Dirty Deeds
At The Depot

Also Known As
Professor Mack’s Miracle Elixir of Life

By
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A Full Length Melodrama
Including Music & Staging Resources

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Welcome to the small western town of San Juan Capistrano. A town where the Santa Fe Railroad has built one mighty beautiful train depot … complete with mission bell and its own fireplace.

The prologue to the play begins with the Depot’s Station Master sitting on a bench in front of a darkened train depot set. He is old and alone and is reminiscing about the glory days of the San Juan Capistrano train depot back in 1895. As he recalls the story we hear sounds building in the darkened depot behind him … a traveler almost trips over a suitcase as it falls over … another traveler enters the depot rushing and fussing … a train whistle is heard … steam pours in from off stage as the train arrives … the now young Station Master enters the ticket office announcing the arrival of the Santa Fe from Chicago - Springfield - St. Louis - Wichita and Albuquerque on track one. One of the locals says “but we only have one track” and so begins the Melodrama.

Enters gentle young Lacie Camisole awaiting the arrival of her future husband. Not one of her selection, mind you, but one of her father’s choosing for her so he can save the Camisole family ranch. Her betrothed is arriving on the Chicago train to collect her. Lacie has resigned herself to her fate until she finds that the new station master (Justin Tyme) is her not-forgotten childhood sweetheart.
Will this surprising revelation change the course of her future? Is the arrival of Professor Mack’s traveling Medicine Show merely a coincidence or does the “Professor” have a nefarious scheme up his sleeve? What brings the Gypsy Claire Voyant to town? I know “the train” … but what is the secret she is keeping? Will the Local School Marm or her half-brother Duncan Disorderly ruin Lacie's chances for happiness? What is Wyatt Earp doing in town and why can’t you find a Pinkerton agent when you really need one?

Mayhem, mystery, dreams fulfilled, plans dashed to the rocks. Schemers, Scalawags and Scoundrels … all just a small part of the Dirty Deeds going on at the Depot in San Juan Capistrano.

For Directors and Playhouse Managers

Welcome to the ultimate audience participation full length melodrama. Extra roles are included so that adventurous audience members can join in the fun on stage for their own 15 seconds of fame or you can cast these bit part roles for those who can’t come to all the rehearsals. Even the Piano Player and Sound Effects Wizard get to join in the action.

Music chosen for this Melodrama is modified music from Public Domain (Published before 1923). Sheet music and CD sample tracks for rehearsals as well as graphics for the Sign Holder’s Audience Cue Cards are available for playhouses on the website www.heroandvillain.com. Use the password ELIXIR to download the files at no charge to registered playhouses or theatres.
THE MAIN PLAYERS:

**The Heroine** – Lacie Camisole – Innocent and somewhat naive Sweetheart of San Juan Capistrano and the lone heiress to the Camisole Ranch... betrothed to marry Dusty Rhodes in an arranged marriage between their rancher fathers. Lacie has never met Dusty who is scheduled to arrive on the noon train. Sweet as the day is long she discovers her childhood love (Justin Tyme) is back in San Juan Capistrano as the new Station Master ... an old flame is rekindled but is it too late?

**The School Marm** - Helen Highwater – The Heroine’s best friend that is as capable with a Winchester as with readin', ritin' and 'rithmetic. Raised with 6 brothers and she could best them all in shootin’, riding and wrangling. She is a strict teacher and always carries a ruler to “swat” the hands of anyone acting inappropriately. Not a woman to be trifled with.

**Dusty Rhodes** - The handsome son of a Texas Buffalo Rancher. A man of few words and fewer vices. Honoring his father’s wishes ... he is taking the train to California to marry the woman selected for him. Honest, but a bit tongue tied at times ... a good sort that easily gets flustered. Even though his family is rich with a capital “R” ... Dusty dresses in the plain range-riding work clothes you’d expect from a rancher’s son.

**The Gypsy** – Claire Voyant – Old friend of the Heroine and traveling Sooth-Sayer from Madam Zorinda's Circus. Arriving in town from her travels back east just in the nick of time as she “sensed” that there would be trouble afoot. Musical, mysterious, and sarcastic with a secret past. Most consider her a charming charlatan or could she be a Villainess in disguise?
The Station Master – Justin Tyme – Former train conductor that “got promoted” to manage the newly built San Juan Capistrano Santa Fe Train Depot finally completed in 1895. Justin has a reputation for never being early but catching the train ... just barely. He is a man with regrets about never traveling to see the world and about leaving his childhood sweetheart. Justin comes from a long line of “train men” ... His father was a conductor like his father before him. Justin’s prize possession is his father’s gold pocket watch. Justin begins this melodrama as our narrator.

The Villain – Professor Thaddeus Mack – A traveling “Snake Oil” salesman with designs for the sleepy little town of San Juan Capistrano. Smooth talking opportunistic promoter, scoundrel and conman ... always with a nefarious plan or song up his sleeve. Could his “Miracle Elixir of Life” traveling medicine show merely be a ruse for a deeper and darker scheme? And where are the Sandwich Islands anyway?

The Villain’s Sidekick – Duncan Disorderly – Helen Highwater’s half-brother ... unfortunately taking a wrong turn at the quaint town of Temperance ... comical and quick with the “one liners”. There is much more to Duncan than may be at first apparent. Front man and shill for Professor Mack ... Duncan originally comes from San Juan Capistrano and finally returns home on the train.

The Judge – Jerry Mander - A Lifetime Bureaucrat with delusions of Higher Office. He helped Orange County to break away from Los Angeles. So popular in San Juan ... his name hasn’t even needed to be put on the ballot for him to be re-elected as Mayor every election. Everyone who is everyone in town is invited to his parties over at Mander Manor. A gruff and stern man that favors a good stiff drink over a good song anytime.
THE HIRED HELP:

In addition to the Main Players there are some very critical roles for the success of this melodrama … or any melodrama for that matter. Without a great piano player … there is no “melo” in melodrama … and where would we be without fun sound effects.

The Piano Player – Natalie Drest – Bringing the melodramatic antics to life … our resident musician tinkles out the tunes and themes that you’d expect from an authentic old west style melodrama. When she is indisposed her student – Trudy Lite may just come over to tinkle the ivories for us. Remember to tip Natalie well as good melodrama music don’t come cheap!

Sound Effects Lackey – Cy Kosis – Natalie’s partner in crime. If it clanks, creeks, crashes or kerplunks … you can be sure that Cy was the wizard behind that melodramatic sound. Occasionally his half-sister - Dora Jarre – sits in for Cy when he gets a paying job. Cy also acts as the town’s Telegraph Operator with the occasional message delivery. A bit eccentric, but he is good folk.

The Cue Card Maven – Paige Turner - For those that don’t come to melodramas often enough … it is nice to have someone to remind the audience of their part in the production. Paige will help us out by popping in from time to time holding up cue card signs such as “Hisss … Booo”, “Aaah” or even “Shameful Plug” when actors give free commercials to our local merchants.
THE LOCALS AND EXTRAS:

Here are a few extra roles or “bit parts” for audience volunteers. You might even auction these roles off for audience members to join in the fun … dress them up quick before hand, give them their lines to read and take an instant photo of them for posterity.

**The Sheriff**  – Hugh Dunnit (AKA Willie Becaught) – A clueless lawman and a fairly inept judge of men, land and horses. A very good natured but swarthy ex-sailor ... also currently acting as the town grocer – “…Buy the fig marmalade … it’s great!”

**The Town Dentist**  – Phil (or Phyllis) McAvity – When not telling a tall tale or pullin’ your leg … Phil (or Phyllis) is probably pullin’ your tooth. A quiet sort … frequently showing up in crowd scenes and maybe joining in on the occasional chorus song or finale.

**Wyatt Earp**  – The fearless frontier lawman of Dodge City, settled briefly in booming San Diego in the 1890s where Wyatt gambled and invested in real estate and saloons. Wyatt is also a good friend of Bat Masterson and Doc Holliday ... and many Pinkerton Agents and made his way to San Juan heading north to Alaska.

**Josie Earp**  – The ex-lawman’s wife. Josie and Wyatt stopped in San Juan as they headed for Alaska to prospect and run a saloon during the height of the Alaska Gold Rush. A fun “Here then gone” extra role just in Act 2 scene 2 in case you were interested.
SONG LIST FOR THE MELODRAMA

Music is from the public domain published prior to 1920.
Songs listed in order of Performance.

1. California and You
A song sung by passengers getting off of the Santa Fe train

2. Friends that are Good and True
A true and loyal friends’ song that Lacie and Helen and Claire sing

3. Professor Mack
The Villain’s Song … a story of the cures & elixirs he brings

4. There’s a Tender Look in Your Eye
A seductive song from the Gypsy Claire to Professor Mack

5. Memories
Lacie sings a song of a lonely heart and years gone by

6. Lacie
A song that Dusty sings to Lacie to get her to love him

7. Dream Days
Justin sings a song of recollections and memories of the past.

8. San Juan
A song about beautiful and wonderful San Juan Capistrano
SET DRESSING NOTES

The sound effects table has a sign on the front saying “Telegraph Office” and the Piano Player has a money jar where people walking by put in money from time to time. The Professor will need a trunk or briefcase with legs for his elixir sales pitch. Traveling medicine shows were still common in the 1890s, but would soon be replaced with local apothecaries and pharmacists due to regulation of patent medicines in America.

The Flag on one wall of the depot near the ticket booth is the Peace Flag (since 1891) with 13 stripes and 44 5-pointed stars in rows of 8-7-7-7-7-8. A picture of the president Grover Cleveland is appropriate. You will need a big red painted “FIRE” bucket for the cannonball style bomb in Act 2 Scene 2.

The Santa Fe Railroad was in the 1890s one of the world's longest railroad systems with over 9,000 miles of track and connections from Chicago and Los Angeles … things had however been tough for Santa Fe since the Wall Street panic of 1893 and it would get consolidated with other train lines due to a bankruptcy in just a few more years.

The Depot stage needs a table and chairs for card playing, an optional fireplace, a rack of newspapers of the late 1890s including at least the Mountain Democrat, the New York Herald, the Los Angeles Daily Globe and the Santa Ana Standard.

The Belford and Company Cannery was across the tracks from the old depot and specialized in fig marmalade and pickled olives under the “San Juan Brand” so if the wind was right … the depot often smelled of sweet cooked fruit.
PROLOGUE

The Place: Just Outside The San Juan Capistrano Depot
The Date: March 4th, 1929
The Time: Early in the Evening

CUE CARD – San Juan Capistrano 1929

(The Depot’s new stationmaster - Justin Tyme - is sitting on a bench in front of a darkened set. Justin is a grey haired bespectacled older man with cane in hand sitting on a bench in front and off to one side of the stage. Only a few flickering hurricane lamps betray the fact that the stage is anything more than an old building. Lights fade up only on the bench and Justin. Natalie is quietly sitting at her piano.)

(SOUND EFFECT – A train whistle is softly wailing in the distance… the sound effects wizard gives this effect from off stage.)

JUSTIN – It wasn’t too long ago when you had to take the stage to get here. Welcome to the small western town of San Juan Capistrano. A town where the Santa Fe Railroad has built one mighty beautiful train depot … not exactly one of the biggest train depots in the west … but back in 1895 it was pretty grand …
JUSTIN – … complete with its own mission bell and a fireplace. The depot even had its own piano. As I recall they went through a heap of trouble to get Natalie just the piano she wanted with a big labor strike going on… and even though the country had been in a depression since the Wall Street Panic of 1893 … the Santa Fe made sure not a shoddy brick was used in building the depot.

I haven’t been back in some time now and I just stopped by to see how she’s held up over the years. (Looking around) Not too much worse for wear. (Pause) If only these walls could talk … oh … the stories they could tell you.

Where to start … well there was a girl. I guess it always starts like that with a girl. And there was a friend - I guess there's always a friend. But that was a long … long time ago.

(SOUND EFFECT – Another train whistle wailing in the distance.)

(INTERLUDE MUSIC BEGINS)

(Lights fade out on the bench as lights begin to fade up on the depot set behind. Dialogue begins and Justin quietly exits behind the stage to make his costume change into the younger stationmaster … be quick Justin you’ve only got 2 minutes to remove your coat, wig and glasses and put on your conductor’s hat for a youthful re-entrance in 1895.)

(Natalie Quietly exits)

LIGHTS FADE OUT
The Place: The San Juan Capistrano Train Depot
The Date: March 4th, 1895 (34 years in the past)
The Time: It is approaching noon

(Paige turner enters from the train platform to hold up her sign then exit until her next entrance)

CUE CARD – San Juan Capistrano 1895

(The Prologue bench is now in darkness as action begins in the train depot lights fading up on the main stage … a traveler almost trips over a suitcase as it falls over. Crates of fresh produce, wines and “provisions” are on the stage … the sounds of swallows are heard with the rustling of people arriving. An old red bucket with the word “fire” stenciled on it is sitting next to the ticket office. A Calendar on the wall says March 4th 1895)

(Traveler enters with bag in hand.)

PHIL (or Phyllis) McCAVITY – So, when will that noon train arrive?
(The Judge and Duncan are sitting at a small table with cups of coffee playing cards. The Judge grabs a piece of fruit from one of the open crates of oranges and fruit nearby.)

THE JUDGE – Snapping at the arriving traveler … Noon I suspect. (to the clueless traveler) (Now turning attention to Duncan who is also seated at the small table obviously playing cards with the Judge) Blasted, jelly-boned belly-wriggling, sniveling, dribbling, unimaginative lot. (Impolitely mocking) “When will the noon train arrive?” (Pause) City Slickers.

DUNCAN – Come on now Judge … Tell me what you really think. (beat) Oh just drink ‘yer coffee and quit ‘yer yammerin’. Are you playing cards or what? (Duncan eats bread and marmalade.)

THE JUDGE – I went through a heap of trouble to get our county to break away from Los Angeles and then they have to go and have to find gold in Alaska. (Holding up a newspaper that says in the headlines GOLD FOUND IN ALASKA TERRITORY) (Snapping) Disloyal grangers heading north. If it weren’t for the Hot Springs … no one would be coming to town!

DUNCAN – Don’t get your dander up … things have been pretty tough around here since the stock market panic of ’83 … I recon’ he’s just trying to better himself … isn’t that why you came to California in the first place? Just stop ‘yer bellyaching.

THE JUDGE – (Mocking) “When will the noon train arrive?” Baaah. What are you eating anyway?
DUNCAN – Fig marmalade from the Belford Cannery across the tracks. I’ll see your dollar and raise you a dollar!

THE JUDGE – When the wind is just right … the whole town smells like fig marmalade. I hate figs.

DUNCAN – Are we going to play cards or aren’t we?

(The men continue to play cards)

(Helen Highwater enters holding the hand of one of her students - a young girl carrying a bundle of books tied with a small belt and maybe a stuffed animal or a rag doll as well.)

HELEN – Don’t doddle … I told your mother that you could tag along. I have one quick errand then it will be time for lessons.

EXTRA (A YOUNG GIRL) – Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was black as soot. And everywhere that lamb did go, his sooty foot he put. (Pause) Can I have some candy?

HELEN – Not until after lessons and you’ll have to ask your mother. Oh … just skedaddle over to the schoolhouse and tell the other students that I will be over directly. Go on now … scoot!

(The Young Girl rushes off)

(Helen Highwater is looking around for her friend Lacie)
HELEN – Sometimes that Lacie can be as slow as molasses in February … There she is now!

(Lacie Camisole enters holding a train schedule, a telegram, and a small bound book of poetry.)

LACIE – (Looking up and around) Oh … my! The new Depot looks just grand! Is that a piano? Oh … My … isn’t this place getting swankier and swankier. Oooh La La.

HELEN – (To Lacie) I’m here like you asked me … so this is the day?

LACIE – Thank you Helen, You are a good friend. Oh, that dress is dreadfully pretty Helen … “tres shiek” where on earth did …

HELEN – (interrupting) So … when does HE arrive?

LACIE – HE should be coming in on the noon train from Chicago … (Holding up the train schedule and telegram she is carrying) … that’s all I know.

HELEN – Do tell? Mighty peculiar if you ask me. Having to marry a man you’ve never laid eyes on before … just because your Daddy says you’ve got to. It’s just not right.

LACIE – Times have been hard and Father said that this is our last chance to save our ranch. By marrying a rich rancher’s son his father will send us enough money to save our lands. Helen … there is more than just MY feelings to consider … you know. I have to do the right thing for the entire Camisole Family. Father wants me to marry “someone of substance”.
LACIE – (ASIDE: I know it may seem strange, but I am obligated to do what my Father wishes. Since Mother passed, Father has worked so hard to protect the Camisole ranch. He is counting on me … I just can not disappoint him.)

(Paige Turner enters and holds up her sign then exits)

CUE CARD – AAAAAH

HELEN – I always try to do the right thing too (ASIDE: That is of course only after I have tried everything else.) Still … I know your heart belongs to another.

LACIE – Yes … that was true, but I have not seen nor heard from Justin since he left town almost 5 years ago. That was a long time ago.

THE JUDGE – (Checking his pocket watch and standing up) Blazes! It’s nearly noon so we best be getting out of here before they start singing.

DUNCAN – “Singing?” What are you talking about?

THE JUDGE – It happens every time people come back to California … actually it’s getting pretty darn annoying.

(SOUND EFFECT – A train whistle and the sound of a train breaking for the station)

(SPECIAL EFFECT – Steam pours in from off stage as the train arrives – smoke machine)
(The now young Station Master enters the ticket office announcing the arrival of the Santa Fe to the San Juan Capistrano Depot.)

JUSTIN – Announcing the arrival of the Santa Fe from Chicago - Springfield - St. Louis - Wichita and Albuquerque on track one.

DUNCAN – But we only have one track? But that is one more than they have in Hemet (or local town to poke fun at).

JUSTIN – First day on the job and the train is on schedule to the minute. Now that’s the way I like to see the train arrive. Never ahead of schedule … Never behind … right on time.

(Cy Kosis and Natalie Drest enter the station carrying bags. Cy with some of his sound effects props. Natalie with a big carpet bag and some sheet music ready to quickly start playing the train arrival song)

NATALIE DREST – Wonderful to be back in San Juan. I’ve been away far too long (crossing to her piano) What is this mess here on my piano? (Straightening her music and putting up her tip jar)

CY KOSIS – Yes in deed … Great to be back again in California!

NATALIE – (From her piano) Good to have you back from Chicago, Cy. The place just wouldn’t be the same without you.

CY – Good to be back … Natalie.
SONG – California And You
Public Domain Music By Harry Puck
Lyrics by Edgar Leslie and revised by Gary McCarver
Originally Published in 1914 by Kalmar & Puck Music Co.

[Verse – Natalie Sings]
Oh! You old Pa-cif-ic coast,
Oh! You land I love the most,
Ev'-ry oth-er place that I see,
On-ly makes you dear-er to me;

Thro' my Pull-man win-dow pane [Cy and Duncan start singing]
As my sta-tion's draw-ing near,
I can hear that fond refrain,
Sung so every-one can hear.

[Chorus – All on stage start singing]
Don't you re-mem-ber Cal-i-for-nia in Sep-tem-ber?
As we stood in the woods 'neath the beau-ti-ful sky,
It made me cry when I told you good-bye, My honey …
Don't you re-mem-ber That I prom-ised I'd be true?

I’m so glad the train is bring-ing me back
to Cal-i-for-nia and you.

[Repeat Chorus]

THE JUDGE – (To Duncan) I told you … pretty annoying isn’t it?

(Cy crosses to his sound effects table which doubles as the town’s telegraph office and takes his seat carrying the train whistle he used off stage a few minutes ago as well as his bag or valise.)
(Duncan and Helen exit)

(Lacie turns and sees Justin … their eyes meet)

LACIE – Oh … my! Can it be?!? Justin! Is that you? (ASIDE: My childhood sweetheart Justin … not a day goes by that I don’t wonder where he might be … who he might be with … and whether he is thinking of me like I often think of him.) Oh … my!

CUE CARD – AAAAH

LACIE – Justin is that you? Nice hat.

JUSTIN – Lacie here in San Juan Capistrano!?! (ASIDE: My childhood sweetheart Lacie … not a day goes by that I don’t wonder where she might be … who she might be with … and whether she is thinking of me like I often think of her.) Yes it is I … I mean me … I mean yes. (Rushing over to embrace Lacie) You really like the hat? (Motioning to his hat) Nice shoes.

(USE A PINK GEL for a special lighting effect when sweethearts embrace center stage)

LACIE – (Embracing Justin) At first I didn’t recognize you … I've changed a lot. Merci.

LACIE – I’m amazed.

JUSTIN – You mean amazing don’t you.
LACIE – No amazed to ever see you again.

JUSTIN – No AMAZING … you look simply amazing! Just look at you … you are beautiful! If you hadn’t heard … I’m the new stationmaster here. It took me a while to get back to San Juan, but finally I kept my promise to return.

LACIE – But it’s been five years?!? When I hadn’t heard from you … I was so lovesick … Father sent me to school in Paris to get my mind off of you … you … you … why didn’t you write? What happened? Why did you leave?

(As the main stage Lights dim a spotlight or other flashback style light shines mostly on Justin)

JUSTIN – (Taking a step or two forward on the stage) It was a cold day just like this that my father went away. My mother must have had some premonition because I remember her pleading with him to find someone else to conduct that train on that run.

LACIE – Oh … my.

JUSTIN – …Then and then he gave me his pocket watch to hold ‘till he came back. He used to do that when I worried about him being gone on long runs. (Fondling the watch fob leading to his vest pocket) It was two days before I found out about the train wreck and that my father would not be coming home.

CUE CARD – AHHHH

LACIE – I am so sorry …(Aside: I never knew. )
JUSTIN – (Pulling out and looking at his father’s pocket watch). He never came back to get his watch. (Winding it)

(SOUND EFFECT of loud watch winding – new year’s noise maker)

Only thing I have to remember him by. (Pause) It hit Mother really hard. We had to move in with her sister’s family in Schenectady.

(OFF STAGE VOICES – “Schenectady!?!”)

(Justin and Lacie look at each other and looking around) Later I got a job on the Santa Fe Line as a porter … then I worked my way up to brakeman and then conductor (One more wind of the watch then putting it back in his pocket and adjusting his hat … an old conductor’s style hat will do) … then I finally took the stationmaster position back here in San Juan. Honestly … I didn’t think you’d remember me.

(Lights full again)

CUE CARD – AAAAH

LACIE – Of course I remember you. I still have that book of poetry that you gave to me, (Holds up a small leather bound book) I just never thought that I’d see you again.

JUSTIN – But … I did write … many times. But all my letters were returned. (Pulls out a packet of letters tied with a string from his pocket handing them to Lacie) I thought …

LACIE – (Angrily) “FATHER!” (Aside to the Audience) That’s why he sent me away. (Pause) That’s why he told me I had to forget the past and to move on. (Pause) Justin … I … I never knew.
JUSTIN – Well that is all water under the trestles now. We are together again and there’s nothing that can stand between us.

(Lacie looks at the train schedule and the telegram she carries then at Justin then bursting into tears she runs from the station)

CUE CARD – AAAAH

JUSTIN – What is it … wait. (He follows her off stage) Lacie wait! Was it something I said?

(The Judge and Helen come back into the Depot with the Judge is holding a newspaper)

(SET DRESSING NOTES: Newspapers of the late 1890s on included: the Fresno Weekly Republican, the Mountain Democrat, the Woodland Daily Democrat, the New York Herald, the Los Angeles Daily Globe and the Santa Ana Standard. Have several spread around the stage so the audience can read the headlines)

THE JUDGE – (Reading with pride from an old copy of the Santa Ana Standard Newspaper) Look here Helen… there’s an article here about our depot … let’s see … it says … “The Santa Fe Railroad is the world's longest railroad with over 9,000 miles of track. Let’s see … here we go … Finally completed in 1895 … Old San Juan will soon blossom with the finest depot on the Santa Fe system. Taking "mission style" a step further than most depots … We invite everyone to come view this unique brick building adorned with arches, a 40-foot high dome with its own mission bell … A dainty ticket office and a quaint old fashion fireplace that will capture the tenderfoot’s heart as he breathes the balmy sea air." This will put us on the map!
(Justin returns quietly going to work behind the bars of the ticket window in the Depot.)

HELEN – “Dainty and Quaint?”

THE JUDGE – Oh heck … I don’t really care what they write … the train is good for the town. Most of the squatters and drifters moved on when the law came to town … and the law came to town because of the train. Sure we still have drunken brawls in the streets most Saturday nights …

HELEN – … with at least one good murder a year.

THE JUDGE - But that’s one of the things that makes me love calling this place home. But since they’ve been selling land to grangers and city slickers looking for that “California Dream” (making quote signs with his fingers) and now they’re leaving us in the lurch heading off to Alaska … there’s a gold rush going on you know? (All the Newspapers in the racks in the Depot have some variation on that headline … ALASKA GOLD RUSH ON … GOLD IN ALASKA … etc.)

HELEN – (Turning the Judge’s paper over to reveal the headline ALASKAN GOLD FOUND!) Yes I think I’ve heard that somewhere. Even so … I’m afraid that there will soon be a few more in town we’d just as soon do without.

THE JUDGE – What do you mean by that?

HELEN – Oh nothing. Really … Nothing.

(The Judge exits as Lacie returns.)
THE JUDGE – Miss Lacie.

(The Judge tips his hat to Lacie as he walks past her to exit.)

LACIE – Mister Mayor. (Kerchief in hand drying a lingering tear.)

HELEN – Are you all right? (Walking over to Lacie)

LACIE – No … not really but there is not much any one can do about it. I am so confused.

HELEN – What’s the confusion … you love Justin don’t you? (Lacie wimpers) Don’t you? Well don’t you? (Lacie crys)

LACIE – We had all these plans. But now I just don’t know … so much has happened. I have my duty to my family and there is the wedding my Father has planned for me and then there is …

HELEN – (interrupting) Did you tell Justin about the wedding?

LACIE – Oh no … not yet. The timing has to be right to … well the timing has to be right. Honesty is the best policy you know.

HELEN – How do you really know that honesty is the best policy unless you’ve tried some of the others? I don’t think you should tell Justin about Dusty.

LACIE – He will hear about the wedding soon enough.

HELEN – Yes … and when he does he’s liable to have a conniption fit.

LACIE – We will just have to figure this out before he hears.
NATALIE (ASIDE to the Audience: Advice from friends is like the weather … some of it is good and some is bad, but it’s mostly unpredictable.)

(SOUND EFFECT – Telegraph)
(Cy is writing down the telegraph message as the scene continues)

(Claire Voyant – The Gypsy enters walking over to Helen.)

CLAIRE – Helen … I’m Surprised. Not even going to say hello after all these years? (Walking in like she owns the place)

HELEN – Claire? Claire! What brings YOU back to San Juan Capistrano? I bet it’s not the fig marmalade.

CLAIRE – I was wondering what that smell was? Actually … I heard that there was going to be a wedding and I had a “feeling” that my services would be needed.

HELEN – Last time I heard you were a “sooth sayer” in a traveling circus back east?

CLAIRE – I prefer the title “prognosticator” or “medium” or “intermediary between the worlds of what is and what is yet to be”.

HELEN – (nodding … knowingly) … “Sooth Sayer”!

LACIE – Sakes Alive … Claire! (They embrace)

CLAIRE – How are you Lacie?

LACIE – Oh (pause) … Just fine.
HELEN – Don’t believe her … She’s worse off than a cat in a room full of rocking chairs.

CLAIRE – … and where is this man you’re about to marry?

LACIE – Well … I suspect he will be here any time now. (Looking at the train schedule)

CLAIRE – Don’t be coy with me Lacie … I’ve known you for too many years … I sensed that there was more to the story than infatuation and ceremony.

HELEN – Horse feathers … now you’ve even begun to believe all that fortune telling “mumbo jumbo” …

LACIE - Helen … just pull in your horns and stop looking for trouble. Claire is an old friend …

HELEN – (Glaring at Claire) Old is right. What's on your mind Claire? If you'll forgive the overstatement.

LACIE – … As I was saying … Claire is one of our oldest friends and I for one am very glad to have you here in town. (Hugging theme close together with one on each side of her) Oh you two… it is so good to be all together again. How long has it been?

CLaire - Too Long …

HELEN – Not Long Enough!

LACIE – You two always fought … you’d think you were sisters. Claire … just ignore her … it is so wonderful to see you again.
HELEN – Well … it is good to see you Claire. In fact … I’m glad you’re here … for Lacie’s sake. The truth of the matter is …

(The telegraph sound has stopped. Cy holds and silently reads the telegram he just transcribed.)

CY KOSIS – (obviously upset interrupting Helen) Consarn, oh that can’t be good! Gol-durn it, dad-blasted, dog-gone!

(The women look over at the CY. Looking back he grins sheepishly.)

HELEN – Can we help you, Cy?

CY KOSIS – I am so sorry Ladies… excuse my language. (Walking over to Lacie) Here’s a telegram for you miss Lacie.

LACIE – What does it say?

CY KOSIS – “dot dot dah dah dah dot dot dot dot dah …

LACIE – T hank you. (Reaching for money or her purse)

CY KOSIS – Never a charge for you Miss Lacie.

(Cy returns to his sound effects/telegraph office table)

LACIE – Oh my … it is from my, “future husband” Dusty Rhodes!
CLAIRE – A telegram? What does it say

HELEN – (To Claire) It’s none of your business now Claire. Hush. (To Lacie) What does it say?

LACIE – (Reading from the telegram) Delayed one day in Chicago … stop … be in San Juan on morning train … tomorrow … stop Dusty. (pause) What am I to do?

HELEN – Tomorrow? Don’t fret … we’ve got till tomorrow … we’ll figure this out …

CLAIRE – I remember back when we were like “pees in a pod” … no problem too big for us. Now that that three of us are back together we should get this all sorted out in short order.

HELEN – Another prediction?

CLAIRE – No … a promise!

HELEN – Well … Maintaining a positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but at least it will annoy people.

HELEN, LACIE, CLAIRE – (All laugh).

LACIE – True friends are scarce … especially now.

CUE CARD – AAAAH

LACIE – I feel better just knowing that you two are here to help. Natalie you mind helping us out here with a song?

NATALIE – Not a problem Miss Lacie. (Begins playing)
SONG – Friends That Are Good And True
Public Domain Music by Edmund Eisner
Lyrics by Julius Steger and slightly edited by Gary McCarver
Originally Published in 1905 by M. Whitmark & Sons.

[Verse sung by Lacie first time through … except the “or three” line which is sung by either Helen or Claire. All three sing together second time through]

From the day when first we start,
Each in life to play her part,
Till we reach that perfect peace
Where all care and toil shall cease,

Fate can nothing better send, [Claire joins in the singing]
Than a true and loyal friend,
Friend in word in thought and deed, [Helen joins in singing too]
Ready in hours of need,

Friends that are good and true,
Each of us finds but few
You never can tell can you
What friends will do for you?
Choose them with proper care
Real friends are scarce and rare,
Happy in-deed is she,
Who can claim two or three. [Claire sings the “or three” line]

(Duncan is standing in the archway of the Depot just watching and waiting for a chance)

LACIE – Having to marry someone I have never met … Finally finding out what happened to my childhood sweetheart … confusing emotions … What more could possibly happen to make things worse? (handkerchief to eyes to dry tears)
CUE CARD - AAAAAH

CLAIRE – You need a good meal and they are fixing pork chops for supper over at (Local Restaurant Name) right now!

CUE CARD - Shameless Plug!

HELEN – More telling of the future?

CLAIRE – No … I just ran into the Judge on my way over here and he invited us over to eat. Come on Lacie … let’s get a wiggle on. You too Helen. You know the Judge don’t take no for an answer.

HELEN – (Glares over where Duncan is hiding but doesn’t see him clearly … he ducks behind the archway to avoid detection)

LACIE – That is true.

HELEN – I’m sorry but I’ve got to skedaddle and teach lessons to some very patient children … but I will catch up with you two later.

LACIE and CLAIRE – Good bye Helen. (Lacie talks to Claire as they walk out … “”Just east of town the hot springs has a very nice little resort …”) (Lacie, Helen and Claire all exit)

(Duncan puts up Miracle Elixir Posters on the walls of the Depot)

CUE CARD – Hisss … Booo!

(Duncan exits)

(INTERLUDE MUSIC BEGINS)

LIGHTS FADE OUT
CUE CARD – (San Juan Capistrano 1895)
CUE CARD – (Later that day)

DUNCAN – (ASIDE TO AUDIENCE: When the Professor was young, he was a genuine card shark making his first fortune at the age of seventeen dealing a game called Faro and his favorite stud poker. But then he discovered the Traveling Medicine Show business … (Pointing at a Magic Elixir sign on the wall) … anyway … it was a natural for him. More than any other man I've met … The Professor has the gift of compressing the largest amount of words into the smallest amount of thought. He is a man of dubious credentials and even more dubious morals and unless we are very lucky … I suspect he will be here soon.)

(The professor enters dragging or rolling a big trunk. He removes his hat and places it on the cane that is protruding from his Medicine Show Miracle Elixir Trunk)

THE PROFESSOR – (Wiping his brow with a handkerchief and talking to Duncan) Have you gotten all the posters up around town like I asked?

DUNCAN – Just about (Holding a few remaining posters)… only one or two more and that’ll be it.

THE PROFESSOR – I trust you’ve been more discreet this time. Remember when shootin’ your mouth off in Abilene (or name of a local town to poke fun at) almost landed us in jail!
DUNCAN – Professor, I haven’t told a soul the real reason you are in town.

THE PROFESSOR – Good! And see that it stays that way. (Looking around to see if anyone is listening) Did you learn anything more about “the matter” I asked you to investigate?

DUNCAN – (ASIDE TO AUDIENCE: He may look like a scoundrel and talk like a scoundrel but don't let that fool you … he really is a scoundrel.)

CUE CARD – Hisss … Booo!

DUNCAN – Professor … the word is that the shipment you were interested in will be arriving on the early train tomorrow and the stationmaster will be asked to keep it safe until the next train bound for Chicago.

THE PROFESSOR – Good! That gives us the time we need.

DUNCAN – I don’t think the folks here in San Juan have a clue as to what will be passing right through this little town. Professor … with a fortune just in our grasp why take any chances hoodwinking these good townsfolk with your medicine show.

THE PROFESSOR – (ASIDE: While Duncan is not dumber than a barn swallow he is not much smarter either.) Does your train of thought have a caboose?

DUNCAN – What?
THE PROFESSOR – To accomplish our goal in this sleepy little town … what we need is a distraction … and I know of no better distraction than a good old fashioned medicine show. And who said anything about “Hoodwinking”. Some people actually do get better after they drink this “elixir”. (Holding up an Elixir bottle)
(Crowd enters on the word timing)

THE PROFESSOR – I suspect it all has to do with “tie- ming” … I mean timing. Ahh … here they all come now. Watch and Learn Duncan … Watch and Learn.

(The Judge and Helen and Lacie and a few extras you might have come into the depot. Even Cy gets up from his sound effects table and joins the crowd around the stage listening to The Professor’s Pitch as he opens his trunk and starts to remove the tools of his trade … bottles of elixir, small boxes or powders and pills and a few other assorted props.)

THE PROFESSOR - Step right up ladies and gentlemen! No other elixir available is as strong as Professor Mack’s Miracle Elixir of Life. None as Invigorating, none as Strengthening, nor as Refreshing. This wonderful and remarkable discovery cures all the ills that afflict man or beast. I invite you to step right this way. Don’t be shy folks…step right this way…ladies come forward.

THE PROFESSOR – (ASIDE: I love forward ladies.)
(NOTE: women cast members make “oh my” or “do tell” comments interjected as the professor runs through his spiel.)

THE PROFESSOR – This wondrous elixir was concocted, constructed and devised to take care of all common afflictions … simply use our specially prepared elixir for instantaneous relief.

THE JUDGE – Who are you?

THE PROFESSOR – Who am I?… Did you say who am I? … (Directed to the Piano Player Natalie) Maestro … please?

SONG – Professor Mack (derived from the song Turkestan)
Public Domain Music by Jack Stern
Lyrics originally by Bobby Jones reworked by Gary McCarver
Published in 1919 by The Broadway Music Co.

[Verse sung only once by The Professor]
From the Land of Turkestan, Where Ottoman,
wan-der in Caravans.
I climb the mountains high … cross desert sands,
Finding Cures (that) you demand.

[Chorus]
My name is Thaddeus Mack … Professor Thaddeus Mack,
I traveled all the world for you.
Water from Hidden Springs … the health my Elixir brings,
A Miracle Remedy … it’s true!
I bring back precious things,
Pills … potions … cures of kings,
From (little) Siam to the Sandwich Isles,
coughs … colds … and headaches gone
Turns weakness into strong
All courtesy of (me) Professor Mack.
[Repeat Chorus twice more – key change last time through]

THE PROFESSOR – Professor Mack’s Miracle Elixir of Life …
A wonderful pain destroying compound … it treats rheumatism, neuralgia and sciatica as well as strains and sprains, frost bites and chill blains. For hours of comforting warmth and relief simply use it externally as a liniment. Turn back the hands of time with this mysteriously manipulated compounds of roots, barks, leaves, and berries… all in a suspension of water from medicinal springs.

DUNCAN – Like the medicinal hot springs here is San Juan?

THE PROFESSOR – There are medicinal hot springs right here in San Juan? (ASIDE: well maybe next year).

DUNCAN – Tell us more Professor!

HELEN – Do Tell!

THE PROFESSOR – (Ah yes) As a tonic it is good for relief of cramps, arthritis, dropsy, dyspepsia, ulcers, mental depression, memory loss, poor digestion, neuralgia, and even lumbago.

DUNCAN – Is that all?

THE PROFESSOR – IS THAT ALL (Or if adlibs abound say the segway line “More Than That!”) …Professor Mack’s Miracle Elixir of Life is the only proven cure for APHONIA … commonly know as Laryngitis. (Faking a sore throat) Simply take a single spoonful to begin the healing process instantly. (The professor takes a spoonful then his booming voice returns). A CURE FOR APHONIA! No family can afford to be without this life renewer!
THE JUDGE – (Loudly) Balderdash! This fellow don't know any more about elixirs than a pig knows about Sunday.

THE PROFESSOR – Balderdash you say? This is not balderdash! This is not ballyhoo! This is not Hocus-Pocus! This unrivalled elixir is the foe of pain, the friend of humanity, and the salvation of the sickly.

THE PROFESSOR – It comes from an ancient formula obtained at great personal risk and expense by me Professor Thaddeus Mack … from the deepest darkest rain forests of (pause) Borneo.

HELEN & LACIE – Oh … My!

THE PROFESSOR – So powerful is this protected formula … ancient tribesmen would trade a single ounce of this miraculous mixture for a horse or a hut or even a wife. (ASIDE TO THE JUDGE: don’t get any ideas my friend.)

THE JUDGE – Why … I would never …

(The Crowd laughs at the Judge)

DUNCAN – (Acting as a shill … from the audience) I only have ten dollars … can I possibly purchase half a bottle?

THE PROFESSOR – My good man … what is your future worth? What is your health worth? What price can you place on the health and well-being of your family? Never before have I made an offer as good as you will hear in one moment. As company founder and general agent for the Pacific Coast and Sandwich Islands … I can provide you an entire bottle of Professor Mack's Miracle Elixir of Life not for 20 dollars … not for 10 dollars not even for 5 dollars … but today I am letting these miracle elixirs go for the paltry sum of only one single solitary dollar per bottle.
THE PROFESSOR – And sir … I would like to give you this first bottle at no cost. Use it in good health!

DUNCAN – Why … Thank you … thank you, sir!

THE PROFESSOR – So … step right up Ladies and Gentlemen. Who will be the next to travel down the road to vibrant health? The fare is only one dollar per bottle! Step right up.

HELEN – I’ll take a bottle. (Holding up and waiving a dollar)

THE JUDGE – Well … I guess I’ll take a bottle. (Waving a dollar.)

NATALIE – (Stepping forward grabbing a couple of dollars from her tip jar) I’ll take one of those.

CY – Give me two bottles … I need some of that! (Barging to the front of the crowd)

HELEN – I was here first! (Swatting Cy with her ruler … “Swack”.)

CY – Stop that … just stop that. (He takes the ruler away from her and snaps it into two pieces and discards them. Helen smiles to audience and takes another out of her bag.)

HELEN – CY … wait your turn!

DUNCAN – (To the Professor: It is said that Helen Highwater can whip her weight in angry cats … not a woman to be trifled with.)

THE PROFESSOR – (Quietly to Duncan). Quickly now … while they are distracted … go check the telegraph desk for any news on (said slowly) “you know what”.

(Duncan slinks over to Cy's telegraph and rifles through his papers grabbing one paper and quickly shoving it into his pocket. Pulling another from his pocket as a replacement note to give to the Professor.)

DUNCAN – Ahaaaa!

(Duncan rejoins the crowd. Just in time as Cy passes him heading towards his sound effects table and telegraph office. Duncan walks by The Professor and puts the piece of paper into his hand.)

THE PROFESSOR – (ASIDE: The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse is the one that gets the cheese.)

CUE CARD – Hisss … Booo!

(The Professor walks back to his medicine show trunk and Claire Voyant enters with a double take as she sees The Professor.)

CLAIRE – (ASIDE: Now there’s the kind of man that looks as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food cake.)

CLAIRE – You villain … you varmint … you contemptible scoundrel.

THE PROFESSOR – Agreed … but what’s your point?
CLAIRE – I'll never forget the first time we met - although I will keep trying. Is that YOU … Thaddeus?

THE PROFESSOR – Ahhhh … Claire … You’re a parasite for sore eyes. (Opening his arms to welcome her)

CLAIRE – Why … thank you. (Pause) Hey. Still up to your old tricks I see. (Pointing at his medicine show signs) When I first met you I thought you were a young man with promise, but it ended up you were only an old man of “promises”. (pause) I waited in that wedding dress all day … you never showed … you cad!

THE PROFESSOR – You mean in Abilene?

CLAIRE – Abilene? I was never in Abeline! Who were you with…

THE PROFESSOR – (Interrupting) Ahhh … Of course I meant in Kansas City? Actually … I had to leave Kansas City suddenly on account of a little “difficulty” I was having with the law at the time.

CLAIRE – Horse feathers! What kind of “difficulty” keeps a man from showing up at his own wedding?

THE PROFESSOR – Let us just say it was the kind of “difficulty” that has a tendency to push a man to the end of his rope.

CLAIRE – Knowing you … it was probably the end of a hangman’s rope. So … what did you steal that time?

THE PROFESSOR – You know me well Claire. (Clearing his throat and changing the subject) I don’t think I’ll be able to whitewash this … suffice it to say … (said slowly) “I apologize”. (Pause) You still have that ring I gave you … I trust? (The Professor kisses her hand and steals the ring off of it.)
CLAIRE – Of course I do. I kept hoping you’d come back to me. I guess I was always in love with the false image I had of you.

(Claire reaches out and takes The Professor’s hand. His kisses her hand and smiles)

CLAIRE – It took me a long time to forgive you … You know … we really we’re good together once … do you remember Thaddeus?

THE PROFESSOR – You’re a hard woman to forget Claire.

CLAIRE – (Aside: It’s easy to remember a hard man) I’ve always been square with you … never cheated you out of a single cent. Never tried to change you or even make you give up the medicine show business.

THE PROFESSOR - That is true.

CLAIRE – Thaddeus I see a future where we are together. (Making a grand gesture)

THE PROFESSOR – Is this part of your old mind reading ruse?

CLAIRE – No I am quite serious … we could have a future together.

THE PROFESSOR – And this future isn’t behind bars is it?

(Claire gets close to “Thaddeus” and tries to seduce him with her song. He will have nothing of it)

CLAIRE – Natalie would you mind?
NATALIE – My pleasure. (She begins to play)

SONG – There's A Tender Look In Your Eyes
Public Domain Music by Victor Herbert
Lyrics by Richard Bruce and reworked by Gary McCarver
Published in 1920 by T. B. Harms & Francis, Day & Hunter, N.Y.

[Verse 1 – Lovingly Sung by Claire to The Professor]
Tell me why you trifle with your heart?
You're aware love is there,
Why not listen to it's calling?
You see … we should've never been apart,
Tell me why we can’t try, you and I?

[Chorus – Claire sings - The Professor adding comments]
There's a tender look in your eyes. (That's a lie)
You'll surrender if you are wise. (I deny)
Why resist me? Why not confess? (Baaah)
When you kissed me you meant "yes?" (You digress)
(2nd time through for The Professor: That's a Guess)
From your glances I can divine. (I see no sign) (All right… fine)
Fond romances none can decline (No not this time)
(2nd time through for The Professor: Maybe next time)
Tell me truly, Why so unruly?
You will some day be mine. (Maybe some day you’ll be mine)
[Verse 2 – Sung by The Professor]
Hear me … when I say you plead in vain.
I don’t feel love's appeal,
I am hardened to its calling.
In Love … no one ever can remain,
Tell me why … we should try … you and I.
[Repeat Chorus]
CLAIRE – Consider it a “business” proposition. We’ve always worked well together and maybe a “merger” would make sense. What do you say Thaddeus?

(Claire makes seductive motions towards The Professor … fingers through his hair etc.)

THE PROFESSOR – Well … I can’t rightly say.

CLAIRE – You … at a loss for words? I can hardly believe that! Quick … Here … before you think too much about it … Here is the key to my Hotel room. If you’re interested in further discussing my proposition … I’ll be waiting for you. (Giving him her room key)

(Clair exits throwing a kiss.)

THE PROFESSOR – Yes … a very hard woman to forget.

DUNCAN - Something on your mind, Boss? (Walking over to him)

PROFESSOR - I am having second thoughts about our plans.

DUNCAN – Second thoughts? What exactly do you mean? PROFFESOR – Claire and I had “something special” once … or twice … but that was many years ago. I don't know … sometimes I think it might be nice to settle down and start playing by the rules, find a nice woman and start a family … but then I think … (long pause looking at each other)

PROFESSOR & DUNCAN – (Sarcastically in unison)... Naaaah.

DUNCAN – Know what you mean.
PROFESSOR and DUNCAN – (Both laugh out loud.)

DUNCAN – (ASIDE: The Professor has all the characteristics of a dog … except that loyalty part.)

THE PROFESSOR – Still (lost in thought a moment) Fetch me my walking stick. (Pause) And would you mind directing me to … the local hotel. (Both exit)

DUNCAN – Oh that’s easy Professor … right at the end of this street … (fading off) They have the best fig marmalade …

(Lacie enters from the side and steps in front of the bench)

LACIE – Oh … What am I to do? (In despair)

CUE CARD – AAAAH

LACIE – (Holding the letters Justin wrote to her) Reading those letters that I never received reminded me of how happy Justin and I once were. He saved them all these years. That has to mean something too. (To Audience: Don’t you think?)

(Lacie goes to Natalie’s piano and puts a dollar in her tip jar)

NATALIE – Thank you kindly. (She starts playing)

**SONG – Memories**
Public Domain Music by Earl Burtnett (Originally entitled Evening) Lyrics by Haven Gillespie and reworked by Gary McCarver Originally Published in 1919 by A.J. Stasny Music Co.
[Sung by Lacie … dimming lights on stage except on her]
Now as the still-ness of night starts to fall,
Thoughts of you come back to me.
My heart was lone-ly and onl-ly for you,
But that is just now history.

[Chorus]
Mem-o-rys, Mem-o-rys, you will live on in my mem-o-rys,
Oh how I sigh for the years gone by
Still wond'ring if you knew how much I did love you
Mem-o-rys, Mem-o-rys,
Your love was just like old memories,
Here for a day (but) then faded away,
evenings brings Mem-o-rys of you.

[Repeat Chorus]

LACIE – What shall I do? (Sobbing) What Shall I do! (Lacie exits)

(Natalie gathers her music, turns and exits the stage)

LIGHTS FADE OUT
ACT 2 SCENE 1

(Natalie enters followed closely by Paige Turner to show her sign)

CUE CARD – (San Juan Capistrano 1895)

(Another train has arrived in the station a few minutes earlier and some additional crates and added suitcases piled up in the corner of the Depot lobby. The Judge and Duncan are playing cards seated at the card table in the Depot. The Professor is walking by the table over to his trunk. The Calendar now says March 5th 1895)

NATALIE – Good morning Professor.

THE PROFESSOR – (He grunts acknowledgement)

THE JUDGE – One moment Professor … do you play cards?

THE PROFESSOR – I’ve never really been one for games of “chance” … (Raising eyebrows and winking to the audience)

THE JUDGE – Oh come now … the name of the game is “Faro”. Ever heard of it?
THE PROFESSOR – Maybe you could educate me, my good man?

THE JUDGE – It’s a game of chance that comes from the grandest of gaming palaces in Europe. We take a standard Deck of cards. (Holding up the deck) The Faro is the king of hearts.

THE JUDGE – (Holding up that card for all to see) You simply bet on the order in which cards are drawn. Simple enough! (Pause) So are you “in” Professor?

THE PROFESSOR – How difficult could that be, but if you don’t mind …? (Sitting down at the table with the other men and grabbing the deck away from The Judge) Let’s start with an even simpler game … poker. I’m in. (pulling out money and placing it on the table) Mind if I deal … Judge?

JUDGE – Well, I guess that would be fine …

(The men play cards in the background as Lacie enters from the side of the stage and is followed by Justin who pulls up the blinds that were closed behind the train ticket window … obviously in mid-conversation.)

JUSTIN – I am so sorry to hear about your mother. How is your father … what has he been up to lately?

LACIE – My father? (pause) Justin … I have to tell you something.
JUSTIN – If it’s about where we will live after we get married …

LACIE – (interrupting Justin) No actually it is …

JUSTIN – If it’s about my position … being a stationmaster here in San Juan is just a temporary position. If I do a good job here, I should be able to write my own ticket to any station or depot on the Santa Fe line. San Francisco, Chicago, even Schenectady.

(voices from off stage – “Schenectady!?!)

(Justin and Lacie pause one beat and look at each other)

JUSTIN – Unless you want me to stay here … then I …

LACIE – Stop interrupting me … there is a problem.

JUSTIN – What ever it is … there is not a problem so big that we can’t solve it together.

LACIE – I am not so sure.

JUSTIN – Oh … (looking at his pocket watch winding it once)

(sound effect – pocket watch winding sound)

JUSTIN – I almost forgot … if you will excuse me a moment. We’ve got a train that’s just arrived in from Chicago …
LACIE – But Justin …

JUSTIN – … and is unloading provisions and supplies. I will be right back. (Justin goes back into the office)

LACIE – Actually it’s about that train from Chicago I want to talk about. (Speaking up so he can hear as he walks away to do duties as the train just arrived) Justin I need to tell you ...(sadly)

CUE CARD - AAAAH

(Lacie hears a sound from the train and heads out of one of the archways offstage. Helen and Claire walk into the depot in mid-conversation from the other side of the train station.)

CLAIRE – … but knowing him sure keeps life interesting!

HELEN – (to Claire) It may not be my place to say, but I don’t cotton to you or your choice of friends Claire. That Professor strikes me as nothin’ but a four-flusher … a cheat … a swindler …a hoodwinker and a chiseler.

CLAIRE – True … he may be a low down cur of a man. But If I play my cards right … he will be MY low down cur of a man.

HELEN – You are hopeless.
CLAIRE – No not yet, but I was well on the road there.

(Claire and Helen see the men playing cards)

CLAIRE – Oh … there he is now. (Walking over to the card game)

THE PROFESSOR – Looks like I win again. (Gathering up money bet in a pile)

CUE CARD – Hisss … Booo!

CLAIRE – You mentioned something about having to take care of some business. You could have just told me you wanted to play cards.

THE PROFESSOR – Actually this was a fortuitous and unexpected game. I guess I’ve had a strong run of “beginner’s Luck” (Winking at Claire).

THE JUDGE – He is quite right ma’am. In fact I think you have won every hand dealt. You say you’ve never played cards before?

THE PROFESSOR – No .. Actually I said I don’t like games of chance. (ASIDE: When I play poker there is little “chance” that I won’t win.)

(Blatantly showing the audience that he has a hidden Ace or two up a sleeve or in a pocket)
CLAIRE – Thaddeus? (Calling his attention)

THE JUDGE – In any case … I guess I’m pretty much played out. So … if you’ll excuse me “gentlemen”.

(The Judge stands to exit. But takes a few moments to organize himself before unsuccessfully trying to exit the depot.)

CLAIRE – Thaddeus … I thought you would be over to “fetch” me when you had finished you business?

THE PROFESSOR – It is you who are “the fetching one” my dear … I have never seen you more radiant. Helen, would you mind if I took your friend for a stroll?

HELEN – (ASIDE: That Professor reminds me of a corkscrew … cold, sharp, and twisted.) Fine … I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

CLAIRE – Helen … now be polite.

HELEN – Fin … fine. Be careful Claire.

THE PROFESSOR – This way my dear. (The Professor and Claire exit the Depot)
CY KOSIS – (Yelling over to Duncan) Duncan I just heard that there’s a rip-roaring time going on over at the Sweet Spot Saloon. The locals are looking for trouble. You ought to find the sheriff.

DUNCAN – To stop it?

CY KOSIS – No … the sheriff just never likes to miss out on a good time.

DUNCAN – Last time he got scooped into a poker game he lost his shirt and I think his favorite hat too!

DUNCAN – I’ll go tell him. (Duncan exits)

(The Judge starts to exit the stage but is intercepted by Helen who moves him back over to the table where the men were playing cards. The Judge invites her to sit down. He does but she stands above him)

HELEN – I want a word with you … Judge.

THE JUDGE – How nice … well, since talk is cheap you can have all the words you want.

HELEN – I'll try being nicer if you'll just try being smarter. What in tarnation ever possessed you to play cards with that scoundrel?

THE JUDGE – I don't know what your problem is, but I'll bet it's a hard one to pronounce.
HELEN – (Said almost without a breath in one stream of excitement) Actually, Judge I do have a problem and I need your advice … what do you think … First of all my best friend is betrothed to a man she has never met in an arranged marriage her father has designed to save her family’s ranch and then she discovers that her childhood sweetheart has returned to town after 5 years and they still have strong feelings for each other, but her future husband has just arrived on the train and now she wants ME to tell her what to do. That’s right … she wants ME to tell HER what to do! I’m stumped. Any suggestions?

THE JUDGE – (ASIDE: If you are arriving late … that should give you a pretty good summary of what has happened until now.) My dear, I don't have a solution … but I do admire your problem. I’m afraid that you’re asking the wrong person. As a politician my job is mostly looking for trouble, finding it, misdiagnosing it and then misapplying the wrong remedies. When it comes to understanding matters of the heart, honestly … I don’t have a clue.

HELEN – So … then what should I tell Lacie?

THE JUDGE – I always advise people NOT to give advice … at least not sober. This calls for a stiff drink - I think we need a drink.

HELEN - I don’t drink … just give me some water.

THE JUDGE – It has been my experience that those with no vices have very few virtues. And I think you just might need something a bit stronger than mere water, my dear. (Pulling a bottle of Gin and two glasses from behind the counter) Besides … did you know that water is actually composed of two gins … OxyGIN and HydroGIN. (as he pours gin into two glasses) OxyGIN is pure gin … while HydroGIN is gin and water. (Handing one of the drinks to Helen) Here … drink this!
HELEN – Fine! (Drinks in one gulp). Hit me with another!

(The Judge is surprised as to how fast she downed that drink. The judge tentatively pours more Gin in her glass. The Judge pours himself a tall one as well)

HELEN – I recon’ that’ll do. (As a toast) Here's how… (She downs this second drink along with The Judge)

JUDGE – I think … just maybe you’ve had quite enough …

(Helen reaches for the bottle she wants another drink … The Judge takes it away to save her from herself and then Helen hits the back of The Judge’s hand with the ruler she always carries around with her. “Swack” She takes the bottle with her when she leaves.)

THE JUDGE – Ouch! Stop that … just stop that!

HELEN – You have been of absolutely no help sir finding the answers that I seek. And although I may not have an answer … honestly at this very moment I do not care.

(A woozy Helen stands to exit and takes the bottle with her)

HELEN – I must admit I've had a perfectly wonderful day. (Pause) Unfortunately… this wasn't it. Good day to you … Judge.
(Helen Exits and Dusty and Lacie enter coming center stage)

DUSTY – I’m so glad you got my telegram. When my pa told me I was getting married … at first I told him … “not a chance” …”I wouldn’t marry someone I’d never met”.

LACIE – I said the very same thing … at first.

(The Judge tips his hat to Lacie and Dusty as he exits from the side they are entering. Natalie enters and sits at her piano.)

DUSTY – But then he convinced me that it was for the good of the family that I get married to “Carry on” the “Rhodes” family name.

LACIE – And me … I’m supposed to save the “Camisole” Ranch.

DUSTY – Pa can be pretty all fired convincing when he wants to be.

LACIE – My father as well. I’m surprised that you don’t have all the local girls swooning over you Dusty. You’re not so bad to look at and you seem like a good sort.

DUSTY – Thank you kindly … Miss Lacie … You’re as fine as cream gravy. The problem is that with most ladies … I’m as jumpy as a toad and can hardly get out a full sentence without putting my boot right in my mouth. But with you … talking isn’t as tough.

LACIE – Why thank you … Dusty. (ASIDE: My he is charming and nothing like I thought he would be.)
DUSTY – You must have been a pretty girl when you were young. (Flustered) I mean … not that you aren’t young now … I mean you are still. Oh what’s the use I always get tongue tied when I talk to a beautiful lady.

LACIE – You really think so?

DUSTY – Think what?

LACIE – That I’m beautiful.

DUSTY – You are as “purty” as a calico dress miss Lacie … I mean …

LACIE – (interrupting) Just a simple yes or no will do.

DUSTY – Yes.

LACIE – Yes what?

DUSTY – Yes I think you are beautiful like a dessert flower. I did from the moment I saw the picture your Father sent.

LACIE – … A picture?

(Dusty pulls out a small sepia photo of Lacie from his pocket.)

DUSTY – Yes and you don’t do your picture justice … I mean … you’re much prettier that I expected … When I found out we were to get hitched … I mean married … even though we hadn’t met I was stumped as to why you’d want a simple son of a rancher. Then I found out what our fathers had cooked up and I decided to come out to California to see if maybe you’d …
LACIE – Go on …

DUSTY – Oh what’s the use. You’re so beautiful and sophisticated and smart … I’d be crazy to think you’d want a simple rancher like me.

LACIE – I like simple sometimes.

**SONG – Lacie**

Public Domain Music by Neil Moret  
Lyrics by Harry Williams and modified by Gary McCarver  
Original Publication in 1918 by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder

[Verse – Sung by Dusty to Lacie as he has fallen for her]

Oh! what a shame they gave you the name of Lacie,  
(I mean) There is no rose that’s half as sweet as you?  
Lucky the birds and the bees you meet,  
Lucky the moss and the violet sweet,  
When they are trod by your bare little feet,  
There in the morning dew.

How can you blame me when I pine,  
Lacie, to change your name to mine?

[Chorus]

Lacie … pretty Lacie with your hair of (raven/auburn/satin*) hue;  
In your smiling so beguiling,  
There's a bit of Killarney, bit of the Blarney, too.  
Childhood in the wildwood,  
Like a dessert flow'r you grew;  
Pretty Lacie, pretty Lacie,  
Can you blame anyone for falling in love with you
LACIE – Don’t stop.

DUSTY – I’ve got to … the piano quit playing.  
(Dusty walks over and puts a few large bills in Natalie’s tip jar)


DUSTY – No thank you maam.

NATALIE – (flirting with him) It would be no trouble at all.

DUSTY – No one was all I needed.

NATALIE – Another time then?

LACIE – (Clearing her throat) Dusty?

DUSTY – (Embarrassed) Excuse me … I get easily distracted. Oh yes … Do you think just maybe that there might be a chance that you could learn to love me … in time. (Pulling a huge ring out of his pocket and placing it on her finger) Here, I brought this for you. Just try it on for size … for a while … maybe it’ll fit … maybe it won’t.

LACIE – (Looking at the ring) Oh my … I don’t know what to say.

DUSTY – You don’t have to say anything yet. Maybe our fathers know better than we do. Maybe they don’t. You think maybe we could find a place just to sit and … talk … for a while. I mean …

LACIE – (Interrupting) I’d love to talk for a while.
DUSTY – No one I’ve ever met holds a candle to you, Miss Lacie.

(Lacie and Dusty begin to exit the depot but are intercepted by Justin who steps out of his office and see the two together. Cy Kosis heads off stage towards the train.)

LACIE – Justin! … umm … This is … Dusty Rhodes.

JUSTIN – Nice to meet you … Lacie has told me absolutely nothing about you.

(Reaching to shake Dusty’s hand.)

LACIE – He is my (Pause) betrothed.

(Justin pulls his hand back and notices the ring on Lacie’s hand.)

JUSTIN – Your … betrothed? I take it that you two …?

LACIE – … Have just met.

JUSTIN – Have just met?

DUSTY – And we’re supposed to be married.

LACIE – I tried to tell you about …

JUSTIN – (interrupting) … You’re getting married?

DUSTY – That’s about the whole story on that.
JUSTIN – … Confusing.

DUSTY – Tell me about it. One day I’m riding the range looking for a lost buffalo and the next week I’m heading off to California to get hitched … I mean … married.

JUSTIN – It takes a week to ride across your ranch?

DUSTY – Well … lightning is a pretty fast horse. Usually it takes him only about 4 days …

JUSTIN – How big is your ranch anyway?

DUSTY – Too big if you ask me.

LACIE – Oh … my!

(Cy Kosis comes back on stage excitedly with some very important news that Justin must hear.)

CY KOSIS – Justin … The conductor tells me that there’s a problem getting a shipment unloaded from the train and the train can’t leave until you get out there.

JUSTIN – Getting Married? (to Lacie … Ignoring Cy)

CY KOSYS – Justin! The conductor says …

JUSTIN – Cy … Hold your horses! (Giving a stern look at Cy and a confused look at Lacie) Stay right here. I will be back as soon as I can. I thought that you? … That I? … That we?

CY KOSYS – Justin?
JUSTIN – All right … already! I’m coming! (Justin Exits with Cy)

DUNCAN – I reckon I’ll best be heading over to my hotel. But if you don’t mind I’d be honored to walk you home Miss Lacie.

LACIE – Thank you … Dusty. If it’s not out of your way.

DUSTY – It could be half way to those Sandwich Islands and I wouldn’t mind.

LACIE – Oh … My.

(Lacie and Dusty exit to one side of the stage)

(Meanwhile Justin returns from the train platform on the other side of the stage … just missing seeing Lacie’s and Dusty’s exit)

JUSTIN – Lacie … Lacie? (ASIDE: Where could she have gone?) I knew I should have told her how I felt sooner …

(Justin works his way over to Natalie’s piano and put a dollar in her tip jar and Natalie starts playing the intro to the song. The lights begin to fade on the stage except on the front of the piano where Justin starts to sing or sing/speak this song of lost love)
SONG - Dream Days
Public Domain Music Words and Music by Charles L. Johnson
Originally Published in 1913 Modified by Gary McCarver in 2005
[Sung or sung/spoke by Justin]

Twi-light brings fond rec-o-lect-tions,
Memories of days long gone by.
Think-ing of some-one who loved me,
Some-one who I told good bye.

Oh take me back to those dream days,
Back to that girl I a-dore There let me stay,
just for one day, back in those dream days of yore.

Dream days, dream days, days gone by
days when we strolled in the gar-den of love,
My Lac-ie and I.

Dream days, dream days, I loved you so.
Oh take me back to those
beau-ti-ful dream days of long (long) a-go.

    (Justin takes off his hat and sadly
        leaves the station)

JUSTIN – I should have told her how much … oh … never mind.

CUE CARD – AAAAH

NATALIE – I am so sorry Justin.

(NATALIE begins playing the INTERLUDE MUSIC)

LIGHTS FADE OUT

    (Natalie Exits)
ACT 2 SCENE 2

(Paige Turner enters with her cure card as lings come up)

CUE CARD – Later That Day

(Lacie, Claire and Helen are standing and talking in the front of the depot in the little garden that adjoins the main depot set)

HELEN – So … if you can predict the future what do you see?

CLAIRE – I see a future where people will come from all over to see little birds visit this little town of San Juan Capistrano.

HELEN – Interesting, but not very helpful for the problem at hand.

HELEN – (ASIDE to the Audience: Claire never lets ideas interrupt the easy flow of her conversation.)

LACIE – Oh my. (She begins to cry)

HELEN – Look what you did Claire … there she goes crying again. (To Lacie) There … there Lacie … don’t take on so.

CLAIRE – I didn’t say …

LACIE – (interrupting) I sure am going to miss San Juan Capistrano.

HELEN – Don’t you have any say in this?
LACIE – My father says …

HELEN – “My father says” … that’s nothing but just a namby pamby excuse for not doin’ what you know needs doin’.

CLAIRE – What are you talking about?

HELEN – She was asking for advice …

CLAIRE – Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer … but wish we didn’t.

LACIE – A witty saying proves nothing.

CLAIRE – What about these? (Holding up the packet of letters Justin wrote to Lacie) … The letters that Justin wrote to you. That man thinks the world of you Lacie.

LACIE – Either way … somebody gets their heart broken. The simple thing to do would be what my father wants me to do and marry Dusty.

CLAIRE – For every complex problem, there is a solution that is simple, neat, and wrong.

HELEN – I hate to admit this … but Claire is right. Life is large and is bigger than all of us. I believe that life sometimes comes down to one moment … one choice and that’s all we get rather. Do you want to go to your grave safe or do you want to skid in sideways, reigns in one hand, a glass of whiskey in the other, totally worn out and screaming “WOO HOO what a ride!”

CLAIRE – “Whoo Hoo”? “Bigger than all of us?” … Helen … I never knew you had that in you.
HELEN – It’s not always you that can do all the philosophisin’. (Pause … to Claire) So, you think I went a little over the top with the “Woo Hoo” part?

LACIE – Hello … You two … I’m over here.

(Justin comes out from the depot to talk with Lacie)

JUSTIN – Lacie? (Kindly)

HELEN – If you need us we’ll be in the depot.

(Helen and Claire exit to the depot)

JUSTIN – My father always told me “The things we have to loose are so much greater that the things we have to gain”.

LACIE – My mother always told me … “Life is too short not to live your dreams.” But my father wants me to marry Dusty to save the Camisole Ranch. It is all so confusing. Tell me what to do.

JUSTIN – You can never tell which way the train went by just looking at the track.

LACIE – (A confused look) What do you mean?

JUSTIN - What I’m trying to say is … I trust you will make the right decision. (Justin and Lacie embrace)

(Lights fade out on front garden and brighten on rear depot part of the stage Lacie and Justin exit. Helen and Claire are sitting at the card table in the depot facing away from the ticket office’s door)
HELEN – So … Let me get this straight … The Professor has left you at the altar twice already.

CLAIRE – Yes … I guess you could say that … but it wasn’t his fault … well not exactly …

HELEN – So … if two wrongs don't make a right, why not try three?

CLAIRE – Quit looking for trouble Helen. The Professor gave me his word.

HELEN – (ASIDE: Unfortunately I have a feeling his word is no good.) Alright … alright … You are my friend so I will do my best to stay out of your business.

(The Professor slinks in with his sidekick Duncan. Duncan is carrying a bag of tools and a sack.)

THE PROFESSOR – All right … let me explain the plan one more time. First I sneak into the stationmaster’s office.

DUNCAN – Because?

THE PROFESSOR – Because that is where the Santa Fe Safe is kept?

DUNCAN – Yes and then?
THE PROFESSOR – Then I crack the safe ... removing the shipment of Alaskan gold and then we take our leave from this dusty town of Old San Juan.

DUNCAN – But what if the safe can’t be cracked Professor?

THE PROFESSOR – Every safe can be cracked. (Holds up a doctors stethoscope) Some just call for plan “B”.

(Noticing the ladies at the table)

THE PROFESSOR – Duncan ... be so kind as to get me a momentary distraction so I can collect our prize from the depot’s safe.

DUNCAN – ... Of course professor.

(Walking over in front of the ladies to distract them from the Professor’s stealthy entrance to the stationmaster’s office)

DUNCAN – Good afternoon ladies ... 

(The Professor sneaks behind the table and enters the ticket office)

HELEN – A good afternoon to you Duncan.
CLAIRE – Duncan.

DUNCAN – Have you ever noticed how beautiful the hills are that surround this depot? (Pointing out the archway away from the slinking Professor) And how stately Grover Cleveland looks … so presidential!

CLAIRE – Thank you Duncan. (Politely excusing themselves for their own conversation)

DUNCAN – Excuse my interruption ladies!

(The professor moves out of the office to the side of the depot and uses hand signals for Duncan to come over)

DUNCAN – (In whispered tones) So Professor … Where’s the gold?

THE PROFESSOR – Curses …

DUNCAN – What …

THE PROFESSOR – It’s a Mei-Link Safe out of Toledo. Can’t pick the lock or hear the tumblers fall. Looks like we will have to go to Plan “B”.

DUNCAN – Right … Plan “B…..” What exactly is plan “B” anyway?
(The Professor grabs the duffel bag and pulls out a cylindrical bomb with fuse … optionally a bundle of sticks of dynamite with fuse)

THE PROFESSOR – All I need is another moment of distraction. After that … a big noise and chaos … then we return to collect our gold.

DUNCAN – I thought it would be simple and QUIET job …

THE PROFESSOR – It will be quiet soon enough.

DUNCAN – You never do things the easy way … do you Professor?

THE PROFESSOR – One more moment of distraction is all I need … go now!

DUNCAN – But professor …

THE PROFESSOR – Go! (Pushing Duncan)

(The Professor enters the office with the bomb as Duncan distracts the ladies once again.)

DUNCAN – … Did I ever mention that we are the only train depot on the Santa Fe Line that has a fireplace and mission bell and…ah … its own piano player!

NATALIE – It’s true! (Playing a couple of chords)
DUNCAN – I almost forgot you were there.

(The Judge and Justin and Lacie all enter the Depot as The Professor drops his bag of safe cracking tools as he comes out of the office. Everyone hears the tool bag dropping to the floor and looks)

HELEN – Jumpin Jehosophats! What are you doing in there?

CLAIRED – What’s going on Thaddeus?

JUSTIN – Excuse me Professor …

THE PROFESSOR – (Pulling out a gun) Everyone put your hands in the air! Now get over there (Directing everyone to the stage farthest from the ticket office with his back to the ticket office) All I want is the gold that is being stored in the Depot’s safe. Nobody will get hurt if you just cooperate.

CUE CARD – Hisss … Booo!

HELEN – (Holding up a ruler) You know better than that! Pointing a gun at these nice people … (Pause … looking at The Professors gun and dropping her ruler) Sorry … old habit. Never mind

CLAIRED – (ASIDE: If you can stay calm, while all around you is chaos…then you probably haven't completely understood the gravity of the situation.)

JUSTIN – “Gold”? Nothing in that safe except a few ledgers, some tickets and my lunch.
HELEN – (Directed at the Judge) Judge ... you didn’t say anything about any gold shipment coming to San Juan TODAY?

THE PROFESSOR – Excuse me ... Judge? (Pointing the gun in the Judge’s direction)

LACIE – Lands Sake! Tell him what he wants to know!

THE JUDGE – If you must know ... it’s due in on tomorrow’s train.

JUSTIN – It’s true ... Now let all of these folks go safely and we’ll give you a good head start before we send the sheriff after you.

THE PROFESSOR – (looking at Duncan) Duncan!

DUNCAN – What? Do I look like a calendar?

THE PROFESSOR – Let me see if I’ve got this straight. There wasn’t any gold in the train ... the safe has nothing but a few books and a lunch in it ...

JUSTIN – That’s true ... and a fine lunch is from “Chow Pasta” (Name of a local restaurant).

CUE CARD – Shameless Plug!

DUNCAN – Professor ... maybe we should take him up on his offer... there’s a lot to be said for being above ground instead of pushing up the daisies. Besides ... the whole town has figured out by now ... that your miracle elixir is mostly spring water and grain alcohol.

NATALIE – It is? (Upset ... getting ready to discard the bottle)
THE JUDGE — Grain Alcohol you say! (Taking the bottle Natalie is ready to toss away ... putting it in his pocket)

DUNCAN — So ... I believe it may be about time we Vamoose, Professor.

THE PROFESSOR — Perhaps you’re right ... Let's wind up this business and head north to Alaska ourselves ... I hear there is a "Gold Rush" going on up there

ALL — (In unison) I think I've heard about that somewhere. (Holding up newspapers with the headlines “GOLD FOUND IN ALASKA”)

(The sheriff bursts in with gun drawn and pointing at The Professor and also at Duncan)

THE SHERIFF — What’s going on it here? What’s with all this shecoonery!

HELEN — You mean chicanery?

THE SHERIFF — That’s what I said ... shecoonery! If you don’t mind ... hand over that gun ... Professor!

THE PROFESSOR — Curses!

CUE CARD — Applause ... Hooray

HELEN — About time you got here!
THE SHERIFF – Hands up Professor and I’m sorry to have to say this … you too Duncan.

DUNCAN – Actually, Sheriff, I am undercover for the Pinkertons. (Showing a Special Agent or Train Agent Badge from under his lapel) We’ve had our eyes on The Professor for quite some time. Now, I’ve got enough on him to put him away for years.

LACIE – I just knew you were one of the good guys!

DUNCAN – Oh! I almost forgot Plan “B”. Professor you didn’t light the fuse did you?

(The Professor gives an I’m sorry expression)

(Dusty comes out from the office holding the cannon ball style bomb with a few feet of slow burning cannon fuse or even a 4th of July sparkler or just a length of rope if you don’t want to deal with fire.)

DUSTY – I just went into the office looking for Lacie and it seems like someone forgot this strange bowling ball next to safe? (He starts to walk over with the bomb offering it) Is this yours?

ALL – “NO”! (Pandemonium breaks out.)

LACIE – Throw it!
HELEN – Yes … throw it outside!

(Dusty walks over to the audience ready to throw the bomb out there)

ALL – No!

DUNCAN – No … don’t throw it … it might go off!

JUSTIN – No … people waiting for the next train outside!

DUSTY – Fine then!

(Dusty takes the fuse out of the bomb and throws the fuse in the red “FIRE” bucket that has been sitting waiting for this moment)

NATALIE - Why … Dusty you were so brave saving us from getting blown up an all. You saved us all … you are our Hero.

CUE CARD – Applause … Hooray

DUSTY – Pshaw … it weren’t much. (Pause) Did you say … blown up? (Giving facial and physical expressions of realizing that he almost died. Maybe sitting down … maybe falling down.)

HELEN – That man doesn’t know the meaning of the word fear (ASIDE: But then … come to think of it … he doesn’t seem to
know the meaning of many words.)

PROFESSOR – Drat! (beat) Duncan a Pinkerton!?! How could you? Trusted henchmen are so hard to find.

DUNCAN – We've been through so much together Professor (Patting him on the back) … and most of it was your fault. Go ahead take him away sheriff.

THE PROFESSOR – Curses! You’ll live to regret this … all of you! You’ve not seen the last of Professor Thaddeus Mack! (Maniacal Laugh)

CUE CARD – Hisss … Booo!

HELEN – (To The Professor) If I promise to miss you … will you just please just go away?

THE PROFESSOR – (To The Sheriff … composing himself) It has all been a terrible misunderstanding my good man. Maybe … I went a little over the top with that whole “live to regret this” line.

LACIE – Old scoundrels never die … they just steal away.

THE PROFESSOR – Curses … Foiled Again! (Baaaaah…)

CUE CARD – Applause … Hooray

(Professor, Sheriff & Duncan Exit)

CLAIRE – (Yelling after The Professor as he is taken away) I’ll wait for you Professor! (Helen at Claire’s side) I’ll wait for you.
HELEN – I never liked that man … and I always will.

(SOUND EFFECT – Train Whistle
Cy does this from off stage)

LACIE – The Train’s coming!

THE JUDGE – Oh no … not more singing!

(SOUND EFFECT – Another train whistle and optionally the sound of a train breaking for the station)

(SPECIAL EFFECT – Steam pours in from off stage as the train arrives – smoke machine and fold in the flat that depicts the front of a locomotive)

(Getting off the train … and entering the stage is Josie … the wife of Wyatt Earp. Duncan and the sheriff come back in for the song with the professor in handcuffs or with rope tied around his hands and lead in by the sheriff. Wyatt Earp is waiting in the wings for his entrance a few lines after the song)
SONG – San Juan (derived from New York, I'm All For You)
Public Domain Music and Lyrics by Edwin Weber
Lyrics modified by Gary McCarver
Originally Published in 1917 by Kalmar, Puck & Abrahams

[Verse 1 – Sung by a strong lead … maybe the Judge or Duncan]

They have writ-ten songs of ev'-ry ci-ty and of ev'-ry state
From Mo-bile Bay to I-o-wa, to 'Fris-co's Gold-en Gate
But there is one the best of all that so far they have missed
They've got them all ex-cept the one that head-lines on my list.

[Chorus – Sung by the whole cast as a full production number]
San Juan the pride and en-vy of them all
San Juan as staunch and sol-id as a wall
San Juan where men get out and dare and do
San Juan the home of ev'-ry-thing that's true

San Juan my heart and soul will always stay (in)
San Juan I am so sad when I’m away
San Juan there is no place I would rather go
San Juan Capistrano.

[Repeat Chorus at least one more time]

DUSTY – (Holding the same bag he first arrived with) Well … We
best be off Lacie. I’ll be on the train getting things situated.

LACIE – But … I …

NATALIE – Welcome to San Juan Capistrano … Maam.

HELEN – What brings you to beautiful San Juan?
JOSIE – My husband is owns a couple of saloons down in San Diego and we’re heading north for Nome, Alaska. There’s a gold rush you know.

JUSTIN – (walking over) Yes I may have heard that somewhere. (Holding up a newspaper headline reading “Alaska Gold Rush”)

JOSIE – Well then … Maybe you’ve heard of my husband too … Wyatt Earp.

(Wyatt enters from train tracks)

CUE CARD – Applause … Hooray!

WYATT EARP – (Putting his arm around Josie) You’d be a fool to let her go, son.

JUSTIN – Excuse me? How do you know what’s been going on here?

WYATT EARP – (Holding up the script with his lines) I read the script son.

LACIE – Really?

WYATT EARP – I don’t know what I’d do without my Josie. (Said slowly) I do .. love .. her .. so.

JUSTIN – But I’ve got my position … people are counting on me. My father told me …

WYATT – I knew your father and he was the kind of man who never walked away from a fight. If you want her, son … you have to fight for her.
JUSTIN – You knew my father?

WYATT – Your father was one of the bravest men I have had the privilege to call friend. He knew what he had to do when that train derailed. Your father died dragging passengers off a burning train. Every passenger got out safely and only one man died that day. A hero to the very end.

LACIE – Oh … my!

WYATT – So the question is, son, how do you want to be remembered? … As a raging fire or a dieing ember. Stand your ground and don’t let nobody tell you how to live your life … not even me. You know best what you’ve got to do.

JUSTIN – Thank you.

(Wyatt puts his arm around his wife Josie and they move over to the far side of the stage to exit.)

WYATT – Come now Josie … we ‘best be off to Alaska.

(Wyatt and Josie exit)

(Justin drops what he is doing and runs after Lacie as she heads towards the train platform)

JUSTIN – Lacie … I can’t tell you to stay! But I …

LACIE – (Interrupting) I just need to know one thing… Justin … do you think I am PRETTY?
JUSTIN – Pretty … well … no … actually …

LACIE – (interrupting) I just needed to know … (Sadly turning to get on the train putting a handkerchief to her eyes)

JUSTIN – Lacie … You're not just pretty … to me you're BEAUTIFUL. You always have been … Please don’t walk away! Not now after we’ve found each other again. Please don’t go.

(Lacie walks over to Justin and shows him the distinctive book of poetry that he had given her when they were younger. Opening it to a bookmarked poem.)

JUSTIN – The poetry book I gave you when we were young?

LACIE – “Some reckon their age by years, Some measure their life by art …but some tell their days by the flow of their tears … and their lives by the moans of their hearts. (Reading a poem then closing the book and giving it to Justin)

CUE CARD – AAAAH

LACIE – (ASIDE TO THE AUDIENCE: No matter which way I choose … somebody’s heart gets broken … What should I do? Who should I choose? (pause … listening to the audience)

LACIE – (TO AUDIENCE: Thank you.) (To Justin) My father has made plans for me and so … I must do what I must do. (Gently touching his cheek with her hand outstretched.)

OFF STAGE VOICE – All Aboard!
LACIE – I must go now.

(Putting a handkerchief to her eyes. Lacie rushes off through the station to catch the leaving train. Justin reaches out to the departing Lacie takes a stride then stops letting his arm drop lifeless)

JUSTIN – Lacie … wait.

SOUND EFFECT – (train whistle)

SPECIAL EFFECT – Steam from train as it leaves the depot station. Move the locomotive panel behind the archway.)

EXTRA – A Passenger (rushing up to the ticket booth and demanding Justin’s attention.) Am I too late? Do I still have time?

JUSTIN – No … I think we are both too late. (pause) I just can’t let her go … (Taking off his hat and leaving it on the ticket counter) Lacie wait for me. (rushing off for his quick change)

(Lights fading. Everyone exits the Depot except Cy and Natalie)

CY – (Walking over to the ticket booth) So … when will there be a train that will take me to New York City? Justin are you there …

(Natalie begins playing the INTERLUDE MUSIC)

LIGHTS FADE OUT
EPILOGUE

The Place: Outside Of The San Juan Capistrano Train Depot
The Date: March 4th, 1929
The Time: It is the same evening that began the Melodrama

CUE CARD – San Juan Capistrano 1929

(The Depot’s Stationmaster (Justin Tyme) is again sitting on a bench in front of a darkened set again dressed as an older man. He holds and fidgets with the small book of poetry that Lacie gave him.)

JUSTIN – Well that about brings you up to date. (Pause) The train sped away full of hopes and dreams. They carted off the “Professor” to jail. Claire was good to her word and waited for that old scoundrel … even married him. Later I heard they made a fortune selling worthless shares of stock in a Santa Ana tin mine … not worth a hill of beans … should have figured that. Claire finally married herself a millionaire. Our Piano player Natalie left for New York City and became a big star in Vaudeville … no surprise … lot’s of talent in that woman. I hear that Helen joined the suffrage movement that finally got women the vote in California back about … I think 1911. It took another 9 years before the whole country agreed with her. (pause) It wasn’t too long before the telegraph was replaced by the telephone and the train was replaced by the automobile and even that airplane. (pause) I always said that “If God had meant for us to fly, he wouldn't have given us the Railways.” (pause) Where was I … oh yes … Wyatt and his wife Josie got rich in the Alaska gold fields and then returned to California for keeps.
JUSTIN – As for me … I decided to see the world … you know “Life is too short not to live your dreams” (Quoting Lacie’s Mother from the last act). In case you were wondering … yes I ran after Lacie’s train, but I couldn’t catch it.

CUE CARD – AAAAAH

(Lacie comes around a flat in a grey wig, a shawl and bespectacled herself. Standing behind Justin sitting on the bench.)

LACIE – … Are you boring these nice folks with that old story again? (Referencing the audience)

CUE CARD – Applause … Horray!

I had to do what I had to do… I had to tell that son of a buffalo rancher to leave without me. I got off the train in Barstow and headed back here … to you. Father got over me not marrying Dusty… I’m not sure if Dusty ever did. It didn’t hurt any that your father’s insurance money helped save the “Camisole Ranch”. (Said to Justin) You and I were married that spring. It was a beautiful ceremony and we spent the rest of our lives raising a family and visiting far off places. (Lacie kisses his head)

JUSTIN – (Standing from the bench slowly) We’ve had a wonderful life … haven’t we Lacie? Traveled the world and now back again here to where it all began years ago.

LACIE – Hey … there’s my poetry book! (Taking it from Justin and opening it to a page to read a poem) “Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be. The last of life … for which the first was made.” (Closing the book again and handing it to Justin)
JUSTIN – You know … I always loved poems by Robert Browning.

LACIE – You know … I always … loved you … you old “train man”. (Pause) Come on now … the grandchildren are waiting for us over at that El Adobe Restaurant. (Local Restaurant’s Name)

CUE CARD – Shameless Plug

(Justin and Lacie start to slowly walk off stage her arm around his back … him walking with a cane)

LACIE – Now don’t have too much pie … you know what the doctor said.” … “I know dear … I know”.)

(SOUND EFFECT – A train whistle wailing in the distance)

FADE TO BLACK
BLOCKING & DIRECTOR’S NOTES
PROPERTY LIST
RECOMMENDED PROPS & SET DRESSING

They say that “clothing makes the man” I prefer to think that “Wardrobe makes the Melodrama”. There are countless sources for clothing and props that are appropriate for the late 1800s. Here are a few of the author’s favorites. Stick with top quality brands like Wah Maker, Frontier Classics or Scully. The Professor has a top hat, Justin has a conductor’s hat, both wear vests, Lacie dresses in fine Victorian style western wear, Helen can be outfitted similarly or more “Calamity Jane” style if you desire. And don’t forget millinery for Lacie and perhaps a parasol.

Wild West Mercantile www.wwmerc.com
Texas Jack’s Outfitter www.texasjacks.com
Calico Annie’s www.calicoannie.net
Gentlemen’s Emporium www.gentlemansemporium.com
Western Stage Props www.WesternStageProps.com
Village Hat Shop www.villagehatshop.com

Most of what you need in the way of props will be found in any theatre’s prop room others you can build (like a life size cut out of a steam locomotive. But a few you might have to find elsewhere.

A red metal bucket painted with the word FIRE written in white. Black feathers and a mud nests for the swallows in Depot eaves. Old suitcases (with travel labels) or carpet bags for the travelers.

A “cannon ball” bomb and fuse (Less imposing than dynamite). Have a few piles of newspapers with headlines of the ALASKA GOLD RUSH around. A couple of holsters, and maybe a peacemaker or two.
Possibly a pocket derringer for The Professor, a cane for the older Stationmaster, converted kerosene lanterns, a desk of old west playing cards, a gold pocket watch for Justin, another for The Professor, a book of poetry, a sheriff’s badge, two glasses and a bottle of gin.

One important prop you will have to create is The Professor’s Miracle Elixir of Life Traveling Medicine Show Trunk. It was created from an inexpensive trunk found in a container store, decorated with old style hotel and travel stickers, shelves installed to hold an assortment of Potions, Pills, Tonics, and elixirs. Plus a few Phrenology props. Plus a hole drilled for his cane.

He has a black cape or old west rifle frock (think Tombstone), wears a bright vest and has garters on each sleeve to match. Get a supply of small “medicine style” bottles and print out labels from the templates available at the website.

www.heroandvillain.com
PROPERTY GALLERY
A FEW MORE PROPS FROM THE 2005 PRODUCTION
SCENE DESIGN
DIRTY DEEDS AT THE DEPOT MELODRAMA

One rendition and a scale model of the Depot set.
ADDED BONUS
THEATRICAL MELODRAMATIC EMOTIONS

Melodrama is essentially a theatre of emotions … a gesture here, an inflection there. “Over the Top” facial and physical expressions that you might typify as sensational, sentimental or thrilling … an exuberance of emotions rather than the more realistic motivations we normally experience.

In Melodrama every character, every action, every predicament stays true to character. The good guys are really good and the villain is really bad … that’s just how it is. Happy endings are the rule and the villain always gets what he deserves in the end.

Conflict, misadventure and desperation that are resolved at the very last moment, unexpected revelations, unexpected twists or turns are all ingredients of the successful melodrama. On stage however, the results of small actions taken are not necessarily recognized, but the consequences are foreshadowed to increase the tension inherent in the play. It is not telegraphed, but set up so that there is some sense of expectation of what might occur. The decisions that characters ‘might take’ and 'might not' take are presented as possible alternatives and the audience envisions several outcomes. As a result, when things do not go as might be expected, the audience is moved into a state of wondering of what might happen next. The actors knowing what is actually going to happen can help push the limits of audience frustration and take them where they never thought they would go and it can be a lot of fun. Melodrama is an audience participation style of entertainment and your villain may want to memorize several dozen snappy “come backs” to the inevitable heckler’s remark.
**Anger** – The actor’s hands are both shoulder high ... eyebrows are pushed toward each other ... with the actor’s face tense with a grimace ... hands in tight fists.

**Fear** – The actor’s face is turned to the right side... eyes wide ... with the right hand to the mouth, fingers curled under touching the top of the palm. Optionally both hands can come to the cheeks with the fingers extended.

**Grief or Sorrow** – The actor’s shoulders rounded ... head down and hands cupping the face. Shoulders rise up and down ... with an optional sobbing noise.

**Love (Male)** – The actor’s chest is held high with his right hand crossing the chest and resting upper left over the heart - opening out to the right and his loved one.

**Love (Female)** – The actor’s chest is held high with her head cocked a bit to one side the opposite leg goes out with foot pointed ... hands under the chin ... fingers entwined and bent at the first and second knuckles (almost praying), hands then go out towards her beloved with a broad beaming smile on her face.

**Villainous Scheming** – One eyebrow up, the other down, a grimace on the face and hands rubbing together, if it is a really good plan, the fingers twiddle.

**Villainous Sneaking** – Shoulders hunched over, one arm raised to cover the nose on down, eyes free to shift around the room, legs bent on the cross of the stage. If you have one ... twirl your black cape or duster as you enter the scene.

**Feeling Overwhelmed** – Chin up bringing the face to look up, one arm dropped limp to the side, the other hand open with palm towards the audience on the top of the forehead.
ADDED BONUS
A FEW VILAINWOUS HECKLER RESPONSES

Here are just a few heckler responses that your resident villain can use to keep control of the performance when a barrage of heckles ensue. A comprehensive compendium of responses can be found online at http://www.heroandvillain.com.

Not playing with a full deck? Heck, he's not even in the game!
Ignore him. He's a few swallows shy of a full flock.
I'm glad to see you're not letting your education get in the way of your ignorance.
A sharp tongue is no indication of a keen mind.
I can't seem to remember you name, and please don't help me!
I'm not as dumb as you look.
Any friend of yours ... is a friend of yours.
He is always lost in thought -- it's unfamiliar territory.
I can't talk to you right now; tell me, where will you be in ten years?
I hear that you're a self-made man. It's nice of you to take the blame!
I like your approach, now let's see your departure.
I'd hate to see you go, but I'd love to watch you leave!
The trick, my friend, is to keep an open mind, but not so open that your brains fall out, my friend.

I'm busy working now. Can I ignore you some other time?

Look, don't go to a mind reader; go to a palmist; I know you've got a palm.

Some people don't hesitate to speak their minds because they have nothing to lose.

Obviously inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity.

What he lacks in intelligence, he more than makes up for in stupidity.

Nature not content with denying him the ability to think, has unfortunately endowed him with the ability to wildly make incoherent comments when other people are working.

He is as useless as a pulled tooth.

Some folks are wise … and some are otherwise.

I firmly believe that there's one too many people in this playhouse … and sir … I think it's you.

He just got lost in thought … It was unfamiliar territory.

(For repeat Hecklers) I think I'm experiencing a bit of “Deja Mooo”. A strange feeling that I've heard this bull before.

You can lead a man to knowledge, but you can't make him think.

Sir … It has been my profound lack of pleasure not to be able to avoid meeting you.

Sir … I'm not as dumb as you look.
WHY ONLY PUBLIC DOMAIN MUSIC IS USED

Here are a few reasons why the songs used in this Melodrama are derived from music with expired copyrights (i.e. in the Public Domain). Besides the fact that they “feel” right for the time period … since they came from the late 1800s … Under U.S. copyright law, any edition of sheet music that was first copyrighted before January 1, 1923 is in the public domain in the U.S., even if the copyright was renewed, the book that contained the sheet music is still in the public domain as long as it was initially copyrighted before January 1, 1923. Prior to 1998, U.S. copyright law featured a "75 year" rule whereby copyright on a musical work lasted 75 years from the first year it was copyrighted. In 1998, that was changed to 95 years. However, the 1998 law was not retroactive and works that were out of copyright before the law was passed are still out of copyright and anyone is free to use its music and lyrics in the U.S. without permission.

Even though this manuscript is protected by copyright, since the songs are in public domain … they stay there and can not be copyrighted again in their original form. However some of the lyrics share only a passing resemblance to the original works from which they were derived, and as such, the new lyrics written specifically for this play are protected. Any copyright notice in this manuscript is for the play content and modified lyrics only. There are many Web sites with enormous data bases of works in the Public Domain and that is where the songs selected for this melodrama were found. If however some work used as the basis for this Melodrama’s music wound up in a purported Public Domain database by mistake, please inform the author and immediately actions will be taken to remove that song from future publications of this manuscript.
For more Melodramas and Melodrama related Materials visit

www.HeroAndVillain.com