

The Notorious Nugget

or

How to Vex the Villain

or

How to Worry the Widow

or

How to Bother the Boche

or

How to Marry the Maid

or

How to Make the Man

A Musical Melodrama in Two Acts by Mark Arnest and Lauren Arnest
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Time: Early summer, 1914

Place: The Colorado* mountains and the fictional town of “Goldville.”

Dramatis Personae: Note that *The Notorious Nugget* requires only SIX actors; one actor plays five roles (that’s part of the fun!); the two actresses also double as anonymous “burlesque girls” in one scene.

Crooksdale “Crook” Robberson, III: 40s-50s, real estate tycoon; magnificently rich; a widower with one daughter, Lizzie.

Buck Worthington: 20s, handsome; newly arrived in Colorado to make his fortune.

Lizzie Robberson: Crook Robberson’s beautiful 18-to-20-something daughter.

Carlotta Costus-Lostus: Lizzie Robberson’s personal maid, 18-20s.

Burpram “Burp” Beasley: the Widow Beasley’s son, 20s. Resembles Crook.

Actor 6: Plays the following five roles:

Widow Beasley: an impoverished widow, 40s-50s; mother of Burpram.

Count Otto von Honkenschnozz: wealthy German count, old with a huge nose

Assay clerk: any age, has the initial aspect of a tough guy, but gradually reveals himself to be flamingly gay

Prospector: old timer, broken with toil

Bear: nonspeaking

Burlesque girls (2): (played by same actresses as Carlotta and Lizzie, but disguised by masks)

* The authors have no objection to changing place names and descriptions at the producer’s discretion.

OVERTURE

ACT I
Scene 1

Setting: An alpine meadow in the Colorado mountains with peaks in the background. On one side, downstage, is a mountain slope, with a cavelike opening above which is a sign reading "Lizzie Mine." Another sign on a post outside the opening reads "No Trespassing" with some small print below that.

(enter BUCK WORTHINGTON, pulling along a donkey, on whose saddle hang mining tools, a rifle, and a bundle of books)

BUCK

Can you believe it, Plato? It's just like *The Guns of Gilded Gulch*. (holds up book) Colorado! And here I am, about to strike it rich like Patch Brierly! These mountains are brimming with gold, just waiting to offer it up.

(sound of donkey braying)

You're always so skeptical! Have you ever seen a more beautiful landscape? Just smell that fresh air! Life has opened up her arms to us, Plato! We've got to hug her right back.

(Song: "SINCE I CAME WEST")

THE MOUNTAINS ARISE IN CELEBRATION.
IN BRIGHTEST OF BLUE THE SKIES ARE DRESSED.
AND HERE AM I, AS BRIGHT, AND HIGH, AS THEY
SINCE I CAME WEST.

THE RIVERS CASCADE IN EXULTATION.
TO FREEDOM THE WAVING TREES ATTEST
AND HERE AM I, THE KIND OF GUY, WHO'S BEST
SINCE I CAME WEST.

IF YOU SEE ME WALKIN' DOWN THE STREET
YOU WILL KNOW ME RIGHT AWAY
I'VE A PHYSIQUE THAT
YOU WILL SELDOM MEET
AND EXTRAORDINARY FACE
NOT ENCOUNTERED EVERY DAY
IF YOU FIND ME KNOCKIN' AT YOUR DOOR
YOU WILL LIKE ME ON THE SPOT
I'VE A MYSTIQUE THAT
MANY PEOPLE SEEK
AND A MIGHTY INTELLECT

AND A WIT THAT'S BLAZING HOT.

(donkey brays, BUCK clears throat)

THE MOUNTAINS ARISE IN CELEBRATION.
IN BRIGHTEST OF BLUE THE SKIES ARE DRESSED.
AND HERE I AM, BECOME A MAN, I'M SURE
SINCE I CAME WEST

THE SPACES ARE FRIENDLY, WIDE, AND OPEN
THE LAND IN EVERY WAY IS BLESSED
AND I AM HERE, ON THIS FRONTIER, A MAN
SINCE I CAME WEST.

{{Dialogue with piano underscore}}

(sound of donkey braying)

BUCK

Of course, I'm going to work for it! I'll be at my claim every day with my spectacular musculature glistening, my thick hair waving in the mountain breeze, and my chiseled features set with determination. And before long I'll be able to keep you in carrots for the rest of your life, my friend.

THE SPACES ARE FRIENDLY, WIDE, AND OPEN
THE LAND IN EVERY WAY IS BLESSED
AND I AM HERE, ON THIS FRONTIER, A MAN
SINCE I CAME WEST.

(Enter PROSPECTOR, dirty and disheveled. Does not see BUCK)

BUCK

(spying PROSPECTOR) Look, Plato! One of the natives. I'll try out my new lingo. (to PROSPECTOR, with exaggerated hick accent) Well, howdy there, pardner!

PROSPECTOR

Howdy, young feller. You're new in these parts, ain't ya?

BUCK

(giving up "lingo") Just in from back East. How did you know?

PROSPECTOR

You new fellers are always trying to use the lingo on us. But we spot it a mile away. I 'spect you're here for the gold like the rest of 'em.

BUCK

That's right.

PROSPECTOR

Word to the wise—there ain't no gold. I been pokin' 'round these parts for thirty years and ain't found more'n what would keep me drunk fur a coupla weeks.

BUCK

You're just telling me that so I'll go away and you can find it all.

PROSPECTOR

Now do I look like a feller who's gonna "find it all," if only some greenhorn from *back East* will get out of the way? I'm tellin' ya, there ain't no gold.

BUCK

But what about Horace Tabor and Myron Stratton and the mines in Cripple Creek?

PROSPECTOR

That's ancient history! The good claims played out a long time ago. Course, folks are always *thinkin'* they found gold, but it always turns out there ain't nothin' there.

BUCK

Nothing? Nowhere?

PROSPECTOR

That's right, nothin' nowhere . . . less'n, a course, ya count the Lost Horse mine. That mighta been real.

(lights dim, Lost Horse Mine music begins)

BUCK

The Lost Horse mine? What's that?

PROSPECTOR

Ah, it ain't nothin'. Just one a them tall tales folks chuck up when they get a little likker in 'em.

BUCK

But what is it?

PROSPECTOR

Well, story was a while back some feller made a huge strike somewhere 'round here. A vein so rich it was right throbbin'. He showed a few nuggets and got folks pretty worked up.

BUCK

What happened?

PROSPECTOR

Feller croaked before he could tell any one where it was! I hear a bear et 'im.
Ain't no one ever found it since.

(lights back up, music stops)

BUCK

Well, I could be the one. I'll dig up this whole range if I have to.

PROSPECTOR

Sorry to tell ya, young feller, but that ain't allowed.

BUCK

What do you mean, "ain't allowed"?

PROSPECTOR

Why, all these mountains is bought up! Already owned. Feller what goes by the name of Crook Robberson.

BUCK

Crook Robberson?

PROSPECTOR

Richest and meanest man in five counties. Take this here claim (points to mine opening and "no trespassing" sign) Now I can't read a lick, but I reckon this sign says "Keep Out."

BUCK

Actually, it says "No Trespassing."

PROSPECTOR

Same thing. And if you look on down a ways, I'll wager you'll find Crook Robberson's name.

BUCK

(looks at fine print on sign, reads aloud) "Inquiries toward purchase should be directed to the Robberson Real Estate Company, Goldville, Colorado." Where's Goldville?

PROSPECTOR

She's just a piece down the road, at the bottom of this here mountain.

BUCK

I think I should pay this Crook Robberson a visit.

PROSPECTOR

You ain't thinkin' a *buyin'* a claim is ya?

BUCK

If I have to.

PROSPECTOR

Well I wouldn't buy *that* one if I was you.

BUCK

Why not?

PROSPECTOR

Because a big ol' bear lives in there!

BUCK

A bear, eh? Then, that's just the one I *will* buy. Who's going to be prospecting for gold in a mine guarded by a bear?

PROSPECTOR

You's a brainy one, ain't ya? Say, I can tell by the sun it's time for the saloons to open down in Goldville. I'll take you to Crook Robberson, if'n you'll stand me a drink.

BUCK

Sounds fair. (extends hand) The name's Buck Worthington.

PROSPECTOR

(shaking hands) Pleased to meet ya. Reckon I had a name once.

(MUSIC strikes chord and vamps in anticipation of song. PROSPECTOR makes as if to sing. Then . . .)

Aw, hang it! Never could sing a lick nohow. Just follow me.

(PROSPECTOR exits)

BUCK

(reading above mine) "Lizzie Mine." Hmmn. Well, Lizzie, you're gonna be mine! Come on, Plato! (pulls or pushes PLATO out as he exits, following PROSPECTOR)
(lights down, end of scene)

Act I
Scene 2

Setting: Lizzie Robberson's boudoir at the Robberson mansion in Goldville. Backdrop of large windows and fancy drapes (can double for drawing room). Bedroom furniture is optional. Full-length mirror, prominently placed.

At Rise: CARLOTTA is helping LIZZIE with a gown she is modeling before the mirror.

CARLOTTA

You look very pretty in this one, Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE

Pretty enough to impress a count?

CARLOTTA

A big account or a no account, Miss?

LIZZIE

A Bavarian count, Carlotta.

CARLOTTA

I don't think barbarians *can* count, Miss.

LIZZIE

Not "barbarian"—"Bavarian." A count from Bavaria. You know—a nobleman.

CARLOTTA

Ah, a bank account.

LIZZIE

Yes, he's rich. My father has undoubtedly seen to that. Did you know, when I was little, he used to make me promise every night that I would only marry a rich man?

CARLOTTA

I think your father might have some issues, Miss.

LIZZIE

I'm not defending him.

CARLOTTA

My mother says what a man needs is the brains to know what's right and the cojones to do it.

LIZZIE

I wish my mother was still alive to tell me such things.

CARLOTTA

I know, Miss. I am sorry you never got to know her.

LIZZIE

Oh, Carlotta! I'm so sick of being cooped up in this mansion, never allowed anywhere but church or my father's office! I'm so bored I could explode!

CARLOTTA

I understand, Miss Lizzie. I, too, feel constrained within limited horizons—though for vastly different reasons!

LIZZIE

I feel like a caged animal! A bird! And though the cage is made of gold—it's a cage nonetheless.

(strains of "Bird in a Golden Cage" are heard and LIZZIE begins to sing it)

CARLOTTA

(alarmed) Oh, no, Miss! Not that song!

LIZZIE

Why not?

CARLOTTA

According to the Copyright Act of 1909, that song won't fall into the public domain until 1964! In the meantime, the publishing company of Boosey & Hawkes is entitled to royalties whenever it is sung commercially or the violator faces fines and penalties of up to twenty-five thousand dollars.

LIZZIE

So?

CARLOTTA

Your father is not about to pony up. Just look at that poor excuse for a piano player!

LIZZIE

(looking) I see what you mean. Then what shall I sing?

CARLOTTA

You'll just have to make something up.

LIZZIE

How about . . . I'm a bunny?

CARLOTTA

Yes, yes. And it rhymes with "money."

LIZZIE

A bunny in a golden hutch. How's that?

CARLOTTA

Splendid, Miss.

LIZZIE

(Song: "BUNNY IN A GOLDEN HUTCH")

IT'S HARD TO ADMIT IT,
IT'S HARD TO TELL TRUE,
I CANNOT DENY IT, BUT OH I'M SO BLUE.
I KNOW THAT I OUGHT TO BE GRATEFUL
AND GLAD BUT I AM OH SO SAD.

YOU SEE I'M ONLY A BUNNY IN A GOLDEN HUTCH
AND THOUGH I'M SAFE FROM THE WORLD,
I MISS THE SUN'S GENTLE TOUCH.
OH, I HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY FOR JEWELS AND SUCH.
BUT IT'S NOT MONEY I WANT, NOT VERY MUCH

OH, IF ONLY THIS BUNNY COULD ESCAPE HER JAIL
WHY I WOULD KICK UP MY HEELS AND HIT THE WIDE OPEN TRAIL
AND I WOULD RUN SO FREE,
NO ONE WOULD KNOW IT WAS ME.

{{interlude dance/dialogue}}

LIZZIE

Oh, I feel ever so much better now! And I *do* look pretty in this dress. I'll wear it tonight. Oh, Carlotta, I do hope he's young!

CARLOTTA

I hope so, too, Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE

I hope he's handsome!

CARLOTTA

Indeed, so do I, Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE

And I hope he's kind!

CARLOTTA

That is also my wish for you.

(Reprise)

Carlotta & Lizzie: YOU SEE I'M/SHE'S ONLY A BUNNY IN A GOLDEN HUTCH
AND IT'S HER/MY FREEDOM SHE/I WANT(S) AND SHE/I WANT(S) IT SO MUCH
L: AND I WOULD RUN SO FREE!
C: AND SHE WOULD RUN, OH YES SHE'D GO, WHAT A SIGHT TO SEE!
L: NO ONE WOULD KNOW IT WAS ME.
C: NO ONE WOULD KNOW, LET IT BE SO, LET HER BE.

L & C: LET IT BE SO, LET HER/ME GO

LIZZIE

If he's all those things, I won't mind marrying him and going to Bavaria. At least it will get me out of Goldville.

CARLOTTA

Indeed, Miss. Now let me help you out of the dress.
(lights down, end of scene)

ACT I

Scene 3

Setting: Crook Robberson's real estate office. A safe is prominent, and a large topographical map hangs on the wall. On one side is an exterior door with a sign reading "Robberson Real Estate Company"; another door goes to an inner office.

At Rise: CROOK ROBBERSON is sitting at a desk reading some papers.

(Enter BURP BEASLEY; he compares
newspaper clipping with sign on door)

BURP

"Robberson Real Estate Company." This is the place. (he enters office, CROOK does not look up) Good day, sir. Do I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Robberson?

CROOK

(looking up) Crooksdale Robberson the third, to be exact. My friends all call me "Crook." . . . Come to think of it, so do my enemies! And what might I do for you?

BURP

I'm responding to your ad. It says you're seeking an assistant who is (reads) "skilled in accounting, salesmanship, and contract law, and is ethically challenged."

CROOK

That is correct. That last requirement is my effort to help out those unfortunates among us who live with disabilities. I'm a very charitable man.

BURP

I'm looking for a job, sir, and I believe I can meet all your requirements. Burpram Beasley is my name. My friends just call me "Burp."
(they shake hands)

CROOK

Well, Burt—

BURP

Actually, sir, it's "Burp" with a "p."

CROOK

"Burp"? With a "p"?

BURP

Yes, sir. When I was born my mother wanted to name me "Burtram" with a "t." But due to a clerical error at the recording office, a "p" was interposed instead.

CROOK

You don't say.

BURP

I do say, sir. And it's been the bane of my existence. You can't imagine all the teasing I grew up with, all the rude noises, the laughter, not to mention that it's put me at a disadvantage with the ladies. And I can't help but think it's made me timid and afraid to stand up for truth, justice, and the American way!

CROOK

Hmmn. So, . . . Burp . . . er, *Beasley* . . . have you been in town long?

BURP

I arrived two days ago with my widowed mother, of whom I am the sole support.

CROOK

So why aren't you up in the hills with all those other young fools looking for gold? Don't you want to get rich quick like the rest of them?

BURP

Oh, my mother wouldn't hear of it! She says mining's too dangerous. My father was a miner, you see.

CROOK

And he died in a mining accident?

BURP

Sort of. . . . He sat on a cactus. The doctor missed a few spines and the ones that were left got infected. Dad was gone in two weeks.

CROOK

Sorry. But I'll tell you what, *Beasley*. I can't imagine why, but I've taken quite a shine to you. You've got the job. You start immediately.

BURP

Oh, thank you, sir! I will endeavor to serve the Robberson Real Estate Company in such a way as to ensure its success.

CROOK

To do that, you're going to need to know something about our business. Now I expect you know what a real estate office does?

BURP

Yes, sir. You sell land.

CROOK

That is only partially correct. If all we sold in these parts was land, we'd go bust in no time. Here at Robberson Real Estate, we sell more than land.

BURP

What else do you sell?

CROOK

We sell *hope*, my boy. All those young men up there looking for gold, when they buy a claim from Robberson, they're also buying the hope of striking it rich!

BURP

I understand, sir. What a noble enterprise this is! I'm proud to be part of it.

CROOK

Yes, well, there's something else. We have to, so to speak, *plant* the hope.

BURP

Sir?

CROOK

Son, the trouble is, there isn't any gold up there. What there was was discovered a long time ago and mostly it all got taken out.

BURP

There's no gold?

CROOK

(pointing to the map) I own all these mountains and there's not enough gold in all of them put together to make a filling for your tooth.

BURP

So all those claims up there in the hills—they're all empty? They're all just holes?

CROOK

Every darn one of them. . . . Unless you count the Lost Horse Mine. That might have been the real thing.

(lights dim, Lost Horse Mine music begins)

BURP

The Lost Horse Mine? What's that?

CROOK

Quite a few years ago. A miner was showing around some nuggets he claimed he found in these mountains. He said it was the biggest strike since Cripple Creek.

BURP

What happened?

CROOK

He died suddenly and took the secret of where it was with him to the grave.

(lights come back up, music stops)

But that's just an old legend.

BURP

If there's no gold, sir, how is it that we sell hope to the young men looking for it?

CROOK

Excellent question! You see, we take a little real gold from somewhere else and hide it in the mine they're thinking of buying. It works like this.

CROOK

(Song: "SALTING THE MINE")

CROOK: SALTING THE MINE IS SUCH AN EASY TRICK
TO BRING THE GULLIBLE RUBES IN THE DOOR.

SALTING THE MINE, INTO AN EMPTY PIT
YOU PUT SOME GOLD THAT WAS NOT THERE BEFORE.

THINKING THEY'VE FOUND A BONANZA,
PROSPECTORS BUY UP YOUR LANDS.
HALF OF THEM THINK THAT IT'S YOU WHO'VE BEEN HAD
SO YOU DON'T FEEL BAD.

SALTING THE MINE, INTO EACH HUM-DRUM LIFE
A LITTLE SEASONING SURELY SHOULD LAND.

SALTING THE MINE, IF YOU CAN DO IT RIGHT
YOU BRING A BLESSING TO YOUR FELLOW MAN.

HE HAS THE JOY AND ELATION,
THINKING HE'S SOON TO BE FLUSH.

AND WHEN IT LATER GOES BUST,
IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT MUCH.
HE'S HAD HIS OWN LITTLE GOLD RUSH!

YOU GET A LAUGH AND PAY IN.
HE GETS THE SHAFT — TO PLAY IN.
THAT IS THE WAY THE GAME IS MADE,
SO THAT WE WIN.

CROOK: SALTING THE MINE IS SUCH AN EASY TRICK
TO BRING THE GULLIBLE RUBES IN THE DOOR.

BURP: SALTING THE MINE IS SUCH AN EASY TRICK
TO BRING THE GULLIBLE RUBES IN THE DOOR.
CROOK: SALTING THE MINE, INTO AN EMPTY PIT
YOU PUT SOME GOLD THAT WAS NOT THERE BEFORE.

BURP: SALTING THE MINE, WE'VE GOT TO DO THIS SHTICK
TO PUT SOME GOLD WHERE THERE WAS NONE BEFORE.

CROOK: THINKING THEY'VE FOUND A BONANZA.
BURP: I DON'T THINK I LIKE THIS STANZA.

CROOK: PROSPECTORS BUY UP YOUR LANDS.
BURP: THAT'S NOT A NICE PLAN.

CROOK: YOU SEE THAT SALTING THE MINE
CAN REALLY WORK OUT JUST FINE
TO MAKE YOUR LIFE SOMETHING RICH AND GRAND.

CROOK & BURP: YOU SEE THAT SALTING THE MINE
CAN REALLY WORK OUT JUST FINE
TO MAKE YOUR LIFE SOMETHING RICH AND GRAND.

BURP

I get it, sir. Very clever. I've got just one question. Since there really isn't any gold
but you make them think that there is—isn't that sort of cheating?

CROOK

What did you say?

BURP

Isn't that cheating, sir?

CROOK

I thought you said you were ethically challenged. I'd hate to have to fire you so
soon for falsifying your credentials.

BURP

No, sir, no, sir! I mean, yes, sir, yes, sir! I *am* ethically challenged, I'm sure of it.

CROOK

Good. But just so's you can relax, it's not cheating.

BURP

It isn't?

CROOK

Not at all. As I said, in addition to buying land, our customers are buying *hope*. In fact, hope is the biggest thing they *are* buying. And when they find gold and think there might be more, they're filled up ready to pop with *hope*. So when they hand over the money to buy the mine, they're also getting the hope they bargained for.

BURP

I see. Thank you for clarifying that.

CROOK

Don't mention it. And I mean that. Don't mention it to anyone else.

BURP

Right, sir. Then where do we get the gold that we hide in the mine?

CROOK

I thought you'd never ask.

(CROOK opens up the safe, pulls out the NUGGET, and holds it aloft. The "Nugget Music" begins, spotlight on the NUGGET)

Right here, my boy. Right here.

BURP

(takes nugget from CROOK) Amazing! It looks just like a horse's —

CROOK

(cutting BURP off before he can say the word "ass." "Nugget Music" ends.) Hind end. Yes. (takes the NUGGET back from BURP)

BURP

And it's all gold?

CROOK

The purest gold there is! The finest specimen of the most refined gold ever found in the state of Colorado.

BURP

May I ask where you got it, sir?

CROOK

I found it some years ago. Stepped right in it—er, *on* it, I mean. Up in the hills not far from here. It's been my ace in the hole. This nugget, son, has made me the richest man in five counties.

BURP

It must be worth a lot.

CROOK:

Yes. But its biggest value is in making the suckers—I mean the *buyers*—think they're going to find more like it in the claims they buy from us. That reminds me, a young sucker name of Buck Worthington wants to take a look at the Lizzie Mine today. Usually I'd show him around myself, but I've got to meet a very important passenger at the station.

BURP

I could go to the station for you, sir.

CROOK

Not this time. His Excellency the Count Otto von Honkenschnozz is coming all the way from Bavaria to marry my daughter. He's loaded, and as soon as we have the wedding, Crook Robberson's going to be the richest man in *ten* counties!

BURP

Congratulations, sir. And congratulations to your daughter.

CROOK

(suddenly all angry and paranoid) Daughter??!! How do you know I have a daughter??!! Who said I have a daughter??!!

BURP

(mystified) Why you did, sir. Just now. You said your daughter was going to marry Count von Honkenschnozz.

CROOK

(mollified) Oh. So I did. . . . (angry again) But you stay away from her, you hear? No penniless loser named "Burp" gets anywhere near my Lizzie, you understand?

BURP

Yes, sir. I understand, sir.

CROOK

Good. (calming down) So you're going to have to meet this Worthington. Four o'clock up at the Lizzie Mine. Right here (points to position on the map). The trail starts at the south end of town. Get there early so you can hide the nugget.

BURP

Yes, sir.

CROOK

Hide it somewhere in plain sight so he's sure to find it. And you be right beside him when he does, so he can't just put it in his pocket. But let him hold it. Let him see the way it shines, let him feel how solid and heavy it sits in his hand. And after he's all excited, you take it back, you understand—because it was found in a mine owned by Crook Robberson, so it belongs to Crook Robberson.

BURP

Yes, sir. What do I do then, sir?

CROOK

Then he's going to want to be sure what he's found is really gold, so you're going to take him to the assay office, right down the street from here. The feller there is going to tell him he's never seen finer gold in his life than this nugget. And then this Worthington sucker—I mean *buyer*— will be ready to purchase the mine from me.

BURP

And after that, sir?

CROOK

Tell him to come to my office tomorrow morning and we'll finalize the sale. Meanwhile you bring the nugget back here and put it in the safe. The combination's carved on the left inside of the top drawer here. And don't get any ideas yourself about taking it. If anything happens to this nugget, I'll have the law on you so fast, you won't even have time to burp. (enjoying his joke) Get it? No time to *burp*.

BURP

(demoralized) Yes, sir.

CROOK

Now take it (hands NUGGET to BURP) and get going! You barely have time to get up there and get it hid.

BURP

Yes, sir.

(BURP exits; lights down, end of scene)

ACT I

Scene 4

Setting: A room in the Robberson mansion. This scene can take place in front of the curtain, with just an item of furniture as a prop.

At Rise: CARLOTTA is tidying up with a feather duster.

CARLOTTA

So the big account is coming tonight to meet Miss Lizzie. He'll be young and handsome and rich and he's gonna sweep my mistress away to Barbaria. And what will become of me? I don't want to go to Barbaria. But I can't stay here. With Miss Lizzie gone, that'll leave just her father. No way am I gonna stay here with him! That means Carlotta's gonna be on her own again. Sometimes I feel I'm just a stock character in some second-rate play. (to audience) You know what I mean? At least I know what role I'm playing.

(Song: "I'M THE VAMP")

I'M THE GIRL WITH THE SAUCY LITTLE SMILE
I'M THE ONE WHO WILL GO THE EXTRA MILE
THE ONE YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU DIM THE LAMP

I'M THE GIRL WITH THE NAUGHTY REPARTEE
I'M THE ONE THAT YOU WANT TO COME AND PLAY
YOU KNOW IT'S SO, CUZ BABY, I'M THE VAMP.

WHEN THE WORKING DAY IS OVER
AND YOU'VE EARNED THAT EXTRA DIME
I'M THE GIRL WHO BEST CAN SHOW YOU A GOOD TIME

I'M THE GIRL WHO THEY SAY IS WAY TOO BOLD
I'M THE ONE, THOUGH, WHO HAS A HEART OF GOLD
THE ONE YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU DIM THE LAMP
OH, OH, YOU KNOW IT'S SO, CUZ BABY I'M THE VAMP

WHEN THE BOSS IS ON THE WARPATH
AND HE SAYS HE'LL DOCK YOUR PAY
I'M THE ONE WHO BEST CAN CHASE YOUR BLUES AWAY

I'M THE GIRL WHO SEEMS BAD, BUT IN THE END
I'M THE ONE WHO WILL BE YOUR TRUEST FRIEND
THE ONE WHO'LL KEEP YOU FROM THE COLD AND DAMP
OH, YOU KNOW IT'S SO, CUZ BABY I'M THE VAMP

Alas! What will become of me, Carlotta Costus-Lostus?

ACT I Scene Five

Setting: An assay office in Goldville. The counter has scales and weights appropriate to the profession and a sign reading "Assay Office." A service bell sits on the desk.

(Enter BUCK and BURP through front door)

BUCK

(excitedly) I had a hunch that mine would be loaded! Tell me, Burp, in all your days in the real estate business have you ever seen a nugget like this? (holds up nugget)

BURP

(evasively) Uh, only once.

BUCK

And to think it was just sitting there in the tunnel, almost in plain sight! Course, I'm no sucker. I remember what Alright Armstrong said in *The Shadowy Shaft*: You have to make sure what you find is not fools gold. That's why I insisted on coming to the assay office. (he rings a service bell on the desk)

(enter ASSAY CLERK from the back, he's taking a long toke on a joint, coughs and waves away the smoke, he's rough-looking, bearded)

ASSAY CLERK

What can I do for you boys?

BUCK

I'd like you to tell me what I got in this here nugget. (holds up nugget)

ASSAY CLERK

(taking NUGGET) Another one of those, eh?

BUCK

Another one? Surely you've never seen a nugget like this one—one that looks just like a horses a—

ASSAY CLERK

(cutting him off before he can say "ass") Uh, uh – horse's patootie. Just about all the nuggets I *do* see these days look just like this one. It's the strangest thing.

BUCK

You mean they all look like a horse's a—?

ASSAY CLERK

(cutting him off) Uh, uh! I must insist that you not say that word.

BURP

Don't say a—?

ASSAY CLERK

(cutting him off) Uh, uh! You are not permitted to say that word in this establishment.

BUCK

But this here's the "ass-say" office, ain't it?

ASSAY CLERK

Yup. This here's the ass say office.

BURP

So you're telling us, we can't say (mouths word "ass") in the ass say office?

ASSAY CLERK

That's right. In the ass-say office, you can't say (mouths word) *ass*.

BUCK

But why not?

(beginning here and into the song,
ASSAY CLERK gradually transforms
his rough appearance and demeanor
into that of a flamingly gay aesthete, at
one point ripping off his shirt to reveal
a sequined leotard)

ASSAY CLERK

(beginning a bit of a patter, sings) BECAUSE IT'S SO CRASS.

BURP

(imitating him) BECAUSE IT'S SO CRASS.

ASSAY CLERK

(picks up a cane and begins to do a soft shoe dance) BECAUSE IT LACKS CLASS.

BUCK

(imitating him) BECAUSE IT LACKS CLASS.

ASSAY CLERK (joined by BURLESQUE GIRLS, BUCK, BURP and CROOK)

(Song: "YOU CAN'T SAY — IN THE
ASSAY OFFICE")

YOU CAN SAY "BOTTOM" IN WINTER, SPRING, OR AUTUMN, AND THERE'S NOT
A MAIDEN AUNT (pron. AWNT) WHO'LL SAY YOU CAN'T (pron. CAWNT)

SHORTEN IT TO BUM, AND SAY IT TO YOUR MUM, AND ANYONE ELSE TO WHOM YOU'LL EVER WANT.

(Enter BURLESQUE GIRLS)

YOU CAN SAY "FANNY" AND NOT OFFEND YOUR GRANNY, AND NARY A NURSE OR NANNY WILL COMPLAIN.

AND THOUGH WE'RE EASY-GOING, OPEN-MINDED, AND URBANE, THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS WE REALLY SHOULD EXPLAIN.

YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
IT WON'T MEET OUR STANDARDS OF DECORUM AND GOOD MANNERS

YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
THIS ESTABLISHMENT IS DEDICATED TO GOOD TASTE.

YOU CAN SAY KIESTER ON CHRISTMAS OR ON EASTER AND NARY A PRIEST OR NUN WILL COME UNDONE.

YOU CAN SAY PATOOTIE, AND REMAIN A THING OF BEAUTY, FULFILLING YOUR SOCIAL DUTY WITH APLOMB.

YOU CAN SAY DERRIERE, AND SAY IT WITH SOME SAVOIR FAIRE, AND NONE OF THE SNOOTY SET WILL EVEN CARE.

AND THOUGH WE'RE QUITE GOOD-NATURED, LIB'RAL, TOLERANT AND FAIR, THERE'S ONE THING OF WHICH YOU SHOULD BE MADE AWARE.

YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
IT WON'T MEET OUR STANDARDS OF DECORUM AND GOOD MANNERS

YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
THIS ESTABLISHMENT IS DEDICATED TO GOOD TASTE!

{{dance break, dialogue}}

(Enter CROOK)

BURP (to CROOK)

(surprised) What are you doing here, sir?

CROOK

Just stopped by to fill out the ensemble. (to Pianist) Maestro, my note.

(Pianist plays CROOK's note, song resumes)

CROOK: YOU CAN SAY "BUTTOCKS," WITHOUT A FEAR TO FLUMMOX, OR YOU CAN SAY BUNS OR BACKSIDE OR BEHIND.

CLERK: YOU CAN SAY "POSTERIOR" WITH ETIQUETTE SUPERIOR, AND CHEERIER HEARERS HERE YOU'LL NEVER FIND.

YOU CAN SAY HEINY AND NO ONE WILL BE WHINY.
YOU CAN SAY REAR END AND I'LL REMAIN YOUR DEAR FRIEND
YOU CAN SAY TUCHUS AND NOT CREATE A RUCKUS
YOU CAN SAY BUTT, THOUGH SOME MAY SAY TUT, TUT

BUT YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
IT WON'T MEET OUR STANDARDS OF DECORUM AND GOOD MANNERS
YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
THIS ESTABLISHMENT IS DEDICATED TO GOOD TASTE

NO YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
IT WON'T MEET OUR STANDARDS OF DECORUM AND GOOD MANNERS
YOU CAN'T SAY ___ IN THE ASSAY OFFICE
IN THE ASSAY OFFICE YOU CAN'T SAY ____

ASSAY CLERK

Thanks, gals!

(BURLESQUE GIRLS exit, ASSAY CLERK quickly puts his shirt back on, and goes back to his rough, uneducated demeanor)

CROOK

(looking at watch) If you'll excuse me, gentlemen, I've got a train to meet!
(CROOK exits)

ASSAY CLERK

So, fellers, any further questions?

BUCK

Just one. Is this here nugget gold or not?

ASSAY CLERK

(puts NUGGET, on scales with counterweights, then looks at it with a lupe) It's gold alright. Just like the others. I ain't never seen finer gold than this here nugget.

BUCK

Yippee! Buck Worthington has struck it rich!

BURP

Not quite yet. First, you have to buy the mine from my boss, Mr. Crook Robberson.

BUCK

Just tell me how soon I can pay up and have this Crook sign over the title to me.

BURP

Come to his office first thing in the morning. (snatching the NUGGET) And by the way, this nugget belongs to him, because it was found in his mine. That mine won't be yours 'til tomorrow.

BUCK

Fair enough. I reckon there'll be plenty more where that came from, once I get in the mine and start really looking. (to ASSAY CLERK) So what do I owe you, friend?

ASSAY CLERK

Nothin', boys. This one's on the house. I had a right good time doing my dance routine. (looks worried) But tell me one thing. Did you boys happen to see a coupla gals come in and dance around, too?

BURP

A coupla gals?

BUCK

Dancin' around?

ASSAY CLERK

Yeah. Did a coupla purty gals, all dressed up, show up and dance around with me?

BUCK

I ain't seen no gals. Did you, Burp?

BURP

Me neither. (pointing to joint in ashtray) You might want to lay off that weed.

ASSAY CLERK

No, sir! Not unless they make it illegal. Them was the purtiest costumes—er, I mean, *gals*—I seen in a long time.

BUCK

Well, so long, mister. Thanks for your help.

(BUCK and BURP exit; end of scene)

Act I

Scene 6

Setting: The drawing room of the Robberson mansion. Evening.

At Rise: LIZZIE, very dressed up, is waiting with CARLOTTA for COUNT VON HONKENSCHNOZZ and CROOK.

LIZZIE

Oh, Carlotta, I'm so nervous! Please—let him be young and handsome!

CARLOTTA

You'll know very soon, Miss. The train arrived over an hour ago.

LIZZIE

Let me practice my curtsy again. (she does a few practice curtsies) How's that?

CARLOTTA

Very nice, Miss.

(off-stage commotion is heard)

LIZZIE

They're here! How do I look?

CARLOTTA

Very beautiful, Miss.

(enter CROOK and HONKENSCHNOZZ
["CVH"]. CVH is old with a huge nose.
He is dressed richly with a cape)

CROOK

(indicating LIZZIE) Ah, here she is, Count. My daughter Lizzie.

(LIZZIE is paralyzed with horror)

Lizzie, this is his excellency the Count Otto von Honkenschnozz of Bavaria.

CVH

(speaks with thick German accent [Note: transliterated accent is only a suggestion. Actor in this part should feel free to develop his own accent]) Count Otto von Honkenschnozz ab und zu Fartenpoof und Krappenschitz, to be precise.

(LIZZIE is helped onto a chair by
CARLOTTA and CROOK as she faints)

CROOK

(to CARLOTTA) Get the smelling salts!

(CARLOTTA finds smelling salts, gives
them to LIZZIE, who comes to
groggily)

(to CVH) Undoubtedly your magnificence has overwhelmed her, Your Excellency. My daughter has led a sheltered life. She's very innocent—if you know what I mean. (to LIZZIE) Daughter, how do you greet our guest?

(LIZZIE struggles to her feet, extends her hand to CVH, who kisses it; then performs a low curtsy, during which she almost faints again.)

LIZZIE

(weakly) How do you do, Your Excellency?

(CVH twirls her around appraisingly)

CVH

Charming, charming! (spying CARLOTTA) And who is zis pretty fraulein?

CROOK

That's my daughter's chamber maid.

CVH

(he grabs CARLOTTA's hand and twirls her around too) Very nice! Zee vill come alzo to Bavaria. Zat vay, vee get ze "two for vun" as you Americans say! (he laughs with honking sound)

CROOK

(nudging LIZZIE, loud whisper) Say something, you little fool! He didn't come all this way to marry a fence post!

LIZZIE

(still weak) I . . . I . . . hope you had a pleasant journey, Your Excellency.

CVH

Ja, it vas most delightful. Vat a country! So much space! I feel zat I could fall any minute upwards into ze sky! Funny, no? (he laughs with honking sound) As if nahzing can keep you down in zis vild vest of yours.

CROOK

That's true, Your Excellency. Nothing keeps us down out here in the West. As we say, the sky's the limit.

CVH

I could never get used to it! In Bavaria everyzing stays in its place. Alles in ordnung.

LIZZIE

I . . . I . . . imagine that could be hard to get used to, too . . . I mean for someone like me, Your Excellency. I'm . . . not sure I could do it.

CROOK

(angrily to LIZZIE) Oh, you'll get used to it alright, daughter—if you know what's good for you. (to CVH) Don't pay her any mind, Your Excellency! Young girls, you know, nothing but fluttering nonsense in their heads.

CVH

On ze contrary, ze young lady is right to be nervous. Zee knows nahzing of her future husband. (bowing to LIZZIE) My dear, for hundreds of years ze House of Honkenschnozz is among ze noblest. Ze family escutcheon is revered far und vide.

(he removes his cape and reveals on
the back his family crest: a huge nose)

On my mother's side is an equally long line of aristocrats of ze Die Nase (pronounced *dee NAH ze*, meaning "nose" in German) family.

(Song: "THE CELEBRATED COUNT VON
HONKENSCHNOZZ")

MY DEAR, THE MAN YOU SEE BEFORE YOU
SEE HERE, TO GREATNESS I WAS BORN
MY STOCK OF ARISTOCRACY IS OF THE HIGHEST SORT
THE KAISER, HE DELIGHTS
TO WELCOME ME AT COURT

MY DEAR,
MY HOLDINGS VERY VAST ARE
SEE HERE, MY RICHES UNSURPASSED
MY LANDS THEY STRETCH FROM THERE TO HERE AND HERE TO THERE AND
THERE,
AND IF I EVER SNEEZE,
THE BANKERS GET A SCARE

MY DEAR,
WHEN EUROPE'S IN A PICKLE
IN FEAR, THE CROWNED HEADS COME TO ME
THEY ALL WANT TO SEE
WHAT HONK SAYS AND DOES
THE CELEBRATED COUNT VON HONKENSCHNOZZ

CLIP, CLOP, CLIP, I'M SMART AS A WHIP
IN ALGEBRA AND LANGUAGES AND ALSO PENMANSHIP

CLOP, CLIP, CLOP, MY PRAISES NEVER STOP
ON MY ESTATES THE PEASANTS WAIT BEFORE ME TO BOW DOWN
IN GRATITUDE THE MEN ALL SMILE, DIE FRAUEN NEVER FROWN

CLIP, CLOP, CLIP, UND ALL THE PRETTY MAEDCHENS WANT TO KISS ME ON THE LIP(S)

{{dance break}}

THE GIRLS ALL LOVE VON HONKENSCHNOZZ BECAUSE HE HAS NO FLAWS
CLOP, CLIP, CLOP, WHEN YOU TAKE UP WITH ME YOU SEE YOU'RE AT THE VERY TOP.

MY DEAR,
I'M SURE YOU WILL AGREE NOW
SEE HERE, MY SUIT CAN'T BE DENIED!
UPON MY ARM YOU'RE SURE TO CHARM, WE'LL SET THE WORLD ABLAZE
WITH MY MAGNIFICENCE, AND YOUR EXQUISITE FACE
AND YOU WILL SHARE THE WILD APPLAUSE OF WHICH I AM THE CAUSE
THE CELEBRATED COUNT VON HONKENSCHNOZZ

CVH

Und don't forget, venn you marry a count, you get to be a countess!

LIZZIE

It all sounds very nice, your excellency. I'm just not sure I could . . . that I could . . . be happy . . . uhm . . . so far away from my . . . father.

CVH

I'm sure he vill visit often. (to CROOK) Und zat reminds me, Herr Robberson. I have been very open about my finances. Und you have promised ze same. Not to make light of zee *connubial bliss* zat your daughter and I vill soon be enjoying. (he chucks LIZZIE under the chin, she shudders visibly) But I would not haff come zeez four zouzand miles just for a pretty girl!

CROOK

You have nothing to worry about on that score, Count! This here's gold country and the Robberson Real Estate Company has done very well exploiting it.

CVH

Ja. Vell, I haff heard zat ze gold is—how you say—*played out* in zeez mountains.

CROOK

Who told you that?

CVH

Some fellows on ze train from Denver. Zay said zere is no gold. . . . Unless you count ze Lost Horse mine. Zat might have been real.

("Lost Horse Mine" music plays
briefly)

CROOK

I wouldn't pay attention to gossip on the train, Count. As to my finances, let's not talk business tonight. My daughter knows nothing about how I make my money and would be bored. And you two lovebirds need to get acquainted! Come to the bank tomorrow at noon, Your Excellency, and I will show you all my accounts. You will find them more than adequate.

CVH

Very vell, I vill meet you at zee bank precisely at noon tomorrow.

CROOK

And now, Your Excellency, dinner awaits. Right this way, please.

(he motions for CVH to exit)

(to CARLOTTA) Show His Excellency into the dining room.

CVH

Bitte, just call me "Honk." (he laughs with honking sound)

(CVH exits after CARLOTTA. CROOK starts to follow, but LIZZIE stops him)

LIZZIE

Father, I can't marry him.

CROOK

You'll marry whoever I say. And I say you'll marry the count.

LIZZIE

But Father, I could never love him.

CROOK

You don't have to love him. All you have to do is marry him.

LIZZIE

But isn't love—

CROOK

You stupid girl! Love has nothing to do with marriage. You think I loved your mother?

LIZZIE

Didn't you?

CROOK

No. I married her because she was the boss's daughter. Of course, it helped that she was a looker.

LIZZIE

But Father, I'm not like you. I must be in love with the man I marry.

CROOK

Forget it! . . . Love's as big a fairy tale as the Lost Horse Mine. So just get it through your head that you're going to marry the count! Tomorrow, if we can arrange it.

LIZZIE

No! Please, Father! Don't make me marry him!

CROOK

(raises hand) Don't defy me, daughter! And don't you dare start crying or I'll really give you something to cry about! (indicating dining room) Now get in there and make that old moneybags think he's getting a deal.

(CROOK pushes LIZZIE ahead of him
as they exit; lights down, end of scene)

Act I

Scene 7

Setting: The humble abode of the WIDOW BEASLEY and her son BURP. This could be as little as a table set with wooden bowls in front of the curtain.

(enter BURP)

BURP

Mother, I'm home!

(enter WIDOW BEASLEY)

WIDOW BEASLEY

Burpram Beasley! Where *have* you been? I was so worried!

BURP

I'm sorry, Mother. It couldn't be helped. You see, I have secured employment, and the boss wanted me to start right away.

WIDOW BEASLEY

Saints be praised! So now we can hold body and soul together at least, in our humble and reduced circumstances.

BURP

Yes, Mother.

WB

What kind of work is it, Son? It's not in the mines, surely?

BURP

No, Mother. Not *in* the mines. I work for a real estate company. We *sell* the mines.

WB

Oh, my Burp's got himself an office job! He's going to be wearing a white collar and be far from dirt and danger.

BURP

Yes, Mother. And I can use what I learned in that mail-order law course.

WB

To think, it actually paid off! So, tell me, what is this boss of yours like?

BURP

His name's Crook Robberson and he's rich. Richest man in five counties, he said.

WB

Rich is good.

BURP

He's about your age.

WB

Quite young, then.

BURP

And I'd say he's a pretty hardnosed businessman.

WB

You can learn a lot from a man like that.

BURP

And he's got a daughter.

WB

A daughter! That's the best news of all! Have you seen her? How old is she?

BURP

I haven't seen her, but she's old enough to get married, because some foreign royalty is coming this very night just for that purpose.

WB

Oh, no! Maybe the marriage can still be called off!

BURP

What for?

WB

So that you can marry her, of course!

BURP

Mother, you can't just up and marry someone! She has a say in it, too.
Besides, if I'm to marry the boss's daughter, shouldn't I be in love with her first?

WB

Foolish boy! Love has nothing to do with marriage.

BURP

It doesn't?

WB

Oh my son! You have so much to learn.

(SONG: "MARRY THE BOSS'S
DAUGHTER")

LOVE IS HARD, AND LOVE IS CRUEL
AND LOVE IS A BITTER CUP.
IF YOU FALL IN LOVE YOU'RE A FOOL
FOR LOVE WILL TAKE YOUR HEART AND RIP IT ALL UP
DISASTER'S THE GENERAL RULE

BUT, IF YOU GIVE UP ALL THE MUSHY STUFF
THEN YOU WILL FIND THAT MONEY IS ENOUGH

IN FACT IT'S EVEN BETTER, IT'S FRIEND WHO'LL NEVER SAY NO
IT'S A COMFORT, IT'S A PLEASURE, IT'S A SUMMER DAY, SO

IF YOUR BOSS HAS GOT A FEMALE HEIR, THEN
YOU WILL FIND YOUR FORTUNE WAITING THERE

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF SHE'S HOT, WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU HAVE GOT
HER
MARRY THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER!

LOVE IS FALSE, AND LOVE IS A BANE
AND LOVE IS A GYPSY'S CURSE
LOVE WILL DRIVE YOU SLOWLY INSANE
FOR LOVE WILL MAKE YOU SEE THAT NOTHING IS WORSE
THAN LOVE'S UNENDING PAIN

BUT, IF YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON ALL THAT ROT, THEN
YOU WILL FIND THAT MONEY DOES A LOT

TO SATISFY, TO GRATIFY, TO SET THE BALL IN PLAY, OH
YOU CAN GET IT EASILY THE GOOD OLD FASHIONED WAY, SO

GO AND WIN THE BOSS'S FEMALE SCION

THAT'S THE MOVE THAT YOU CAN BEST RELY ON

SHE MAY NOT DESIRE YOU,
BUT HE WILL NEVER FIRE YOU, SO

PLEASE THE OLD MATER ("MAYTER")
DON'T DO IT LATER

GO OUT AND GET HER
DON'T BE A QUITTER

DO IT FOR YOUR DEAR OLD MATTER ("MAWTER")
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

MARRY THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER!
{{REPRISES}}

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF SHE'S OLD, OR SHE'S A SOT, OR SHE'S A SCOLD
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU HAVE GOT HER
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
MARRY THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER!

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF SHE'S BIG, OR SHE'S A TART, OR SHE'S A PIG
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU HAVE GOT HER
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
MARRY THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER!

DO IT FOR YOUR DEAR OLD MATTER (MAH TER)
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
MARRY THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER!)

WB

The only thing better than marrying the boss's daughter is marrying the boss himself. But that option is not available to you, of course. . . . Not for another hundred years, I would say.

BURP

I see. I have one question. Does this mean that you didn't love my father?

WB

(upset) Your *father*?! (relieved) Oh, you mean Billy Bob!

BURP

Weren't you in love with him?

WB

I was very fond of Billy Bob Beasley—your *father*. But ours was a marriage of practicality. . . . Poor man, he promised me he was going to strike it rich.

BURP

(looking around) I guess that didn't pan out.

WB

No. Although just before he died, he thought he'd found something. But it doesn't help us now. So that's where the boss's daughter comes in.

BURP

Mother, I'm not going to make a fool of myself with the poor girl. Besides, I could lose my job. The thought of me with his daughter made Mr. Robberson very angry.

WB

Oh, dear! We'll just have to hope that fate brings you together with the girl in spite of him. But in case it doesn't, dear Burpram, I want you to promise me one thing.

BURP

Anything, Mother, for you.

WB

Promise me that you'll only marry a rich woman.

BURP

Mother!

WB

Burpram, it would be a solace to your dear mother in her declining years to know that her son married well.

BURP

Alright, Mother. For your sake, I promise I will only marry a rich woman.

WB

That's my boy! Now come and have some humble gruel.

Act I
Scene 8

Setting: LIZZIE's boudoir after the big dinner with the CVH.
(enter LIZZIE, followed by CARLOTTA.
LIZZIE throws herself down,
distraught and weeping)

LIZZIE

Oh Carlotta! I can't marry him! I can't! I can't!

CARLOTTA

Truly, Miss, the honking alone would drive you insane. And there's the matter of his age! And what if your children took after him?

LIZZIE

I shall have to kill myself! I shall have to throw myself into the lake or under the next train, or jump off the mountain, or take poison, or—

CARLOTTA

Perhaps there's another way, Miss.

LIZZIE

Oh yes, stabbing and shooting. I was getting to that.

CARLOTTA

No, Miss. A way to not marry the count without having to kill yourself.

LIZZIE

Tell me!

CARLOTTA

You can run away. And I will go with you. There's nothing for me here without you!

LIZZIE

Oh, Carlotta! Yes! We can go to Cripple Creek. My godmother lives there. She surely would hide us, until we can think of some place else to go.

CARLOTTA

It's quite a long hike, but the trail south of town goes over the mountain and right into Cripple Creek.

LIZZIE

South of town. Yes. We should start right away. . . . Oh, I just thought of something.

CARLOTTA

What is that, Miss?

LIZZIE

We'll need resources. . . . Money. And alas, I have none. Father never gives me anything!

CARLOTTA

And I have less than nothing with the chintzy wage he pays! What about your mother's jewels? We could pawn them.

LIZZIE

Oh, Carlotta! They're just paste. Father sold the real ones long ago.

CARLOTTA

Such a shame.

LIZZIE

There *is* one thing of value I know of. But we'd have to get our hands on it.

CARLOTTA

What is that, Miss?

LIZZIE

It's a big gold nugget that looks just like a horse's . . . well, a horse's . . .

CARLOTTA

Pompas? Nalgas? Badonkadonk?

LIZZIE

Yes. Exactly like a horse's hind end. I've seen my father with it. It's in the safe at his office.

CARLOTTA

But how will we get it?

LIZZIE

Carlotta, you will get it!

CARLOTTA

I?

LIZZIE

You, because I have to be over the mountain before my father realizes I am gone.

CARLOTTA

What must I do?

LIZZIE

My father will be at the bank at noon tomorrow to show the Count his money.

CARLOTTA

So we count on the count to be counting the account with your father at the bank?

LIZZIE

Yes. At exactly noon you slip into his office and take the nugget.

CARLOTTA

But you said the nugget is locked in the safe.

LIZZIE

The combination is carved into the left side of the top drawer of his desk.

CARLOTTA

But what if someone should see me? A woman of the working class snooping in the drawers, picking the locks? I could be arrested.

LIZZIE

That gives me an idea! You will dress up in my sumptuous and expensive clothing. If anyone asks, you say you are me, Lizzie Robberson. My father has kept me so hidden, hardly anyone in town knows what I look like.

CARLOTTA

I'm beginning to understand! And you, Miss?

LIZZIE

I shall put on your simple but strangely alluring attire and become Carlotta!

CARLOTTA

So I shall be the bunny in the golden hutch. I have often wondered how it feels to be rich and want for nothing.

LIZZIE

And I shall be the vamp! I have often envied you the freedom to be so . . . so . . .
free!

(Song: "BUNNY/VAMP REPRISE)

LIZZIE: I'M THE GIRL WITH THE SAUCY LITTLE SMILE

I'M THE ONE WHO WILL GO THE EXTRA MILE

THE ONE YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU DIM . . .

{{Spoken: "I think I might like being the vamp!"}}

CARLOTTA: YOU SEE I'M ONLY A BUNNY IN A GOLDEN HUTCH.

AND THOUGH I'M SAFE FROM THE WORLD,

I MISS THE SUN'S GENTLE TOUCH.

OH, I HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY FOR JEW'LS AND SUCH

BUT IT'S NOT MONEY I WANT, NOT VERY MUCH

LIZZIE: WHEN THE WORKING DAY IS OVER, AND YOU'VE EARNED THAT EXTRA DIME, I'M THE GIRL WHO BEST CAN SHOW YOU A GOOD TIME
I'M THE GIRL WHO SEEMS BAD, BUT IN THE END, I'M THE ONE WHO WILL BE YOUR TRUEST FRIEND, THE ONE WHO'LL KEEP YOU FROM THE COLD AND DAMP

OH, YOU KNOW IT'S SO, 'CUZ BABY, I'M THE VAMP
OH, YOU KNOW IT'S SO, 'CUZ BABY, I'M THE VAMP

CARLOTTA: OH, IF ONLY THIS BUNNY COULD ESCAPE HER JAIL
WHY I WOULD KICK UP MY HEELS AND HIT THE WIDE OPEN TRAIL
AND I WOULD RUN SO FREE, NO ONE WOULD KNOW IT WAS ME
LET IT BE SO, LET ME GO

CARLOTTA

Tomorrow, Miss, go down to breakfast at the usual time. Pretend to be willing to marry the count. Afterward, you'll start over the mountain to Cripple Creek dressed as me. And I, dressed as you, will follow as soon as I can procure the gold nugget.

LIZZIE

Oh, my sister! Salvation is just over the mountain!

(SONG: Bunny/Vamp Reprise 2)

LIZZIE: I'M THE GIRL WHO SEEMS BAD BUT IN THE END I'M THE ONE WHO WILL BE YOUR TRUEST FRIEND. YOU KNOW IT'S SO, 'CUZ BABY, I'M THE VAMP. OH, YOU KNOW IT'S SO, 'CUZ BABY, I'M THE VAMP. YOU KNOW IT'S SO, 'CUZ BABY, I'M THE VAMP.

CARLOTTA: YOU SEE I'M ONLY A BUNNY IN A GOLDEN HUTCH, AND IT'S MY FREEDOM I WANT, AND I WANT IT SO MUCH. AND I WOULD RUN SO FREE! LET IT BE SO, LET ME GO.

(LIZZIE and CARLOTTA embrace;
lights down, end of scene, end of ACT I)

ENTR'ACTE

ACT II
Scene 1

Setting: The next morning. The Robberson Real Estate Office.

At Rise: CROOK, BUCK, and BURP are present.

CROOK

(to Buck) So, Mr. Worthington. You wish to purchase the Lizzie Mine?

BUCK

Yes, sir.

CROOK

I always considered the Lizzie one of my poorer properties. There was a time I would have been happy just to get the price of digging the shaft out of her. But now that Mr. Beasley has shown me *this*, I'm not sure I want to part with the mine at all.

(CROOK holds the NUGGET aloft as the
"nugget music" sounds briefly)

BUCK

I'm prepared to offer a fair price, sir, taking into account the mine's improved outlook.

CROOK

From the looks of this (holding nugget up again) I'm not sure I should sell at any price. It's the finest gold I've ever seen. Now I'm a rich man, but if I hold on to the Lizzie, I could be richer by far, and I *like* being rich.

BUCK

Well, sir, I have five hundred dollars. (gives wallet to CROOK) It's my entire life savings.

CROOK

(dismissively) Mr. Worthington, if you found even one more nugget like this one in the Lizzie, you would have made up that price ten times over.

BUCK

(drawing out a little purse and handing it over) There's two hundred and fifty more dollars. It's the legacy my father left me when he perished off the coast of Newfoundland in a fearsome nor'easter.

CROOK

I'm sorry, Mr. Worthington, but it's small potatoes compared with the property's obvious worth. (he starts to give back BUCK's money)

BUCK

(pulling a brooch from another pocket) Here is my grandmother's diamond brooch. She bade me on her deathbed to give it only to the woman I would marry. But she would understand that I need the means to send my brother to the seminary and to pay for my sister's operation so that she might one day walk again.

CROOK

(examining the brooch) And you really have nothing else?

BUCK

Nothing, sir, but a large collection of western literature. It's all I have to my name.

CROOK

(disparagingly) Your offer is awfully meager, Mr. Worthington, I'm sorry to say. The Lizzie is on the order of the Cripple Creek strike. It'll make a fortune for the man willing to work her.

BUCK

And that I am, sir. I'll be down there working night and day.

CROOK

Well, I am getting on in years. I may not have the stamina or strength to fully exploit the Lizzie's riches. So, young man, I'll do you a big favor. We have a deal. (he signs a paper, then gives it to BUCK) Sign here and the Lizzie is yours.

BUCK

Thank you, sir! Thank you!

(BUCK signs, CROOK and BUCK shake hands, BURP and BUCK shake hands)

CROOK

Congratulations, Mr. Worthington. You're going to be a very rich man. What am I saying? You *are* a very rich man!

(Song: "YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW")

CROOK: GET YOUR HIGH TOP HAT, GET YOUR SILK CRAVAT.

YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

GET YOUR FINE CIGARS, GET YOUR MOTOR CARS.

YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

SOCIETY OPENS UP ITS DOORS FOR YOU.

JUST THINK ALL THE THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO.

NOW YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO!

{{Spoken line CROOK: "Tell him, Beasley!" }}

BURP: GET YOUR FANCY WATCH, GET YOUR WELL-AGED SCOTCH.
YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!
GET YOUR GOLD-TOPPED CANE, GET YOUR PRIVATE TRAIN.
YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

THE WORLD IS LAID OUT ON A PLATE FOR YOU.
SO TAKE FROM IT ALL THAT YOU CAN CHEW.
AND HOLY COW, YOU SHOULD TAKE A BOW, FOR
YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

BUCK: THANK YOU, GENTLEMEN, I'M SURE I'M MUCH OBLIGED
ALL THAT YOU HAVE SAID IS VERY KIND.
THOUGH YOUR ADMONITIONS ALL ARE FAIR AND WISE
I AM JUST NOT SURE THEY'RE WHAT I HAD IN MIND.

{{Spoken interlude while piano vamps}}

(aside) Sucker! CROOK

I beg your pardon? BUCK

I said, "Good luck, sir." CROOK

BUCK
Thank you. I don't want to be ruined by quick success like Tex Goldstein in
Standoff at Gory Gulch.

CROOK
Nonsense my boy! As a rich man you have an important role to play. People
expect it of you.

{{Song begins again}}

BUCK: THANK YOU, GENTLEMEN I'M SURELY GRATIFIED. I SEE I HAVE DUTIES
TO FULFIL. CAN YOU PLEASE JUST RUN THAT BY AGAIN FOR ME? FOR THEN I
CAN SEE, JUST WHAT I SHOULD BE.

CROOK: GO GET YOUR GOURMET MEALS.
BURP: YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

CROOK: GO GET YOUR SWEETHEART DEALS.
BURP: YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

CROOK: GO GET YOUR OPERA BOX.
BURP: YOU ARE RICH!

CROOK: GO GET YOUR BONDS AND STOCKS.
BURP: YOU ARE RICH!

CROOK: GO GET YOUR PIN-STRIPED PANTS.
BURP: YOU ARE RICH!

CROOK: GO GET YOUR ARROGANCE.
BURP: YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

CROOK: GO GET YOUR HIGH-TONED SPOUSE.
BURP: AND ENORMOUS HOUSE.
CROOK AND BURP: YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

BURP: GO GET YOUR CUTE FRENCH MAID.
CROOK: GET HER PROMPTLY —
BUCK: [interjecting quickly last word] PAID!
CROOK AND BURP: YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

CROOK: SOCIETY OPENS UP ITS DOORS FOR YOU.
BURP: THERE'S OH SO MUCH MORE FOR YOU.

CROOK: JUST THINK, ALL THE THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO
BURP: THE THINGS YOU CAN DO!

CROOK: NOW YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO
BURP: YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO.

BUCK: I'LL GET MY HIGH TOP HAT, AND MY SILK CRAVAT.
BURP: GO GET YOUR SILK CRAVAT
CROOK: GO GET YOUR HAT AND CRAVAT

BUCK: I'M A RICH MAN NOW!
BURP: HE'S A RICH, HE'S A RICH MAN NOW
CROOK: HE'S A RICH, HE'S A RICH MAN NOW

BUCK: I'LL GET MY FINE CIGARS, AND MY MOTOR CARS.
BURP: GO GET YOUR MOTOR CARS
CROOK: GO GET CIGARS, GET YOUR CARS

BUCK: I'M A RICH MAN NOW.
BURP: HE'S A RICH, HE'S A RICH MAN NOW
CROOK: HE'S A RICH, HE'S A RICH MAN NOW

BUCK: THE WORLD IS LAID OUT ON A PLATE FOR ME
BURP: THE WORLD IS LAID OUT ON A PLATE FOR YOU.
CROOK: THE WORLD IS LAID OUT ON A PLATE FOR YOU.

BUCK: AND DOORS ALL ARE OPEN TO ME TOO
BURP: AND DOORS ALL ARE OPEN TO YOU TOO
CROOK: AND DOORS ALL ARE OPEN TO YOU TOO

BUCK: IT'S ALL SO NEW, IS IT REALLY TRUE?

BURP: YES, YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW.
CROOK: YES, YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW.
BUCK: THEN, HOLY COW, I SHOULD TAKE A BOW, FOR I'M A RICH MAN NOW!
BURP: YES, GO AND TAKE A BOW. FOR YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!
CROOK: GO GET THAT COW. TAKE A BOW. FOR YOU'RE A RICH MAN NOW!

CROOK

It's been a pleasure doing business with you, Mr. Worthington. I'm sure we'll be seeing each other soon as members of the exclusive Century Club.

BUCK

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. I'm going to get right to work on the Lizzie. Good day.
(BUCK exits)

CROOK

Not a bad morning's work, eh Beasley? Now that you see how it's done, you and I are going to make a killing fleecing the rubes. Did you hear? He owns a "large collection of western literature"! (checking time) It's nearly noon. I have an important meeting at the bank. You take care of the office. (hands BURP the nugget) And see that this gets to where it rightfully belongs.

BURP

Yes, sir.

(CROOK gathers up money and the contract and exits; BURP is left looking at the NUGGET; lights down)

ACT II

Scene 2

Setting: The interior of the Lizzie Mine on one side of the stage, looking out, with mountain backdrop on the other.

(LIZZIE, dressed as Carlotta, enters)

LIZZIE

I've been climbing all morning and I'm nowhere near the top! (sees mine entrance, reads sign) "Lizzie Mine." This place has my name on it! I'll rest for a few minutes out of the sun before I press on to Cripple Creek.

(she enters the mine and sits down)

Oh, I'm so tired. So sleepy. I'll lie down (she lies down, yawns) just . . . for . . . a . . . moment. (she relaxes into sleep)

(enter BUCK outside the mine, pulling Plato, loaded with a rifle, a lantern, and the book collection. He is humming "You're a Rich Man Now.")

BUCK

So, Plato, just as I was saying—I do a little digging, you do a little hauling and our fortune's made. Me in clover, and you in—well, clover.

(Sound of donkey braying)

You're right, of course, I shouldn't jump the gun. And speaking of guns (he picks up rifle) I'd better make sure there's no one inside of the ursine persuasion. . . . Sorry, Plato, I didn't mean to talk over your head. "Ursine" refers to bears.

(Sound of donkey braying)

You did *not* know that! Stop trying to impress me. In any case, I'm going to let that bear know that there's a new owner and he'd better scam (takes lantern, lights it) I'll take this, too. It's no doubt darker than a bear's insides in there.

(BUCK enters mine with rifle and lantern; almost stumbles over LIZZIE, jumps back and examines her with wonder)

What in blazes?! That's no bear!

(LIZZIE sits up; BUCK jumps, gun discharges in air and LIZZIE screams)

(flustered) Pardon me, Ma'am. I thought you were a bear. You see, I've heard that a bear lives in here. . . . But you're sure the prettiest bear I ever saw.

(they look at each other raptly for next several exchanges)

The name's Buck Worthington, Ma'am. I'm the new owner of this mine.

LIZZIE

(flustered as well) Please forgive me, Mr. Worthington. I didn't mean to trespass. I've been hiking up the trail since early morning and it was so hot and I was so tired and I must have fallen asleep. I'll just be on my way. So sorry to have troubled you.

BUCK

No harm done, Ma'am. You can trespass on my property any time. I didn't catch your name—

LIZZIE

Carlotta. Carlotta Costus-Lostus. I work as a chamber maid down in the city.
(abashed) Excuse me for staring. You see, I don't often meet young men.

BUCK

That's unusual. In my experience young ladies in your profession are frequently seen in the company of young men.

LIZZIE

My mistress doesn't get out much. (still staring) You're so . . . so

BUCK

(preening) Yes, it *is* remarkable, isn't it? (posing) Check out my profile. (changes pose) And how about this angle?

(Enter BEAR; LIZZIE is facing it, BUCK has back to it, LIZZIE'S look turns to horror)

I know! Sometimes my good looks even scare *me!*

LIZZIE

(pointing behind BUCK) No. There's a . . . a . . . a

(BUCK turns, sees BEAR, yells, and tosses rifle in the air; BEAR catches it; BUCK and LIZZIE back away; LIZZIE clings to BUCK)

LIZZIE

What do we do?

(still holding rifle, BEAR sits down and curls up in front of the mine entrance, cutting off couple's escape)

BUCK

(picking up lantern) As long as we've got a fire burning I think we'll be alright.

LIZZIE

I'm so grateful you were here, Mr. Worthington.

BUCK

Just call me Buck.

LIZZIE

If you hadn't come in when you did, Buck, that bear might have just eaten me up. But you're so big and strong, he wouldn't dare!

BUCK

I'm glad I'm here to protect you, Miss Costus-Lostus.

LIZZIE

Please, just call me Liz—er, Carlotta.

BUCK

(savoring sound of name) Carlotta. . . . Of course, it would have been better if I hadn't lost my gun. Now we have to wait until he leaves.

LIZZIE

Oh, I don't mind. It's kind of nice sitting here with you. I never imagined being trapped in a dirty cave with a bear could be nice.

BUCK

Being trapped anywhere with you would be nice in my book, Carlotta. (they stare at each other adoringly) Sooo . . . since you don't see many young men, I don't suppose you've been kissed very often.

LIZZIE

I've never been kissed.

BUCK

Would you like to be?

LIZZIE

Very much.

(BUCK kisses LIZZIE)

BUCK

What did you think?

LIZZIE

I think I need more practice.

(LIZZIE and BUCK kiss; lights down)

ACT II

Scene 3

Setting: The Robberson Real Estate Office at around noon. The office is empty.

(CARLOTTA, dressed as Lizzie, enters furtively. Looking around, she opens top drawer of desk, sees combination, then goes to safe and opens it; enter BURP from back room, polishing the NUGGET; BURP watches CARLOTTA; she does not see him; she rummages inside safe, not finding what she is looking for)

BURP

Excuse me, Ma'am. May I help you?

(CARLOTTA turns abruptly, slamming
door of safe shut behind her)

CARLOTTA

(composing herself) Oh! You startled me! I didn't know anyone was here.

BURP

Pardon my frankness, Miss, but it's not entirely proper to be helping oneself to
the contents of someone else's safe without permission.

CARLOTTA

Oh, but it's not without permission! You see, I'm Lizzie Robberson.

BURP

Well, I'm Burpram Beasley and Mr. Robberson asked me to—wait a minute!

CARLOTTA

He asked you to wait a minute?

BURP

(realizing) You're his daughter!

(offstage voice of WIDOW BEASLEY is
heard saying "Marry the boss's
daughter" possibly with lots of reverb)

You're the boss's daughter! (BURP stares at her in wonder.)

CARLOTTA

Yes, I am. (growing nervous under his stare) Is there something wrong with
that?

BURP

No! No! Not at all.

CARLOTTA

(forging ahead) You see, my father asked me to fetch something for him.

BURP

And what might that something be?

CARLOTTA

It's a gold nugget, shaped just like a horse's—well, like a horse's . . .

BURP

Behind?

CARLOTTA

Yes, exactly like a horse's behind.

BURP

(holds up NUGGET, "nugget music" sounds briefly) Might this be the item in question?

CARLOTTA

Yes, that's it! If you'll just give it to me, I'll take it right to father. (she reaches for it)

(Offstage voice of CROOK saying, "See that this gets to where it rightfully belongs" possibly with lots of reverb)

BURP

(pulls NUGGET away) I'm sorry, Miss, but I can't do that. Your father didn't say anything about you coming to fetch it. I'm his assistant, you see, and he has entrusted me with the care of his property.

CARLOTTA

I do appreciate your devotion to my father's interests, but I assure you he has asked me to take this to him right away. He's over at the bank.

(offstage voice of WIDOW BEASLEY saying "Marry the boss's daughter.")

BURP

That checks out. He *is* at the bank.

CARLOTTA

So, if I might just have the nugget, I will no longer trouble you. (holds out her hand)

(offstage voice of CROOK saying, "See that this gets to where it rightfully belongs")

BURP

Tell you what, Miss Robberson. We'll go together to the bank. That way I can fulfill my duty to your father and oblige a lady at the same time.

CARLOTTA

Oh, but you must stay here and manage the office! . . . Please, you *must* give it to me!

(she tries to grab the NUGGET, and as BURP pulls it away, she falls into him, their gazes lock; she steps away; looks down, ashamed)

You give me no choice but to tell you the truth and fall at your mercy. You see, my father plans to marry me off to an old man whom I cannot love—just to get his money! So I'm running away. I have no resources and not a friend in the world to help me, so I was going to steal the nugget.

BURP

But surely your father is only trying to do what's best for you.

CARLOTTA

(making eye contact with him again) Don't you understand?

(Song: "I WILL MARRY FOR LOVE")

FATHER SAID THAT I SHOULD BE WED
AND THE REASON WHY I CAN TELL
I'M AN ASSET TO MARKET, ONE MORE THING HE CAN SELL
IN RETURN HE SAID I WOULD EARN LOTS OF PRETTY MONEY AND GOLD
HE THINKS I SHOULD BE HAPPY,
THOUGH IT'S LIFELESS AND COLD
IT'S A LIE THAT HAS OFTEN BEEN TOLD.

OUT THERE, FLOWERS IN THE MEADOW HAVE WORTH JUST TO BE
AND SOMEWHERE THERE'S A MAN WHO'S WILLING TO SEE
IF THAT MAN COULD UNDERSTAND, LIKE THE SUNLIT GOLD ON THE BLUFF
THERE'S A GIFT FREELY GIVEN, AND FOR ME IT'S ENOUGH
IF I CAN, I WILL FIND THAT MAN, THOUGH HIM I KNOW NOT OF

FATHER, LOOK AT ME NOW!
HEAVEN WITNESS MY VOW!
I WILL MARRY FOR LOVE.

FATHER, LOOK AT ME NOW!
HEAVEN WITNESS MY VOW!
I WILL MARRY FOR LOVE.

(BURP and CARLOTTA gaze at each other; offstage voice of WB is heard saying "Marry the boss's daughter." Offstage voice of CROOK saying "Where it rightfully belongs"; again offstage voice of WB saying "Boss's daughter" and offstage voice of CROOK saying "Rightfully belongs"; a small pause for suspense)

BURP

Miss Robberson, not only will I give you the nugget (holds out NUGGET to her), but I will help you run away.

CARLOTTA

(she takes nugget, then impulsively embraces BURP) Thank you!

BURP

Have you any thought of where to go?

CARLOTTA

I have a godmother in Cripple Creek. I think she will help me.

BURP

The path south of town goes right into Cripple Creek. I will escort you there, Miss Robberson.

CARLOTTA

Please, call me Lizzie.

BURP

Lizzie.

CARLOTTA

And what did you say your name was?

BURP

(looking ashamed) Burp.

CARLOTTA

Burp? Like (here makes little gesture as though burping)?

BURP

Yup.

CARLOTTA

(laughs, composes herself) Forgive me! How ever did you get a name like that?

BURP

It's a long story. I'll tell you on the way. Now we had better get out of here before your father returns. . . . I'll face the consequences later. Let's go!

(BURP escorts CARLOTTA out and
locks door behind them; they exit;
lights down)

ACT II

Scene 4

Setting: The inside of the Lizzie Mine on one side of the stage; the outside mountain backdrop on the other side.

At Rise: LIZZIE and BUCK are asleep next to each other on the mine floor, BUCK sans shirt; the BEAR is gone, leaving Buck's rifle. Plato the donkey stands outside.

BUCK

(wakes up, sees LIZZIE next to him, jumps up panicked) What in tarnation!? Carlotta! Oh, Carlotta! What did we do!?!?

(grabs his shirt and rifle, runs outside)

Plato! Thank heavens you're still here! Something's happened!

(sound of donkey braying)

Of course, it has to do with the girl in the mine! What did you think—it was the bear? The bear! (looking around) Whew! Looks like he's gone, at least.

(sound of donkey braying)

Her name's Carlotta.

(sound of donkey braying)

Well, what happened was that I gotta lotta Carlotta. . . . More than I outta. What should I do?

(sound of donkey braying)

Great idea, Plato! Straight-Shot McCann was in a similar situation in *Mountains Move Men*. I'll see what he did. (he rummages in the books on Plato's back and pulls one out, flips it open, reads) "He gazed upon her alabaster mounds." No. No. After that. Ah, here it is. (reading) "He realized that against all odds, he loved her, so Straight-Shot went directly to the nearest preacher to make an honest woman of her. They were married on the spot." (thinks a moment) You know, Plato, life really does imitate art. I *do* love her. And if she'll have me, we'll be married.

(sound of donkey braying; BUCK runs back into the mine to LIZZIE)

(shaking her gently awake) Carlotta! Carlotta!

LIZZIE

(waking up) Carlotta? Right, *Carlotta*. Buck! You're really here. It wasn't a dream!

BUCK

No, it wasn't a dream. And Carlotta, I realize that against all odds, I love you. Will you marry me?

LIZZIE

Oh, Buck! I love you too! . . . But I haven't been completely honest with you.

BUCK

Oh, no! You're pledged to another! Just like Maizy in *The Saddle Sore Saloon!*

LIZZIE

No, *I* have never pledged myself to another. (under her breath) No matter what my father thinks.

BUCK

I didn't catch that last part.

LIZZIE

Buck, my name's not really Carlotta. It's Lizzie. Lizzie Robberson.

BUCK

Robberson. You're Crook Robberson's daughter! The feller I bought this mine from.

LIZZIE

Yes, I'm his daughter. And I'm here because I'm running away.

BUCK

Running away?

LIZZIE

My father is trying to make me marry a man I don't love, just for his money.

BUCK

But you don't love him.

LIZZIE

No. I love you.

BUCK

Well, I don't recall reading about a situation like this one, but it seems to me that you should marry the man you love. Am I right?

LIZZIE

Yes! Yes!

BUCK

So, Lizzie, will you marry me?

LIZZIE

(about to say yes, then catches herself) There *is* one more thing.

BUCK

What's that?

LIZZIE

My whole life my father has made me promise only to marry a rich man. I should at least keep that promise, because, you see, in spite of everything I *do* love my father. So, Buck, are you a rich man?

BUCK

(after a pause) Heck, yes, I'm a rich man! Your father told me so himself when he sold me this here Lizzie Mine!

LIZZIE

In that case, my father would surely approve. So, yes, Buck, I'll marry you!
(LIZZIE and BUCK exit the mine)

(Song: "BETTER THAN THE BOOKS")

BUCK: WHAT A WORLD IT IS SO
FULL OF BEAUTY
WILD AND BOUNDLESS AND VAST

WHAT A WONDER THAT
YOU ARE HERE AND THAT
I HAVE FOUND YOU SO FAST!

LIZZIE: WHAT A WORLD IT IS SO
FULL OF BEAUTY
WILD AND BOUNDLESS AND VAST

WHAT A WONDER THAT
YOU ARE HERE AND THAT
I HAVE FOUND YOU SO FAST!

BUCK: IT'S BETTER THAN THE BOOKS ... I'VE READ
LIZZIE: IT'S BETTER THAN THE PRAYERS ... I'VE SAID
B & L: IT'S BETTER THAN THE WISH I MADE ON A STAR
LIZZIE: SO FAR AWAY.

B & L: OH, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT BUT IT'S
BETTER THAN THE SONGS ... I'VE HEARD
IT'S BETTER THAN THE FLIGHT ... OF BIRDS
IT'S BETTER THAN THE POETS' WORDS
IT'S GOT TO BE UNIQUE TO YOU AND ME

BUCK: IT'S BETTER THAN THE GAMES ... I'VE PLAYED
LIZZIE: IT'S BETTER THAN THE CAKES ... I'VE MADE
B & L: IT'S BETTER THAN THE ART DISPLAYED ON SOME OLD WALL
OH, WHAT CAN WE CALL IT?
NO ONE'S EVER FELT THIS, THIS WAY BEFORE!

WHAT A WORLD IT IS THAT
HAS THIS FEELING
WILD AND BOUNDLESS AND VAST

THERE'S NO WAY TO PORTRAY IT,
WHAT SHOULD WE SAY
IF SOMEONE SHOULD ASK?

WE MIGHT SAY
IT'S LIKE AN ACE TIMES FOUR,
LIKE A LION'S ROAR,
LIKE THE SIGHT OF SHORE
LIKE AN OPEN DOOR!

OR PERHAPS WE CAN SIMPLY SAY: WE'RE IN LOVE.

BUCK

We need to find a preacher right away.

LIZZIE

There's one down in Goldville.

BUCK

What are we waiting for? I know a short-cut. Let's go! Come on, Plato! You can be best a—, er . . . donkey!

(They exit on opposite side of stage from their entrance, pulling Plato with them. Now enter BURP and CARLOTTA from opposite side; out of breath from their flight up the mountain.)

BURP

(panting) You're awfully strong for a lady, Lizzie. I can barely keep up with you.

CARLOTTA

And you're kind of cute for a man whose name is "Burp."

BURP

I don't know about you, but I could use a little rest and I've got a rock in my boot the size of this whole mountain and getting bigger with every step. (pointing out mine entrance) This here's the Lizzie Mine. Your father just sold it this morning, but I don't think the new owner would mind if we went in to rest for a few minutes.

CARLOTTA

Yes. Let's get out of the sun. To be honest, this dress is downright stifling.

(They start to enter the mine;
CARLOTTA reaches up and feels an earring missing)

Oh! I think I dropped an earring back on the trail. You go in and I'll be right back.

(CARLOTTA exits; BURP enters mine;
sits down on rock with back to
entrance; starts removing boot; BEAR
enters unseen by BURP; makes
snuffling sound)

BURP

(thinking CARLOTTA has returned and without looking) So did you find it?

(BEAR makes a louder sound; sits
down on rock a little behind BURP,
who is still getting his boot off and
doesn't look)

Good. . . . You know, Lizzie, when I said you were awfully strong, I didn't mean it
in a bad way. I like strong women.

(BEAR claps a huge paw on BURP's
shoulder with a fair bit of force)

(looks surprised but still doesn't turn around) Of course, there's a lot to be said
for a more delicate, feminine demeanor as well. Don't you agree?

(BEAR leans in and snuffles in BURP's
ear, nods as BURP continues, making
gestures to smell his own breath and
armpits; BURP makes face as he
smells BEAR's breath, but still does
not look)

(waving smell away) Lizzie, perhaps a gentleman shouldn't broach this subject
with a lady, but you could be more attentive to your oral hygiene. There's these
newfangled things called "toothbrushes." Kind of a stick with a brush—

(CARLOTTA enters the mine, casually
replacing an earring on her ear)

CARLOTTA

I'm lucky, it had fallen into my—

(CARLOTTA sees bear and screams;
BURP jumps up, trips over his half-off
boot and falls while BEAR advances
upon him with a roar; CARLOTTA
kicks BEAR in rear; BEAR turns and
advances on her; BURP tackles BEAR
by the knees)

BURP

Run, Lizzie, run! I'll hold him as long as I can!

CARLOTTA

I'm not leaving you!

(CARLOTTA pulls out the only thing she has at hand—the NUGGET—and pokes the BEAR with it, screaming “Get!” “Scat, you!” etc.; BURP tries to get up but his boots keep tripping him; after a scuffle, the BEAR grabs the NUGGET, pops it in his mouth, swallows it with a big gulp, reels, staggers out of the mine, and exits)

CARLOTTA

(sitting down beside BURP) Are you alright?

BURP

Yes. Are *you* alright?

CARLOTTA

Not a scratch.

BURP

You saved my life!

CARLOTTA

You saved *my* life!

BURP

In truth, it was the nugget that saved us both. It’s probably the best use it ever had.

CARLOTTA

Stupid old thing! And it looked just like a horse’s—

BURP

A horse’s—

(they look at each other and giggle together for a moment)

(shyly) You know, Lizzie, I’ve never felt so at ease with a girl before—I mean, a lady.

CARLOTTA

Nor I, with a gentleman.

BURP

And now we’ve faced death together. I feel such a connection with you, I could almost . . . almost—

CARLOTTA

Yes?

BURP

I could almost ask you to marry me.

CARLOTTA

Why don't you?

BURP

Dang it! I don't have the courage. No lady would marry someone named "Burp."
"Mrs. Burp Beasley." It's just not going to happen.

CARLOTTA

Didn't you say your full name is "Burpram"?

BURP

That's right. "Burpram."

CARLOTTA

Well, instead of shortening it to "Burp," why don't you call yourself "Ram"?

BURP

(trying it out) Ram? Ram Beasley?

CARLOTTA

It's very masculine. Very . . . potent.

BURP

How do you do, Ma'am? The name's Ram. Ram Beasley. (he holds out his hand to
shake CARLOTTA's) I think I like it. . . .

(he gets up, helps CARLOTTA up, and
runs out of the mine, followed by
CARLOTTA)

Hello, World! Meet Ram Beasley!

(Song: "RAM, I AM.")

RAM. AM I RAM? I AM RAM. RAM I AM!
IT'S STRANGE, I FEEL A SURGE OF CONFIDENCE,
GLIMMERINGS OF COMPETENCE,
AND A DASH OF PRIDE.

RAM. AM I RAM? I AM RAM. RAM I AM!
OH, I CAN SEE THAT THERE'S ANOTHER ME,
LONGING TO COME OUT AND BE,
THINGS I'VE NEVER TRIED.

RAM. AM I RAM? I AM RAM. RAM I AM!

IT'S ODD, I FEEL A BURST OF BRAVERY,
SOMETHING LIKE AUDACITY,
FORTITUDE INSIDE.
IT'S JUST A NAME.
ALL THE SAME,
I'M AFLAME.

{{dance break}}

RAM & CARLOTTA: YES, I/YOU FEEL A BURST OF BRAVERY,
SOMETHING LIKE AUDACITY,
FORTITUDE INSIDE.

CARLOTTA: DON'T YOU KNOW THOUGH, YOU HAVE HAD SO MUCH OF THESE
THINGS ALL ALONG?

RAM & CARLOTTA: BUT NOW THIS MAGIC IN A MONIKER, HELPS ME/YOU BE
THE CONQUEROR, OF SELF-DOUBT AND FEAR.
FOR HE WHO FINALLY LOVES HIMSELF CAN LOVE SOMEBODY ELSE, SOME
ONE WHO'S VERY NEAR.
A NAME. JUST A NAME. ALL THE SAME. WE'RE AFLAME.

CARLOTTA

So, Ram, what was it that you wanted to ask me?
(offstage voice of WB is heard saying
"Marry the boss's daughter!" perhaps
with lots of reverb.)

RAM

Right! Lizzie, would you—? Would you—?

CARLOTTA

Yes?

RAM

Lizzie, would you—? Oh, shoot, I can't do it!

CARLOTTA

What's wrong now?

RAM

My mother made me promise to marry a rich woman. But I think it dishonorable
to marry for money. And even though I love you, I keep hearing my mother say,
"Marry the boss's daughter" and I can't be completely sure of my motives.

CARLOTTA

But surely you know that by running away, I am forfeiting all my father's
fortune?

RAM

Forgive me, Lizzie, but I figured if we were married he would have to forgive you and make me a partner in his business! And that, too, is a problem, because his wealth is ill-gotten and I want no part of it. But I may not be strong enough to resist. I respect you too much to have there be any doubt about my feelings for you.

CARLOTTA

Ram, put your mind at ease, for I am neither rich, nor is my name Lizzie Robberson!

RAM

You're not? It isn't?

CARLOTTA

No. My real name is Carlotta Costus-Lostus, Lizzie Robberson's faithful maid. I was helping her run away by stealing the nugget and bringing it to her in Cripple Creek. We thought it safest to switch identities.

RAM

(overjoyed) You're not the boss's daughter? You're not rich?

(CARLOTTA shakes her head "no")

So what you told me about being forced to marry is not true.

CARLOTTA

It's true for the real Lizzie Robberson.

RAM

And that part about how you want to marry for love and not for money?

CARLOTTA

That part's true for me as well as her.

RAM

(falling to his knee) Then, Carlotta, would you marry me?

CARLOTTA

Yes, Ram, I will marry you.

RAM

There's a preacher in Goldville. Let's do it right away. Then we'll take the coach to Cripple Creek and see what we can do to help your friend.

(hand in hand, they exit running)

ACT II

Scene 5

Setting: The Robberson Real Estate Office. Time, a few hours later.

(Enter CROOK, realizes door is locked, pulls out key, unlocks door, and goes in.)

CROOK

Beasley! What's the meaning of locking the door? Beasley? Where *is* that good-for-nothing assistant?

(enter COUNT VON HONKENSCHNOZZ)

CVH

Herr Robberson! I demand satisfaction for zees insult!

CROOK

Your Excellency! I didn't expect to see you again until the wedding this evening.

CVH

Zer vill be no vedding, Herr Robberson.

CROOK

What do you mean? It's all arranged.

CVH

Can it be zat you do not know? Vee have been robbed, Herr Robberson.

CROOK

What are you talking about, Your Excellency?

CVH

Moments ago I take ze shtroll to ze church to see vere I vill be joining in matrimony your daughter, und vat do I see? I see your daughter . . . marrying anozer man!

CROOK

What daughter? What man?

CVH

Lizzie und a young man—getting married.

CROOK

Impossible!

CVH

I assure you, it was she.

CROOK

Beasley! But how did he—? I told him to stay away from her!

CVH

Herr Robberson, in my social strata a broken engagement is a terrible insult. In four centuries it has never happened to a Honkenschnozz! I must insist that we duel!

CROOK

A duel!? But Your Excellency, dueling is so outdated, not to mention illegal.

CVH

True. . . . It would be more acceptable simply to declare war and lay waste to your villages and kidnap all your vimin!

CROOK

You can't be serious, Your Excellency!

CVH

Of course, invading Colorado from Bavaria would be tricky. Maybe I can round up some of the old gang and my Austrian cousins and invade somewhere more convenient. Bosnia Herzegovina, perhaps.

CROOK

Never heard of it.

CVH

You vill. Und now, auf Wiedersehen. May you never cease to regret that the Honkenschnozz fortune has eluded you, and that none of your grandchildren will display the noble Honkenschnozz profile. I am away on the next train east.

(CVH exits; BUCK, LIZZIE, RAM, and
CARLOTTA, now enter scene)

LIZZIE

Oh, Carlotta! To think that our fortunes have so changed in less than a day! Both of us married!

CARLOTTA

Yes, Miss, it was a surprise to meet you leaving the church as we were going in.

LIZZIE

Enough with the “Miss.” From now on, we are on equal footing. You were ready to link your fate to mine in adversity and now in prosperity we will be best friends! . . . Ah, here we are. We must tell my father.

(LIZZIE, BUCK, CARLOTTA, and RAM
enter office, CROOK glares at them)

Father! We have wonderful news.

CROOK

Daughter, you have disgraced me! I disown you! (turning to RAM) And how dare you molest her? You, you, Burp! You Belch! I’ll have you arrested!

RAM

First of all, sir, I am no longer “Burp,” but henceforth to be known as “Ram” Beasley. Second, I have no more molested your daughter than I have flown to the moon. Your daughter is now Mrs. Buck Worthington. And third, I don’t like the way you do business, so I quit—sir.

CROOK

You can’t quit! You neglected your duties, so I fired you first.

RAM

Did not.

CROOK

Did too. . . . And did you say Worthington? (to LIZZIE) Lizzie! Is this true??! You married this ne’er-do-well? This pauper? You have broken your promise to your father to only marry a rich man?

LIZZIE

But father, I *did* marry a rich man! Buck has purchased the Lizzie Mine from you, which you told him is surely the richest strike since Cripple Creek.

BUCK

Don’t you remember, sir? After you sold me the mine, you said I was a rich man. Fabulously rich. Stupendously rich. How did you put it?

(BUCK and RAM do a short reprise of
“You’re a Rich Man Now.”)

CROOK

(clutching at straws) We can have this marriage annulled! Maybe the train hasn’t left yet! Beasley! Go to the station and bring Honkenschnozz back at all costs!

RAM

Can’t do that, sir. Remember—you fired me? Besides the train has left. There’s the whistle.

(sound of train whistle)

CROOK

(breaks down sobbing) All that beautiful money! Gone! All gone!

LIZZIE

Father dear! What's wrong? Aren't you pleased that I've brought this tremendous wealth back into the family and still was able to marry the man I love?

RAM

I think, Mrs. Worthington, that your father is sorry that it will not be he himself who exploits the riches of the Lizzie Mine. In fact, no sooner had he sold it to your husband than he confided in me how much he regretted the sale. "If only I could buy it back!" he said, "I would be willing to pay a hundred times more, nay a thousand times more for it than what I sold it for."

CROOK

I said no such thing! Pay for that worthless scratch? Preposterous!

RAM

Now, now, don't deny it, sir! I know how hard it is for you to lose *both* your daughter and the fabulous mine bearing her name.

BUCK

(to CROOK) Is it true, sir, that you would buy the mine back? And at a profit for me?

CROOK

It most definitely is *not* true!

BUCK

Pity. Because, you see, mining was never really my thing.

LIZZIE

It wasn't?

BUCK

No. I'm more of a story man. And there's this place called Hollywood out in California where they're making motion pictures. It's the latest in storytelling. I figured I'd make enough out of some mine here to bankroll me in opening my own film studio out there. There are plenty of stories just waiting to be turned into moving pictures. I've got a boatload of them, and I figured I'd star in them myself—I mean, why let these good looks go to waste? And now that I have Lizzie, she'd be my leading lady. She's got the looks to do it, and no doubt the talent, too.

LIZZIE

Oh, Buck! That's just the life I would have dreamed of, if it ever had occurred to me! Oh, father, won't you buy the mine back? For me?

RAM

And Buck's not the only one with stories, sir. I've got a couple that might interest Judge McCorkle down the street. Stories about swindling land deals, fraud. And maybe your daughter would like to hear them, too.

CROOK

You wouldn't dare!

RAM

Oh, wouldn't I?

LIZZIE

Please father! If you buy the mine back, Buck and I won't have to wait to go to Hollywood, and you'll have all the mine's riches, and I know how you love money.

RAM

(picking up book from desk and handing it to CROOK) Here you are, sir. Your check book. You can write a draft on the bank right now in favor of Mr. Worthington.

CROOK

(blubbering a little) Okay, okay! I'll buy it back!

RAM

At a profit for Mr. Worthington.

CROOK

At a profit! At a profit!

(CROOK writes out check; RAM is standing looking over his shoulder)

RAM

(pointing to check) It needs a few more zeros at the end here, sir.

(CROOK looks pained but adds zeros)

(looking again) I think you can afford one more, sir.

(exasperated CROOK complies; RAM takes check from him, hands it to BUCK)

BUCK

(looking at check, overjoyed) Oh, thank you, sir! This is enough to send my brother to seminary, pay for my sister's operation, and build a whole film studio to boot!

LIZZIE

(looks at check and then embraces CROOK and kisses him) Thank you, father!
(CROOK breaks down sobbing in a chair; enter WIDOW BEASLEY)

WB

(to BURP) Oh, there you are! I've heard the most amazing news! It's just what I wished for when you told me your boss's daughter was engaged. The girl has thrown over her elderly fiancé and he was seen boarding the train in a fit of pique—whatever that is—so she's still available and you might have a go at her while she's reeling from the breakup. (looks around and sees others staring at her) Oh, am I interrupting something? I do beg your pardon.

RAM

Mother, the "girl" to whom you refer is right here (points to LIZZIE). Formerly Miss Lizzie Robberson, may I now present Mrs. Buck Worthington. She has married this gentleman of that name less than an hour ago.

WB

She's already married? So you've missed your chance. (noticing LIZZIE's outfit) Why is she wearing that rather provocative maid's outfit?

RAM

It's a disguise.

WB

Well, it doesn't disguise much! The rich really *do* have more fun. (sees CARLOTTA) And who is this lovely young thing? Perhaps you should cultivate her acquaintance.

RAM

Not only have I cultivated her acquaintance, Mother, but I have married her. Meet my wife Carlotta. Carlotta, my mother.

WB

How do you do? Well, son, I can see by her dress that you have married well.

RAM

Carlotta hasn't got a penny. Her dress is also a disguise.

WB

What is going on here? Tell me this is all a joke? Burp! Burp!

RAM

That's another thing, Mother. My name is no longer Burp. From now on, it's Ram.

WB

(making a dramatic attempt at fainting) Oh, my! It's too much for a mother to bear. He's married a poor girl and changed his name!

(she reels and threatens to faint on everyone, finally crashes onto chair out of which CROOK jumps just in time; looks dazed, but gains control of herself)

(looking up at CROOK) And who might you be?

CROOK

I am Crooksdale Robberson the third, Madam, the father of the bride, that is to say Mrs. Worthington.

WB

(interested) So you're the actual boss? And where is Mrs. Robberson, may I ask?

CROOK

Alas, gone to meet her maker many years ago.

WB

I'm sorry. Allow me to introduce myself. I am *the widow* Beasley. Did you get that? *Widow*. My son tells me you are the richest man in five counties.

CROOK

I'm afraid that is no longer true, Madam. My wealth is sadly diminished.

WB

Pity. And it seems my only offspring has married into poverty, defying his mother and breaking a sacred promise. Not to mention that he's changed his name.

CROOK

I'm afraid, Madam, that the morals of the young are not what they were when we were coming up. My own daughter has similarly defied me. And I have had to fire your son for neglecting his duties.

WB

Burp! Is this true? You've been fired?

RAM

First of all, Mother, my name is now Ram. And Robberson did not fire me. I quit.

WB

You quit?

RAM

Yes, and as to my promise, Mother, that I would marry only a rich woman. I *have* done so, for Carlotta is rich in everything I could desire. She is rich in beauty, rich in courage, rich in kindness, and rich in her love for me. Now I know that this is not the kind of wealth you intended, so I won't play games. I did break my promise, but it was a promise you had no right to extort from me. In truth, I believe that marrying for money is dishonorable and condemns one to the worst poverty of all—the poverty of living for a symbol, instead of the real thing. Mother, I have married for love and I am sorry it is a state that apparently you never knew.

(silence, then WB breaks down in slobbery sobs, snorting, and blubbing)

WB

Oh, Burp—I mean Ram! I feel so ashamed. You have acted nobly in spite of your mother and your marriage for love has awakened in me sentiments I have long thought dead. For you are wrong that I have never known love. And now I shall tell you a secret I swore to take to my grave. Ram, the man whom you knew as your father, Billy Bob Beasley, was a decent man who did well by us, but my son, he was not your real father! You, Ram, are the son of my first and only true love!

(gasps from the others)

RAM

Mother! (RAM begins to unconsciously mirror CROOK's gestures)

WB

Yes, it is true! I was in love once—many years ago. I was a mere slip of a girl.

CROOK

Oh, Madam, your confession moves me strangely! For I too have known love, many years ago. And she was but a slip of a girl. And I had such a head of raven hair!

WB

Ah, and my love also had a full head of raven hair!

CROOK

And oh, my sweetheart had the reddest lips and her hair was strawberry blond.

WB

But the reddest lips were mine back then, and my hair—it out-strawberried the strawberries! As for my love, he was solid as brick with limbs like a mighty oak!

CROOK

Back then, I too was strong as an oak.

WB

I was but newly engaged in a profession for which it is customary not to know the names of one's clients. So I never knew my true love's real name, nor did he know mine. But I called him Spanky.

CROOK

What an extraordinary coincidence, for that is exactly the term of endearment my love created for me! And I, in turn, called her Tweebles.

WB

Sir! By what remarkable twist of chance can such odds be cast?! For Tweebles was also the nickname by which my love knew me!

(WB and CROOK scrutinize each other.)

CROOK

Could it be?

WB

Could it be?

(after looking at each other for a long beat, WB and CROOK turn to audience)

CROOK AND WB

(shaking heads vigorously) Nyaah!

RAM

But Mother, what happened to tear your love for my father asunder?

WB

We had planned to run away together.

CROOK

My love and I also had planned to run away.

WB

But on the appointed day and hour as I made my way to the assigned meeting spot, I was pursued by a bear and chased up a tree! The beast kept me cornered there for two hours! When I at last I reached the spot, Spanky was not there! He had not waited. Oh man of little faith!

CROOK

And I waited for Tweebles at the location we had agreed upon, but she never came. For an hour and fifty-nine minutes I paced the ground. Finally, I gave up. Clearly, the flighty littly hussy had jilted me. I left town that very night, never to return. Shortly after that, I married the boss's daughter.

WB

Finding myself in a family way, I was lucky to attract the affections of Billy Bob Beasley, who married me. I never knew where my Spanky ended up, but he would be proud to see what a fine son he had.

RAM

Oh, Mother, perhaps you understand now why I have married for love.

WB

Yes, my son, and I am prepared to give you my blessing. I have only one possession of any earthly value. Your stepfather Billy Bob bequeathed it to me on his deathbed. I planned to keep it as security for my old age. But seeing that you have married a penniless girl and are yourself without employment, I want you to have it.

RAM

Mother, whatever this gift is, I renounce it. I want you to keep it just as you intended. Carlotta and I will make our own way in the world.

WB

But don't you even want to see what it is? (she pulls out a nugget on a gold chain from around her neck, shaped like the front end of a horse) It's a nugget of purest gold, worth many thousands.

RAM

(taking it from her) Remarkable! It looks just like the front end of a horse.

CROOK

(taking it from him) Let me see that! Madam, where did your late husband acquire this, may I ask?

WB

My late husband, Billy Bob, prospected a claim in these mountains that he named the Lost Horse Mine. (lights dim, others gasp, "Lost Horse Mine" music plays briefly) He was convinced that it was the richest vein ever known. And from it he mined the gold to forge this bauble. As you might imagine, it once comprised an entire horse. But alas, one day as Billy Bob was returning from the mine, he was accosted by a bear. He fought off the beast using this very nugget, but the bear seized it and bit it in half, unfortunately swallowing the horse's— the horse's—

CROOK

Patootie?

BUCK

Tuckus?

LIZZIE

Bum?

CARLOTTA

Nalgas?

RAM

Fanny?

WB

Yes, posterior. The bear staggered off with the prize in its stomach and Billy Bob fell backwards into a cactus which two weeks later caused his demise. Before he died he gave me the remaining half of the horse, and told me its secret.

RAM

What secret is that, Mother?

WB

Billy Bob had the horse made to an exact dimension, such that if one took the 1904 E. B. Connelly and Sons topographical map of the Pike's Peak quadrant with a magnetic declination of 0.021 east and placed the horse's right front hoof on the town of Cripple Creek, and its left front hoof on the town of Victor, then the right rear hoof would land exactly on the location of the Lost Horse Mine. But with the rear half of the horse missing, now the mine can never be found.

CROOK

(goes to map on wall, reads) "E. B. Connelly and Sons 1904, magnetic declination 0.021 east" (he places horse's hooves as instructed) So you mean to tell me, Madam, that if the rear end of this horse were united with the front half we would know the exact location of the Lost Horse Mine?

WB

That is my understanding.

CROOK

(brightening) Madam, did you say you're a widow? Yes, of course you did! This Billy Bob fellow croaked! And did I tell you that I am a widower, currently unattached, available, and free to marry?

WB

Yes, you did. But what of that? You also told me that your fortune is sadly diminished.

CROOK

Perhaps not so sadly, Madam. You see, I am in possession of that very horse's a—
er, *rear end*, that was lost. I'm quite sure it is the one, as it had clearly been
through a bear when I chanced to step on it!

WB

(also brightening) Oh, really? You don't say?

CROOK

Madam, I see now what an attractive female you really are. Mature. Handsome,
in a thoroughly magnetic way that young women can never hope to approach
until the wisdom of years makes them the gift of it.

WB

And in you, sir, I suddenly detect such manly development as only comes with
weathering the storms of life, a certain stalwart strength that causes my heart to
palpitate in positively dangerous ways!

RAM

Mother! Surely, you're not going to be taken in by this mountebank!

WB

It depends on the amount he's got in the bank!

RAM

But remember your newly awakened reverence for love!

WB

Oh. (to CROOK) Indeed, sir, my son is right. From now on only love can move me.

CROOK

Love, eh? Poppycock!

LIZZIE

Father, dear, now that you have also recalled that sweet emotion of your youth, I
would hope that you would be more alive to its charms. I can tell you there is
nothing in the world to equal love. (squeezes BUCK's hand or kisses him)

CROOK

(Grudgingly) Well, supposing I did feel something akin to that . . . that . . .
particular sentiment. How would I go about conveying it?

WB

(eagerly) Perhaps a song would help.

CROOK

Humph. Well, I'll see what I can do . . .

(Song: "I'M IN LOVE, LOVE, LOVE,
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE")

CROOK: I'VE A STRANGE SORT OF STIRRING, IT'S ALMOST A PURRING, LIKE
KITTENS OR BUZZING OF BEES
AND THIS CONFOUNDED WHIRRING WITHIN ME OCCURRING IS MAKING ME
WEAK IN THE KNEES
I'M REDUCED TO A GIBBERING MORON
MY REASON'S DEPARTED, I FEAR
I'M DRY IN THE MOUTH
AND THERE'S SOMETHING DOWN SOUTH
BECAUSE OF YOU, DEAR

OH, IT'S ALMOST AS IF I JUST STEPPED OFF A CLIFF, BUT THEN RATHER THAN
FALLING I FLEW
AND IN SPITE OF THE LIFT I CAN TELL I'M SCARED STIFF, THOUGH I'M
RATHER ENJOYING THE VIEW
I'M AGHAST, I'M APPALLED, I'M EMBARRASSED
BUT I'M GRINNING, I'M GIDDY WITH GLEE
I'M IN LOVE!

CHORUS: HE'S IN WHAT?!

CROOK: I'M IN LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE!

WIDOW BEASELY: I'VE A STRANGE SORT OF PRICKLING, IT'S ALMOST A
TICKLING, LIKE FEATHERS OR BLIZZARDS OF FLUFF
AND THIS CONFOUNDED STICKLING HAS SET ME TO GIGGLING, WHICH
SURELY IS CALLING MY BLUFF
I'M AWASH IN A STEW OF SENSATIONS
I'M FEELING MOST DEFINITELY QUEER
I'M LIGHTER THAT AIR
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING DOWN THERE

BECAUSE OF YOU, DEAR

OH, IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH I'VE BEEN CAST IN A SHOW THAT REQUIRES
SOME SINGING AND DANCE.

CROOK: I'M BEGINNING TO SEE

WB: BUT THE STEPS I DON'T KNOW AND MY VOICE IS TOO LOW, YET I'M
WILLING TO GIVE IT A CHANCE.

CROOK: SHE IS PERFECT FOR ME.

WB: I'M AMAZED, I'M SURPRISED, I'M ASTONISHED
BUT I'M STARTING TO LIKE THE NEW ME
I'M IN LOVE!

CHORUS: SHE'S IN WHAT?

WB: I'M IN LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE!

WB & CROOK: WE'RE IN LOVE, WE'RE IN LOVE. WE'RE IN LOVE, LOVE, LOVE,
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE!

CHORUS: THEY'RE IN LOVE, THEY'RE IN LOVE, THEY'RE IN LOVE, LOVE, LOVE,
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE

CHORUS, CROOK & WB (serially): I'M IN LOVE, HE'S IN LOVE, THEY'RE IN LOVE,
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE!

CROOK

Madam, I . . .

WB

Please! Call me Biddy.

CROOK

Biddy . . . there is simply no helping it. Would you consent to become Mrs.
Crooksdale Robberson the third?

WB

How can I refuse?

RAM

Mother, before you say yes, at least have him produce the aforesaid nugget in the
shape of a horse's hind end!

WB

I suppose that is prudent. Crook, my love, let us take a look at that nugget.

CROOK

Why certainly, it's here in my safe. (rummages in the safe) Zounds! It's gone!
Beasley, you're responsible for this! You've stolen the nugget!

RAM

I cannot tell a lie. I did steal the nugget.

CROOK

You told me you were ethically challenged and now you say you cannot tell a lie?

CARLOTTA

(to CROOK) In truth, sir, my husband *has* told a lie. Two in fact. For you see, I stole the nugget. And he is merely trying to protect me.

CROOK

You! . . . Say, aren't you my daughter's chamber maid?

CARLOTTA

Was her maid, yes, sir.

CROOK

I'll have you thrown in jail.

LIZZIE

Father, dear, it was really I who stole the nugget, as Carlotta was acting under my orders when she took it.

CROOK

My own daughter stealing from me! Well, whichever of you has it, restore it to me immediately!

RAM

You realize, Robberson, that my mother has a superior claim to ownership of that nugget, since her husband was the one who lost it to begin with.

CROOK

Don't try to play legal games with me, Beasley! I had no reason to know that I was not a bona fide successor in due course when I acquired it from its last owner.

RAM

Are you implying that the bear was the last "owner" in due course? Preposterous!

WB

Son, please, just give him the nugget! I don't care who owns it now that I am about to become Mrs. Crooksdale Robberson the third.

RAM

You really mean that, don't you? Well, mother, I would restore it if I could. But the truth is, the nugget is lost and beyond recovery.

CROOK

What??!! How??

CARLOTTA

When Ram and I were running away over the mountain, we were attacked by a bear. I used the nugget to fight him off, and he snapped it up and swallowed it!

CROOK

You mean to say the nugget is presently inside of a bear?

RAM

Precisely.

BUCK

Well, that ain't no problem! We can just go up there and shoot the varmint.

RAM

Buck, my friend, what a rip-snortin' good idea.

LIZZIE

Buck! I'm surprised at you! Nobody, but nobody harms a hair on that dear animal's hide! For without him, I would not now be Mrs. Buck Worthington.

CARLOTTA

And without him, *I* would not now be Mrs. Ram Beasley. That noble beast must go unmolested.

LIZZIE and CARLOTTA

There will be no shooting the bear!

CROOK

Forbear a moment! No one needs to shoot the bear.

WB

They don't?

CROOK

No. All we need to do is wait.

ALL THE OTHERS

Wait?

CROOK

That's right. What happened once can happen again.

(Song: "WAIT FOR THE BEAR")

CROOK: WHEN I WAS BUT A LITTLE LAD
UPON MY MOTHER'S KNEE
AS SHE Poured OUT ANOTHER DRINK
SHE'D OFTEN SAY TO ME.
NOW PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE, LAD

REMEMBER WELL, MY SON:
WHAT CAN'T BE HAD BY GRAB AND RUN
WITH PATIENCE CAN BE WON.

OTHERS: WHEN HE WAS BUT A LITTLE LAD
UPON MY HIS MOTHER'S KNEE
AS SHE Poured OUT ANOTHER DRINK
SHE'D OFTEN SAY TO HE
NOW PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE, LAD
REMEMBER WELL, MY SON,

CROOK: WHAT CAN'T BE HAD BY GRAB AND RUN
ALL: WITH PATIENCE CAN BE WON

{{WIDOW BEASLEY holds last note until RAM interjects "Mother!" and she stops.}}

CROOK: WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
IF WE WANT TO FIND THE GOLDEN HORSE
BETTER TO LET NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE.
WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE BEAR.

CROOK AND BUCK: SOME DAYS IT'S BEST JUST TO BIDE YOUR TIME.
FORGET THE REASON, GIVE UP THE RHYME.
WHAT COMES YOUR WAY MAY BE MOST SUBLIME.
IF YOU WAIT FOR THE BEAR!

ALL: WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
IF WE WANT TO FIND THE GOLDEN HORSE.
BETTER TO LET NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE

WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
SOME DAYS IT'S BEST JUST TO QUIT THE RACE.
EMBRACING PATIENCE IS NO DISGRACE.
YOU MIGHT FIND GOLD IN THE STRANGEST PLACE.
IF YOU WAIT FOR THE BEAR!

CROOK: NOW, IT'S A SCIENTIFIC FACT, WHAT GOES IN MUST COME OUT.
OTHERS: YES, IT'S A SCIENTIFIC FACT, THERE'S NO DOUBT!

ALL: WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE BEAR.
SOME DAYS IT'S BEST JUST TO QUIT THE RACE.

EMBRACING PATIENCE IS NO DISGRACE.
YOU MIGHT FIND GOLD IN THE STRANGEST PLACE
IF YOU WAIT FOR THE BEAR!
YOU MIGHT FIND GOLD IN THE STRANGEST PLACE.
IF YOU WAIT FOR THE BEAR!

CROOK

Now, about how long ago was it that the bear swallowed the nugget?

RAM

Maybe three or four hours.

CROOK

Let's find him and carefully observe his behavior. The crucial event could occur at any time.

WB

Ah, my love, you have a brilliant mind! But may I suggest we take a short detour by the church? That preacher's already performed two marriages today and three is a lucky number!

CROOK

My dear, you, too, have a brilliant mind.

RAM

Robberson, if you are to marry my mother, I must insist that you give up your previous business model.

CROOK

Kid, if the nugget is "produced," so to speak, there will be no need for me to continue that activity.

RAM

I'm not sure that answer suffices. But meanwhile I suppose I'll have to get used to calling you "Dad." Funny. . . . It sounds right to me somehow.

BUCK

Let's go then!

(They all start to exit to a reprise of
"WAIT FOR THE BEAR." Lights down.
The End.)