

The Girl of the Flying X or Sputters
The Western Play by George Crawley

One of the most popular tent show plays of all time, *The Girl of the Flying X*, better known by its subtitle, *Sputters*, was written by George Crawley in 1916. Crawley began as an actor, and later managed his own tent company called Crawley's Comedians. According to Michael Kramme in a typescript from the Theatre Museum in Mt. Pleasant, Crawley also wrote *Sally Dugan, Inc.* and *Angel of Hell's Valley*. Crawley died on March 11, 1930 in his hometown of Iron Dale, Missouri.

The version that follows is also from the Theatre Museum in Mt. Pleasant and contains no credit to Crawley as the playwright. As we have mentioned before, piracy was a terrible problem and Robert Sherman one of the most infamous pirates. Instead, the title page reads:

PRODUCERS PLAY COMPANY

Robert L. Sherman, President

Chicago, Illinois

The western bill was just that, a play set in the west, and most companies featured one Western bill per week. The defining feature of this particular bill is the character of Sputters, a stuttering cowboy. The character, Rose, teaches Sputters to speak without stuttering by having him draw an imaginary square with his finger. He can then only speak clearly for long periods of time by constantly repeating the movements. This particular comic premise provided limitless prospects for physical comedy, for which Toby comics were known. Though Sputters is not a named Toby role, Toby comedians favored this

role above most others, a role rivaled only by Lun in *The Awakening of John Slater*.

ACT I

(SPUTTERS discovered at rise asleep on bench. He snores as curtain goes up. He stutters whenever the occasion permits.)

KEEMA: (At rise enters from house – apparently anxious and worried about Zambra) Zambra, where heem been? Keema would like to know. For five times him come and go back. Never tell me when I ask. Ah-him coming fast.

(exits into house quickly)

ZAMBRA: (Enters L.U. holding his arm as if bruised) Whoa! Caramba! But it is bad. Dat one time they almost get me. Maybe so de next time they will catch me, and then – Bah! Me Zambra, me no afraid. Two, three more trips and I no work for dese Gringos no more. (Starts to go)

KEEMA: (Enters from house) Zambra, you come back?

ZAMBRA: (Turns quickly – drops paper accidentally) What you do here, huh?

KEEMA: (Starting to him) To see you, Zambra. (He turns away) You do not wish it, I go. (Turns to go)

ZAMBRA: Oh, I no care, Keema. But sometimes I think you watch, you spy on me.

KEEMA: No, no, Zambra – I no care for what you go away, only you are not to me, as you were before. You still love Keema, don't you Zambra.

ZAMBRA: Oh – Maybe so.

KEEMA: Zambra, you no love me?

ZAMBRA: Of course, yes, Keema, but trust me, I have work to do. Work plenty hard so I get money for you and me. Den me Zambra, and you Keema, we go back to our own Mexico. You

like that Keema, huh?

KEEMA: Oh, I die to be there now, Zambra – when –

(Sees his injured arm)

Oh, you hurt?

ZAMBRA: Oh no, no, I no hurt. Just scratched from brush when I ride boundary north last night. Keema, you listen, you no say no word of this to Gringos. (Indicates arm)

KEEMA: I no speak, Zambra. Just so long as I know you love me, den Zambra I come for nothing else.

(Sputters snores)

ZAMBRA: Sh! You might wake him. (Indicates Sputters) I go now.

KEEMA: You no come back today?

ZAMBRA: I work here all today, always I work here by day you see.

KEEMA: Of course, Zambra, yes.

ZAMBRA: To-night Keema, maybe so I come. (Starts R.) Adios! (Exits R.U.)

KEEMA: Adios.

(Sees – and picks up paper he drops-reads)

“Neet ammunition train twelve P.X. 16Th-near twenty mile point. Escort train to river. Use same signal. Joe.” Joe! Oh, that is Joe Daious. Senor Villa's spy. It says heem who is getting - - - what you call things for guns to shoot across Little River to Villa. Ah, Zambra, you no love Keema now, Keema might tell. (Holding up document) Dis I keep. (Exits behind house)

MRS BAILEY: (Enters from house with bucket) What's that noise? (Sees Sputters on bench) Oh, it's you is it, Sputters? Do you hear me you lazy critter, you. How can you sleep in the boiling hot sun is more than I know, but I do know that you are going to get up and do some work. (Sputters snores loudly) Now you get out of this and get busy. (Grabs hold of him and shakes him) The Colonel didn't hire you to lay out here all day and snore!

SPUTTERS: (Waking up and stuttering) Did you say snore, Miss Bailey?

MRS BAILEY: Yes, I said snore, Sputters.

SPUTTERS: (Stutters) But I don't snore.

MRS BAILEY: Don't snore! Why you snore so loud the chickens won't come near the house to feed.

SPUTTERS: (Shaking head and stuttering) Don't snore.

MRS BAILEY: How do you know you don't?

SPUTTERS: (Stutters) Laid awake lots of times to see if I did. Don't snore a bit.

MRS BAILEY: Get out. You're crazy. (Starts after him)

SPUTTERS: (Stuttering) I may be crazy, but I don't snore.

MRS BAILEY: Well, have it your own way, but get a move on and get to work. The rest of these punchers will think we are trying to make a hot house plant out of you. They are always on the job, and there is some branding to be done this afternoon – don't forget that.

SPUTTERS: (Stuttering) Well – let them do it.

MRS BAILEY: (Up to well) Why not let you do it?

SPUTTERS: (Yawns – stutters) I can't bear to see 'em suffer.

MRS BAILEY: Dah! You get out or I'll drown you.

SPUTTERS: I'm going then, Mrs. Bailey.

MRS BAILEY: Well, see that you do, I'm tired of looking at you.

SPUTTERS: Oh say, is Miss Rose coming home sure nuff today, huh?

MRS BAILEY: Yes, the Colonel has gone after her, now.

SPUTTERS: (pauses – thoughtfully – stutters) She kissed me when she came home a year ago, she did.

MRS BAILEY: (impatiently-) Good Lord, are you going or not?

SPUTTERS: (shying away-) Wait, I'm already gone. (Ducks out R upper – quickly)

MRS BAILEY: That Sputters, sure is the limit. If it ain't one thing it's another. But, I don't know that this place could be without him.

(comes down to bench-sits)

Just think my little girl will be home today. I wonder if he's 'tending school in Phoenix.

(Zambra enters at back - during speech)

I don't know way, but that has always carried me, more or less. If Rose would ever want to leave I'd be ready to quit myself and I know the Colonel would too. Pshaw, what am I thinking of? But I do wish they'd come.

(rises and turns facing Zambra – who has come down)

Well I'll be blessed. Say Zambra, I wish you'd make a noise

when you come around me. You creep upon my us with about as much noise as a gee-lee monster. I don't like it.

ZAMBRA: I think maybe so, Mees Bailey. (leers at her)

MRS BAILEY: Well, then don't forget it. The next time kick something over, the next time you desire to make a call near the house and I'll stand the damages.

(aside as she goes to house)

What the Colonel wants with that greaser is more than I can understand. (Exits into house)

ZAMBRA: (Looking after her) You no like me, huh? Maybe some time I say dat same thing, Mees Bailey Gringo; Bah. Me, I am no afraid.

(imitating her)

Make beeg noise, when I come. Maybe so, I will make big noise.

(exit U.L.)

(Sputters enters up right – looking after Zambra-)

SPUTTERS: Damn Greaser. (Calls to house) SAY.

MRS BAILEY: (Enters from house) Well, what now?

SPUTTERS: (stutters) They - coming.

MRS BAILEY: Who? Rose and the Colonel? You mean?

SPUTTERS: Uh Huh!

(exits down to R.)

MRS BAILEY: Oh yes, sure enough it's Rose. Oh the darling, see how tall she is.

ROSE: (Runs on U.R.) Oh, mother, mother, you dear old

darling mother. (They embrace)

MRS BAILEY: My little girl, my little baby girl. OH- I'm so glad to have you back again.

ROSE: (Holding Mrs. Bailey's hand) And you don't know how glad I am to get home again. A young lady's seminary may be alright mother mine, but home is so much better though. I wonder how I managed to stay away from it as long as I did. (Kisses her)

MRS BAILEY: Oh, they can't change you Rose darling, can they? You don't forget home and mother.

ROSE: Mother how could you think of such a thing? (Sees Sputters) Why, it's Sputters. Forgive me, Sputters, but I did not see you.

(Takes his hand)

But I am so glad you are here to meet me. I thought perhaps you might have left us. Cow-punchers have reputation of having a roaming nature you know, and if you were not here, who would I have to accompany me on my rides?

MRS BAILEY: Oh, no danger of him leaving, he's got it too easy here to think of that. All he does lately, is sleep and I do believe he gets tired of doing that.

ROSE: Now mother dear, I believe you are rather hard on poor Sputters.

(Xes to house)

You dear old home, how I have longed to see you. The architecture of the one I lived in, in Phoenix is superb compared to you.

(Turns to Mrs. Bailey)

But mother you don't know how many times I longed for this old home and my own room again.

SPUTTERS: (Whispers to Mrs. Bailey) Say, she didn't do it.

MRS BAILEY: Didn't do what?

SPUTTERS: (Stutters) Kiss me this time.

MRS BAILEY: (Laughs) Oh my - - -

ROSE: What is it, mother?

MRS BAILEY: Sputters says you kissed him the last time you came home and -

ROSE: And in my happiness at being home once more I forgot it this time.

(Xes to him)

But we can soon remedy that.

(Sputters . . .bus of backing away – wiping his mouth with his sleeve)

ROSE: Here here. Why Sputters what a poor soldier you would make. Now then Sputters.

(kisses him)

How's that?

SPUTTERS: (Stutters) Great! Do it again.

ROSE: (Laughs- Turns, and sees Zambra) Mother, who's that?

MRS BAILEY: (Turns) Oh, just a greaser your father picked up about a month ago. Zambra, this is my daughter, Miss Rose.

ZAMBRA: (Elaborate bow) Senorita!

ROSE: (Bows) Senor Zambra.

MRS BAILEY: Come now, dear, let us go in. I've a thousand questions I want to ask you. (exit into house with Mrs. Bailey)

SPUTTERS: (To Zambra) (Stutters) Well, what are you standing there looking at? Get out of here. Here me?

ZAMBRA: (Xes to R.C.) I no afraid of you.

SPUTTERS: What? You won't go?

ZAMBRA: When I want to go, but not till den.

SPUTTERS: Why - - - cuss you - - -I'll - - -

(starts for him. ZAMBRA draws knife)

COLONEL: (Enters) Here you Zambra - - put up that knife. Sputters, what's the row?

SPUTTERS: Nothing much. Just don't like him, that's all.

COLONEL: Well, clear out, both of you. The boys are needing your help right now. So get busy.

Don't believe I blame Sputters. I don't take much to that greaser myself. Seems to be a good man around cattle but too derned sneaking in his ways. I do wish somebody would come along this road that knew the first principles of handling this place. I'm getting too old to be on the jump continually. It sure does make my old bones ache. (Sits R.)

ROSE: (Enters from house in time to hear it) Has my father fallen into the habit of talking to himself? (Sits beside him) That sir, is a very bad sign.

COLONEL: No Rose, I was just thinking of that greaser I picked up a while back. That fellow kinda gets on my nerves at times, and I guess I was muttering out loud.

ROSE: What about him, father?

COLONEL: Well, I hardly know, Rose; he's a good man on the job, but – well dern it all gal, he puts me in mind of something that crawls.

ROSE: Why not get rid of him, father?

COLONEL: Yes, I could do that, but I'm awful short of help as it is. I need every man I've got, yes, and more, too.

ROSE: Mother said Mr. Thomas, your foreman, had left you and taken a position with his brother in Texas.

COLONEL: Yes, and I' sure do miss him, too. I've sorta been trying to hold up his end myself. I wish a good man might happen along.

(JIM EDWARDS enters – he carries a saddle – comes to stage centre – and stops - unobserved)

ROSE: I could ride in the round-up, you know. Your daughter used to be quite a cow-puncher.

COLONEL: Bless your heart, so you are. But I guess we can manage it somehow. If Thomas had only stayed until next month all would have been well.

ROSE: Then all you are really in need of is a good man for foreman.

COLONEL: Yes dear, and I wish the Lord a good man might just happen along.

JIM: (drops saddle just inside the gate) I'll take that job, pardner.

COLONEL: (Rises) Did you say something?

JIM: (Lifting hat and crossing down centre) I said I'd take that job as foreman.

COLONEL: OH - - -Know the work?

JIM: Born to it.

COLONEL: Might I ask where you're from?

JIM: You might.

COLONEL: Ahem; You – you look all right.

JIM: I am, pardner.

COLONEL: Bailey is my name. (holds out hand)

JIM: (takes his hand) Mine's Edwards. Jim Edwards.

COLONEL: My daughter Miss Rose.

JIM: (Nods) Miss Rose. (Turns to Colonel) Job mine?

COLONEL: Yes, it's yours. About the pay - -

JIM: You look over my work first. (Starts up) Where's the bunch?

COLONEL: Wait a while, I'm going out myself. Bunk house is off there. (points L.) I'll be over there in a minute.

JIM: Alright. (Picks up saddle and exits off L.U.)

ROSE: (Stamps foot) Oh-

COLONEL: Hurrah, I got a foreman, you can't fool me. By Jongo, Rose you're coming home has brought me luck.

ROSE: He may be a good foreman, I hope he is. But he certainly must have left his manners in the last place he worked, or perhaps he never had any.

COLONEL: Why, what's got into your head now child? The fellow seemed right enough.

ROSE: Did he father?

COLONEL: Why, to be sure, Rose. Course he didn't seem to

want to tell where he hailed from, but you know it's the custom out here not to inquire into a man's past. That is not too deep.

ROSE: I guess you are right, father dear. Oh, I almost forgot. Do you know I nearly offended poor Sputters. (Xes and sits R.I.)

COLONEL: Oh, I guess not he likes you too well for that.

ROSE: Oh, but I did. You know last year when I came home he met me at the station.

COLONEL: Yes, I know dear – I had gone to Bisbee on business.

ROSE: Well, I was so glad to see someone from home that I immediately grabbed Sputters when I alighted from the train and gave him a kiss.

COLONEL: Why, Rose dear.

ROSE: The poor dear, seemed to enjoy it, for this time I forgot my act – and - -

COLONEL: Yes, and - -

ROSE: He gave me to understand that he expected it.

COLONEL: (Laughs heartily) And you kissed that ugly freckle faced cow-puncher again? Shame on you.

ROSE: (Laughs) He is good boy, isn't he father?

COLONEL: Yes, but he ain't worth a continental on the job; I just keep him around so the boys can tease him and amuse themselves.

SPUTTERS: (Enters R.U. - stutters) Mong-mong-monkey.

COLONEL: (Rises) Whose a monkey. Eh?

SPUTTERS: Oh, I jest want to to to to to say -

ROSE: (Rises) Sputters proceed.

SPUTTERS: I - I jess want – ant-wanted to say if he monkeys around me I'll cut off his ears and put tin ones in place of 'em dern him.

ROSE: Has he been bothering you?

SPUTTERS: No n-n not on your life. I jess' don't like him, that's all.

ROSE: (laughs) You poor old Sputters. By the way I want to ask you something if you promise not to be angry.

SPUTTERS: (stuttering) Le-Le-Let her fly.

ROSE: Do you always stutter?

SPUTTERS: No, only when I talk.

COLONEL: Now I guess you'll be good, won't you?

ROSE: For shame, Sputters.

SPUTTERS: Oh, I didn't mean nothing. Honest, I didn't. Say, who is that fellow over there by the bunk house?

COLONEL: Bless me, I'd forgotten all about him. That fellow, Sputters, unless I'm mistaken is going to be your foreman.

SPUTTERS: Sure enough?

COLONEL: Yes, sure enough. I've got to go into the house for a minute. And you just run over and tell him I'll be over in a jiffy.

SPUTTERS: All right. (Exit R.U.)

COLONEL: (crossing to house) Are you coming, Rose?

ROSE: Not yet, father. I just want to remain out here and

convince myself that I'm really home again, and that I'm not dreaming.

COLONEL: (laughingly) All right, but I don't reckon you'll be allowed to remain out here long before your mother'll be after you. She'll have you very busy answering questions for the next ten days. (exit in the house)

ROSE: Dear old Dad. How I love him. His hair is growing grayer day by day. And mother what would I do without them?

(crosses to gate)

Pshaw, if I let my thoughts run in that direction I'll be having the blues my first day home. Jim Edwards. Nice looking, but just a little shy of the ladies.

(exits into house)

ZAMBRA:(Enters R.U.- looking after ROSE) Senorita Rose. How long she stay on dee Flying X I wonder? Maybe if tings go good wid Zambra Mees Rose-mebbe, would - -; bah. If I get money – all of it – Mees Rose, mebbe just soon be Zambra's wife as – but I wait I wait. Dat paper I get from Joe, hees gone. If dees Gringoes find it dey know where I go, what I do. And Joe, if heem know I lose dat, he will kill me. Sure.

KEEMA: (Enters from behind house – Xes to centre) Zambra; why you come back from the house?

ZAMBRA: (glancing around) Sh. Listen. Little while ago when I get off de horse, in my pocket I have paper.

KEEMA: Paper Zambra.

ZAMBRA: Santa Maria, yes. An' dat paper I lose, you hear? (grabs her by arm)

KEEMA: Of course, Zambra. But my arm- you hurt.

ZAMBRA: If dees Gringoes dey find dat paper, I leave here quick- before I go to fail- before I get shot. You see?

KEEMA: But why, Zambra? I no understand.

ZAMBRA: Dat is my business. Keema, you listen, I go now back to corral to look, to hunt. You find out queek if deese Gringoes get dat paper and Keema you no stop till you know where dat paper go. Den you quick tell me.

KEEMA: Yes, Zambra, I go find out for sure. (Xes into house)

ZAMBRA: (Pointing R.) Good, I go there,. In three-five minutes I come back.

KEEMA: Yes, Zambra. Adios. (Exits into house)

ZAMBRA: And dat man, what he do here? Santa Maria he come dis way. (Exits R.U. quickly)

JIM: (Enters L.U.E. Xes down to well) Yes, old timer, I'm sure on for foreman of this outfit. That is, of course if I make good. (Drink water at well)

SPUTTERS: Guess you know the work all right. You look like a puncher.

JIM: Much obliged; say what do they call you anyway?

SPUTTERS: (crossing to L C-stutters) Sput- Sput – Sputters.

JIM: All of that or just the last part?

SPUTTERS: Now dern it, don't you start in on this job of making fun of me.

JIM: Oh, you're dead wrong. I wouldn't think of it.

SPUTTERS: Sure 'nuff?

JIM: Sure enough.

SPUTTERS: (stuttering) Oh, it's just the last part; you see I stut-stutter.

JIM: Oh, you do eh?

SPUTTERS: Ye- yep – maybe you didn't notice it but I sure do.

JIM: Isn't that too bad?

SPUTTERS: Huh-uh; You see I stut-stut-stut--

JIM: Stutter.

SPUTTERS: And they call me Sput-Sput-Sput--

JIM: Sputters; Well, Sputters my name is Jim Edwards and I'm glad to see you.

SPUTTERS: (shakes hands with Jim) Same to you and many of them.

JIM: Did you say the Colonel would be out to the bunk house right away?

SPUTTERS: Ye-ye-yes and we'd better get out there.

JIM: Alright, let's go. (crosses toward R.U.)

SPUTTERS: (stutters) And say, anything you want to know about the old Flying X, you jest come to Sput-Sput

JIM: Sputters?

SPUTTERS: That's her. Come on. (Exits L.U.)

ROSE: (Enters from house) I thought I heard someone out here talking.

(looks around)

Oh, it's the new foreman, and Sputters. Well, I'm glad he can

talk to some one even if he can't converse with me. (Starts for house)

ZAMBRA: (Enters R.U.) Senortia! - Mess Rose. (comes C.)

ROSE: Oh!

ZAMBRA: I scare you, huh?

ROSE: A little yes. Pardon me, but I did not know you were there.

ZAMBRA: No, mebbe so.

ROSE: Did you want to see my father? I'll call him. (starts)

ZAMBRA: You wait a little, Mess Rose.

ROSE: Be quick. What is it you wish?

ZAMBRA: You, I see kiss heem, Mr. Sputters I mean, huh?

ROSE: Pardon me. (Starts for house)

ZAMBRA: (Grabs her wrist) You kees him, why you no kees Zambra too. You will huh? Maybe so?

ROSE: Let go of my arm, you brute, or I'll call my father. Quick now . . .

ZAMBRA: But first I get my kees, den maybe you won't tell.

(Grabs her and tries to kiss her)

JIM: (Enters and throws ZAMBRA down) You dog. Don't be frightened, Miss.

(COLONEL AND MRS. BAILEY enter from house)

ROSE: (Xes to Col) Oh, father.

COLONEL: What is it girl?

JIM: Get up, you snake, and don't you hit anything but the high

places until you reach the men, then you climb on the job and be mighty sure you stay on it.

ZAMBRA: Santa Maria save me.

(Bus. Sputters enters stands by gate)

It's the killer, the killer.

JIM: Are you going or shall I kick you out.

ZAMBRA: Si, Senor, I go I go.

(Slinks away and exits R.U.) (SPUTTERS kicks at him when he passes)

SPUTTERS: I've been wanting to do that for a whole month.

COLONEL: (Laughs) Sputters, you better keep an eye open for that greaser, he won't forget that. (Xes C. to Sputters)

SPUTTERS: (Stutters) Don't want him to. If he pulls that knife on me again I'll sure smoke him up.

MRS BAILEY: Well, don't you get into any fights Sputters.

SPUTTERS: (Stutters) Don't you worry. There won't be any. I'll just kill him and the Colonel can bury him. Come on, Jim.

JIM: (Laughs) Alright, Sputters. (Exits L.U. with Sputters)

MRS BAILEY: You had better get rid of that greaser, Colonel, even if you are short handed.

COLONEL: Yes, I suppose I had. But dern it all, honey, I could work more men than I have now. Heretofore I've always had a full crew. But those blamed moving picture people have raked this country over with a fine tooth comb and just about taken all of the good punchers. (Xes to R. and sits)

ROSE: Is that so, father. I wonder if they could place a good cow-girl. (Laughs)

MRS BAILEY: Rose dear, you wouldn't - - -

ROSE: No mother I don't believe I would. Still from what I hear of it, it must be a very pleasant engagement to receive a salary for what they do.

COLONEL: You said it there, Rose, it's the salary that landed those cow-boys. These picture people can afford to pay a heap better wage than I can and yet I have always paid the best I could.

MRS BAILEY: Well, never mind, if it comes to a show down Rose and I will get on the job.

COLONEL: Say, I'd give a hundred just to see you climb on that horse Cactus. Lord, what an upheaval there would be. (Laughs)

ROSE: Oh, I don't know, father. I've seen mother hold down some pretty fly bronks, and not so many years ago either.

MRS BAILEY: Huh, well I reckon.

COLONEL: Yes, but mother's afraid of Cactus. You see, Rose, I got a little joke about that horse and your ma. You know she -

MRS BAILEY: Colonel Bailey, you dry up right now.

COLONEL: (Laughing and Xes to house.) I ain't said a word, honey. I ain't said a word.

MRS BAILEY: No, and you better not either.

ROSE: Tell me, mother.

COLONEL: I'll bet she don't, but you wait until I get a chance, Rose, and I'll tell you about it. Coming in?

ROSE: Yes, father.

(To Mrs. Bailey) Come, dear.

(They exit into house)

JIM: (Enters L.U.) By Jove, I hope I haven't lost that. That was mother's pin, and pshaw – I can't lose that, I've got to find it.
(down on knees)

ROSE: (Enters from house – sees Jim looking for something) I wonder what he's looking for.

(Gets down on their knees and grope around looking for lost article – as they are down Sputters enters at back – and speaks just as Rose and Jim heads bump together - pause)

SPUTTERS: What the hell you two looking for?

CURTAIN

ACT II

(At rise, KEEMA discovered at gate looking off anxiously. MRS. BAILEY enters from house.)

MRS BAILEY: Keema, you startled me standing there for all the world like an Indian on the lookout. Who are you looking for?

KEEMA: I -- I -- look for Zambra.

MRS BAILEY: Zambra! Look here, Keema, you let that greaser alone. Don't you take any stock in the likes of him there whatever. He ain't worth the power and the lord to blow him to Kingdom Come. What's he been saying to you, huh?

KEEMA: Why him say nothing, Miss Bailey, heem only---

MRS BAILEY: Yes, he has, too. He's said enough to have you cut here looking for him with all the eyes you've got. And I'm telling you right now that it ain't going to do you no good whatsoever. I didn't even know that you ever spoke to that man. Did you know him before he came here to work?

KEEMA: A little I know him Mees Bailey.

MRS BAILEY: That's just because you don't know. You're young and trusting and that cow thief can wrap you right around his little finger.

KEEMA: But to me I say, heem good.

MRS BAILEY: Huh! He sure has been talking to you to get you talking like that. Come here to me Keema.

Now see here girl, you know I like you and that you can stay right here with us just as long as you like. But you get this straight in that little head of yours. You keep away from that greaser cause I won't have it. He don't mean you no good, and if I catch him around here looking for you, I'll just break his no-account neck for him.

KEEMA: I know you he been good to me. But I am plenty old to have what you call - -

MRS BAILEY: A sweetheart. Well, that's alright. But you get one that is part man and not a knife sticking coyote like this Zambra. You just wait until the right one shows up and I'll help you plan how to catch him. And in case one don't show up in the next six months, I'll have the Colonel look some of them over. Now remember that, Keema, and do as I say and after is said and done, you'll be mighty glad you did as you were told.

KEEMA: Well, Mees Bailey, I get water for you?

MRS BAILEY: No, I'll get it. You better go in the house and finish that ironing so that we will have it up and out of the way.

KEEMA: Very well. I go do him quick. (Exits)

MRS BAILEY: Guess I'll have to keep my eyes open as long as that Zambra stays here. Love. Lord what a funny thing. Even the dogs and coyotes catch it.

Oh, well--

I thought so. My I do wish that girl wouldn't ride like that. Just look at her, dear, dear me.

ROSE: Who boy you beauty. Hold up. (Off stage then enters)

MRS BAILEY: Well, bless me if she hasn't been riding that devil horse Cactus again. Rose child, that horse will kill you. He just broke every bone in Mr. Thomas' body before he left here.

ROSE: Why mother dear, surely you think I'm a better horsemen than Mr. Thomas is. Why he can't ride at all.

MRS BAILEY: Yes, but Rose dear--

ROSE: There, there, dear-- don't worry. If I get tossed, Sputter will pick up the pieces.

MRS BAILEY: Sputter, where is she?

ROSE: Poor fellow, he didn't even have a chance. The last I saw of him he was at the Forks where I turned into the old cow trail for home. We will be along presently.

MRS BAILEY: Well, I wish you wouldn't.

ROSE: Let me, mother.

Is mother at home?

MRS BAILEY: No, he went to the bank early this morning. Tomorrow is my day, you know.

ROSE: Yes, so father told me. And I promised to straighten up his books tonight. (Exits into house)

MRS BAILEY: Bless your dear heart.

There comes poor Sutters.

SPUTTERS: Whoa! Yuh dern bronk. (Off stage then enters)

Dern horses anyway.

Burn bust yer; you orter have sense enough to stop when you get home. You know I can't say whoa any time I want.

Miss Rose sure kin ride; I ain't got a look in with her.

ROSE: (Enters from house) Hello, Sputters, I haven't seen you for a month. How's your good health?

SPUTTERS: Oh-oh-oh to the devil with you; anyhow my bronk went lame.

ROSE: Now Sputters; do you expect me to believe that? Why I always beat you; Now don't I? Own up, Sputters.

SPUTTERS: Ye-ya-I-I guess you do, dog-gone it.

ROSE: Trouble with you, is, you don't know horse flesh. That old cow pony of yours is broke down- and has been - understand?

SPUTTERS: W-w-well I-I don't ride no horse like that Cactus; not me. I'm only twenty-eight and figure on livin' some time yet.

ROSE: Sputters, it's all in knowing how.

SPUTTERS: S-sa-say, I reckon I know how to bust a bronk,

and I kin do it, too.

ROSE: You mean, if he isn't too much often outlaw, you can.

SPUTTERS: Sa---sa-say now. I—I--

ROSE: Why Sputters, I saw you on a bronk a year ago and with these very eyes I actually, saw you “pull leather.”

SPUTTERS: Wh-Wha-what you I-I-
dern it I- (Kick himself then exits)

ROSE: Yes, sir, “pull leather,” you know what that stands for in a cowboy country.

SPUTTERS: B-b-but--

ROSE: You KNOW it's the truth, too.

SPUTTERS: Dern it.

ROSE: That was mean, I know, to tease Sputters. But I couldn't help it.

I wonder where he put it all. Well, I never- he's down right bashful or just downright mean. And which ever it is I don't

care that much.

I wonder if he saw me. Of course he did. Huh! Mother, oh mother.

MRS BAILEY: Y(Enters from house) es, dear—what is it

ROSE: I would like to know what ails father's foreman, Mr. Jim Edwards.

MRS BAILEY: Why not a thing in the world, child. He is an excellent foreman.

ROSE: It is not his work that bothers me. It is his manners.

MRS BAILEY: His manners?? Why no one is more polite. I was just saying to your father yesterday how lucky we were to secure such a man.

ROSE: Well, you and father might find him so, but your daughter Rose does not.

MRS BAILEY: Why Rose dear-

ROSE: Why he pays no more attention to me than if I were the dirt beneath his boots. Not that I care, understand mother, I do not care in the least. But I would like to be treated with

common civility, that's all.

MRS BAILEY: There must be some mistake, indeed there must.

ROSE: I can't see any unless it's myself. That is as far as he is concerned.

MRS BAILEY: I'm sure, dear, I don't understand.

ROSE: Mother, why did that greaser turn ten shades whiter, and that awful

MRS BAILEY: Why yes, dear, but it slipped my mind.

ROSE: Well, it hasn't slipped mine. And mother, did you also hear what that Zambra said?

MRS BAILEY: Why I believe he said--

ROSE: THE KILLER, it's the killer. Now mother dear, what could that mean.

MRS BAILEY: Hush dear, I don't believe I would say anything more about it. We need Mr. Edwards and if he knew we're talking about his, he might leave at once . . . and if he did

your father would not like it a bit, he puts a lot of dependance in this man.

ROSE: Do you think father knows anything him mother.

MRS BAILEY: I couldn't say to that. You know your father is not very talkative himself.

ROSE: Well someone must talk or I am going to ask where acquired that unique name, THE KILLER.

MRS BAILEY: Oh, no, no dear- that would never do. Besides I know you are only joking. I know well enough that you could never do a thing like that. But aren't you coming in?

ROSE: No mother dear, not just not

MRS BAILEY: Very well dear. (Exits into house)

ROSE: Sputters, Oh Sputters.

SPUTTERS: (Off stage) Uh-huh-what do you want?

ROSE: Come over here. I want to talk to you.

SPUTTERS: (Enters) Well, what do you want?

ROSE: I want to talk to you.

SPUTTERS: Over there? Why didn't you say so and then I wouldn't have had to walk all around the well?

Well, what's on your chest? Spit it out, I ain't got any dern use for you today.

ROSE: Sputters, do you like your new foreman?

SPUTTERS: I sure do. All he's made me do lately is rise fences.

ROSE: Tell me, Sputters, what does he say about himself?

SPUTTERS: He works and lets the rest of us do all the talking.

ROSE: He knows the work alright?

SPUTTERS: Why I should kiss a pig. What he don't know right now about old Flying X isn't worth knowing.

ROSE: Where does he live?

SPUTTERS: Over in the bunk house.

ROSE: No, no, I mean, his home.

SPUTTERS: Ain't no taters.

ROSE: You mean you don't know?

SPUTTERS: UhhhHuh- don't know.

ROSE: What did he do before he came here?

SPUTTERS: Punched cattle I reckon.

ROSE: Where did he work?

SPUTTERS: Don't know.

ROSE: Hold old is he?

SPUTTERS: Don't know.

ROSE: Well, what does he eat?

SPUTTERS: Same as me, beans and flapjacks.

ROSE: That's all, Sputters. You are hopeless.

SPUTTERS: That's what the Colonel says, but I get mine on pay just the same. So long. And if you want to know anything else about him just send for me.

ROSE: I believe he known and won't tell me. I just wonder if father does. Well, I'll ask him and if he does-- I'll work it out of him somehow. And I forgot to ask Sputters if he knew why that greaser Zambra called Mr. Edwards THE KILLER. Something strange about that man and I mean to fins out what they is,

ROSE: How-do-you-do.

JIM: (Enters, bridle in hand) How-how do.

ROSE: There now I made him speak- but what I have done? What will he think of me. Oh to think of a young lade with two years at select seminary to her credit stopping a cow puncher in pursuit of his duties to say How-do. It;s awful, simply awful. What would Sears say if she heard there. How-do. It's – oh. It's time I went to mother. (Exits into house)

COLONEL: (Enters) SO she said that you “pulled Leather,” did she? Well Sputters we will we have to give her a spanking. Yes, that is what I shall do.

SPUTTERS: No Colonel, don't do that. You just tell her I am insulted and she has got to beg my pardon or I won't ride with her again.

COLONEL: Very well, I'll do that then.

So she said that to you, a real live cow puncher. “Pull leather.” Sputters, that's a disgrace to the worst bronk rider on the range. Oh, you Sputters. (Exits into house)

SPUTTERS: Oh, hell!

JIM: Sounds like you are down right mad, Sputters. What seems to ail you?

SPUTTERS: Said I pulled leather.

JIM: Gee whiz, that's serious. Who said that?

SPUTTERS: Who said that. Miss Rose.

JIM: Oh she did, eh?

SPUTTERS: Now dern you laugh too, I thought you were my friend.

JIM: Every time Sputters, all the time. But a man can't help smiling once in a while you know.

SPUTTERS: Smile tomorrow, but don't smile cause I'm mad and clean through.

JIM: Well, Sputters, I'm sorry to find you in all this trouble. On the dead I am.

SPUTTERS: I'll get out of it alright.

JIM: Of course you will. (ROSE enters from house)

SPUTTERS: She's got to apologize or fight.
Well, what are you grinning about, huh?

ROSE: I'm not grinning Sputters, I'm almost ready to cry.

SPUTTERS: Maybe so.

ROSE: Honest injun. Father just informed me that you were

angry.

SPUTTERS: He's quite right, young lady.

ROSE: Why Sputters, you foolish boy, don't you know that I would not think of teasing you if I did not like you. And I *was* teasing you all the time.

SPUTTERS: Sure a nuff?

ROSE: Of course I was, and now I'm sorry. Very sorry. And I humbly ask your pardon.

JIM: I'd give a hundred dollars to have her talk that way to me.

SPUTTERS: That's all that necessary. I big you good day.

ROSE: Poor, poor, Sputters, and to think he really got mad.

JIM: How-do.

ROSE: Sir!

JIM: How-do.

ROSE: I am quite well, thank you.

JIM: Guess you don't fancy me none, am I right?

ROSE: Quite right, Mr.--

JIM: Edwards-- Jim Edwards.

ROSE: Oh yes, I believe I heard father mention your name.

JIM: Quite likely Miss, he knows me. You see I work for him.
What's the reason you don't like me?

ROSE: You are mistaken, Mr.--

JIM: Edwards—Jim Edwards--

ROSE: Mr. Edwards. - I did not say that I liked or disliked you.
I said I did not fancy you.

JIM: Oh, yes, so you did. Something wrong with my get up
maybe?

ROSE: Not in the least, as far as I'm concerned.

JIM: Then Miss- what the devil--

ROSE: What--?

JIM: I beg your pardon. But what is it? You know a fellow gets lonesome at times, especially me.

ROSE: Yes.

(Aside) He is actually coming out of his shell.

JIM: You bet I do Miss, and the first time I saw you a week ago I said to myself, Jim Edwards, if you can secure that lady for your friend this is the job you want. You see Miss, I'm right frank with you. I want to be your friend, and you want to be mine. Reason is, I get tired jamping wind with a lot of punchers all day and would like to have a chat with you once in a while. Ain't nothing wrong in that is there, Miss?

ROSE: Why no, I believe not Mr. Edwards. But I had formed quite a different opinion of you. How's that, Miss?

JIM: How's that?

ROSE: I rather fancied that you did not care to talk much with anyone.

JIM: You're mistaken there, Miss. Why, I'm a regular victrola when I get started off on the right foot. But will you be my friend, Miss? It means a lot more than you think for.

ROSE: Yes, I will be if you wish it.

JIM: Thanks Miss. You don't know how good it makes me feel. I wouldn't have told you this, but now I will-

ROSE: Yes--

JIM: You know that bunch of packers keep clear away from me, that is all but Sputters, he's alright Sputters is.

ROSE: They keep away from you, you say?

JIM: And they might take good care to let me know that I ain't welcome. I'm not kicking understand, for I can foot it alone if I have to, but I'm human and it kinda gets on a fellow's nerves.

ROSE: Yes, I can understand that, Mr. Edwards. But the reason, the cause?

JIM: I don't know-- unless Zambra has-- I guess I've been talking too much.

ROSE: Zambra—Ah – I see- -

JIM: Miss, you heard?

ROSE: What Zambra called you the first day when you came here- yes. The Killer.

JIM: Yes, that's it, you heard right, Miss. The Killer. But you see--

ROSE: You-- you mean he was right, that is the reason he fears you, the reason the men shun you?

Well, Mr. Edwards, answer me if you can.

JIM: I'm sorry, Miss – but I can't answer that.

ROSE: Then, Mr. Edwards, I'm afraid our compact of a few moments ago is canceled. Good day.

JIM: You mean, Miss, that you don't want to be my friend – that you are angry?

ROSE: No, Mr. Edwards, not angry but sorry, very sorry for you. (Exits into house)

JIM: Miss – come back. I'll tell you.

(Pause then speaks to himself) No, Jim boy, I guess you better not.

COLONEL: Oh, (Enters from house) Edwards, just a minute. I was in town today.

JIM: Yes, Colonel, I know that.

COLONEL: Why, what's the matter boy – why that tone of voice. Got something on your mind? Tell me if you have to get it out of you. Maybe it will tone you up and I know how to keep you quiet. You believe me, don't you?

JIM: Yes, Colonel, I sure do, but I ain't ready to talk just yet.

COLONEL: Alright boy, but if I can help you, just count me in.

JIM: Thanks, colonel, I know you would,

COLONEL: But here is what I want to give you. I only pay every three months and tomorrow is pay day. (Hands JIM

money)

I may leave early and in case I do I want you to pay the men off first thing in the morning. You will find a slip on top here to put you right. It's a little of fifteen hundred all told. And I always pay the boys the day it's due.

JIM: All right, Colonel, I'll do just as you say. But if it's just the same to you, keep this in the house tonight, and I'll get it from your wife in the morning. I sleep in the open on nights like this and I would rather not have it on me. (Hands money back to COLONEL)

COLONEL: All right, Jim – if you wish it, but I must go in and check up my books in case I light out the first thing in the morning. Goodnight. (Exits into house)

JIM: All right, Colonel. (Pause during speech and ZAMBRA enters unseen and listens)

A white man there, white clean through. (ZAMBRA exits)

Well, I'm a little shy on friends just now – so I'll count the Colonel an even dozen. Fifteen hundred, quite a pay roll for a ranch this size. (Exits)

SPUTTERS: (Enters) Oh—dad but that bronk. He rail fenced it across the corral, sunfished a couple of times, swopped ends and I lit flat on my back. Oh, my el-el-elbow.

ROSE: (Enters from house) Well, Sputters, what now?

SPUTTERS: Where is everybody? Doggone if this ranch don't go to bed with the chickens. Everybody goes to bed at four o'clock in the afternoon except the horses and I can't talk horse talk yet.

ROSE: Are you thinking of learning it, Sputters?

SPUTTERS: Reckon I'll have to.

ROSE: Well, I'm here now and I want to talk to you.

SPUTTERS: Much obliged.

ROSE: You are quite welcome I assure you. What shall we talk about?

SPUTTERS: Let's talk about you.

ROSE: Me, Sputters. I'm afraid that would be rather dry.

SPUTTERS: You stuck on any fellers up there where you went to school?

ROSE: No, Sputters. I have a number of good friends, but nothing serious.

SPUTTERS: Will you marry me?

ROSE: You, Sputters?

SPUTTERS: Will you, huh – yes or no?

ROSE: No—Sputters, no.

SPUTTERS: Well, I'm darned glad of that.

ROSE: Sputters, are you feeling just right tonight?

SPUTTERS: Never felt better. Why?

ROSE: Why first you ask me to marry you, and then you appear pleased because I refused you. Rather odd, don't you think?

SPUTTERS: I knowed you wouldn't marry me, but I felt it was my Christian duty to ask you, and I wanted to make sure your visit home is as pleasant as possible.

ROSE: That as kind of you.

SPUTTERS: Besides, when you go back to school, I want you to be able to tell the girls that you have been proposed to by one of the leading citizens.

ROSE: Oh, Sputters.

SPUTTERS: But I knowed you wouldn't marry me.

ROSE: You did, Sputters?

SPUTTERS: Why, I couldn't support a pool parrot – why I can't even keep myself in chewing tobacco.

ROSE: You are perfectly awful, Sputters.

SPUTTERS: Say – would you marry Jim?

ROSE: Mr. Edwards?

SPUTTERS: Uh-huh?

ROSE: So that's what you're getting at, eh? Does Mr. Edwards know about this?

SPUTTERS: Sh---- If he did he'd kill me with them boots on.

ROSE: And from what I heard, I believe he is rather well versed in that work.

SPUTTERS: You mean what that greaser said – The Killer?

ROSE: Yes.

JIM: Rats, he never killed nobody. He's just got something up his sleeve. You wait and see. Now don't you go and get mad at me for talking this way, but this gang of Sears and Roebuck cowpunchers on the S. sold out Jim dead cold.

ROSE: They do?

SPUTTERS: Yes, and he's the best feller I ever saw. Why I'd walk clear to Frisco and back again to get Jim a pack of Bull Durham if he wanted it.

ROSE: Sputters, do you -

MRS BAILEY: (Calling from off stage) Are you coming in, Rose dear?

ROSE: Yes, mother.

I like to hear a man talk that way about his friends Sputters, and I'm not mad at all.

SPUTTERS: Ain't yuh?

ROSE: Not at all, but I must go in. Goodnight, Sputters. (Exits into house)

SPUTTERS: Goodnight--- good – so long.

If she could only tie up with Jim I could die happy.

Here comes that dern greaser. I better go so I don't have to kill him. (Exits)

ZAMBRA:(Enters) Why she no come?

KEEMA: (Enters from house) Zambra, you call?

ZAMBRA:Sh—sh-- Keema, you listen. Where Colonel Bailey put hees money a while ago?

KEEMA: Why you ask me that, Zambra?

ZAMBRA:What you care, Keema?

KEEMA: They been good to me. I no tell if you want to steal.

ZAMBRA: Bah! Keema, I no steal. I have reason dat is all.
Now you say where.

KEEMA: True, is that, Zambra?

ZAMBRA: I no lie to you, Keema.

KEEMA: He put it in bookcase in front. You no leave ranch tonight.

ZAMBRA: No, I go to ride herd till twelve.

KEEMA: So queek you must go?

ZAMBRA: Yes, but tomorrow I see you Keema.

KEEMA: Zambra, you wait. Mees Bailey she say to me not to see, not to talk to you.

ZAMBRA: She say that. Why?

KEEMA: She say you mean no good, Zambra.

ZAMBRA: Bah—des Gringoes no like, care for me. I not spoke to dem and for date they hate me. You do want here to work. Mebbe so I take you away from here. For dat they tell you lies of me.

KEEMA: But you will take me away form here, Zambra. We go to our own Mexico and live happy. To be man and wife, huh, Zambra?

ZAMBRA: Of course, Keema. I give you promise once, truth is enough.

KEEMA: Den dat is all I care. And when they talk of you I not listen. I love you Zambra. Listen, when we go?

ZAMBRA: Soon, Keema, just as soon as I finish big work we have to do.

KEEMA: Dat make me so glad when you say that. But it is better now that I go in.

ZAMBRA: But listen, you tell you say nothing when they talk of me. You do what I say and den we fool dem all. You see.

KEEMA: Yes, Zambra.

ZAMBRA: No-no- someone might see. I go now. Good night.

KEEMA: Goodnight, Zambra. Tomorrow I see you. (Exits into house)

ZAMBRA: Huh! Mebbe so, Keema, mebbe so. (Exits)

(SPUTTERS enters and knocks on the door)

MRS BAILEY: (Off stage) Who's there?

SPUTTERS: Sput-Sput-Sputters. Is the Colonel up?

MRS BAILEY: (Off stage) Yes, but we are all ready for bed. He was too tired to even check up his books. What do you want?

SPUTTERS: Tell him if he goes to town to fetch five dollars worth of Mule.

MRS BAILEY: (Off stage) All right – I'll tell him.

SPUTTERS: Good—good--good---

MRS BAILEY: (Off stage) GOOD NIGHT!

SPUTTERS: Wish to hell I could learn to talk. Can't even say good—good--good- gosh almighty. (Exits and fires a shot)

ZAMBRA: Enters) Mercy, Senor - I go- T go-

JIM: (Enters) Who fired that shot?

SPUTTERS: I did.

JIM: You, Sputters?

SPUTTERS: Yes, me. And if I had been a little closer, I'd hit him.

JIM: Which way was the greaser headed?

SPUTTERS: Chuck wagon.

MRS BAILEY: (Enters form house) Who's doing all the shooting out there at this time of night?

SPUTTERS: Your uncle Sputters and I did it with my little hatchet.

MRS BAILEY: Oh, it's you, is it? I might have known as much. Now just what do you mean by coming around the house and cutting loose with that canon you carry, when people are trying to sleep.

SPUTTERS: Tain't time to go to bed nohow.

MRS BAILEY: That's what you think, you hyena. But the next time you do it I'll run you off the Ranch, understand that. I'll run you off the ranch.

SPUTTERS: Takes more than you to run me to the bunk house even.

MRS BAILEY: What's that?

SPUTTERS: You heard what I said. Yer a female woman, and I'd hate to do it, but if you compel me to I'll have to.

MRS BAILEY: You'll do what? What will you do?

SPUTTERS: Spank you.

MRS BAILEY: Why you door scrub cowpuncher- you--
(chases him.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

(At rise, JIM is discovered laying onstage. Fires a shot towards offstage)

JIM: Huh! Pretty good shot for a greaser.

COLONEL: (Enters from house) What's up, Jim?

MRS BAILEY: (Enters from house) Are you hurt?

COLONEL: Shot sounded as if it came from off there.

JIM: Yes, it did. Looks like a forty-four.

COLONEL: Jim, who did that?

JIM: I'd rather not say just now, Colonel.

COLONEL: Well, I wish you would boy, I don't want that kind on my place.

MRS BAILEY: Why, you might have been killed. It's terrible.

COLONEL: Know of any reason, boy?

JIM: Yes, Colonel, but let it go. The party won't be here at sundown. I'll promise you that.

MRS BAILEY: Now, please, Mr. Edwards, don't do it.

JIM: Kill him?

MRS BAILEY: Yes.

JIM: Don't intend to. Wouldn't soil my gun on him. Today's pay day. I'll give him his, then hog-tie him and kick him off the place.

(ROSE enters)

COLONEL: I think I know who it is myself, but it's your funeral, Jim so go to it in your own money. In case you should need a little help- (holds out foot)

I wear number nines.

JIM: Alright Colonel, I may need them.

MRS BAILEY: It's a dirty shame. Won't you come in and eat breakfast, Jim?

JIM: No thanks, Mrs. Bailey, but Colonel if you will, you can hand me that pay roll now -

COLONEL: Oh yes, of course. Come mother, I'm getting hungry. (Exits into house)

MRS BAILEY: Alright, I'm coming.
(To JIM) Do be careful, Jim.

ROSE: (Aside) Jim!

JIM: Good morning, Miss Bailey.

ROSE: I would rather you called me Miss Rose.

JIM: And I would a whole lot rather do it, too, only I didn't know-

ROSE: You-- you were not hurt, were you?

JIM: Not a scratch, Miss Rose. Missed a foot.

ROSE: Do you know who?

JIM: I think so.

ROSE: Tell me, please.

JIM: Pardon me, but not just now.

ROSE:(Stamps foot) Oh, that is what makes me dislike you at times.

Don;t you know that I am a woman with a woman's curiosity, and – and you are so mysterious that—that I can scarcely stand it.

JIM: Well, I am sorry about that, but when I do tell you Miss, you will understand why it is that I can't speak now.

ROSE: I don't see why you can't see that I am just dying to know. We are all aware that you killed a man, perhaps a dozen and--

JIM: Yes, Miss and--

ROSE: Well, we know it.

JIM: Tell me, Miss Rose, what would be your verdict in a case of this kind.

ROSE: Well, if you had killed him in self-defense ---

JIM: Yes, Miss – go on.

ROSE: I wouldn't mind it so much.

JIM: Ah then Miss, you do believe in me a little, don't you?

ROSE: I never said so.

JIM: No, but you do. I know you do.

ROSE: Yes, Mr. Edward, I think I do.

JIM: I knew it. (Kisses her)

ROSE: Oh-oh- How dare you, how dare you. (Back away)

JIM: There ain't much I wouldn't dare where you are concerned. You said a while ago that you are a woman, yes you are Miss Rose , a woman and I knew the first time I saw you that you were the woman that had Jim Edwards' heart. Yes, heart, head, chaps, and gun thrown in. You knew I loved you. You knew it because you are what you said, a woman. And I do love you,

Rose, love you more and better than I have ever loved anything in all my life. I can't tell you what you asked at present. I'm clean girl and I want you for my wife. Give me one week more and I'll be at liberty to tell you all. Tell me, Rose, will you wait that long?

I'm waiting girl.

ROSE: Yes, Jim, I'll wait. For I believe every word you say.

JIM: (Kisses her again) Thank you, dear- you've made me the happiest man in Arizona, and when you know all I know you won't be sorry.

ROSE: Jim! Love me?

JIM: Huh, uh.

ROSE: I want you to tell me something.

JIM: I'll tell you anything girl, and what I don't know I'll find out. So let's have it.

ROSE: I want to know when you first started – that is – when you first - Well, Jim, you know what I mean?

JIM: I'll be blessed if I do, dear. Let's have it a little plainer, if

you please.

ROSE: Well, Jim – when did you first start caring for me?

JIM: As near as I can figure it Rose, about two hundred years ago.

ROSE: No, that won't do. Tell me, Jim, I want to know.

JIM: You won't laugh?

ROSE: I can't see where there is any laugh coming.

JIM: Well, sir it was the very first day I hit the ranch, and the exact minute was when I started to pick up my saddle the by the gate.

ROSE: Why, Jim, you acted as if you were frightened half to death.

JIM: By Jove I was. That's the way it acts on some people.

ROSE: It never affected me that way.

JIM: Well, perhaps you have had more experiences than I have.

And--

ROSE: Never mind, you have said quite enough.

JIM: But I want to--

ROSE: Come in the house and have breakfast with me. Is that right, sir?

JIM: With you, anywhere. But aren't you rather practical?

ROSE: How do you mean, Jim?

JIM: I had forgotten there was such a thing as breakfast.

ROSE: For shame. And besides, I don't believe in that old worn out saying.

JIM: What's that, girl?

ROSE: Living on Love. (Laughs and exits with JIM arm in arm)

ZAMBRA:(Enters, knife in hand) Ah- senorita, I wait-

SPUTTERS: Say, greaser, you better not mix that with the stuff you're drinking, you're liable to blow up.

ZAMBRA:Sputters- Bah!

SPUTTERS: Now just for that you beat it or I'll shoot. Now dern yuh go.

ZAMBRA:Huh! I no fear you. Exits)

SPUTTERS: Get out you spotted hoptoad, shake a leg, damn mutt. I'd kill him if I could ever git him far enough away from the house.

Gee, I'm tired.

ROSE: (Enters form house) I thought I heard someone out here. Oh, how are you, Sputters.

SPUTTERS: Fine and dandy. Say, but you look happy today sure enough.

ROSE: Oh, I am Sputters. Just awfully happy.

SPUTTERS: So would I be if I could learn to talk. That dern greaser just made fun of me.

ROSE: Well, that was unkind of him, but he's a greaser and don't know any better.

SPUTTERS: But he will next time. I'll shoot him up, cuss him.

ROSE: Sputters.

SPUTTERS: What?

ROSE: I just thought of something. Will you try it?

SPUTTERS: Sure. Anything to get to talk a little.

ROSE: Very well, now listen. I knew a girl that stammered and was completely cured. Now in the school she went and they made you talk like this.

(Draws out a square in the air with her finger) One, two, three, four. Now, Sputters, you try it.

SPUTTERS: (Draws square) One-two-three-four.

ROSE: And did you notice that you did not hesitate?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) Hot-dog.

By Jove, you're right.

ROSE: There, you see you stuttered then because you forgot to use your hand. Now Sputters, you must make one side to your square for each and every syllable you utter. Do you understand?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) I-think-I-do.

ROSE: Fine, Sputters, and you didn't stutter a bit.

SPUTTERS: What do I do when the square is made and I still want to talk?

ROSE: Keep making it over and over until you finish your sentence. But you must not forget to use your hand, I mean.

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) All-right-I-won't

ROSE: There, don't you see?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) What-will-the-bunch-say-I-wonder?

ROSE: What do you care when you can see for yourself that it is helping?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) Guess-I-will-go-out-and-hunt-up-that-greaser-and-give-him-a-dern-good-cuss-ing. I-can-do-it-now-with-out-hes-i-tat-ing. Good-bye and thank-you.

ROSE: Sputters, don't you go getting into trouble with that greaser. And remember, I expect you to mind.

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) You bet I will.

ROSE: Poor Sputters. I hope it does help him for he certainly deserves it if anyone does.

That man actually makes me feel creepy. Ugh!

COLONEL: (Enters with JIM) Here, Jim, is the money. You will take it now.

JIM: Oh, certainly, Colonel. I'll pay off about noon today, you say.

COLONEL: Yes, or anytime to suit your own convenience, Jim, just so it's paid today.

JIM: 'll attend to it Colonel. Well, dear, I've told your mother mother and father our secret.

ROSE: You needn't have been in such a hurry, Mr. Edwards.

JIM: Jim is my front name, Miss Bailey.

ROSE: Father, isn't he awful.

COLONEL: Ugliest man I ever set eyes on and I'm fifty two.

ROSE: He is not.

COLONEL: But what what are we going to do without you, your mother and I?

ROSE: We intend to stay right here I have it all arranged. Jim is going to boss the ranch and I an going to boss him.

JIM: What?

ROSE: Besides, it's high time you and your mother took a rest.

COLONEL: God bless you, honey – I wish we could do so.

ROSE: It can, it will be. If he offers to take me away from you and mother, I won't marry him, so there. Jim, you wouldn't, would you?

JIM: Not if you didn't want to, girl.

ROSE: There you are dear old darling, you just leave, Mr. Jim to me. I'll attend to him.

COLONEL: Yes, I don't doubt it in the least. Women generally do.

JIM: Well, I guess I had better saddle up and be off.

COLONEL: Yes, it is a little late but then we and important business to attend to this morning. (JIM tries to kiss ROSE)

Go ahead you dern fool, I won't look. (Turns away. JIM kisses ROSE)

ROSE: Goodbye, Jim.

JIM: Goodbye, dear..

COLONEL: Rose, child, you had better go in and see your mother. She's just about crying her eyes out by now.

ROSE: Poor dear mother. Yes, yes, I'll go right in. (Exits into house)

COLONEL: The best little girl in Arizona, and I ain't dern badly mistaken. She's got a boy in Jim that will take care of her. Jim's a man.

SPUTTERS: (Enters with hand bus.) Jim wants to know if he could ride Cactus today.

COLONEL: Well, what's the matter, Sputters. Drunk?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) No, learning to talk. Can Jim ride Cactus?

COLONEL: Yes, get out – you're crazy.

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) So-are-you. (Exits)

COLONEL: Now what the devil has gotten into him? I know he'll get drunk, but there ain't a drop of whiskey on this ranch. It's too derned nearly dry. Well, I guess I better do out and see what mother is doing. She don't like the idea of loosing her little girl a bit. (Exits into house)

JIM: (Enters followed by SPUTTERS) You say no one has been monkeying with my saddle, Sputters?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) Not-on-your-life.

JIM: Well, that's dern funny. I've used a Nelman clinch all my life and that's the first time I've had a new one to break. Wonder if that dirty greaser---Sputters, you say there is an old clinch hanging in back of the barn.

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) Yes, hanging on a nail. I put it there myself.

JIM: Say on the level, are you subject to fits?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) Never had one in my life.

JIM: What in the hell are you trying to do?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) Learning to talk like the rest of the human beings.

JIM: Who told you that?

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) My friend, Rose.

JIM: I wonder if she's kidding him.

(hand bus.) Come-to-think-of-it-you-don't-stut-er-when-you-do-

that-do-you?

SPUTTERS: Now, there you go, you cut it out. Don't you mock me.

JIM: On the dead level I didn't mean it, Sputters. I was just thinking dern practical it is. When Rose—Miss Rose told you that, she did you a favor. Stick to it and I bet you win. But I got to get this clinch.(Exits)

SPUTTERS: Come dern near calling her Rose, didn't you? (hand bus.) Well-yuh--

Yuh-bet-ter-keep-off-the-grass. (Exits)

ROSE: (Enters house) Dear, old mother-- to see her crying makes me cry, too. But father said tomorrow she would look on the bright side and come realize that a girl must marry sometimes.

Poor dear, I hope so. Wonder what the boys will say when they come trouping in only to learn that I returned home to wed their new foreman. And Jim told me himself they all keep away from him because of the name he bears. I'll bet that greaser told them that. There must be some awful mystery, but that will all be cleared up a week. My Jim says so.

ZAMBRA: (Enters, knife in hand) Just one little word from you, Senorita, and Zambra will fix your pretty face so it is pretty no more. Jim, mu Jim, I hear you say. But it is not so. You will

have no Jim, but instead you will have Zambra, the greaser, you call him. You I take away with me now to love, to kiss until you will forget Jim, and will kiss me in return. I know des country Mees Rose as no one else knows him. Tomorrow you will be across border with me, here des Gringoes will not find you soon. And when they do Senorita Rose, they will not want you.

ROSE: (struggle and scream) Help—Jim!

ZAMBRA: Caramba—One more like that and I kill you.

(JIM enters and throws ZAMBRA to the ground. COLONEL and MRS. BAILEY and SPITTERS enter)

COLONEL: There, there, dear. The dirty Mexican dog. Jim, Jim, for God's sakes, boy don't kill him. I know he has it coming, but think, think of yourself. Think of the girl.

JIM: The girl, yes. Did he hurt you, dear?

ROSE: No, no, Jim. Only frightened. Oh, Jim, you haven't killed him.

SPITTERS: Let him kill the son-of-a-gun. He ain't worth a cuss nohow.

JIM: No dear. No such good luck. He's too much of a snake to die with one choking. Get up you dog. Get up.

ZAMBRA: Mercy, senior, mercy.

JIM: Now you stay put until I'm through with you.

ZAMBRA: Santa Maria-- save--

JIM: Shut up. There's your pay. Can you write?

ZAMBRA: Mercy, Senior. --- No, no.

JIM: Make your mark. Now listen to me and make no mistakes in what I say. You can make the boundary of this ranch in just one hour. Understand?

ZAMBRA: Si, Senior. Mercy.

JIM: Then go and if you don't cross the border I'll kill you the next time we meet. Go.

ZAMBRA: Mercy, Senior. I go now. (Exits)

SPUTTERS: Oh, Lord, he had a brick in it that time.

JIM: Sputters.

ROSE: Jim, I'm so glad you didn't-- didn't-

JIM: Kill him, dear? So am I – but even so the world could get along very well without much as he.

ROSE: Yes, Jim, dear – but it is much better as it is. And he will never bother us again, I am sure.

JIM: My little sweetheart. (Takes ROSE in his arms and kisses her.)

ACT IV

(KEEMA discovered at rise, looking offstage. ZAMBRA enters.)

ZAMBRA:Keema!

KEEMA: Zambra, where you been? Why you stay away?

ZAMBRA:Day no tell you, Keema?

KEEMA: No, they say to me nothing.

ZAMBRA: The Killer, hem tell me to cross border and no come back or hem kill me.

KEEMA: The Killer, you say. Why you call him dat?

ZAMBRA: Dat I can no say now. Maybe so later I tell you.

KEEMA: But you do not fear hem, Zambra?

ZAMBRA: Santa Maria, yes. Heem I see wid dese eyes kill five of my countrymen queek like dat.

KEEMA: But you, Zambra, you are brave.

ZAMBRA: No, no, I say to you, Keema, heem I no ken kill. Caramba, I fear him, The Killer.

KEEMA: Bah! You afraid, and I think you afraid of nothing.

ZAMBRA: But I tell you, heem kill me now if he find me here.

KEEMA: Den why you come, why you no hide?

ZAMBRA: Tonight I go to show right in right road to party to cross Little River and into Mexico. Den I am free to go where I want to go. Tonight I keep my promise.

KEEMA: Why dat party not go by big road to border, huh?

ZAMBRA: Dat I can not say. But tonight I get my pay for my help I give dem.

KEEMA: Go, Zambra. Where you go?

ZAMBRA: I think to my own country, Mexico.

KEEMA: And you take me, too, huh – I go wid you?

ZAMBRA: Dat Keema, I no kin do dat now.

KEEMA: You mean you go 'lone, you mean you leave me here behind?

ZAMBRA: I must. But you wait here, you wait. I want food for tonight. You bring it to me there at the beeg tree.

Den when I get pay for my beeg work, den Keema I come back for you.

KEEMA: You, I bring food for at big tree, huh?

Well-- I—You no kin take me now, Zambra?

ZAMBRA:Of course not, Keema, but I come back for you sure
I come back.

KEEMA: Alright, Zambra, you wait at big tree I bring heem
soon. Yes, I bring him soon. (Exits into house)

ZAMBRA:Good. She will bring food den I will see Keema and
dese Gringoes no more.

No more. (Shakes fist at house then exits)

KEEMA: (Enters from house.) I thought so, Zambra. I thought
so. Now I know heem for sure. You want I should bring you
food so you can go away and leave Keema behind for good, for
all. But I find you out, I do everything for you, and you for me
do nothing. Always you have lied to me and now you go from
me not to come back. Ah—but you wait, Zambra, you wait.
(Exits into house)

JIM: (Offstage) Whoa boy, hold up. (Enters)

COLONEL: (Enters from house) Oh, Jim, it;s you.

JIM: Yes, Colonel, it's me. Colonel, I want to say something

and I hardly know how to begin.

COLONEL: Well, don't be backwards on my account boy. You know I won't bite.

JIM: It isn't that, Colonel. Well, here goes. When I go to work for a man, especially as his foreman, it's up to me to look after interests, isn't it?

COLONEL: I should think so, boy. Yes.

JIM: Well, Colonel, what I've got to tell you sounds like a schoolboy bringing tales to his teacher. I've told the boys to get on the land at least a dozen times this morning.

COLONEL: Yes, Jim.

JIM: And they did, Colonel. That is, they did until my back was turned and then--

COLONEL: Oh, Lord, I thought so.

JIM: Colonel, I've got one of the biggest games of stud poker on my hands I have had the pleasure of running. I paid 'em all yesterday and today if you ask any puncher on this place his name, he'll answer Poker. I tell you I never saw anything like it.

It's like poker here and poker there. In fact, it's poker everywhere.

COLONEL: Sh-- Jim. I'll own up. It's all my fault. I started it ten years ago and it's the only slip I've ever made. But I did it nevertheless and it's been a case of poker ever since. You would have found me out there myself this morning only mother is keeping too close a watch. She's jawed me all our married life, but dern it, I can't quit. I love the game. It's in my blood. Why Jim boy, even Rose, my little girl, has it in hers.

JIM: Colonel, you mean that--

COLONEL: Oh, I don't mean that she plays poker or gambles 'cause she don't. But you catch her unaware and make a bet with her right quick. You'll see for yourself that I'm right.

JIM: By Jove, that's funny.

COLONEL: As far as she is concerned, yes. But me, her dad – why boy, with me it's down right serious. I'd give a hundred head of longhorns to be out there right now. But I'm afraid to risk it. Got cold feet, you know.

Mother's on the job.

JIM: Well, just set your foot down and say I won't play. I know you could if you wanted to.

COLONEL: You've said it – right there is where our argument goes wrong. I don't want to stop. I'd rather play poker than eat. Down there by the chuck wagon, ain't they?

JIM: Yes, Colonel. Reckon they'll get with their work tomorrow alright?

COLONEL: Sure as your born. Twenty-four hours is the limit. Always been.

JIM: Well, they're sure having some time. Two horse blankets down and money on every thread. Hank was dealing when I left. That man Grange had just raked in a cool hundred. Stayed on a pair of trays-- that is, they must have been – the card showing was a trey. Lots of big cards showing their faces to the sun but it didn't seem to bother him none. He kept on betting and so did the rest. Must have been his lucky day for he turned over three trays and took the money. Why even Sputter is winning.

COLONEL: Sputters? Come to think of it I've got to see him on important business.

Jim, tell mother I'm fixing the roof on the bunk house. Tell her any old thing, just so you don't tell her-

JIM: Well, I've heard of poker players and poker friends.

Gamblers of all kinds and nationalities, but this bunch has sure got 'em all beat to a frazzle. Lord, look at the Colonel go.

And by Jove, he's gone and left his hat.

Hey, Colonel, better look out. You'll get tanned.

Where's the girl?

KEEMA: (Enters from house) Oh-h-h

JIM: Didn't frighten you, did I?

KEEMA: No, Senor Jim, dat is not very much.

JIM: Keema girl, it ain't hardly my way butting into things that don't concern me, but I've seen you holding conflag with Zambra a few times of late, and I want to ask you if you won't stop it. For my sake if not for your own.

KEEMA: Why you say that to me?

JIM: Because I happen to know that these folks here like you and I know that the greaser ain't no ways up to you, in your class. You savvy that?

KEEMA: I think so, but you wait. When I come you seen den what I know. What I Keema think of Zambra. Bah! I hate dat snake.

JIM: Where now?

KEEMA: To Circle Ear.

JIM: Going to walk?

KEEMA: I not care for it.

JIM: My horse is tied just off yonder, you can use that. There's no use in walking.

KEEMA: Thanks, Senor Jim.

JIM: There's some U.S. Regulars camped over there, better be careful.

KEEMA: Huh, I know dat. It is dem I want to see. When I come back I tell you more, mebbe so. (Exits)

JIM: Well, I'll be derved, there's something mysterious about that. Wonder if she always takes that frog sticker with her on these little walks. She didn't think I saw that. Oh well, I suppose she knows what she's doing. Wonder if she could be going after that greaser.

By Jove, the Colonel has made it to the chuck wagon. I reckon he's happy. Well, that beats the band.

ROSE: (Enters from house) Jim, you certainly are happy this morning, aren't you? (MRS.BAILEY enters)

JIM: Happy girl, I'd just like to know of a man who wouldn't be happy in my place. Haven't I the biggest game of poker – I mean the prettiest little sensible girl in the world for my fiancée. Happy – why that's my middle name.

MRS BAILEY: Good morning, Jim. How are you?

JIM: Couldn't be better, Mrs. Bailey. Say, you are not disappointed in me, are you? Not angry because I love this little girl?

MRS BAILEY: No, Jim, but yesterday it made me feel pretty blue to think of losing my baby girl. She still seems like a baby, you know and I do love her so. I don't believe I ever realized that she was a woman until you told us yesterday. But Jim boy, I like you and after thinking it over, I'm glad it's so. For you can work right here, take charge of the place and we can still have Rose. You will, I know you will. And Jim, since you are to be my boy, I guess you had better stop calling me Mrs. Bailey. What do you think about it, Jim?

JIM: Thank you, mother. I've wanted to call you that all the

time, the very first time I came here, but well – I didn't dare. Besides that word has always been a dream with me. My mother died when I was born. Rose, dear, I thought last night I was the luckiest man alive because I had won your love. But when a fellow gets you and a mother like her, well – I'll – I'll try to deserve it, that's all.

MRS BAILEY: There- there now – I guess I'll go in. Yes, I know I will. (Exits into house)

ROSE: Jim, what brought you to the house at this time of day?

JIM: Why poker – that is – I had to see the Colonel, dear. How do you like these chaps?

ROSE: Never mind the chaps. Where is father?

JIM: Where- er- Rose--

ROSE: Jim.-

JIM: He's playing poker, dear.

ROSE: That's why I like you, Jim. You can't lie. And you need not have any conscientious scruples about telling me, for I am aware of the fact.

JIM: You knew the Colonel was playing poker?

ROSE: To be sure. He's not here, is he? And yesterday was pay day. There's your answer.

Oh- I know father alright.

JIM: Colonel said she had it in her blood. I'll see.

Yes, I guess you do.

ROSE: I do believe he would walk to Phoenix if he knew there was a good square game in progress.

JIM: I don't doubt it in the least.

Sat, dear, do you know it looks like rain.

ROSE: Rain. Why. Jim, dear, the sun is boiling hot. There is not a sign of rain.

JIM: Bet you five it rains before night.

ROSE: Done, I'll take it.

JIM: I guess the Colonel knew what he was talking about. No dear, come to think of it, I guess it won't rain.

ROSE: Well, I bet you five dollars it does rain.

JIM: I'll go you. So let's make it ten and a kiss.

ROSE: Done.

JIM: Very well, but let's take that kiss right now.

MRS BAILEY: (Enters from house) Jim, have you seen Colonel Bailey?

JIM: Yes, mother.

MRS BAILEY: Where is he?

JIM: Why he-- that is-- you see – the Colonel. Why, mother, can you make an angel cake?

MRS BAILEY: Can I make what?

ROSE: Jim, you are no account when it comes to telling lies. Mother, Colonel Bailey, your husband – is –

MRS BAILEY: Playing poker. And me with my eyes right on his all the time. You can't corral that man when there is a game of poker within twenty miles. It just can't be done. But you wait, I'll get him.

ROSE: Mother, I couldn't. Let him play. He can afford it.

MRS BAILEY: Well, I can't.

Huh-here he comes now. Sputters and someone else is with him.

JIM: Yes, he said he wanted to see Sputters.

MRS BAILEY: Why, bless me, it's the sheriff.

ROSE: The Sheriff, mother, are you sure?

MRS BAILEY: Sure? Of course, I am. Don't you suppose I know that gait of his. Sheriff Holmes used to spark me when I was a girl. I guess I'd better go in and fix up a bit. (Exits into house)

ROSE: Jim do – you heat, it's the sheriff. Sheriff Holmes. Your horse is ready dear, get on him and ride for it. The old trail is fore then the left road to the reservation. I'll hold him here myself until you make the Fork. There is a light wind and it will cover your tracks in twenty minutes. Hurry, Jim, and

don't let him take you away from me. Go, please, go.

JIM: Why Rose dear – there is no occasion for all that. I have nothing to fear.

ROSE: Are you sure, Jim, are you dead sure?

JIM: Of course, sweetheart, of course I am.

ROSE: But Jim, that word that I can't seem to drive away, the word that haunts me day and night, that word Jim. The Killer.

JIM: It isn't a good sounding title, is it dear? But you remember you wanted to know about that. So I think your wish is about to be fulfilled.

ROSE: No, no, if it is going to take you away from me, Jim?

JIM: No danger of that. Not for a long time at any rate. But come dear, you had better go in. your mother is as nervous as can be. (Exits into house with ROSE)

SPUTTERS: (Enters with SHERIFF) Whoa! Up – you can't go through that gate dad bust yuh. Till you give me a listening to, do you hear me?

SHERIFF: That's the matter with you? Have you gone loco?

SPUTTERS: No – I haven't gone loco you old razor backside winder you. And if you undertake to slap Jim in jail, I'll – I'll -

SHERIFF: You'll what?

SPUTTERS: I'll pull that ugly nose of yours out by the roots, and make you eat it.

SHERIFF: Why you--

SPUTTERS: Shut up and keep shut until I'm through. Jim Edwards is the best man I ever knowed and any Sheriff that would try to jail him is too dang busted ornery to herd a gang of horned toads. And if you ever so much as get an idea into that bonehead of yours of pinching Jim, you've got to climb over me. And when I get good and sore I'm wooser'n a she-bear with red measles.

Now what do you know about that?

SHERIFF: Who said anything about pinching Jim?

SPUTTERS: Well, well, well.

SHERIFF: Well, what?

SPUTTERS: Well, ain't you here after him?

SHERIFF: Well, hardly.

SPUTTERS: And you ain't going to jail him?

SHERIFF: Certainly not.

SPUTTERS: And after me doing all that howling you ain't going to?

SHERIFF: I'm not.

SPUTTERS: Well, all I got to say is you're a hell of a Sheriff.

(JIM, COLONEL, and MRS.BAILEY enter)

SHERIFF: Howdy, Mrs. Bailey. I was just about to tell this galoot, how fond I was of those home made biscuits, for you sure make the best in the world. And after I have partaken of what I want, maybe you'll allow me to take some home with me.

MRS BAILEY: Sheriff Holmes, you and your blarney are out of place here in the country. Shame on you.

SHERIFF: Just been talking about making an arrest. But this guy gave me the horse laugh.

COLONEL: Say, Sheriff, can't you let us in on this? Here's four of us just about ready to die with an overdose of curiosity. Talk a little, can't you?

SHERIFF: I reckon I can. But surely this is not your little girl?

COLONEL: That's my Rose. Of course.

SHERIFF: Don't you remember me?

ROSE: Yes, Sheriff, of course I do. But it seems you do not remember me.

SHERIFF: My, my, when I see a girl like you, it makes me realize how time flies. Colonel, we sure are getting old.

COLONEL: I reckon so. But never mind about our age. Let's have this mystery.

SHERIFF: I've got some investigations to make before I talk. See here girl, you're not stuck on the young scamp there?

ROSE: Why Sheriff - - I - -

SHERIFF: Say, Jim - - who figured this out for you?

JIM: No one, Sheriff, it was kind of a hunch. I'm hoping it worked out as I planned. For if it did I'll take all that coming to me.

SHERIFF: I'll say you will, and if you need my help, you can have it if they send me up for the rest of my natural life.

JIM: I came very near asking your advice, but I thought you might be compelled to ---

SHERIFF: I thought so, too. So I went over and had a chat with the judge and Lawyer Jordan.

JIM: Yes, Sheriff, and what did they say?

SHERIFF: They bet me that she knows.

JIM: Wrong again, Sheriff. Pardon me dear, but I thought of course you do.

SHERIFF: Well, they do seem to be in the dark, perhaps I had better tell 'e, about you. Shall I Jim?

JIM: Yes, I promised them I'd explain. You do it.

SHERIFF: I reckon you all know what the Anchor Brand stands for?

COLONEL: Humph "ANCHOR BRAND." Why it's considered not only the best, but the largest ranch in the State. In fact, I've heard it call a little chunk of Arizona. Two hundred miles southwest of here, I believe.

SHERIFF: Well, I presume you knew that a man by the name of Jim Edwards owned the ANCHOR BRAND.

COLONEL: Well, I'll be damned.

SHERIFF: Tut-tut. Why, Colonel Bailey.

SPUTTERS: Yes, stop your cussing. It sounds like hell.

SHERIFF: Hadn't you never thought of it Colonel.

COLONEL: Why of course I've thought of it. Jim Edwards is the name, but surely Jim there is not - - -

SHERIFF: Well, maybe I ought to go a little further, are you listening?

COLONEL: Yes, yes, go on Sheriff.

SHERIFF: You see, there was a couple of Edwards boys. One of which was suspected of having committed a crime, and one lit out and sought new fields, as I persuaded him to do.

COLONEL: Lord, what a snap the youngsters have nowadays. My old dad turned me loosed with a dern good sprouting and even minus a chew of tobacco.

SHERIFF: Yes, yes, no doubt.

Why even now you seem I'll treated.

COLONEL: Oh, I don't mean now. But I sure had to work hard for what little I possess.

MRS BAILEY: What "LITTLE" meaning me?

SPUTTERS: You didn't think he meant me, did yuh?

MRS BAILEY: You shut up.

COLONEL: Present company always accepted, my dear.

I beg your pardon for interrupting. Sheriff, go on.

SPUTTERS: So do I Sheriff. You have my permission to proceed.

Let-her-flick-er.

SHERIFF: Say, you you reckon you'll ever amount to anything?

SPUTTERS: You're dern tooting. Say, ain't you heard about it?

SHERIFF: Heard about what?

SPUTTERS: My invention.

SHERIFF: You're what- invention?

SPUTTERS: Yes, sure nuff, my invention. Something to help humanity on it's downward plunge through life. I've invented a pickle compass.

SHERIFF: Pickle compass? What the devil is that?

SPUTTERS: It's an apparatus you put on a dill pickle when you go to bite into it, to see which way it's going to squirt.

SHERIFF: He's loco – I knew it.

COLONEL: After that, Sputters, we can get along without you. You go start the fire, so mother can get the Sheriff something to eat.

SPUTTERS: That's always the way. Why the devil don't he fill up on sour milk biscuits at home 'stead of coming out here bothering hard working people to death. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Drat-your-hide.

COLONEL: Never mind. You go start that fire.

SPUTTERS: Well I'm going, ain't I?

Oh, I say. Them Grump boys went to town day before yesterday to bury old Lady Grump, and them derned city commissioners wouldn't let them do it.

SHERIFF: What was the reasons?

SPUTTERS: She wasn't dead yet. (Exits into house)

COLONEL: The dern fool.

But go ahead and tell us the rest of the story.

SHERIFF: Well, as you know, there is \$5000 reward for the catchers of 'em. There's a lot of cattle rustling in this county and others. Most of it has been done by Mexicans. A lot of cattle has been herded off the Anchor Ranch. And considerable shooting has been indulged in. It seems there was a couple of brothers that own that ranch, you could hardly tell one from the other. One of them got into a lot of trouble mostly with the Mexicans. I reckon before anyone was the finish that about five Mexicans are killed. And being Sheriff, naturally, I was called into the case. There has been several G-men on this case. They too furnished me with the information and photograph of the man they wanted me to catch. There's a pretty good likeness of that man that did the shooting, ain't it Jim?

JIM: Yes, Sheriff. We sure had some high old times in our younger days on our resemblance to each other.

SHERIFF: You've been a great help to us, Jim. But your brother, George, sure had a tough time of it that night, didn't he?

JIM: Yes, Sheriff. I went to see Hughes in regards to the deal I had on George, poor devil was hard at it, had stopped five bits of lead at that, mostly about the arms and shoulders. I said

Canada to him, said yes. And then he fainted. I got a doctor to fix him up, gathered in a thousand dollars and started him for Detroit, after changing clothes with him. This is outfit I have on no. With all his faults, George is a mighty fine fellow. He was crying when we shook hands at the train. The rest you know. I hit out across the country to try my hand at catching them Mexicans and finally landed here.

Thanks to Lord.

SPUTTERS: (Enters from house) Here is your dad busted sour milk biscuits, all you have to do now is to take 'em.

SHERIFF: Say, you probably put a lot of foreign substance in these here biscuits. You better tell me what you put in them, do you hear me?

SPUTTERS: No, Sheriff. No foreign substance in these here biscuits, 'cepting three hairpins and a fish hook.

SHERIFF: What?

COLONEL: There you dern fool – see what you've done.

SPUTTERS: Oh – that's all right. Just a spot or two. It's just as good as eaten.

COLONEL: Well, dern my –

SPUTTERS: Well, gee whiz! What the dad busted time are you tryin' to do – stump my growth?

COLONEL: Now just one more yip out of and I'll shoot your boots off.

SPUTTERS: Better not if you want the atmosphere to remain clear.

COLONEL: Shut up. Now Sheriff, go ahead. Did you know Jim was here?

SPUTTERS: Sure. Now Colonel – I've got a picture of the man I'm looking for. Which one of the brothers is it?

COLONEL: Why, that's Jim, I know.

SHERIFF: What do you say, Miss?

ROSE: No, that is NOT Jim.

SHERIFF: You're right. That's George.

SPUTTERS: Say, you kinda overlooked me, didn't yuh?

SHERIFF: Say, if you don't look out I'll throw you in jail.

SPUTTERS: Takes more than you to shut the doors on me.

SHERIFF: I'd like to try it.

SPUTTERS: You sure would. That's why you're Sheriff.

SHERIFF: Say, Jim, I suppose you know you're being watched.

JIM: Watched by whom?

SHERIFF: Those Mexican's. They didn't know that it was George, instead of you. Now that we've settled everything, do I get those biscuits or not?

MRS BAILEY: You do, Sheriff – you certainly do. Come right into the house. (Exits into house)

SHERIFF: You bet I will. 'Cause I don't want to miss them biscuits. (Exits after her)

COLONEL: I'm going to see he doesn't eat anything but biscuits.(Exits after SHERIFF)

JIM: Well, old pal, what's your mind?

SPUTTERS: I was just thinking what a damned shame it was that your gun gave out before you got Zambra.

ROSE: Zambra? Jim, he was the sixth, the one that got away.

SPUTTERS: I guess I'll-- I'll

ROSE: Sputter, Sputter – (Reminds him)

SPUTTERS: (hand bus.) going to bum a chew the She--
Sher-iff. I-went-broke-in-the-pok-er-game. (Exits into house)

ROSE: Why are you so quiet, dear? Of what are you thinking?

JIM: I was just thinking how long it will be before I can put the
“Anchor Ranch” on you.

ROSE: Oh for shame, Jim.

JIM: By Jove, Rose – that party is sure pushing that home.

SPUTTERS: (Enters) Say, who's trying to run down time with that bronk, oh?

JIM: Blessed if I can see for the dust, Sputters.

MRS BAILEY: (Enters) Who is it, Jim?

JIM: By Jove, it's Keema. Wonder what's on her mind.

SPUTTERS: Say you can tell. A Mex is a Mex, and that's all there is to it.

KEEMA: (Offstage) Whoa!

MRS BAILEY: Keema, what in the world are you riding like that for?

KEEMA: Oh, I don't know. I not care. I feex heem dat Zambra and for de rest I don't tink.

JIM: I thought you like him, Keema.

KEEMA: No, no, I think so at first, but now I hate heem dat dog dat snake. Heem he lie to me. Heem he say for me to bring food at beeg tree, den he say when he tink I not hear heem dat

he would see me Keema, no more. But I feex heem. I feex heem.

JIM: He didn't cross the border then?

KEEMA: No, heem wait for me at beeg tree for food. Heem Zambra is man what has been putting beeg shots for guns to shoot Cross Little River.

COLONEL: What? How do you know that?

KEEMA: I find paper dat tell me all. I would keep paper and no show it, but Zambra treat me bad, and lie to me. Den I take paper to soldier's field at Circle Ear and show dem where to get Zambra. Dat is food I take to him Zambra to beeg tree.

JIM: Did he get away? Give us the dope girl.

KEEMA: No.

ROSE: Did he get away?

KEEMA: Heem try get away.

ROSE: Yes, yes, go on.

KEEMA: Five, six soldiers day shoot and heem Zambra fall.

Dey kill him.

MRS BAILEY: Poor thing. I guess she stirred up a bigger hornets nest than she figured on. Come, Keema, let's go into the house.

Come, let's all go in, it makes me kinda nervous. (Exits with KEEMA into house)

COLONEL: Well, it was only a question of time with the coyote anyway. Come on folks. (Exits into house)

SPUTTERS: And to think I let that greaser get away from me. Dat bust his ugly hide. Had to sneak off and get smoked up by a lot of soldiers. Why – I - -I ---

ROSE: Sputters-- Sputters. (Holds up her hand)

SPUTTERS: (Hand bus.) Well –don't-that-beat-

JIM: Here, here - - -Sputters (Takes ROSE in his arms)

CURTAIN

