mean—help here at home...

**ASHLING.** ...you have beautiful hair...

**MARY.** Thank you...it's OK—to dye—my OB says “no one should have to have gray hair”—

**ASHLING.** (*Laughing.*) Amen sister. When are you due?

**MARY.** Actually next week. I really left interviews to the last minute—

**ASHLING.** No no no you're OK—

**MARY.** It's just that with, Lucy, with my daughter, she's in school now, and I thought I was *finally* done with full-time help—I've forgotten everything about babies—

**ASHLING.** Oh no—you're fine—you know, I've been called a baby whisperer...

**MARY.** Really?

**ASHLING.** Oh yes... I have *a lot* of experience with babies.

**MARY.** I only get four weeks' leave from the hospital and I'm worried about going back right when he gets on schedule and—

**ASHLING.** That's not long!

**MARY.** I know—I've tried to fight it. Legally they should give me six. But they need me—and honestly I feel like I have to or I'll lose my job...they're bullying me into it frankly... But you know, I guess some people get no paid leave at all so...in many, many...ways I'm very lucky.

**ASHLING.** Your listing mentioned that you don't work regular hours?

**MARY.** That's right. I work eight to six three days a week, on weekdays. And one evening from two to midnight. Every week. And then one weekend a month I work two to midnight Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. So, for you, this job would be to cover all the time I'm at work. It's a fifty-hour workweek—but I never really get to go home at six. And I'm set up with a computer to read studies from home on the days I don't go in—

**ASHLING.** Studies?

**MARY.** CAT scans. MRIs—I'm a radiologist so—

**ASHLING.** Oh. Got it.

**MARY.** I know—my schedule is a little irregular.

**ASHLING.** I can roll with irregular. I was hoping to have my nights and weekends free but...

**MARY.** I need flexibility for nights and weekends.

**ASHLING.** I hear you.

**MARY.** I typically work forty to fifty hours. Which means you would work fifty to sixty hours to allow me time to get to and from work; plus the one weekend a month.

**ASHLING.** That's a lot of hours.

**MARY.** It is.

**ASHLING.** And that one weekend a month, that's like thirty-six hours just from Friday to Sunday??

**MARY.** It is.

**ASHLING.** Do you pay overtime?

**MARY.** No. I mean I haven't before.

**ASHLING.** Oh?

**MARY.** Well some weeks I work less—and for the first *four* weeks you are employed I wouldn't be working at all so I expect to need you about twenty hours a week just so I can shower and have help getting Lucy to and from school. But I'd pay you for sixty. So those hours would roll forward. I know that isn't strictly legal anymore—

**ASHLING.** It isn't?

**MARY.** No. It's a state by state law. To prevent abuse of domestic workers.

**ASHLING.** Good to know!

**MARY.** But that's really the only way I can rationalize paying a full-time salary for the time I'm not working full time. Why would I pay for sixty hours when you work twenty for *four* weeks if we didn't agree that I would get that time back when I'm back at work? I mean that's one hundred and sixty hours that I would've paid for and you would *not* have worked...

**ASHLING.** I think I get it.

**MARY.** And I understand and respect wanting a full-time job with

consistent hours so I am willing to pay for that every week *if* I can get that time back—

**ASHLING.** I get it.

**MARY.** I see the job as a sixty hour a week job and I'm offering a set salary for that time based on a—competitive—hourly rate. Some weeks it will be more hours and some weeks it will be less but I will make sure it all evens out—I won't take advantage—and you will always take home the same amount.

**ASHLING.** Sometimes it will be less hours—besides the first month?

**MARY.** Well if I'm not working on the weekend, it's a four-day workweek and closer to forty hours but I never really know. You can't predict the hospital or the ER. So those additional twenty hours are really to protect you.

**ASHLING.** So no overtime rate.

**MARY.** No.

**ASHLING.** I was really hoping for weekends off.

**MARY.** Well I do want time with Lucy—I'm very “hands on”—and you would have the other three weekends off a month when I'm not working. But I do need coverage for when I'm at work on that one weekend—and of course, I need a nanny rather than day care because day care isn't open until midnight. Or on the weekend.

**ASHLING.** Time for two nannies!

**MARY.** Oh no—I don't want that.

**ASHLING.** Totally. I get it. You need a co-parent.

**MARY.** Well—

**ASHLING.** Someone who is here when you're at work.

**MARY.** Who I pay to be here. A nanny.

**ASHLING.** Totally.

**MARY.** And there is a lot of downtime when Lucy is in school.

**ASHLING.** But the baby will be home, right?

**MARY.** Oh right! Oh my goodness. Yes. I see. It is a lot of hours. But babies nap...so...

**ASHLING.** Going back to my roots! Old school. Like I'm eighteen again. I had hoped for a nine to five Monday to Friday but you

know, it's all about the right fit and the long-term. Them's the breaks! "Babies" are nanny for job security.

*Ashling laughs at her joke.*

**MARY.** Yes. Right.

**ASHLING.** And for Liz, I work really long hours—I'm basically on call—which—is tough at my age—

**MARY.** Every day?

**ASHLING.** Oh no! I work three days a week. But in the beginning it was every day. Yesiree. When Henry was a baby I basically lived in. And...when I worked for Amber, she was head chef *and* she owned the restaurant—so you can imagine the hours!

**MARY.** No "on call" here—I know my hours ahead of time and I can make a schedule for you?

**ASHLING.** Are you offering—paid leave—

**MARY.** Do you mean paid vacation weeks??

**ASHLING.** Or if I get sick? I mean I never get sick but you never know—you know? *hahaha*

**MARY.** Gosh. I uh—I hadn't thought about that I can—think—about—how I would...

**ASHLING.** It's pretty standard in my experience. Do you have a nanny now?

**MARY.** Yes. Sarah. I love her very very much.

**ASHLING.** She's leaving because...?

**MARY.** To get a degree in developmental psychology. Sarah's very young. We were her first job. She's lovely. I wish her all the best.

**ASHLING.** Could I talk to her?

**MARY.** Oh. Yes. I suppose you could...

**ASHLING.** I mean if this worked out, I could have a playdate with her, with Sarah, and with Lucy—you know, get the scoop.

**MARY.** Oh! I haven't told Lucy yet. But yes. Yes—

**ASHLING.** And it's a boy?

**MARY.** Yes. But... I didn't even do genetic testing this time. I'm a little regretful about that—

**ASHLING.** He will be beautiful no matter what.

**MARY.** Yes...

**ASHLING.** What? ...

**MARY.** Neuromuscular disorders run in my family and with donor sperm...I think it was possibly reckless not to test. I guess the truth is I want this baby no matter what so—oh.—I haven't really said this to anyone before. I don't know why I just? Sorry.

**ASHLING.** Don't be sorry! ...That's what I'm here for.

*Ashling touches Mary's knee. A tiny pause.*

I worked with a child with disabilities once.

*She points to a listing on her resume.*

The Leslie family. A little boy. He was so sweet. I carried him to school on my back.

**MARY.** You did?

**ASHLING.** Yup. He was very stubborn and didn't want a chair even though he probably should have had one—but we worked it out. When he got tired I pretended it was a game and carried him until he had energy again...

**MARY.** What was his condition?

**ASHLING.** It was neuromuscular.

**MARY.** Which one?

**ASHLING.** I don't remember—

**MARY.** Muscular dystrophy?

**ASHLING.** No...

**MARY.** Multiple sclerosis?

**ASHLING.** Maybe? I really don't remember..... It was a looong time ago.....

*Tiny pause.*

Tell me about Lucy.

**MARY.** Lucy is extremely willful. You're not meant to say bossy anymore but she is. She loves school. She loves her friends. She *isn't* into stuffed animals...or dolls or toys—or even games—

**ASHLING.** She's an imagination girl.



**MARY.** Yes. That's right. I don't do screens. It's really important to me that she gets exercise. Lots of exercise—if she doesn't run she doesn't sleep. Sleep is so important! And Lucy needs it. When I read that we aren't born with the ability to self-soothe, we have to be taught to fall asleep on our own? I thought—well that's something I can give my child. And I've been very strict about it, you know? I mean sleep training was brutal—endless nights of crying—they say, it'll take a week—it took Lucy months! But. Now. I love when she sleeps twelve hours—

**ASHLING.** Twelve hours?

**MARY.** Yes! ...her mind and body having all that time—

**ASHLING.** You betcha.

**MARY.** I'd love for Lucy to tie her own shoelaces, you know? To learn to entertain herself. Which of course is hard with a nanny—

**ASHLING.** I get that. No problem. I can do that.

**MARY.** She also loves music.

**ASHLING.** I love music! Does she like art?

**MARY.** Yes. You know—I guess a typical amount. Really the main thing she likes is people. Company. Other kids. Doesn't matter who—she likes *everyone*—*really, actually EVERYONE*.

**ASHLING.** Got it! Me too! I have a lot of friends. I brought this for her—if I may?

*Ashling gives Mary a small pack of hair ties.*

**MARY.** That's very sweet.

**ASHLING.** I saw these and thought of Lucy—I know you shouldn't give gifts to children but—

**MARY.** Oh it's OK—thank you—

**ASHLING.** I saw in the photo she has long hair.

**MARY.** Yes. I've never cut it. She was bald for two years so when it came in I just couldn't bear to cut it.

**ASHLING.** Totally! I'm into hair. We can have hair parties!

**MARY.** Do you braid?

**ASHLING.** Yup.

**MARY.** That's great!

**The play doesn't end here...**

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