

LYLE THE CROCODILE

Based on the books

Lyle, Lyle Crocodile

And

The House on East 88th Street

BY BERNARD WABER

Adapted by Kevin Kling

LYE THE CROCODILE

By Bernard Waber

Adapted for the stage by Kevin Kling

CHARACTERS:

LYLE

MR. GRUMPS

HECTOR P. VALENTI

MR. PRIMM

JOSHUA

MRS. NITPICKER (MRS. PRIMMS' FRIEND)

TWO MOVING MEN

TWO FIREMEN

TWO GUARDS

TWO CROCODILES

88th STREET KIDS

88th STREET NEIGHBORS

LORETTA THE CAT

NEWSMAN

HENRY HUDSON

SCENE ONE

WHICH INTRODUCES US TO HECTOR P. VALENTI, 99TH STREET, AND TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRIMMS

HECTOR: (Takes three deep breaths with his nose on each exhale) Ahhhhhhhh. (Third one) New York. Ahhhhhhhh. New York I am in love with you. Hallo. My name is Hector P. Valenti start of state and screen. But then everyone in New York is a star of stage and screen. But I am different....I speak five language. English best. And I love New York. Listen (Cop car). The New York mating call. The sounds of love. (CAR CRASH) Hear that? Two people have just met and will no doubt fall in love. Love (make love to New York). New York. Sooooo much to love. The sights, the sounds. My hair is in Paris. My kidneys in Sydney. My tibia in Libya, my muscles in Brussels, my spleen in Aberdeen, my colon in Poland, but my heart, my heart is in New York. New York City of sights and sounds and smells, one breathe all the smells in the world at once. (Guy walk by with boom box). Thank you my friend, for sharing with me your taste in music. But in this wonderland called New York, there is a very special street. A quite little street known as 88th street. In all of New York this street is my favorite. And this is the house and this is the story about a very good friend of mine named Lyle. Lyle the crocodile.

(Moving truck backs in)

MOVING MAN 1: (OFFSTAGE) Hey, ya jerk, watch where ya standing.

HECTOR: A common New York greeting. Hallo to you too, my friend.

MOVING MAN 1: (OFFSTAGE) Look out, you wanna get killed?

HECTOR: No, but thank you for asking. Aha a moving van. It seems the house on 88th Street will not be empty for long.

(THE NOISE IS HEARD)

Wait there is a noise coming from the house. A very strange noise. Let's go inside and investigate.

SCENE 2

IN WHICH WE ARE TAKEN INSIDE THE PRIMMS HOUSE AND MEET LYLE

(THERE IS A NOISE IN THE BATHROOM. JOSHUA TAKES A LOOK).

MOVING MAN1: Well lady, the perfectly preserved potted pistachio plant is the last thing in the truck.

JOSHUA: Mom.

MR. PRIMM: Honey bunch, I can't seem to find my pipe.

MRS. PRIMM: Look in the box marked "kitchen."

MOVING MAN 1: Where do you want the couch, lady?

MRS. PRIMM: Right over there, please.

JOSHUA: Mom.

MR. PRIMM: Just a minute Joshua.

JOSHUA: Do you mean an adult minute or a real minute?

MRS. PRIMM: No. That's all wrong. Try how about over there.

MR. PRIMM: Hon, it's not there.

MRS. PRIMM: Try "spices and automotive."

MR. PRIMM: Spices and automotive?

JOSHUA: Mom.

MRS. PRIMM: That's not right either. How about over there.

MOVING MAN 1: That's where we started.

MR. PRIMM: I can't find it anywhere. I'm simply helpless without my pipe. Oh, this is the worst move ever.

MRS. PRIMM: No. No. NO. The contour is all wrong.

MOVING MAN 1: Lady.

MR. PRIMM: Sweetheart

JOSHUA: Mom.

MRS. PRIMM: What!

(The noise happens again.)

MOVING MAN 1: Did you hear that?

MOVING MAN 2: Yeah.

HECTOR: An eerie silence fell about the house.

(The couch drops on MOVING MAN 1's foot).

MOVING MAN 1: Owwww. You dropped the couch on my foot. You jerk.

MOVING MAN 2: You're the jerk. The guy said we were all silent.

MOVING MAN 1: What guy?

MOVING MAN 2: The guy telling the story.

MOVING MAN 1: Like I'm gonna be silent with a 5000 pound couch perched on my toe. You're the jerk.

MOVING MAN 2: I'm the...No uh uh. You. You.

MOVING MAN 1: Uh uh, no, no, you. You're the jerk.

(The noise)

HECTOR: There it was again.

MOVING MAN 2: There it is again.

MRS. PRIMM: It's only a little thunder.

MOVING MAN 1: Oooo, look at the time. Uh, we have to go now lady, we have to uh...uh...we have to go.

MOVING MAN 2: Uh...We have to go run for our lives.

MOVING MAN 1: Yeah, that's it, we have to go run for our lives. So, if you'll excuse us...

(The exit. Tires squeal. Truck roars off)

MR. PRIMM: They certainly were polite for moving men.

MRS. PRIMM: Well, I'm going to prepare our lunch, but first I want to go wash these grimy hands.

(Mrs. Primm goes to the bathroom door.)

JOSHUA: I wouldn't go in there, Mom.

(She reaches the top of the stairs and looks in the bathroom. The lights come up on Lyle in the tub. Mrs. Primm closes the door and steps out into the hall. She screams, but nothing comes out.)

MR. PRIMM: What is it love bucket? Apple cheeks? Lambs breath? Duck butter? The door? No? What's on the other side of the door? Oh, I give up, feather thighs, you know I'm bad at these games.

(She whispers in his ear).

MR. PRIMM: A Crocodile? That's impossible, crumb cake, crocodiles aren't indigenous to New Your. They are found only in deepest darkest Africa, Australia, some parts of Asia and South America. But not in New York. Now an alligator perhaps, but even so...

(Mrs. Primm shoves Mr. Primm into the bathroom. Lyle is caught in a compromising position, and immediately and tastefully covers up with a towel.)

MR. PRIMM: Oh, uh, hullabaloo, pardon me my good...uh...man.

(He calmly goes back into the hallway.)

MR. PRIMM: I've got to hand it to you angel blossom, you were right. That is most definitely a crocodile.

MR. AND MRS. PRIMM: A CROCODILE!!!!

(They run down the stairs in a panic).

MR. AND MRS. PRIMM: AHHHHHHHHHHH

(Mrs. Primm goes to the window. Mr. Primm to the phone).

MR. PRIMM: Operator, operator (The phone isn't hooked up. The cord drags behind him).

MRS. PRIMM: (Mrs. Primm tugs at the window. The windows are painted shut.)
HELP! HELP!

MR. PRIMM: Great Zeus, there's no answer. Operator. Operator.

MRS. PRIMM: The windows won't open. They must be painted...shut. Open! Open!
Oh please. Open!

MR. PRIMM: It's no use. We're goners. Operator.

MRS. PRIMM: I love you Joseph.

MR. PRIMM: I love you, lotus lips. Operator.

MRS. PRIMM: Open.

MR. PRIMM: Goners.

MRS. PRIMM: Help.

(There's a knock at the door. Joshua opens it and there stands Hector P. Valenti. He hands Joshua a letter.)

HECTOR: Hallo. I hope the moving day it goes smooth as baby bottoms for you.
(Hands Joshua a letter). Oh. And this will explain everything about the crocodile.

(He tips his hat and closes the door.)

JOSHUA: Here Dad, this will explain everything about the crocodile.

MR. PRIMM: Thank you my son. (Read with Hector). Please be kind to my crocodile. He is the most gentle of creatures and would not do hard to a flea. He must have tender, loving care, for he is an artist and can perform a good many tricks. Perhaps he will perform some for you. I shall return. Cordially, Hector P. Valenti.

HECTOR: (Through the mail slot in the door) Star of...

MR. PRIMM: Oh.

MR PRIMM and HECTOR: Star of the stage and screen.

MRS. PRIMM: We can't have a crocodile. I don't even know what they eat.

MR. PRIMM: P. S.

MR. PRIMM and HECTOR: He will only eat Turkish caviar.

MRS. PRIMM: Turkish caviar? What crocodile eats Turkish caviar?

MR. PRIMM: P.P. S.

MR. PRIMM and HECTOR: His name is Lyle.

MRS. PRIMM: Lyle" Caviar? Honestly, call the realtor, Joseph. I will not have a crocodile in my bathroom. There was no crocodile in the bathroom during the open house...

JOSHUA: Don't worry Mom, he's not in there anymore.

MR. PRIMM: Good.

JOSHUA: He's on the stairs.

(Lyle comes out of the bathroom and down the stairs. The Primms' huddle together for safety. Lyle does various tricks. First spinning a ball on his nose; going in a door one place, coming out another, walking on his hands, etc... After each trick the Primms' clap at first very tentatively, then more vehemently. His final trick is met with "bravos," but then Lyle goes into the Prams' boxes.)

MRS. PRIMM: He's in our stuff, Joseph. Do something...

MR. PRIMM: (Looks at her a while). Shoo. Stay out of there...Look here, my good crocodile...those are private things. Private. P.R.I...

(Lyle comes toward the Primms'. They recoil in horror.)

JOSHUA: Now you did it Dad.

(Lyle holds something out.)

MR. PRIMM: Well (Christ on a Ritz), it's my pipe. Look hon. Perhaps we judged the old boy all wrong.

JOSHUA: Yeah, can he stay, Dad huh? Can he, huh? Can he, huh? Huh, can he?

MR. PRIMM: It's really up to your Mother, Joshua. What do you say Mrs. Primm, can he stay? Can he, huh?

MRS. PRIMM: Well, he'll have to help around the house and we'll have to do something about breaking that Turkish caviar habit and it's a trial basis only, if he doesn't work out or one of use gets eaten then it's off and...

JOSHUA: Hooray! Hooray for Lyle!

MR. PRIMM: Hooray! Hooray for Mrs. Primm!

MRS. PRIMM: Why Joseph, did you call me by my name?

MR. PRIMM: Why, yes, I suppose I did.

MRS. PRIMM: Oh, Joseph.

MR. PRIMM: Oh, Mrs. Primm.

JOSHUA: Oh brother.

BLACKOUT

SCENE THREE

OF THE NEIGHBORS RESPONSE TO THE CROCODILE

HECTOR: And that is how Lyle the Crocodile came to live with the Primm family. As you know, it was I, Hector P. Valenti, who left Lyle for the Primms to find. Before this, I had traveled the world with my friend Lyle the Crocodile. We performed the palaces of

kings and the haylofts of farmers. Wonderful times. Alas, good times do not last forever. Our act became stale and (raspberry) people stopped coming to see us. After a while we became flat broke. I couldn't afford this Turkish caviar, so I have decided to leave Lyle in New York, the city of love, on the best street with the very best family. I think Lyle will do fine with the Primms' don't you? Yes. But I must admit, I will miss him very much. Farewell Lyle.

(Enter MS. NITPICKER with a neighbor friend).

MS. NITPICKER: And then I said...and then she said that I said, then she said what I said was what she said, that I said...

NEIGHBOR: Well, I never...

MS. NITPICKER: And that isn't the half of it...I said and she said and I said...

HECTOR: Uh oh. You see that lady? That is the one Ms. Nitpicker...the neighborhood gossip lady.

(Ms. Nitpicker enters with a neighbor)

MS. NITPICKER: STOP! (Ms. Nitpicker sniffs the air). I smell trouble and it's coming from that house. I need to investigate this matter.

(MS. NITPICKER EXITS)

HECTOR: Maybe it's best I stick around for a while. I'm not so sure everyone on 88th street is ready to have Lyle for a neighbor.

SCENE FOUR

WHERE MS. NITPICKER IS INTRODUCED TO LYLE

(MS. NITPICKER RINGS DOORBELL). IT PLAYS "NEW YORK, NEW YORK")

MRS. PRIMM: Lyle, will you please answer the door?

(LYLE: ME? Alright) He smoothes his apron, puts down his feather duster, and opens the door.)

MS. NITPICKER: Greetings! You must be Mrs. Primm. My name is Nancy Nitpicker, and I'm here on behalf of the East 88th Street neighborhood. Welcoming committee to welcome you to our neighborhood. Welcome.

MRS. PRIMM: Well Ms. Nitpicker what a pleasure and honor...

MS. NITPICKER: (AS SHE BARGES IN SNIFFING ABOUT). Yes...mmmm, Yes, I'm sure it is. Mmm. Here, this is my tuna and tater tot surprise.

MRS. PRIMM: Thank you. (She opens the casserole and all jump). This is Lyle. Lyle, this is Ms. Nitpicker (exits).

(LYLE: Hello. My name is Lyle.)

MS. NITPICKER: Charmed. (As Lyle kisses her hand). There's something not quite right here, but I can't seem to put my finger on it.

MRS. PRIMM: (Returning). Hors d'Oeuvres?

MS. NITPICKER: No, that's not it.

MRS. PRIMM: Hors d'Oeuvres, Ms. Nitpicker?

MS. NITPICKER: Oh to eat thank you. Thank you.

MRS. PRIMM: Lyle made them.

MS. NITPICKER: Really, mmmmmm. Yummy.

MRS. PRIMM: He loves helping out with the chores. You know, I only had to show him once how to make up the bed. He folds towels, feeds the bird, and when he sets the table there's always a surprise.

MS. NITPICKER: Something smells fishy.

MRS. PRIMM: Well, it can't be Lyle, for thankfully, he has learned to eat something besides Turkish caviar. There was a while there I thought we would never get him off the stuff, but I had to put my foot down and say, "Lyle, this little habit is going to put us in the poorhouse." And he stopped like that. Oh, sometimes as a treat we still give him his Turkish caviar and a warm bed of water, and he is happy as a bird.

MS. NITPICKER: Mmmmmm. Tell me more about this Lyle.

MRS. PRIMM: He is wonderful company. We take him everywhere. He is a good sport. Everyone wants to play on his side. Why, people everywhere stop and talk to him. They say his is the nicest crocodile they ever met.

MS. NITPICKER: Crocodile. That's it. He's a crocodile. Nitpicker you've done it again.

MRS. PRIMM: Everyone should have one. Don't you agree?

MR. NITPICKER: No, Mrs. Primm, I'm afraid that a crocodile in the neighborhood will simply never do. Not on 88th street anyway. (Lyle pours her some tea). Thank you...I'm afraid it...

MRS. PRIMM: Lyle

MS. NITPICKER: Lyle, will simply have to go back to New Jersey or wherever it is crocodiles come from. Well, my work is done here...

MRS. PRIMM: Why, Ms. Nitpicker, he likes you.

MS. NITPICKER: What? Me? He likes me?

MRS. PRIMM: Yes.

MS. NITPICKER: Why. Why does he like me...

MRS. PRIMM: He quite simply likes you for what you are.

MS. NITPICKER: You're kidding. Well, isn't that something. Likes me for what I am. No one has ever...I don't know what to say you big green thing you...Well, look I'm all aglow...He likes me for myself. Who would've thought.

MRS. PRIMM: Contrary to my nature, I've been rude, Ms. Nitpicker. What were you saying about Lyle?

MS. NITPICKER: Well, only that we should have a tea so everyone can meet Lyle, and see how sensitive and intelligent he is and that he likes me.

MRS. PRIMM: That sounds lovely, Ms. Nitpicker. But we'll have to ask Lyle. He is, after all, very shy. Lyle, Lyle,Oh my...

MS. NITPICKER: What? What?

MRS. PRIMM: The door is open...and Lyle...Lyle is gone.

MS. NITPICKER: Gone? No, how can that be? Find him. We must find him. There's a crowd gathered outside...oh dear...

MRS. PRIMM: Joseph, Joshua help. There's a big commotion on 88th street and Lyle is missing.

MS. NITPICKER: Lyle, Lyle where are you? Lyle...oh, how tres tragic. We must find him...he likes me.

SCENE FIVE

IN WHICH LYLE JOINS A PARADE AND MEETS MR. GRUMPS

(The scene shifts to exterior 88th Street. When the scene shifts, different groups of people pop up to watch the parade.)

HECTOR; Hot dogs. Get 'em while they're hot dogs. Hot dogs. Hallo. It is me again. Hector P. Valenti, star of stage and screen. I used my extensive acting training to land this job as a wienie Lyle...smart huh? Hot dogs...

MRS. PRIMM: Lyle, where are you?

HECTOR: Hot dogs...

MR. PRIMM: Mrs. Primm

MRS. PRIMM: Joseph, have you seen Lyle?

MR. PRIMM: Not yet.

HECTOR: Hot dogs...

MRS. NITPICKER: Lyle.

MRS. PRIMM: Joshua, who are all these people?
(Parade music starts)

JOSHUA: It's a parade. Listen.

HECTOR: I love it, another parade in NEW YORK for no good reason...Hot dogs...

MS. NITPICKER: Lyle, hheelllooooo!

PRIMMS': Ms. Nitpicker, have you seen Lyle?

MS. NITPICKER: No.

ALL: Where's Lyle

(Audience points to next Lyle, they run, calling his name but he is gone.)

ALL: Where's Lyle now?

JOSHUA: Here he comes. Hi Lyle, you're terrific!

MRS. PRIMM: Have you seen Lyle? Where is he? Joshua, he was just here!

(The slider people part and the marching band arrives and Lyle leads the band, (then Macy's balloon Lyle.)

JOSHUA: That's not the really Lyle!

MS. NITPICKER: Where is the real Lyle?

JOSHUA: Hello Santa, I know it's you Lyle. Goodbye Santa.

(Parade Dance)

JOSHUA: Oh Dad!

HECTOR: Balloons...

JOSHUA: I want one

HECTOR; Have the whole bunch.

JOSHUA: Help! Help! I'm floating away...

(Lyle sees Joshua)

(In the middle of the parade MR. GRUMPS steps into the picture, holding LORETTA. Thunder and lightning. The parade screeches to a halt, on thunder.

MR. GRUMPS: Well, well, well...what do we have here? Look Loretta, a parade. I hate parades.

HECTOR: That is Mr. Grumps...where he goes there is a bad day following like a puppy on a leash. Notice. Mr. Grumps always has a face that makes him look like he just stepped in something, which in New York, is very possible, but a person doesn't have to look that way.

MR. GRUMPS: What is this?

JOSHUA: His name is Lyle, Sir. He is a crocodile.

MR. GRUMPS: Lyle? What is it kitty? Huh? You can tell Daddy. (Loretta starts going bonkers.) Why that monster tried to kill my sweet Loretta.

MRS. PRIMM: No, Mr. Grumps, Lyle likes Loretta. Lyle likes Loretta. Lyle likes Loretta.

MS. NITPICKER: Lyle likes everyone, Mr. Grumps, even...you.

MR. GRUMPS: Oh drivel and spew, I have no use for a crocodile, unless maybe as a pair of SHOES, or as a SUITCASE, or an AFTERSHAVE KIT. How would you like that Lyle, a lifetime of toting my Old Spice? (he laughs a haunting, scary lavalier laugh). It feels so good to laugh, and it aids digestion. Come my precious. Tropical riff raff.

(Mr. Grumps and Loretta exit.)

MRS. PRIMM: It's alright, Lyle, we still love you.

MR. PRIMM: One hundred percent.

(THEY EXIT)

SCENE SIX

WHERE THE CHILDREN PLAY HIDE AND SEEK

JOSHUA: Shake it off, Lyle. What, life doesn't seem fair does it? Do the rules keep on changing? When you try to please people do you end up breaking something? ... well, don't feel like the Lone Ranger, Lyle, now you know what it's like to be a kid. Nobody said life was fair, Lyle. Wake up and smell the Pop Tarts, it's a rat race being a crocodile, but all is not lost no..., Ask yourself, "What would a kid do in this case? How does a kid handle these overwhelming odds?" I'm going to let you in on a little secret. We play, Lyle. That's right, we play hard and we play fast. And that's how we deal with early bedtimes, spinach, and all those other rules we never asked for. Am I right?

KIDS: Right!

JOSHUA: So get off your green behind, Lyle and let's get down to some serious playing. You know how to play hide and seek? Come on, you know how to play hide and seek? You don't know how to play hide and seek? What do you guys do for fun in the animal kingdom? Alright, just because I like you, I'm going to let you be "it". You know what "it" is don't you? It's "it". You're "it" like you're it, the one, the main man, the "It,"

the utmost, the best, the tops, the it of it's a beautiful day and I'm a major part of it. You're "it". Alright. So you're "it" now. And as "it" your job is to cover your eyes and count to ten. SLOWLY. Ok, while you're counting, slowly, we hide and when you hit ten, you come and try to find us, ok? Sounds like a breeze, huh? Cover your eyes, and start counting. Remember, no peeking, NOOOO peeeeeekiiiiiiiing. GO!

(The kids all run and hide as Lyle counts. Loretta the cat sneaks out of the house while Lyle is counting. She goes in a garbage can. Lyle finishes counting and thinking he has spotted a hiding child grabs into the garbage can. The cat has a fit and is all over Lyle. He throws her off and the terrified feline wrestles with one of the kids. Finally, she is tossed off and sticks like Velcro to the back of a screaming youth. The youth runs off stage and on comes the caterwauling cat and right up the tree. Mr. And Mrs. Primm come out. Mr. Grumps comes on with thunder and lightning.)

MRS. PRIMM: What is going on, Joshua?

MR. PRIMM: What is all the commotion, son?

JOSHUA: Uh oh...

(Loretta meows)

MR. GRUMPS: Loretta, Loretta. Help police, police. Come down, sweet thing, come on down. Daddy loves you...

(SIREN. FIREMEN ENTER. MAYBE SAME TRUCK AS MOVERS HAD NOW PAINTED LIKE A FIRETRUCK).

FIREMAN 1: Alright, where's the fire?

MR. GRUMPS: No officer.

FIREMAN 2: Fireman.

MR. GRUMPS: Fireman, see...I ...you see...

FIREMAN 1: Calm down, calm down. Take it slow pal...

MR. GRUMPS: You see, it's my cat.

FIREMAN 1: Jeez, look at that it's worse than I thought.

FIREMAN 2: Maybe we should call for back up. All units...all units.

FIREMAN 1: No, we can handle it, we can handle it.

FIREMAN 2: Yeah, yeah, yeah right. We can handle it. Stand back folks, and give the professionals some room to work.

MR. GRUMPS: You heard the man, back...back.

FIREMAN 1: Here, hold the ladder.

FIREMAN 2: You always get to clime. You hold the ladder.

FIREMAN 1: I held it last time, you jerk.

FIREMAN 2: I'm a jerk? Oh no you. You're the jerk.

FIREMAN 1: Uh uh uh uh no. Uh uh no you. You.

MR. GRUMPS: Enough! You're both jerks. Both of you get back.

FIREMAN 2: But you need someone to...

MR. GRUMPS: Stay away from the ladder. Come on Loretta, come on sweetie. Yes, that's right...Gotcha.

(MR. GRUMPS SAVES LORETTA. THIS SPOT IS BEGGING FOR A BIT).

CROWD: Hooray!

MR. GRUMPS: Loretta, Loretta my sweet. What have they done to you?

JOSHUA: We were playing hide and seek Mr. Grumps, and Loretta was in a garbage can.

MR. GRUMPS: Lies! Loretta in a waste receptacle.

JOSHUA: It's true, and Lyle didn't know.

MR. GRUMPS: YOU AGAIN! All I know is I had a happy well adjusted Kitty cat until this beast came along with his foreign ways.

MR. PRIMM: I think your cat is spoiled, Grumps old man.

MR. GRUMPS: And that is a wild animal and everyone knows the place for wild animals is the ZOO! Now, either you call the authorities, or I will.

MRS. PRIMM: Oh please, Mr. Grumps, give Lyle one more chance. I promise, you or Loretta won't be bothered again.

MR. GRUMPS: One more chance. One more chance. I have a feeling I'll regret this within the hour, but very well, as a good neighbor I decree. One more chance.

CROWD: Hooray!

MR. GRUMPS: But one little incident, one teeny tiny weeny itty bitty miniscule microscopic little slip and it's the ZOO!

(MR. GRUMPS EXITS. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.)

MRS. PRIMM: Come on Lyle, I think the best think for you is to stay as far away from Mr. Grumps as you can. What do you say we go on a little tour of New York? Hmmmm? Would you like that?

VOICE OF HECTOR: And that is how Lyle the Crocodile came to tour New York, the city of love.

SCENE SEVEN

OF THE NEW YORK TOUR CONDUCTED BY MRS. PRIMM

(If possible, the faces in heads in the drops could be cut out and they talk. Faces are animated somehow.)

NEWSMAN: EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT; Crocodile caught in catastrophic cacophony as catatonic kitty cat is catapulted into kumquat tree. EXTRA, EXTRA! Crocodile tours New York to relax and avoid Mr. Grumps. EXTRA, EXTRA.

(Hector buys a paper).

NEWMAN: Thanks buddy. EXTRA, EXTRA. Get your news, news of the world. What's up, who's down, where's in, why's out...all right here. One think dime, one tenth of a dollar, Extra, Extra read all about it. Go away Lizard, ya bother me. Step right up, News of the world. Extra. Put that back. Look Mack, you gotta be able to read, see or it's no news for you.

MRS. PRIMM: Excuse me, my good man, but Lyle can read.

NEWSMAN: Heh? You're kiddin.

MRS. PRIMM: Oh no. Lyle often helps our son Joshua with his homework, and he's very good in the kitchen with a cookbook. Why even my husband comes to Lyle when he's stuck with the crossword puzzle...

NEWSMAN: Alright, alright, I believe you, already. Pardon me my green friend...Here you go. Enjoy. Extra, extra read all bout it...

MRS. PRIMM: Why look, lucky day Lyle. Already we have discovered a point of interest. It says here this is a statue of Henry Hudson. In 1609 Henry Hudson discovered Manhattan for the Dutch. Originally called New Holland, Henry Hudson thought the terrain ideal for farmland. The Hudson River is named after him...

HENRY HUDSON: Lyle, Lyle, up here. It's me, the statue. Lyle, Lyle do me a favor and get that pigeon will you? (Mrs. Primm continues to read not noticing the talking statue. Lyle shoos a pigeon away.) I hate those things. All day long they sit on me and I can never reach them. Now could you scratch the spot? Yeah...that's it...ahhh...yes...thanks my friend. I used to be a great explorer, now look at me. People walk by, don't even notice. I never dreamed I'd be taken for granite. Oh Lyle, my New York. I had such plans for this place. I wanted farms here. Now look, concrete and steel. Who would've thought, concrete, who would've thought. (Lyle cleans him up a

bit.) Ahhhh, thanks my friend. Do me a favor Lyle, and every once in a while check in on me okay? Thanks my friend.

MRS. PRIMM: And his remains were never found...Now Lyle, what's next?The ballet...Why Lyle, you can dance!

(They dance, Lyle beginning with some ballet.)

MRS. PRIMM: Mikhail Bareschnacroc!

(Mrs. Primm joins Lyle and together they waltz while the Statue of Liberty is revealed., Fireworks)

MRS. PRIMM: What? No, not...the Tango!

(Lyle does a tango, and Mrs. Primm joins him.)

MRS. PRIMM: STOP! Lyle, do you feel that?

(Lyle shakes his head).

MRS. PRIMM: Oh Lyle, it's got me. No. Don't. Stop! Lyle, stop me. Stop me. No, don't. Stop, don't stop. It's stronger than the two of us. Oh Lyle, I'm being

pulled...into...that...department...store...No...No...IT'S...A...SALE...(Mrs. Primm with Lyle in tow is pulled off stage.)

SCENE EIGHT

IN WHICH LYLE MEETS HECTOR IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE

VOICE OF HECTOR: Yes, a sale, the most ruthless of all modern inventions. Capable of breaking down the even strongest of our species. Now who, who on earth, and it has to be someone we already met. Who, who could be responsible for such a diabolical scheme?

(Enter Mr. Grumps with Ms. Nitpicker.)

MR. GRUMPS: Welcome to Grumps Department Store. Ms. Nitpicker, it's so nice of you to visit.

MS. NITPICKER: Mmmm, yes. Yes, I'm sure it is. Mmmmmm.

HECTOR'S VOICE: Oh twisted yarn, what a sweater we weave.

MR. GRUMPS: If there is anything I can do to make your visit more enjoyable, please make it known, and I will be happy to grove, fester, and swell to insure your patronage.

MS. NITPICKER: Well...I was talking to a friend and she said that I said that you said there might be... (Whispers) ...a sale today.

MR. GRUMPS: As a matter of fact, I have it on good authority, there is about to be a sale.

MS. NITPICKER: AHHHHHHHH!

MR. GRUMPS: SHHHHHHHHH.

MS. NITPICKER: Where, oh where, tell me...

MR. GRUMPS: MMMMMMMM,.....No.

MS. NITPICKER: Please, oh please...tell.

MR. GRUMPS: Well, now, I have no idea, but if a person happened to be near say...

MS. NITPICKER: Yes, Yes...

MR. GRUMPS: The sleepwear department...

MS. NITPICKER: PAJAMAS! How brilliant...Oh Grumpy.

MR. GRUMPY: Not in the workplace...

MS. NITPICKER: Of course. Thanks for the tip. I shan't forget this.
(She exits)

MR. GRUMPS: Neither shall I...
(Lightning and thunder. He exits.)

(Mrs. Primm and Lyle enter.)

MRS. PRIMM: Now stick close Lyle, these mild mannered people can break into a shopping frenzy at any moment, and I'd hate to think what could happen to a crocodile caught in the middle.

(Three notes are heard over the loudspeaker in the store.)

VOICE OF MR. GRUMPS: Attention shoppers, attention shoppers. (Thunder and lightning over the speaker as the store lights dim momentarily.) Announcing a sale. I repeat...a huge sale; a chance of a lifetime. Savings like never before on our entire line of fashion sleepwear. So please proceed to the pajama department in a calm and orderly fashion. Ahhhh....

(The shoppers stampede. Cut outs of shoppers running through so Lyle could be systematically cut off from Mrs. Primm as she screams "The horrors. When will the buying stop!") Where on come the shoppers, they cover up say Lyle and when they leave, there stands Mr. Grumps in various forms of disrepair. Maybe at times Lyle is right next to Mr. Grumps. A good way to use a couple of Lyles to be everywhere, or to be wearing different articles of clothing from the department store. Like a magic act where people appear and disappear right next to each other until there stands Lyle and Hector together again at last.

HECTOR: Lyle, it's me, Hector P. Valenti. Up until recently, star of stage and screen. I have used my extensive acting training to land a job as a pajama salesman. Oh Lyle, it's so good to see you again! All the wonderful times we had. Ahhhhh. You remember? Hey Lyle, I got me an idea...what do you say we do a show for these nice people?

(Lyle and Hector perform Crocodile Tears. The Sales desk becomes a stage. The store clientele become a Parisian audience. Lyle and Hector burn up the stage.)

HECTOR: Good evening wear ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you all to Grump's Loungewear. We have a terrific show for you tonight...Hey, nice robe Pierre.

(Drum)

Thank you

I'm Hector P. Valenti, star of stage and silk screen, and I'll be your host for tonight...
I'm so happy you all satin.

(Drum)

Thank you

You know, ever since I sported feet in my PJ's, there's nothing I like better than jamming for the jammy set. So, without further ado, I'd like to introduce a very, very, good friend of mine. The cat who cared the cat outta the cats pajamas, the 'ol lounge lizard himself...I think you all know who I'm talking about...Who am I talking about?

Who?

That's right...Ladies and gentlemen:

Lyle (wanna sing a few scales?)

(Drum beat)

(Lyle mimes a variety of skills, complete with sound effects. Like rotating tires with a drill sound; chain sawing down a tree...etc...after each one, Hector guesses what Lyle is doing, maybe with the help of the audience.)

Those are all fine skills Lyle, but I'm afraid I was thinking more of song and dance. You remember song and dance? No?

One fine summer day long ago, I found myself lost in Africa. The deepest, darkest, scariest part of Africa. The part of Africa that's like the basement at midnight during a power outage...all by myself...all alone.

Suddenly, out from behind a bush stepped a crocodile.
I have to admit, I kind've liked his style.
But I didn't trust that toothy smile.

I figured I was as good as dead
But as he opened his jaws this came out instead.

One fine summer day, long ago
I found myself lost in Africa, the deepest, darkest, scariest part of Africa
The part of Africa that's like the basement at midnight during a power outage
...All by myself...all alone.

When suddenly, out from behind a bush stepped a crocodile
I have to admit, I kind've liked his style
But I didn't trust that toothy smile

I figured I was as good as dead
But as he opened his jaws, this came out instead.

(Lyle as a saxophone, does a riff)

I said, say what?

(Lyle does another riff)

I said, play it again brother, I can't believe what I'm a hearin' in here...

(Lyle riffs twice)

Whoa hold me down and call me Ruth
This cat blows like pepper from the nose of truth
Not bad, I said, for a big green thing
But lean into that ax, and let's hear you swing...

Ah, you can't fool me, you sneaky croc
You're slipping in some Johan Bach

Let's rock Doc

(Lyle does air guitar)
Ad lib lines like:
Play that funky music green boy
Whoa, let my people go
Teach me right from wrong
Swamp think
You make the jungle swing
Swamp thing, I think I love you

Man, oh man, he really ripped
My lid done flipped, my backbone slipped
And then he found just one last note

End of story, all she wrote

And then I saw a tear come out of that ol crocodile eye
And something in here, something I didn't even know I had, shattered...
And for the first time in my life, I started to cry:

(Hector sings)

CHORUS ONE:

Lyle, you got style
You're the jelly on a roll
Oh, but Lyle, best of all, you got soul

VERSE ONE:

I'd thought I'd seen it all
From the basement to the sky
Oh, but nothing
I mean nothing
Gets in here
Like the tear

From the eye
Of a crocodile

CHORUS TWO:

Lyle, oh that smile
Brother you helped me see
You don't have to be a person, per se
To have a personality

BRIDGE:

So when I thought my life would end
I found Lyle to be my best friend
I think back to all those happy years
It makes me cry these crocodile tears

CHORUS ONE

Oh Lyle, you got style
You're the jelly on the roll
Oh, but Lyle, best of all, you got soul

VERSE TWO:

Now I've seen all there is to see
From here to Timbuckthree

But nothing, I said nothin', gets me here
Like a tear
From the eye
Of a Crocodile

CHORUS TWO:

Lyle, oh that smile
And brother you helped me to see
Oh you don't have to be a person, per se
You don't have to be a homosapien
To have a personality

Yeah.

(Applause)

HECTOR; Lyle. Listen to that. They love us. We'll be famous again.

MR. GRUMPS: YOU! I warned you! Now this has gone too far. Taunting poor Loretta was one thing, but now you have hampered a sale. GUARDS! Put this beast in irons.

HECTOR: No Mr. Grumps, you can't. I confess, it was I who has led Lyle astray.

MR. GRUMPS: Then you're fired! And as for you...It's the ZOO!

GUARD 1: What seems to be the trouble?

MR. GRUMPS: This creature caused a riot in my store. Ms. Nitpicker saw the whole ting. Didn't you Ms. Nitpicker? She happened quite by accident to arrive at the pajama sale just as it started, and saw the entire fiasco.

GUARD 1: Well lady?

MS. NITPICKER: I...Uh...I...I'm so confused.

MR. GRUMPS: And oooooo...Ms. Nitpicker, how did you ever come away with such lovely PJ's, hmmm?

MS. NITPICKER: Yes...Yes...he did it. The green one there...I'm sorry Lyle.

GUARD 1: You have the right to remain silent...anything you say can...

GUARD 2: What're you doing?

GUARD 1: Reading him his rights.

GUARD 2: It's a croc!

GUARD 1: I know, but it's the law, and we are bound to abide by it.

GUARD 2: No, ya jerk, it's a crocodile.

SCENE NINE

OF LYLE'S INCARCERATION IN THE ZOO

(Lyle is in the zoo with other crocodiles in his cell. A sad version of "Crocodile Tears" plays. Lyle runs.)

JOSHUA: Lyle. Here he is.

MRS. PRIMM: Oh Lyle, I'm so sorry.

JOSHUA: Geez, you really did it this time Lyle. This looks worse than being grounded.

MRS. PRIMM: Are they treating you alright? The food must be horrible here. I brought you some Turkish caviar. (She hands him caviar wrapped in a hanky). Oh Lyle, I'm sorry. I'm trying to be strong.

MR. PRIMM: Keep a stiff upper snout, Lyle. We'll get you out of here. I have my best men working on your case. If there's a loophole, we'll find it.

JOSHUA: I talked to the gang, Lyle. We'll be visiting you every day. Don't get all sentimental, Lyle. We have to visit... You're still it!

(They start to leave. Mrs. Primm falls to pieces.)

MRS. PRIMM: This is all my fault. My fault. I'm trying to be strong, Joseph. Oh Lyle. How can they do this to you...

MR. PRIMM: (Comforting Mrs. Primm): Come now Mrs. Primm: Easy...easy...She'll be alright Lyle. This is just going to take some getting used to. (Mr. Primm snaps...grabs the bars). But she's right, it's no fair. How can we call ourselves civilized when crocodiles are locked away like people. No fair...no fair...

(Joshua comforts Mr. Primm. The Primms' exit.)

CROC 1: Hey you. Eh, Lyle. Yeah you, come here. First time in the slammer? You'll get used to it. We all started out a pretty wild bunch, but we settled down. What ya got there in the hanky? Yeah, that hanky. Caviar huh? Look boys, he's got caviar.

(The pile of crocs rumble)

CROC 1: Look Lyle, in my experience things can go good in here, or they can go bad. Now good things usually happen to those who share, and bad things happen to those who are tight fisted and don't fork over they're caviar. Understand?

(Lyle hands over caviar).

CROC 1: That's better.

CROC 2: Hey, what about us?

CROC 1: Get your own, ya jerk.

CROC 2: Why do you gotta always be calling me a jerk all the time for?

CROC 1: Cause ya are one, ya jerk.

CROC 2: I'm saying I got feelings. If you cut me, do I not say ouch, hey you jerk, you went and cut me.

CROC 1: Alright, I'm sorry. Here.
(Gives Croc 2 some caviar). Now ya happy?

CROC 2: Yeah.

CROC 1: Fine. Now go to sleep, ya jerk.

CROC 2: Good nigh. You're the jerk.

VOICE OF HECTOR: Lyle tried to get comfy, but it was not use. He just didn't fit in with the others. Soon Lyle was missing his warm bath, and visions of happy Primms' danced in his head bone. And soon other thoughts crept into his sleepless nights. Did the Primms' really miss him like they said?; Maybe they were better off now that he was locked away. Were they even now dancing and toasting his life sentence? No, not the Primms'. How could he think that. (noise). What was that noise? Another animal in the zoo perhaps? There it was again. Yes, that was just an animal. Either that or the one armed psycho crocodile killer that was roaming about in search of fresh blood. One look into his evil eye, and the victim was frozen in terror, then bitten in the neck and sucked dry, but did not die, oh no. Worst of all, the hapless crocodile roams the land like a

zombie, a servant of his own thirst for fresh blood. (The silhouette of the one armed psycho killer appears, but as lightning strikes, we see it's Mr. Grumps, holding Loretta. He laughs his lavalier laugh. Lightning. There is another noise and another figure lurking around Lyle's cage).

HECTOR: Lyle?

HECTOR'S VOICE: What was that?

HECTOR: Lyle?:

HECTOR'S VOICE: He knows my name thought Lyle.

HECTOR: Lyle, where are you?

HECTOR'S VOICE: Don't look in his eyes. Avoid the eyes.

HECTOR: There you are Lyle. I've come for you.

HECTOR'S VOICE: You may be dressed like a zookeeper, one-armed psycho crocodile killer, but if you think you can mess with Lyle the Crocodile, you can think again!

HECTOR: Lyle?

(Gong. Lyle hits him in the head with his water dish)

HECTOR: Ouch!

VOICE OF HECTOR: This zookeeper, he looked oddly familiar, with the emphasis on odd.

HECTOR: Ooooooooo my achin' head bone.

VOICE: And he spoke with what could have been any of five language, English best.

HECTOR: Lyle, wait, it's me, Hector P. Valenti.

VOICE: That's right, it was me.

HECTOR: Star of cage and screen. (Hector produces a set of keys and opens the cage door.)

VOICE: You see, I used my extensive acting training to land a job as a zookeeper.

HECTOR: Hurry Lyle, we must make good your escape. (Lyle hugs Hector.) Time for thanks later. Hurry, in minutes the place will be crawling with the flatfeet.

(They exit. One of the crocodiles gets up and goes to the door and shuts it.)

CROC 1: (Waving the hanky) Good luck, Lyle. I hope you find what you're lookin' for.

CROC 2: Goodbye Lyle.

SCENE TEN

THE VALIANT ESCAPE OF HECTOR AND LYLE WHERE HECTOR DESCRIBES THE GLORIES OF AUSTRALIA

HECTOR: Don't worry Lyle my friend. I have a plan. There should be a getaway car here somewhere. (Car pops up.) Ah, there it is. Quick! Get in.
(The car starts up. Through the next scene, they are racing through the streets ala high speed.)

HECTOR: In the glove compartment you will find your papers and your new identity. (Lyle puts on a mustache). From this moment on you will no longer be Lyle the Crocodile. Your new name will be "Kyle the Crocodile." Got it? There should also be a ticket enclosed. I have booked us passage to Australia.

HECTOR: We will perform our new act and become famous again. You will love Australia Lyle waltzing Matilda. There will be other crocodiles and there will be no language problem because Australian is one of the five language I speak. (Sings) "My kind of town Australia is. If I can make it there, I cana make it anywhere." Oh cheer up Lyle. What's the matter? Why am I asking you? I am the one telling the story. I know why. You miss the Primms'. You miss the house on 88th Street. You miss the little boy. You miss the warm tub. Why would anybody in their right mind give all that up for a land that is 90 percent desert, has more sheep than people and a depleting ozone. I tell you what Lyle, 88th street just happens to be on the way to the pier. We can drive by the house and you can say goodbye to the Primms' in person. Or in crocodile. Alright? Very good.

SCENE ELEVEN

IN WHICH LYLE SAVES THE LIFE OF MR. GRUMPS AND THERE IS A PARADE

HECTOR: Lyle, did you take up smoking in the pen? No? Well, I sure do smell something and it's not the cauliflower I had for lunch. Wooo...roll down a window. Ahhh, now it's worse...Jeepers, creepers what is this? Mr. Grumps house, it's on fire!

HELP! HELP! And just our luck, we're in a theatre so I can't yell FIRE! HELP!
Special effects! Special effects! Mr. Grumps' house is going' up in special effects!
Someone help!

(Hector runs off in search of help. Lyle wastes no time. His chest swells to heroic proportions, and into the burning house he goes. Sirens blow. The Primms' come out of their house.)

MR. PRIMM: Great Scott! The Grumps' household is in flames!

(Two familiar firemen come on dragging a fire hose).

FIREMAN 1: I get to work the hose.

FIREMAN 2: Back off you jerk, I get to work it.

(Hector runs on)

HECTOR: Lyle...Lyle..Oh no he must be in the house.

FIREMAN 1: You're the jerk. Gimme it.

FIREMAN 2: No. Uh, uh, you're the jerk.

HECTOR: Lyle....Lyle...

(An explosion. Pause. Lyle comes out draggin' Mr. Grumps and Loretta)

EVERYONE; Hooray!

MR. GRUMPS: What happened? I was burning Christmas cards and the next thing I know...Loretta. Loretta, you're alive. I don't know how to thank you Sir.

(Lyle takes off the mustache)

EVERYONE: Lyle!

MR GRUMPS: You...This does it you're going to get it now. Now you're going to get a...get a big apology from me. Ladies and gentlemen, Lyle is the bravest, kindest, most wonderful crocodile in the whole wide world. I would consider it a privilege and a pleasure to have him as a neighbor once more.

CROWD: Hooray!

MR. GRUMPS: And as for you...(to Hector)

CROWD: Ouch!

MR. GRUMPS: Should you decide to stay in New York a job in my store will always be yours for the asking.

CROWD: Hooray!

MR. GRUMPS: I'm sorry Lyle. Please understand. I didn't want to be an old poop, but I didn't trust someone different. And now you've saved Loretta, the only friend I have.

MS. NITPICKER: Oh Donald, how blind can you be? I like you.

MR. GRUMPS: Why? Why do you like me?

MS. NITPICKER: I like you for what you are.

MR. GRUMPS: Oh Nancy!

MS. NITPICKER: Oh Donald.

JOSHUA: Oh brother.

MR. GRUMPS: Look Loretta, all these friends and what a nice day. Why, it's been years since I've seen the sun. What a fine day for a parade.

BAND LEADER: Did someone say parade?

(The parade comes back with the marching band.)

HECTOR: Another impromptu parade. New York. I love you.

JOSHUA: Where's Lyle?

(We hear the "noise" coming from the bathroom.)

HECTOR; So now, if you should happen to be walking past the house on 88th Street and you should happen to hear (we hear the "noise"), don't be surprised. It's only Lyle. Lyle the crocodile.

(The band plays an up tempo version of "Crocodile Tears." Lyle comes out in a towel.)

END OF PLAY###

