

LULU.

Sketchbook

**The Development of Lulu
(Such As It Is)**



© J. Roberson
4/15/09

"Innocent" is a word that's used often in connection to Lulu.

Now, that's true as far as it goes. What interests me about the character, especially as a tragic character, is that she inverts many of the cliches of the "femme fatale." Rather than, as with Dietrich in "The Blue Angel," leading men to their corruption and deaths, the men lead themselves to both, and fix upon her as an object of blame.

But then, in many ways, isn't that the whole *point* of the *femme fatale*? All the way back to Adam. "The girl made me do it! Punish her good!"

Lulu's innocence, as we shall see in great and explicit detail (as I feel Wedekind would have wanted, but more about my notions there next time), is not sexual, or rather, her plainly uninhibited attitude about it is itself a manifestation of her "innocence." She simply doesn't see why not do whatever she likes. But it's not in any way what might, in other works, a sign of her guile, because Lulu is characterized by a singular lack of guile. It's merely what she is.

But given this is a tragedy and she's the protagonist, how is that a *flaw*?

Some define tragedy as involving something good undone by a flaw. That's certainly what Prof. Houlgate taught me at Depaul. But a flaw can be all kinds of things. Like the heroines of Lars Von Trier, Lulu is undone by, perhaps, being too innocent of the world, and men, but also what both want to make of her.

Tragedy isn't really about flaws. It's about mistakes, misconceptions, things that were good that might have been great, but are destroyed, as it is in life. *Loss* is the theme. Loss of things that are precious, destruction inevitable the minute they appear in this world and humans being what they are.

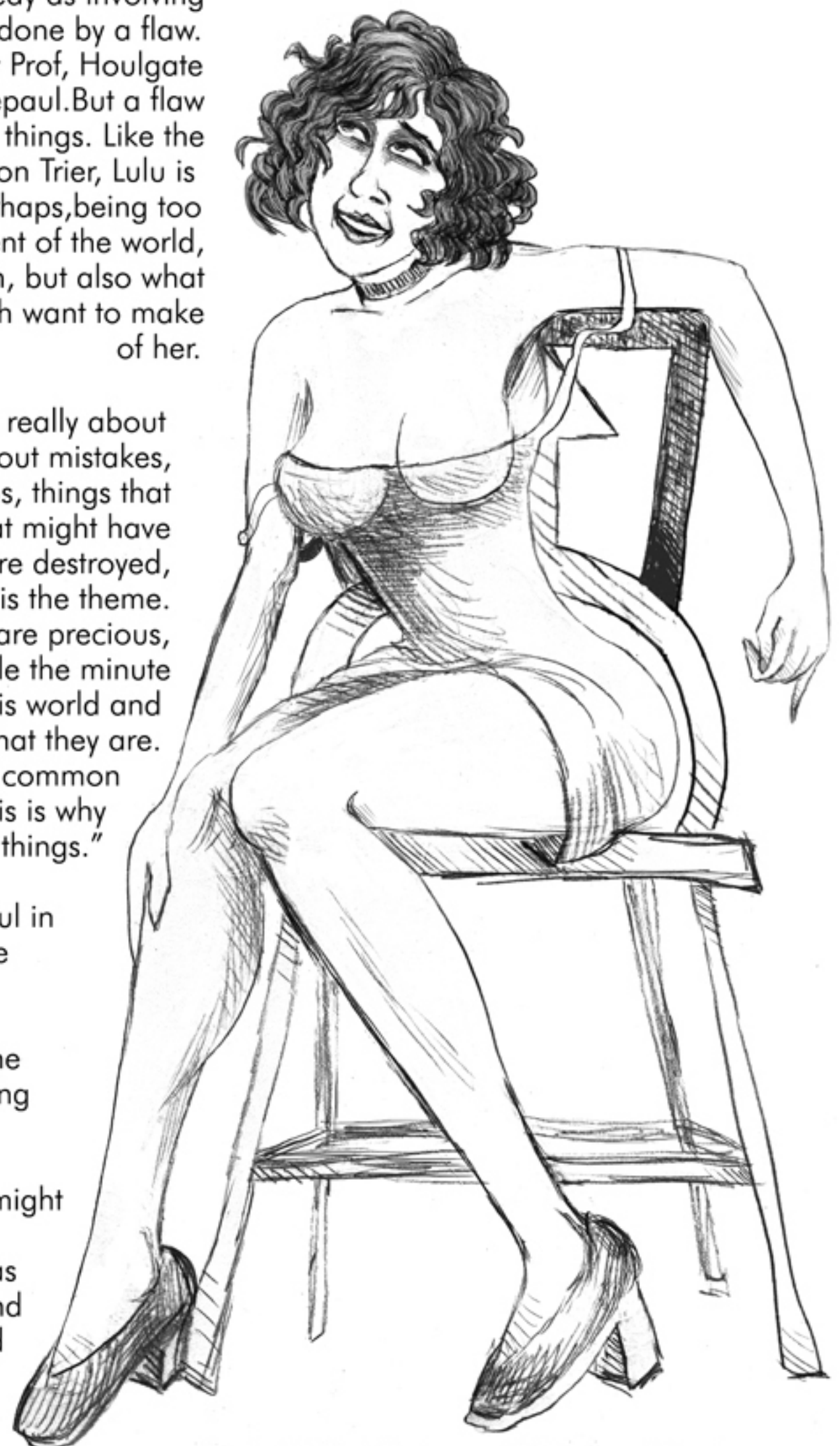
You could say the real common theme in tragedy is "This is why we can't have nice things."



Lulu is about the impossibility of anything truly free or joyful in the world, in my view, among much else. In a world where everything is for sale.

So the type of depiction of Lulu herself makes or breaks the version being done. These were some of the steps in finding the Lulu that felt best to me.

The one above was the first try. I decided the hair length might be the sole nod to Louise Brooks, the most famous Lulu, whose image I otherwise elected to avoid. But this one was too cute and roundy. The one at right was next. Longer and looser of limb seemed the way to go, but this one seemed too jaded and slatterny. Though possibly appropriate for the last act.

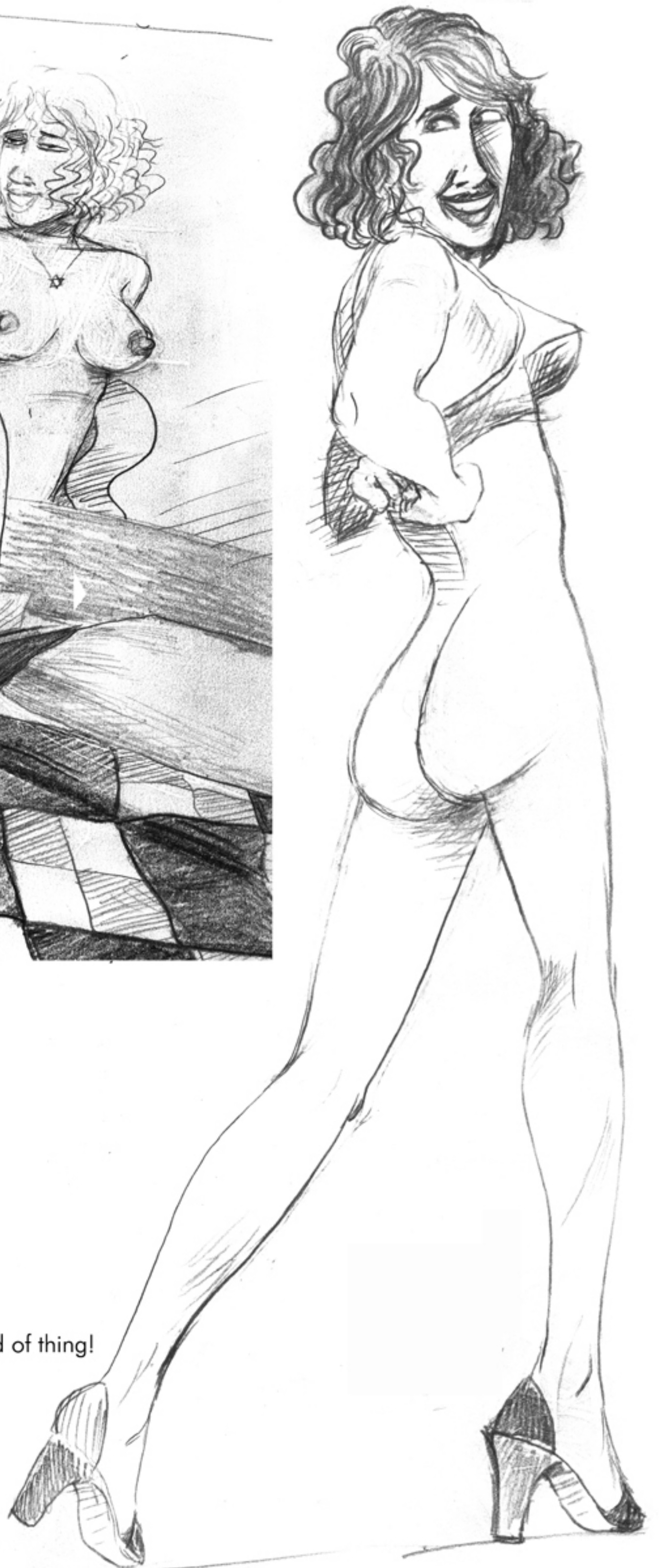


This was done from a photo I'd come across of a model named Tiffany Hayden, except for the face and hair. Getting there, but the face was still a little off. Perhaps still is, but oh well.





Getting there, but still a bit too thin somehow.



Hey. Now, *this* is more the kind of thing!



It was drawing her "in action" as it were, that started to make her really come alive for me. So, in this case using a still from the film *WR: The Mysteries of the Organism* as reference, I drew her doing one of her, ahem, favorite things...and finally got the face I wanted, along the way...

...and her other favorite thing, dancing. This was inspired by a picture clipped for me by a very good friend, and a friend of comics, Gabriela Pirralho.

This one not only evolved, as you know if you're reading this, into the graphic on this issue's cover, but also into the model sheet for Lulu, which I refer back to every single time I draw her. Each time is a poor attempt to recapture this face.

More sketches and other odds & sods next time, perhaps.

John Roberson, Seattle, 2010

