

# WHO GOT THE SHERIFF?

*by Kimberlee Mendoza*



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**WHO GOT THE SHERIFF?**  
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# WHO GOT THE SHERIFF?

*An old-fashioned whodunit dinner theatre*

**By Kimberlee Mendoza**

**SYNOPSIS:** There's gold in them thar hills... along with a passel of problems. Ma and Pa picked out a pretty prospective wife for son Levi, but she's taken a shinin' to the Sheriff – and Levi, too, has another love. Then there's bad blood between the Sheriff and his sister, the saloon's shenanigans cause a ruckus, and ol' looney tunes prospector Obadiah claims the town's rugged frontier land is his. There's a (very tame.) "shootout" at the end ("guns" are fake or even squirt guns.). After guests polish off their fried chicken dinners, they try to figger out who's crooked and who's not – and guessing who's the outlaw proves trickier than panning for gold! Old-timey 1800s fun, with a crazy cowboy's endless one-liners to rope in the guests. The real gold nugget is the conclusion, which reinforces "judge not" and forgiveness amid the entertainment. A family-friendly romp in the wild, wild West.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(4 female, 5 male)*

SHERIFF COLT DUNN (m).....Suave and confident, but he seems to make everyone mad. *(124 lines)*

GUS EVANS (m) .....Store owner/undertaker/preacher; endures his wife, loves bacon. *(83 lines)*

PEARL EVANS (f).....Store owner's wife; very opinionated and no-nonsense. *(80 lines)*

LEVI EVANS (m) .....Rancher; a good man gone bad due to circumstances. *(47 lines)*

JANE FISHER (f).....Widowed saloon owner, sassy and tough. *(61 lines)*

CORA COOPER (f).....Schoolteacher; beautiful, but a bit too naïve and delicate for the West. *(95 lines)*

ELIJAH JACK (m) .....Cowboy bandit; wants to be tough, but isn't very good at it. *(69 lines)*

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- WINNIE DUNN (f) .....Banker and excessive gambler;  
doesn't like being dirty, likes nice  
things. (61 lines)
- OBADIAH FRANK (m) .....Prospector and crazy old coot.  
(44 lines)

(ALL LINE COUNTS ARE APPROXIMATE)

**DURATION:** 50-120 minutes.

*NOTE: The script is approximately 50 minutes. The play, pre-show, and full meal is approximately 120 minutes.*

**SETTING:** Dunn Hill City, California

**TIME:** 1850; California Gold Rush

### COSTUMES

SHERIFF COLT DUNN – Light brown pants and shirt, gun belt and star, hat.

GUS EVANS – Khakis, white shirt, apron, small tie, arm bands.

PEARL EVANS – Scarf, long skirt, shirt, apron, or old-fashioned dress.

LEVI EVANS – Khakis, chaps, button-down shirt, vest, hat, boots.

JANE FISHER – Bright old-fashioned dress and ribbons.

CORA COOPER – Pastel old-fashioned dress, parasol, pretty hat.

ELIJAH JACK – Cowboy outfit and bandana.

WINNIE DUNN – Fancy dress and hat.

OBADIAH FRANK – Khakis, old ripped shirt, suspenders, old hat.

### SOUND EFFECTS

- Rooster Crowing
- Horses' Hooves
- Stagecoach
- Gunfire
- Music

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**PROPS**

- Broom
- Luggage
- Hats
- Flyer
- Nail
- Cards
- Poker Chips
- Sarsaparilla (or IBC root beer bottles)
- Shot Glass
- Liquid
- Bandanas
- Gold Nugget
- Dynamite (may use several paper towel rolls tied together with twine.)
- Plate of Food
- Bags of Money
- Book
- Hat with Fishing Wire (for when Colt's hat flies off in ACT ONE, SCENE 8.)
- Rope
- Audience Questions (see page 8)
- Jar with Big Gold Nuggets or Pan of Gold (gold nuggets may be made of papier-mâché and spray-painted gold)

*A note about guns:* This performance is intended as a good clean family evening, in the style of old westerns. Characters should wear a “gun” in a holster or have access to one. We suggest using toy guns, Silly String guns, squirt guns with or without water, or no guns at all, just pointed fingers! Keep it as nonviolent as possible while staying true to the western genre, using whatever is best suited for your audience.

## THE EVENING

Have the characters or a wait staff serve beverages as the guests arrive. If you have a live country band or other entertainment, serve the main course during the pre-show. The dessert should be served after the intermission by a wait staff.

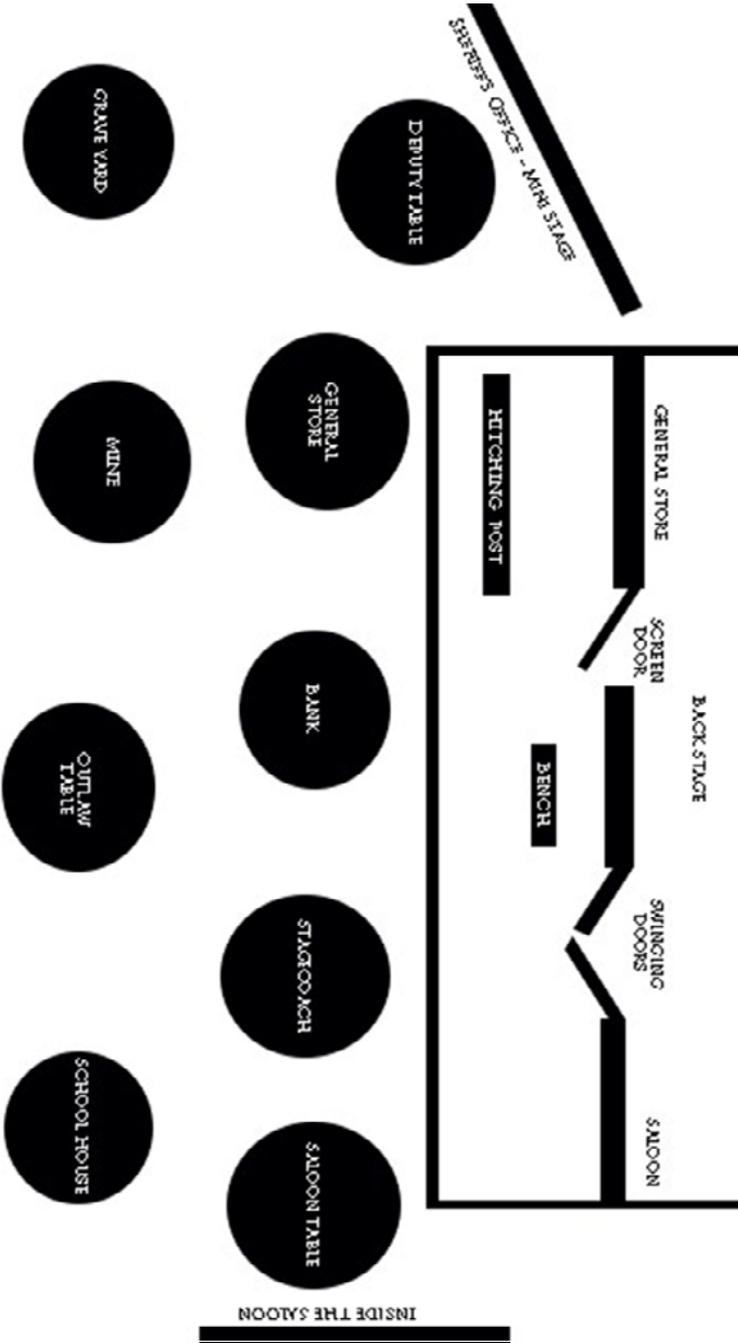
## SUGGESTED MENU

- Barbecue or fried chicken
- Potato salad or mashed potatoes
- Coleslaw, corn, or green beans
- Baked or barbecue beans
- Chili
- Rolls, biscuits, or cornbread
- Water, lemonade and/or iced tea (coffee with dessert.)
- Pie

## TABLES

*Each character will man a table that is decorated to fit that theme:*

1. Coal Mine (miners) – Obadiah
2. Sheriff's Office (Deputies) – Colt
3. Bank (bankers) – Winnie
4. Schoolhouse (teacher/students) – Cora
5. Saloon (gamblers) – Jane
6. Campfire (outlaws) – Elijah
7. General Store (shoppers) – Pearl
8. Rancher (cowboys) – Levi
9. Graveyard (undertakers) – Gus
10. Stagecoach (passengers) – Extra wait help



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## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Guests arrive
- Cast mingles among audience
- Rolls, beverages and salad are on table
- Possible “musical” entertainment while main entrée is served
- **ACT ONE, SCENE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8**
- Intermission, Coffee and dessert served (15 minutes)
- **ACT TWO**
- Guests depart

## JOKES FOR GUS

- Why didn't the cowboy's car start? He had Injun trouble.
- Why did the cowboy get a hot seat? He rode the range.
- What kind of sickness do cowboys get from riding horses? Bronc-itis
- Why did the cowboy ride his horse? Because the horse was too heavy to carry.
- Why can't the bankrupt cowboy complain? He's got no beef.
- Why did the cowboy never shoo the flies? He decided to let them go barefoot.
- What do you call a frog who wants to be a cowboy? Hopalong Cassidy
- What did the cowboy maggot say when he went into the saloon bar? Give me a slug of whiskey.

**QUESTIONS FOR AUDIENCE**

Hand out the following questions to audience members before the show starts. Try to recruit those who will have fun with it and speak loudly.

**SPECIAL DEPUTY**

*DIRECTIONS: When you hear a gun shot and the Sheriff say, "My hat!" You need to yell, "I'm shot!" Feel free to act it out. This is your moment in the spotlight.*

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

**QUESTION FOR WINNIE:** Winnie, it is obvious you were ready to shoot your brother, but we could see you didn't pull the trigger. Did you have someone else do it for you?

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

**QUESTION FOR PEARL:** Pearl, you obviously didn't like the Sheriff and the way he was running your town. Did you shoot him?

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

**QUESTION FOR GUS:** Gus, I think you could have shot him for a different reason. Could it be that you didn't like how close the Sheriff was getting to your future daughter-in-law?

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

QUESTION FOR JANE: Jane, you said that if Levi and Cora got together, you'd get the Sheriff. Did you shoot him because they finally met?

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

QUESTION FOR LEVI: Levi, you seem to have the biggest motive. He is stealing your catalogue wife, and he built that saloon, which your folks hate. Did you shoot him?

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

QUESTION FOR ELIJAH: Elijah, we know you dislike the Sheriff, and since stealing the money didn't make Winnie shoot him, did you take matters in your own hands?

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

QUESTION FOR CORA: Cora, did you shoot the Sheriff and the Deputy?

*DIRECTIONS: When the cast member asks for your question, raise your hand, stand up, and read it loudly.*

QUESTION FOR OBADIAH: Obadiah, you obviously have a problem with the Sheriff stealing your claim. Did you shoot him?

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**ACT ONE, SCENE 1**

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**AT START:** *Rooster crows and GUS comes out to sweep. Sound of horse arriving. OBADIAH is asleep somewhere On-stage.*

**GUS:** Pearl, the stagecoach has arrived. Better get some eggs from the chickens. The new crop of city slickers is gonna be hungry.

**PEARL:** *(Sticks head out the door.)* Hope they're not here to fill that devil-infested saloon. I don't know why you ever allowed them to build that place, and right next to our store. It's just too much!

**GUS:** First off, woman, I have no control over what is built in this town. That is Sheriff Colt's decision. He's the one who owns all this. Second, chickens.

**PEARL:** Is that some kind of new curse word? If so, watch your mouth.

**GUS:** What?

**PEARL:** I said, if so, watch your mouth, or I'll be washing it out with my new lavender lye.

**GUS:** No, chickens. For the stagecoach.

**PEARL:** You want to give our chickens to the stagecoach?

**GUS:** No, I want to feed the people coming out of it some eggs and fried chicken.

**PEARL:** Fine. *(Exits.)*

**GUS:** How did I get stuck with such a woman?

*COLT, enters. CORA enters with her luggage.*

**COLT:** Well, it ain't like there are lots of choices here. You wanted a good one, you should of stayed where you ...

*Notices CORA mid-sentence. ELIJAH and WINNIE enter and intercept before COLT can.*

**ELIJAH:** Why hello, little lady. What's your name?

**CORA:** Oh, hello. Cora. Cora Cooper.

**ELIJAH:** Mighty glad to meet you, Cora Cooper. Is that Miss Cooper or Mrs. Cooper?

- 1 **WINNIE:** You're incorrigible.
- 2 **ELIJAH:** Why thank you, Winnie.
- 3 **CORA:** Miss. And Cora is fine.
- 4 **ELIJAH:** Yes, I believe you are. I'm Elijah Jack. You've probably  
5 heard of me.
- 6
- 7 *CORA shakes head.*
- 8
- 9 Famous gunslinger. Wanted somewhere out east.
- 10 **COLT:** If that were true, Elijah, I'd be collecting the reward. And  
11 we're in the West.
- 12 **ELIJAH:** I'm just that good.
- 13 **WINNIE:** Or that stupid.
- 14 **CORA:** I'm the new schoolteacher.
- 15 **ELIJAH:** If only I was still in grade school.
- 16 **WINNIE:** Some would say your brain never left.
- 17
- 18 *CORA hugs them.*
- 19
- 20 **ELIJAH:** (To WINNIE.) Hush, you. (To CORA, who is still hugging  
21 him.) Why, you're a mighty friendly one.
- 22
- 23 *GUS looks up and steps out.*
- 24
- 25 **GUS:** This boy bothering you?
- 26 **CORA:** Oh, no. Just making my acquaintance.
- 27 **ELIJAH:** Yes, making her acquaintance.
- 28 **GUS:** Well, I suggest you stop making her acquaintance and move  
29 along.
- 30 **ELIJAH:** Don't forget who you're talking to, old man. The famous  
31 Elijah Jack, the best in the... east.
- 32
- 33 *ELIJAH puts hand on holster and tries to pull out gun. Is visibly  
34 shaken. WINNIE holds his gun up proudly.*
- 35
- 36 **WINNIE:** Looking for this? Just remember, a flush always beats a  
37 pair of deuces.

1 **ELIJAH:** I don't understand why you always lose, except when you  
2 play me. I have to stop betting against you. Losing to a woman  
3 is the worst.

4 **WINNIE:** Nah, you can't do that, Elijah. You keep me funded. As a  
5 matter of fact, you keep this *town* funded. (*To CORA.*) Elijah is  
6 always losing his gun in a poker game. I would say Jane's saloon  
7 is the best thing that ever happened to this town.

8

9 *PEARL enters, bringing out things to open the store. She doesn't*  
10 *really look at anyone, just says her piece.*

11

12 **PEARL:** I beg to differ. That establishment is not the best thing.

13 **ELIJAH:** Why not?

14 **PEARL:** Don't get me started, Elijah. You wouldn't be here if it  
15 wasn't for that – that place.

16

17 *PEARL exits. ELIJAH is paying special attention to CORA, making*  
18 *GUS uncomfortable.*

19

20 **GUS:** Not to step on your toes, Sheriff, but I think Elijah needs to  
21 move along and stop pestering the young lady.

22 **ELIJAH:** I'm going, old man. Just better hope I don't get my gun  
23 back.

24 **COLT:** I hope you're not threatening anyone, Elijah. The jail could  
25 use an occupant.

26 **ELIJAH:** Just using my words, Sheriff. Just using my words. (*Tips*  
27 *hat to CORA.*) Miss.

28 **GUS:** (*Shaking his head.*) The riffraff that stagecoach brings some  
29 days... Everyone here wants our gold.

30 **OBADIAH:** (*Pops up.*) He be meaning *my* gold. (*OBADIAH exits.*)

31 **GUS:** (*Ignoring him, to CORA.*) Sorry. Did you just arrive by  
32 stagecoach?

33 **CORA:** Yes. I am the new schoolteacher, and I'm also here to meet  
34 my future husband.

35 **ELIJAH:** I'd like to oblige ya.

36 **WINNIE:** Well, that's mighty hopeful. If only it was that simple. I'm  
37 thirty-six next Monday, and I still haven't found me a man.

- 1 **ELIJAH:** It's 'cause you're old. (*To CORA.*) I'm sure finding a  
2 husband for a pretty lady like you should be no issue.
- 3 **WINNIE:** Don't be feeding her lies. Look at me. I'm pretty, and it's  
4 been terrible. Just terrible.
- 5 **COLT:** As Elijah so smartly pointed out, you're old, Winnie. You  
6 missed your window.
- 7 **WINNIE:** My window? Baby brother or not, I'm about to knock your  
8 teeth out.
- 9 **COLT:** And you wonder why you can't find a man.
- 10 **WINNIE:** You're the reason I missed my (*Grits teeth.*) window.  
11 Brought me to this – this dried-up ghost town.
- 12 **COLT:** Stop your whining, Winnie. (*To CORA.*) I can't believe I'm  
13 going to say this, but Elijah is right. You should have no problem  
14 finding a husband... I'd just avoid certain ones.
- 15
- 16 *COLT looks at ELIJAH. ELIJAH shakes head and steps into saloon.*  
17
- 18 **CORA:** Oh, no. I already have a man. My father sent a dowry of  
19 pigs last week. Paid in full. And I was told it came with a job at  
20 the schoolhouse.
- 21 **GUS:** Oh, wonderful bacon!
- 22 **CORA:** You ate them already? Oh, my.
- 23 **GUS:** No. Well, yes. But no, I mean...you're to marry our son Levi.
- 24 **CORA:** (*Instantly hugs him.*) Papa!
- 25
- 26 *PEARL enters. She is perturbed that her husband is hugging a*  
27 *pretty woman.*
- 28
- 29 **GUS:** Um, friendly thing.
- 30 **PEARL:** What the chickens?!
- 31 **GUS:** (*Trying to unfold from CORA's grip.*) Pearl, this is... what was  
32 your name, dear?
- 33 **CORA:** Cora Cooper.
- 34 **GUS:** This here is Cora, and she's here to marry our Levi.
- 35 **PEARL:** Oh! Welcome, young lady. I'm Pearl, Levi's mother.
- 36
- 37 *CORA instantly hugs her. COLT exits around the corner for a*  
38 *moment.*

1

2 **CORA:** Mama!3 **PEARL:** Wow, yes, very friendly. Um... (*Unwrapping from her.*)

4 People here in the West... well, we –

5 **GUS:** Yes, we don't –6 **PEARL:** We're not that friendly, dear.

7

8 *OBADIAH enters toward saloon.*

9

10 **OBADIAH:** Friendly? (*Grumbles.*) What do ya'll have to be friendly

11 about anyhow? All a bunch of robbers, liars, and sinners here in

12 Frank Hill City. Obadiah Frank at your service. (*Under breath.*)

13 Now, go home.

14 **CORA:** I thought I was in Dunn Hill City.15 **COLT:** You are.16 **OBADIAH:** Dunn Hill! Ha! This place was mine first. It be Frank Hill17 City. Just haven't put up the signs. (*To CORA.*) You might think

18 this is a nice town, but you'd be wrong. Everyone keeps blowing

19 holes in my mountain and raiding my streams. They're stealing

20 all my gold. My gold! (*To audience of prospectors at Coal Mine*21 *Table.*) So all of you, go back to your big eastern cities and

22 ranches, and leave the digging and panning to me! It's my gold.

23 My bounty! Not yours! Not yours at all! I was here first! You got

24 that? (*Eyes on one audience member, staring him down.*) Good!25 (*Exits.*)26 **CORA:** Wow, I think he needs a hug...

27

28 *CORA steps toward where he left, but PEARL grabs her.*

29

30 **PEARL:** Uh, no, dear. That is the meanest man this side of

31 Tombstone. He's got a burr in his saddle that won't easily be

32 plucked. I'd stay clear if I were you.

33 **CORA:** What's got him so blue?34 **GUS:** Thinks all the mines here are his to claim.

35

36 *OBADIAH pokes head out.*

37

- 1 **OBADIAH:** Think? No! I know! They're mine. Mine! I saw them and  
2 staked my claim. The mines are mine! Mine! All mine! And I'll  
3 meet anyone at high noon that believes differently. (*He topples*  
4 *over and falls back into the saloon.*)
- 5 **GUS:** It's true; he *was* the first one here. Then came Sheriff Colt  
6 Dunn. Sheriff bought up all the land. Named it Dunn Hill City after  
7 himself. Obadiah couldn't stop what happened next.
- 8 **CORA:** Oh, my! (*Really dramatic, then realizes she has no idea.*)  
9 What happened next?
- 10 **PEARL:** The gold rush happened, dear. People started mining all  
11 around his original hole and the river that runs by it. He hasn't  
12 found one ounce of gold since that first day, but others are  
13 leaving here as millionaires. The Sheriff benefits, and the bank  
14 sometimes, but hardly anyone beyond that.
- 15 **CORA:** Oh, he does need a hug.
- 16 **PEARL:** He bites. No more hugging, understand?
- 17 **CORA:** I'll try.
- 18 **WINNE:** But Obadiah does have his good days...
- 19 **GUS:** Only with Jane, and sometimes you. (*To CORA.*) He softens  
20 with women.
- 21 **PEARL:** He's never softened up to me.
- 22 **GUS:** My point exactly.
- 23 **COLT:** Just in case, Pearl's probably right about him biting. Avoid  
24 hugging him if you can.
- 25 **PEARL:** Well, I think some proper introductions are in order. We're  
26 the Evans family. Together we run the general store, and Gus is  
27 also the town undertaker.
- 28 **CORA:** That's unusual...
- 29 **GUS:** Actually, they go together quite nicely.
- 30 **CORA:** Undertaker and storeowner?
- 31
- 32 *COLT enters.*
- 33
- 34 **GUS:** Oh, yes. It pays the most and most often. I just order the  
35 coffin and the headstone from the Sears and Roebuck  
36 catalogue. They come in with the rest of the supplies, and we  
37 bury the dead on Mondays. I can even say the final words as a—

1 **COLT:** He sells them guns, too. So in some ways, he helps it all go  
2 full circle.

3 **PEARL:** He doesn't pull the trigger. It's that God-forsaken saloon.  
4 Sheriff, you need to reconsider...

5 **COLT:** Pearl, we've been through this a zillion times. Every town  
6 from here to the Bible belt has to have a saloon. Think of it as  
7 tradition. Besides, those miners need a place to hang their hat  
8 after a day in the ground.

9 **CORA:** You put children in the ground? Oh, my. No wonder you  
10 want to open a schoolhouse.

11 **PEARL:** Not minors. Miners.

12

13 *CORA shakes head, not understanding.*

14

15 **COLT:** Not small people. Gold miners. Prospectors.

16 **OBADIAH:** (*From Backstage.*) There be only one prospector.

17 **CORA:** Sorry, this is all too much for me to process.

18 **PEARL:** (*Under her breath.*) And this is what our level of education  
19 will be in the West.

20 **CORA:** What's that, Mrs. Evans?

21 **PEARL:** I was just saying, we should see about getting you settled.  
22 We weren't expecting you so soon. We thought you were coming  
23 next week. The telegram only got here a week ago. That train is  
24 really speeding things up for us. But I will tell you, I run a tight  
25 ship. No messing around. Just because you're in the West  
26 doesn't mean you shouldn't conduct yourself appropriately, like  
27 the proper lady you were brought up to be. Understand?

28 **CORA:** Yes, ma'am. I'll remain a lady.

29 **COLT:** Agreed.

30 **PEARL:** And all the men will stay clear, you hear? Levi will be back  
31 any day now. Gus, can you see about getting her settled in the  
32 room above the store?

33

34 *JANE enters to put out a flyer.*

35

36 **GUS:** Well, that's a problem. The room above the store was flooded  
37 in the last rainstorm. We needs a new roof.

- 1 **PEARL:** After all the work we done? (*He nods.*) Well, she can't be  
2 sleeping in the same dwelling as our Levi. Where's she going to  
3 go?
- 4 **JANE:** The saloon has vacancies. I just tossed two guys out last  
5 night. (*Smiles.*) Hello. I'm Jane Fisher.
- 6
- 7 *CORA goes to hug JANE, but PEARL pulls her back.*
- 8
- 9 **PEARL:** No future daughter-in-law of mine is stepping foot in your  
10 place of debauchery.
- 11 **JANE:** Clean sheet and three square meals for only one dollar a  
12 night ain't half bad, Mrs. Evans. If you reconsider, I'll be just  
13 inside. (*JANE exits.*)
- 14 **GUS:** They have a back entrance.
- 15 **PEARL:** Do you hear yourself, Gus? No, wait – how do you know  
16 that?
- 17 **GUS:** Wait what? Huh? Supposing they do...
- 18 **PEARL:** I do not trust those men in there. And I will not have her  
19 name tarnished. Not if it goes along with my son, mind ya.
- 20 **WINNIE:** I go in there all the time. It ain't a problem.
- 21 **PEARL:** You're a different breed, Winifred.
- 22 **WINNIE:** It's Winnie, (*Then, to CORA.*) and that's probably true. I'm  
23 Winnie Dunn. The Sheriff is my brother, and I oversee the bank.  
24 It was originally owned by our uncle, but he passed into heaven  
25 thanks to a rattler in the outhouse, and now I run it.
- 26
- 27 *CORA hugs her.*
- 28
- 29 **PEARL:** Yes, our money is real safe on the gambling tables. Stop  
30 hugging her, dear. She's an excessive gambler, which is  
31 downright sinful, and therefore we do not talk to her outside the  
32 bank.
- 33 **WINNIE:** And your future mother-in-law is a crabby old busybody  
34 who is judgmental and ugly. Good day. (*WINNIE exits to saloon*  
35 *before PEARL can have the last word.*)
- 36 **GUS:** So back to the problem at hand – where's she gonna sleep  
37 then?
- 38 **PEARL:** How do you feel about tent camping?

- 1 **COLT:** You won't let your future daughter-in-law sleep in the  
 2 saloon's hotel room, but you'll allow her to sleep in a tent in this  
 3 wild town?
- 4 **GUS:** The man has a point.
- 5 **PEARL:** It's your fault, Sheriff! You just had to build that saloon. It's  
 6 just inviting all sorts of people with bad intentions to come here.
- 7 **COLT:** No, that would be the gold.
- 8 **OBADIAH:** (*Peeks out.*) That be *my* gold. Make sure she knows  
 9 that. Stick to teaching the ABCs, lady.
- 10 **COLT:** You can rest easy, Obadiah. She's not here to pan.
- 11 **OBADIAH:** Good. Because gold is –
- 12 **PEARL:** The root of all evil. That's what the Good Book says.
- 13 **OBADIAH:** *You're* the root of all evil.
- 14 **PEARL:** Sheriff, I believe Obadiah is intoxicated and needs to be  
 15 locked up for that reason you lock up drunk people.
- 16 **OBADIAH:** I haven't had one drink. (*Real tipsy, falls back toward*  
 17 *saloon.*) Well, not in the last ten minutes, anyway. (*He exits.*)
- 18 **COLT:** Look, I could put Cora up in the jail.
- 19 **PEARL:** (*Sarcastic.*) Oh yes, that's so much better.
- 20 **COLT:** Clean sheets. Safer than a tent. Comes with a meal, too.
- 21 **PEARL:** Sorry, Sheriff, but I don't think bread and water will cut it.
- 22 **CORA:** How about the schoolhouse? Does it have room for a cot?
- 23 **GUS:** Well, maybe we did get ourselves a smart teacher. Why  
 24 didn't I think of that?
- 25 **PEARL:** Because you're an imbecile.
- 26 **COLT:** Get the girl a cot, Gus. (*GUS exits.*)
- 27 **CORA:** Thank you all for being so kind.
- 28
- 29 *Goes in for a hug, but PEARL makes it awkward by getting in the*  
 30 *way.*
- 31
- 32 I'm looking forward to my new life. When will I meet Levi?
- 33 **PEARL:** He's a bringing a herd over from Arizona. Should be back  
 34 any day now. But we'll keep you company until he arrives.
- 35 **CORA:** If he's not here, why can't I stay with you?
- 36 **PEARL:** Perception, dear. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to  
 37 close up the store. I'll be right with you. (*PEARL exits.*)
- 38 **COLT:** I don't believe we have officially met. I'm Sheriff Colt Dunn.

1 **CORA:** The law!

2

3 *Hugs him as PEARL enters with disapproving face. Lights out.*

4

5

6

## ACT ONE, SCENE 2

7

8 **AT START:** *Scene change to saloon, or they may act in the*  
9 *audience at the Saloon Table. COLT, GUS, and ELIJAH sit at the*  
10 *table with cards. JANE brings them sarsaparillas. COLT tosses*  
11 *poker chips to the center pot.*

12

13 **COLT:** Raise or fold, Elijah.

14 **ELIJAH:** Did I tell you all about the tough cowboy that sprinkled  
15 gunpowder on his oatmeal every morning and lived to be a  
16 hundred and three?

17 **JANE:** Really? A hundred and three?

18 **ELIJAH:** He was told gunpowder would make him live a long life,  
19 and it did. He was survived by eight children, thirty-two  
20 grandchildren, and fifty-five great-grandchildren...

21 **JANE:** Wow! You don't say.

22 **COLT:** And one very large hole in the ground where the  
23 crematorium used to be.

24 **ELIJAH:** You've heard it before.

25 **COLT:** (*Groans.*) Yes.

26 **GUS:** Quit stalling and raise or fold, Elijah. I have to get back next  
27 door before my old lady realizes I'm gone.

28 **WINNIE:** If your old lady knew you were in here, I'd have to loan  
29 her a shovel.

30 **GUS:** And you won't tell, will you? (*Taps gun on table.*)

31 **WINNIE:** My lips are sealed, Gus. Raise or fold, Elijah.

32 **ELIJAH:** I think the Sheriff is cheating. Do I need to show you my  
33 gun?

34 **WINNIE:** You'd have to win it back first.

35 **COLT:** I'm not cheating. You're just lousy at cards.

36

37 *ELIJAH jumps up.*

38

- 1 **ELIJAH:** Those are fighting words. Law or no law, you can't talk to  
2 me thataway.
- 3 **GUS:** You're lousy at fighting as well. Sit down, Elijah.
- 4 **JANE:** Finish your game, or get out. There will be no roughhousing  
5 in my saloon.
- 6 **ELIJAH:** Why should I listen to you? You're just a woman, and no  
7 respectable woman should be working in here anyways.
- 8 **WINNIE:** Hey!
- 9 **JANE:** This business was my husband's, God rest his soul. And I  
10 will run it to the best of my ability.
- 11 **ELIJAH:** Well, you're failing miserably. (*Makes a face.*) This beer  
12 tastes funny.
- 13 **JANE:** That's because it's sarsaparilla.
- 14 **ELIJAH:** Sheriff, arrest her! That's surely a crime.
- 15 **GUS:** Raise or fold, Elijah.
- 16 **ELIJAH:** You're all in cahoots! All of you!
- 17 **COLT:** Raise or fold, Elijah, or I might arrest you for trying to weasel  
18 out of a card game.
- 19 **ELIJAH:** (*Looks at WINNIE.*) Can he do that?
- 20 **WINNIE:** He's the law. I suppose he can. Raise or fold.
- 21 **ELIJAH:** (*Slowly and emphatically.*) Sheriff, I don't like you. So help  
22 me, if I get my piece back –
- 23 **COLT:** Is that a threat, Elijah? Are you threatening the law?
- 24 **GUS:** Again...
- 25 **ELIJAH:** I'm Elijah Jack. The toughest outlaw in the east.
- 26 **WINNIE:** Good thing we're in the West.
- 27 **ELIJAH:** I do not have to take these insults.
- 28 **GUS:** (*Sighs.*) You do this every game, Elijah. Just raise or fold.
- 29 **JANE:** Or get out.
- 30 **COLT:** Raise or fold, Elijah.
- 31 **WINNIE:** Raise or fold, Elijah.
- 32 **OBADIAH:** (*Lying-down drunk, he suddenly sits up.*) Raise or fold,  
33 Elijah – then get out... of California.
- 34
- 35 *OBADIAH falls over. Get some people in the audience to*  
36 *participate. They all begin to yell at him at once.*  
37
- 38 **ELIJAH:** Fine. (*He tosses a ring in the pot.*) Call.

1

2 *They flip over their cards. WINNIE looks at ELIJAH's cards.*

3

4 **GUS:** Three threes for me, and for Outlaw Jack, a potpourri of  
5 numbers that mean nothing.6 **COLT:** And I have a small straight. *(He reaches for the pot.)* Nice  
7 ring.8 **ELIJAH:** I despise you. *(Pause.)* So... five-card draw?

9

10 *OBADIAH stumbles out and comes back in with his pistol out.*

11

12 **GUS:** I'm out.13 **WINNIE:** I'm out.14 **ELIJAH:** Obadiah? What are you doing?15 **OBADIAH:** Someone done stole my horse. I'm gonna drink one  
16 more drink and then I better see my horse back or I'm gonna  
17 hafta do what I did in Tombstone.

18

19 *He holds up a finger to JANE. She pours him a drink. He kicks it*  
20 *back.*

21

22 **ELIJAH:** I'll be right back.23 **COLT:** Don't do anything you'll regret, Obadiah. I know you haven't  
24 had a fair shake here in town, but I'll have to lock you up.

25

26 *ELIJAH exits. JANE whispers to COLT.*

27

28 **WINNIE:** I hope it's there. I'd hate to see what he did in Tombstone.29 **COLT:** You and me both.

30

31 *OBADIAH exits.*

32

33 **JANE:** Should we go out there, too?34 **COLT:** Maybe we should. I might have to restrain him from doing  
35 something stupid.36 **JANE:** Yeah, I think...

37

38 *OBADIAH walks back in.*

1

2 **OBADIAH:** My horse is back. Tied right where I left him. Good  
3 thing, too.

4

5 *ELIJAH enters out of breath.*

6

7 **ELIJAH:** Yes, good thing. (*Looks relieved.*) So, um, what did you  
8 do in Tombstone when the other guy stole your horse?

9 **OBADIAH:** I had to walk home.

10

11 *CAST nods. Lights out.*

12

13

14

### ACT ONE, SCENE 3

15

16 **AT START:** *ELIJAH enters with a bandana on his face and speaks*  
17 *to the audience while holding a gun.*

18

19 **ELIJAH:** This is a stick-up. Nobody move. (*Removes hat and holds*  
20 *it out.*) Money and jewelry in the hat. (*He can improv with the*  
21 *audience a bit.*)

22

23 *CORA enters.*

24

25 **CORA:** Elijah, is that you?

26 **ELIJAH:** Shoo! I'm busy.

27 **CORA:** I'm sorry; I can't understand you with that thing on your  
28 mouth.

29 **ELIJAH:** I said, not now. I'm trying to... I'm ... can't you see I'm  
30 busy?

31 **CORA:** What?

32 **ELIJAH:** (*Exasperated, he pulls the bandana down.*) I said I'm  
33 busy! (*Realizes everyone can see his face.*) Great! (*He storms*  
34 *out.*)

35 **CORA:** Well, that was just silly. He obviously needs a hug.

36

37 *COLT exits saloon door and leans against the general store.*

38

- 1 **COLT:** (*Tips hat.*) Miss.
- 2 **CORA:** Why hello, Sheriff. (*Goes to hug him, but stops herself.*)
- 3 Might pretty day, wouldn't you say?
- 4 **COLT:** Yes, it is. As are you.
- 5 **CORA:** Why, thank you kindly, sir.
- 6 **COLT:** Are the Evanses treating you OK? Because if they aren't –
- 7 **CORA:** They're fine. They don't think much of you, though. Why do
- 8 you suppose that is?
- 9 **COLT:** Because I bought the town and built a saloon. Though pretty
- 10 much everyone here has some issue or another with me. That's
- 11 a minor one.
- 12 **CORA:** The people who work the mines. I remember.
- 13 **COLT:** No. Minor one. (*She's confused.*) You know, not a big one.
- 14 **CORA:** Are we still talking prospectors or children now? There's
- 15 too many minors in this town to follow.
- 16 **COLT:** Never mind. The point is, no one likes me.
- 17 **CORA:** Really? I like you.
- 18 **COLT:** Thank you kindly.
- 19 **CORA:** So why don't folks like you?
- 20 **COLT:** A lot of people around here have their ideas about what the
- 21 West should be. They come off the stagecoach with a dream in
- 22 their heads. When it looks different, they blame me. It's not an
- 23 easy place to manage. Most days I'm lucky not to have a bullet
- 24 in the back.
- 25 **CORA:** Well, that doesn't seem too friendly, does it?
- 26 **COLT:** It's the West, ma'am. Friendly doesn't exist here. There are
- 27 lots of "accidents" all the time.
- 28
- 29 *WINNIE and JANE enter.*
- 30
- 31 **WINNIE:** Yeah, like the time that snake bit you.
- 32 **COLT:** That weren't no accident.
- 33 **WINNIE:** How'd you know?
- 34 **COLT:** That snake did that on purpose.
- 35
- 36 *WINNIE visibly sighs for audience to see. Then to JANE enters.*
- 37

1 **COLT:** *(Continued. To JANE.)* Jane, did you get your land  
2 purchased?

3 **JANE:** Yeah, it's great. I get up at five in the morning and ride my  
4 horse all day, and I don't reach the end of my land before dark.

5 **CORA:** I had a horse like that once. My dad had to put her down.

6

7 *They stare at her a moment, then JANE exits.*

8

9 **COLT:** Winnie, I hear you're leaving for a poker game in Calico. Be  
10 careful. I know you can handle yourself, but you're still a woman.

11 **WINNIE:** I'll ignore that comment. And yeah, I'll be riding back on  
12 Friday.

13 **COLT:** See you in a few days then?

14 **CORA:** A few days would be Monday.

15 **COLT:** I reckon that's true.

16 **WINNIE:** Yes, I'll be back by Monday. Tuesday at the latest.

17 **CORA:** But you said you'd be riding back on Friday.

18 **WINNIE:** Yes.

19 **CORA:** I don't understand.

20

21 *WINNIE and CORA exchange confused looks.*

22

23 **COLT:** What don't you understand?

24 **CORA:** If you're riding back on Friday, how can you be back  
25 tomorrow? *(She moves to audience.)* Anybody else understand?

26

27 *Wait for audience. If anyone has the answer, let him or her answer.*  
28 *If not, COLT will.*

29

30 **COLT:** The horse's name is Friday.

31 **CORA:** Oh. Funny name for a horse.

32 **COLT:** I suppose so. He was born on a Wednesday.

33 **WINNIE:** Before I go, I need a favor.

34 **COLT:** What's that?

35 **WINNIE:** I need you to watch over the bank while I'm away.

36 **COLT:** No problem.

37 **WINNIE:** I trust only you, but if anything should happen while I'm  
38 gone, I will never forgive you.

- 1 **COLT:** Though I'm your baby brother, I'm still the Sheriff. I've got  
2 you covered.
- 3 **WINNIE:** Yeah, I've heard that before. *(She exits.)*
- 4 **CORA:** She seems to be OK with you.
- 5 **COLT:** Not really. Been fighting our whole lives. Never really got  
6 along. She didn't want to come out here, but when our folks died,  
7 I made her.
- 8 **CORA:** Isn't she older than you?
- 9 **COLT:** OK, I kind of tricked her into coming out here. But it was for  
10 a good reason. I knew we could build a better life out here. She  
11 didn't have a husband, and our uncle was already here. I panned  
12 for gold, scored, and bought the town. She thought I should have  
13 done more for her – set her up real nice. But our uncle was a  
14 horrible, mean man. He's the one who owned the bank. He died,  
15 so she inherited it, which was kind of good news, but she's  
16 miserable. Her gambling is causing all sorts of debt. I'm always  
17 lecturing her, and she hates me for being here, and for, well, all  
18 of it.
- 19 **CORA:** And she runs the bank?
- 20 **COLT:** Yeah, that's kind of a problem.
- 21 **CORA:** Why?
- 22 **COLT:** Because of her gambling.
- 23 **CORA:** But the bank is only over there, *(Points.)* and the saloon is  
24 over there. *(Points.)* I don't see a problem. She could easily walk  
25 that far and be gambling in no time.
- 26 **COLT:** Are you sure you want to be teaching our kids?
- 27 **CORA:** I love kids. Should be a lot of fun. *(Pause.)* Though I haven't  
28 seen any kids running around. *(She looks in audience and points*  
29 *out a kid. She can improv if she likes.)* Oh, there's one. I'll see  
30 you on Monday, OK? *(Back to COLT.)* As you were saying...
- 31 **COLT:** Yes, well, my sister doesn't know that I knew – I mean, that  
32 I know that she knew more than I knew about the snakes.
- 33 **CORA:** Huh?
- 34 **COLT:** She planted those snakes in the outhouse. One got my  
35 uncle, God rest his soul.
- 36 **CORA:** She tried to kill you?
- 37 **COLT:** I'm afraid so.
- 38 **CORA:** Why didn't you lock her up?

1 **COLT:** Can't really prove it. Call it a hunch. Plus, she's my big  
2 sister. Why make her life any more miserable than it already is?

3 **CORA:** Aren't you afraid she'll do it again?

4 **COLT:** I know she will. But I also know she always loses. Even in  
5 this. I don't think she'll win.

6 **CORA:** That's kind of a sad thought. She might need a hug.

7 **COLT:** Yeah... probably not.

8 **CORA:** Ma always says that I give the best hugs, and I should  
9 share them often.

10 **COLT:** I'm sure your ma is proud. (*Pause.*) So, you came out here  
11 to marry a man you've never met?

12 **CORA:** I'm the first generation born in America. They want me  
13 hitched proper.

14 **COLT:** Where are your parents from?

15 **CORA:** Scotland.

16 **COLT:** You don't sound Scottish.

17 **CORA:** I don't?

18 **COLT:** How do your mother and father sound?

19 **CORA:** My mom has a really squeaky voice, and my dad's is real  
20 deep.

21 **COLT:** No, I meant... never mind. And your marriages are  
22 arranged?

23 **CORA:** Yes.

24 **COLT:** And you're OK with that?

25 **CORA:** I suppose it's better than having nobody to take care of me.

26 **COLT:** I don't think you're in danger of that.

27

28 *CORA and COLT stare at each other a moment and then begin*  
29 *moving towards each other. Eyes are locked, and there is obvious*  
30 *attraction.*

31

32 **CORA:** You don't?

33 **COLT:** There are plenty of men here who would marry you.

34 **CORA:** There are?

35 **COLT:** I'm sure of it.

36 **CORA:** Anyone in particular?

37 **COLT:** I can think of one.

38

1 *They are almost close enough to kiss when PEARL enters holding*  
2 *any supplies.*

3

4 **PEARL:** Chickens! *(She drops whatever is in her hands.*

5

6 *CORA and COLT move away fast. PEARL glares at COLT.\*

7

8 Cora, let's let the good Sheriff be. He's got a town to run. Your  
9 cot is made up. We have dinner on the table. Come on back,  
10 and we'll get you fed and in bed. *(Looks back at COLT.)* And  
11 Sheriff, stick to keeping the peace.

12 **COLT:** Night. *(He exits toward his office.)*

13 **PEARL:** Watch out for him, Cora. He's not to be trusted. Someday  
14 he'll—

15 **CORA:** Get a bullet in the back?

16 **PEARL:** What's that?

17 **CORA:** Nothing. Lead the way, Mrs. Evans.

18

19 *They exit through the general store door, but CORA looks back to*  
20 *where COLT exited.*

21

22

23

#### ACT ONE, SCENE 4

24

25 **AT START:** *WINNIE enters audience and approaches various*  
26 *people.*

27

28 **WINNIE:** Can I get a loan from anyone? I'm good for it. I can pay  
29 you back as soon as my luck changes. Just a few more games,  
30 and I'll be rich. Not to mention, I own a bank. Anyone? Spare  
31 just a little money? *(She improvises. As soon as someone gives her*  
32 *a dollar, she acts like she doesn't know what kind of paper that*  
33 *is and tosses it back or gives it to another person.)*

34

35 *LEVI enters.*

36

37 **LEVI:** *(Tips hat.)* Lost in another poker game, I see?

38 **WINNIE:** Levi? You on your way home?

1 **LEVI:** Yeah, just dropped off my heard upstream. *(Pause.)* You're  
2 a long way from home. Who's manning the bank? Or is it funding  
3 your operation here?

4 **WINNIE:** The Sheriff is manning the bank. And no – I didn't use  
5 funds from the bank. Well, not very many, anyway. *(Pause.)*  
6 Actually, I could use some now. Don't suppose you –

7 **LEVI:** No, I don't suppose I could.

8 **WINNIE:** You know, I've seen your fiancée. Too bad my brother  
9 has taken a shining to her.

10 **LEVI:** What? You'd better be lying, Winnie, or he's a dead man.

11 **WINNIE:** I figured that, but it be the truth. *(Pause.)* Now if you'll  
12 excuse me, I have a fortune to make in cards.

13 **LEVI:** You don't care much for what happens to your brother, do  
14 you?

15 **WINNIE:** We may be siblings, but the blood does not run thick in  
16 these bones. That man has backstabbed me more than a  
17 butcher to a ham. Besides, if he was gone, I could get out of this  
18 town for good.

19 **LEVI:** We may have an accord, you and I. You need money, and I  
20 need information. I'll pay you for that endeavor if you will provide  
21 me with some knowledge.

22 **WINNIE:** My brother will suffer?

23 **LEVI:** Guaranteed. *(Spits on hand and sticks it out.)*

24 **WINNIE:** *(Shaking LEVI's hand.)* Deal!

25

26 *Lights out.*

27

28

29

## ACT ONE, SCENE 5

30

31 **AT START:** *OBADIAH comes in giggling and dancing. He begins*  
32 *talking to some gold nuggets in a jar. OBADIAH is a bit out of touch*  
33 *with reality.*

1 **OBADIAH:** I knew you wouldn't let me down. My precious,  
2 precious... (*May consider doing a Lord of the Rings sort of voice*  
3 *for extra laughs.*) gold. Now if I can just get the Sheriff outta the  
4 way, so you'll be all mine. This is *my* town. My gold. My mine. All  
5 of it! (*To audience.*) You can't have it.

6  
7 *SFX: Sound of stagecoach.*

8  
9 **OBADIAH:** (*Continued. He starts freaking out, running from one*  
10 *side of the stage to the other.*) No! No more! Thieves. All of them!  
11 (*Pulls out some dynamite.*) I need to blow them all back to  
12 kingdom come. Starting with the Sheriff. Then it'll all be mine.  
13 (*As if he is talking to angels and demons on shoulders.*) I know  
14 it isn't nice. But it's mine. I was here first, and then Sheriff Colt  
15 had to come and take over. (*As if someone is talking in him.*)  
16 What do you mean I can't blow them up? Why do you always  
17 have to come ruin everything? What else can I do? (*Looks at*  
18 *gold.*) What do you think? Surely you have a plan, my valuable  
19 golden nugget. So beautiful. You see the purpose of a big blast  
20 from our friend dynamite, right? A big explosion. Boom! And all  
21 our problems are solved! Or a pickaxe. Or a gun! No, I couldn't  
22 use a gun. That's just too cruel. (*Pause.*) Why am I listening to  
23 you? I'm not afraid of you, devil. You can't scare me. Get off my  
24 shoulder. (*Flicks at shoulder. Pause.*) I'm not afraid of you,  
25 because I was married to your sister for years. (*Pause.*) Rest her  
26 soul. (*Looks at other shoulder.*) I know I can't hurt people. But  
27 it's mine. They need to understand. The mine... is mine!

28  
29 *JANE enters.*

30  
31 **JANE:** Obadiah.

32 **OBADIAH:** Jane.

33 **JANE:** You OK?

34 **OBADIAH:** That dumb stagecoach just keeps a-comin'. Every day.  
35 It just keeps a-comin'.

36 **JANE:** You look like you could use a bath and a good meal.

37 **OBADIAH:** Eh – who needs 'em? Wait... does the meal have  
38 steak? Because I like me a good heifer on a plate.

- 1 **JANE:** That might be arranged.
- 2 **OBADIAH:** Why are you always nice to me?
- 3 **JANE:** Because I don't think you're all bad.
- 4 **OBADIAH:** I need to try harder.
- 5 **JANE:** You're probably a real marshmallow, just with a rough  
6 exterior.
- 7 **OBADIAH:** (*Pulls out gun.*) Who you calling a marshmallow?
- 8 **JANE:** It's an expression, Obadiah. Come on, put it away. No  
9 plated heifer if you don't.
- 10 **OBADIAH:** Well, that changes things.
- 11 **JANE:** Where are you originally from?
- 12 **OBADIAH:** Here. I was here first.
- 13 **JANE:** I know that's what you say, but truly, you had to come from  
14 somewhere.
- 15 **OBADIAH:** (*Shakes head.*) No, my folks done dropped me out of  
16 the wagon train and didn't even notice. They forgot all about me.  
17 I grew up in the mountains, raised by the Apache.
- 18 **JANE:** Wow, so this land really *is* yours.
- 19 **OBADIAH:** What do you think I've been saying? Bunch of thieves!
- 20 **JANE:** Well, I can't give you any land, but I can give you the steak  
21 I promised. Come on, let's get you fed, clean, and in bed.  
22
- 23 *JANE and OBADIAH exit to saloon. ELIJAH enters and pounds on*  
24 *the general store's door.*  
25
- 26 **ELIJAH:** Gus! Open up, Gus! I have a bone to pick with you.
- 27 **GUS:** What's wrong with you?
- 28 **ELIJAH:** That horse you sold me is half-blind. He keeps running  
29 into things.
- 30 **GUS:** So?  
31
- 32 *PEARL enters.*  
33
- 34 **PEARL:** What's all the ruckus?
- 35 **ELIJAH:** Your husband sold me a blind horse. He can't do that.  
36 That's dishonest!
- 37 **PEARL:** No, he done told you the truth.
- 38 **GUS:** Like I said, it was a fine horse, it just didn't look too good.

- 1 **ELIJAH:** You... that's... you will burn, old man.
- 2 **PEARL:** Have a good day.
- 3 **ELIJAH:** You better watch your back, Gus.
- 4 **GUS:** Don't be threatening me, boy. (*Pulls shotgun from store.*) I
- 5 have no problem shooting a no-good cowboy like yourself. I'll
- 6 give my other job some business.
- 7 **ELIJAH:** Better sleep with both eyes open.
- 8
- 9 *ELIJAH exits. OBADIAH enters with a plate of food. ELIJAH grabs*
- 10 *something off his plate, and OBADIAH looks like he's about to go*
- 11 *nuts.*
- 12
- 13 **OBADIAH:** All a bunch of thieves! Town of thieves! (*OBADIAH runs*
- 14 *away, frantic.*)
- 15
- 16 *JANE runs out to check on him.*
- 17
- 18 **JANE:** Obadiah, you OK?
- 19 **OBADIAH:** Mine! (*He exits.*)
- 20
- 21 *JANE laughs and shakes head.*
- 22
- 23 **PEARL:** Crazy old coot.
- 24 **JANE:** He's not all that bad. Good morning, Pearl.
- 25 **PEARL:** (*Not friendly.*) Jane.
- 26 **JANE:** That's a lovely scarf you have on.
- 27 **PEARL:** It won't work.
- 28 **JANE:** What won't?
- 29 **PEARL:** You trying to be my friend.
- 30 **JANE:** And why is that?
- 31 **PEARL:** We are bred from two different kinds of people.
- 32 **JANE:** No, I would say we just married differently.
- 33 **PEARL:** Well... yes. Don't be filling my son and husband with your
- 34 nonsense. Gus don't know that I know, but I know, you know?
- 35 **JANE:** What do you know?
- 36 **PEARL:** You know what I know, and you know what?
- 37 **JANE:** What?
- 38 **PEARL:** That's what I thought. (*PEARL exits.*)

1 **JANE:** (*Sighs.*) I know this town is crazy. That's what I know.

2

3 *OBADIAH crosses stage, clearly crazy, and exits. JANE shakes*  
4 *head. LEVI enters.*

5

6 **LEVI:** Hey, beautiful.

7 **JANE:** Levi! You're back. (*She runs to hug him, but he steps back*  
8 *to see if anyone is watching.*) Levi?

9 **LEVI:** You know I can't be seen with you.

10 **JANE:** But – I thought –

11 **LEVI:** Mom arranged something else.

12 **JANE:** Cora. The schoolteacher. Nice girl.

13 **LEVI:** She's here?

14 **JANE:** Came in on the coach yesterday.

15 **LEVI:** I see.

16 **JANE:** You know I love you.

17 **LEVI:** Doesn't matter. We can't be together.

18 **JANE:** So you'll settle for a catalogue wife instead of marrying the  
19 woman you love?

20 **LEVI:** Better that way.

21 **JANE:** For who?

22 **LEVI:** For all involved.

23

24 *JANE begins to cry. CORA enters.*

25

26 **CORA:** (*Sympathetically.*) Awwww. Need a hug?

27

28 *JANE exits, crying.*

29

30 Wow! No one here wants a hug, but everyone really needs one.

31

32 *CORA exits. ELIJAH enters. He and LEVI stare each other down.*  
33 *They circle each other with ominous faces. Then they make sure no*  
34 *one's looking and hug a man's slap hug.*

35

36 **ELIJAH:** When did you get back?

37 **LEVI:** Just now.

38 **ELIJAH:** You see your new bride yet?

1 **LEVI:** Was it that pretty thing?

2 **ELIJAH:** Yeah. That was her. If you decide you don't want her, I'll  
3 take her off your hands.

4

5 *COLT and CORA enter and walk by and exit.*

6

7 Seems to me that I may not be the only one.

8 **LEVI:** The good Sheriff deserves to be shot in the back. Always  
9 putting his nose where it don't belong.

10 **ELIJAH:** You know his sister is in Calico for a poker game.

11 **LEVI:** Yes, she and I had quite an interesting talk.

12 **ELIJAH:** What're you thinking?

13 **LEVI:** I don't know yet, but I'll think of something.

14 **ELIJAH:** You know what I'm thinking?

15 **LEVI:** You know how to do that?

16 **ELIJAH:** I'm thinking there is cold hard cash in that bank for the  
17 taking, know what I'm saying?

18 **LEVI:** And if we stole it, Winnie would shoot the Sheriff for us.  
19 *(Pause.)* You're a lot smarter than people give you credit for.

20 **ELIJAH:** It's better if people think I'm stupid.

21 **LEVI:** When should we rob it?

22 **ELIJAH:** I've been watching the bank all weekend. I think I know  
23 the schedule. I say we hit it when it opens in an hour. *(ELIJAH*  
24 *tips his hat and exits.)*

25 **LEVI:** We're finally going to show Sheriff Colt Dunn that he don't  
26 run this town no more.

27 **ELIJAH:** Yeah. We do.

28

29 *Lights out.*

30

31

32

## ACT ONE, SCENE 6

33

34 **AT START:** *LEVI and ELIJAH are in the audience at the Bank*  
35 *Table. They have handkerchiefs over their mouths.*

36

37 **LEVI:** All right, nobody move!

- 1 **ELIJAH:** We're here to rob the bank. If you cooperate, no one will  
2 get hurt.
- 3 **LEVI:** Hand me those money bags right there.  
4
- 5 *GUS enters and sees them, and wants to save the day.*  
6
- 7 **GUS:** *(Calling Off-stage.)* Pearl, get my gun! Someone is robbing  
8 the bank!  
9
- 10 *CAST runs on.*  
11
- 12 **PEARL:** Sheriff, do something! They're stealing our gold.
- 13 **GUS:** *(Deflated.)* Gee, thanks...
- 14 **OBADIAH:** You mean *my* gold! They're stealing my gold. String  
15 them up, Sheriff! Lynching is too good for them! But it will suffice.
- 16 **COLT:** Stop!  
17
- 18 *LEVI and ELIJAH run out. COLT chases them.*  
19
- 20 **CORA:** You go get them, Sheriff! *(Swoons.)* My hero!
- 21 **PEARL:** What? No. Not your hero. Your hero is my son, Levi.  
22 Remember him?
- 23 **CORA:** Oh, right. When is he getting here?
- 24 **PEARL:** Soon.
- 25 **CORA:** I have to be honest, Mrs. Evans, I don't know if I can do  
26 this. I miss home.
- 27 **PEARL:** This is a good place.
- 28 **GUS:** Yeah, all we need here is some more good people and a little  
29 more water.
- 30 **CORA:** Well, if you think about it, that's all hell needs too.
- 31 **PEARL:** Young lady!
- 32 **CORA:** Sorry. I just really miss home.
- 33 **PEARL:** Well, we don't talk like that here. But don't you worry; my  
34 Levi will be home any day. We'll all be able to eat dinner  
35 together, and you two will get to know each other real soon.
- 36 **CORA:** *(Thinking.)* This is kind of a silly question, but when  
37 cowboys are out there in the wild, how do they eat? Where do  
38 they cook?

- 1  
2 *GUS enters.*  
3  
4 **GUS:** On the range, of course. (*Slaps knee.*) And do you know what  
5 advice the cows give them when they get mad?  
6 **CORA:** What?  
7 **GUS:** Turn the udder cheek and move on. (*Laughs, slapping knee.*)  
8 Didn't know there was humor in the West, but it's grand.  
9 **PEARL:** Oh, brother. Don't get him going.  
10 **GUS:** Why did the bowlegged cowboy get fired?  
11 **CORA:** Why?  
12 **GUS:** Because he couldn't keep his calves together.  
13  
14 *CORA laughs.*  
15  
16 **PEARL:** Don't encourage him. He got a cowboy joke book in the  
17 mail from Sears and Roebuck the other day. He's been trying to  
18 find ways to share those jokes any way he can.  
19 **GUS:** Why did the...  
20  
21 *GUS starts really laughing. CORA giggles, and PEARL glares at*  
22 *her.*  
23  
24 **PEARL:** OK, enough foolishness.  
25 **GUS:** Just trying to lighten the mood. I mean, why did the cowboy  
26 get lots of laughs, anyway?  
27 **CORA:** (*Whispers.*) Why?  
28 **GUS:** Because he was horsing around.  
29 **PEARL:** We have enough problems. The bank was just robbed.  
30 Not a time to be telling jokes.  
31  
32 *WINNIE enters.*  
33  
34 **GUS:** Oh, that's right. Holy chickens!  
35 **PEARL:** Watch your language.  
36 **GUS:** Sorry.  
37 **WINNIE:** Did you say the bank was robbed?  
38 **PEARL:** Yes. This morning.

1 **WINNIE:** I'm going to kill him.

2 **PEARL:** Oh, chickens.

3 **GUS:** Who has a "fowl" mouth now?

4

5 *GUS laughs at his own joke and exits. PEARL exits. COLT enters.*

6 *CORA crosses to him.*

7

8 **CORA:** Did you catch them?

9 **COLT:** No! And my sister is going to kill me!

10

11 *WINNIE enters with gun.*

12

13 **WINNIE:** And why is that, do you think?

14

15 *Lights out.*

16

17

18

## ACT ONE, SCENE 7

19

20 **AT START:** *ELIJAH and LEVI start over by Campfire Table.*

21

22 **ELIJAH:** We did it! We pulled it off. Winnie is likely to put a slug in  
23 his back by nightfall.

24 **LEVI:** We'll see.

25 **ELIJAH:** Look – we're rich and rid of our troubles. Why don't you  
26 seem more excited?

27 **LEVI:** Don't worry about it. Bury the cash. I'm going into town. (*LEVI*  
28 *exits.*)

29 **ELIJAH:** Hey, will you hold this? (*Gives money to audience*  
30 *member.*) I trust you to watch over this here gold. Don't make  
31 me shoot you, now. (*Improvs with audience member before*  
32 *exiting.*)

33

34 *CORA and COLT enter together.*

35

36 **CORA:** So, what's going to happen with your sister?

37 **COLT:** (*Dramatic.*) We'll draw at noon... high noon... and only one  
38 of us will be left standing.

- 1 **CORA:** But – she’s a girl. You can’t shoot a girl.  
2 **COLT:** Agreed. But this isn’t my call.  
3 **CORA:** And that doesn’t bother you?  
4 **COLT:** My sister always loses. I told you that.  
5 **CORA:** But you could kill her.  
6 **COLT:** I will only wound her to teach her a lesson.  
7  
8 *CORA and COLT don’t see LEVI enter.*  
9  
10 **CORA:** What if you’re wrong and she kills you? I couldn’t bear to  
11 have you gone. I – I – I think I like you a whole lot.  
12 **COLT:** I feel the same.  
13 **LEVI:** Is that so?  
14 **COLT:** Levi. When did you get back in town?  
15 **LEVI:** This morning. I see you took no time moving in on my  
16 property.  
17 **CORA:** Levi? The man I’m to marry?  
18 **LEVI:** Though it looks like you’re getting really chummy with the  
19 Sheriff. We didn’t eat all that bacon just so you could marry *him!*  
20 **COLT:** Look, things happen. You were gone a long time, and –  
21 **LEVI:** Yeah, things happen – like bullets in the back.  
22 **COLT:** I know you aren’t threatening the law.  
23 **LEVI:** Of course not. Just making an observation.  
24  
25 *PEARL and GUS enter.*  
26  
27 **PEARL:** Levi! You’re home! (*She hugs him..*)  
28 **CORA:** Why does she get to hug?  
29 **PEARL:** Have you met your future wife, Cora?  
30 **LEVI:** Not officially.  
31 **PEARL:** Levi, Cora. Cora, my Levi.  
32 **LEVI:** Ma’am. (*He tips his hat, but you can tell he is just going*  
33 *through the motions.*)  
34  
35 *CORA puts hands out for hug, but then steps back, looking at*  
36 *PEARL, who is doing a nod, shake action, indicating that yes, she*  
37 *can hug him, and no, don’t step away, but CORA is confused.*  
38

1 **CORA:** Nice to meet you finally.

2

3 *PEARL wraps her arms around LEVI and PEARL and pulls them*  
4 *toward the general store.*

5

6 **PEARL:** There are so many plans to be made. Come, come.

7

8 *PEARL escorts CORA and LEVI in. PEARL and CORA exit.*

9

10 **LEVI:** Watch your back, Sheriff.

11 **GUS:** Now Levi, do what the Good Book says and be kind.

12

13 *LEVI exits. GUS turns to COLT.*

14

15 But it *is* good advice, Sheriff. You're making lots of enemies.

16 (*GUS pulls out a tape measure and steps to COLT.*) Should I

17 measure you for a pine box? I like to be prepared...

18 **COLT:** (*Batting him away.*) Not funny, old man.

19 **GUS:** Just trying to provide good customer service. (*GUS exits.*)

20

21 *JANE and OBADIAH enter.*

22

23 **JANE:** Do you suppose there is anyone in this town who likes you,

24 Sheriff?

25 **OBADIAH:** Nope. (*OBADIAH falls down drunk.*)

26

27 *CORA starts to exit, but stops to listen.*

28

29 **COLT:** Not that I can see. I suppose you and I have no beef.

30 **JANE:** We will if you can't get that Cora to marry you instead of

31 Levi.

32 **COLT:** Marry me? Why do you say that?

33 **JANE:** You know I love Levi. I know you've seen it.

34 **COLT:** I suppose I had my suspicions.

- 1 **JANE:** Well, he loves me too. He's just too stubborn and afraid of  
2 his mama. (*To herself.*) I don't know why I want a big mama's  
3 boy anyways, but I do. (*Pause.*) If there was no other girl, maybe  
4 he'd get the courage to be mine. It's not like the pickings are rich  
5 out here. Same goes for you. The wagon usually brings men.
- 6 **COLT:** It shouldn't be too hard to help you. I think I genuinely care  
7 for Ms. Cora.
- 8 **JANE:** I'll pay you twenty dollars.
- 9 **COLT:** (*Takes money.*) Don't ya worry; I'll keep my side of things.  
10 I needs a wife.  
11
- 12 *CORA starts to exit.*
- 13
- 14 **JANE:** See Obadiah home, won't you? He's had a bit too much.  
15 (*JANE exits.*)
- 16 **OBADIAH:** I can see myself home. I don't need no help. All I need  
17 is for everyone to leave my city alone. (*Sees CORA.*) How about  
18 her? She's a pretty young lady. She can walk me home.  
19
- 20 *CORA ducks out before COLT can see her.*
- 21
- 22 **COLT:** Seeing things again, old man? Come on, Obadiah.  
23
- 24 *COLT lifts OBADIAH up, but OBADIAH bats at him.*  
25
- 26 I know you're frustrated with me, but fair's fair here in the West.
- 27 **OBADIAH:** (*Slurs.*) A claim is a claim, law man. And I claims it.  
28 Was here way before you were old enough to hold a fork to your  
29 spoon. Been raised here my whole life.
- 30 **COLT:** Money speaks louder than words, I'm afraid.
- 31 **OBADIAH:** I despise you.
- 32 **COLT:** Yes, we've established that. Come on; let me get you home.  
33
- 34 *Lights out.*



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