

BRAVE BUCKAROO

OR HOW A WIMP FROM NOWHERE MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF
A MUSICAL MELODRAMA IN TWO ACTS

By Renee Clark

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BRAVE BUCKAROO

By Renee J. Clark

SYNOPSIS: A two act musical melodrama perfect for middle school productions. Hook and Ratface Rago are greedy varmints. Dirtbag Scuzz and the Casadeech Gang are bottom of the bucket scum. As luck would have it, they all meet in the little Western town of Nowhere, Arizona. Now it just so happens that the folks of Nowhere are planning a talent show to raise money for the hospital. Hook and Ratface, scheming with Dirtbag and the Casadeech Gang, plot to heist the show. Enter Wendell Wishbone, alias Brave Buckaroo, who fearlessly tracks down the bandits, rescues the hostage, and recovers the money. Crowd-pleasing comedy and toe-tapping tunes will have your audience going Nowhere fast!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(FOR A FLEXIBLE CAST OF 26, 7-12 MEN AND 14-19 WOMEN, PLUS
OPTIONAL CHORUS/EXTRAS)*

HOOK..... The well-educated, heartless villain.
He is the brains behind many a
crime. *(Approximately 64 lines)*

RATFACE RAGOO Hook's simpleminded cohort.
(Approximately 37 lines)

TOM..... A citizen of Nowhere. *(6 lines)*

JANIE Tom's young wife. *(6 lines)*

NEWSPAPER GIRL (OR BOY)

BRAVE BUCKAROO

THE PERSQUACKY SISTERS Priscilla, Prudence, and Penelope.
Old maid sisters. They run the Ladies Temperance League. The moral watchdogs of Nowhere.
(Approximately 16 lines total)

MRS. MATILDA MUNEYGOAT President of Nowhere's Ladies Guild. A widow, she's searching the desert high and low for a rich hubby. *(26 lines)*

SAL THE GAL A rough and tumble tomboy. She can shoot with the best of them.
(Approximately 51 lines)

GINA PARMESAN A beautiful young maiden forever in love with who else, but Brave Buckaroo. *(Approximately 50 lines)*

MAMA MIA PARMESAN Gina's mother. Owns Mama Mia's Café and Emporium.
(Approximately 15 lines)

WENDELL WISHBONE Our hero. (Alias the Brave Buckaroo.) A mild-mannered wimp to all who know him, but actually the fearless Brave Buckaroo madly in love with Gina. *(Approximately 52 lines)*

PUDDENFACE PETE Although he can hear, he is mute. The only one who knows Wendell's true identity.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

DIRTBAG SCUZZ Looks and smells like his name.
(Approximately 29 lines)

THE CASADEECH GANG (Bopalong, Sloपालong, and Ploपालong) Filthy dirty pesky rascals who follow Dirtbag Scuzz around like lost puppies.

MAYOR MAHONEY Mayor of Nowhere, Arizona. (2 lines)

MYRON MEYERS..... Fancies himself a Shakespearean actor. (11 lines)

MYRTLE MEYERS If this is possible, she is an even worse actor than her husband, Myron. (11 lines)

FANNY SWINETTE..... Tries to sing a note or two.

THE PORKLIN' PIGGIES Three backup singers to Fanny, if only they could sing.

MABEL MOREHOUSE..... Fancies herself a poet.

EXTRAS Additional townspeople.

Brave Buckaroo is designed for a production with a cast of 25 to 30, or more. For a larger cast, extra townspeople can be used in the street scenes, additional waiters/waitresses for café scenes, and as your rehearsals progress, you may even find more talent for Nowhere's First Annual Talent Show . . . feel free to add any or all of the above to your production.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

PLACE:

The little Western town of Nowhere, Arizona.

ACT ONE

Scene 1 On the road to Nowhere, Arizona.

Scene 2 A street in Nowhere, Arizona.

Scene 3 Inside Mama Mia's Café and Emporium.

Scene 4 A street in Nowhere, Arizona.

Scene 5 That evening at Mama Mia's Café and Emporium.

ACT TWO

Scene 1 Inside Mama Mia's Café and Emporium.

Scene 2 A street in Nowhere, Arizona, few minutes later.

Scene 3 An abandoned mine shack.

Scene 4 Inside Mama Mia's Café and Emporium.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

SET

For flat floor or open stages, areas left and right can be used for street scenes and mine shack while the center area is used for the café scenes. For proscenium stages with grand drape or teaser, all scenes EXCEPT those at the café could be performed on the apron or thrust in front of the curtain with the few set pieces. The café scenes could be pre-set on the main stage. A box set is not necessary for this scene, though one would surely add the “flavor” of the Old West melodrama. Three or four small tables with chairs left and right of a small 4 X 8 platform for the talent show ‘stage’ is sufficient.

COSTUMES

The old-time melodrama collection, of course. Females should wear long skirts with high neck blouses and bonnets. Males should wear jeans, boots, plaid shirts, cowboy hats, and neckerchiefs.

Suggestions for certain characters:

HOOK: For Colonel William S. Danders. White wig, white long jacket, white shirt, pants and string tie.

MATILDA MUNEYGOAT: Widows clothes, long black skirt, black blouse and hat.

SAL: Jeans or chaps, plaid shirt, vest, cowboy hat.

WENDELL: White shirt with garter and jeans for waiter, under the white shirt a blue shirt with the red letter ‘B’ painted or tacked on.

DIRTBAG SCUZZ AND THE CASADEECH GANG: Ragged shirts, filthy jeans, cumpled hats, fake beards for boys and pigsty hairdos for girls.

MYRON MEYERS: Frilly poet’s shirt, knickers.

MYRTLE MEYERS: Large, white nightgown.

MELODRAMA

It is not difficult to understand the enormous popularity of melodrama. The overall framework of melodrama is one of the fast action, quick scene changes, and exaggerated emotion. The three main character types - hero, heroine, and villain - are easily identified by appearance. Traditionally, ranting heroes and distressed heroines dress in light colors, while scheming villains dress in dark colors. In its presentation of character, audiences will surely enjoy the triumph of virtue and defeat of evil characteristic of this type of drama.

STAGING

As with any melodrama, keep the action moving. No pauses between lines unless otherwise indicated in the script and keep the wait between scenes as brief as possible. The biggest laugh will come from the “no-talent” talent show. The fact that it is so absurd is what makes it funny. During rehearsals, various offbeat ideas might come up, if they work, use them.

PROPS

Act One, Scene 1:

Milepost, walking stick, fake rubber hook, stethoscope, book, pair of glasses, flowered blouse or revealing lingerie, long, white beard, sling, piece of cloth, medal, eye patch, rebel hat.

Act One, Scene 2:

Post with sign, two benches, newspapers, handbills for talent show.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

Act One, Scene 3:

Newspaper, papers and pencil, broom, table cloths, dishes and glasses for café tables, menus, dishcloth, café check, dollar bill, (toy) cowboy guns with holsters for outlaws.

Act One, Scene 4:

Newspaper.

Act One, Scene 5:

Talent show sign, talent show programs, handful of index cards, scroll, step ladder, paper and pencil for judges' table, donation check, sack of money, bottle of sarsaparilla.

Act Two, Scene 3:

Small table and three chairs (mine shack), rope and gag, (toy) cowboy guns with holster for Buckaroo, blanket, five pieces of rope, long rope.

Act Two, Scene 4:

Telegram.

DO NOT COPY

BRAVE BUCKAROO

MUSICAL NUMBERS

The music for *Brave Buckaroo* can be found on its own PRODUCTION/REHEARSAL CD. Purchase of the CD grants license to use it at all rehearsals and for your performance. Additional copies of the CD may be made for use by your performers only. You may also listen to clips of the songs online at www.hitplays.com.

ACT ONE

- SONG #1 **JUST A COUPLE O' SIDEKICKS**..... Hook and Ratface
SONG #2 **THERE'S TALENT IN THIS TOWN**..... Sal, Gina and Townspeople
SONG #3 **BRAVE BUCKAROO** Mama, Gina, Sal and Townspeople
SONG #4 **THERE'S A HERD OF WORMS HEADIN' FER SPAGHETTI**... Dirtbag,
Bopalong, Slopalong, and Plopalong
SONG #5 **GINA (MY LOVE IS LIKE A JALOPENA)**..... Wendell
SONG #6 **I'M HOG WILD ABOUT YOU**..... Fanny Swinette and the Porklin' Piggies
SONG #7 **CLASSICAL MUSIC**..... The Persquacky Sisters

ACT TWO

- SONG #8 **BRAVE BUCKAROO** Company

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ACT ONE, SCENE 1

On the road to Nowhere, Arizona. Up center is a post with two signs nailed to it. One has an arrow pointing stage right. It says "SOMEWHERE - 50 MILES"; the other points left and says: "NOWHERE - 3 MILES." HOOK enters right followed by his know-nothing sidekick RATFACE RAGOO, who is limping and carrying a walking stick and satchel. HOOK is dressed all in black and speaks like a well-educated gentleman, perhaps with an English accent.

RAT: Dang it, Hook. Slow down, will ya? Ma feetz is hurtin' somethin' awful!

HOOK: My dear fellow, you have no one to blame but yourself. If you hadn't forgotten to tether our horses when we stopped at that oasis five miles back, they wouldn't have run off when you so recklessly shot at your own shadow.

RAT: Aw, Hook. I swear that warn't no shadow. I thought it was someone hidin' behind a rock waitin' to ambush us. Ever since we escaped from that jail in Santa Fe, I been jittery. Now that we're in Arizona, I'm even jittier. I hear tell they got this super dude lawman in these parts. A lawman without a badge. I hear tell he's caught more crooks than any marshal. They call him the Brave Buckaroo.

HOOK: Yes, I've heard of his exploits. He's faster than a speeding jack rabbit, more powerful than a grizzly bear, able to leap into the saddle in a single bound. He does sound like some sort of super sheriff, doesn't he? But he's probably only a myth-created to scare off prospective criminals.

RAT: Sure hope yer right. *(Looks over his shoulder.)* And I sure hope we lost that posse.

HOOK: Ratface, my little friend, I told you we left that posse behind two days ago. Thanks to my quick thinking and sound judgment, that false trail we established has surely led them astray.

RAT: *(Laughs.)* I gotta hand it to you, Hook. In spite of yer fancy talk, you sure as shootin' know how to plan a robbery.

HOOK: Why, thank you, Ragoo.

RAT: I still can't believe how you got the drop on that stagecoach.

Those poor trusting souls . . . they all thought I was a lady passenger on the way to California. They actually believed you were an Injun and you was takin' me captive.

HOOK: Yes, well, I am quite a master of disguise, if I don't say so myself.

RAT: It sure was easy. They were so afeard you was gonna shot me, they just handed over the dough just like that. *(He snaps his fingers.)*

HOOK: Yes, it was a rather clever ruse, wasn't it?

RAT: Only thing is, Hook, don't ya think by now everyone in these parts is lookin' fer us? That was the third holdup in one month and the third time you took me hostage. They might put three and three together, ya know what I mean? They is sure to have some wanted posters up.

HOOK: Yes, dear man, but remember, they do not know my many faces, and as long as I keep this out of sight . . . *(He holds up his "hook.")* I will not rouse suspicion.

RAT: That's what I like about you, Hook. Yer always prepared . . . fot an answer for everythin'.

HOOK: Yes, my mentally challenged little rodent. With my brains, good looks, charm, wit, and cleverness, and your *(He thinks.)* your . . . uh . . . *(RAT nods, smiling, waiting.)* uh . . . your, uh, simpleminded eagerness, I think we make a good team.

RAT: *(Proudly.)* You bet yer butt, Hook. We're just a coupla sidekicks, you and me.

**SONG #1: JUST A COUPLE O' SIDEKICKS
(HOOK AND RATFACE RAGOO)**

HOOK AND RAT:

WE'RE JUST A COUPLE SIDEKICKS
WE MOSEY ALONG OUR WAY
WHEELIN' AND DEALIN', ROBBIN' AND STEALIN'
WE'LL STRIKE IT RICH SOMEDAY
WE'LL STRIKE IT RICH SOMEDAY.

HOOK:

I AM THE BRAINS, YOU ARE THE BRAWN

RAT:

YOU PAVE THE WAY; I GO ALONG.

HOOK:

I PLAN OUR CAPERS WITH GRAVE AND FINESSE.

RAT:

I DO YER DIRTY WORK 'CAUSE I'M THE BEST.

BOTH:

WE GO TOGETHER LIKE EGGS AND HAM.

RAT:

YOU ARE THE TOAST; I AM THE JAM.

BOTH:

WE GO TOGETHER LIKE SUGAR AND SPICE.

RAT:

I'M MISTER NAUGHTY; YOU'RE MISTER NICE.

BOTH:

WE'RE JUST A COUPLA SIDEKICKS
WE MOSEY ALONG OUR WAY
WHEELIN' AND DEALIN', ROBBIN' AND STEALIN'
WE'LL STRIKE IT RICH SOMEDAY
WE'LL STRIKE IT RICH SOMEDAY.

HOOK:

I SAY WHERE WE GO AND WHAT WE DO.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

RAT:

I FOLLOW YOU, AND DO IT RIGHT, TOO.

HOOK:

I AM THE SUGAR, YOU ARE THE CREAM.

RAT:

YOU ARE THE CAPTAIN; I AM YER TEAM

BOTH:

WE GO TOGETHER LIKE PEPPER AND SALT.

RAT:

YOU ARE THE MILKSHAKE; I AM THE MALT.

BOTH:

WE'RE IN FOR THE MONEY, OUT FOR THE FALL.
IT'S-ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL. 'CAUSE . . .

WE'RE JUST A COUPLA SIDEKICKS
WE MOSEY ALONG OUR WAY
WHEELIN' AND DEALIN', ROBBIN' AND STEALIN'.
WE'LL STRIKE IT RICH SOME DAY.
YES, WE'LL STRIKE IT RICH SOME DAY.

RAT: So where do we go from here, Hook?

HOOK: *(Studying the sign, thinking aloud.)* Hmm . . . Nowhere.

RAT: Huh?

HOOK: *(To himself.)* Yes, that's what we'll do. We're so close, anyway. We'll go to Nowhere.

RAT: Ya mean we're gonna just set here like sittin' ducks, waitin' fer the law to nab us? Or worse – the big guy, uh. Brave Buckaroo?

HOOK: *(Ignoring him.)* Obviously, we're too far from Somewhere, so we'll head for Nowhere and then plan our next venture.

RAT: *(Shaking his head, bewildered.)* Yer makin' my head spin, Hook. Just WHERE ARE we goin'?

HOOK: I told you, Nowhere.

RAT: *(He flops down.)* Well, that suits me fine. I'll just stretch out a spell and rest my tootsies. Let me know when you've made up yer mind to go somewhere.

HOOK: *(Impatient.)* No! Somewhere is too far away, Ragoo. *(Points to sign.)* Oh, that's right. I forgot you can't read. *(Loud and slow.)* The sign says Somewhere is that way. *(He points right.)* And the town of Nowhere is three miles that way. *(He points left.)*

RAT: *(Rising.)* Well, why didn't ya say so in the first place? *(He starts off right which is the wrong way, of course.)*

HOOK: Yooo-hoo, Ragoo. We need disguises. Give me the satchel. *(As he rummages through the items in the sack, he switches accents.)* Let's see. *(He takes out a stethoscope.)* Shall I be the docta from New Yawk? No. *(He takes out a book and a pair of glasses.)* The young student from the university? So, I don't think so. *(He takes out a flowered blouse or for a bigger laugh, a revealing piece of lingerie, holds it up, and both RAT and HOOK shake their heads vehemently.)* No, no. *(He takes out along, fake beard and white hat.)* Ah, maybe . . . *(He puts them on and instantly becomes the famous Colonel of Chicken with a "Foghorn Loghorn" twang.)* Well, ah say, well, ah say, how do ah look?

RAT: Wow! You look slicker than goose grease! Who're you supposed to be?

HOOK: Ah am none othah than Colonel William S. Danders, retired. A decorated Confederate during the war between the states. *(He drops his accent as he takes a sling and a piece of cloth out of his bag.)* Help me with this sling, will you. I must hide my hook, you know. *(Southern accent returns.)* Ah was injured at the Battle of Shiloh when Yankee canon caught my arm as I was draggin' a wounded private away from enemy fire. *(During these lines, RAT helps wrap the hook and hide it in the sling.)* Ah was awarded the Medal of Honah by General Lee himself. *(His own voice again. He hands RAT a medal.)* Ratface, would you be so kind as to pin this here? *(He points to a place on the sling.)* Now give me your walking stick. *(RAT does.)* There. *(Hook poses with stick, then begins limping. Around, using the stick, then begins limping AROUND, USING THE STICK LIKE A CANE. He poses again.)* Well?

RAT: You sure look fine, Hook. But what about me? Who am I gonna be this time?

HOOK: You, my sleazy pardner, are the injured private I saved so many years ago. You have become my loyal private and companion, forever indebted to me for saving your wretched little life. *(He takes an eye patch and rebel hat out of the bag.)* Here, put these on. You lost your eye during a skirmish. *(RAT puts them on.)*

RAT: *(Saluting.)* Prah-vit Ragoo, at yer service, Sergeant! *(Clicks his heels.)*

HOOK: *(A bit perturbed.)* It's COLONEL, Rat, and don't you forget it! And you are Private Benjamin. Private Barney Benjamin. Not Ragoo . . . got it? *(RAT nods yes.)* Now I will develop our cover. *(They start to exit left.)* Perhaps, since I have retired from the military, I am looking for a nice little town to open up my own eating establishment. *(With his Southern accent.)* Ah will have only the best Southern recipes mah mama used to make. Perhaps I will specializes in . . . *(He thinks.)* . . . CHICKEN!

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

A street in Nowhere, Arizona. The milepost has been removed and in its place is a sign that says, NOWHERE ARIZONA – GOING NOWHERE FAST!” There are two benches; one down left and one down right. Townspeople enter left and right, walking in pairs or clusters. The three PERSQUACKY SISTERS are huddled over a newspaper up right. TOM and JANIE are down left, the NEWSPAPER GIRL (OR BOY) is left center. Everyone is bustling around, talking about the two biggest stories to hit Nowhere since Deck and Slimmer stole Joe Taggart’s cattle – the latest stagecoach robbery and the grandeur intent show scheduled for tonight.

NEWSGIRL: Extra! Extra! Read all about it! WELLS FARGO
STAGE ROBBED BY INJUN! LADY TAKEN CAPTIVE!

TOM: I'll take one of those. *(He buys the newspaper and moves down left with his wife. They sit on a bench and read the paper together.)* Cripes! That holdup was only 50 miles from here!

JANIE: By crook, it says here the Injun got away. The posse couldn't catch him.

TOM: No trace of that lady hostage either.

JANIE: It's like they disappeared into thin air.

TOM: That'd be just our luck! The sheriff's on his way to Tucson with the two varmints that stole ol' Joe Taggart's cattle. *(They continue reading silently.)*

JANIE: Oh, Tom! I'm scared! What if they're headed this way?

GINA PARMESAN and SAL THE GAL, enter left. They are distributing handbills for Nowhere's First Annual Talent Show a fund raiser to build a new hospital. GINA, every bit a heroine, is an incurable romantic and SAL, her best friend, walks like a rough and tough tomboy, talks like a rough and tough tomboy, is a rough and tough tomboy.

SAL: Okay, Gina, you take that side; I'll do this side.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

SAL wanders into the audience, while GINA crosses down left to TOM and JANIE.

GINA: Hi, Tom, Janie. Are you coming to the talent show tonight?
(She hands a flier to both of them.)

TOM: Don't rightly know, Miss Gina. Talent show, you say?

JANIE: What kind of talent?

GINA: Why we have the most talented people in town participating. There will be some singing, some dancing, some reciting . . . I think a touch of culture is something we all could use.

JANIE: Who's going to sing?

GINA: Come with your money and find out. Tonight at Mama Mia's Café and Emporium, 7:30. *(She moves on as TOM stares longing after her.)*

TOM: *(Watching her.)* Now that's one heck of a nice lookin' gal.

JANIE: Fer cryin' out loud put your eyes back in your head, dear. Besides, everyone in Nowhere knows Gina Parmesan is head over heels in love with that sharp-shootin', desert-blowin', rough-ridin's, rootin', tootin fearless defender of justice, the one and only Brave Buckaroo!!!! *(Sighs.)*

RAT and HOOK enter right, dressed as Colonel Danders and Private Benjamin, just in time to hear the words 'Brave Buckaroo.' They observe for a minute, then sit on the bench right. HOOK crosses to the NEWSGIRL, buys two papers and returns to RAT. They hold the papers in front of their faces so as not to be seen. They watch and listen.

GINA: *(Crossing to SAL.)* Sal?

SAL: Any luck, Gina?

GINA: No one seems to know about the show. We have to get the word out.

SAL: Simple. *(She stands on bench center and whistles or shouts. Everyone stops and turns to face her.)* ATTENSHUN! Miss Gina and me are passin' out fliers about tonight's talent show. Yer donations are goin' to be good cause – the hospital fund. *(A few applaud.)*

JANIE: Tell us more about it, Sal.

**SONG #2: THERE'S TALENT IN THIS TOWN!
(SAL, GINA, AND TOWNSPEOPLE)**

SAL:

THERE'S GONNA BE A SHOW TONIGHT
A REAL TALENT SHOW
WITH SINGIN', DANCIN', CITIN', PRANCIN'
WE'RE GONNA HAVE A SHOW.

TOM: Talent show? Nowhere ain't got no talent.

SAL: Oh, yeah?

WE'VE GOT TALENT IN THIS TOWN TONIGHT
TALENT IN THIS TOWN
POETS, ACTORS, DANCERS, SINGERS
TALENT IN THIS TOWN.

SAL AND GINA:

WE'VE GOT CULTURE IN THIS TOWN TONIGHT
CULTURE IN THIS TOWN
SOMETHIN' NOWHERE NEEDS RIGHT NOW
CULTURE IN THIS TOWN.

SAL:

NOW GRAB YER PARTNER 123
STOMP, THEN CLAP YER HANDS! *(Clap! Clap!)*
STEP LEFT, STEP RIGHT, STEP 123!
NOW SWING AROUND, LET'S DANCE!

DANCE HERE.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

SAL:

DOSEY DO YER PARTNER.
SWING HER LEFT, THEN RIGHT.
PROMENADE HER ROUND AND ROUND.
NOW STOMP WITH ALL YER MIGHT. (*Clap! Clap!*)

ALL:

THERE'S GONNA BE A SHOW TONIGHT
A REAL TALENT SHOW
WITH SINGIN', DANCIN', CITIN', PRANCIN'
WE'RE GONNA HAVE A SHOW.

WE'VE GOT TALENT IN THIS TOWN TONIGHT
TALENT IN THIS TOWN.
POETS, ACTORS, DANCERS, SINGERS
TALENT IN THIS TOWN.

WE'RE RAISIN' FUNDS FOR CHARITY.
SO COME AND BRING YOUR DOUGH.
THIS HOSPITAL'S FOR EVERYONE
SO COME SUPPORT OUR SHOW.
COME, ENJOY OUR SHOW. YEAH!

SAL: So we wanna see each and every one of you at Mama Mia's
Café and emporium - 7:30 sharp!

GINA continues to pass out fliers as SAL crosses to the prim and proper PERSQUACKY SISTERS. They are huddled over their paper. All three are prudish old maids and have a habit of interrupting each other.

SAL: Howdeeee, ladies.

PRISCILLA: (*Looks up.*) Why, hello, Sal. That was a wonderful
speech you gave about our talent show.

SAL: You ladies ready with yer act?

PRUDENCE: Oh, yes. Why, sisters and I are so-o tickled that we will
be performing.

PENELOPE: Yes, we've been preparing for our little number all
week.

SAL: So I've heard.

PRUDENCE: (*Concerned.*) Sal, we've been reading about those escaped convicts from Santa Fe. Such . . .

PENELOPE: Smutty men! One of them has a . . . a

PRISCILLA: HOOK for a hand! (*They gasp simultaneously.*) According to the newspaper, they're plodding into Arizona as we speak.

SAL: Yeah, I heard about those critters.

PENELOPE: Rogues!

PRUDENCE: Filchers! We just don't feel . . .

PRISCILLA: . . . safe anymore. Do we, sisters?

PENELOPE/PRUDENCE: Not in the least.

PRISCILLA: If only the sheriff . . .

PENELOPE: Hadn't taken those wily rustlers to . . . uh.

PRUDENCE: Tucson.

SAL: Well, ladies, the sheriff's due back in a jiffy. I'm sure you'll be safe til then. You just keep practicin' yer act fer the talent show tonight.

PEN/PRIS/PRUD: (*Ad-libbing as they exit.*) Yes sirree. Oh, we are so excited about tonight. Practice, practice, practice.

SAL crosses to NEWSGIRL, buys a paper, and stands there reading. GINA crosses to MRS. MUNEYGOAT, president of Nowhere's Ladies Guild, who is standing up right near HOOK and RAT reading her newspaper.

GINA: Mrs. Muneygoat, how nice to see you.

MUNEYGOAT: (*Reading it.*) Oh, Gina. Have you read about those sleazy swindlers footstompin' into Arizona? My heart's all aflutter with fear, what with our sheriff gone and all.

GINA: I know, Mrs. Muneygoat. That's all everyone is talking about. Sal and I have been trying to drum up busness for tonight's talent show. Will you be able to attend? (*She hands her a flier.*)

MUNEYGOAT: I wouldn't miss it for all the steers in Texas, Gina.

GINA: It's such a good cause, don't you think? All the money will help pay for a real hospital. *(RAT and HOOK peek at them over the top of their newspaper.)*

MUNEYGOAT: Yes, dea, and you can be sure everyone from our Ladies Guild will be there, too. How much do you expect to raise?

GINA: If we fill all of the seats, I'd say at least \$400. *(On this RAT and HOOK drop their newspapers simultaneously, look at each other, then quickly raise the papers again.)*

MUNEYGOAT: That's a good start, Gina. And it's good of your mama to let us use her café.

GINA: We're happy to oblige, Mrs. Muneysgoat. This town has been good to us since Papa died. It's our way of saying thanks. And Mrs. Muneysgoat, I was wondering. Would you like to be one of our judges?

MUNEYGOAT: Why, I'd be honored, Gina.

GINA: Wonderful. Now I must be going. Sal and I have to meet Wendell to set up the stage for tonight. *(She crosses to SAL and they exit left.)*

MUNEYGOAT: *(Waves at her excitedly as GINA exits.)* See you tonight, dear. *(She notices HOOK and RAT, fluffs her hair, adjusts herself and crosses to them.)* Pardon me, sirs. I'm Matilda Muneysgoat, president of Nowwhere's Ladies guild. I don't recollect ever seeing you gents in our town before.

HOOK: *(Going into his act, exaggerating the accent.)* Ah, yey-us, we are new-comers to your fair city, ma'am. Jest arrived today.

MUNEYGOAT: Don't mean to pry, but could you fellows identify yourselves? We don't get many strangers in these parts. You see our sheriff's out of town, and a stagecoach was robbed a couple of days ago. There are desperados on the loose. We can't take any unnecessary chances, you understand.

HOOK: Of course, uh . . . *(He gives her a broad, flirtacious.)* . . . uh . . . ma'am. Ahm Colonel William S. Danders. *(He pronounces it "Danduhs.")* Confederate Army, retired. *(He clicks his heels, then bows with a flourish. Then he points to his sling.)* War wound-sharpnel.

MUNEYGOAT: (*Impressed.*) Ohh. (*To RAT.*) and you . . . ?

RAT: (*Salutes stiffly, then does an awkward bow.*) Private Barney, Barney Benjamin, ma'am!

HOOK: At ease, Private.

MUNEYGOAT: (*Flirting.*) May I ask your business in Nowhere, uh . . . Colonel?

HOOK: Why, sure you may, Miss . . . or is it MRS. Muneysgoat?

MUNEYGOAT: Mrs. Alas, I am a widow these past eight years. Presently unhitched. Uh, you were saying?

HOOK: Yes, well, since ah've retired from the military, ah've been lookin' to invest my somewhat large fortune in a nice little Western town-like this. Ah propose to open an eatin' establishment-specializin' in chicken-the best chicken west of the Mississippi. Private Benjamin here will assist me.

MUNEYGOAT: (*Dollar signs in her eyes and marriage on her mind.*) A large fortune, you say? Invest in a restaurant?

HOOK: Yes, ma'am. It'd bring jobs to this fair city. And if it's a success, who knows, ah might even start a chain of 'em. Franchise is the way of the future, you know. I'll call it Colonel Danders Arizona Fried Chicken.

MUNEYGOAT: (*Dreamily.*) Sounds financialicious . . . I mean delicious, of course. Let me be the first to welcome you to our little town. I think kyou'll find Nowhere is just what you're lookin' for. (*She extends her hand.*)

HOOK: (*Takes her hand and kisses it.*) *She is bug-eyed and breathless.*) Charmed. And now could you dahrect me to a nice hotel and eatery? The private and ah would like to settle in.

MUNEYGOAT: (*Recovering.*) The only hotel in town is the Talkanooga Hotel-down the street and to your right. The rooms are small, but clean. Mama Mia's Café and Emporium is the only restaurant in town. Mama's lasagna is scrumptious. They're getting ready for a big talent show tonight-a fund raiser for our new hospital. You might want to go and meet some of the townspeople. I'll be there as one of the judges tonight.

HOOK: *(Smiles like a weasel.)* Well, in that case, ah may just be there, too. Mrs. Muneygoat.

MUNEYGOAT: Oh, please, sir, call me Matilda.]

HOOK: Matilda it is.

MUNEYGOAT: See you tonight, then, Colonel.

HOOK: *(Tipping his hat.)* Good day to you, Matilda. *(She exits right. After he is sure she is gone, he switches to his own voice.)* Well, Ratface Ragoo, my conniving little cohort, I think we've landed out next heist.

RAT: Ya mean the local bank?

HOOK: Oh, no, no, no my companion in crime. That's too easy. We are going to attend Nowhere's First Annual Talent Show-and at the end of the evening, we'll be \$400 richer. But we've got to elicit more help. *(As they exit left.)* We'll see what, or who, awaits us at Mama Mia's Café and Emporium. *(They exit.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

Inside Mama Mia's Café and Emporium. Tables are set up around a platform, which is up center. It will become the stage for the talent show. Townspeople are seated here and there, eating, drinking, quietly conversing. SAL, GINA, AND MAMA are seated at a table down left. Sal reads her paper while GINA shuffles through her work for the show. WENDELL is waiting tables as PUDDENFACE PETE, a mute, sweeps the floor. WENDELL, who is really the BRAVE BUCKAROO, is the Old West's version of a nerd. He acts like a fainthearted coward and talks in a high nasal voice. PETE, who can hear quite well, is mute and mimes all of his dialogue. He is the only one who knows BUCKAROO'S real identity.

SAL: *(Reading aloud from the newspaper.)* Says here they still haven't caught those escaped convicts from Santa Fe, and that was almost two months ago.

MAMA: *(Italian accent, if possible.)* Oh, solo mio! *(Hands to heaven, then she clutches her heart.)* Watsa the world coming to? Badda men escape! Injuns robina stage! Anda that sheriff? He-sa-gone!

GINA: *(To MAMA.)* Worry-wart!

MAMA: Gina, I'm-a you mama. I gotta worry about you. If-a-somating shoulda happen to me, you gotta no one to take care of you.

GINA: Mama, nothing is going to happen to you.

MAMA: I wisha you hada man. Sal, dontcha tinga Gina needs a husband?

SAL: I reckon so, Mama.

MAMA: Gina. *(Looking at WENDELL.)* that Wendell, now he-sa good catch, no? Honest, hard-working . . . and I watcha him watcha you.

SAL: Ha, ha. Yeah, Gina, you know ol' Wendell's been stuck on you fer years. *(Teasing.)* Why dontcha give the guy a chance:

GINA: *(Rolling her eyes.)* Sal, you know Wendell is not my type. He can be such a . . . such a.

SAL: Why don't ya say it? Wimp. Wimpy Wendell Wishbone.

GINA: That didn't come out of my mouth.

MAMA: What-a-you want, Gina? You cannot be picky in Nowhere. A man's a man a man.

SAL: Once you separate the man from the boys, Mama, there's only on man Gina is interested in . . . the Brave Buckaroo.

MAMA: The Brave-a-Buckaroo. Now that's a man.

GINA: *(Crossing down center for song.)* Yes, mama. He's my Mr. Right.

BRAVE BUCKAROO

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