

THE MEDICINE SHOW

A Musical Farce

freely adapted from Molière

Book, Lyrics, and Music

by

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THE PLACE: rural America, the southern Mississippi River valley
THE TIME: a while back

CHARACTERS

THE DOCTOR, also SCALAWAG
MAXINE
COLONEL DUPONT, also DEACON TWADDLE
ANDREW
REBECCA
LUKE, also LIMPING MAN
LUCY
HORACE, also SHERIFF

The medicine show wagon is conceived as a unit set, which the actors turn or change to represent the three different locations. The main point is for scene changes to be fast, so that transitions between scenes can be effectively instantaneous.

This is low comedy—farce in the *commedia* tradition—and all sticks and branches used for hitting people are slapsticks, with an outrageously loud, sharp sound.

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ACT ONE**OPENING**

(There is no overture. The stage is bare except for a few set pieces representing trees. As the lights come up, bright and energetic music begins. Two actors in a gaudy patchwork horse costume run onstage pulling a brightly painted wooden wagon with the legend "TWENTIETH CENTURY MEDICINE CO." and signs reading "Tomorrow's Remedies Today"... "Tonics, liniments, treatments, soaps"... "BIG FREE SHOW!" They pull the wagon to center stage. During the following, they pull off the horse suit as two other men and three women tumble out of the wagon in a flurry of activity, carrying props, costumes, percussion instruments, juggling items, etc.)

MAN 1 & WOMAN 1

(singing out over the audience)

HEY, COME A-RUNNIN'!

MAN 2 & WOMAN 2

HEY, COME ON DOWN!

MAN 3, WOMAN 3 & MAN 4

HEY, COME A-RUNNIN'!

COMPANY

**MEDICINE
SHOW'S IN
TOWN!**

MAN 1

**STEP RIGHT UP NOW AND SETTLE DOWN HERE, FOLKS;
TAKE YOUR SEATS FOR THE MEDICINE SHOW!**

WOMAN 1

**MOST COLOSSAL OCCASION ALL YEAR, FOLKS;
EVERYONE MEETS AT THE MEDICINE SHOW!**

MAN 2

**LAST TIME THROUGH, THERE WAS ONLY A SHACK HERE;
QUITE A WAIT FOR THE MEDICINE SHOW!**

WOMAN 2

**WHO CAN TELL IF WE'LL EVER BE BACK HERE?
DON'T ARRIVE LATE FOR THE MEDICINE SHOW!**

MAN 3
GLAMOR AND EXCITEMENT, FOR FREE;
FANTASY AND FUN FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS...

WOMAN 3
AND A VERY LEARNED M.D.,
SHOWING ALL OUR DRUGS AND THEIR CURATIVE POWERS.

MAN 4
WHY MAKE LIFE AN ETERNAL BLUE MONDAY?
WHY LET WORK LEAVE YOU GLOOMY AND GLUM?

COMPANY
DROP YOUR HARROW, YOUR HARVESTER, AND YOUR HOE,
AND COME TO THE MEDICINE SHOW!

WOMAN 1
DEMONSTRATIONS OF NEW AND UNKNOWN DRUGS—
BIG FREE BASH AT THE MEDICINE SHOW!

MAN 1
BUT, OF COURSE, TO BE GETTING YOUR OWN DRUGS,
BETTER HAVE CASH AT THE MEDICINE SHOW!

WOMAN 2
ART AND TRADE IN A HALF 'N' HALF MIXTURE—
THEY GAVE BIRTH TO THE MEDICINE SHOW!

MAN 2
SUCH A TRULY AMERICAN FIXTURE—
NOTHING ON EARTH LIKE THE MEDICINE SHOW!

MAN 3
SORT OF LIKE A SHOWBOAT—ON LAND...

WOMAN 3
SORT OF LIKE AN OPERA, BUT FUNNY AND FRISKY...

MAN 4
SORT OF LIKE A CRAP GAME—BUT PLANNED...

WOMAN 3
TRYING OUT OUR DRUGS IS THE ONLY THING RISKY!

MAN 1, MAN 2, WOMAN 1 & WOMAN 2
WHILE WE'RE HERE, WE MAKE EVERY DAY SUNDAY—

MAN 3, WOMAN 3 & MAN 4
KIDS RUN RIOT AND VILLAGES HUM—

COMPANY

STILL THE FUN MAY EVAPORATE WHEN WE GO,
SO COME TO THE MEDICINE SHOW!

(They assemble into a formal grouping and indicate the wagon door.)

HERE COMES THE DOCTOR!

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY DOCTOR!

THE MIRACLE WORKER OF THE MODERN AGE.

ALL PANACEAS

IN UP-TO-DATE PHARMACOPEIAS

ARE AT THE BECK AND CALL OF THIS MIGHTY SAGE.

WOMEN

HE MASTERED THE MYSTERIES OF MEDICINE.

MEN

HE MADE LYING LAID UP IN BED A SIN.

COMPANY

ANATOMY'S ANSWER TO EDISON...

HERE COMES THE DOCTOR NOW!

(The Doctor comes out of the wagon, wearing a costume that suggests the "man in white", but is infinitely more elaborate and impressive; if the Surgeon General wore a uniform, it might look like this. He is charismatic, eloquent, persuasive. He waits for silence before he begins. Music continues softly under.)

DOCTOR

My friends. It warms my heart to see so many familiar faces...to return to my favorite state, the jewel of the South. Yes, it's great to be back in Arkansas...

(The nearest actor hastily whispers in his ear.)

Tennessee...and to welcome you to our Medicine Show. My friends, we stand on the threshold of a new century—the twentieth century. A new age of health and happiness for all, thanks to American know-how...and thanks to the Twentieth Century Medicine Company! Now, other patent medicine companies brag about how “natural” their products are. “Pure vegetable extract”, they say. “Made from herbs and water”—“no chemicals added”! But I ask you, my friends: what are vegetables made of, when you get down to basics? Chemicals. What is everything we eat, drink, or breathe made of? Chemicals! So *why not get the chemicals straight from the lab, pure and unadulterated!*

(starting low and building again)

Now some of you may say, “Shouldn’t medicine be made from natural sources?” Well, arsenic is natural, my friends. So are toadstools...and black widow spiders! Is *that* what you want to give your loved ones when they’re in pain? My friends, the Twentieth Century Company pledges that every medicine we sell is *one hundred percent artificial!* And we stand behind that pledge!

(The music swells and the company applauds, cheers, and whistles.)

But you all know how wonderful these products are, and I’m certainly not here to sell you on them. No, I’m here...

DOCTOR *(cont.)*

(producing a large patent medicine bottle)

...to sell you on *this!* Oh, it's a health tonic, yes, but a health tonic so special and new that we had to give it a special new name: the Twentieth Century Wonder Drug!

COMPANY

(in formation, with big toothy smiles)

IF YOU WANT TO FEEL YOUR BEST,
DEMAND THE TONIC THAT BEATS THE REST.
YOU'LL BE SLEEPING SAFE AND SNUG
WITH THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WONDER DRUG!

(Music continues softly under.)

DOCTOR

Now you're undoubtedly asking yourselves, just how good is this Twentieth Century Wonder Drug? Well, let me show you something, my friends. A few weeks ago a man came to me who was dying right before my eyes. To show you how ill he was, I have this man's diseased heart preserved right here...

(An assistant hands him a large specimen jar containing something resembling a pickled baby octopus.)

...in this jar. A horrible sight, isn't it? But I put this man on a strict regimen of Twentieth Century Wonder Drug, and within a week that sick, dying man was turning somersaults and singing! And here is that same man's heart *now*.

(The assistant exchanges the jar for one containing what looks like a large, bright red, stuffed valentine heart in liquid.)

Notice the difference! Healthy, glowing with life...all thanks to the Twentieth Century Wonder Drug! But we'll tell you more about this miraculous tonic later—now it's time for our show. It's a new version of an old favorite, which tells how an average man—someone no different from you or me—found health, happiness, and success...all thanks to the practice of medicine. And if, occasionally, you see or hear something that reminds you of the Twentieth Century Wonder Drug, or any of our other fabulous products...

(with a broad wink)

well, that's purely coincidental. Now besides being about medicine, this play has the three classic conflicts: man against nature...

(The actor playing Luke rips a flower to shreds.)

Man against man...

(Andrew and Horace hit each other over the head with sticks.)

And man against himself.

(Luke hits himself over the head with a stick.)

It has hilarious comedy...

(Andrew and Horace alternately hit each other on the backside with sticks.)

And deeply moving tragedy.

(Horace and Andrew alternately hit each other on the backside with sticks.)

And we give this classic play a first-class production. You'll see: stunning beauty!

(The three women parade across stage in "sexy" poses, Maxine last.)

DOCTOR *(cont.)*

Amazing acrobatics!

(Horace bows to the audience, rubs his hands, prepares for a stunt, then trips and falls.)

Colossal spectacle!

(Andrew crosses carrying a gigantic pair of spectacles in his arms.)

Sharpshooting!

(Luke aims his shotgun up into the wings and fires; behind him Dupont yelps in pain and claps a hand to his backside.)

And naturally—since this is a show about doctors—a plentiful supply of clowns!

COMPANY

TIME FOR YOU TO SIT BACK AND SMILE;
TIME FOR YOU TO CACKLE AND QUIVER WITH LAUGHTER.

DOCTOR

SEEING HOW YOU'LL BE HERE A WHILE,
TAKE A TIP AND DON'T TRY THE TONIC TILL AFTER!

ALL

NOW WE'LL SHAKE YOU WITH MAGIC AND MAYHEM—
NOW WE'LL STIR YOU WITH MUSIC AND MIME—
NOW THE WIDE MISSISSIPPI MAY OVERFLOW:
IT'S TIME...
FOR THE MEDICINE SHOW!

(They hustle about, turning the wagon, changing costumes, setting props; then they vanish. The scene change finishes on the last chord.)

SCENE ONE

(The yard in front of Scalawag's house, a dilapidated wooden cabin. Morning. A large earthen whiskey jug sits on a tree stump; a hefty ax rests against the stump. The Sheriff, an authoritative man with tremendous whiskers and a big lawman's star on his coat, enters carrying a large sign, closely pursued by a vehement Maxine and a more easygoing Scalawag.)

MAXINE

But you can't!

SHERIFF

Yes I can.

MAXINE

But you mustn't!

SHERIFF

Yes I must. Sorry, folks, it's the law.

(He takes a hammer and nails from his coat pockets and begins to nail the sign across the front door; it says "FORECLOSED" in large letters, followed by some fine print.)

SCALAWAG

Now take it easy, Maxine, I'm sure we can work this out.

MAXINE

Scalawag, you lazy slug! He's taking away our house! Do something!

SCALAWAG

Sheriff, I don't understand. How can you foreclose on our house?

MAXINE

There's no mortgage on it!

SCALAWAG

There never was!

MAXINE

We built it ourselves!

SCALAWAG

With her own two hands!

SHERIFF

(Having nailed the sign to the door, turns back to them.)
It's not for a mortgage. You owe a year's worth of taxes on it.

SCALAWAG & MAXINE

Taxes!?

SHERIFF

A year ago, this whole part of the county was officially declared within town limits. And the town has a property tax. Everyone got a letter about it.

(He puts away his supplies and prepares to leave.)

MAXINE

(ominously)

Scalawag, did you get something in the mail about this?

SCALAWAG

(squirming)

Who reads letters from the town? I thought it was—

SHERIFF

(turning back to them, as though against his better judgment)

Look, Scalawag...Mrs. Scalawag. Tomorrow is Sunday. This don't become official till Monday anyway, so I can hold off reporting it till then. Bring the money first thing Monday morning, and you can keep your house.

MAXINE

But that only gives us two days! Where are we supposed to get that kind of money in two days?

SHERIFF

That's your problem. So long, folks.

(He leaves.)

MAXINE

(picking up a stick and going after him)

Yeah, so long, Sheriff—

SCALAWAG

(grabbing and restraining her)

No, Maxine!

MAXINE

Let me go!

SCALAWAG

It won't do any good.

MAXINE

It'll do *me* good!

SCALAWAG

We'll get out of this somehow. Now if I let go, are you going to hit him?

MAXINE

No, Scalawag, I'm not going to hit him.

SCALAWAG

All right then.

(He lets her go. Suddenly she turns and hits him with the stick.)

Ow! What did I do?

MAXINE

Nothing at all—as usual! Look at you! A boozier, a gambler, a loafer, a lecher—

SCALAWAG

I resent that. I am *not* a loafer.

MAXINE

I see you making eyes at other women. I know what you'd like to do.

SCALAWAG

That's a lie.

MAXINE

But I'm not worried, because no other woman would want you.

SCALAWAG

That's a lie!

MAXINE

You don't fool me. I have eyes like a hawk.

SCALAWAG

(to the audience)
And a face like a vulture.

MAXINE

What was that? What did you say to them?

SCALAWAG

I said you have no culture. Tell me, Maxine, how many other woodcutters do you know who can give lectures, recite Latin, sing and dance—

MAXINE

Oh, listen to the eminent scholar parade his knowledge! The fruits of five years spent in kindergarten! Meanwhile we're gonna lose our house, because all you do is loaf around and eat up everything we own.

SCALAWAG

I do not!

MAXINE

No, you're right, you drink some of it.

(to audience)

I once caught him trying to sell my family heirlooms for betting money.

SCALAWAG

(to audience)

Ridiculous!

(under his breath, to Maxine)

Do you have to tell them *everything*?

MAXINE

You sleep all day and play all night.

SCALAWAG

I like to keep regular hours.

MAXINE

You chop up our furniture instead of going out to cut wood.

SCALAWAG

Well, that makes it easier if we have to move.

MAXINE

And now we do! And I'm sick of your getting all the good lines!

(She hits him with the stick.)

SCALAWAG

Ow! I'm sick of your nagging, my worser half. Whatever happened to the romance in our marriage?

MAXINE

I think you pawned it last week!

ONCE UPON A TIME,

EVERY DAY,

YOU'D COME HOME WITH ROSES FOR ME.

HIKING THROUGH THE WOODS,

PICKING THEM, DIDN'T SEEM TOO HARD.

BUT NOWADAYS, I GUESS,

WHAT I LIKE COUNTS FOR LESS—

YOU WON'T EVEN PICK THE WEEDS IN THE YARD.

SCALAWAG

ONCE UPON A TIME,

EVERY NIGHT,

WE'D BE OUT AT PARTIES TILL DAWN.

YOU ENJOYED IT ONCE—

NOW YOU KEEP YAPPING THAT IT'S WRONG.

MAXINE

NOW DON'T START THAT AGAIN!
OF COURSE I LIKED IT THEN—
YOU USED TO TAKE ME ALONG.

MAXINE

THE THRILL IS GONE,
THE LOVELY DREAM HAS ENDED.
THE THRILL IS GONE,
AND HOW CAN DREAMS BE MENDED?

SCALAWAG

THE THRILL IS GONE!
THE THRILL IS GONE!

BOTH

WHEN THE GLOW OF LOVE HAS FADED,
AND YOU'RE STRUCK WITH A CHILL,
THE THRILL IS GONE.

(Music continues under.)

MAXINE

Remember the beautiful singing voice I used to have?

SCALAWAG

I remember you could stun small game at thirty yards, if that's what you mean.

MAXINE

Fool! I had a three-octave range. My vibrato was perfection. I could toss off a trill with ease. And now, listen...

(on a long, piercing high note)

AAAA!

SCALAWAG

(having covered his ears, wincing)

What the hell was that?

MAXINE

Don't you hear it? The *trill* is gone!

SCALAWAG

(after reacting to the pun)

ONCE UPON A TIME,
LONG AGO,
I WAS GONNA MARRY A GIRL.
SHE WAS SWEET AND SLIM,
SOFT AND WARM, AND SHE LOVED ME TOO.

MAXINE

Who the hell...?

SCALAWAG
BUT JUST WHEN WE WERE SURE
OUR FUTURE WAS SECURE...
WHAT A TRAGIC FATE! SHE TURNED INTO YOU.

MAXINE
ONCE UPON A TIME,
MAKING LOVE
ALWAYS FELT LIKE NEW YEAR'S WITH US...

SCALAWAG
Oh?

MAXINE
LOTS OF FUN AND GAMES,
LOADS OF LAUGHS, FULL OF PARTY CHEER.

SCALAWAG
WELL, I CAN TELL YOU HOW
IT'S STILL LIKE NEW YEAR'S NOW...

MAXINE
Yeah?

SCALAWAG
IT ONLY COMES ONCE A YEAR.

SCALAWAG
THE THRILL IS GONE,
THE MAGIC IS FORGOTTEN.
THE THRILL IS GONE,
AND WHAT REMAINS IS ROTTEN.

MAXINE
THE THRILL IS GONE!
THE THRILL IS GONE!

BOTH
WHEN THE HONEYMOON IS OVER,
AND YOU'RE STUCK WITH THE BILL,
THE THRILL,
THE THRILL IS GONE!

MAXINE
Well, at least we agree on something. And you know whose fault it is?

SCALAWAG
Not this again.

MAXINE
Let's just take a look at where the blame belongs—

SCALAWAG

(simultaneously)

Where the Blame Belongs... Lecture number Seventeen-B in the manual.

MAXINE

Shut up and listen.

(During the following she paces, while behind her back Scalawag elaborately pantomimes plugging his ears, and doing her bodily harm in various ways.)

Now when a man and a woman marry they make certain promises, and they agree to accept the marriage contract as binding.

(She turns to him and he instantly assumes an attentive pose. Pacing again)

In our marriage, on the other hand, this contract has been violated on your side more times than I can count.

(She turns to him; same business. Pacing again)

Now ordinarily, as I'm sure you'd agree, I'm as patient and silent as a martyr, but when—

(She turns to him and this time he's caught. He smiles sheepishly and tries to disguise his pantomime.)

Why, you boozebrian—make fun of me, will you?

(She hits him with her stick and jumps on him. They wrestle, somewhat playfully at first, then in earnest.)

I'll teach you, pumpkinhead!

SCALAWAG

Now now, my precious...

MAXINE

Jellybelly!

SCALAWAG

(rolling on top of her)

Sticks and stones may break my bones...

MAXINE

Jackass!

(She hits him with the stick and knocks him off her.)

SCALAWAG

Ow! Help!

MAXINE

(on top, hitting him)

And now, my fine fat fool of a husband...

(He grabs the stick, wrests it from her, and knocks her off him.)

Ow! Hey! Stop it!

(Deacon Twaddle, a bespectacled, cadaverous, prissy old man, enters hurriedly. He holds a rolled-up umbrella which he uses as a cane.)

DEACON

Oh no no no no no, my friends! Desist, I beg of you!
(He interposes himself between them.)

SCALAWAG

But—but I was only—

MAXINE

Did you see what this dungheap—

DEACON

No, my dear friends, violence is never the answer.

SCALAWAG

But, Deacon Twaddle, we were just—

DEACON

Please, Brother Scalawag, let me arbitrate this matter. I'm a busy man, but as a good neighbor I'm willing to help avert senseless bloodshed. Now please explain the problem.

SCALAWAG

Well you see, Deacon, we were—

DEACON

Please be brief, my time is precious. Come straight to the point.

SCALAWAG

Well I am, I was going to—

DEACON

The less said the better. Don't mince words. No shilly-shallying.

SCALAWAG

But I'm really—

DEACON

You're really very slow. Come come, speak up.

SCALAWAG

I will, if you'll just shut up for a second!

DEACON

(after a beat, subdued)
Oh. Very well, I'm silent.

SCALAWAG

Good. Now I—

DEACON

I'm all ears.

SCALAWAG

Fine. Then—

DEACON

May I die if I say another word.

SCALAWAG

Amen to that! I swear—

DEACON

Still not finished? Your wife had better explain—you just keep blathering away.

SCALAWAG

I'm so mad at you, I forget why I was mad at *her*!

MAXINE

He was mad at me because I called him a fleabrainned eggsucker!

SCALAWAG

(He reaches across and hits her with the stick.)

Right!

MAXINE

Ow!

DEACON

Stop, stop! No matter what the provocation, there is no excuse for cudgelling your wife!

MAXINE

(grabbing his umbrella)

And what if I want him to cudgel me?

(poking him with it on each line)

What's it to *you*? It's *my* life! Who asked *you* to butt in?

DEACON

(backing away)

Er...no one...

MAXINE

It so happens I *feel* like being cudgelled! So *mind* your own *business*!

DEACON

(backed up against Scalawag)

I apologize, Brother Scalawag. Please, go ahead and cudgel your wife. I'll even help.

SCALAWAG

And suppose I don't want to cudgel her?

SCALAWAG (*cont.*)

(*poking him with the stick on each line*)

What's it *your* business? She's *my* wife! Who asked *you* to butt in?

DEACON

(*Tries to back away but Maxine is behind him.*)

No one...

SCALAWAG

It so happens I don't *feel* like cudgelling her! So get *lost*! And remember the old saying...

SCALAWAG & MAXINE

(*both hitting the Deacon in rhythm*)

Don't – put – your finger – between – the hammer – and – the nail!

(*They drive him offstage and return, laughing warmly together.*)

SCALAWAG

And now let's kiss and make up.

MAXINE

(*instantly angry again*)

Never.

SCALAWAG

Oh come on, baby.

MAXINE

(*rubbing her bruises*)

You fought back. You never did that before!

SCALAWAG

I apologize. Anyway, it's over, isn't it? My sweet...my little dove...

MAXINE

Stop it. You've put me in an ugly mood.

SCALAWAG

Have I ever told you how beautiful you are when you're ugly?

MAXINE

You should be out cutting wood. We've only got two days to get the money for the house.

SCALAWAG

Don't worry, I'll make it somehow. I'll cut down every tree in the forest if I have to! But first I want my goodbye kiss.

MAXINE

(sullenly)

Oh, all right. Here.

(She gives him a peck. He grabs her and turns it into a big passionate embrace, then he drops her on the ground.)

SCALAWAG

Now I go to work.

(He cockily saunters over to pick up the ax and the jug. As he exits)

See you later, my dear.

MAXINE

(rubbing her bruises, mimicking him)

My dear, my sweet, my dove... Well, that was the last straw, my dove! I'm tired of being so meek and submissive. You'll pay for hitting me back, just wait and see!

THE THRILL IS GONE,

THE SPELLS HAVE ALL BEEN SPOKEN.

THE THRILL IS GONE—

I BET MY ARM IS BROKEN!

WHEN YOU'RE FULL OF RIGHTEOUS ANGER,

AND YOU SWEAR YOU COULD KILL,

THE THRILL IS GONE!

(She exits.)

SCENE TWO

(A garden by Colonel Dupont's mansion. A stone bench up center, a high hedge bush on either side of it. Andrew sneaks onstage. In his twenties, he is handsome, boyish, and intelligent.)

ANDREW

(softly)

Rebecca?

(There is an offstage noise. He quickly hides behind one of the hedges. Rebecca, who made the noise, sneaks on. She is about twenty and very pretty.)

REBECCA

(calling softly)

Andrew?

(Andrew's hedge shakes. Startled, she quickly hides behind the other one.)

ANDREW

(peering out, head low to the ground)

Becky, is that you?

REBECCA

(peering out at normal height)

Andy?

(They can't see each other. She looks under the bench as he looks over it.)

REBECCA

Andrew?

Rebecca?

(She straightens up and they see each other.)

Andrew!

Rebecca!

(They rush together and kiss passionately.)

ANDREW

Rebecca—

REBECCA

Shhh! It's morning already. My father will be up at any moment.

ANDREW

He'll have to wait his turn.

(He kisses her again.)

REBECCA

We shouldn't have met. If my father found out—

ANDREW

Your father, your father, I'm sick of your father! I'd like to have this out with him right now!

(Offstage animal noise—a cricket or frog or perhaps a rooster crowing. They both jump and hide behind the bushes. After a beat they peek out. Whispering)

Becky, I love you, and I want—

REBECCA

What?

ANDREW

(loud)
I love you, and—

REBECCA

Shhh!

ANDREW

(lower)
I love you and—

REBECCA

Shhh!
(She crosses to him.)
Now what were you saying?

ANDREW

(wearily)
I don't know, I couldn't hear.

REBECCA

You were talking about love.

ANDREW

I was *trying* to.
(He opens his mouth to sing; stops, and looks around cautiously. Then softly)

I WANT TO SING YOU A LOVE SONG;
I WANT TO BUBBLE AND GUSH.
I'VE BEEN DYING TO TRY IT,
BUT WE HAVE TO BE QUIET.

(his voice rising)
AND WHO CAN SING A LOVE SONG—
(She puts a finger to his lips. Softly)
IN A HUSH?

REBECCA

I'D LIKE TO SING OF MY PASSION,
SO LOUD AND CLEAR THAT YOU'D BLUSH.
BUT HOW CAN I, WITH THIS PER-
SISTENT NEED FOR A WHISPER?

(her voice rising)

IT'S HARD TO SING A LOVE SONG—

(He puts a finger to her lips. Softly)

IN A HUSH.

ANDREW

IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU HERE.

REBECCA

IT'S THRILLING TO BE NEAR YOU.

BOTH

IT'S HEAVEN WHEN YOU SING TO ME...

I JUST WISH I COULD HEAR YOU.

(They look around cautiously.)

ANDREW

YOU NEED A VOICE, FOR A LOVE SONG,
THAT'S FIRM AND VIBRANT AND ROUND;
AND MY VOICE IS MUCH FIRMER
WHEN I DON'T HAVE TO MURMUR.

(his voice rising)

YOU JUST CAN'T SING A LOVE SONG—

(He catches himself. Choked off)

WITHOUT SOUND.

BOTH

IT ISN'T HARD TO SPEAK OF LOVE
IN THIS ROMANTIC GARDEN;
BUT WHEN WE TALK, IT ALL COMES OUT LIKE—

REBECCA

HM?

ANDREW

I BEG YOUR PARDON?

(They move closer to each other.)

REBECCA

BUT SOON WE WILL BE TOGETHER,
WITH NO MORE SCURRY OR RUSH.
THEN MY CLOTHES WON'T GET MANGLED—

ANDREW
OR MY VOICE COME OUT STRANGLER—

BOTH

(their voices rising)
AND WE WON'T HAVE TO KISS THROUGH UNDERBRUSH,
OR SING ANOTHER LOVE SONG—
(They catch themselves. Softly)
IN A HUSH!
(They kiss.)

ANDREW
Why can't I tell your father we want to marry? Speak to him frankly, man to man?

REBECCA
Because he'll take his pistol and shoot you, man to man.

ANDREW
I'm not afraid.

REBECCA
He'll never give his permission. I can hear him now...
(mimicking Dupont)
"Why should I let a poor student marry my baby girl?"

ANDREW
But we can't go on meeting like this.

REBECCA
Maybe we'll have to get married without his permission.

ANDREW
Now look, Becky, I love you so much it hurts. I'd give up everything for you...if I had anything to give up. But I don't want to steal you away from your home... I want to win you openly, honestly, proudly, for all the world to see. That's the honorable thing to do, the manly thing, the noble thing. Anything else would be the act of a coward or a thief, and I—

REBECCA
I know, Andrew, I know. You have high ideals and noble principles.

ANDREW
It's not just a question of principles, it's—
(Colonel Dupont, an old-school Southern gentleman (and pompous blowhard) in his fifties, enters. With him is Luke, a muscular man in his late twenties or thirties, holding a shotgun; and Lucy, a beautiful woman in her twenties, with large and impressive breasts.)

DUPONT

No, young man, it's a question of trespassing, and secret rendezvous before dawn!

REBECCA

Poppa!

ANDREW

Colonel Dupont!

(Luke stands behind him with the shotgun pointing, but not aimed, at him. Extending a hand to Dupont)

You may not remember me, sir, I'm Andrew—

DUPONT

(ignoring the hand)

Oh yes, Andrew. You were in the school choir with Rebecca, were you not?

ANDREW

Yes, that's right.

DUPONT

You still sing poorly. And I suppose that this is one of your extracurricular activities?

REBECCA

Actually, Poppa, you see, Andrew was selling newspaper subscriptions door to door, and—

DUPONT

In the middle of the night?

REBECCA

It's an evening paper.

ANDREW

Forget it, Rebecca. I'm glad it's out in the open now. Colonel, I have the honor to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage.

DUPONT

Your "honor" fails to impress me, sir. The Duponts are one of the First Families of Virginia. I don't suppose that yours is one of the First Families of Tennessee?

ANDREW

No...but it was the second family in Hickory Hollow.

DUPONT

Then you must at least be very wealthy?

ANDREW

No, but when I finish school in two years I'll—

DUPONT

And in the meantime?

(as Rebecca silently mimics him)

Why should I let a poor student marry my baby girl?

ANDREW

Colonel, there are other things in life besides money.

DUPONT

True...there's property. Do you have any?

ANDREW

No...but what about love? Doesn't love count for anything with you?

(Dupont merely stares stonily.)

I guess not. But let me tell you this, Colonel: I'm the best husband possible for Rebecca, because I worship her with a devotion transcending everything else in existence.

(Rebecca smiles adoringly at him.)

DUPONT

(after a pause, solemnly extending his hand)

Your hand, sir.

(They shake.)

The answer is no. Goodbye.

ANDREW

No? But—but can't I—

DUPONT

No you cannot. Goodbye.

ANDREW

But you were young yourself once, and—

DUPONT

Never. Goodbye.

ANDREW

But isn't there *anything* I can say to—

DUPONT

Yes. Say goodbye!

ANDREW

I will when I'm ready.

DUPONT

Luke...

(Luke takes aim at Andrew.)

ANDREW

I'm ready. Rebecca, I'll...be seeing you.

(He walks off tragically.)

DUPONT

(shaking a fist after him)

Not if I see you first!

REBECCA

(bursting into tears)

Oh, Lucy!

(She puts her head on Lucy's bosom.)

LUCY

Go ahead and cry, honey.

DUPONT

Yes, get it all out. You'll soon forget him.

(Rebecca cries louder.)

Oh, now that's enough. Stop it, Rebecca, please. Lucy, you're the girl's nurse—say something.

LUCY

Say somethin', Colonel? I say she's got every right to cry. Family and money and all is fine, but don't none of 'em take the place of good old-fashioned *love*.

DUPONT

Now what does this have to—

LUCY

No, you can keep your money and your land and your jewels—well, maybe not the jewels—and just give me a lovin' man.

DUPONT

But—

LUCY

Now take my Luke here. He ain't got no money—I mean, he ain't got *nothin'*—but someday I might marry him, and why? Love. You want to know what *I* think—

DUPONT

I don't!

LUCY

I think Becky should choose her own husband—I mean, *she's* the one has to get in bed with him every night, and—

DUPONT

Luke, make her stop! Help me!

LUKE

Shut your mouth, woman!

(thumping Dupont on the back for emphasis)

The Colonel don't want your *advice*! He got heavy *things* on his mind! I *told* you, and I *told* you, and I *told* you, *don't bother the boss!* Right, boss?

DUPONT

Yes, yes! Now stop helping me!

LUKE

(with a sly smile)

Sure, Colonel, sure. You say the word, the word is heard.

DUPONT

(softly to Luke)

I'm expecting a guest—

LUKE

(to Lucy)

Mister Horace, I bet.

DUPONT

(motioning quickly for silence)

You two go see if he's arrived.

(Luke and Lucy exit.)

Good, you've stopped crying. In time you'll see the wisdom of my actions.

REBECCA

(fiercely)

All I see is that you're condemning me to a life of misery.

DUPONT

Misery? Nonsense! I know what you need: a good strong dose of...

(Music jumps in, lights change, placards appear, etc. To the audience)

Twentieth Century Wonder Drug! The only health tonic that cleans and tunes as it pours!

REBECCA

Plain or sparkling!

(Music fades, placards disappear, and lights return to normal.)

Nothing will help, if I have to marry Horace!

DUPONT
What's wrong with Horace? He's young enough—

REBECCA
He's stupid.

DUPONT
He's wealthy—

REBECCA
He's obnoxious.

DUPONT
He's landed gentry—

REBECCA
He falls down all the time!

DUPONT
His family is the most prosperous in the county. A match with him would be advantageous for me.

REBECCA
Then you can marry him. Because I never will!

DUPONT
You'll marry him or you won't marry anyone!

REBECCA
Fine! I'll become a nun!

DUPONT
You can't be a nun, we're Presbyterian!

REBECCA
I'll convert!

DUPONT
You are going to do, young lady, exactly—

LUKE
(entering with Lucy and Horace)
Mister Horace.
(Horace is average-looking, in his twenties. He is extremely clumsy, though he likes to fancy himself a suave womanizer.)

DUPONT
—exactly the man I was talking about. Horace, what a surprise, so good to see you!

HORACE

Likewise, Colonel.

(Coming forward to shake hands, he trips and falls. Luke and Dupont move to help him up.)

DUPONT

Are you all right?

HORACE

(jumping up)

I'm fine, no problem.

(with a sleazy smile)

Hel-lo, Rebecca.

(Rebecca turns away.)

DUPONT

Why don't you take your guest for a stroll around the lawn, my dear. I'll be in the house...if I'm needed.

(He exits.)

HORACE

Thanks, Colonel.

(starting off)

So, what do you say we—

(Rebecca walks off in the opposite direction. Hurrying after her)

Yeah, this way is nice too.

(He exits.)

LUCY

Lord have mercy, what a mornin'! Well, time's a-wastin' and chores a-waitin'.

(She starts off.)

LUKE

Hold on, Lucy, I want to talk to you.

LUCY

What is it, hon?

LUKE

Before we get married, there's a couple things we got to get straight.

LUCY

Who said anything about gettin' married?

LUKE

Well, I figure it's about time.

LUCY

Why are you in such a hurry?

LUKE

Hurry? We been livin' together for five years, how much time do you need? You love me...don't you?

LUCY

Oh, I love you all right...but I never said I was gonna marry you.

LUKE

Why not? There's somebody else, ain't there?

(stalking around the stage)

Who is he? I'll carve him up for breakfast, I'll boil his bones, I'll tear—

LUCY

Luke, there ain't no one else.

LUKE

(looking suspiciously into the audience)

Better not be.

LUCY

But that's the problem, honey—you're so jealous.

LUKE

Jealous? *Me?* That's the craziest thing I ever— Wait a minute. Jealous of *who?*

LUCY

That's just what I mean.

LUKE

If I'm jealous, it's 'cause of your free and easy ways. You're always talkin' to other men, laughin' and jokin'—

LUCY

But that's just bein' friendly. I don't mean nothin' by it, Luke, you know that.

LUKE

Maybe not. But I still don't like it.

BABY, YOU'RE THE ONLY WOMAN FOR ME;
I'LL LOVE YOU TILL I'M IN MY GRAVE.
BUT I'M WARNIN' YOU, THERE'S GONNA BE GRIEF
IF YOU DON'T BEHAVE!

NOW YOU UNDERSTAND, I DON'T SAY ANYTHING'S WRONG
WITH HAVIN' OTHER MEN AS FRIENDS;
YOU CAN SAY HELLO WHEN THEY PASS ON THE STREET...
BUT THAT'S WHERE IT ENDS!

YOU GOT TO TOE THE LINE...

Listen to me now!

LUKE *(cont.)*

AND DON'T YOU STEP OVER IF YOU WANT TO BE MINE!
DO LIKE I TELL YOU AND WE'LL GET ALONG FINE...
SO BABY, BETTER TOE THE LINE!

I DON'T EVER WANT TO SEE YOU FOOLIN' AROUND—
YOU KNOW THE KIND OF THING I MEAN.

LUCY
THEN I'LL NEVER DO ANY FOOLIN' AROUND...
(drily)
WHERE I CAN BE SEEN.

LUKE
IS THERE SOMETHIN' FROM YOUR PAST YOU WANT ME TO HEAR?
CAUSE NOW'S THE TIME TO TELL ME SO.

LUCY
NO I'M SORRY, HON, I CAN'T THINK OF A THING...
I WANT YOU TO KNOW.

LUKE
YOU GOT TO TOE THE LINE...
AND DON'T YOU STEP OVER IF
YOU WANT TO BE MINE!
DO LIKE I TELL YOU AND WE'LL
GET ALONG FINE...
SO BABY, BETTER TOE THE LINE!

LUCY
(mocking)
I'M GONNA TOE THE LINE!
DO LIKE YOU TELL ME AND WE'LL
GET ALONG FINE...
I BETTER TOE THE LINE!

LUKE
IF I EVER CATCH YOU WITH ANOTHER MAN,
YOU KNOW I'LL GO FOR MY GUN!

LUCY
(exasperated)
IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT ANOTHER MAN,
THEN I PROMISE YOU'LL NEVER *CATCH* ME WITH ONE!

LUKE
Now look here—

LUCY
I CAN TELL FROM ALL OF THIS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY
YOU'RE EVER GONNA TRUST IN ME:
IF I WEAR A VEIL, LOCK MYSELF IN MY ROOM,
AND SWALLOW THE KEY!

LUKE
Aw, baby—

LUCY

I'VE HAD ALL THE JEALOUS CRAP I'M TAKIN' FROM YOU,
 SO CUT IT OUT, OR ELSE I SWEAR:
 YOU CAN MAKE YOUR RULES AND LAY DOWN YOUR LAWS...
 BUT I WON'T BE THERE!

LUCY

YOU BETTER TOE THE LINE...

AND DON'T YOU STEP OVER IF
 YOU WANT TO BE MINE!
 DO LIKE I TELL YOU AND WE'LL
 GET ALONG FINE...
 SO BABY, BETTER TOE THE LINE!

YOU BETTER TOE THE LINE!
 TOE THE LINE...

YOU BETTER—

YOU BETTER...
 YOU BETTER TOE THE LINE!

*(Lights out on them and up on the opposite side of the stage, where
 Rebecca enters, pursued by Horace.)*

LUKE

YOU BETTER TOE THE LINE!
 AND DON'T YOU STEP OVER IF
 YOU WANT TO BE MINE!
 DO LIKE I TELL YOU AND WE'LL
 GET ALONG FINE...
 SO BABY, BETTER TOE THE LINE!
 TOE THE LINE...

YOU BETTER TOE THE LINE!

YOU BETTER—
 YOU BETTER—YOU BETTER—
 YOU BETTER TOE THE LINE!

HORACE

(running ahead and blocking her way)
 So, Rebecca. How've you been?

REBECCA

Fine...until a few minutes ago.

HORACE

That's nice.
(A beat.)

Oh.
(He smiles.)

That's cute, I like that. In fact, I'm kinda fond of just about everything about you,
 little lady.

REBECCA

(sweetly)
 Horace...drop dead.

HORACE

No really, I mean it.
(moving in on her)

I tell you, sweetheart, this is fate. I mean I resisted, I fought it with all my
 might...but you won me over. I give in...I'm yours.

HORACE *(cont.)*

(He embraces her. She socks him in the stomach and pulls away.

Gasp

Does that mean “No”?

REBECCA

Horace, can't you get it through your head? You repel me. You disgust me. You turn my stomach. I don't like being on the same continent with you!

HORACE

Now let me get this straight. Are you saying...you don't *like* me?

REBECCA

I'm sorry that it's such a shock.

HORACE

(recovering his poise, backing away)

Hey, don't lose any sleep over it, all right? Don't you worry about old Horace, honey, he's just fine.

(He trips and falls.)

REBECCA

(exasperated but amused, running to help him)

Oh, Horace!

(She grabs his arm to pull him up.)

Here...

HORACE

Hey, I knew you'd come around!

(He grabs for her.)

REBECCA

(dropping him)

Ohhh! Don't you ever learn?

HORACE

(getting up)

I don't need to! Take it from me, we're going to get married. I know it, your father knows it—

REBECCA

So why don't I know it?

HORACE

Because you only know about my bad qualities. Let me tell you about my good ones.

REBECCA

Well, that shouldn't take long.

HORACE

(complacently)

I'M NOT VERY CLEVER,
I STUMBLE A LOT,
AND MY HUMOR IS RARELY FUNNY;
NO, I DON'T HAVE A TALENT, BUT THERE'S ONE THING I'VE GOT...
A PILE OF MONEY.

I EAT WITH MY FINGERS,
MY BREATH CAN BE MEAN,
AND MY NOSE, AS A RULE, IS RUNNY;
BUT THERE'S ONE THING I ALWAYS DO MY BEST TO KEEP CLEAN...
MY PILE OF MONEY.

A PILE OF MONEY MAKES UP FOR A LOT
OF FLAWS, OR SO I'M TOLD;
YOU'LL SOON DISCOVER HOW EACH OF MY FAULTS
IS WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD.

I KNOW I'M NOT ALL THINGS
A HUSBAND SHOULD BE,
BUT YOU NOTICE I DON'T DENY IT.
LET ME KNOW IF YOU FEEL THERE'S SOMETHING LACKING IN ME...
AND I'LL GO BUY IT.

THEY SAY MONEY CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS,
OR MAKE A MARRIAGE STRONG;
THEY SAY MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING...
THEY'RE WRONG.

I'M NOT A GREAT LOVER,
MY LOOKS AREN'T MUCH,
AND MY LIPS AREN'T SWEET AS HONEY;
BUT THERE'S ONE THING I'VE GOT THAT ALL THE GIRLS WANT TO TOUCH...
MY PILE OF MONEY.

A PILE OF MONEY'S THE GREATEST OF ALL
INVENTIONS KNOWN TO MAN.
IF MINE CAN'T BUY ME YOUR HEART, THEN I'LL TAKE
THE PART OF YOU IT CAN.

I'M CALLED A WET BLANKET,
A BORE AND A BEAST;
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT MY MIND'S A SEWER.
BUT THERE'S ONE THING THAT NO ONE'S EVER CALLED ME, AT LEAST...
AND THAT IS POO-ER.

SO NOW THAT I'VE EARNED YOUR INTEREST,
I'LL GIVE YOU THE BOTTOM LINE,

HORACE *(cont.)*

ASSUMING WE MAKE THIS MERGER I PROPOSE:
AS OUR WEDDING BONDS MATURE
I'LL WIN CONTROL OF YOUR HEART,
AND WE'LL SEE OUR FORTUNES RISE
UNTIL THEY CLIMB OFF THE CHART...

(indicating a baby)

AND A BUNDLE OF JOY SO DEAR
WILL GET BIGGER EVERY YEAR...

AS OUR PILE OF MONEY GROWS AND GROWS!

So there you have it, pumpkin. Soon as you say the word, we'll be married.

REBECCA

(slowly)

And suppose I didn't say the word?

HORACE

You will, girlie, you will.

REBECCA

(running toward the house and calling)

Poppa! Poppa! Lucy!

HORACE

What are you doing?

REBECCA

Wait and see.

(Dupont, Luke, and Lucy enter quickly.)

DUPONT

What is it, what's the
matter?

LUKE

What's goin' on?

LUCY

Becky, you all right?

REBECCA

I called you here because I've come to a decision.

DUPONT

You what?

HORACE

An *important* decision, Colonel.

DUPONT

Ohhh. Well go ahead, my dear, tell us.

REBECCA

(significantly)

Here it comes.

(She goes on opening and closing her mouth, but nothing comes out.)

DUPONT

WHAT DID YOU SAY?
NOW SPEAK UP! WE'RE WAITING, MY DEAR.

LUKE

(to Lucy)
THEY LOST ME—WHAT DID SHE SAY?

HORACE

OH MY GOD! I'M DEAF—I CAN'T HEAR!

DUPONT

Quiet, Horace.

LUCY

If you're deaf, we all are.
(They all watch Rebecca mouthing and gesticulating.)

HORACE

I GET IT NOW!
A CHARADE! A SAYING OR PHRASE.
(Rebecca shakes her head and gestures.)
IT SOUNDS LIKE...?

LUKE

HOW MANY WORDS?

HORACE

(to Dupont and Lucy, as Rebecca tries to strangle him)
OH COME ON, NOW EVERYONE PLAYS!

DUPONT

Quiet, Horace!
DEAR, TELL ME QUICKLY—
IS THIS A MALADY THAT SUDDENLY CAME ON?
(Rebecca nods.)
AND HAVE YOU BECOME COMPLETELY MUTE?
IS YOUR VOICE ENTIRELY GONE?
(Rebecca nods.)
OH. WELL, THAT'S ODD.
OH! OH! OH MY GOD!

DUPONT, LUKE, LUCY & HORACE

(to audience)
IT CAN DRIVE YOU WILD
TO SEE YOUR ONLY CHILD
STRUCK DUMB!
SHE HAS A THROAT SO WEAK
THAT WHEN SHE TRIES TO SPEAK
SHE KEEPS MUM.

LUCY
IF ONLY SHE COULD EVEN WHISPER TO US...

HORACE
OR ELSE AT LEAST IF SHE COULD HUM...

DUPONT, LUKE, LUCY & HORACE
WE KNOW MANY PEOPLE WE WOULD RATHER SEE
STRUCK DUMB!

HORACE
(shouting in Rebecca's ear)
What's wrong with you?

DUPONT
Be quiet, you fool, she's not deaf!

LUCY
Oh my poor child!

LUKE
Wait, she's tryin' to say somethin'!

REBECCA
(after a great struggle)
Hih!

DUPONT
LISTEN TO THAT!

LUKE
SHE SAID "HIH"! I HEARD AND I SEEN!

HORACE
THAT'S RIGHT, "HIH"! CLEAR AS A BELL!

LUCY
AND JUST WHAT THE HELL DOES IT MEAN?

DUPONT
Why, it means... What *does* it mean?

REBECCA
(after another struggle)
Hai!

DUPONT
LISTEN TO THAT! SHE SAID "HAI"!

HORACE

WELL, "HI" TO YOU TOO!

LUKE

IT MEANS "WINE", SOMETHIN' TO DRINK!

LUCY

IT MEANS "TIGHT"! UNBUCKLE HER SHOE!

DUPONT

This is awful!

QUICK, FETCH A DOCTOR!

LUKE

BUT COLONEL, WE COULD NEVER GET ONE NOW!

DUPONT

WHY NOT?

LUKE

WHAT DOCTOR WOULD MAKE A HOUSE CALL—AND ON A WEEKEND?

DUPONT

I FORGOT!

(turning to Rebecca)

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

(throwing up his hands)

WHY DO I ASK YOU?

DUPONT, LUKE, LUCY & HORACE

HOW YOUR HEAD CAN SPIN
IF ONE YOU LOVE HAS BEEN
STRUCK DUMB!
A GIRL WHO'S FAR TOO YOUNG
TO HAVE A MOUTH AND TONGUE
THAT GO NUMB.

LUKE

I STILL THINK SHE SHOULD HAVE A BRANDY, OR WINE.

HORACE

WELL, I COULD USE A LITTLE RUM...

DUPONT, LUKE, LUCY & HORACE

BUT IF WE DELAY,
WHO KNOWS HOW LONG SHE'LL STAY
STRUCK—

DUPONT
SCOUR THE BACKWOODS! COMB THE COUNTRYSIDE!
SEARCH EVERY VALLEY AND GLEN!
FIND SOME LONELY GENIUS MAKING MEDICINE,
HIDDEN FROM HIS FELLOW MEN!

HORACE
I'LL BRING YOU A DOCTOR, IF YOU PAY THE COST—

LUKE
AND I'LL GO ALONG, SO HE DOESN'T GET LOST—

LUCY
AND I'LL STAY AND NURSE HER THROUGH ALL OF THE PAIN—

REBECCA

DUPONT, LUKE, LUCY & HORACE
AND YOU REMAIN STRUCK DUMB!
(DUM DA DUM, BA DA DA DUM)
STRUCK DUMB!
(DUM DA DUM, BA DA DA DUM)
STRUCK—

DUPONT
(striking a pose)
DUMB...

HORACE
(striking a pose)
DUMB...

LUKE
(striking a pose)
DUMB...

LUCY
(striking a pose)
DUMB...

REBECCA
(behind them, carried away, in a florid coloratura)
DUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UH-UMB—
*(She catches herself and stops, as the others look around for the fifth
voice. In pantomime she begs the audience for silence.)*

DUPONT, LUKE, LUCY & HORACE
(baffled but going on)
SHE COULD REMAIN STRUCK DUMB!
(All exit, Rebecca smiling.)

SCENE THREE

(Scalawag's house. Maxine is rubbing her bruises and pacing, as at the end of Scene 1.)

MAXINE

(sweetly)

LET ME SEE NOW, HOW CAN I PAY BACK YOUR LITTLE LOVE-TAP,
MY DEAR?

'CAUSE I OWE YOU ONE, AS I'M SURE YOU'D AGREE.

LIKE THE GOOD BOOK SAYS, WHEN I OWE A DEBT I REPAY IT,
MY DEAR,

AND I DO TO OTHERS AS THEY DO TO ME.

I BELIEVE I SHOULD GIVE AS GOOD AS I GOT,
SO YOU'LL GET ALL YOU GAVE ME, AND MORE,

'CAUSE ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE...

(savagely)

AND WAR.

(Luke and Horace enter behind her. Horace, not looking where he's going, bumps into her and tumbles backwards. Music continues under.)

Hey! Watch where you're going, clod!

HORACE

(as Luke helps him up)

I'm sorry, ma'am. I don't know what I'm doing today.

LUKE

Say, maybe you could help us, ma'am. We got this problem.

HORACE

Well it's no big deal, really...

LUKE

We in trouble.

HORACE

We're just looking for someone.

LUKE

We need the greatest doctor in the world.

HORACE

But I'm handling it.

LUKE

Like I said, we in trouble.

MAXINE

How perfectly terrible.

(Luke and Horace freeze as her face lights up.)

How terribly perfect!

WHAT AN IRRESISTIBLE INSPIRATION I'VE GOTTEN,
MY SWEET;
WHAT A PERFECT PRESENT I'M SENDING YOUR WAY.
YOU ENJOY SURPRISES, AND THIS ONE SHOULD BE A BIG ONE,
MY SWEET—
WHY, IT ISN'T EVEN YOUR BIRTHDAY TODAY.
NOW IT MAY BE A SOMEWHAT BIGGER SURPRISE
THAN YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN BEFORE,
BUT ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE...
AND WAR.

(Luke and Horace unfreeze as she turns to them. Music continues under.)

You're in luck! Not half a mile away is the greatest doctor who ever lived.

HORACE

Really?

MAXINE

Yes, Doctor Scalawag can cure anything! He's already put two undertakers and a church out of business.

LUKE

Darn my socks! Where do we find him?

MAXINE

Down that way in the forest, cutting wood.

HORACE

Cutting *wood*?

LUKE

What is he, a tree surgeon?

MAXINE

No, you see he's eccentric. Sometimes he'll dress funny, refuse to treat people, or even pretend he's not a doctor. When he's in one of those moods there's only one way to get his help.

HORACE

What's that?

MAXINE

Beat him.

HORACE & LUKE

Beat him?

MAXINE

Believe me, it's the only way. And once you beat him, you'll be amazed at what comes out of his mouth.

HORACE

(exiting with Luke)

We'll go find him right now. Thanks!

LUKE

Have a good day!

MAXINE

Oh don't worry, boys...I will!

(alone)

MY HEART BLEEDS AT HOW YOU'LL BE BLEEDING, DARLING;
IT HURTS ME TO THINK OF HOW BADLY YOU'LL HURT.
WHEN YOU GROAN IN PAIN, I'LL BE WITH YOU IN SPIRIT;
I WISH I COULD BE THERE—TO SEE IT AND HEAR IT!

TO BE HONEST, I MIGHT HAVE FIBBED A BIT TO THOSE STRANGERS,
MY DOVE;
YES, I MIGHT HAVE TOLD THEM A WHITE LIE OR TWO.
SO I OUGHT TO WARN YOU, THEY SWALLOWED MY LITTLE WHITE LIE,
MY DOVE—
AND YOU'LL SOON BE BEATEN TILL YOU'RE BLACK AND BLUE.
NOW I DO HOPE THEY DON'T ANNOY YOU TOO MUCH,
BUT SUPPOSING THEY *DO* MAKE YOU SORE...
REMEMBER, MY DOVE,
WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE,
THAT ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE...
AND WAR!

(She exits.)

SCENE FOUR

(A clearing in the woods. Trees, bushes, some boulders. Scalawag enters on Maxine's applause, carrying his ax and whiskey jug.)

SCALAWAG

(bowing)

Ah, thank you, thank you.

(He looks around, puts the jug down.)

A perfect spot to work. Just look at that sky. Feel that breeze.

(He takes a deep breath.)

Taste that air. A day like this makes you glad just to be alive.

THE SUN IS BRIGHT,
THE SKY IS CLEAR;
THE WEATHER IS SUBLIME
FOR ANY TIME OF YEAR...
I DON'T THINK I'LL END IT ALL TODAY.

THE AIR IS WARM
AND STRONG AS WINE;
THE SCENT OF THAT ALFAL-
FA IS A VALENTINE.
I DON'T THINK I'LL END IT ALL TODAY.

I KNOW THAT IF I LOOK AROUND I'LL FIND SUFFICIENT SORROW
TO MAKE ME WANT TO TAKE MY FINAL BOW;
AND CERTAINLY I MAY DECIDE TO CHUCK IT ALL TOMORROW,
BUT...NOT JUST NOW.

A MOUSE JUST SAID,
"THE VIEW IS FREE",
AND OVERHEAD I HEARD
A FRIENDLY BIRD AGREE.
I DON'T THINK I'LL END IT ALL TODAY.

THE KATYDIDS
ALL CHIRP SO LOW
THAT WHEN I LISTEN CLOSE,
I HEAR MIMOSA GROW.
I DON'T THINK I'LL END IT ALL TODAY.

I KNOW THAT EVERY HIGH IDEAL WILL END BY TURNING SOUR,
THAT LIFE IS FULL OF STRIFE AND GRIEF AND HATE;
THE PROBLEMS ARE SEVERE AND THEY GET WORSE WITH EVERY HOUR,
BUT...THEY CAN WAIT.

I'M SO CONTENT,
IT'S CLEAR TO SEE

SCALAWAG *(cont.)*

THAT SUCH A MORNING MUST
 HAVE HAPPENED JUST FOR ME.
 HOW COULD SOMEONE THROW THIS ALL AWAY?
 THE WORLD IS WIDE,
 DIVERSIFIED;
 THERE'S TOO MUCH LEFT TO DO
 TO THINK OF SUICIDE.
 I DON'T THINK I'LL END IT ALL TODAY!

Okay. Time to start. Got to pay off the taxes, got to save the house.

(He takes his ax and approaches a tree, then stops.)

But first I'd better have a drink. Woodcutting is thirsty work.

(He returns to the jug and takes a big swallow; coughs violently, reacts, etc.)

Mmrm...last Tuesday. A vintage week.

(corking the jug)

Okay. Now...to work.

(He approaches the tree and raises his ax; lowers it, spits on his hands, rubs them together; reacts and wipes his hands on his pants; raises the ax, swings it back...)

That's enough work for a while. Time for a break.

(He returns to the jug and takes another drink. Waving the jug to each side)

Mister President...members...I offer you a toast.

(He thinks.)

Here's to motherhood.

(He drinks. A beat.)

Here's to brotherhood.

(He drinks.)

Here's to Robin Hood.

(He drinks. By now he is somewhat tipsy. Luke and Horace enter and see him. They confer quietly and separate, coming downstage on opposite sides and picking up sticks on the way.)

Here's to our boys in uniform.

(He drinks.)

Here's to our girls, out of uniform.

(He drinks and corks the jug.)

Oh-kay. An' now—

HORACE

(behind Scalawag, approaching him)

Pardon me...

(Scalawag whirls to face him. He extends a hand to Scalawag, who thinks he is reaching for the jug and, quickly sobering somewhat, sets it down behind himself.)

LUKE

‘Scuse us...

(Scalawag whirls to face him. He extends a hand and Scalawag puts the jug between his own legs.)

HORACE

Sorry to bother you, but is your name Scalawag?

SCALAWAG

(suspicious)

Huh?

LUKE

We want to know is your name Scalawag.

SCALAWAG

(starting to nod to Luke)

Y—

(He stops and looks at Horace. Starting to shake his head)

N—

(He stops and looks front.)

Maybe. It all depends. What do you want with him?

HORACE

We want to offer him money.

LUKE

Lots of money.

SCALAWAG

(after a beat, heartily)

Scalawag’s the name. At your service.

HORACE

We hear you’re the only one who can help us.

SCALAWAG

Very kind of you to say so. I can’t deny I’m the best woodcutter in these parts.

HORACE

I beg your pardon...?

SCALAWAG

I cut only the highest quality sticks and kindling wood, and I charge less than anyone else. One dollar a cord.

HORACE

Okay, you’ve had your little joke. Now seriously—

SCALAWAG

Joke? I swear I can't sell it for a penny less.

LUKE

Now look, we're not interested in—

SCALAWAG

Oh sure, you can find cheaper wood, if you don't care about quality. But if money is all you care about...

HORACE

Why are you acting like this? Why does a great doctor like you want to hide from people that need him?

SCALAWAG

Why? Because when you're a...great doctor? Are you crazy?

LUKE

Come on now, Doc, you can't fool us.

SCALAWAG

I don't know where you two escaped from, but I'm not a doctor. Hey, if you don't believe me, ask them!

(He indicates the audience.)

HORACE

(to Luke)

That woman was right—he *is* eccentric.

(to Scalawag)

Please, Doctor, stop this pretending, or we'll have to—to do something we'll all regret.

SCALAWAG

Boys, I'll tell you once and for all: I. Am. Not. A. Doctor.

HORACE

(hefting his stick)

So you're not a doctor.

SCALAWAG

(with mock congratulations)

That's right, you got it!

LUKE

I guess that's it then.

(Horace nods and they start to beat Scalawag with the sticks.)

SCALAWAG

(trapped between them)
Ow! Hey! You *are* crazy!

HORACE

Sorry, Doctor, it's for your own good.

LUKE

You made us do it.

SCALAWAG

Ow! Stop! Ooh!
(He suddenly dashes down front. To the audience)
Hey, you know this really hurts!
(He dashes back between Luke and Horace.)
Ow! Oooh! Yes, yes, I'm a doctor! A pharmacist too, if you want!
(They stop beating him.)

LUKE

Praise the Lord.

HORACE

I thought you'd never admit it.

SCALAWAG

It slipped my mind. Uh...could you just explain one thing?

LUKE

Sure.

SCALAWAG

You say I'm a doctor?

HORACE

(nodding emphatically)
Yes!

SCALAWAG

A great, exceptional doctor?

LUKE

(nodding with Horace)
Right!

SCALAWAG

(Nods in unison with them, then stops.)
You're crazy.
(He tries to run away. They each grab an arm. He runs in place, then gives up.)
Come on, boys, this is a joke, right? Some kind of initiation ceremony?

HORACE
You still deny it?

LUKE
You still ain't no doctor?

SCALAWAG
Strike me dead if I am!
(They raise their sticks.)
Oops.

HORACE & LUKE
If you say so...
(They start to beat Scalawag again.)

SCALAWAG
Yowch! Aieeee!

HORACE
Doctor, stop this! It's so cruel of you.

LUKE
We got feelings too, you know.

HORACE & LUKE
This hurts us more than it hurts you.

SCALAWAG
I'm a doctor! I'm a doctor!
(They stop beating him but keep the sticks raised. They are tired, panting.)

HORACE
You mean it now?

LUKE
You ain't foolin' again?

SCALAWAG
No no, I mean it, I'm a doctor.

HORACE
Thank God, he's come to his senses. Forgive us for beating you, Doctor.

LUKE
Yeah, we ever so sorry.

SCALAWAG

(to audience)

Maybe I'm the one who's crazy. Could I be a doctor without knowing it?

HORACE

You won't regret this, Doctor. You'll be well rewarded for your help.

LUKE

You can name your own price.

SCALAWAG

Name my own price?

HORACE

Yes.

SCALAWAG

Oh, yes, I'm a doctor, no doubt about it! It all comes back to me now! Well, where's the patient?

HORACE

We'll take you to her.
(They start off.)

SCALAWAG

Wait!
(He runs back and picks up his jug.)
I keep my strongest medicine in here.
(to Luke)

You carry it.

LUKE

Why me?

SCALAWAG

Doctor's orders. All right, men—forward, march!
(They start off. To audience)

YOU NEVER KNOW
WHAT LIES AHEAD;
THE ONLY THING FORESEE-
ABLE IS...BEING DEAD!
I DON'T THINK I'LL END IT ALL TODAY!
(He exits behind them.)

SCENE FIVE

(Dupont's garden. Dupont and Lucy enter. Business of the two of them waiting impatiently, perhaps with Lucy imitating Dupont's nervous pacing, tapping, humming, whistling, etc., and irritating him. This builds to a peak.)

DUPONT

Confound it, Nurse, stop that! It's an irritating habit, and—

HORACE

(offstage, calling)

Colonel Dupont!

(rushing on)

Hey Colonel!

(He trips and falls on his face.)

DUPONT

(as he and Lucy help Horace up)

Horace—did you find a great doctor?

HORACE

The greatest doctor you ever saw in your life! Why, he's cured as many people as...

(Music jumps in, lights change, placards appear, etc.)

Twentieth Century Wonder Drug, the painkiller that's proven safe!

DUPONT

One hundred percent safe...

HORACE

And one hundred proof! Drink it and feel no pain!

(Music fades and lights return to normal.)

But I have to warn you, he's a little strange.

DUPONT

Strange? In what way?

HORACE

He's kind of eccentric. If you didn't know better, you might even think he was drunk. But he's great, all right—the whole backwoods is talking about him.

DUPONT

Excellent! You see, Lucy, I told you we'd find the right doctor.

LUCY

I'll believe it when I see it, Colonel.

HORACE

Here he comes! Here comes the doctor!

(Luke leads in Scalawag, wearing a doctor's coat.)

DUPONT

(stepping forward to shake hands)

OH DOCTOR, I'M VERY GLAD TO MEET YOU!

I OUGHT TO FILL YOU IN, I SUPPOSE.

MY NAME IS DUPONT,

AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I WANT.

YOU SEE I—

SCALAWAG

OPEN YOUR MOUTH.

(He whips a thermometer out of a pocket and sticks it into Dupont's open mouth.)

NOW CLOSE.

DUPONT

(spluttering, mouth closed)

Mmmm—

SCALAWAG

(feeling his pulse)

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

DUPONT

Mmmm—

SCALAWAG

HOW LONG HAVE YOU FELT IT?

DUPONT

Mmmm—

SCALAWAG

BAD, BAD. I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME.

DUPONT

Mmmm!

LUKE

NOW DOCTOR, THIS GENTLEMAN'S THE COLONEL.

AIN'T HIM WHO NEEDS YOUR HELP, IT'S HIS KIN.

HIS DAUGHTER, I MEAN,

BUT THE POINT IS, YOU AIN'T SEEN

HER YET SO—

SCALAWAG

OPEN YOUR MOUTH.
(Luke opens his mouth.)
 BREATHE IN.

LUKE

(breathing in, falsetto)
 Eeee—

SCALAWAG

(feeling his pulse)
 HOW DO YOU FEEL?

LUKE

Eeee—

SCALAWAG

HOW LONG HAVE YOU FELT IT?

LUKE

Eeee—

SCALAWAG

OH, MY. I HOPE I'M NOT TOO LATE.

LUKE

Eeee?

HORACE

OH DOCTOR, YOU'VE MISSED THE POINT COMPLETELY.
 I'M SORRY IF OUR HASTE THREW YOU OFF.
 THESE MEN AREN'T SICK,
 IT'S MY FUTURE WIFE'S AFFLIC-
 TION WHICH YOU—

SCALAWAG

OPEN YOUR MOUTH.
(Horace opens his mouth.)
 NOW COUGH.
(Horace coughs. Feeling his pulse)
 HOW DO YOU FEEL?
(Horace coughs.)
 HOW LONG HAVE YOU FELT IT?
(Horace coughs.)
 AH, YES. THEY COUGH BEFORE THE END.
(Horace has a coughing fit.)

LUCY

NOW DOCTOR, THIS YOKEL IS MY BOYFRIEND.
 THE COLONEL IS YOUR PATIENT'S PAPA.
 LUCY *(cont.)*

THIS MAN IS HER BEAU,
I'M THE FAMILY NURSE, AND SO
YOU SEE IT'S—

SCALAWAG

OPEN YOUR MOUTH.

*(As she opens her mouth, he whips a tongue depressor out of a pocket
and holds it against her tongue.)*

SAY AH.

LUCY

(nasally)

Aaaa—

SCALAWAG

(feeling her pulse, and admiring her)

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

LUCY

Aaaa—

SCALAWAG

HOW LONG HAVE YOU FELT IT?

LUCY

Aaaa—

SCALAWAG

(removing the tongue depressor)

DEAR GIRL, YOU NEED A DOCTOR'S CARE.

(under his breath, to her)

I'll take care of you later.

(aloud)

THE DOCTOR SAYS: EVERYONE SNEEZE.

(The others all sneeze.)

THE DOCTOR SAYS: EVERYONE PRAY.

(They all pray aloud, variously.)

THE DOCTOR SAYS: HANDS ON YOUR HEAD.

(They all put hands on head.)

HANDS ON YOUR HIPS...

(They all put hands on hips.)

UH-UH, THE DOCTOR DIDN'T SAY!

(They look at each other, confused.)

THE DOCTOR SAYS: WALK ON YOUR KNEES.

(They all try to walk on their knees.)

SCALAWAG *(cont.)*

THE DOCTOR SAYS: STAND UP AND SWAY.

(They all stand and sway.)

THE DOCTOR SAYS: STAND ON YOUR HEAD.

(Horace tries and fails; the rest object loudly ad lib.)

QUIET! THE DOCTOR DIDN'T SAY!

SCALAWAG

*(to Dupont, putting another
thermometer into his mouth)*

CLOSE!

THE DOCTOR SAYS:

YOU'RE LOOKING ILL.

(to Luke)

BREATHE!

THE DOCTOR SAYS:

YOU'RE LOOKING WORSE.

(to Horace)

COUGH!

THE DOCTOR SAYS:

YOU NEED A PILL.

*(to Lucy, putting another
tongue depressor into her
mouth)*

AH!

THE DOCTOR SAYS:

I NEED A NURSE...

*(using the tongue depressor to
fiddle with her buttons)*

OPEN YOUR BLOUSE!

THE DOCTOR SAYS:

YOUR CHEST CONDITION LOOKS...
SEVERE.

(to the audience)

THE DOCTOR SAYS:

I THINK I'M GONNA LIKE IT HERE!

*(Using the tongue depressor as
a baton, he conducts the group
to a finish.)*

SCALAWAG

Let's get down to business. My card.

*(He hands Dupont a card. Dupont turns it over, puzzled; it's a playing
card. Holding out a deck to Horace)*

Take a card, any card.

*(Horace takes one and looks at it, puzzled. To Dupont, putting away the
deck)*

Now Doctor, I understand you need my assistance on—

DUPONT

I beg your pardon, sir, I'm not a doctor.

DUPONT

MMMM—MMMM—MMMM—

(He continues to the end.)

LUKE

EEEE—EEEE—EEEE—

(He continues to the end.)

HORACE

*(He coughs in rhythm to the
end.)*

LUCY

AAAA—AAAA—AAAA—

(shrieking)

AAAA!

AAAA—AAAA—AAAA—

(She continues to the end.)

You're not?
 SCALAWAG
 Of course not.
 DUPONT
 SCALAWAG
(picking up a stick)
 Are you sure?
 DUPONT
 Of course I'm sure!
(Scalawag starts to beat him.)
 Ow! Ow! Luke—Horace!
(Luke and Horace separate them.)
 SCALAWAG
 You're a doctor now. That's the only training I ever got!
 DUPONT
 What kind of madman have you brought me?
 HORACE
 I told you he was eccentric.
 DUPONT
 Very well, I'll be patient.
 SCALAWAG
(crossing to him)
 Good! Open your mouth.
 DUPONT
 But I'm not *the* patient!
 SCALAWAG
 You're not a doctor and you're not a patient. What are you doing here?
 DUPONT
 I'm the patient's father.
 SCALAWAG
 I knew that.
(looking over the others, ominously)
 All right, who is it? Speak up now and it'll go easier on you.
 DUPONT
 Doctor, please! My daughter has a strange malady, and I'll give anything to the man who can cure her. Money is no object.

SCALAWAG

(to the audience)

I like the sound of that.

(to Dupont)

Sir, I'm happy to help your daughter. I only wish that you yourself were dying, slowly and painfully...so I could show you how eager I am to be of service.

DUPONT

(with a courtly bow)

Much obliged, sir.

SCALAWAG

(returning the bow)

Not at all, sir.

DUPONT

(bowing)

Your servant.

SCALAWAG

(bowing)

Likewise, I'm sure.

DUPONT

(bowing)

Many thanks.

SCALAWAG

(bowing)

The pleasure is all yours.

DUPONT

Yes...well...I'll go fetch my daughter.

HORACE

(quickly)

Uh, I'd better be running along, Colonel. I'll stop by tomorrow.

DUPONT

I'll see you out.

(to Scalawag, bowing)

Excuse us, sir.

SCALAWAG

Of course, sir.

(He bows, forcing Dupont and Horace to trade bows as they back away. Dupont backs offstage; Horace backs into the proscenium, adjusts his course and backs offstage. A loud thud offstage.)

HORACE

(offstage)
I'm okay, no problem.

SCALAWAG

(Straightens up and gazes at Lucy, as Luke looks off toward Horace.)
So, this fine, healthy-looking young woman with the Southern charm and the Southern exposure is the nurse.

(to Lucy)
Ah Nurse, charming Nurse, all my medicine is at the service of your nursery. I only wish I was a baby lucky enough to suck the milk...

(laying a hand on her breast)
...of your good graces. All my remedies are yours to command, and—

LUKE

Doctor! What in the foggy foggy dew are you doin' with my gal?

SCALAWAG

I'm taking her pulse, of course.

LUKE

But...but I thought you took the pulse from the wrist.

SCALAWAG

That's the old system. Modern medicine has changed all that.

LUKE

Oh...scuse me.
(Scalawag starts to lead Lucy away.)
Hey, where you takin' her now?

SCALAWAG

When I examine one member of a household, I examine them all. Besides, it's the doctor's duty to check the nurse's equipment.

LUKE

Now hold on, Doctor. I don't want you doin' nothin' like that with my fiancy.

SCALAWAG

What! The two of you are engaged?

LUKE

Well, yeah...

LUCY

Depends on who you ask.

SCALAWAG

Well, congratulations!

(He makes as if to embrace Luke but embraces Lucy instead.)

LUKE

(interposing himself)

What's all this now?

SCALAWAG

Why, I'm rejoicing with you at your impending marriage.

(He makes as if to embrace Luke, but ducks under his arms and embraces Lucy again.)

LUKE

(interposing himself again)

Rejoice all you want with me, but not with my wife!

SCALAWAG

(Making as if to embrace Luke...)

But I must congratulate you on getting such a lovely wife...

(...he scrambles between Luke's legs to embrace Lucy again.)...and congratulate *her* on getting such a fine husband!

LUKE

(pulling him away)

That's enough congratulations!

SCALAWAG

Don't prescribe for the doctor! This woman needs to be kept warm! She could catch cold—from exposure!

LUKE

What kind of fool do you think I am?

SCALAWAG

Oh, a nice big one. Now where was I?

LUKE

You was over there, huggin' my gal.

SCALAWAG

Right!

(He goes to embrace Lucy.)

LUKE

(picking him up in a bear hug)

Dogbone it, leave her alone!

SCALAWAG

(frightened but covering it)

How dare you interfere with my examination! Let go or I'll hit you with a fever!

(He makes a mystical gesture at Luke, who drops him and steps back hastily.)

LUCY

Lucas, don't you think I can take care of myself? Ain't nothin' gonna happen.

SCALAWAG

Now let's not go too far.

(Dupont enters with Rebecca; Scalawag turns to them. During the following, Luke and Lucy argue softly and Lucy turns her back on him; then they get caught up in the foreground action.)

So this is the patient, eh?

DUPONT

She's my only child, Doctor. I pray that you can save her.

SCALAWAG

Don't worry—no one dies around here, except on doctor's orders.

*(to Rebecca, as though to a small child)*Hello, I'm Doctor Scalawag. And what's *your* name?

DUPONT

Her name is Rebecca.

SCALAWAG

Good name for a patient—a lovely name. And a lovely patient to go with it.

(Rebecca giggles soundlessly.)

DUPONT

Amazing, Doctor. She hadn't so much as smiled all day.

SCALAWAG

(patting her head)

Yes, she's a good girl. We're going to get along just fine.

DUPONT

But Doctor, aren't you going to examine her?

SCALAWAG

Well, I...I don't have any equipment with me, so I guess we'll have to—

DUPONT

Yes, I thought you might not have your bag...

(producing a doctor's bag from behind the bench)

...so I had one delivered here.

SCALAWAG

How thoughtful.

(He waves the others away from the bag; opens it, peers in gingerly, and takes out a stethoscope. He holds the earpieces to his eyes as though looking through them. Or perhaps he puts it on properly, spits into the mouthpiece, and recoils.)

DUPONT

Doctor, what are you doing?

SCALAWAG

Oh, uh, just checking for leaks.

(He puts it on properly, reaches into the bag, and takes out a head mirror; looks into it, smooths his hair, and puts the mirror back. He takes out a rubber surgical glove and considers it.)

DUPONT

Doctor, can't you get on with it?

SCALAWAG

All in good time. You have to check your equipment first.

(He blows into the glove and inflates it like a balloon; turns to the others, watching him curiously, and releases it, so that it flies at them. He takes a bottle of pills from the bag; opens it, takes out one pill, and licks it curiously; smiles and pops it in his mouth. He begins tossing pills in the air and catching them in his mouth.)

DUPONT

Doctor, please, the examination!

SCALAWAG

Oh, all right.

(He pops all the pills into his mouth. Chewing loudly, he tosses the bottle back in and takes out a big pocket watch. Holding it in one hand, he takes Rebecca's pulse with the other. He looks at the watch, does a double-take, stares at her wrist, then at the watch.)

DUPONT

(alarmed)

Doctor, what is it?

SCALAWAG

It's fifteen minutes slow!

(He winds the watch and pockets it.)

Now tell me, my dear, are you in pain?

(Rebecca hesitates, then nods.)

Good, good... Strong, agonizing pain?

(Rebecca nods.)

Excellent! Now where does it hurt?

REBECCA

(indicating her jaw)
 Haw huhhow heah, Hahhuh.
("All around here, Doctor.")

SCALAWAG

I beg your pardon?

REBECCA

Hi heh huh hay hih huhhow heah.
("I said the pain is around here.")

SCALAWAG

I'm sorry, I don't speak Chinese.

DUPONT

That's her illness, Doctor. She's been struck dumb.

SCALAWAG

Now let's not have any layman's diagnosis. Who's the doctor here, me or you?

DUPONT

(placating)
 Oh, you are.

SCALAWAG

(after a brief mental calculation)
 That's right!

(to Rebecca)

Now open your mouth.

(She opens. He looks in quickly.)

Close.

(She closes. To audience)

Looks like an open-and-shut case to me.

(to Dupont)

Colonel, I have some bad news for you. Your daughter has been struck dumb.

DUPONT

That's it, Doctor, that's it exactly!

LUKE

Look how quick he put his finger on it!

LUCY

(drily)

Modern medicine is amazin'.

DUPONT

But Doctor, please tell me the cause of her muteness.

SCALAWAG

That's easy. The cause of her muteness is that she's lost her voice.

DUPONT

Why has she lost her voice?

SCALAWAG

She's lost her voice because...because her speech is impaired.

DUPONT

I see. But why is her speech impaired?

SCALAWAG

Yes, why is her speech impaired... Well, Hippocrates says... Do you know any Latin?

DUPONT

I'm afraid not.

SCALAWAG

What! You don't understand Latin?

DUPONT

Not a word.

SCALAWAG

But it's so clear! *Ex libris, mea maxima culpa... Non sequitur in excelsis! Lux et, in vino, veritas! Amo, amas, amat? O tempora! O mores! O'Shaughnessy!*

LUKE

Well, Dan my Boone!

SCALAWAG

I rest my case.

DUPONT

But Doctor...forgive me...

SCALAWAG

Wasn't that clear enough?

DUPONT

Oh, yes, no one could have said it better! But could you possibly put it in English?

SCALAWAG

If you insist. The question here is: what is the cause of your daughter's illness? Now this can't be answered with a simple Yes or No. But in layman's terms...

(picking up a stick and using it as a pointer, indicating strange places on Rebecca's body)

From time to time there arise in the, uh, abdominal cavity certain irritating vapors, which we doctors call...irritating vapors. They come up through the pendulum, passing through the ulterior duct, which in Latin is *veni*...up and around the inner condiments, which in Greek is *vidi*...and circulate through the empirical criterion, which in Hebrew is *vici*. Now these vapors— Follow me so far?

DUPONT

(Has been nodding blankly. He continues to nod, then catches himself.)

Oh, er—yes, yes.

SCALAWAG

Good. Because here's where it gets *strange*.

(acting it out, gradually building)

Now these vapors are sneaking up along here, see, trying to block off the voice. But suddenly out of nowhere come these corpuscles from the liver to clear the way!

(Rebecca ducks as he swings the stick wildly.)

So the vapors circle around—and try to head 'em off at the spleen! But the corpuscles are too smart for that. They *chaaarge* right up the sinuses...

(He leaps up on the bench.)

...firing as they come, *ratatat ratatat*, and the vapors fall back and fire from long range, *boom! kaboom!* till they go up in smithereens! Then they race down the throat, *budabum budabum budabum*, peppering the tonsils, *zap! bzap! bzap!* and the whole thing blows up, *KA-BLOOOOOOOM!!!!*

(mopping his brow)

And that's why your daughter is mute.

(He sinks to the bench.)

DUPONT

But if she is to be cured, Doctor, it must be quickly. Her marriage is waiting on it.

SCALAWAG

Why is that?

DUPONT

Well, naturally her future husband wants his wife to be able to talk.

SCALAWAG

What is he, a fool? I only wish it was catching, I'd introduce her to mine!

DUPONT

Nevertheless, Doctor, please tell me how my daughter can be cured.

SCALAWAG

Well... First, put the patient to bed.

Nurse, if you please...

DUPONT

Come on, honey.
(She takes Rebecca off.)

LUCY

(watching her go)
Now: do you have a good supply of birdseed in the house?

SCALAWAG

DUPONT

Why, no. Is it important?

SCALAWAG

It's essential! Your daughter must be fed a spoonful of birdseed every two hours.

DUPONT

What in the world for?

SCALAWAG

Answer me this: besides man, what other animals can speak?

DUPONT

Why...parrots, I suppose.

SCALAWAG

Exactly. So if your daughter has lost her power of speech...

DUPONT

Ahhh! Luke, go to town this instant and buy a sack of birdseed. Two sacks.

LUKE

But Colonel, that could take hours!

SCALAWAG

Then you'd better get started now.

DUPONT

You heard the doctor.

LUKE

Okay, Colonel. You tell me where, I'm halfway there.
(With a suspicious look at Scalawag, he exits.)

DUPONT

Anything else, Doctor?

SCALAWAG

Hmmm...

LUCY

(entering from the house)

Rebecca's in bed, Colonel. I'm goin' into the woods and pick some herbs and roots we might need.

DUPONT

All right. Please be sure to check on her at bedtime.

(Lucy nods and exits.)

SCALAWAG

(starting after her)

And now I'll be off to get what *I* need.

DUPONT

One moment, Doctor, if you please.

SCALAWAG

(impatiently)

Yes?

DUPONT

(taking out and offering a coin pouch)

You'll be incurring some expenses before this case is over, and—

SCALAWAG

(indignantly)

My dear sir!

DUPONT

Please, I insist—

SCALAWAG

(turning away)

I wouldn't think of such a thing!

DUPONT

No no, please --

SCALAWAG

The welfare of my patients is my reward!

DUPONT

I know that, Doctor—

SCALAWAG

(turning back and taking the pouch)

Well, as long as that's understood.

(shaking the pouch)

Gold, I hope.

Yes.

DUPONT

SCALAWAG

(pocketing the pouch)
And now I'm off.

DUPONT

(bowing)
Much obliged, sir.

SCALAWAG

(returning the bow)
Not at all, sir.
(to audience)
Here we go again.

DUPONT

(bowing)
Your servant.

SCALAWAG

Likewise, I—
(pointing behind Dupont)
Why, look! Isn't that Robert E. Lee?

DUPONT

(turning to look)
Where...?

SCALAWAG

(immediately running off after Lucy)
Oh, Nurse! Nurse!
(Dupont stands bewildered, then shrugs and exits. Behind him Andrew, who has hidden behind a bush, runs off after Scalawag.)

SCENE SIX

(The clearing in the woods. Scalawag runs on, still calling.)

SCALAWAG

Oh, Nurse! Lucy!

(He looks around. To audience)

She was heading this way. I think I got here first. Now all I have to do is wait... Oh, I know what you're thinking. What about Maxine?

(to someone in a front row)

You remember her—my wife? The face that sank a thousand ships?

(resuming)

Doesn't it matter to me that she has no idea where I am or what's happened to me—that she's probably sick with worry—that she's all alone in the woods?

(A beat. Shrugging)

Welllll...

ANDREW

(Enters behind him. Approaching diffidently)

Doctor...?

SCALAWAG

(barely glancing at him)

Go away.

(continuing to the audience)

Actually, if you want to know the truth, she—

ANDREW

Excuse me, Doctor, is it possible for me to—

SCALAWAG

I doubt it very much.

(continuing to the audience)

She's been asking for this for a long time, and—

ANDREW

(tugging on Scalawag's sleeve)

Doctor, please! It's important!

SCALAWAG

Young man, can't you see I'm busy? Who said you could barge in here and make a dialog out of my soliloquy?

ANDREW

I'm sorry, Doctor, but I need your help.

SCALAWAG

(whipping out a tongue depressor)

Open your mouth.

SCALAWAG (*cont.*)

(*putting it into Andrew's mouth and feeling his pulse*)
Ah yes. Caustic dichotomy, a bad case. What you need is—

ANDREW

(*trying to speak around the tongue depressor*)
Hahhuh, hi hah hih!
(*"Doctor, I'm not sick!"*)

SCALAWAG

Another mute? Funny, I was just treating a case like this...

ANDREW

(*pulling the tongue depressor away*)
There's nothing wrong with me!

SCALAWAG

Don't worry—I'm a doctor, I'll find something.

ANDREW

My name is Andrew, and I'm in love with Rebecca. Her father refuses to let me see her, and I need your help.

SCALAWAG

How dare you! How dare you ask an eminent doctor to aid your sordid love affair!

ANDREW

Please, Doctor, not so loud, I—

SCALAWAG

(*shoving him*)
I'll talk as loud as I like, you snotty little punk.

ANDREW

Doctor, you don't underst—

SCALAWAG

(*shoving*)
You come here and insult me...

ANDREW

No, it's not like that at—

SCALAWAG

(*shoving*)
By God, these snotty little punks make my blood boil, and—

ANDREW

(quickly holding out a jingling coin pouch)
Wait, look!

SCALAWAG

(instantly in a new tone, taking the pouch)
—and of course I'm not talking about *you*. I can see you're a well-bred young man, and I'll be happy to help you. But there are *some* snotty little punks who insult me, and they make my blood boil.

ANDREW

I understand.

SCALAWAG

Now what can I do for you?

ANDREW

First I have to tell you that Rebecca's illness is phony. Her father wants her to marry this Horace, so she's pretending to be sick to delay the wedding.

SCALAWAG

Aha, a phony illness! I suspected it all along, of course.

ANDREW

Since you're free to come and go at Colonel Dupont's, I'm hoping we can figure out a way to sneak me in to see her.

SCALAWAG

Hmmm, that's a tall order. Let's think.

(He paces. Andrew paces opposite.)

What if... No, that won't work. Wait! I've got an idea that...

ANDREW

That what?

SCALAWAG

That won't work.

(They pace.)

Say, couldn't you—

(Andrew looks up. Considering him)

No, you couldn't.

(They pace. Suddenly, excited)

Wait! You could change your name, get a phony passport, and sneak across the border into Mexico!

ANDREW

What good would that do?

I have no idea!
(They pace.)

SCALAWAG

Hey, I know!

ANDREW

(Thinks for a beat, then)
No, that won't work.

SCALAWAG

How about—

ANDREW

No, that either.
(They pace. Suddenly they stop and look up at each other.)

SCALAWAG

Wait—a—minute! *That's it!*

SCALAWAG & ANDREW

What a plan!

SCALAWAG

It's foolproof!

ANDREW

Now you go get everything we need.

SCALAWAG

Right!
(He exits.)

ANDREW

SCALAWAG
(to audience, jingling the two pouches)
Well! Things are certainly looking up for the Scalawags! A simple mistake, and I find myself making more money in an hour than I used to make in a month!
(The musical introduction to "Today" begins.)
It all just goes to show...
YOU STOP TO THINK—

SCALAWAG

(entering)
Excuse me, Doctor...
(The music stops.)
...but where and when are we going to meet?

ANDREW

SCALAWAG

(hustling Andrew off)

I'll meet you right here in one hour. Now go!

(to audience)

Where was I? Oh yes.

(running through it all in one breath)

Things are certainly looking up for the Scalawags. As a simple mistake and I find myself making more money in an hour than I used to make in a month!

(The music starts.)

It all just goes to show...

YOU STOP TO—

ANDREW

(entering)

Doctor?

(The music grinds to a halt.)

SCALAWAG

I'm a busy man, Andrew. What is it now?

ANDREW

You didn't tell me how we're going to get Rebecca away from her father.

SCALAWAG

I'll explain it all later. For now just remember this...

(whispering in Andrew's ear)

Pss pss wsp pss pst.

(aloud)

Now goodbye, Andrew.

(Andrew exits. Music starts as Scalawag turns to audience, opens his mouth...)

ANDREW

(sticking his head in from the wings)

What do you mean, "Pss pss wsp pss pst"?

(The music stops.)

SCALAWAG

(shoving Andrew offstage)

Goodbye, Andrew!

(He signals angrily for music, which starts as he rapidly runs through the cue lines under his breath. Finishing aloud)

...just goes to show.

YOU STOP—

(He whirls around and the music stops. As he looks for Andrew, puzzled, Lucy enters from the opposite side.)

LUCY

Why, Doctor Scalawag! What are you doin' here?

SCALAWAG

(instantly switching gears)

Waiting for you, my dear, waiting for you. Ah, Lucy, the sight of you is castor oil for my heart and mustard plaster for my soul!

LUCY

Oh, I don't think you should be talkin' to me like that.

SCALAWAG

You don't?

LUCY

No I don't.

SCALAWAG

All right...

(in a high, cartoony, voice)

How about like this?

(She laughs. In his normal voice)

Get sick, my dear, get sick, I beg of you.

LUCY

What in the world for?

SCALAWAG

For my sake. It would be such a joy to put you to bed and take care of you.

LUCY

(bending over to pick an herb)

My land, Doctor, how you do go on!

SCALAWAG

(admiring her from behind)

So do you, my dear...and on, and on, and on...

(He moves in and is about to grab her from behind when she straightens up and moves away. He falls. Groaning)

Oh...ohhh..

(Lucy, picking herbs elsewhere, doesn't notice. Very loud)

Ohhhhh...Nurse...

LUCY

(rushing to him)

Doctor, what is it? What's wrong?

SCALAWAG

I'm not sure...

LUCY

Well, how do you feel?

SCALAWAG

Like this!

(He's up and after her. She runs to the other side of the stage.)

LUCY

Now Doctor, that's enough! If my Luke saw how you're messin' with me, he'd hit you so hard nothin' could put you together again! Not even...

(Music jumps in, lights change, placards appear, etc.)

Twentieth Century Wonder Drug! Even with a foot in the grave...

SCALAWAG

It makes you feel like an Indian brave!

(Music fades and lights return to normal.)

But you don't understand. I simply saw that you need some nursing yourself.

LUCY

Me? I never felt better!

SCALAWAG

So much the worse, my dear. Too much health is as bad as none at all. What you need is a nice stimulating body rub, and I would be—

LUCY

But why should you be doctorin' me when I'm in perfect health?

SCALAWAG

Preventive medicine, my dear! Now let's remove our clothes, and—

LUCY

(turning away)

I ain't takin' off my clothes for no strange man.

SCALAWAG

Oh come now! I'm not a man, I'm a doctor!

(Lucy snorts derisively. To audience)

She's a difficult case...but we'll find a way to bring her around.

(He steps behind a bush and starts to undress. To Lucy)

Maybe I am a little overeager to help you, my dear...but it breaks my heart to see what a jealous, suspicious boyfriend you have.

LUCY

Oh Doctor, you tellin' me?

SCALAWAG

To see a delicate blossom like yourself tied to that clod, that boob, that yokel slob... I'm sorry, I just had to say it.

LUCY

I know he deserves all those names, and then some. But I guess I'm stuck with him, for better or for worse.

SCALAWAG

(Stepping from behind the bush, revealed in his long johns, slowly approaching her)

Are you? It's so unfair! I mean, look at you...

YOU'RE THE IMAGE OF A LOVELY SOUTHERN BELLE;
HE'S A LUNKHEAD AND A HALFWIT HICK AS WELL.
I SAY SUCH A MIX COULD NEVER JELL...
YOU'RE TOO GOOD FOR HIM.

HOW CAN YOU REMAIN WITH SUCH A JEALOUS PEST?
HOW CAN I STAND BY WHILE BEAUTY IS OPPRESSED?
HOW CAN HE MISTREAT THIS TREASURE...CHEST?
YOU'RE TOO GOOD FOR HIM.

LUCY

I TRY TO BE GOOD, LIKE HE EXPECTS ME TO BE.

SCALAWAG

YOU *ARE* GOOD, MY DEAR—I KNOW YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

LUCY

I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF CHEATING, LIKE OTHER WOMEN DO.
I'M TRUE TO HIM—

SCALAWAG

BUT DEAR, YOU'RE MUCH TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

YOU HAVE VIRTUE AND FIDELITY TO SPARE;
STILL, TO SAVE IT ALL FOR ONE MAN ISN'T FAIR.
SPREAD THE WEALTH AND LET SOME OTHERS SHARE!
YOU'RE TOO GOOD FOR HIM.

LUCY

I ACT LIKE A SAINT, BUT I GET JEALOUSY AND DOUBT.

SCALAWAG

SO LET'S GIVE HIM SOMETHING TO BE JEALOUS ABOUT!

LUCY

WELL, MAYBE IF I TRIED IT—ALTHOUGH THE ODDS ARE SLIM—

LUCY

IT COULD

BE GOOD FOR ME,
AND JUST TOO BAD FOR HIM.

SCALAWAG

IT WOULD
BE GOOD FOR ME,
AND JUST TOO BAD FOR HIM.

(They go into a dance: a mock ballet, with Scalawag the amorous faun pursuing the coy nymph Lucy among the bushes and trees. Then Luke appears in the background. He sees the dancers, disappears, and pops up again in various places, his rage mounting. Finally Scalawag opens his arms to Lucy and they are about to kiss, eyes closed, when Luke pops up between them and their kisses land on his face. They open their eyes. He grabs Scalawag and as he turns to Lucy, Scalawag pulls away and starts to run. Lucy walks away in disgust and Luke chases Scalawag around the stage. He is just about to grab Scalawag when the lights black out except for a spot on them. They freeze, and the music stops.)

ENTR'ACTE

(A fanfare. The actors playing Luke and Scalawag suddenly turn to the audience.)

SCALAWAG

We'll get back to our show in a moment...

LUKE

But first, a word from the folks at Twentieth Century!

(Lights up, revealing Scalawag as the Doctor and the entire company on stage.)

DOCTOR

(over lurid organ chords)

Friends, are you ravaged by Disease? Do you suffer from that dreaded scourge, Indigestion? Are you caught in the clutches of cruel Heartburn? Or are you wasting away from that slow but sure killer, Constipation? Are you weak—feverish—dying? Good! Because I hold the answer to your problems right here in my hand...

(holding up a bottle)

The brand-new, flavor-enhanced, chemically soothing, Twentieth Century Wonder Drug! With the secret ingredient...H₂O!

COMPANY

IF YOU WANT TO FEEL YOUR BEST,
DEMAND THE TONIC THAT BEATS THE REST.
YOU'LL BE SLEEPING SAFE AND SNUG
WITH THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WONDER DRUG!

MAN 1

THE STRONGEST TONIC EVER MADE,
OUTSTANDING AND UNIQUE.
CURES A COLD IN MINUTES, FLU IN DAYS,
AND DEATH IN A WEEK!

WOMAN 1

ALREADY IT'S HELPED THOUSANDS,
AND WE KNOW ONE MAN IT'S CURED
WHO WAS TURNED AWAY AS HOPELESS
FROM THE SACRED SHRINE AT LOURDES.

MAN 2

IT ACTS AS A CORRECTIVE
TO RESTORE YOUR VITAL FORCES...

DOCTOR

AND IT'S EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE
ON YOUR CATTLE AND YOUR HORSES!

COMPANY
CLEANS YOUR SYSTEM THROUGH AND THROUGH...

DOCTOR
A FIRST-RATE FURNITURE POLISH, TOO!

COMPANY
FIGHT OFF EVERY GERM AND BUG
WITH THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WONDER DRUG!

THIS CURES ANYTHING!

DOCTOR
LISTED ON THE LABEL...

COMPANY
OR YOUR MONEY BACK!

DOCTOR
NEXT TIME WE'RE IN TOWN...

WOMAN 2
NOW IF YOU NEED A SNAKE OIL,
IT'S THE FINEST YOU CAN TAKE.

MAN 3
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, BUY A DOZEN
AND WE'LL THROW IN THE SNAKE!

WOMAN 3
THIS CURE-ALL IS COMPLETELY SAFE,
LIKE ALL THAT WE PRODUCE...

DOCTOR
BUT IF PAIN OR SUDDEN DEATH OCCURS,
THEN DISCONTINUE USE!

MAN 4
YOU'LL FIND THIS LITTLE TONIC
IS A VERSATILE ELIXIR:
MAKES AN EXCELLENT COLONIC—

DOCTOR
AND A DANDY COCKTAIL MIXER!

COMPANY
YOU MAY THINK THE PRICE IS STEEP...

DOCTOR
BUT NO ONE EVER SAID HEALTH WAS CHEAP.

COMPANY
BUY A BOTTLE, BUY A JUG
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WONDER DRUG!

DOCTOR
Beware of imitations!

COMPANY
TWENTIETH CENTURY WONDER DRUG!

DOCTOR
Now with added brighteners!

COMPANY
TWENTIETH CENTURY WONDER DRUG!

(Blackout. The lights come up to show a large sign mounted on the wagon, reading "INTERMISSION" and in smaller letters, "A perfect time to buy some Twentieth Century Wonder Drug!")

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

(Music and lights up on the company, except for the actors playing Luke and Scalawag, facing the audience. Behind them, the set still represents the clearing in the woods.)

COMPANY

HEY, COME A-RUNNIN'!

(to various members of the audience)

HEY, WE MEAN YOU!

HEY, COME A-RUNNIN'!

MEDICINE SHOW, ACT TWO!

(Lights out on them and up on Luke and Scalawag, frozen as at the end of Act I Scene 6. Scalawag unfreezes, starts to run, then realizes that Luke is still frozen. He comes back curiously to Luke, looks him over; experimentally makes some "boo" gestures at him; tries some funny faces; tickles him; no reaction. Grinning, he gives Luke a good kick in the pants. Music starts, lights come up, Scalawag runs off, Luke unfreezes, and the rest of the company enter and mill about excitedly, dressed as farmers and countryfolk. During the following, Luke looks around in puzzlement and exits. Then Scalawag enters in his doctor's coat and, in the background, receives patients and dispenses medicines from his black bag.)

MAN 1

**IF YOU CAST AN ADORING EYE AT A GIRL—
AND SHE SQUASHES IT FLAT WITH A SHRIEK...**

WOMAN 1

**IF A BOY TOOK YOUR HAND AND WENT FOR A WALK—
AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN BACK FOR A WEEK...**

MAN 2

**IF YOUR HEART'S ON YOUR SLEEVE, YOUR FOOT'S IN YOUR MOUTH,
AND YOU'VE BITTEN OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW...**

WOMAN 2

IF THE CAT'S GOT YOUR TONGUE, AND YOU'VE GONE TO THE DOGS...

COMPANY

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU GOTTA DO?

**GO IN A HUFF, GO IN A TIZZY,
GO ANY WAY THAT YOU CAN;
GO IN A FUNK, IN A SNIT, IN A TRUNK...
GO TO THE MEDICINE MAN!**

*(Scalawag comes downstage as a man with a cane limps up to him.
Music continues under.)*

LIMPING MAN

Oh Doctor, Doctor!

SCALAWAG

(whipping out a tongue depressor)
Open your mouth and say Ah.

LIMPING MAN

(singing beautifully)
AHHH!

SCALAWAG

Not bad.
(removing the tongue depressor)
Can you do this?
(doing a fancy roulade up to a high note)
AH-HA-HA-HA-HA-HAAAAA!

LIMPING MAN

Gee...

SCALAWAG

No, B flat.
(to someone in the front row)
Make a note of that.

LIMPING MAN

(handing Scalawag a coin pouch)
Doctor, look at my wound!
(He shows a spot on his leg.)

SCALAWAG

Hmmm. Very nice wound.
(giving him a bottle of pills)
Here. Take two every four hours, and four every two hours.

LIMPING MAN

(limping away)
Thank you...

SCALAWAG

And good luck!
(He goes upstage again.)

MAN 3

IF YOU'RE TOLD THAT YOUR MOTHER, WALKING THROUGH TOWN,
HAS TURNED INTO A GROCERY STORE...

WOMAN 3

IF A SMALL RAGGED ORPHAN TEARS AT YOUR HEART—
AND IT'S BLEEDING ALL OVER THE FLOOR...

MAN 4

IF YOUR HEAD'S IN THE CLOUDS, YOUR BACK'S TO THE WALL,
AND A WORM EATS THE APPLE OF YOUR EYE...

WOMAN 2

IF A LUMP'S IN YOUR THROAT, AND A PAIN'S IN YOUR NECK...

COMPANY

DON'T GIVE UP! THERE IS HELP NEARBY!
GO IN A RAGE, GO IN A JIFFY,
GO ANY WAY THAT YOU CAN;
GO IN A HAZE, IN A SULK, IN A DAZE...
GO...

(counting under their breath)

TWO—THREE—FOUR—ONE—

(full out)

TO THE MEDICINE MAN!

*(The company vanishes, leaving Scalawag alone on stage, hefting the
coin pouch.)*

SCALAWAG

Well! Only in business for one day, and already I've made enough money to pay off the taxes on my house. I've obviously been in the wrong field all these years. Think of it: a cobbler gets paid when he fixes your shoes, a carpenter gets paid when he fixes your house—but when you go to a doctor, he gets paid whether he fixes you or not! We doctors get the credit for our successes, and no one blames us for the failures—it's always the corpse's fault. And the dead are very decent about it—you never hear them complain!

*(Andrew enters disguised as a pharmacist, wearing glasses, carrying a
large satchel.)*

ANDREW

Here I am, Doctor Scalawag.

SCALAWAG

Ah, Andrew. The perfect picture of a pharmacist.

ANDREW

(holding up the satchel)

What do I do with all the things in here?

SCALAWAG

I thought I told you that in Act One! Never mind, I'll explain as we go. You're sure the Colonel won't recognize you?

ANDREW

He's only seen me up close once, and in this getup I think I'm safe. But how do I pretend to be a druggist? Suppose he asks—

SCALAWAG

Don't worry about that. You look the part, and take it from me: clothes make the man!

ANDREW

All right. But I must admit this isn't the way I wanted it. I wanted to win Rebecca openly, honestly, proudly, for all the world to see.

SCALAWAG

I know, Andrew—

ANDREW

That's the honorable thing to do, the manly thing, the noble thing.

SCALAWAG

I know, but—

ANDREW

Anything else would be the act of a coward or—

SCALAWAG

(waving a hand in front of Andrew's face)
Andrew? Hello?

ANDREW

I'm sorry—what?

SCALAWAG

We've got to get going, Andrew—the leaves are starting to turn.
(leading Andrew off)
Rebecca Dupont will be yours by tonight...or I'm no doctor!

SCENE TWO

(Dupont's garden. Luke and Lucy enter, arguing violently.)

LUKE

You was too!

LUCY

We were not!

LUKE

Don't gimme that, woman, I saw you!

LUCY

You didn't see *nothin'*...unless you looked in a mirror and saw a grade-A natural-born fool.

LUKE

Well, suck my succotash! You got the ballface nerve to stand here and tell me you and that doctor wasn't doin' nothin'?

LUCY

I do, 'cause it's true.

LUKE

You was givin' him a big fat kiss!

LUCY

I was not!

(a beat)

And besides it was only a tiny one.

LUKE

That's just because I happened to walk by and—

LUCY

Happened to? You were followin' me.

LUKE

I—I—

LUCY

And I'll tell you somethin' else, Mister Lucas Brown: I've had enough of your sneakin' and spyin'. If you can't trust me, then we don't belong together.

LUKE

Oh now, Lucy—

LUCY

I didn't do anything wrong with the doctor—but if you go on like this after we're married, sooner or later you'll drive me to it. And I don't want a marriage like that.

LUKE

But Lucy—baby—

DUPONT

(entering with Rebecca)

The doctor will be along any moment, my dear. Meanwhile you get some fresh air. Lucy, why don't you walk Rebecca around the garden.

LUCY

(with a contemptuous glance at Luke)

Come on, honey. Standin' around here is just wastin' time.

(They exit.)

DUPONT

(looking after Lucy)

Strange. Luke, have you seen the doctor anywhere?

LUKE

Yeah, I seen him all right.

DUPONT

Well, where did he go?

LUKE

I don't know. But I know where I'd like him to go!

(He stomps off.)

DUPONT

This household is becoming stranger by the minute.

(Scalawag and Andrew enter.)

Ah, here you are, Doctor. I wondered what was keeping you.

SCALAWAG

I was consulting with my colleague the pharmacist here. He has some special medicines you can't get anywhere else.

DUPONT

Really? I'm very glad to meet you, Mister...

(As they shake hands, Andrew averts his face and mumbles something indistinct. Peering at him)

Strange, sir, but you look familiar. Have we met before?

SCALAWAG

(quickly interposing himself)
I doubt it, Colonel, you see he's just arrived here from Paris.

DUPONT

From Paris! *Comment ça va, Monsieur?*

SCALAWAG

(as Andrew stands flustered)
Paris, Tennessee.
(Lucy and Rebecca enter; crossing between them)
Good morning, Rebecca...
(He puts an arm around her shoulder.)
Nurse...
(He tries to put a hand around Lucy's breast. She slaps it away.)
Let's get to work. Go along with the druggist, my dear, and let him take your pulse. I'll be with you in a minute.
(As Andrew and Rebecca go to one side, he draws Dupont to the other. During the following, Andrew speaks softly to Rebecca, taking off his glasses for an instant. She opens her mouth in amazement; he covers her mouth and talks quickly.)
You see, Colonel, in cases like this it's essential that the doctor make certain that—
(Dupont starts to turn to look at Andrew and Rebecca; Scalawag puts a finger under his chin and turns his head back.)
Listen to me, please.

DUPONT

Of course, Doctor, I—

SCALAWAG

As I was saying, the doctor must try to determine whether or not it's safe to give—
(Dupont tries to look again; Scalawag puts his hand under Dupont's chin and turns him back.)
Please, pay attention.

DUPONT

I was, Doctor, I only—

SCALAWAG

As I was saying, the doctor must decide whether or not to give the patient a strong—
(Dupont tries again; Scalawag puts an arm around his shoulders and blocks his view with a sleeve.)
Listen closely, I beg of you.

DUPONT

I simply want to—

SCALAWAG

As I was saying, the question is whether to administer drugs to a patient already weak from illness.

(Dupont tries again; when Scalawag tries to pull him back, he resists. They struggle, and Scalawag pulls Dupont around violently, into a tango embrace. Tangoing with Dupont downstage and back, speaking in rhythm)

Some say yes...some say no...

DUPONT

(shoving Scalawag away)

Let go of me!

(As Scalawag spins away Dupont tries to circle around him, but he makes a circle and ends up in front of Dupont again.)

SCALAWAG

(climbing up on the bench to block Dupont's view with his whole body)

I myself say yes *and* no, and thus we see how—

REBECCA

(loud)

No! I will *not* wait!

(Dupont, Scalawag and Lucy turn to look as Andrew tries to hush her.)

I can't endure this pretense a moment longer!

DUPONT

Doctor, did you hear that? She's talking!

(Scalawag sinks to the bench, fanning himself and mopping his brow.)

By God, it's a miracle! Lucy, quick—send a stableboy to tell Horace the news!

(Lucy gives Rebecca a quick hug and exits. Crossing to Rebecca)

You did it, Doctor—my daughter is talking again!

(Scalawag makes a depreciatory gesture.)

REBECCA

(intensely)

YES, I'M TALKING, DEAREST POPPA,
AND I'M TELLING YOU TO STOP A-
RRANGING WHOM I GET TO MEET AND WHAT I DO,
FOR NEVER, NEVER, NEVER WILL I GO ON OBEYING YOU!

DUPONT

Now take it easy, my dear, you've just been through a—

REBECCA

ALL YOUR TALKING DOESN'T MATTER,
THOUGH I KNOW YOU LIKE TO CHATTER
ON AND RANT AND RAVE UNTIL YOUR THROAT IS SORE,
BUT NEVER, NEVER, NEVER WILL I LISTEN—SO SAY NO MORE!

DUPONT

Doctor, is it too late to *reverse* the—

REBECCA

OH, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING;
DON'T BOTHER TO EXPLAIN.
YOUR THREATS, YOUR PLEAS, YOUR ARGUMENTS
ARE ALL IN VAIN.

DUPONT

Now listen to me, young lady—

REBECCA

IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY
WHOM I'LL MARRY AND WHEN,
BUT I WON'T BE SILENT AGAIN!

DUPONT

That is quite enough—

REBECCA

IF YOUR FOOLISH PERSECUTION
COULDN'T SHAKE MY RESOLUTION
THEN TO TRY IT NOW BY TALKING IS ABSURD!
I TELL YOU, IT'S A LUDICROUS ENDEAVOR...

DUPONT

But my dear—

REBECCA

I WON'T TAKE ANY ORDERS WHATSOEVER...

DUPONT

But I only—

REBECCA

IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL, I'LL NEVER UTTER A WORD!
NO, NEVER—

DUPONT

But—

REBECCA

NEVER—

DUPONT

But—

NEVER— REBECCA

You— DUPONT

NEVER— REBECCA

I— DUPONT

NEVER!!! REBECCA
(She turns away.)

(after a beat) DUPONT
Well! I must say—

REBECCA
(suddenly turning and moving in on him)
I TOLD YOU, IT'S A LUDICROUS ENDEAVOR!

DUPONT
(backing away)
But my dear—

REBECCA
I WON'T TAKE ANY ORDERS WHATSOEVER!

DUPONT
But I only—

REBECCA
NOPE, NEGATIVE, FORGET IT, NOTHING DOING, NO WAY!

DUPONT
But—

REBECCA
(forcing him back to the bench and down to a horizontal position)
NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER!!!!

DUPONT
(still supine)
Doctor, you heard all that. Please—make her dumb again.

SCALAWAG

Sorry, that's impossible. I can make you deaf, if you like.

DUPONT

No thank you.

SCALAWAG

(helping Dupont up)

Don't despair, Colonel, the treatment isn't over yet. I have a cure for everything.

DUPONT

Even a disobedient daughter?

SCALAWAG

Yes, but once again I'll need the help of my friend here.

(to Andrew)

You see that the patient and her father are completely at odds... that a remedy must be found...that there's no time to lose. Take the patient...and treat her.

(giving Andrew his black bag)

I recommend a strong *elopative*...followed by a liberal dose of *matrimonium*.

ANDREW

I understand, Doctor.

(He takes Rebecca off with the black bag and the satchel.)

DUPONT

What are those drugs you mentioned, Doctor? I don't think I've ever heard of them.

SCALAWAG

Special drugs, Colonel, used in only the most desperate cases. And now I've got to be running along...

DUPONT

But the treatment can't be over so soon!

SCALAWAG

That's what you think—I mean, the pharmacist can handle everything from here on.

DUPONT

Whatever you say.

(They shake hands, Dupont clasping Scalawag's hand in both of his own.)

I cannot tell you how grateful I am for all of your help.

SCALAWAG

My pleasure to be of service.

(He tries to pull away but Dupont holds on.)

DUPONT

You don't know what distress this whole affair has caused me.

SCALAWAG

Oh, I understand completely.
(He tries to pull away.)

DUPONT

My daughter was so infatuated with this Andrew, I thought she might even try to run off with him!

SCALAWAG

Wouldn't surprise me at all.
(He tries to pull away.)

DUPONT

What do they think I am, a blind old fool?

SCALAWAG

Yes—I mean, no, of course not.
(He tries to pull away.)

DUPONT

They don't realize I'm always one step ahead of them.

SCALAWAG

Well, your secret is safe with me.
(He tries to pull away.)

LUKE

(running on)
 Colonel! Colonel! Awful news! We been robbed!

DUPONT

What do you mean?

LUKE

I mean we been screwed, stewed, and barbecued! Rebecca just run off—eloped!
(Scalawag pulls away violently, but Dupont holds on and he comes flying back.)

DUPONT

What! But how...?

LUKE

That druggist—he was Andrew in disguise!

DUPONT

But that's impossible! If he were Andrew, that would mean...

(He and Luke slowly turn to stare at Scalawag.)

You!

SCALAWAG

(turning to look behind)

Who?

DUPONT

Luke!

(Luke grabs Scalawag from behind. Picking up a stick)

So, you rascal! You've cheated me, mocked me—and now you rob me of my daughter?

SCALAWAG

Please, thanks aren't necessary.

DUPONT

(raising the stick threateningly)

Is it true?

SCALAWAG

Well... Yeeesss...

(Dupont is about to strike him.)

But...!

DUPONT

But what?

SCALAWAG

But I'm *very* sorry.

LUCY

(entering)

I sent a message to Mister Ho— What is goin' on here?

LUKE

Now Lucy, you just keep out of this.

LUCY

(in a fury)

So, Lucas Brown! I warned you about this, but I guess it don't mean nothin'. So this won't mean nothin' either: *goodbye!*

(She runs off.)

LUKE

Lucy! Lucy, wait!

(to Scalawag)

You done it again—come between my woman and me! But this time you gonna pay!

SCALAWAG

You wouldn't take a check, would you?

DUPONT

Yes, you are going to pay.

SCALAWAG

(melodramatically)

But I'm innocent, I tell you! I've been framed!

DUPONT

Don't worry, you'll get the full benefit of country justice.

SCALAWAG

Country justice?

DUPONT

That's where we skip the trial...

LUKE

And go straight to the execution.

DUPONT

Lock him in the cellar, Luke. We'll hang him right after sundown.

SCALAWAG

(as they take him off)

Well! This is the last time I make a house call!

SCENE THREE

(Clearing in the woods. Andrew, in his disguise and carrying the satchel, runs on with Rebecca, carrying the doctor's bag. They are flushed, excited. Andrew stops as they reach center.)

ANDREW

Wait a second!

(They drop their bags and breathe deeply in unison.)

Do you see anyone?

(They look back the way they came.)

REBECCA

No.

ANDREW

Then I think we made it!

(They laugh and embrace.)

REBECCA

We should have done this a long time ago—this is *fun*!

ANDREW

(abruptly serious)

Yes... And where do we go now? How do we live?

REBECCA

What's the matter, Andrew? Isn't this what you wanted?

ANDREW

Yes, but...I don't know, it seems wrong somehow. Sneaky. I feel like we're running away.

REBECCA

We *are* running away.

ANDREW

But I didn't want to steal you away from your home. I wanted to win you openly, honestly, proudly, for all the world to see. That's the honorable thing to do, the manly thing, the—

REBECCA

I know, I know. We don't have time for the whole speech right now. But if you—

ANDREW

Wait! What was that?

REBECCA

What?

I hear someone coming.

ANDREW

You're right!

REBECCA

(picking up the bags)
Quick, let's go!

ANDREW

(straining to see)
Wait? Can it be...it looks like...Horace?

REBECCA

Horace? Are you sure?
(A loud thud offstage.)

ANDREW

Yes, it's Horace. He must be taking the shortcut through the woods to my house.

REBECCA

Becky, I'm getting an idea. Take the satchel and hide back there in the bushes.

ANDREW

What about you?

REBECCA

I'm going to wait for him. He doesn't know me, and if I can fool your father I can certainly fool him.

ANDREW

All right, but what do I—

REBECCA

Use the stuff in the satchel. Just follow my lead.

ANDREW

Always.
(She kisses him and goes to hide.)

REBECCA

This is *fun!*
(She hides. Horace enters, carrying a pack on his back, whistling and snapping his fingers.)

Hello, neighbor.
(Horace waves in greeting and walks into a tree.)
How are things?

ANDREW

Just fine.
(He continues on.)

HORACE

Same here. So tell me—

ANDREW

Sorry, Doctor, I'm in a big hurry. I just found out the girl I'm going to marry is in good working order again...so I'm going over to settle it once and for all.

HORACE

Settle it? How?

ANDREW

(hefting the pack)
 With this. One thousand dollars in gold.

HORACE

One thousand dollars... My friend, you're in no condition to marry anyone. You look terrible.

ANDREW

Don't be ridiculous, I... I do?

HORACE

Hasn't anyone told you? You're practically white. And you're trembling.

ANDREW

I am?
(He holds out a hand; Andrew jogs his elbow.)
 I am! Doctor, what's wrong with me?

HORACE

What *isn't* wrong with you?

ANDREW

Oh my God! Is it fatal?

HORACE

Only if you're alive.

ANDREW

You mean I'm going to die?

HORACE

It might be your only hope!

ANDREW

HORACE

I knew it! I knew I should've taken my Twentieth Century Wonder Drug this morning! See what happens when you don't?

ANDREW

If you like, I'll examine you right now.

HORACE

Oh, would you?

ANDREW

Of course.

(He makes a surreptitious signal to Rebecca, who silently moves behind Horace and opens the satchel.)

IS YOUR SPINE TINGLING?

(Rebecca takes a backscratcher from the satchel and rubs it down Horace's back.)

HORACE

YES...WHY YES, I FEEL A PRICKLING DOWN MY BACK.

ANDREW

TOO BAD. THAT'S A SYMPTOM OF AN ADENOID ATTACK.

HORACE

BUT I'M FEELING FINE!

ANDREW

YES, THAT'S A COMMON SIGN.

HORACE

It is?

ANDREW

IS YOUR HEART POUNDING?

(Rebecca takes out a small bass drum and beats it loudly.)

HORACE

YES! OH YES, I FEEL THE POUNDING OF MY HEART.

ANDREW

TOO BAD. THAT'S HOW SPASTIC CLAUSTROPHOBIA CAN START.
BUT, MY LUCKY FRIEND,
YOUR PAIN IS AT AN END.

'CAUSE I'VE GOT
FAST RELIEF
FOR ALL THE THINGS THAT AIL YOU;
YOU'LL GET
FAST RELIEF

ANDREW (*cont.*)

WHEN YOU TAKE THIS TINY PILL.
 YES, WITH
 FAST RELIEF
 YOUR ILLNESS WILL BE BRIEF,
 AND IT'S ALL YOURS, ONCE YOU PAY MY BILL.
 (*Music continues under.*)

HORACE

How much is it?

ANDREW

Ten dollars a bottle. Better take a case, to be safe.

HORACE

(*counting out coins from the pack*)
 All right...here. Well, so long—

ANDREW

Just a minute, friend...
 IS YOUR FOOT ACHING?
 (*Horace looks at his foot, shakes his head; Rebecca takes out a mallet
 and swings it down sharply on his other foot.*)

HORACE

OW! IT IS—IN FACT IT'S HURTING FIT TO KILL.

ANDREW

TOO BAD. THAT'S RHODE ISLAND FLU—HAVE YOU MADE OUT A WILL?

HORACE

DON'T YOU HAVE A CURE?

ANDREW

I MIGHT HAVE, I'M NOT SURE.

HORACE

You're not *sure*?

ANDREW

ARE YOUR EARS RINGING?
 (*Rebecca takes out a bell and rings it loudly.*)

HORACE

YES! IT'S TRUE, I HEAR A RINGING IN MY EARS.

ANDREW

TOO BAD. THAT'S THE SIGN WHEN SWEDISH MEASLES FIRST APPEARS.
 BUT I HAVE THE BEST
 OF CURES—

HORACE
I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!

ANDREW
I'VE GOT SOME
FAST RELIEF;
JUST FOLLOW THIS PRESCRIPTION.
YOU'LL GET
FAST RELIEF
WHEN YOU USE THIS SPECIAL SALVE
YES, WITH
FAST RELIEF,
YOU'LL NEVER COME TO GRIEF,
AND I'LL GLADLY SELL YOU ALL I
HAVE.

(Music continues under.)

HORACE
YOU'VE GOT SOME
FAST RELIEF...

I'LL GET
FAST RELIEF...

YES, WITH
FAST RELIEF,
YOU'LL NEVER COME TO GRIEF!

ANDREW
That's twenty jars, at ten dollars apiece.

HORACE
(counting out coins)
Two hundred... Couldn't I just keep one or two diseases for a while?

ANDREW
(alternately examining Horace and dispensing medicines)
I SEE A PYORRHEA—
TAKE THESE HERBS— IS THAT A BOIL?

HORACE
(paying)
Where?

ANDREW
RUBELLA, TARANTELLA,
A CAPPELLA— USE THIS OIL.

HORACE
But—

ANDREW
THERE'S RICKETS, WICKETS, CRICKETS—
THIS SUPPOSITORY'S GOOD.

HORACE
BUT COULDN'T ALL THIS KILL ME?

ANDREW
NO—THOUGH YOU MAY WISH IT WOULD.
Just a joke!

ANDREW (*cont.*)

ARE YOUR KNEES TREMBLING?

(Horace winces in anticipation, but nothing happens; Rebecca can't find the right implement.)

HORACE

(surprised)

NO.

ANDREW

I SAID, IS THERE A TREMBLING IN YOUR KNEES?

(Rebecca finds the mallet and hits Horace behind the knees, buckling them.)

HORACE

THERE IS!

ANDREW

AH, YOU SEE? YOU'RE GETTING HOOF-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

HORACE

ISN'T THAT A COW DISEASE?

ANDREW

IT WAS, TILL NOW!

ANDREW
STILL I'VE GOT
FAST RELIEF—

HORACE
STILL YOU'VE GOT
FAST RELIEF—

ANDREW

ALTHOUGH I OUGHT TO WARN YOU,
SOMETIMES
FAST RELIEF
CAN HAVE SIDE EFFECTS AS WELL.
THEY CAN
PARALYZE,
AND THAT'S WHY I ADVISE
BUYING EVERY ANTIDOTE I SELL.

(He empties the remaining contents of the black bag into Horace's arms.)

HORACE

HOW MUCH WILL ALL THIS COST ME?

ANDREW

I'M NOT CERTAIN, LET ME COUNT.
HOW MUCH DO YOU HAVE LEFT?

HORACE

(emptying a handful of coins into his palm)
JUST THIS...

ANDREW

(grabbing them all)
THAT'S JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT.

HORACE

Hey—!

ANDREW

YOU OUGHT TO BE IN BED NOW.

HORACE

I'LL GO HOME AND GET RIGHT IN.
THESE PAINS AND PILLS CAN FIGHT IT OUT...

ANDREW

AND MAY THE BEST MAN WIN!

ANDREW

I'VE GIVEN
FAST RELIEF...
RELIEVED YOU OF YOUR PROBLEMS
WITH SOME
FAST RELIEF...

HORACE

YOU'VE GIVEN
FAST RELIEF...

FAST RELIEF...
AND OF ALL MY MONEY TOO.

ANDREW

AH, BUT
WAIT AND SEE:
TAKE THESE AND ONE-TWO-THREE,
YOU'LL FEEL FINE; LOOK AT ME—
I DO!

ANDREW & HORACE

(Shake hands. Horace, arms full of medicine, starts off.)
I WAS IN TROUBLE, BUT NOW IT'S PAST,
BECAUSE RELIEF CAME SO FAST!

(Horace staggers out. Andrew puts the money into the bag as Rebecca comes out of hiding.)

REBECCA

That was wonderful! You were brilliant!

ANDREW

(removing his disguise and putting it into the satchel)
I was, wasn't I?

REBECCA

(putting the implements back into the satchel)

That was the slickest, sneakiest deception I've ever seen!

ANDREW

(sobering)

Yes, it was pretty fraudulent. Come to think of it, it was downright criminal!

(closing up the satchel)

I can't believe what I just did. Rebecca, I just took one thousand dollars from its rightful owner!

REBECCA

You're practically a doctor already!

(They run off, carrying bag and satchel. After a beat Lucy comes walking on, angrily.)

LUKE

(offstage)

Lucy!

(She looks back, then goes on.)

Baby, wait up! Please!

(She stops and waits impatiently as he runs on, half out of breath.)

Lucy! I found you!

LUCY

What do you want, Mister Brown?

LUKE

(crossing toward her)

Now baby, don't be like that, 'cause you know—

(She backs away. Moving closer)

Come on now, woman, I—

(She backs away again. Defeated)

Aw, hell.

(simply)

I—I want you to come home, baby. Back where you belong, with me.

LUCY

What makes you think I belong with you?

LUKE

You didn't give me a chance to explain back there! It wasn't like you thought—the Colonel wanted me to grab him. See—

LUCY

It doesn't matter, Luke, If it's not him it'll be someone else. As long as you're lookin' for somethin' to be jealous of, you'll find it—even if you have to make it up.

LUKE

I know I get crazy jealous sometimes...but it's only because I love you so bad.
And...and you love me. So how can you walk out now?

LUCY

(simply)

I NEVER PROMISED TO STAY WITH YOU;
I GAVE YOU NO GUARANTEE.
I NEVER SAID THAT, WHATEVER YOU DID,
YOU COULD ALWAYS COUNT ON ME.

I NEVER PROMISED TO BEAR WITH YOU;
I NEVER SWORE TO BE STRONG.
I NEVER TOLD YOU I'D STAY BY YOUR SIDE
AND DEFEND YOU, RIGHT OR WRONG.

I COULDN'T SAY HOW LONG I'D BE HERE,
OR WHEN I MIGHT WANT TO GO FREE.
I COULDN'T SAY I'D TAKE THE BAD WITH THE GOOD
TILL I KNEW HOW BAD THE BAD WOULD BE.

(Music continues under.)

LUKE

I'm sorry, baby, I know I been awful. But I won't ever be jealous again. I mean it!

LUCY

I know you do, Luke. Every time you say it, you mean it.

LUKE

So...what now?

LUCY

So now I make up my mind.

I COULDN'T SAY HOW LONG I'D BE HERE,
OR WHEN I MIGHT WANT TO GO FREE.
I COULDN'T SAY I'D TAKE THE BAD WITH THE GOOD
TILL I KNEW HOW BAD THE BAD WOULD BE.

I NEVER PROMISED TO DIE WITH YOU;
I NEVER GAVE YOU A VOW.
I NEVER SAID IT WOULD BE FOREVER...
SO I'LL SAY IT NOW.

(She holds out a hand to him. He takes it, and they exit together. After a beat, there is an enormous wailing howl from offstage that comes closer and louder until Maxine enters.)

MAXINE

(wailing)

Wooooooe... Where is he? Where's my man? He's been gone a whole day...the slimy skunk! Probably off somewhere doing who knows what nasty, vicious things...*without me!* And it's all my fault, My little prank this morning is what started it. And now my Scalawag is gone. Come home, baby, all is forgiven! Waggy, come home!

(to people in the audience)

Have you seen my man? How about you? Yeah, you, the guy with the bad haircut. Have you seen my man?

(to the audience at large)

Anybody? Where is he? I don't want anyone else but him...I'm easily satisfied. Won't somebody tell me...*is my doctor in the house?*

ONCE UPON A TIME—

YESTERDAY—

LITTLE THINGS WOULD DRIVE ME INSANE:
HOW HE SMOKED CIGARS,
HOW HE SNORED, DROVE ME UP THE WALL.
BUT SEE WHAT ONE DAY BRINGS!
THOSE AWFUL LITTLE THINGS—
THEY'RE WHAT I MISS MOST OF ALL.

THE THRILL IS GONE,
THOUGH HE'S A SHIFTY, SLY TYPE;
THE THRILL IS GONE...
I GUESS HIS TYPE IS MY TYPE.
WHEN THE HOUSE IS COLD AND EMPTY
AND THE BEDROOM IS STILL,
THE THRILL IS GONE.

(She lurches off with another wail.)

SCENE FOUR

(Dupont's garden. Sunset. Luke leads on Scalawag, whose hands are tied behind his back. During the first few lines Luke slings a rope through Scalawag's bonds, under the bench, and around a high tree limb, and ties a doubly-secure knot.)

SCALAWAG

Do you have to keep me trussed up like this? These knots are hurting my wrists.

LUKE

Oh my, that is a cryin' shame. There! See if that don't hold you till they get here. Can't waste my time watchin' you.

SCALAWAG

You certainly hold a grudge, don't you?

LUKE

No, I just get even. But I ain't got time to chat now. Me and Lucy, we got things to do.

(He starts to leave.)

SCALAWAG

Really? Did someone show you how?

LUKE

(Snaps his fingers.)

Tell you what I can do. When I come back, I'll take the rope off your hands—and put it around your neck!

(He gives the rope a sudden tug, yanking Scalawag to the ground, and exits laughing.)

SCALAWAG

(Mimics Luke's laughter. Then)

Sundown—I have till sundown. Only minutes left!

(He runs toward the wings, but before he reaches them the rope goes taut and pulls him back. He runs to the other side; the same thing happens. He tries to crawl under the bench, but there is no room. Panting, he gives up.)

I guess this is it. The end. The Last Of The Scalawags. You know, it's funny—I'm about to die, I should be reliving my fondest, happiest memories...and all I can think about is my wife. She's a foulmouthed, nagging old harpy...and I miss her. I can't help it—I keep seeing her face, hearing her voice...

(sentimentally)

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE I GO,
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT I DO;
I HEAR HER
CALLING ME
EVERYWHERE.

SCALAWAG *(cont.)*

AND WHEN I WANDER TO AND FRO,
FROM TENNESSEE TO TIMBUKTU,
I HEAR HER—

MAXINE'S VOICE

(right next to him, offstage)
LOVELY VOICE!

SCALAWAG

(bewildered, looking around)
EVERYWHERE?

I TRY TO ESCAPE HER—

MAXINE'S VOICE

GO ON AND TRY!

SCALAWAG

(alarmed, slowly edging across stage)
BUT IT DOES NO GOOD WHEN I ROAM.
IN MEMPHIS OR MECCA, I STILL HEAR HER SIGH,
“COME HOME, MY DARLING, COME HOME.”

SO IF I RUN TO NEW FRONTIERS,
TO MADAGASCAR OR TO MARS,
I'LL HEAR HER—

MAXINE'S VOICE

(now from the opposite wing, right by him)
LOUD AND CLEAR!

SCALAWAG

(silently mouthing the word)
EVERYWHERE...

(edging up center, aloud)
AND EVEN IF I PLUG MY EARS,
OR PLAY A HORN IN NOISY BARS,
I'LL HEAR HER—

THREE VOICES

(up center, off left, and off right, all apparently Maxine's, overlapping)
BET YOUR ASS!

SCALAWAG

EVERYWHERE?!?

SCALAWAG *(cont.)*

(coming down center)

YOU ASK IF I'LL HEAR HER AFTER I DIE?
ASK ME: DOES THE POPE LIVE IN ROME?
IN HELL OR IN HEAVEN, I'LL STILL HEAR HER SIGH—

THREE VOICES

COME HOME, YOU JACKASS, COME HOME!

(overlapping, contrapuntally)

COME HOME... COME HOME... COME HOME...

SCALAWAG

(simultaneously)

I thought this was supposed to be a solo!

SCALAWAG

*(running back and forth,
trying to escape the voices)*

SO IF I JOIN THE HOLY HOST...

OR END UP AS AN ENDLESS
ROAST...

IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE
WHERE I AM AT ALL.

EVERYWHERE...

EVERYWHERE...

I HEAR HER CALL.

FIRST VOICE

WHAT HOST? GUESTS ARE
COMING AND YOU'VE LEFT ME
HOME ALONE!

SECOND VOICE

WHAT ROAST? WE'VE GOT
NOTHING LEFT TO EAT EXCEPT
A BONE!

THIRD VOICE

WHAT DIFFERENCE?

THREE VOICES

WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

(overlapping)

EVERYWHERE, EVERYWHERE,
EVERYWHERE...

EVERYWHERE, EVERYWHERE,
EVERYWHERE...

AHHH!

SCALAWAG

Maybe it's best that I go now. If I'm hearing voices, I must be cracking up. The tension is getting to me—

MAXINE

(entering behind him)

Scalawag!

SCALAWAG

(jumping in fright)

Aieeee!

(He turns and sees her. Overjoyed)

Maxxy!

MAXINE

Waggy!

SCALAWAG

Baby!

(They run to each other; she embraces him and they kiss.)

Is it really you?

MAXINE

Who else would it— You louse, where've you been? I was worried sick!

SCALAWAG

I'm sorry, Maxine, I've been sort of...tied up. But I've been dreaming of you constantly.

MAXINE

(pleased)

Really?

SCALAWAG

Yes, it's been horrible.

MAXINE

What are you doing like this?

SCALAWAG

Oh, nothing...waiting to be hanged.

MAXINE

What! Why?

SCALAWAG

It's just a little misunderstanding. See, there's this Colonel Dupont, and I sort of took some money from him, *you* know, and helped his daughter elope, and—

MAXINE

And so they're going to hang you. Didn't I warn you where all your lying and cheating would get you? Haven't I told you, over and over and over and—

SCALAWAG

Yes, yes, you've told me!

MAXINE

But they're not really going to hang you, are they? I don't believe it.

SCALAWAG

Well, the problem is, they do.

MAXINE

No, they're just trying to frighten you.

SCALAWAG

And they're doing a terrific job.

MAXINE

So when are they going to...string you up?

SCALAWAG

Just a few minutes. As soon as the...lynch mob gathers.

MAXINE

(after a beat, vehemently)
How can you do this to me?

SCALAWAG

To you?

MAXINE

How can you leave me all alone in the world?

SCALAWAG

I'm sorry, Maxine, but—

MAXINE

And think of the disgrace! Letting yourself be hanged in front of all these people!
(She indicates the audience.)

SCALAWAG

What do you want me to do about it?

MAXINE

If only you'd paid off the taxes on the house, it wouldn't be so bad.

SCALAWAG

Get out of here, you're breaking my heart.

MAXINE

No, I'll stay with you till the bitter end. I won't leave until I see you hanged.

SCALAWAG

Thanks a lot.

MAXINE

(The introduction to "I Never Promised" begins.)
I NEVER PROMISED TO DIE WITH YOU...
(The music stops.)

SCALAWAG

Yes, go on!

MAXINE

That's all.

DUPONT

(entering, cheerfully)
It should be dark in a few minutes. The others will be here by then, so we can hang you and still have time for dinner.

MAXINE

(throwing herself at his feet and embracing his legs)
Mercy! Mercy, please, I beg of you!

DUPONT

Who in the name of Jefferson C. Davis is this?

SCALAWAG

She's my wife.

DUPONT

You have my deepest sympathy. Oh, and you too, ma'am.

MAXINE

Do you have to hang him? Couldn't you just give him a good beating instead?

DUPONT

I'm sorry, ma'am, but country justice must take its course. Luke!

LUKE

(entering, carrying the shotgun)
Right here, Colonel. And Lucy's showin' Mister Horace up the drive.

DUPONT

Then we're ready to begin. Prepare the rope.

LUKE

My pleasure.

(He gives Dupont the gun and unties the tether from Scalawag's end, leaving Scalawag's hands tied. Dupont keeps Scalawag covered while Luke coils the rope and begins tying it.)

HORACE

(offstage)
Colonel Dupont?

DUPONT

Back here, Horace, in the garden! I haven't enjoyed anything so much since we fired on Fort Sumter.

(Horace enters with Lucy. He is a wreck: one arm holds a crutch; the other, in a sling, holds a hot-water bottle to his head, around which a cloth bandage is wrapped. All watch, amazed, as he crosses the stage without falling.)

Why, Horace! You look as though you're at death's door.

HORACE

I am. Crepitated ulcers...acute osmosis...Coney Island flu... You name it, I've got it. But I got up off my deathbed when I heard the news. I'll die happy, if I can see him go first.

(swooning slightly)
Ooog. Can I help?

DUPONT

Just keep an eye on this scoundrel until Luke is ready.

HORACE

Sure.
(staring woozily at Scalawag)
Why are there two of him?

LUKE

(showing the result of his work: a noose)
I, am, ready.

DUPONT

Excellent.

SCALAWAG

Colonel Dupont, I have to warn you! This is your last chance...
(Everyone listens expectantly.)
...to change your mind.

DUPONT

I'm sorry, sir, but you have to give the public what they want. Well, I believe we are all here now, and so—

ANDREW

(entering with Rebecca)
Yes, Colonel, we're *all* here.
(The others turn, amazed. Horace's crutch slips and he falls to the ground.)

ANDREW (*cont.*)

Rebecca and I were going to run away and get married...but I didn't want to steal her away from her home. I wanted to win her openly, honestly, proudly, for all the world to—

EVERYONE ELSE

We know, we know.

DUPONT

You impudent pup—first you run off with my daughter, and then you have the nerve to come back and ask my permission?

(He picks up a stick and approaches Andrew.)

ANDREW

You should know that I've just come into a large sum of money—one thousand dollars in gold.

DUPONT

(About to hit Andrew, he stops, but keeps the stick raised.)

One thousand dollars?

HORACE

One thousand dollars? That's funny...

DUPONT

That is a considerable sum, young man...but eventually it will run out. And what will you do then?

REBECCA

Poppa, Andrew graduates in two years and—

DUPONT

And will a diploma put a roof over your head or food in your mouth?

SCALAWAG

Andrew...tell the Colonel what you've been studying.

ANDREW

Why, I thought you knew, Colonel. I'm studying medicine.

DUPONT

Medicine? You mean you'll be a *doctor*?

ANDREW

Yes.

DUPONT

(dropping the stick and shaking Andrew's hand)

Andrew, I give you my permission. If you are to be a doctor, then your fortune—I mean your future—is assured.

REBECCA

(running to him and hugging him)

Oh, Poppa!

ANDREW

Thank you, Colonel. That being the case, don't you think you should release poor Doctor Scalawag?

DUPONT

I feel so good right now, I can even forgive him! Luke, untie him.

LUKE

But Colonel—

LUCY

(snuggling up to Luke)

Honey, you heard the man.

LUKE

(smiling)

Okay, baby. You hold my hand, I'm yours to command.

(untying Scalawag)

But I tell you one thing: from now on, you and me are gonna eat an apple a day, every day!

SCALAWAG

So, everything has worked out for the best.

HORACE

What about me? I'm still a bachelor...and on top of that, I'm dying!

SCALAWAG

Oh, I'll fix you up...for my usual fee, of course.

MAXINE

Well, you can thank me for making you a doctor. I'm the one who did it, you know.

SCALAWAG

Then you're the one who got me those beatings!

MAXINE

And it serves you right! Don't forget the beating you gave me!

SCALAWAG

What about the one you gave *me*?

MAXINE

That's nothing compared to the one I'm *going* to give you!

ANDREW

(coming between them)

Come on now, make up and be friends.

REBECCA

Everything's ended too happily for you to stay angry.

SCALAWAG

Very well...I forgive you the beatings, my dear, considering the dignity of my new profession.

(putting an arm around her waist)

But from now on I want the highest respect from you and from everyone else. Just remember, all of you: a doctor can be a dangerous man when he's angry.

MAXINE

And even when he's not!

(Music starts, the lights change, and the actors drop their "show" roles and face the audience.)

DOCTOR

And so we come to the end of our play. But, my friends, I want to leave you with this thought...

(Arms around each other, the company starts to hum reverentially in the background.)

There is a sovereign remedy for life's little ills available to us all...better than doctors, better than nurses, better than anything you can buy in a drugstore...

(His arms are spread wide, as though indicating Mother Nature, or perhaps Brotherly Love. Then, as a medicine bottle appears in each hand and the humming suddenly stops)

The Twentieth Century Wonder Drug! With the secret ingredient H₂O!

COMPANY

NOW OUR ENTERTAINMENT IS DONE;
NOW WE PUT AN END TO OUR MUSICAL FABLE.

DOCTOR

AND OF COURSE, ALTHOUGH FUN IS FUN,
REALLY EVERY DOCTOR IS HONEST AND ABLE...

(The others wink knowingly, stifle laughter, snort derisively, etc.)

ALL

BUT FOR NOW, IF OUR COMEDY PLEASED YOU,
IF YOU FOUND YOU COULD PARDON THE FLAWS,
IF WE TOUCHED YOU OR TICKLED YOU, LET US KNOW:
APPLAUSE...

FOR THE MEDICINE SHOW!

(Blackout. After the lights come up and the bows are over, the cast returns one by one into the wagon, except for two actors who put on the horse costume and pull the wagon offstage.)

THE END