

# **PICKING UP**

## **A NEW MUSICAL**

**Book and Lyrics by Nathan Christopher**  
**Music and Lyrics by Gregory Douglass**

30 Provost Street  
Apartment B4  
Jersey City, NJ 07302  
973-650-8792  
arcadianj007@gmail.com

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

<u>MARGOT LOW:</u>	Grandmother/Mother.
<u>LEIGH TUCKER:</u>	Mom/Daughter.
<u>LUCY TUCKER:</u>	Daughter/Granddaughter, in law school.
<u>ELLA DENVER:</u>	Lucy Tucker's childhood friend, never left town.

## THE TIME

The mid-1990s. Autumn.

## THE PLACE

A farmhouse in Ohio.

## THE SETTING

A rambling, spacious kitchen with a door that leads outside. A large, rustic table at center stage is littered with magazines and games, including a chess set and a deck of cards. A game of Scrabble is in progress at the moment. Equestrian-themed items are present throughout the kitchen, incorporated into the décor as tastefully as possible – a wall calendar, salt and pepper shakers, magnets holding family photos on the refrigerator, a napkin holder, a blanket over the back of one of the chairs, etc. A few unicorn-related knick-knacks are also in the mix. Floral arrangements and “Get Well Soon” cards have been placed around the room without too much thought. If the circumstances were different, the room would appear warm and welcoming. Although that’s not the case, it still looks very lived-in.

## **MUSICAL NUMBERS**

### **ACT ONE**

PICKING UP	Lucy Tucker, Ella Denver, Margot Low
DEAD-END TOWN	Leigh Tucker
EVERYTHING'S GREAT	Lucy Tucker, Ella Denver
NOW YOU'RE A STRANGER	The Company
PICKING UP THE PIECES	Ella Denver, Lucy Tucker
HEARTS	Ella Denver, Lucy Tucker and The Company
JOANIE	The Company
IMAGINE WHAT COULD BE	The Company

### **ACT TWO**

THE BEST IS STILL TO COME	The Company
FIVE-AND-DIME	Margot Low and The Company
SHE'S THE ONE	Ella Denver
WHO WILL CATCH ME?	Lucy Tucker and The Company
I MISS THE MUSIC	Leigh Tucker and Lucy Tucker
LIVE WHILE YOU CAN	Ella Denver and The Company

## ACT ONE

**AT RISE:** Evening is approaching. Light rain and a low rumble of thunder are heard.

LUCY TUCKER and ELLA DENVER are playing Scrabble at the table. They are drinking bottles of beer.

(SONG: "PICKING UP")

LUCY  
IT'S YOUR TURN.

Oh!  
ELLA

LUCY  
HOW'S YOUR JOB?

ELLA  
NOT BAD. I'M HEAD NURSE FOR MARGOT'S FLOOR NOW.

LUCY  
WELL, I'M SO GLAD TO HEAR THAT!  
YOU'VE WORKED SO HARD TO GET THERE.  
AND I'M STILL NOT GETTING ANYWHERE, SO...

ELLA  
HOW'S YOUR INTERNSHIP?

LUCY  
IT'S BEEN QUITE A TRIP BUT I'M NOT SURE I CAN HANDLE IT.

ELLA  
YOU'RE LUCY TUCKER AND YOU CAN DO ANYTHING

LUCY AND ELLA  
I/YOU WISH

LUCY  
THAT I WASN'T BACK IN THIS OLD ONE-HORSE TOWN.

ELLA  
Hey! You love it here!

LUCY  
ELL, PLEASE DON'T TAKE THAT THE WRONG WAY!  
IT'S BECAUSE OF WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE.  
BUT I'M GLAD THAT WE'VE STAYED CLOSE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

LUCY AND ELLA  
WE'RE PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE LEFT OFF.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE WERE.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE LEFT OFF.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE THE FRIENDSHIP THAT WE BOTH SHARE  
COMPLICATES OUR LIVES.

LUCY  
AND WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

ELLA  
WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

LUCY AND ELLA  
WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

ELLA  
(Plays tiles and counts up the points.)  
So with a double-letter score, that's fifteen. Your turn.  
(Picks up new tiles to replace those she played.)

LUCY  
(Frustrated, she dumps her tiles and picks out new ones.)  
Go.

ELLA  
HOW'S YOUR MOM?

LUCY  
I WOULDN'T KNOW.

ELLA  
SHE SHOULD BE HERE SOON.

LUCY  
HOW'S MY GRAM GETTING ALONG AT THE HOME?

ELLA  
SHE'S ALWAYS A HOOT  
AND EVERYBODY THERE LOVES HER ECCENTRIC PERSONALITY.  
SHE'S IN GOOD HANDS.

LUCY  
I HOPE SHE ISN'T TOO MUCH TO BEAR.

ELLA  
NOT AT ALL! SHE MAKES ME LAUGH LIKE NO ONE ELSE CAN THERE!

LUCY  
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE NOW.  
IT'S BEEN QUITE A SCARE FOR THE WHOLE TUCKER FAMILY  
WITHOUT AUNT JOANIE HERE.

ELLA  
LUCE, PLEASE DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY  
BUT – WHATEVER COMES – YOU'LL HAVE TO BE STRONG.

LUCY  
SHE'S GONNA PULL THROUGH, ELL. SHE'LL PROVE YOU WRONG.  
SHE'LL BE PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE SHE LEFT OFF.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE WERE.

LUCY AND ELLA  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE LEFT OFF.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE THE MEMORIES THAT WE ALL SHARE  
COMPLICATE OUR LIVES.

LUCY  
AND WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

ELLA  
WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

(MARGOT LOW enters.)

LUCY, ELLA AND MARGOT  
WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

LUCY  
Oh, Gram! You're up!

(Both LUCY and ELLA get up to help MARGOT across the room. ELLA  
motions for LUCY to sit back down.)

ELLA  
I've got her, Luce.

LUCY

Thanks.

ELLA

How was your nap, Margot?

MARGOT

I wasn't napping. I was just resting my eyes.

(ELLA helps MARGOT into a chair at the table.)

ELLA

Well, my mistake!

MARGOT

NOW, GIRLS, COULD YOU PLEASE PUT THE KETTLE ON?  
A CUP OF TEA WOULD BE NICE IN HERE.

LUCY

Sure, Grandma.

MARGOT

(Sees the beer bottles on the table.)  
ON SECOND THOUGHT, I THINK I'LL JUST HAVE A BEER.

LUCY

Ummm.

ELLA

(Hands MARGOT a tabloid newspaper.)  
You can have this.

LUCY, ELLA AND MARGOT  
WE'RE PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE LEFT OFF.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE WERE.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE WE LEFT OFF.  
PICKING UP RIGHT WHERE THE MOMENTS THAT WE ALL SHARE  
COMPLICATE OUR LIVES.

ELLA

COMPLICATE...

LUCY AND MARGOT

WHERE WOULD I BE WITHOUT YOU?

LUCY, ELLA AND MARGOT  
COMPLICATE OUR LIVES.

MARGOT  
COMPLICATE...

LUCY AND ELLA  
WHERE WOULD I BE WITHOUT YOU?

LUCY, ELLA AND MARGOT  
COMPLICATE OUR LIVES...

ELLA  
(Lays down more tiles and smiles triumphantly.)  
There. And on a *triple*-word score, that's...  
(Points to the tiles as she adds their values, counting under her breath.)  
Seventy points.  
(Starts to write down the total.)

LUCY  
Wait a minute. Just hold on. That's not a real word.

ELLA  
Yes, it –

LUCY  
I read a lot. And I do a *ton* of crossword puzzles – those hard ones in *The New York Times*. And I've never seen *that* word before. Cheater! You just made it up.

ELLA  
I did not.

LUCY  
Admit it! You *did*. You just made it up. You're trying to cheat *again*! Every time we play –

(LUCY moves to take the tiles off the board. ELLA stops her.)

ELLA  
Hey! It *is* a word.  
(Smugly.)  
It's a biology term.

LUCY  
Bullshit. You think you can just pull out these smart-sounding words and I'm going to let them slide? No way. If you have crappy letters, dump them. I just did. Go fish.



ELLA

It's not –

LUCY

Look, there are like *four* words in the entire English language that start with “x”:

(Counts them off as she says them.)

Xylophone, Xerox, X-ray, and X-mas, and the last three don't count. Just because you got stuck with it is no reason to –

ELLA

Xenophobia.

(Picks up a pocket dictionary and throws it across the table to LUCY.)

Look it up.

LUCY

Okay, *five* words...

ELLA

And *xylem*.

(Points to each tile on the board as she spells it out.)

X-Y-L-E-M. A biology term. It's the woody tissue of a plant. Trust me. Or look it up if you don't. I have a –

LUCY

You have a biology degree. I know. Fine.

(Touches MARGOT's arm and leans toward her.)

Grandma, I think Ella cheats.

ELLA

I'm not cheating!

LUCY

Grandma, help me think up a word so I can beat her.

(Dumps her tiles again and begins replacing them, one by one.)

My letters *still* suck.

MARGOT

(Looks up absently at the girls, then back at her paper, points to a headline and reads aloud to them.)

“Wolfman of Tokyo loose in the US!” Twenty-three American women missing so far. All of them redheads.

(MARGOT touches her hair and sighs with relief.)

LUCY

(Frantically rearranges her letters.)

I can't imagine she really believes all that stuff. You think?

ELLA

I'm not sure.

(Moves to the refrigerator.)

That's the only thing she ever reads. We have subscriptions for the residents to *Reader's Digest*, *TIME*, *National Geographic* – all of those, even in the large-print format.

(Opens two beer bottles and sets one down in front of LUCY.)

And she won't touch anything but those tabloids. Here. Takes the edge off, doesn't it?

LUCY

Thanks. That was a little tough today. But I think Joanie looked a little better, don't you? She has a little more color.

MARGOT

She did look better, honey. But she was just too weak to talk.

LUCY

She was trying.

MARGOT

I don't know about that.

LUCY

Joanie's the toughest person I know.

ELLA

She was able to yesterday. She just seemed so much more tired today.

LUCY

But Dan said she was talking this morning.

ELLA

Dan said he was talking to *her*, not that she was answering.

LUCY

She hasn't even been there forty-eight hours yet. People can't go downhill that quickly, can they?

ELLA

It's tough to say. Depends on the person and how hard they fight.

LUCY

Maybe there was too much excitement when the three of us showed up –

MARGOT  
Four soon, once Leigh gets here.

LUCY  
Right. Four.

MARGOT  
Did you make up Leigh's room, Lucy?

LUCY  
Not yet, Gram.

ELLA  
Do you even dare?

LUCY  
Exactly.

ELLA  
I can help you. I'm the queen of hospital-bed corners.

LUCY  
We might as well change my bed because she'll want my room anyway.  
(Indicates the Scrabble board.)  
It's your turn.

MARGOT  
Leigh always stays in that room when she's here.

LUCY  
Which isn't often, as we know.

ELLA  
Luce –

LUCY  
I'm just pointing it out. It's a fact. You'll see.  
(ELLA puts down more tiles and adds up the score.)

MARGOT  
She should have been here by now.

LUCY  
I'm sure she's waiting until the last possible minute.

MARGOT

Maybe the weather slowed her down.

ELLA

Or she stopped at the hospital.

(Headlights sweep the room. They all look out the window.)

LUCY

Speak of the devil.

ELLA

Nope. Not her.

LUCY

Good.

ELLA

Wow, it's getting pretty bad out.

LUCY

It's supposed to get worse.

MARGOT

(Goes back to her newspaper.)

Well, I hope she gets here soon.

(Indicates her tabloid.)

I have so much *news* to tell her.

ELLA

(Gets new letter tiles.)

That's not news, Margot. Remember? We talked about that.

(To LUCY.)

Your turn.

LUCY

I know.

(Intensely scrutinizes her letter tiles.)

She can take her time. I'm not ready yet.

ELLA

It won't be too bad, Luce. I've got your back.

LUCY

Thanks.

Did you tell her I was here?	ELLA
We haven't talked.	LUCY
She'll be surprised to see me.	ELLA
She likes surprises.	LUCY
(Scoffs.)	ELLA
Yeah, I remember.	LUCY
I didn't mean –	ELLA
Margot, can I get you anything?	MARGOT
Not right now, Ella. Thanks.	ELLA
Alright.	MARGOT
I'll take my nightcap in a bit.	LUCY
Nightcap?	ELLA
She always says that.	LUCY
(Indicates the beer bottle.)	
Where did you pick these up? I can't find them at home.	ELLA
The Red Bandana, believe it or not.	LUCY
No way. That place is still open?	