

The Perils of Penelope
A Melodrama with Music, Lyrics and Script by Darryl Bojanowski

The Perils of Penelope was conceived as an old-fashioned melodrama. In the original production, the show was accompanied by a single upright piano, played by all three members of the cast, with the exception of the Prologue song and a few incidental scene changes. Because the entire show is played "to the audience" this unusual method of accompaniment added to the spontaneity of the production but is not essential. The audience should feel like a part of the show. The actors should react to and even encourage the audience's participation. There is a piano motif (A for SNIDE; B for PENELOPE; C for NELSON) which should be played each time they ENTER. These serve as cues for the audience to cheer the hero, sigh for the heroine and boo the villain --especially boo the villain. This is especially important in the second half of the piece, when confusion reigns in the audience as well as in the story onstage. In the original production, a barbershop quartet was employed to perform in the lobby prior to the show. The group also backed up Penelope's first song, walking through the audience to join her. This is not essential to the show, but adds another fun aspect. If desired, the group could also perform songs of their choosing during the Olios (intermezzos performed between the scenes in each act). The actor playing Nelson Noble serves as emcee for the introductory piece and the Olios.

INTRODUCTION/PROLOGUE (to be performed in front of the curtain)

(DS LIGHTS UP as NELSON ENTERS; he is dressed in a forest ranger/Mountie suit including hat)

NELSON

Good evening and welcome to The Perils of Penelope, an old-fashioned melodrama. In all plays, the audience is extremely important. And even more so in a melodrama. The villain, the hero and the heroine are all equally important and each has a brief musical motif which is your cue to boo, cheer or sigh. For example if you hear this sound –

(MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE A: SNIDE)

...our villain Sylvester Snide appears. When he appears you should boo or hiss. Let's try it.

(MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE A: SNIDE; SNIDE ENTER wearing a black suit and tie, black cape and top hat. He bows and EXITS)

This little bird-like sound signals us to sigh for the lovely Penelope.

(MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE B: PENELOPE; PENELOPE ENTERS & EXITS)

This stirring fanfare signals the hero, me, Nelson Noble. Your cheers are appreciated.

(MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE C: NELSON; NELSON bows & cuts off audience)

So let's try it out.

(NELSON EXIT; each character ENTERS with the appropriate musical cue [PROLOGUE 00 A, B, C]; audience is expected to respond accordingly. NELSON ENTERS following demonstration; MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE C: NELSON; audience cheers)

NELSON (acknowledge cheers)

Now we are ready to begin our story.

(SNIDE ENTERS; MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE A; audience boos)

SNIDE (acknowledge boos)

Thank you. So glad you could come to MY show.

NELSON

This show isn't about you. It's about my sweet, sweet Penelope.

(PENELOPE ENTER, MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE B, audience sighs)

And me, Nelson Noble.

(MUSIC 00: PROLOGUE C, motion for cheers)

SNIDE

Nonsense! You may win out in the end, but we all know it is ME they came to see.

(to audience)

Right?

(acknowledge their boos)

Thank you.

(MUSIC 1: EVERYBODY LOVES TO HATE THE VILLAIN; NELSON & PENELOPE join SNIDE)

SNIDE

EV'RYBODY LOVES TO HATE THE VILLAIN

PENELOPE & NELSON

VILLAIN

SNIDE
EV'RYBODY WANTS TO SEE HIM IN A STEW
EV'RYBODY LOVES TO HATE THE VILLAIN

PENELOPE & NELSON
VILLAIN

SNIDE
EV'RYBODY WANTS TO SEE HIM GET HIS DUE
YOU MAY STAND UP AND CHEER WHEN THE HERO APPEARS
BUT EVERYBODY HAS HIS FLAWS
THE VILLAIN'S THE ONE WHO GETS THE JOB DONE
AND HE ALWAYS GETS THE MOST APPLAUSE
OH, CHEER FOR THE HERO BUT LISTEN MY FRIEND
WHO WILL YOU REMEMBER WHEN THE STORY ENDS?
OH, THE VILLAIN, THE BLACKGUARD, THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS
YOU WON'T REMEMBER ANY OF THE REST OF [THE CAST
OH, EV'RYBODY LOVES TO HATE THE VILLAIN
AND THE VILLAIN GETS THE LAST LAUGH

(MUSIC continues as cast makes entrances and exits to audience reactions)

PENELOPE
OH, THE VILLAIN

NELSON
THE BLACKGUARD

SNIDE
THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS
YOU WON'T REMEMBER ANY OF THE REST OF [THE CAST
OH, EV'RYBODY LOVES TO HATE THE VILLAIN
AND THE VILLAIN GETS THE LAST LAUGH

(BLACKOUT; CURTAIN OPEN; MUSIC 2: WINTER MUSIC)

ACT ONE: SCENE 1. A CABIN IN THE WILDS OF MINNESOTA

(Across the back wall are a window SR next to a door which opens onto stage; a small pot-belly stove is SL of the door. A wintry scene is visible through the window. On the table there is a crystal radio with earphones. A coal scuttle sits next to the stove. A coat rack stands in the UL corner with PENELOPE's coat

and scarf. A table with two chairs is DRC; there is a tablecloth on the table. DLC is a smaller table with a small bell and a few books on it. MOTHER (whose face is never seen) sits in a wheelchair SL of the small table in wheelchair facing US. As LIGHTS UP, PENELOPE ENTERS through the door MUSIC 2.1B. As she opens the door a handful of snow blows on with her. She carries a few letters and a small snow shovel)

PENELOPE

Brrr! Is it cold out there. We have three feet of snow on the ground and no sign of it stopping. The thermometer says 10 degrees. And it's not even Hallowe'en yet.

(MOTHER waves her hand at Penelope)

Yes, Mother, I have the mail. No, your magazine didn't come. A bill, another bill.

(she places bills in a shoe box on the table; the box is already overflowing)

Oh! A letter for me from Nelson!

(this she holds to her heart)

(MUSIC 2.2C)

And -- why, Mother, a letter for you from Florida. Who do you know there?

(she leans in to hear her mother)

Of course, I had forgotten about Uncle Benjamin. You were always his favorite sister, weren't you?

(MOTHER motions for her)

Read it to you? Why, of course.

(opens letter and starts to read)

"Dear Mrs. Parker". That doesn't sound like it's from Uncle Benjamin.

(MOTHER motions)

All right, all right. I'll continue. "Dear Mrs. Parker, I regret to inform you that your dear brother Benjamin has recently passed away."

(MUSIC 3: SAD NOTES)

Oh, my. That is sad news.

(MOTHER indicates to continue)

"My heart is with you in your grief at this news. It was his request that I notify you personally and let you know that you are mentioned in his will." That was very nice of him, wasn't it?

(MOTHER motions to keep reading)

All right, I'll go on. "The will is to be read on Tuesday and I shall relay word of the details by special delivery that day. Hoping you are well. Sincerely, Jason Juniper, Attorney at Law."

(MOTHER beckons her to come closer; she grabs letter from PENELOPE)

You don't have to grab it that way! I would have given it to you.

(returning to table)

Honestly, you'd think I was a thief or something the way you treat me sometimes. I don't know why you act like that.

(MOTHER's hand suddenly droops and she drops her letter; PENELOPE picks it up)

Really, Mother, I know there's nothing wrong with you.

(MOTHER snaps fingers as if to say “Nuts”; PENELOPE puts MOTHER’s letter on table and takes her own letter out to read it)

Oh, Nelson! If only you knew how much I long for your letters. And how much I miss you!

(MUSIC 4: I’M IN LOVE WITH A FOREST RANGER; PENELOPE moves DR; STAGE LIGHTS DIM; special on PENELOPE)

PENELOPE

I’M IN LOVE WITH A FOREST RANGER
AND WHEN HE IS NOT HERE TO SEE
BE IT SUNSHINE OR SNOW I MISS HIM SO
AND I HOPE HE IS THINKING OF ME

OH, I WISH, I WISH THAT I COULD BE
LIKE A TREE SO STRONG AND HIGH
IN THE FOREST I’D STAY
AND SEE HIM EACH DAY
AS MY RANGER CAME WALKING BY

OH, I WISH, I WISH THAT I COULD BE
WHERE MY HERO IS TODAY
IN SOME GLEN OR A GLADE
HE WOULD STAND IN MY SHADE
IN THAT FOREST FAR AWAY

PENELOPE (unfolds letter and reads)

“My dearest Penelope, How I miss you as I sit here in the lonely tower. Why, just an hour ago, I saw a buzzard fly overhead and immediately thought of you. He was so high I couldn’t help but wonder if you and I could both see him --- me from the tower and you from your house.”

(DL SPECIAL or SPOT as NELSON steps out writing a letter)

NELSON

“I suppose that is silly. But sometimes one’s mind goes silly from the loneliness up here. Day after day I sit here, ever alert, ever ready for any emergency that might arise. So far, there have been no emergencies to speak of, but I must be ready! For THAT is the duty of a forest ranger.”

PENELOPE

“I will soon be on furlough for ten days...”

NELSON

“... and if you will allow it, I would like to see you in order to ask you a very important question. Sincerely yours, Nelson Noble”

PENELOPE
I'M IN LOVE WITH A FOREST RANGER
A MAN SO HONEST AND TRUE
EVEN SQUIRRELS AND BEARS
SEE THE WAY THAT HE CARES
THE ANIMALS LOVE HIM, TOO

(DL SPOT OUT; NELSON EXIT)

I'M IN LOVE WITH A FOREST RANGER
AND WHEN HE IS NOT HERE TO SEE
BE IT SUNSHINE OR SNOW I MISS HIM SO
AND I HOPE HE IS THINKING OF ME
I HOPE HE IS THINKING OF ME

PENELOPE (folds up letter and sighs)

Nelson wants to ask me a very important question. I wonder what it could be.

(DR SPECIAL OUT; FULL STAGE UP as MOTHER rings bell, she motions for PENELOPE to approach her; PENELOPE leans in)

PENELOPE

Oh, Mother! Marry him? Do you think that's what he intends to ask me? Oh, if only that could be true...

(MUSIC 4.1A: SNIDE as he appears in window; he sprays mouthwash in his mouth and disappears from window; then he knocks on the door)

PENELOPE (looking out window)

Oh dear, it's that slippery Sylvester Snide. I wonder what he wants.

(PENELOPE opens door; snow blows in; SNIDE ENTERS; MUSIC 4.2A; He carries a bouquet of flowers)

SNIDE (after acknowledging boos from the audience)

Ah, my dearest Penelope. How lovely you are this beautiful morning.

PENELOPE

It's ten degrees outside and it's not even Hallowe'en yet.

SNIDE

Yes, but wherever YOU are it is the first day of spring.
(hands her bouquet)

Here, you are, my dear. A small token of my esteem and affection for you. I know they are pale in comparison to your shining beauty.

(he takes her hand and starts to kiss it; she pulls it away)

PENELOPE

Where did you find fresh flowers on a day like this?

SNIDE (dangling an "In Memoriam" ribbon behind his back)

I have my ways.

PENELOPE

Well, they are very pretty. Thank you.

SNIDE

Not at all. Not at all. When we finally marry, I will see that you have fresh flowers every day.

PENELOPE

Marry? You?

SNIDE

I know, I know. The idea will take some getting used to. But it's just a matter of time.

(MUSIC 5: I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR)

SNIDE

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR
I KNOW THAT YOU'LL AGREE
THAT SOMEONE JUST LIKE ME COULD SATISFY YOU
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR
IT'S CLEAR AS CLEAR CAN BE
THAT SOMEONE JUST LIKE ME COULD GRATIFY YOU
I'M HANDSOME AND INTELLIGENT
A PERFECT COMBINATION
I CAUSE A GREAT SENSATION'
JUST BY WALKING IN THE DOOR
ACCEPT NO IMITATION
FOR IN MY ESTIMATION
I FIND THAT I'M JUST TOO GOOD TO IGNORE

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR
AND ANYONE CAN SEE
THAT ONLY SOMEONE JUST LIKE ME WILL DO
AND SO IN ALL HUMILITY
I HEREBY GUARANTEE

THE ONE THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IS ME

PENELOPE (spoken; music continues)

Why do want to marry me?

SNIDE

Why, because you are so sweet, so lovely --- so naïve. Why, I think of you the first thing in the morning and the last thing every night.

(MOTHER rings bell; PENELOPE leans in)

SNIDE

What did she say?

PENELOPE

“In a pig’s eye.”

(SNIDE pulls PENELOPE to him)

SNIDE (singing)

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR
AND ANYONE CAN SEE
THAT ONLY SOMEONE JUST LIKE ME WILL DO
AND SO IN ALL HUMILITY
I HEREBY GUARANTEE
THE ONE THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IS ME
THE ONE THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IS - - -
ME!

(END song with freeze: SNIDE leaning in to kiss PENELOPE while she turns her head and puts her hand up to stop him; following applause (which SNIDE acknowledges), MOTHER rings bell, motions for SNIDE to approach)

SNIDE (approaches her and leans in to kiss her hand)

And how are you this lovely day, Mrs. Parker?

(MOTHER tweaks his nose; he careens across the stage)

Feeling chipper, I see.

(SNIDE sits at table, rubbing his nose; MOTHER motions for PENELOPE; she leans in to listen then turns back to SNIDE)

PENELOPE

All right, Mother. If you'll excuse me for a moment, Mr. Snide, my mother says she wants to take a short nap. Until you're gone.

SNIDE

Of course, my dear.

(PENELOPE EXITS with MOTHER; SNIDE takes a piece of paper from his pocket, looks at it and walks around the room, stopping at various points, nodding and moving elsewhere. He suddenly sees the letter from Jason Juniper on MOTHER's table and picks it up and begins reading it)

SNIDE

Benjamin Parker. He was never much good for anything. I wonder what he had that was worth leaving someone in his will. On the other hand, THIS property is worth a fortune!

(There is a knock on the door. SNIDE puts letter down on table and goes to answer the door. A hand reaches in and hands SNIDE another letter)

SNIDE

Special delivery, eh? Of course I will give it to her. Thank you, Homer.

(he slams the door and looks at letter in his hand)

Special delivery.

(he looks around to be sure no one is watching; opens envelope and quickly reads it)

Gadzooks!

(he picks up pen and hastily adds something to bottom of letter)

That should fix of it.

(SNIDE stuffs letter back into envelope and sits down, whistling to himself.
PENELOPE ENTER; MUSIC 5.1B)

PENELOPE

Oh, you're still here.

SNIDE

Forever and ever, my dear.

PENELOPE

Now, look, Mr. Snide, I don't want to offend you or anything, but about us getting married --- the fact is, my heart belongs to another.

SNIDE

Say it isn't so!

PENELOPE

Yes, it is. I am waiting for my hero.

SNIDE

You mean --- Nelson Noble? Why, that bumbling buffoon doesn't even deserve the right to call himself a man.

PENELOPE

Such talk, Mr. Snide!

SNIDE

I am sorry, my beloved. I cannot help but wear the face of sorrow when I think of how you cannot be mine just because of Nelson Noble.

PENELOPE

That's not the only reason.

SNIDE

It's not?

PENELOPE

No. To be perfectly frank, Mr. Snide, I find you repulsive.

SNIDE

Oh.

PENELOPE

Is that more mail?

SNIDE

Oh, yes. A special delivery letter came.

(holds up torn envelope)

It is a shame how the Post Office treats mail these days.

(PENELOPE reaches for the envelope but SNIDE holds it up high so she can't reach it)

PENELOPE

It's Uncle Benjamin's will. Give it to me.

SNIDE (still holding letter up)

Benjamin. I knew a Benjamin in Florida once. Alligator wrestler.

PENELOPE

That couldn't have been my uncle.

SNIDE

Perhaps not. I saved his life, you know.

PENELOPE

You saved someone's life?

SNIDE

An alligator had gotten hold of his leg when I happened by. I rushed right over and, using every ounce of muscle in my body, I held those mighty jaws open and Benjamin pulled himself to freedom.

PENELOPE

You must have been a lot stronger when you were young.

SNIDE (hands on his hips)

What do mean? I'm fit as a fiddle!

PENELOPE (grabs letter from SNIDE; reads it)

Mmm hmmm. Mmm Hmm. MMM HMM!

SNIDE

Good news?

PENELOPE

It's my Uncle Benjamin's estate. 200 acres of beachfront property in Miami, Florida!

SNIDE

All that sand. Can't grow anything on it.

PENELOPE

You can grow MONEY on it! That land has to be worth millions. Mama! Mama!

(PENELOPE EXITS; MOTHER makes a strange sound offstage; PENELOPE ENTERS pushing MOTHER in her wheelchair; MUSIC 5.2B: MOTHER has letter covering her face)

PENELOPE

See, Mother. Uncle Benjamin DID invest his money well. We're going to be rich! RICH!

(MUSIC 6: PENELOPE DANCES around the room; MOTHER suddenly groans and drops the letter. PENELOPE picks it up)

PENELOPE

What is it, Mother?

(MOTHER points to letter)
Yes, yes. I read it
(MOTHER forcefully points at letter, indicating the bottom)
The bottom? “The land is left to my sister and her daughter ONLY if and when Penelope marries Sylvester Snide.” What?

SNIDE

Oh, my goodness.
(takes the letter)
Must have been the same Benjamin after all.

PENELOPE

Well, it won't work. I will not marry you. I love Nelson Noble! A woman must marry for LOVE, not GAIN!

(MUSIC 6.1C)

SNIDE

I couldn't agree with you more.
(looks at letter)
Still, it would be a shame if your poor old mother died from the cold of our Minnesota winters!

(MUSIC 7: THREAT)

PENELOPE

No, no! Stop!

SNIDE

On the other hand, I wouldn't want it to be said that I was the cause of your mother's demise. I am willing to marry you to protect you from the horrible guilt you would feel.

PENELOPE

Let me see that will again!
(she looks at it)

SNIDE

It will be a sacrifice for us both. But your mother's health must be paramount.

PENELOPE

There must be something I can do.

SNIDE

The law is very specific on this point. The dearly departed's last will and testament must be honored. Alas, in order to provide for your mother in her final days, you must marry me.

PENELOPE

I must think!

SNIDE

The choice is yours.

PENELOPE

All right. I'll do it...

SNIDE (embracing her)

Oh, my darling.

PENELOPE (pushing him away)

I said I would marry you. I didn't say I would hug and kiss you!

(NELSON crosses by the window and knocks on the door. PENELOPE runs to the door and opens it. MUSIC 7.1C. He signals to audience for his cheer, then ENTERS)

NELSON

Penelope! My own dear sweetheart.

(starts to give her a hug but notices SNIDE; he shakes her hand instead)

How have you been?

PENELOPE

Just fine, thank you. I believe you know Sylvester Snide...

NELSON (darkly)

Of course. Morning, Mr. Snide. Nice weather we're having.

SNIDE

It's 10 degrees out and it's not even Hallowe'en yet.

NELSON

Yes.

SNIDE

Tell me. Mr. Noble, have you caught any more litterers recently? That is your job, isn't it?

NELSON

It is against the law to pick wildflowers inside the forest's boundaries, Mr. Snide. If the fine you had to pay for your – indiscretion --- inconvenienced you, I am sorry. But the law is the law.

PENELOPE

Nelson, I must speak with you.

NOBLE

And I with you.

PENELOPE

You will excuse us, Mr. Snide?

SNIDE (crossing DR)

Of course.

NELSON

Penelope, I wrote to you and told you how I think of you always...

PENELOPE

Yes. You are in my mind --- and my heart --- all the time as well.

NELSON

Then it will come as no surprise to you that I am in love with you and am asking ---
(he kneels)

I am asking you to be my bride. I know that I am not worthy and a forest ranger doesn't make a lot of money, but it is honest work and I promise to take care of you always.

PENELOPE (kneeling)

Oh, Nelson!

NELSON

Penelope, will you marry me?

PENELOPE

Oh, Nelson! No.

NELSON

You have made me the happiest --- No? You said no?

PENELOPE (standing)

Oh, Nelson, I cannot marry you.

NELSON

Why not? Does your mother disapprove of me?

PENELOPE

No. I can't marry you because --- because I am engaged to --- to Sylvester Snide.

(MUSIC 7.2A)

NELSON (standing)

Snide? You love him more than I?

PENELOPE

Of course not. It's --- Here, read this.

(she hands him the will, he wanders upstage to read it)

SNIDE

Penelope, my dear, I think we should marry right away. I'll go get the minister.

(heads for the door)

PENELOPE

NO!

SNIDE

Why not?

PENELOPE

Well --- It seems so sudden.

SNIDE

The sooner we are married, the sooner your mother can claim her inheritance and move to Florida.

PENELOPE

Oh. Well, then. I guess it's all right.

SNIDE

Then I shall be back posthaste with the reverend.

(starts toward door)

NELSON

I don't think that will be necessary, Mr. Snide.

SNIDE

I beg your pardon, but this is really no concern of yours.

NELSON

Villains and fraud are the concern of every man who loves his country and values the rights of free men.

(signal for audience to applaud)

SNIDE (pause)

I'm leaving. And I trust, Penelope, that you will see that this walking bumper sticker is gone by the time I return.

NELSON

Hold, villain!

(MUSIC 8: OMINOUS CHORD 1: note: each of the 7 “Ominous Chords” is ½ step higher than the previous one)

SNIDE

What is it?

NELSON (handing PENELOPE the will)

Penelope, please look at the will.

PENELOPE (taking the will)

The will? What about it?

NELSON

Notice that it written by hand. And in black ink.

(MUSIC 8: OMINOUS CHORD 2)

PENELOPE

Yes...

NELSON

Notice also that the sentence at the bottom --- the one referring to Mr. Snide --- is written in BLUE ink.

(MUSIC 8: OMINOUS CHORD 3)

PENELOPE

You're right.

SNIDE

So he changed pens. So what?

NELSON

Notice also, dear Penelope, that the letters in blue ink slant to the right. Those in the rest of the text slant to the left. Your uncle was left-handed, but the last sentence was written by a right-handed person.

(MUSIC 8: OMINOUS CHORD 4)

PENELOPE (not getting it)

Yes...

SNIDE

He must have DICTATED the last sentence. Just before he died.

NELSON

Notice also, dear Penelope, that the ink is still wet!

(MUSIC 8: OMINOUS CHORD 5)

PENELOPE

But what does that mean?

NELSON

It means that someone has tampered with the will!

(MUSIC 8: OMINOUS CHORD 6)

PENELOPE

But whom?

NELSON

None other than --- Sylvester Snide!

(MUSIC 8: OMINOUS CHORD 7)

SNIDE (pause, glance toward audience)

Curses!

PENELOPE

Then I don't have to marry him?

NELSON

No!

PENELOPE

Hooray!

(NELSON and PENELOPE signal for audience response)

NELSON

Now, Mr. Snide, I suggest you get out of here while you can. I am in control of my temper momentarily, but I may explode at any second.

SNIDE

I'll get you for this, Noble!

NELSON (starting to fume)

Out, Snide!

(SNIDE EXITS, stopping to briefly look through the window from the outside)
PENELOPE (running to NELSON)

Oh, my hero!

NELSON (kneeling)

Dear Penelope, with Sylvester Snide no longer your prospective groom, will you marry me?

PENELOPE (kneeling)

Oh, Nelson!

(standing)

This is all so sudden.

NELSON

Sudden?

PENELOPE

A girl needs time to think about these things. Getting married is a big decision, you know.

NELSON (standing)

Well, then, I will leave now and return tomorrow for your answer. Can you decide by then? I must be back to work the next day.

PENELOPE

I will try, dear Nelson.

(escorting him to door, they shake hands good-bye)

Adieu.

(NELSON EXITS, pausing at window to salute)

PENELOPE (crosses to MOTHER)

What do you think? Should I marry him?

(leans in)

Yes, I know that's all I've been talking about. But hoping for something is not the same as having it happen.

(leans in)

Yes, Mama. It is getting late. I'll go prepare your bed.

(PENELOPE EXIT. MOTHER makes a "crazy" gesture. SNIDE peeks through window: MUSIC 8.1A; PENELOPE returns: MUSIC 8.2B; SNIDE disappears from window)

PENELOPE

All ready, Mother.

(PENELOPE EXITS with MOTHER. SNIDE ENTERS; MUSIC 8.3A; he signals audience response. He carries a few flowers and a note which he places on the table)

SNIDE

So they think they have finished with me, do they? They will soon learn that the word "quitter" is not in the Snide family vocabulary.

(Before he leaves he turns on the crystal set which whistles and crackles; MUSIC 9: WINTER MUSIC: END OF SCENE)

VOICE ON RADIO

Storm approaching . . . blizzard . . . danger . . .

(BLACKOUT/CURTAIN/LIGHTS UP ON APRON FOR OLIO)

[OLIO: NOTE: In the original production, NELSON led the audience in singing 'The Man On The Flying Trapeze'. It could be a number by the barbershop quartet; something that has nothing to do with the show.]

(After OLIO, BLACKOUT)

ACT ONE / SCENE TWO; THE CABIN, A LITTLE LATER

(MUSIC 10: YOU YOU YOU [SOFT INSTRUMENTAL])

RADIO VOICE ON TAPE

As you will recall, sweet Penelope narrowly escaped marrying the evil, villainous and sinister Sylvester Snide, thanks to Nelson Noble. When Nelson asked her to marry him, she promised to give him her answer tomorrow, which is today. After Penelope and her mother went to bed, the evil, villainous, sinister Sylvester Snide returned, leaving a mysterious present on the table. Will Penelope marry Nelson Noble? Will Mother ever speak? And what of the approaching blizzard?

(LIGHTS UP; radio is crackling. PENELOPE ENTERS with MOTHER; MUSIC 10.1B; PENELOPE hears radio and turns it off; leaves MOTHER in same place she was in SCENE 1)

PENELOPE

I guess I must have left this on last night.

(turns and sees flowers and note)

Oh, my. What's this?

(smells flowers, then puts them in a vase; picks up note and reads)

"My dear Penelope, I know now why you put me off last night. A poor forest ranger cannot expect to make someone like you happy. I understand, and so I am leaving. Where I will go, I know not. But I will always think of you. I hope Sylvester Snide makes you very happy. Affectionately, NN."

(pause, think)

NN? Nelson Noble! Oh, Nelson!

(gives note to MOTHER)

Did you hear, Mother? I must go find him!

(PENELOPE gets her hat and coat, goes to door and leaves. MOTHER rings bell. PENELOPE returns, MOTHER points to stove and shivers)

PENELOPE

All right, Mama. I'll put some coal in the stove before I go.

(She does so, then starts for the door again; MOTHER rings bell, points to scarf hanging on wall)

PENELOPE

Yes, Mother. I'll get my scarf. Now, I really have to go. My happiness depends on it.

(PENELOPE puts on scarf and heads to door; SNIDE appears in window, then knocks on door)

PENELOPE

It's Nelson!

(PENELOPE rushes to door, opens it (MUSIC 10.2C/A part 1) without looking; she turns and hugs SNIDE; (MUSIC 10.2C/A part 2); PENELOPE suddenly realizes her mistake and lets go)

SNIDE

Well, I didn't expect such an enthusiastic greeting.

PENELOPE (pulling away)

Sorry. I thought you were Nelson.

SNIDE

That wimp?

PENELOPE

He is not a wimp.

SNIDE

What you need is a real man to take care of you. Like me.

(MUSIC 11: I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, REPRISE)

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR
AND ANYONE CAN SEE
THAT ONLY SOMEONE JUST LIKE ME WILL DO
AND SO IN ALL HUMILITY
I HEREBY GUARANTEE

THE ONE THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IS ME

SNIDE (reaching for her hand)
Come, now, my dear. The two of us could be very happy together.

PENELOPE
No, no. A thousand times no!

(MUSIC stops suddenly)

SNIDE
Then I shall ask you a thousand and ONE times.

PENELOPE
The answer would still be no if you asked me TWO thousand times.

SNIDE
Then I shall ask two thousand and one times.

PENELOPE
I must leave now. I must stop Nelson before he runs off.

SNIDE
Runs off? Where is he going? Is he joining the circus?

PENELOPE (hands him note)
Here. If you must know, read this. Good bye.

(PENELOPE starts toward door. MOTHER rings bell)

PENELOPE
Now what?
(cross to MOTHER, lean in)
Mr. Snide.

SNIDE
Sylvester. My first name is Sylvester. I'd like you to call me that.

PENELOPE
Mr. Snide. My mother says she would feel more comfortable if you would leave.

SNIDE
Did she say that?

PENELOPE

Well, those weren't her EXACT words.

SNIDE

I am insulted.

PENELOPE

Please, Mr. Snide. Just go.

SNIDE

Very well. And good luck finding Nelson Nobody.

(SNIDE EXITS; he stops at window, looks in and turns back)

PENELOPE

Now, I have to go. Mother. I'll be back as soon as I can.

(PENELOPE EXITS. When she gets to the window, SNIDE appears behind her. He puts a bag over her head and leads her off. He returns in a few seconds and ENTERS through the door. MUSIC 11.1A; He waits for the audience response and laughs sardonically)

SNIDE (approaching MOTHER)

Ah, Mrs. Parker. I just didn't feel right leaving you all alone. Not now. Not with a blizzard coming this way.

(MOTHER reacts to this news)

You didn't know? But don't worry, Mrs. Parker. I have made sure that Penelope is safe and warm, at least for now. You know, you look a bit tired. You could use some nice warm tea.

(MUSIC 12: SNIDE DRUGS MRS. PARKER; cross to stove to get pot, back to table to pour it into a cup; slips a "mickey" into cup)

Here we go. Nothing like a nice warm cup of tea.

(offer to her; she waves it away)

Oh, my dear. You simply MUST have some tea. There's nothing like it to relax the body.

(force her to drink; take cup back to table)

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8. That should do it.

(MOTHER throws arm into air then down beside the wheelchair)

You'll sleep VERY comfortable now. At least for a few hours.

(MUSIC ENDS; SNIDE wheels MOTHER OFF and returns; MUSIC 12.1A)

Now, to wait for Nelson Noguts.

(sit at table)

Once HE is out of the picture, I will wed Penelope and share in her inheritance.

(take out Miami travel brochures from pocket and look at them)

(NELSON appears at window, knocks on door)

NELSON (off, knocking on door)

Penelope! Penelope?

SNIDE (mimicking PENELOPE's voice)

Come in.

NELSON (ENTER and look around; MUSIC 12.2C)

Penelope?

SNIDE (putting Miami brochure on SL table)

I'm afraid you have come at a bad time, Noble. Penelope just went out for a walk.

NELSON

A walk? But there are three feet of snow on the ground. It's ten degrees out and it isn't even Hallowe'en yet. Not to mention there's a blizzard on the way.

SNIDE

Sit down, Noble. Let me get you a cup of tea.

NELSON

No thank you. Where is Penelope?

SNIDE

I told you. She went out for a walk.

NELSON

I must find her before the blizzard hits. Which way did she go?

SNIDE

North, I believe.

NELSON

No! The blizzard is coming from the north.

SNIDE (sipping tea)

Oh, dear. I hope she will be all right.

NELSON

She may be trapped in the storm already.

SNIDE

You're right. She may be blinded by the swirling snow, trapped under a snowdrift, felled by a falling tree.

NELSON

I must go find her.

SNIDE

Of course you must, Noble. It's in your genes.

NELSON (looking at his pants)

In my genes?

SNIDE

You must go out and find Penelope because you are a natural born hero.

NELSON

A hero?

SNIDE

If you see a bird's egg on the ground, what do you do?

NELSON

I try to find the nest and put it back.

SNIDE

And if you see a child pulling a cat's tail, what do you do?

NELSON

I rescue the cat and explain to the child that it is not a nice thing to do.

SNIDE

And if you see a child crying because she dropped her ice cream cone?

NELSON

I buy her another.

SNIDE

Why?

NELSON

Because --- because I have to. It's the decent thing to do.

SNIDE

You see? You have no choice!

(MUSIC 13: YOU, YOU, YOU)

SNIDE (spoken over music)

Some of us make choices and choose what we will do
We have the power to make our own decisions
And if we err as is the case a fleeting time or two
We learn and in the future make revisions
But others only ever do what comes as a reaction
It seems that such behavior is genetic
What some may call heroic holds for me no great attraction
I think the whole thing sad, morose, pathetic.

YOU, YOU, YOU
YOU'RE IN A RUT AND GET OUT
THERE ISN'T ANY DOUBT
THAT YOUR LIFE IS NOT YOUR OWN

YOU, YOU, YOU
YOU'RE IN A HOLE AND CAN'T GET OUT
YOU HAVEN'T ANY CLOUT
BECAUSE YOU'RE IN IT ALL ALONE

YOU HEAR THE MASSES CHEER YOU FOR AN HOUR OR A DAY
BUT NOT A SINGLE ONE WOULD TAKE YOUR PLACE
YOU MAY THINK THAT THEY REVERE YOU
BUT IT'S JUST A GAME THEY PLAY
THERE'S NO ONE THERE TO CATCH YOU
WHEN YOU FINALLY FALL FROM GRACE

YOU, YOU, YOU
IF YOU MAKE A DUMB MISTAKE
THEY WILL SAY THAT YOU'RE A FAKE
YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE
FOR THEY HAVEN'T ANY CLUE
THAT YOU DO THE THINGS YOU DO
BECAUSE YOU'RE
YOU, YOU, YOU

(SNIDE and NELSON do brief challenge dance break; NELSON starts toward door; SNIDE stops him)

YOU, YOU, YOU
IF YOU MAKE A DUMB MISTAKE
THEY WILL SAY THAT YOU'RE A FAKE
YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE
FOR THEY HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE
THAT YOU DO THE THINGS YOU DO
BECAUSE YOU'RE YOU, YOU, YOU
BECAUSE YOU'RE
YOU, YOU, YOU

NELSON

Now, I must find Penelope.

SNIDE

Good luck, Mr. Noble.

(open door for him; NELSON EXITS)

A natural-born...

(close door)

...stupid, naïve, babe-in-the-woods hero.

(turn on radio]

VOICE ON RADIO (with static)

Blizzard ... growing stronger now ... every second ... wind chills to 75 below ... and it's not even Hallowe'en yet.

(SNIDE turns off radio)

SNIDE (mimicking PENELOPE)

Oh, poor Nelson Nobrain.

(regular voice)

Well, it's time to rescue Penelope.

(SNIDE EXITS, returns with PENELOPE who still has a bag over her head; he takes bag off her head MUSIC 13.1A/B)

SNIDE

Goodness, Penelope. It was fortunate that I came along. What happened to you?

PENELOPE

I don't know. I had just left when someone came up behind me and put a bag over my head. Then they tied me up and left me in the barn.

SNIDE

Why would someone do such a thing?

PENELOPE

I don't know.

SNIDE

Well, it wasn't very nice of them, was it?

PENELOPE

Downright mean and nasty.

SNIDE

Have a cup of tea. To warm you up.

PENELOPE (sipping tea)

Thank you. Perhaps I was wrong about you.

SNIDE

Wrong?

PENELOPE

You saved me.

SNIDE

Yes. I suppose I did. More tea?

PENELOPE

No. No thank you --- Sylvester.

SNIDE

What did you call me?

PENELOPE

Sylvester. That is your name, isn't it?

SNIDE (pleased)

Yes. Yes, it is.

PENELOPE (stand, look out window)

Looks like another snowstorm is coming.

(She turns on the radio)

VOICE ON RADIO

... blizzard...upon us now...stay indoors...

(SNIDE turns radio off)

PENELOPE

A blizzard! I hope Nelson is all right.

SNIDE

I'm sure he's just fine.

(PENELOPE turns radio on)

VOICE ON RADIO

... temperatures falling ... this just in... anyone knowing whereabouts of Penelope Parker...

(SNIDE turns radio off)

PENELOPE

Penelope Parker! Why, that's me.

(PENELOPE turns radio on; SNIDE turns it off; PENELOPE turns it on; SNIDE turns it off and holds the knob)

PENELOPE

What's going on?

SNIDE

Going on?

PENELOPE

Why are they looking for me?

(PENELOPE pushes SNIDE away and turns radio on)

VOICE ON RADIO

... Penelope Parker ... Nelson Noble looking for her ...

(PENELOPE turns radio off)

PENELOPE

Why is he looking for me?

SNIDE

Why is he looking for you?

PENELOPE

I thought he was leaving.

SNIDE

Maybe he changed his mind.

(MOTHER makes noise off left)

PENELOPE

What was that? Mother?

(PENELOPE EXIT LEFT)

SNIDE

Curses! She wasn't supposed to wake up for another hour. Perhaps I should make a hasty retreat.

(SNIDE starts for the door; NELSON passes the window, then knocks on the door)

SNIDE

Hasty retreat blocked.

(SNIDE looks around room, jumps under the table; PENELOPE ENTER with MOTHER; MUSIC 13.2B part 1)

NELSON (knocking at door)

Penelope!

(PENELOPE runs to door and opens it; MUSIC 13.2C part 2)

PENELOPE

Nelson!

NELSON (ENTER)

Penelope!

PENELOPE

Nelson!

NELSON

Penelope!

Nelson PENELOPE

Penelope! NELSON

Nelson! PENELOPE

(MOTHER rings bell; PENELOPE and NELSON look at her)

NELSON (to PENELOPE)
I thought you were lost in the blizzard!

Penelope PENELOPE
I thought you were leaving me.

Nelson NELSON
Leaving you?

Penelope PENELOPE
Yes. The flowers. The note.

Nelson NELSON
What are you talking about?

Penelope PENELOPE (cross to table; give NELSON note)
Here.

Nelson NELSON (sitting at table; looks at note)
I didn't write this.

Penelope PENELOPE
You didn't?

Nelson NELSON
No. And where would I find flowers this time of year in the wilds of Minnesota?

Penelope PENELOPE
I don't know. But Sylvester Snide always seems to be able to find them somewhere...

Nelson NELSON (bangs his hand on table; SNIDE reacts)
Snide! HE must have written this note.

(bang table again)
To make you think I was leaving.

PENELOPE (bangs table; SNIDE reacts)
He KNEW I'd go after you. And when I did ...
(bang table)
...he tied me up and left me in the barn!

NELSON
Then when I came by, he told me that you had gone out in the blizzard to look for me.
(bang on table)
He KNEW I would go after you!

PENELOPE
He hoped you would get lost in the storm.

NELSON
So he could marry you himself!

PENELOPE (bang on table; SNIDE reacts)
The scoundrel!

(MUSIC 14: SYLVESTER SNIDE)

NELSON
THE SCOUNDREL, THE VILLAIN, NEFARIOUS KNAVE
HAS EVER THE WORLD SEEN A MAN SO DEPRAVED?

PENELOPE
CONTEMPTIBLE, CRIMINAL, OUT ON THE PROWL
REPUGNANT, REVOLTING, DISGRACEFULLY FOUL

BOTH
HAS EVER THERE BEEN A VILLAIN SO VILE
AS SYLVESTER SNIDE WITH THE SCURRILOUS SMILE
DISHONEST, DESTRUCTIVE AND SO INSINCERE
THE DEVIL HIMSELF NEVER HAD SUCH A SNEER

SNIDE, SNIDE, SYLVESTER SNIDE
IF HE SWEARS THAT IT'S TRUE THEN YOU KNOW THAT HE LIED
THAT SINISTER, CYNICAL SYLVESTER SNIDE

NELSON
DESPICABLY LOATHSOME, IGNOBLE AND MEAN
THE LOWEST OF LOWLIFES THE WORLD'S EVER SEEN

PENELOPE
DISGUSTING AND HORRID, A BLACKGUARD, A BRUTE
THERE NEVER HAS BEEN SO CORRUPT A GALOOT

BOTH
HAS EVER THERE BEEN A VILLAIN SO VILE
AS SYLVESTER SNIDE WITH THE SCURRILOUS SMILE
DISHONEST, DESTRUCTIVE AND SO INSINCERE
THE DEVIL HIMSELF NEVER HAD SUCH A SNEER

SNIDE (comes out from under table)
SNIDE, SNIDE, SYLVESTER SNIDE
IF HE SWEARS THAT IT'S TRUE THEN YOU KNOW THAT HE LIED

ALL
HAS EVER THERE BEEN A VILLAIN SO VILE
AS SYLVESTER SNIDE WITH THE SCURRILOUS SMILE

SNIDE
DISHONEST, DESTRUCTIVE AND SO INSINCERE
THE DEVIL HIMSELF NEVER HAD SUCH A SNEER

ALL
SNIDE, SNIDE, SYLVESTER SNIDE
IF HE SWEARS THAT IT'S TRUE THEN YOU KNOW THAT HE LIED

PENELOPE
THAT SINISTER CYNICAL

NELSON
CALLOUSLY CLINICAL

SNIDE
AWFUL THICK-SKINNICAL SYLVESTER SNIDE!

ALL
SNIDE, SNIDE, SYLVESTER SNIDE
IF HE SWEARS THAT IT'S TRUE
THEN YOU KNOW --- HE LIED!

(At end of song, SNIDE stands between NELSON and PENELOPE; they are facing him)

NELSON

So! Now we have you!

SNIDE

You have me? You have me?

(SNIDE grabs PENELOPE and holds her in front of him as he backs up left, toward MOTHER)

SNIDE

I have Penelope!

(MOTHER jabs him with a knitting needle. SNIDE jumps, letting go of PENELOPE who runs DR; NELSON and SNIDE face each other; SNIDE starts backing away from NELSON. MUSIC 15: CHASE MUSIC continues under. During chase, SNIDE goes out door and closes it; NELSON follows. PENELOPE crosses to door and closes it)

PENELOPE (shaking her head)

Men!

(SNIDE ENTER DR; PENELOPE is startled and runs US)

SNIDE (to audience)

Back door.

(SNIDE EXIT L; NELSON ENTER through door)

PENELOPE (pointing DR)

The back door! The back door!

(NELSON EXIT DR; PENELOPE EXIT through door; SNIDE ENTER left, follows PENELOPE out door; PENELOPE ENTER DL as NELSON ENTERS through door; they both EXIT DR; SNIDE ENTERS through door and looks around. NELSON and PENELOPE ad lib offstage; SNIDE hides under the table; PENELOPE ENTER DR; NELSON ENTER DL; CHASE MUSIC STOPS)

NELSON

Where did he go?

(MOTHER rings bell and points to table; PENELOPE and NELSON go on opposite sides of table and look under it. SNIDE sneers and comes out sheepishly)

SNIDE (suddenly pointing toward MOTHER)

Mrs. Parker! Look out!

(PENELOPE and NELSON run to MOTHER; SNIDE runs out the door. NELSON starts after him)

PENELOPE

Wait!

NELSON

What?

PENELOPE

Let him go!

NELSON

Let him go?

PENELOPE

He did me no real injury. Besides, the blizzard... The wind is really starting to blow now ...and look!

(She points to window as SNIDE is being blown past by the ferocious winds;
MUSIC 16: SNIDE BLOWS AWAY)

SNIDE

Heeeeelp!!!

NELSON (starting to the door)

Poor Snide.

PENELOPE

Where are you going?

NELSON

To help Snide, of course.

PENELOPE

Why?

NELSON

Because --- because --- because I MUST! I cannot stand by and watch a man suffer. Not even one so base and vile as Sylvester Snide.

PENELOPE

But Nelson. The wind. The snow. The bitter cold.

NELSON (his hand on the door knob)

Perhaps you're right. It's one thing to be helpful. It's quite another to be stupid.

PENELOPE (runs to him)

My hero!

(MUSIC 16.1C; They embrace; MOTHER takes a Miami brochure and looks at it; LIGHTS start to DIM)

NELSON (to lighting technician)

Wait! Lights up!

(LIGHTS UP)

NELSON

Now, Penelope, my dear Penelope. Will you marry me?

PENELOPE

I thought you would never ask.

(MUSIC 17: END ACT 1; PENELOPE and NELSON start to kiss; BLACKOUT)

--- END ACT ONE ---

ACT 2: Scene 1 SAME SET AS ACT 1

(MUSIC 18: WINTER MUSIC; LIGHTS come up slowly during the intro; no one is on stage)

OFFSTAGE VOICE (under music)

You will recall that in the first act, the sinister Sylvester Snide tried to trick our hero, Nelson Noble, by telling him that his dear sweet Penelope was lost in the blizzard. She was actually in the barn, where Snide had tied her up. Snide's plan backfired, however, and it was HE who fell

prey to nature's wrath. He was blown away in the blizzard. Nelson then proposed to Penelope and to no one's surprise, she accepted. It is now a few days later. It is still cold. Ten degrees outside and it isn't even Hallowe'en.

\ (LIGHTS are full; PENELOPE ENTER with MOTHER MUSIC 18.1B)

PENELOPE

Oh, Mother. Today is the day. Nelson and I will become Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Noble. Then, as soon as the weather breaks, the three of us will head for Miami. Nelson will be here any moment now.

(NELSON appears at window, then knocks; MUSIC 18.2C] as door opens)

PENELOPE (opening door)

Nelson!

NELSON

Penelope!

PENELOPE

Nelson!

NELSON

Penelope!

PENELOPE

Nelson!

(MOTHER rings her bell)

PENELOPE

Oh, Nelson, you have made me the happiest girl in Minnesota.

NELSON

And I am now the happiest forest ranger that ever lived. And yet...

PENELOPE

And yet, what?

NELSON

And yet I can't help feeling badly for Sylvester Snide. Perhaps under that façade of bluster and bragging, there breathed a real human being. Perhaps buried beneath his evil bearing is --- was - -- a warm caring individual.

PENELOPE

No. He was a real slimeball.

(Knock on the door)

NELSON

That must be the minister. My dear Penelope, are you sure you want to marry me?

PENELOPE

Oh, Nelson, I have never been so sure of anything in my whole life. Except maybe when I was five years old and wanted a tricycle of my own.

(Knock on the door)

PENELOPE

Are you sure?

NELSON

As sure as I was when I took my solemn oath as a forest ranger!

(Slightly louder knock on the door]

NELSON (holding up his hand)

To do my best to protect all of nature's flora and fauna from those who seek to destroy it. To be always vigilant. Always sincere, always...

(Very loud knock on the door)

PENELOPE (calls to the door)

Just a moment.

(She preens, checks her hair, smiles at NELSON and opens the door, revealing SNIDE; MUSIC 18.3A (part 1); she looks at him and closes the door)

PENELOPE

It's Snide.

(Louder knock on door. NELSON opens it; MUSIC 18.3A (part2); SNIDE ENTERS)

NELSON

Mr. Snide. But I thought you were in cold storage, so to speak.

SNIDE

Very funny. Actually being blown about by that blizzard was a very fortunate event for me.

PENELOPE

Why?

SNIDE

You see, the wind blew me to a small cabin about fifteen miles from here. I recognized it as the home of the dear old nurse who became my nanny as a boy. May she rest in peace. I took shelter inside and by a happy accident, found this letter.

PENELOPE

A letter?

SNIDE

Yes. Shall I read it?

NELSON

Actually, now is not a very good time for that. Come back in a few days.

SNIDE

I MUST read it to you.

NELSON (sits down)

Very well.

SNIDE

“To whom it may concern: Being near the end of my life, I must admit to a secret of the greatest consequence. Through a strange accident, I inadvertently switched two boys while they were only babies. Not knowing how to correct the error, they were raised with their parents each believing each was in reality the other. Thus Sylvester Snide was raised as Nelson Noble and Nelson Noble as Sylvester Snide.”

NOBLE (standing and grabbing the letter)

What?

PENELOPE (looks at SNIDE)

You mean that you are really Nelson Noble?

(looks at NOBLE)

And that you are actually Sylvester Snide?

SNIDE

Exactly.

PENELOPE

But that cannot be!

SNIDE

But it is.

PENELOPE

But I have promised to marry Nelson Noble.

SNIDE (bowing)

Just so.

(MUSIC 18.4C)

NELSON

But that means that I am not the warm and understanding Nelson Noble, but ---
(suddenly taking on the voice and mannerisms of SNIDE)
...the repulsive and sinister Sylvester Snide.

(MUSIC 18.5A)

PENELOPE

No!

SNIDE (speaking like NELSON)

I'm afraid so, my dear. And today you shall become my wife. You have made me very happy.

PENELOPE

And you have made me very confused.

NELSON (in SNIDE voice)

He's right, Penelope. I cannot allow you to marry me, the evil Sylvester Snide.

PENELOPE

But Nelson...

SNIDE

Yes?

PENELOPE (indicating NELSON)

No. THIS Nelson.

SNIDE (NELSON voice)

He is not Nelson Noble. I am Nelson Noble.

PENELOPE (to NELSON)

Then --- Sylvester...

NELSON

Yes?

PENELOPE

I will marry Sylvester Snide instead.

(SNIDE and NELSON continue using opposite voices)

SNIDE

No! A promise is a promise. You said you would marry Nelson Noble!

PENELOPE

But that was before I knew that YOU were Nelson and that he is Sylvester Snide.

SNIDE

You want to marry someone who has deceiv-ed you?

PENELOPE

Deceiv-ed me?

SNIDE

Did he ever tell you he was really Snide?

PENELOPE

No...

NELSON

I didn't know. I thought I was Nelson Noble.

SNIDE

Noble? You?

(laugh, then to PENELOPE)

Don't believe anything he says. He is a villain who only wants to marry you for your inheritance.

PENELOPE (to NELSON)

Is that true?

NELSON

If I am Snide, it MUST be true. I must only be interested in your wealth.

PENELOPE

Villain! I will keep my promise and marry Nelson Noble.

SNIDE

Good. The minister should be here at any moment.

(NELSON starts to leave)

SNIDE

No. Don't go. We will need a witness.

NELSON

Me? A witness at what should be my own wedding? I think not.

(to PENELOPE)

If you plan on marrying Nelson Noble, there is nothing for me to do but leave.

(to SNIDE)

But I swear, Noble, that I will be aven-ged! The Snides do not stand idly by while millions of dollars are stolen!

SNIDE

You threaten me?

NELSON

No, I do not threaten. I make a promise! And a Snide always keeps his promises.

SNIDE

Is that so?

NELSON

Yes, that is so.

PENELOPE

Stop!

(MUSIC 19: WHAT SHALL I DO?)

I am confused! I must listen to my heart. Shall I wed the one who NOW bears the name of Nelson Noble --- because of my promise? Or shall I marry the one who proved so honest and true even though he now bears the dreadful name of Sylvester Snide? Oh, dear!

PENELOPE

OH, MY, WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE

WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

NELSON

WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

PENELOPE

ALAS AND BOO HOO HOO
IT'S SO CONFUSING

SNIDE AND NELSON

CONFUSING

PENELOPE

FOR WHAT I THOUGHT I KNEW
MAY NOT BE EVEN SLIGHTLY TRUE
WHAT SHALL I DO?
WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE

WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

NELSON

WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

PENELOPE

WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE AND NELSON

WHAT SHALL SHE DO, SHE DO?

PENELOPE

I LISTEN TO MY HEART TO TELL ME
WHAT I OUGHT TO DO
BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE

SNIDE AND NELSON

OH, NO, SHE DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE

PENELOPE
THE SIMPLE LIFE I'VE DREAMED ABOUT
HAS VANISHED IN THE BLUE
WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE AND NELSON
WHAT SHALL SHE DO, SHE DO?

PENELOPE
MY FUTURE'S UP TO ME
I KNOW I MUST DECIDE
WHICH ONE IT'S GOING TO BE
BEFORE MY HEART AND MIND COLLIDE

OH, MY, WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE
WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

NELSON
WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

PENELOPE
ALAS AND BOO HOO HOO
IT'S SO CONFUSING

SNIDE AND NELSON
CONFUSING

PENELOPE
FOR WHAT I THOUGHT I KNEW
MAY NOT BE EVEN SLIGHTLY TRUE
WHAT SHALL I DO?
WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE
WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

NELSON
WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

PENELOPE
WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE AND NELSON
WHAT SHALL SHE DO, SHE DO?

PENELOPE
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH IT OUGHT TO BE
A SIMPLE LITTLE TASK
IF I HAD SOMEONE TO ASK

SNIDE AND NELSON
OH, IS THERE SOMEONE SHE CAN ASK?

(MOTHER raises her hands)

PENELOPE
A FORTUNE TELLER, ORACLE, A PSYCHIC OR A SEER
WHO COULD TELL ME WHAT TO DO, DO, DO
(to NELSON)
I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD ALWAYS BE MY ROMEO AND YET
I FIND THAT YOU ARE REALLY HE AND I'M HIS JULIET

OH, MY, WHAT SHALL I DO?

SNIDE
WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

NELSON
WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

PENELOPE
ALAS AND BOO HOO HOO
IT'S SO CONFUSING

SNIDE AND NELSON
CONFUSING

PENELOPE
FOR WHAT I THOUGHT I KNEW
MAY NOT BE EVEN SLIGHTLY TRUE
WHAT SHALL I DO?
WHAT SHALL I DO?

NELSON
WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

SNIDE

WHAT SHALL SHE DO?

PENELOPE

WHAT SHALL I DO?

NELSON AND SNIDE

WHAT SHALL SHE DO, SHE DO?

WHAT SHALL SHE DO, SHE DO?

PENELOPE

WHAT SHALL I DO, WHAT SHALL I DO?

(ALL POSE at end of song)

PENELOPE (to MOTHER)

Mother, help me. What shall I do?

(MOTHER hands her a coin)

PENELOPE

Oh, Mother. Decide my fate by the toss of a coin?

(gets ready to toss coin)

No, I couldn't do that.

(puts coin on table)

SNIDE (picks up coin, looks at it, smiles, puts in pocket and substitutes another one)

It seems to me a fair way to decide.

(hands her the substitute coin)

PENELOPE

Oh, very well. What am I saying?

SNIDE (takes coin, tosses it)

Heads!

(SNIDE tosses coin; it lands on the floor)

PENELOPE

It's heads.

SNIDE (grabbing PENELOPE)

Ah, my dear!

NELSON

Wait! Two out of three.

(NELSON tosses coin)

SNIDE

Heads

(PENELOPE looks at coin)

PENELOPE

It's heads.

SNIDE (grabbing PENELOPE; she pushes him away)

Ah, my dear!

NELSON (picking up coin and tossing it again)

Three out of five...

(he tosses it, picks it up)

SNIDE

Heads.

NOBLE (looks at coin)

Four out of seven...

(tosses coin)

SNIDE

Enough of this. It is clear that fate intended Penelope for me.

NELSON (reaching for coin on floor)

Wait! Let me see that coin.

SNIDE (stepping on NELSON'S hand)

So you can steal that from her? Really, Snide, haven't you done enough damage already?

(NELSON stands up and is about to speak. He stops, looks at PENELOPE and EXITS through door)

SNIDE

Together at last! Soon the minister will be here. No need to change your wedding plans just because there's been a change in grooms.

(takes her hand)

PENELOPE (pulls away)

I said I would marry you. I did not say I would hold your hand. I think it would be best to postpone the wedding for a day or two.

SNIDE

But my dear Penelope...

PENELOPE

Day after tomorrow. Now, if you'll excuse me, Mr. Snide --- I mean Nelson --- I must, I must...

(PENELOPE breaks down, cries and EXITS; MOTHER rings her bell;
PENELOPE returns; MUSIC 19.1B and EXITS with MOTHER)

SNIDE (tossing coin and catching it)

Day after tomorrow will do nicely. It will give me a chance to explore the cabin a bit more thoroughly. Heads.

(toss coin)

Heads again.

(toss coin)

Heads!

(laugh and EXIT)

(NELSON ENTER after SNIDE has gone; MUSIC 19.2C/A GOOF; NELSON glares at piano player; continue MUSIC 19.2C/A GOOF; NELSON smiles approvingly, then immediately changes attitude)

NELSON

Oh, what tricks fate plays on us. Yesterday I was a happy forest ranger and today a villainous snake in the grass.

(picks up letter and reads it)

How could his parents not have noticed that I was not their child? They must have suspected something.

(PENELOPE ENTER; MUSIC 19.3B)

PENELOPE

Oh, my! Mr. Snide.

NELSON

Ah, Penelope, I just came back to take another look at the letter. This revelation came rather --- unexpectedly.

PENELOPE

I must insist that you leave. I am betrothed to another.

NELSON

That scoundrel!

PENELOPE

It is YOU who are a scoundrel. Leading me on. Making me think you were someone you aren't.

NELSON

Perhaps I was wrong about you as well. Perhaps you are not who I thought you were either.

PENELOPE

What?

NELSON

What what?

PENELOPE

What do you mean by that?

NELSON

What do I mean by what?

PENELOPE

What do you mean by what you said?

NELSON

What do I mean by what I said?

PENELOPE

Yes.

NELSON (pause and think)

I don't know. Good bye!

(NELSON EXITS; PENELOPE to door and slam it shut. Looks ready to cry and EXITS LEFT; BLACKOUT. MUSIC 20: I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU; ENTER NELSON SR in SPOT; NOTE: no A or B or C music during song)

NELSON

I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU
I THOUGHT THAT YOU KNEW ME

I THOUGHT THAT WE WOULD ALWAYS BE TOGETHER
JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU
HOW WRONG A MAN CAN BE
WHEN IT COMES TO LOVE YOU NEVER REALLY KNOW

I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THE INSIGHT
I OUGHT TO BE RELIEVED
TO FIND THAT THINGS ARE NEVER QUITE
THE WAY THAT I BELIEVED
I SHOULD BE HAPPY AND ELATED
THAT THIS LITTLE TWIST OF FATE
HAS SO COMPLETELY ILLUSTRATED
HOW OUR LOVE'S DISINTEGRATED

I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU
I GUESS THE JOKE'S ON ME
I ONLY KNEW THE YOU YOU LET ME SEE

(DIM SR SPOT; PENELOPE ENTER SL IN SPOT)

PENELOPE

I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU
I THOUGHT THAT YOU KNEW ME
I THOUGHT THAT YOU AND I WOULD BE FOREVER
JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU
THERE IS NO GUARANTEE
WHEN IT COMES TO LOVE YOU NEVER REALLY KNOW

I KNOW I SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUSPICIOUS
BUT I HAD NO DOUBT OR FEAR
WHEN YOUR HEART IS FULL OF WISHES
WHAT IS TRUE IS SO UNCLEAR
I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE KEPT MY GUARD UP
SHOULD HAVE LOOKED BEFORE I LEAPED
BUT WHEN YOUR THOUGHTS ARE ON ROMANCE
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO TAKE A CHANCE
I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU
I GUESS THE JOKE'S ON ME
I ONLY KNEW THE YOU YOU LET ME SEE

(BOTH SPOTS UP)

BOTH

THE YOU YOU LET ME SEE WAS ALWAYS GENTLE
SO SENTIMENTAL AND SO SINCERE
THE YOU YOU LET ME SEE LET ME BELIEVE I COULD BELIEVE IN
THE YOU YOU LET ME SEE
SO MUCH FOR DESTINY

I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU
I GUESS THE JOKE'S ON ME
I ONLY KNEW THE YOU YOU LET ME SEE
I ONLY KNEW THE YOU YOU LET ME SEE

(SPOTS OUT; BLACKOUT; ENTER SNIDE through door carrying a lantern and a piece of a map; LIGHTS UP DIM; SNIDE is wearing a forest ranger hat; MUSIC 20.1C (SNIDE SHUSHES MUSIC) starts; SNIDE shushes piano player and he stops; LIGHTS REMAIN DIM as SNIDE walks around tapping on the floor and listening to the sound)

SNIDE

Now I can look around without fear of being bothered. Little do they know that this house was built over the entrance to the Lost Swede Gold Mine. And soon that mine will be my mine. Between the property in Florida and the gold mine, I will soon be stinking rich!

(MUSIC 21: END OF SCENE; SNIDE laughs sardonically; puts lantern on table and continues tapping on the floor as CURTAIN CLOSES)

ACT TWO OLIO; LIGHTS UP in front of curtain for OLIO; somewhat shorter than ACT One

(BLACKOUT after Olio)

ACT TWO / SCENE 2: The same cabin, a little later

(MUSIC 22: WINTER MUSIC under taped voice)

VOICE OFFSTAGE

You will recall that when we last saw Snide he was tapping on the floor, looking for the entrance to the Lost Swede Gold Mine. No, no! That was Nelson Noble, wasn't it? Snide, on the other hand, had left despondent over the loss of his true love to his rival Nelson Noble. No, it was Noble who left because Penelope had decided to marry Sylvester Snide. That is, Nelson Noble. He USED to be Sylvester but now he's Noble. And vice versa. At any rate it is now Penelope's wedding day

(LIGHTS UP; CURTAIN OPEN. The room is a mess. The table cloth lies on the floor, the table has been moved, the tea pot is on the floor, etc. SNIDE is in the middle of it all, still tapping on the floor. He stops, stands and crosses to table to look at the map)

SNIDE

It has to be here somewhere.

(Put map down and cross to stove. NOISE off right; SNIDE hides under the table. NELSON looks through the window, opens door and ENTER. MUSIC 22.1A/B part 1; He is wearing a black cape and a top hat a la SNIDE. He waits for audience reaction. SNIDE sneaks out the door behind him and closes it. NELSON turns toward the door as PENELOPE ENTERS LEFT with MOTHER; MUSIC 22.1A/B part 2)

PENELOPE (looking at the messy room)

Snide! What have you done?

NELSON (SNIDE voice)

Done? Why, I have done nothing. I have only just arriv-ed.

PENELOPE

Look at this mess! Why did you do it?

NELSON

It wasn't I.

PENELOPE

You're the only one here. It's jealousy, isn't it? You were so upset that I chose Nelson that you came back and ransacked the house.

NELSON

Of course I'm jealous, but I didn't ---

(SNIDE ENTER, looks at piano player; MUSIC 22.2C; SNIDE smiles)

SNIDE (NELSON voice)

Oh, my goodness. What has happened? Did you do this, Snide?

NELSON

No!

PENELOPE

Yes, he did. Out of jealousy!

SNIDE

Sore loser, eh?

NELSON

I didn't do anything. I have just arriv-ed here myself!

SNIDE

A likely story. I am afraid, sir, that I must ask you to leave.

NELSON

Leave?

SNIDE

Scram. Vamoose. Hit the road. Get out of here!

NELSON

Very well. But know this, Penelope, I did not do the damage to this house. It was someone else.

(he circles SNIDE)

Someone with far more to gain than I have to lose.

SNIDE

Are you suggesting that I had something to do with this? Nelson Noble would never stoop so low!

NELSON

That's true. Nelson Noble is far too honest and good to do something like this.

SNIDE

But not Sylvester Snide!

PENELOPE

To think that I once trusted you because you SAID you were Nelson. Please leave my house and never come back.

NELSON

But, Penelope, I didn't do this.

PENELOPE

Please leave.

NELSON

Very well.

(NELSON cross to door, turn back with a noble look and EXIT)

SNIDE

Ah, Penelope. Alone at last.

(MOTHER rings her bell)

SNIDE

Not quite alone. I wonder if you would mind, Mrs. Parker...

(starts to wheel MOTHER offstage)

PENELOPE (taking chair from SNIDE and turning it around)

Oh, I have no secrets from Mother.

SNIDE (taking chair from PENELOPE and turning it around)

I think we need a little time alone. To discuss the wedding.

PENELOPE (taking chair and turning it around)

Mother is very good at planning things, aren't you, Mother?

SNIDE (taking chair and turning it around)

I don't think we should bother her with the plans. I'm sure she has other things on her mind.

PENELOPE (taking chair)

I'm sure she WANTS to help.

SNIDE (taking chair)

She's going.

PENELOPE (taking chair)

Staying.

SNIDE (taking chair)

GOING!

(MOTHER strikes SNIDE in the stomach)

PENELOPE

Mother!

(to SNIDE)

Are you all right, Nelson?

SNIDE

Merely a flesh wound. Really, Mrs. Parker, you are going to have to learn to be a little nicer to your son-in-law.

(MOTHER swings again but misses)

PENELOPE (to SNIDE)

It might be best if you left now. Mother seems a bit grumpy today.

SNIDE

Perhaps you're right. I'll come back later. Farewell, my sweet.

(SNIDE kisses her hand and EXITS. PENELOPE wipes off her hand then starts to clean up the room, discovers map SNIDE left)

PENELOPE

What's this? Mother, do you know anything about a gold mine? According to this, our house is right on top of the entrance to ---

(eyes wide)

the Lost Swede Gold Mine!

(PENELOPE starts looking around the room; MOTHER holds up a large book labeled "MINNESOTA GOLD MINES" but PENELOPE doesn't notice; NELSON crosses past window and knocks at the door)

NELSON (off)

Penelope! I must speak with you.

PENELOPE

I have nothing to say to Sylvester Snide.

NELSON

I have decided to leave. I just wanted to say good-bye.

PENELOPE

Oh, very well. Come in.

(NELSON ENTERS; MUSIC 22.3A; PENELOPE continues looking for the mine entrance as he speaks)

NELSON

Penelope, I want you to know how much the time we spent together has meant to me. It is a memory I will treasure forever. The golden hours ---

(PENELOPE turns to him with a crazed look, grabs him by the collar)

PENELOPE

Where is it, Snide?

NELSON

I beg your pardon?

PENELOPE

The entrance to the Lost Swede Gold Mine!

(MOTHER holds up book again)

NELSON

The Lost Swede Gold Mine? I have no idea what you mean.

PENELOPE (letting him go)

A likely story. Look. I found this map on the table. You obviously dropped it in your haste to leave this morning.

NELSON (looking at map)

I've never seen this before.

PENELOPE

Ha! Another of your lies. Why did you come back here, you sniveling skunk?

NELSON

I came back to tell you how much I shall miss your gentle ways and your loving smile...

PENELOPE

Don't give me any of that, Snide. I want to know where the GOLD is.

(she circles him; MOTHER holds up book and shakes it)

I know it's here. A shining yellow treasure trove greater than the mind of man can imagine.

Nuggets bigger than your fist. A mother lode so long it would take a month to walk from end to end.

(shaking him; hysterical)

Where is it?

NELSON

My dear, sweet, gentle Penelope!

PENELOPE

Stop that insipid flattery! Where's the gold? WHERE'S THE GOLD???

(MUSIC 23: GOLD; MOTHER shakes book again)

PENELOPE

SOMEWHERE JUST BENEATH THE FLOOR
ARE GOLDEN NUGGETS BY THE SCORE
LIGHTING UP THE DARKNESS WITH A MELLOW YELLOW GLOW
NEVER HAD A PREMONITION
NEVER HAD THE LEAST SUSPICION
THERE WAS TREASURE LURKING ONLY INCHES DOWN BELOW

NELSON

PERHAPS THE STORY ISN'T TRUE
A LIE MADE UP BY SOMEONE WHO WAS EXERCISING HIS IMAGINATION
PERHAPS IT'S JUST A TEST TO FIND
SOMEBODY PURE IN HEART AND MIND
WHO WOULDN'T KNUCKLE UNDER TO TEMPTATION

PENELOPE

NO! IT'S
GOLD, GOLD, GOLD
ALL A-GLITTERING AND GLEAMING
OH, DON'T WAKE ME IF I'M DREAMING
LET ME SLEEP A LITTLE MORE
GOLD, GOLD, GOLD
I'VE HIT THE JACKPOT, NOW I'M LOADED
AS IF SOMETHING HAS EXPLODED
FATE IS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR
GOLD, GOLD, GOLD
ALL AT ONCE I'M IN THE MONEY
ALL AT ONCE THE SKY IS SUNNY
LIKE IT'S NEVER BEEN BEFORE
STARTING NOW I'M STARTING OVER
I WILL SOON BE ALL IN CLOVER
AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF
GOLD, GOLD, GOLD

NELSON (spoken)

Penelope. What's gotten into you?

(MOTHER shoves open book into NELSON'S hands; he reads)

NELSON

ACCORDING TO THE TRAGIC TALE
A SWEDISH LAD ONCE HIT THE TRAIL

TO FIND A PLACE WHERE HE COULD BUILD HIS MINNESOTA HOME
(PENELOPE is reading over his shoulder)
HE FINALLY FOUND THE PERFECT SPOT
THEN REALIZED HE HAD FORGOT
TO MARK THE WAY HE CAME, AND SO HE STARTED OUT TO ROAM

(PENELOPE grabs book from NELSON and reads)

PENELOPE

ONE MINNESOTA WINTER NIGHT
HE STUMBLED TOWARD THE CANDLELIGHT
AND CALLED OUT SHIVERING WITH THE COLD
OF COURSE THEY LET THE SWEDE INSIDE
THEY SAY THAT JUST BEFORE HE DIED
HE HANDED THEM A PIECE OF PUREST GOLD

NELSON (reading over her shoulder)

YES!
IT WAS GOLD, GOLD, GOLD
ALL A-GLITTERING AND GLEAMING
OH, DON'T WAKE ME IF I'M DREAMING
LET ME SLEEP A LITTLE MORE

PENELOPE (moving away from him)

GOLD, GOLD, GOLD
I'VE HIT THE JACKPOT, NOW I'M LOADED
AS IF SOMETHING HAS EXPLODED
FATE IS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

BOTH

GOLD, GOLD, GOLD
ALL AT ONCE I'M IN THE MONEY
ALL AT ONCE THE SKY IS SUNNY
LIKE IT'S NEVER BEEN BEFORE

PENELOPE

STARTING NOW I'M STARTING OVER
I WILL SOON BE ALL IN CLOVER
AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF
GOLD, GOLD, GOLD!
AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF GOLD,

GOLD
NELSON

GOLD.
PENELOPE

GOLD
NELSON

GOLD!
PENELOPE

NELSON
IT'S ALL BECAUSE, IT'S ALL BECAUSE, BECAUSE OF GOLD!

(They strike a pose; after applause MOTHER rings her bell; PENELOPE turns, still crazed)

PENELOPE (crossing to MOTHER, intensely)
What is it now?

(MOTHER slaps PENELOPE)

PENELOPE (straightening up)
Oh! Oh, my. What happened to me? I've never acted like that before.

NELSON (dryly, to the audience)
No one has EVER acted like that before.

PENELOPE
What?

NELSON
It's gold fever.

PENELOPE
Gold fever?

NELSON
The craving for gold can make any of us go a bit crazy. Greed. Pure and simple greed. None of us is immune.

PENELOPE

It brings out the --- Snide in each of us.

NELSON

You cut me to the quick. Farewell.

PENELOPE

Wait. Where will you go?

NELSON

I don't know. Alaska, perhaps. Far from here and even farther from the sunny beaches of Miami.

PENELOPE

Oh, if only you were still Nelson Noble and I could marry you instead. But a promise is a promise.

NELSON

Yes. You know, there is one thing that has been troubling me.

PENELOPE

What?

NELSON

As you know, I --- Sylvester Snide --- was born here. But Nelson's parents didn't move here until he ---- Nelson--- was eight years old.

PENELOPE

Why does that trouble you?

NELSON

You would think they would have noticed the difference between Nelson and me. I mean it's one thing to switch babies at birth, but quite another to switch children at eight years old...

PENELOPE

I see what you mean. What do you remember about the switch?

NELSON

That's another strange thing. I don't recall anything about it.

PENELOPE

Not a thing?

NELSON

No. I've tried and tried, but all I can remember is being happy and thinking I was Nelson Noble.

PENELOPE

Repression!

NELSON

Repression?

PENELOPE

Repression! I've read about it. Perhaps you have repressed the memory because it is so painful to you.

(PENELOPE to book shelf, get PSYCHOLOGY book & quickly find a page; reads to herself)

NELSON

I wish I COULD remember.

PENELOPE (looking at book)

Nelson --- uh, Snide --- have you ever been --- hypnotized?

NELSON

No. Why?

PENELOPE

It says here that people who have been hypnotized can recall repressed memories. Would you like to try it?

NELSON

Remember what I have forgotten? I certainly would. How is it done?

PENELOPE

They say that you have the person concentrate on some object. Here, my necklace. Sit down over here.

(NELSON sit at table; PENELOPE start swinging necklace; MUSIC 24: HYPNOSIS 1; NELSON watches the necklace)

PENELOPE

You are getting sleepy. Very sleepy...

(MOTHER stretches hands up, yawns and starts snoring. NELSON starts to nod. SNIDE appears in window, watches and immediately goes into a trance. He disappears from window and there is a loud thud outside the door. PENELOPE opens door and discovers SNIDE on the ground. MUSIC 24.1C; NELSON falls off his chair)

PENELOPE (crosses to NELSON, tries to help him up)

Oh, my. Get up, Sylvester.

(SNIDE stands up; PENELOPE does not see him; she manages to get NELSON to stand and rushes to get chair before he falls; she brings chair over; still not looking at SNIDE)

PENELOPE

There, Sylvester. You just sit down.

(NELSON doesn't sit; SNIDE sits on floor. She turns and sees SNIDE, brings him another chair)

PENELOPE

Now, Nelson, sit on the chair.

(NELSON sits in a different chair; PENELOPE struggles to get SNIDE in chair)

NOBLE

Sit.

PENELOPE (turning to NELSON)

Now, Sylvester, do you remember we were talking about remembering your childhood.

SNIDE

Childhood...

PENELOPE (still talking to NELSON)

It's called regression. Now, the way it works is we gradually go back in time...

SNIDE

Back in time...

PENELOPE (looking at NELSON)

Now, Sylvester, I'm going to count from 10 to 1 and when I finish you will be twelve years old.

SNIDE

Twelve...

PENELOPE

Here we go.

(MUSIC 25: HYPNOSIS 2)

10 – 9 – 8 – 7 – 6 – 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1. Speak to me, Sylvester.

SNIDE (in SNIDE voice)

Twelve years old.

PENELOPE (to SNIDE)

Oh. No! You weren't supposed to regress, Nelson. Sylvester was supposed to do it. I guess he has thought he was Sylvester for so long he has even fooled his subconscious mind.

SNIDE (continue in SNIDE voice from this point)

Happy birthday to me, happy birthday to me...

PENELOPE (to SNIDE)

All right, Nelson, you are twelve years old.

NELSON (in NELSON voice from this point)

Twelve years old! A new bicycle!

(SNIDE and NELSON continue in their own voices)

PENELOPE

Bicycle?

NELSON

Mama! Mama! That mean kid stole my new blue bicycle!

SNIDE (moving as if riding a bicycle and ringing bell)

Ding-ding-ding. Vvvvrooom!

PENELOPE (to NELSON)

Who stole your bicycle?

NELSON

That kid with the top hat and cape. Sylvester Snide!

PENELOPE

Snide? But YOU are Sylvester Snide. You stole your own bicycle?

SNIDE (to PENELOPE)

Want to buy a bicycle? Hardly been used at all. A mere twenty dollars. A bargain. A real STEAL!!!

(laughs)

PENELOPE (to SNIDE)

Nelson, what's going on? Did you steal Sylvester's bicycle?

NELSON

No. He stole MY bicycle.

PENELOPE

That's what I asked.

SNIDE

18 dollars? 15?

PENELOPE

They haven't regressed far enough. That's it. They are still remembering as if they are each other.

(picks up necklace and sways it; both watch)

Back, back. You are now 11, now 10, now 9. You are now eight years old.

SNIDE

Here, kitty, kitty. Nice little pussycat. Don't be afraid. I won't hurt you. That's it.

(grabs "cat")

Gotcha!

(acts as if shaving the cat)

NOBLE

Mama! Mama! That little boy is shaving Buttons!

PENELOPE

Shaving Buttons?

NELSON

She was just sitting there on the porch when he came by and grabbed her!

PENELOPE

Is Buttons a cat?

NELSON

Of course. You know that. Oh, Mama, please stop him. He's SHAVING her!

PENELOPE

Who is doing this terrible thing?

NELSON

You know. The boy one who always wears a top hat.

PENELOPE and NELSON

Sylvester Snide!

SNIDE (laughing)

There. No more hairballs for you!

PENELOPE

Something is terribly wrong. Snide still thinks he is Nelson and Nelson is acting as if he thinks he is Snide.

NELSON (crying)

Oh, poor Buttons.

PENELOPE (to SNIDE)

What is your name?

SNIDE

Puddin' Tame. Ask me again and I'll tell you the same.

PENELOPE (to NELSON)

What is YOUR name?

NELSON

Nelson. Nelson Percival Noble.

SNIDE

PERCIVAL! PERCIVAL! Oh, Perrrcyyy!

NELSON

Mama, he's making fun of me again.

PENELOPE

Oh, shut up, both of you. I need to think.

(thinks, then turns to them)

When I count to ten, you will return to your real ages. You will not wake up, but you will be back in the present. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10.

(to SNIDE)

What is your REAL name?

SNIDE

Sylvester Snide.

PENELOPE (to NELSON)

What is YOUR real name?

NELSON

Nelson Noble.

PENELOPE

Now I see. I was tricked!

(MOTHER suddenly knocks over bell table and makes a loud sound; NELSON and SNIDE WAKE UP)

NELSON (speaking as SNIDE)

Where --- am I?

SNIDE (speaking as NELSON)

What happened?

PENELOPE

You took a little CAT nap.

SNIDE

Where am I?

NELSON

What happened?

PENELOPE

I hypnotized both of you.

SNIDE

Hypnotized. Me? Impossible.

PENELOPE

Would you like to know what you said?

SNIDE

I'm sure it wasn't anything important.

NELSON

What did we say?

PENELOPE

I took you back to the time when you were both eight years old.

SNIDE

Eight? Whatever for?

PENELOPE

That's when Nelson Noble moved here from Minneapolis.

SNIDE

Ah, yes. A tragic year in my history.

PENELOPE

The interesting thing was that in that time, you were Sylvester Snide and you were Nelson Noble.

NELSON

I was Nelson Noble? What does this mean?

PENELOPE

It means there was no switch. You have always been Noble, and he has always been Snide.

NELSON (speaking as NELSON)

I am Nelson Noble after all?

(SNIDE pulls a revolver from his coat and grabs PENELOPE)

SNIDE (speaking as SNIDE)

So I have been found out. Well, no matter. Penelope is coming with me. If you want to see her again, you will transfer your interest in the Florida property to me and you will sign the deed to the house over to me as well.

(MOTHER suddenly rings bell; SNIDE turns toward her; PENELOPE kicks SNIDE and runs across stage; SNIDE drops the gun and NELSON picks it up; SNIDE pulls arm back as if to strike MOTHER; NELSON shoots gun in the air)

NELSON

Stay right there, Snide. The gig is up!

PENELOPE

Jig.

NELSON

What?

PENELOPE

The JIG is up. Not the gig.

NELSON

I was sure it was the gig.

PENELOPE

No, it is the JIG.

(SNIDE tiptoes to NELSON and grabs the gun)

SNIDE

Aha! NOW whose jig is up?

NELSON

Gig!

(PENELOPE grabs her necklace and sways it back and forth; MUSIC 26: HYPNOSIS 3); SNIDE looks at her; PENELOPE covers NELSON's eyes)

PENELOPE

You are getting sleepy. Very sleepy. 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1...

(SNIDE falls limply to the floor; PENELOPE takes the gun)

PENELOPE

Stand up, Sylvester, and sit at the table'

(She hands gun to NELSON as SNIDE walks to the table and sits; she switches their hats then ties SNIDE up with a convenient rope. She gets ready to ready to clap her hands. MOTHER rings her bell)

PENELOPE

What is it, Mother?

(MOTHER waves the map; PENELOPE crosses and takes it and looks at it)

PENELOPE

Of course!

(she crosses to SNIDE)

Sylvester Snide. Do you know where the entrance to the Lost Swede Mine is?

SNIDE (groggily)

Yes.

PENELOPE

Where is it?

SNIDE

Under the stove.

(NELSON goes to investigate)

NELSON

Look. He's right. There is a trapdoor under the stove. It must be the entrance.

(MOTHER throws confetti, PENELOPE claps; SNIDE slowly wakes up)

SNIDE (realizing he is tied up and that the trapdoor has been discovered)

What's going on? Curses! Double curses! TRIPLE curses!

NELSON

The minister will soon be here, Mr. Snide. After Penelope and I are married, we will celebrate by taking you to jail.

PENELOPE

Oh, Nelson! My hero!

NELSON

You made one very big mistake, Snide. Greed never prevails but goodness always does. And those who are honest and pure always have truth on their side!

(MUSIC 26.1C)

SNIDE

Bah!

(BLACKOUT; ACTORS EXIT; MUSIC 27: BOW MUSIC)

(BOWS: NELSON, followed by PENELOPE; SNIDE ENTERS for bows still tied to chair; BLACKOUT)

(MUSIC 28: EXIT MUSIC)

--- END ---