

Triple Threat

A One-Act Comedy

By Wiley Russell

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DEDICATION

*To my mother, Betty Russell, for her love and creativity;
poet Patricia A. Oplinger for her encouragement;
and playwright Werner Trieschmann for his guidance.
God bless, and thank you all very much.*

STORY OF THE PLAY

Babysitter Ariel Watson is watching the 13-year-old triplet daughters of a famous scientist and his wife. What Ariel does not know is that the triplets have a time-traveling device in their bedroom, which brings copies of themselves out of a parallel universe. Soon there are nine girls in the house and then twelve.

Ariel does not believe what is happening, until the visitors begin telling her, a piece at a time, that her future self has had a terrible "thumb accident." By the end of the story Ariel is frantic to get to the future and stop herself, much to the entertainment of the triplets and their friends who have pulled off the joke, in order to have a party right under the babysitter's nose.

Approximately 45 minutes.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

A staged reading was held on December 17, 2010 at Williams Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Arkansas under the direction of Ms. Melinda S. Williams, Assistant Professor of Speech, Drama, and Journalism.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 11 w, 1 flexible)

(In order of appearance)

MRS. VON FRAUNHOFER: Mother of the triplets.

MR. VON FRAUNHOFER: Father of the triplets.

ARIEL WATSON: Babysitter, 17 years old.

BRENDY: Triplet.

CINDY: Triplet.

MENDY: Triplet.

DORI: First duplicate of Brendy.

LORI: First duplicate of Cindy.

TORI: First duplicate of Mendy.

TIM: Schoolmate of the triplets.

JIM: Duplicate of Tim.

SLIM: Another duplicate of Tim.

COP: Male or female police officer.

BONNIE: Second duplicate of Brendy.

CONNIE: Second duplicate of Cindy.

RONNIE: Second duplicate of Mendy.

BOB MILLER: Next-door neighbor.

UNCLE ROY: Triplets' uncle.

DOUBLING POSSIBLE: Father could play Cop. Cop could also play Uncle Roy or Bob Miller.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

1) The set is a middle-class living room. Keep it simple: a couple of wingback chairs, table with lamp and phone, perhaps a small couch against a wall, some pictures, etc. Remember there will be 9-plus people on stage during most of the play and 16 in the last scene.

2) The time-traveling "device" should be as kooky and over-the-top as you like. But must be big enough (cardboard freezer box?) for a teen to crawl through on her hands and yet be half-hidden offstage out of audience view.

3) Teen idols Justin Bieber and Zac Efron are mentioned. You may want to change the names as needed for current times.

PROPS

Pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey game
Tray of hotdogs with buns
Piñata full of candy w/bat
Giant tub of popcorn
Tray of sodas
Twister game
Tray of pizza pockets
The "device"

EFFECTS

Doorbell (or loud knock)
Smoke "from kitchen"
Beeping smoke alarm
Sound of popcorn popping
Racket of banging, crashing pots, pans, etc.

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(AT RISE: The living room. KAREN VON FRAUNHOFER straightens DR. GEORGE VON FRAUNHOFER'S tie as they prepare for an evening out. She brushes off his shoulders, then yanks the bottom of his suit coat making everything just right.)

MRS. VON FRAUNHOFER: There! You look perfect.

DR. VON FRAUNHOFER: Is it okay to move now?

MRS. V F: This is serious business, George. Most scientists don't even come close to winning the Riemann Award until they're in their 60s or 70s. And you did it at 42! *(Kisses HIM on the cheek.)*

DR. V F: Yes... It's amazing what you can discover by letting a 30-year-old adolescent pack a Pringles' can full of cherry bombs and light it off in your neighbors' sandbox.

MRS. V F: I'll admit my brother Roy, even though he's 30, has the heart of a 16-year-old.

DR. V F: And the brain too. Do you know how many degrees Fahrenheit it takes to turn sand into glass? Four thousand. Who would ever guess a Pringles' can could hold that much energy.

MRS. V F: Roy did.

DR. V F: Trust me, Karen, Roy's motivation had nothing to do with the science of potential energy. Roy just wanted to hear something go boom.

MRS. V F: And look what happened -- after the police stopped Bob Miller from dismembering Roy with a garden hoe and the fire department got their poodle down off the roof -- you discovered that crystalline structure in the sandbox that's going to lead to a whole new generation of satellite telescope lenses. And won you the Riemann Award! *(Looks HIM up and down, then brushes his coat a little more.)*

DR. V F: Next Fourth of July I'm giving Roy a case of sparklers and a gallon of pickles, just to see what happens.

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MRS. V F: Oh no you're not!

(SFX: A doorbell rings or loud knock.)

MRS. V F: That's the babysitter. I'll be right back. *(SHE exits stage right.)*

DR. V F: She did say I could move, didn't she?

(MRS. VON FRAUNHOFER reenters talking with the babysitter, ARIEL WATSON.)

MRS. V F: I've known Mrs. Werner for ten years and she speaks so highly of you. If you can handle those two boys of hers, then that's the young lady I want babysitting my girls. Ariel, this is my husband George.

(DR. VON FRAUNHOFER shakes hands with ARIEL.)

DR. V F: George von Fraunhofer. Pleased to meet you, Ariel.

ARIEL: Thank you, sir. I really appreciate the job.

DR. V F: You're going to enjoy the triplets, they're a lot of fun.

MRS. V F: Just don't ever let one of them get in front of you with two of them behind you or vice versa.

ARIEL: Wha—

DR. V F: Oh, they wouldn't hurt a fly.

MRS. V F: You don't have anything flammable in your purse or on your body, do you?

ARIEL: I don't think so.

DR. V F: They're just your average 13-year-old girls.

MRS. V F: Average for the Taliban. If you have to dial 911, tell them it's a code 35 and they'll send the SWAT team.

(ARIEL begins chewing a fingernail.)

DR. V F: Karen, you're scaring her. Let's just call the triplets down and let Ariel meet them.

End of Freeview

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