

The Day
Ma's Boys
Done Went
to Town
to Rob
the Bank,
Again



John Donald O'Shea

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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*To the twelve students from Seton Jr. High
who were my original cast,
who did the show as I envisioned it,
and who gave me my finest
junior high school production.*

*And to the Seton administration
who made my job a pleasure.*

*And to D.R., my publisher,
who has always treated me
the way every author wishes to be treated.*

The Day Ma's Boys Done Went to Town to Rob the Bank, Again

MELODRAMA. High in the hills of Arkansas, Ma's boys have hatched a plan to rob the Vulture Rock bank. The only problem is that there is no bank in the town of Vulture Rock! The last time Ma's boys tried to rob the "bank," they robbed the livery stable, scared the heck out of the horses, and stole all the horse chips because they mistook them for silver dollars. This time, the boys mistake the county jail for the bank and end up stealing three womenfolk—a saloon owner, a switchboard operator, and the town gossip. The boys bring their prospective brides home to Ma, but when Ma inspects these uptown womenfolk and discovers they can't cook, slop the hogs, or drag tree stumps out of a cornfield, she and her boys have some serious misgivings about the upcomin' weddins'!

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

Characters

(6 M, 6 F)

MA SCRAGGINS: Beloved matriarch of the Scraggins' Clan; wears a blouse, a full-length jean skirt, and an apron.

CLAUDE SCRAGGINS: Ma's illiterate eldest son. Note: "Claude" is pronounced "Clod."

CLETUS SCRAGGINS: Illiterate son.

CLEM SCRAGGINS: Ma's most illiterate son and the largest of the brothers. Note: "Clem" is pronounced "Clam."

CLEMATIS SCRAGGINS: Ma's illiterate daughter; wears blue jeans or a jean skirt, a cute top, and boots.

SHERIFF JACK HARE: Sheriff of Vulture Rock; a John Wayne-type character; vain; wears new well-fitted jeans, a solid-colored long-sleeve shirt, a ten-gallon cowboy hat, and cowboy boots.

EZEKIEL: Sheriff Hare's deputy; wears jeans, a belt, a western long-sleeve shirt, and boots.

PASTOR HEZIKIAH CROPKILLER: Vulture Rock's man of the cloth; wears a black suit, black hat, black shoes, and a turned collar.

PRUDENCE PLEASING: Switchboard operator; wears a cute peasant dress with shoes or boots.

BELLE GOLDEN: Proprietor of the Golden Belle Saloon; wears a cowgirl skirt, blouse, and boots.

GLORIA GOBBLEGOOK: Vulture Rock's pre-eminent gossip; wears a cute peasant dress with shoes or boots.

BEULAH: "Gourmet" cook of Vulture Rock; wears a blouse, a full-length jean skirt, and an apron.

NOTE: The Scraggins family is as poor as they come. Their clothes should reflect this. The Scraggins boys wear blue jeans, work clothes, or overalls; work shirts; work boots or cowboy boots; and a cowboy hat or farmer's brimmed hat.

Setting

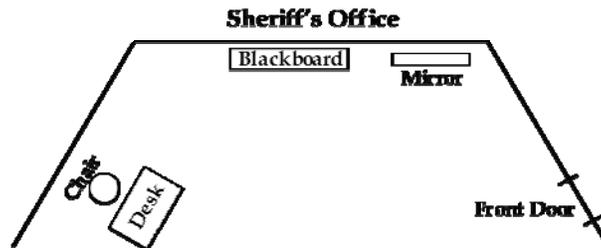
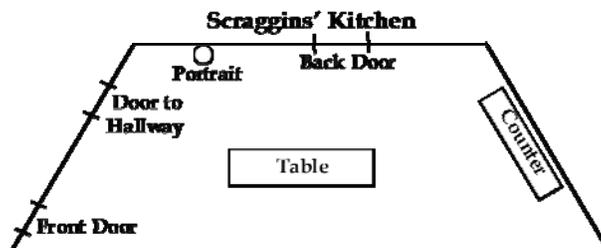
The small town of Vulture Rock in the hills of Arkansas.

Set

There are two simple sets that can be accomplished quickly with just a few set pieces.

The Scraggins' kitchen. There is a front door DSR, a back door USC, and a door to the rest of the house USR. A counter runs along the SL wall. There is a long table CS. A picture of Festus Scraggins, the deceased patriarch of the clan, hangs on the back wall to the right of the back door.

Sheriff's office. There is a desk and chair DSR and a door DSL. There is also a blackboard and a full-length mirror.



Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Scraggins' kitchen; early afternoon.

Scene 2: Sheriff's office, mid-afternoon.

Scene 3: Scraggins' kitchen, one hour later.

Scene 4: Sheriff's office, one hour later.

Props

Wall portrait of Festus Scraggins	3 Hood-type masks
Kitchen table and chairs	2 Old-fashioned pistols
Pair of filthy boots, for Clem	Old-fashioned shotgun
Basket of laundry	5 Holsters
2 Horseshoes	3 Guns
Desk	2 Short pieces of rope
Paperwork	2 Burlap potato sacks
Full-length mirror	Blackboard
Cooking pot	Chalk
	Wanted poster
	Water glass

Sound Effects

Gunshot

"iLLiterate chicken thieven scoundrels
seek upright women for marrying.
Must be able to support mate
and keep 'em out of prison.
Send photo to Ma Scraggins
at Scraggins Gulch, AR."

Scene I

(AT RISE: The Scraggins' kitchen, early afternoon. Clematis is folding laundry at the counter. Ma enters from the hallway door USA, and notes a pair of filthy boots on her kitchen table.)

MA: Boys, git in here. *(No response.)* Boys, I said, "Git in here." Now!

CLEMATIS: They don't hear real good, Ma.

(Claude, wearing his boots, enters from the back door. Note: "Claude" is pronounced "Clod.")

CLAUDE: What ya want, Ma?

(Cletus, wearing his boots, enters from the back door.)

CLETUS: We was busy, Ma.

(Clem, a brute of a man, enters from the back door. He is barefoot. Note: "Clem" is pronounced "Clam.")

CLEM: Ye interrupted us, Ma.

MA: Yer lucky thet's all I done. Which of you galoots done left yer durty boots on my kitchen table?

CLEMATIS: *(To Boys.)* Ya oughta be ashamed of yourselves. Ma jist wiped it off...last winter...

(Claude is wearing his boots but looks down to make sure they are on his feet.)

CLAUDE: Weren't me, Ma.

(Cletus is wearing his boots but looks down to make sure they are on his feet.)

CLETUS: I'm wearin' mine, Ma.

(Clem, barefoot, looks down to where his boots should be.)

CLEM: Weren't me, neither.

(Ma looks at Clem.)

MA: *(Indicating boots on kitchen table.)* Well, then whose boots are they?

CLEM: They ain't mine, Ma.

CLAUDE: Ain't got a notion.

CLETUS: Suppose they belong to the Parson?

(Clem crosses to the table CS, picks up the boots, and examines them.)

CLEM: Sheriff's got a pair somethin' like 'em.

MA: Clam, where yer boots at?

CLEM: *(Still barefoot, he points to his feet.)* I'm wearin' 'em, Ma.

MA: Where you wearin' 'em, Son?

CLEM: Why thet's the dumbest question I ever heared. I'm wearin' them right here on my feet. *(He looks down.)* Least I was. *(Pause.)* Ma, think someone done stole my boots.

CLEMATIS: Did ya check yer pockets, Clam?

MA: Why don't you call on Sheriff Jack Hare? Maybe he can find 'em for you.

CLAUDE: I don't think we oughta do thet, Ma.

MA: Why not? Sheriffs is supposed ta find things.

CLETUS: 'Cause Clod, Clam, and me was plannin' ta rob the bank.

CLEM: If Sheriff Hare heared about it, he might git upset. Might jist shoot one of us.

CLEMATIS: Not if'n one of you'ns shoot him first.

CLETUS: Forgit the Sheriff. Us four boys'll find Clam's boots in no time.

CLAUDE: Yeah, Ma. Me, Cletus, and Clod sure will.

MA: Ain't yer name "Clod," Son?

CLAUDE: I meant me, Cletus...Clam and me. Why the four of us can ferret out anythin'. Clam, you look in the barn. Cletus, you check the henhouse. And I'll go check down by the crick [*creek*].

MA: Thet there's a good idea, Son. (*She pats him on the back.*) And after you find Clam's boots, you all come back in here, 'cause there's somethin' powerful important I'm wantin' ta talk ta you about.

(*Claude and Clem exit through the back door. Beulah enters from the front door, carrying a covered cooking pot.*)

BEULAH: Mornin', Liza. Brung ye and yer clan some fresh stew I gist made from a new recipe. I thought y'all might like ta try it out.

(*Ma crosses to Beulah and takes the cooking pot.*)

MA: Thet ware very thoughtful of you, Beulah. The boys are very fond of beef stew. (*She puts the pot on the table.*)

BEULAH: Ain't beef.

CLEMATIS: Then what is it?

BEULAH: Skunk. Be sure and let me know how it tastes. (*She exits the front door.*)

CLETUS: (*Looking terribly confused.*) Ma...?

(*Ma turns to Cletus.*)

MA: What is it, Son?

CLETUS: Can't remember which door I take ta git ta the schoolhouse.

CLEMATIS: Why ya wantin' ta go ta the schoolhouse?

CLETUS: That's where Clam mighta left his boots.

CLEMATIS: Clam never went ta school.

CLETUS: Then why'd he leave his boots there?

MA: Who said he did?

CLETUS: *(Hopelessly confused.)* Well, if thet don't beat all...

Then why did Clod jist tell me ta go ta the schoolhouse?

MA: Clod said, "henhouse."

CLEMATIS: Well, I'll be! Is thet whar the hens go ta school,
Ma?

MA: No, darlin'. It's whar they go ta lay eggs.

CLETUS: Ya sure?

MA: Yeah, I'm sure.

CLETUS: Clod's annunciation must be a bit off today.

Okay. So which door do I take?

MA: Might try the back one.

CLETUS: *(Pointing.)* Thet the back one, thar, Ma?

MA: Sure is, Son.

(Cletus goes to the back door and tries to open it by pushing it out instead of pulling it in. Cletus turns to Ma with his back to the door.)

CLETUS: Maw, I think it's stuck.

CLEMATIS: He's doin' it wrong again, Ma.

(While Cletus has his back to the door, Clem opens the door, hitting Cletus in the back and propelling him forward. Clem enters.)

CLEM: Ma, I found the barn.

MA: That's good, Son. But did you find yer shoes?

CLEM: Found these instead, Ma. *(Holds up two horseshoes.)*

But I don't think they'll fit.

(Ma crosses to Clem. She takes the horseshoes and inspects them.)

MA: Where'd you find 'em, boy?

CLEM: It weren't easy. Two more still on the horse.

(Ma gives the horseshoes back to Clem.)

MA: Be sure an git 'em on the right foot, Son.

CLETUS: Ma, we ain't got no horse.

CLEM: Looked like a horse ta me.

CLEMATIS: Even if it ain't a horse, cain we keep it, anyway? I got room in my room.

(Claude enters from the back door dripping wet. He approaches his brothers.)

CLAUDE: Found the creek, Ma.

MA: Git those wet clothes off, boy, afore ye catch a death of a cold. *(Pause.)* On the other hand, maybe ye should leave them on.

(Claude notices Clem is barefoot.)

CLAUDE: Ma, ya know them boots we done found on the kitchen table? I'll bet anythin' they're Clam's.

CLEM: Are not.

(Ma looks at Clem's bare feet, crosses to the table, grabs the boots, and holds them up for Clem to examine.)

MA: Look close, Son. Are they yers?

(Clem crosses to Ma, takes the boots, holds them as close as he can, and examines them.)

CLEM: Not sure, maw.

CLEMATIS: Maybe he should try 'em on, Ma. I remember a story about a purdy girl who tried on some glass slippers

and got ta marry a prince. Maybe if they fit Clam, he'll git ta marry a prince, too.

(Clem turns to Clematis.)

CLEM: Now you know better than thet, Sis. I ain't got no time for marriagin'. If I goes out and gets all married up, how we gonna pull off thet bank robbery we been plannin' so good?

(Knock at the door.)

MA: Who in tarnation kin thet be?

(Clematis crosses to open the front door, but before she does so, she turns back to Ma.)

CLEMATIS: What's "tarnation" mean, Ma?

CLETUS: *(To Clematis.)* If it's the Sheriff, tell him we ain't here.

CLEM: What if he sees us?

CLETUS: Then all four of us boys will have ta tell 'em, too.

CLAUDE: It could be Parson Cropkiller.

MA: Why do you say thet, Son?

CLAUDE: 'Cause I jist sawed him out front.

MA: What's he doin' out there?

CLAUDE: Cain't say for sure. Think he were talkin' ta his horse.

CLETUS: Why'd ya think thet?

CLAUDE: 'Cause I heard him say, "Horse, where'd ya leave your shoes?"

CLEM: Why'd he say thet for?

CLAUDE: Probably wanted ta know where his shoes were.

CLEMATIS: Maybe wanted ta trim his toenails.

CLEM: If he were gonna trim his toenails, why were he talkin' at his old horse?

CLETUS: *(To Claude.)* She jist teld ye. He were worried about his horse's toenails.

CLEM: Never seed a horse with toenails.

CLAUDE: Least, not on his feet.

CLEMATIS: Thet's 'cause you can't see no toenails when they is wearin' shoes.

CLETUS: Maybe he lost a shoe?

CLAUDE: No sir. The Parson was still wearin' both of his.

CLETUS: I meant, maybe his horse lost a shoe.

MA: *(Indicating horseshoes.)* Whar'd you say you found them shoes, Son?

CLEM: You see, Ma, thar ware this horse—

(Knock at the door.)

MA: Clematis, girl, open the door.

(Clematis opens the front door. Parson enters and crosses past Clematis to Ma.)

PARSON: Howdy Mrs. Scraggins, boys, Clematis.

MA: Afternoon, Parson. What brings you all the way out here ta Scraggins Gulch?

PARSON: Why ma'am, you invited me for dinner. Said you had a problem that needed powerful discussin'.

(Ma crosses to Parson.)

MA: Thet weren't fer today.

CLEMATIS: When were it fer, Ma?

PARSON: *(To Ma.)* Sure was. Did ye fergit?

MA: You ain't invited till *next* Tuesday.

PARSON: This is next Tuesday. You invited me yesterday. And as yesterday were last Monday, thet makes today next Tuesday.

CLEMATIS: Ma, does next Tuesday always come after last Monday?

MA: I'm afreared ye made a bodacious mistake, Parson. This here is only *this* Tuesday,

CLEM: You're right, Ma! It's Tuesday all day long. I done checked our sundial this mornin'.

MA: *(To Parson.)* All right, then. Today is only *this* Tuesday. You wasn't invited till *next* Tuesday. It won't be *next* Tuesday until next Tuesday. Ye got it all wrong, so come back then.

CLETUS: *(To Parson.)* Ma cain't cook the chicken today. Clod ain't stole it yet.

PARSON: Would ye serve a man of the cloth poached chicken?

CLAUDE: Don't see why not. 'Twas your chicken we was fixin' ta steal.

CLEMATIS: Besides, Ma weren't plannin' ta poach it. She were gonna roast it.

(Parson crosses to Cletus and grabs him to make a point. He takes Cletus DSL.)

PARSON: *(To Cletus.)* You leave my chicken alone. Thet thar chicken was given ta me by the Scrud family. They couldn't afford ta put money in the plate, so they gave me the bird instead.

CLEMATIS: I ken understand thet.

CLAUDE: But they gave it ta you before we could swipe it from them.

CLEM: Them Scruds stole it from the Sheriff before we could. Thet makes it rightly ours.

(Parson crosses to Ma.)

PARSON: *(To Ma.)* How 'bout we jist forgit dinner and git on with the powerful discussin' thet you were needin' ta be discussin'?

MA: Ya mean you'd do thet far me, even if I warden't ta fix you dinner?

PARSON: Certainly... *(Pause.)* ...if I have your werd of honor thet your boys will leave my other chickens be.

MA: Thet sounds like a fair bargain. Line up, boys. Boys, I want all four of you ta cross yer fingers, and repeat after me. *(The three boys do so with varying difficulty.)* I cross my fingers and hope ta die thet I will never again steal any of Parson Cropkiller's chickens.

CLAM/CLAUDE/CLETUS: *(Solemnly doing as told.)* I cross my fingers and hope ta die thet I won't steal no more of Parson Cropkiller's chickens.

CLETUS: Ma, cain we still rustle his gooses?

MA: Never ye mind. You ain't ta touch a single thing thet belongs ta the Parson.

CLEM: Can we still steal his things if'n we're careful not ta touch 'em?

CLAUDE: Can we still steal from his church?

MA: No, you cain't steal from the church, neither.

CLEMATIS: Not even from the poor box?

PARSON: The poor box is there ta help the poor.

CLEMATIS: We're as poor as they come.

CLAUDE: *(To Parson.)* Didn't ye say in one of your sarmons thet "God helps those who help themselves"?

CLEM: How much poorer do we have ta git before we is poor enough ta rob the church?

CLETUS: Rats. Thet'll jist about put us out of business!

PARSON: Speakin' of business, cain we git down ta it?

MA: Sure cain.

CLEMATIS: *(To Parson.)* Would you like some lemonade first?

PARSON: Sure would.

CLEMATIS: We ain't got no lemons, but I'll git ye some anyway. *(She exits through the hall door.)*

PARSON: Lemonade without lemons?

CLEM: It's real good, Parson. Jist a tad sweeter.

PARSON: *(To Ma.)* Can we jist git on with discussin' your problem?

MA: In thet case, I'll come right ta the point. I got four right handsome boys. *(Gesturing to the three boys.)* If thar's gonna be future generations ta carry on the good name of Scraggins, they'll need womenfolk ta marry.

PARSON: And ye want me ta make darn sure thet that don't never happen?

MA: No, I want you ta find eligible young women of high moral caricature ta marry my boys and take good care of 'em.

(Claude taps Ma on the shoulder.)

CLAUDE: Ma, I don't wants ta git married. You cook jist fine.

(Cletus approaches Ma.)

CLETUS: I'm happy here, Ma. You picks up real good after me.

(Clem yanks Claude away from Ma.)

CLEM: We don't have time for women, Ma. We're too busy plannin' ta rob the Vulture Rock Bank. *(Claude and Cletus give Clem a dirty look. Clem realizes his blunder. To Parson.)* But don't tell nobody, Parson. It's a big secret.

CLAUDE/CLETUS: *(To Clem.)* Shhhhhh!

PARSON: You're plannin' ta do what?

CLEM: My three brothers don't want me ta tell you. Jist forget anythin' you didn't hear.

MA: You see! That's why my boys needs womenfolk, Parson. It's jist like ye say in your sarmons: "The idle mind is the devil's outhouse."

PARSON: It's truly gratifyin' ta know that the members of my little flock hang on my every word.

(Clematis enters carrying a glass of "lemonade.")

CLEMATIS: We sure do, Parson. Even when they don't make no sense.

(Clematis hands the Parson the glass.)

CLEM: *(To Parson.)* Except when we sleeps through them, of course.

(Ma takes the Parson by the hand.)

MA: Do you think you can find my boys some fittin' wives, Parson?

PARSON: Did you have any particular young ladies in mind?

MA: What I really think we needs are young ladies who ain't too particular.

PARSON: Have you considered the possibility of advertisin' for mail-order brides?

MA: Kin you do thet?

PARSON: Certainly. I'll even help you write the ad. *(Imagining the ad.)* "Illiterate chicken-thieven scoundrels seek upright women for marryin'. Must be able ta support mate and keep 'em out of prison. Send photo ta Ma Scraggins at Scraggins Gulch, AR [Arkansas]."

MA: Say, thet's real good. You sure do have a way with words, Parson.

CLAUDE: What's "illiterate" mean?

PARSON: It refers ta your best quality.

CLEMATIS: What best quality?

PARSON: I want you ta put your best foot forward.

CLEMATIS: Which one's thet, Parson?

CLAUDE: (*Not sure which foot is best.*) Don't think I got one.

(*Clem crosses to Parson.*)

CLEM: (*To Parson.*) If we need wives, couldn't we jist kidnap a few?

CLETUS: Ma, couldn't I jist kidnap Miss Prudence? She's always real nice ta me.

CLAUDE: Ma, if I have ta git married, can I have Belle Golden. I think she's real purdy.

PARSON: Why don't I ride into town and approach the ladies before ya kidnap them. Some young women might object ta being carried off ta Scraggins Gulch.

MA: That makes sense ta me. But be real sure thet they're good enough for my boys. And I'm truly sorry there weren't no chicken dinner fixed. (*Suddenly she gets a brilliant idea.*) Tarnation! I plumb forgot. Do you like stew, Parson?

PARSON: Sure do.

MA: I've got a whole pot jist sittin' on the table. I'll send it with you. Then we'll be all even.

PARSON: Beef stew's my favorite food. Thank you kindly, ma'am.

CLEM: Say, Parson...when you git back ta town, if'n you have time, do ya think you maybe could go ta the bank? We needs the combination of the vault.

(*Blackout.*)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Sheriff's office, mid-afternoon. The Parson enters from the door DSL. Ezekiel, the Sheriff's deputy, is sitting behind a desk doing paperwork.)

PARSON: Ezekiel, where's the Sheriff? Got ta speak ta him, pronto.

EZEKIEL: Cain't. He ain't here.

PARSON: Well, whar is he? Trouble's a-comin'.

EZEKIEL: *(Remains calm.)* Well, it'll jist have ta wait till the Sheriff gits back.

PARSON: It cain't wait, Zeke. It's the four Scraggins boys. They've concocted up a secret plan ta hold up the bank!

EZEKIEL: How'd ya know thet?

PARSON: Clam told me.

EZEKIEL: Why'd he do thet?

PARSON: Why does Clam do anythin'?

EZEKIEL: Don't sound like a very good secret.

PARSON: It were... afore he told me.

EZEKIEL: Which bank?

PARSON: Our bank, ye darn fool. The one right here in Vulture Rock.

EZEKIEL: Sure sounds like a crisis ta me. I'll be sure and tell Jack soon as he gets back.

PARSON: It cain't wait. They'll clean the place out unless the Sheriff does somethin' now.

(Sheriff and Prudence enter.)

SHERIFF: Who'll clean what place out? *(Sheriff walks over to the full-length mirror and admires himself.)*

PRUDENCE: *(Indicating Sheriff.)* Ain't he the best-lookin' hunk ye ever did see?

(Sheriff admires himself in the mirror some more and then turns to the rest.)

SHERIFF: Don't look one day older than I did an hour ago.

(Parson crosses to Sheriff.)

PARSON: Jack, the four Scraggins boys...they're plannin' ta rob the Vulture Rock Bank. Ya gotta do somethin' right away, Sheriff.

(Prudence approaches Sheriff.)

PRUDENCE: Jack, you can't let 'em do it.

SHERIFF: Quit worryin'. Them boys will never pull it off...

EZEKIEL: They're a desperate bunch, Sheriff.

(Prudence takes the Sheriff by the arm.)

PRUDENCE: How can you be so calm, Jack?

PARSON: *(To Sheriff.)* Aren't you bein' a bit overconfident?

(Sheriff crosses to the desk to get a piece of paper.)

SHERIFF: ...'cause Vulture Rock ain't got no bank.

PRUDENCE: By golly, he's right! I plumb forgot.

EZEKIEL: Never even had one.

PARSON: Do the four Scraggins boys know that?

SHERIFF: Probably not.

EZEKIEL: Shouldn't we tell 'em?

SHERIFF: 'Preciate if you could drop over ta Scraggins' Gulch and do that for me, Ezekiel. Last time they tried it, they wound up robbin' the livery stable. Scedered the heck out of all the horses.

EZEKIEL: They git any money?

SHERIFF: Nope. Jist chips. Whole bag of them.

PRUDENCE: (*Confused.*) Chips?

SHERIFF: Horse chips.

PRUDENCE: Why ever would they take horse chips?

SHERIFF: Mistook 'em for silver dollars.

(*Parson grabs the Sheriff by the shoulder.*)

PARSON: But thet ain't all, Sheriff. The boys is plannin' ta marry Prudence, here, and Belle... (*Looks around for Belle.*) ...who ain't here.

EZEKIEL: (*Concerned.*) Somebody'd better warn Belle, pronto-like.

PRUDENCE: (*Seeing her chance to eliminate her rival.*) Now, why'd they wanta do thet?

PARSON: Not sure they do. 'Twas Ma Scraggins' idea.

PRUDENCE: I don't want ta marry her, neither.

PARSON: This is serious, Jack. If the girls won't consent ta marry 'em, the boys is plannin' ta kidnap 'em.

(*Belle enters.*)

BELLE: Who's plannin' ta kidnap who?

(*Prudence crosses to Belle.*)

PRUDENCE: The four Scraggins boys is plannin' ta kidnap us.

BELLE: Which "us"?

PRUDENCE: Me and you.

BELLE: Why'd they wanta do thet?

PRUDENCE: Parson says they wants ta marry us.

BELLE: They've got more brains than I've been givin' 'em credit for. In fact, they've got more brains than a certain sheriff I know...

PARSON: Why do you say thet, Miss Belle?

BELLE: Because that certain sheriff could marry either one of us, but is too dumb ta ask.
PARSON: I could understand the Sheriff wantin' you, Miss Belle, but why me?
BELLE: You ain't one of the "us-ns" I was referrin' ta, Parson.
PRUDENCE: Belle meant her and me, Parson.
EZEKIEL: But there're four Scraggins boys and only two of you.
PARSON: All I know is thet Cletus wanted Prudence, here, and Clod thought Belle was *real* purdy.
BELLE: Well, least he ain't blind. (*Turns to Prudence.*) What do you think, Pru?

(*Prudence draws Belle aside DSL.*)

PRUDENCE: I think we need ta find two real fast horses.
PARSON: Be sure and check their shoes. Clam stole mine.
BELLE: Then where'd you git them... (*Indicating his shoes.*) ...what yer wearin'?
PARSON: Not mine on my feet. Mine on my horse.
PRUDENCE: Why'd he do thet?
PARSON: Think he lost his.
PRUDENCE: His horse?
PARSON: No, his shoes.
BELLE: You mean his horse's shoes?
PARSON: No, I mean his boots.
BELLE: Who puts boots on a horse?
PRUDENCE: Do you think yours will fit?
SHERIFF: If they nail them on real good.
PRUDENCE: To the horse?
SHERIFF: No, to Clem.
BELLE: Why don't he jist use laces?
SHERIFF: Horseshoes don't come with laces.
PRUDENCE: But why would Clem be wearin' horseshoes?
PARSON: 'Cause he lost his boots.

EZEKIEL: 'Cause he's a Scraggins.

PRUDENCE: I ain't marryin' no man what wears horseshoes.

PARSON: You won't have ta. It was Cletus who spoke up for you...not Clam.

(Sheriff crosses to Belle.)

SHERIFF: If Clod is gonna marry Belle, and Cletus is eyein' Pru, who's Clam gonna marry?

EZEKIEL: The only other unmarried female in town is Gloria.

BELLE: Gloria? Poor Clam.

PARSON: How ya plannin' ta protect the womenfolk, Sheriff?

(Belle crosses to the Parson and puts her hand on her hip.)

BELLE: I don't need any protectin', Parson. I'll plug any rattlesnake who dares lay a hand on me. You all better excuse me. *(Starts to exit.)* I gotta go see if the money's still rollin' in over at the Golden Belle. *(Exits.)*

SHERIFF: Think I'll jist mosey out ta the Scraggins' place and have a palaver with Ma Scraggins. Ezekiel, you keep an eye on the office while I'm gone.

EZEKIEL: I thought you said I was ta hang them "wanted" posters around the county?

SHERIFF: You can do that at the same time.

PRUDENCE: Zeke can hang your posters. I'll watch yer office fer ya. I'll use the time ta write that re-election speech for your re-election that I done promised you.

PARSON: And I gotta go and prepare next Sunday' sarmon.

(Ezekiel rises.)

EZEKIEL: The one ya gave last Sunday was sure a humdinger, Parson. 'Twas a frightful shame all the soybeans withered, though. First time I e'er seed that happen during a sarmon.

SHERIFF: First time I e'er heard a sarmon that long. But it were really good! At least it were in the parts I didn't sleep through.

(Parson puts his arm around the Sheriff's shoulder and walks him to door DSL. Ezekiel follows.)

PARSON: Been meanin' ta discuss that with you, Jack. Don't mind you sleepin' through my sarmons, but I was wonderin' if you might be considerate enough ta hold down all that snorin'...scares me, and makes me repeat myself.

(Parson steers the Sheriff out the door DSL and they exit. Ezekiel exits behind them and then turns back.)

EZEKIEL: I like his sarmons. Cheaper than sleepin' pills.

(Ezekiel exits. Beulah enters from the front door, carrying a cooking pot.)

BEULAH: Mornin', Prudence. Sheriff Hare here?

PRUDENCE: Mornin', Beulah. What ya need him fer?

BEULAH: Prepared a new culinary delight. Though the Sheriff might like bein' the farst one ta try it.

(Prudence crosses to Beulah and takes the pot.)

PRUDENCE: That's real neighborly of ye. What's it called?

BEULAH: *(Proud.)* Beulah's Scrumptious Boiled Crow. I even plucked off the feathers.

PRUDENCE: Boiled crow?

BEULAH: Yup. In sweet potato syrup. Have Jack let me know how it tastes.

PRUDENCE: That's very kind of you, Beulah. You'll make some man a fine wife. *(She puts the pot on the desk.)*

BEULAH: That's the idea...

(Beulah exits through the front door. Prudence checks the contents of the cooking pot and recoils from the smell.)

PRUDENCE: Don't think Jack likes boiled crow...even with the feathers off. Think I'll drop it by the parsonage later. Hezikiah will eat anythin'.

(Gloria enters through the front door.)

GLORIA: Sheriff? Sheriff Jack?

PRUDENCE: Mornin', Glory. Sheriff's not here. I'm holdin' the fort. Is they anything I kin do ya for?

GLORIA: Now that ya mention it, thar is. You can stay away from Jack Hare. I intends on marryin' him.

PRUDENCE: Didn't know Jack were affianced to ya.

GLORIA: He ain't. Jist don't want him gettin' affianced to you afore he gets affianced to me.

PRUDENCE: And I don't want him gettin' affianced to Belle or you.

GLORIA: Nor her neither.

PRUDENCE: Didn't realize you was interested in Jack. Thought it was jist me and Belle.

GLORIA: Whom I supposed ta marry? Clod Scraggins?

PRUDENCE: Parson Cropkiller ain't so bad.

(Gloria crosses to Prudence and takes her hands.)

GLORIA: Do you know what I heard about him?

PRUDENCE: *(Knowing what's coming.)* I haven't the faintest idea.

GLORIA: Let me tell you what I heard about him. My cousin, Carla Carrytale, swore on her solemn oath that she were told by her best friend, Carolyn Quidnunc, that Ruthann Rumormonger heard from her sister-in-law, Mary Munblenews, that the Reverend Mr. Cropkiller had ta skedaddle out of Parched Springs, Oklahoma, 'cause he made palpable advances to a 17-year-old girl named Una Upright, and 'cause Una's father, Judge Obidiah Upright, had in mind a shotgun weddin'.

PRUDENCE: I don't suppose you ever heard the Parson's side of things?

GLORIA: Squire Tumbleweed told me that he got from Tom Tabby that the Parson's stepmother, Catherine Cropkiller, told him that Parson Hezikiah—the's her stepson ya know—claimed that Una Upright misconstrued his efforts at vocalizationing into a palpable proposal of marriage.

PRUDENCE: How could somethin' like that happen?

GLORIA: He were singin' "I Love You Truly" jist as she arrived for choir practice. *(Turns to Prudence.)* As she were the only woman in the place, she naturally assumed he was proposin'.

PRUDENCE: Gloria, however do you find out all these things?

GLORIA: 'Tain't easy. Takes a powerful lot of snoopin'.

(Claude enters wearing a mask and points an obsolete pistol at Gloria and Prudence.)

CLAUDE: Reach for the sky, you filthy varmints.

(Prudence and Belle put up their hands and back away. Cletus enters behind Claude. He is wearing a mask and holding an obsolete pistol as well.)

CLETUS: Stand and deliver. This here's a genuine robbery!

(Clem, wearing a mask, enters and remains far DSL. Clem is carrying two burlap potato sacks and two short pieces of rope over his shoulder. Clem is holding an obsolete shotgun but is pointing it at himself.)

CLEM: Anybody moves, and I'll fill 'em full of buckshot.

GLORIA: In thet case, ya better not move, boy.

CLAUDE: Clam, you got your gun backwards, agin.

CLEM: I'm awfully sorry, fellas. *(Clem goes to swing his gun around so he can point it at the girls, but in the process, he swings it past his brothers, who have to dive to avoid being shot. As Cletus ducks, his mask turns so he can no longer see through the eyeholes.)* It won't happen again. Whar'd you fellows say the trigger was?

CLETUS: *(To Claude.)* I don't think we should tell him.

CLAUDE: Me neither.

GLORIA: What is the meanin' of this here outrage?

CLAUDE: *(Leveling his gun at her.)* Cletus gist told ya. This here's a bank robbery.

CLEM: So you'ns better open the safe afore we fills ya full of lead.

PRUDENCE: Boys, this here is the Sheriff's office.

CLEM: It ain't the bank?

PRUDENCE: It ain't the bank.

GLORIA: And we ain't got no safe.

CLETUS: Then why fore have ye got all those bars on the windows?

GLORIA: Because you gist broke into the county jail.

CLEM: You'ns must think we're awful dumb or somethin'. Thets be a terrible waste of bars. No bank robber in his right mind is gonna break into a county jail.

CLAUDE: Are ye certain thet this here's the jail?

CLETUS: Hey, Clod, it's gettin' dark in here. Can you light a lamp?

CLEM: I reckon your mask has gotten crooked.

(Cletus straightens his mask.)

CLETUS: Nobody make a move, or I'll fill you full of lead!

CLEM: Cletus, does that include me?

PRUDENCE: When are you four Scraggins boys gonna realize this isn't a bank? This here's the Sheriff's office.

CLAUDE: *(To Prudence.)* Are ya sure you ain't jist tryin' ta fool us?

CLETUS: How'd they know it were us? We all got masks on?

CLAUDE: Someone must of told 'em.

CLEM: If this here ain't the bank, whar then is the bank?

GLORIA: We ain't got no bank in Vulture Rock.

CLETUS: Well, if that ain't the...now what are we goin' ta do? Maw won't like it if we come home empty-handed.

CLEM: *(To the women.)* Got any money?

PRUDENCE: Nope.

GLORIA: Sorry.

CLAUDE: Then let's not tell her. We'll tell her we done gone fishin' instead. *(Finally noticing that Prudence is Prudence, he crosses to her.)* Say, Cletus. Ain't that Miss Prudence? Ain't that the girl you was fixin' ta marry?

CLETUS: Ain't sure. Ain't wearin' my glasses. *(He approaches Prudence to get a closer look.)* Jist keep reachin' for the ceiling, ma'am. *(He moves in for a real close look.)* Yup, that's her.

CLAUDE: Well, don't gist stand there. Ask her!

CLETUS: *(Turns back to Claude.)* Ask her what?

CLEM: If she wants ta marry you.

CLETUS: Ma'am, I've got a question I've been meanin' ta ask you. Jist keep your hands up.

CLEM: One false move, and he'll fill you full of lead!

CLETUS: Ma'am, I wants ta marry you. Would that be okay with you?

PRUDENCE: *(To Clem.)* Does tellin' him "no" count as a false move?

CLEM: Sure would.

PRUDENCE: May I have time to consider?

(Cletus moves the gun closer to her nose.)

CLETUS: How much time?

PRUDENCE: A week?

CLETUS: *(To Clem and Claude.)* What do you fellas think?

CLEM: What's a week?

PRUDENCE: Seven days.

CLEM: Is thet more than four?

CLETUS: Don't know.

GLORIA: I'll count it out fer ya. One, two, four, three, six,
five, seven.

CLAUDE: Sounds jist about right. Ma will probably need a
week ta git invitations out ta the relatives, especially to the
Scraggins' branch down in Buzzard County.

CLETUS: Still got your moneybags, Clam?

CLEM: Sure do.

CLETUS: *(To Prudence.)* You can put you hands down,
ma'am. *(To Clem.)* Bag her, Clam.

*(Prudence puts her arms straight down, and Clem puts the sack
over her head. The sack comes down to her knees. Clem then ties a
piece of rope around her waist to keep her bagged.)*

CLEM: Thet oughta hold her, Cletus.

PRUDENCE: *(From inside the bag.)* Jist what do ya think yer
doin'?

CLETUS: Jist takin' you home ta Ma. Gotta see if she
approves of you. Now you be real good in thar.

PRUDENCE: What if'n your ma doesn't approve of me.

CLETUS: I guess I'll jist have ta shoot ya.

GLORIA: You can't kidnap her. You're behavin' like four
brutes.

(Claude and Cletus redirect their guns at Gloria. Clem crosses to Gloria.)

CLEM: Hey, fellas, I gist noticed somethin', Clod.

CLAUDE: What's thet, Clem?

CLEM: This'un here's kinda purdy, too. Kin I marry her?

CLETUS: *(To Gloria.)* Do ya wanna marry Clam here?

GLORIA: *(To Clem, with her hands still upraised.)* Are you proposin'?

CLEM: No, Cletus, there are doin' it for me.

GLORIA: Do you love me?

CLEM: Ain't given it much thought.

GLORIA: Can I put my hands down?

CLEM: Ya carryin' a firearm?

GLORIA: Do I look like I am?

CLAUDE: She looks purdy clean ta me.

(Cletus crosses to her and smells her from the back, ending up DSR of her.)

CLETUS: She smells purdy clean, too.

GLORIA: What if I say no?

CLEM: I reckon I'd have ta plug you.

GLORIA: Kin I have a week?

CLAUDE: Got another bag, Clod?

CLEM: Sure do. But I'm Clam. *(He bags Gloria and ties her around the waist.)* Thet'll hold her.

(As the Scraggins boys are bagging Gloria, they have relaxed and lowered their guns. All have their backs to the front door of the jail. Belle enters from front door behind them and immediately sizes up the situation. She draws her pistol from its holster.)

BELLE: Git 'em up, boys! Up high. *(Clem, Claude, and Cletus comply, holding their weapons up with one hand.)* Now put your hardware on the desk. *(They comply.)* Jist what do

you polecats think you're doin'? Take off yer masks.
(*They take off their masks.*) All right, Clod Scraggins, start talkin'.

CLAUDE: Cletus and Clam jist proposed. They was takin' the girls home ta Ma.

GLORIA/PRUDENCE: Help! We're bein' kidnapped!

BELLE: Why I hearded of some low-down mangy things in my time, but this is the most low-downest, most mangiest thing I ever hearded of.

CLEM: Please, Miss Belle, don't be angry. We was jist takin' the girls home ta Ma so she could approve the nuptials.

GLORIA/PRUDENCE: Help! We're bein' kidnapped!

BELLE: Which one were you plannin' ta wed, Clod?

CLAUDE: I weren't plannin' ta marry neither. Cletus has done proposed ta Miss Prudence, and Clam ta Gloria.

BELLE: I repeat, who are you plannin' ta marry?

CLAUDE: I were cogitatin' marryin' you, Miss Belle. (*He drops to one knee.*) How about it, gal?

BELLE: Sorry to disappoint you, Clod, but I was kinda plannin' on tyin' the knot with the Sheriff.

PRUDENCE/GLORIA: Thet's a-takin' unfair advantage while we, here, is captivated.

(*Claude rises.*)

CLAUDE: (*To Belle.*) Ya say you're settin' your snare for ole Jack Hare?

BELLE: Yup. (*Pause.*) Make you a deal, Clod. If you fergit about marryin' me, I'll let you four boys all escape and fergit ta tell the Sheriff what you've got in mind for the girls.

PRUDENCE/GLORIA: Thet's a-takin' unfair advantage while we, here, is captivated.

CLAUDE: Are ya sayin' thet if'n I sacrifice my own wedded bliss, then my brothers can still wed Miss Prudence and Miss Gloria?

GLORIA/PRUDENCE: We're bein' kidnapped!

BELLE: I'd be real disappointed if they didn't.

CLAUDE: Ye have a bargain. Do ye want it in writin', or is a handshake good 'nough?

CLEM: The word of a Scraggins is his bond, Miss Belle.

CLETUS: You can take the word of a Scraggins to the bank...if you can find one.

BELLE: A handshake will do gist fine.

(Belle switches the gun into her left hand and extends her right hand. As she takes Claude's hand to shake it, he yanks her off balance, grabs her gun hand, and raises it into the air. Clem crosses and assists Claude in getting the gun away from Belle. Clem grabs Belle from behind and turns her to face him.)

CLAUDE: I've done change my mind. I'm still wantin' ta wed ya.

BELLE: Thet was a dirty trick, Clod Scraggins.

CLEM: Thet's why they calls him, "Durty Clod."

BELLE: And if I refuses you...?

CLETUS: We'd have ta shoot ya. Part of the Scraggins' family code of honor.

PRUDENCE/GLORIA: *(Still in bags.)* Nothin' unfair about thet. Bag her, boys!

BELLE: Can I have a week?

CLAUDE: Yup.

GLORIA/PRUDENCE: Git a bag.

CLEM: Ain't got no more.

CLAUDE: Got some rope?

CLETUS: Nope.

CLAUDE: *(To Belle.)* Are ya willin' to pretend you've been bagged? *(Pointing her gun at her nose.)*

BELLE: *(Nods yes.)* I'm entirely willin'.

(The boys proceed to escort the girls out the back door. Parson enters from the front door.)

PARSON: What's goin' on here?

BELLE/PRUDENCE/GLORIA: *(To Parson.)* We're bein' kidnapped.

CLEM: *(To Cletus.)* Should I shoot him?

CLETUS: Seems like a mighty fine idea ta me.

PARSON: Why would you want ta shoot me?

CLAUDE: Your sarmons been kinda long.

CLETUS: Boring, too.

CLEM: Real good way ta make sure ya don't tell the Sheriff nothin'.

PARSON: You boys don't really want ta shoot me.

CLAUDE: *(Confused.)* We don't?

CLEM: I think I do.

PARSON: *(Thinking quickly.)* Whose goin' ta marry you if you shoot me?

CLEM: Weren't plannin' ta marry you anyway.

CLAUDE: Forgot ta think about thet.

CLETUS: Better not shoot him gist yet.

CLEM: *(To Cletus and Claude.)* What do you want me ta do with him?

(Claude spots the blackboard.)

CLAUDE: *(To Cletus and Clem.)* Is two hundred a real big number?

CLETUS: Shore is.

CLAUDE: *(To Parson.)* Kin ye count ta two hundred?

PARSON: Sure can.

CLAUDE: Then if I was you, I'd mosey right over to thet there blackboard...and write two hundred times, "I promise to give shorter sarmons." Now git.

(Parson scurries to the blackboard and beings writing.)

PARSON: *(As he writes.)* "I promise to give shorter sarmons. I promise to give..."

(All exit while Parson writes. Blackout.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: Scraggins' kitchen, one hour later. Ma is sitting at the table doing a chore. There is a knock on the front door. Ma crosses to open the front door.)

MA: What'd ya bring me this time, Beulah?

(Beulah enters, carrying a cooking pot.)

BEULAH: Dessert.

MA: 'Nother new recipe?

BEULAH: Yup.

MA: Well, what is it this time?

BEULAH: Catfish Jell-O with whip cream. Should be a real delicacy.

MA: However do ye think up all these delightful recipes?

BEULAH: It's easy. Whene'er I gits leftovers thet Pa wouldn't eat, I jist slops 'em together and gives them ta you and the boys. How'd ye like the skunk stew?

MA: I never seed a meal disappear so fast in my whole life.

BEULAH: I'll make it agin for ye sometime.

(Beulah exits. Claude enters from the back door, pushing Belle ahead of him. Belle walks as if she is bagged like the other two girls even though she isn't.)

CLAUDE: Ma, we're home.

(Clematis enters from the hallway door.)

CLEMATIS: Leave yer muddy boots at the door.

MA: How much money did ya git?

(Cletus enters from the back door guiding Prudence in ahead of him.)

CLETUS: Didn't git none.

MA: Why not?

CLAUDE: Couldn't find the bank.

CLEMATIS: Why not?

(Clem enters from the back door guiding Gloria in ahead of him.)

CLEM: 'Cause there weren't no bank.

MA: Don't tell me ya done held up the livery stable agin.

CLETUS: *(With great pride.)* No, ma'am. This time it were the jail.

MA: Well, if thet ain't...why would you four boys rob the county jail?

CLEM: Thought it were the bank.

CLAUDE: It looked like a bank.

CLETUS: But it weren't.

MA: How could anybody ever be dumb enough to mistake a jail fer a bank?

CLAUDE: The bars fooled us. It weren't our fault, Ma.

MA: Ya mean ta tell me the four of you didn't know jails had bars?

CLAUDE/CLETUS/CLEM: No, ma'am.

MA: 'Spect I should have told you. *(Notices the two bagged women.)* What ya got there?

CLAUDE: Women, Ma.

CLETUS: Brought 'em home for yar approval, Ma.

MA: Sure don't approve of how they're dressed. Them is the ugliest dresses I ever seed.

BELLE/PRUDENCE/GLORIA: Help, we're bein' kidnapped.

CLEMATIS: They can talk, Ma. Must still be alive.

MA: Why'd ya kidnap 'em?

CLAUDE: Gonna marry 'em, Ma. Got one for each of the four of us.

CLETUS: Wanted ta make sure you liked 'em before we hitched the knot.

CLEM: Wanted ta make sure they was good enough for us boys.

MA: Have you boys proposed to 'em yet?

CLETUS: Yup, proposed real good.

CLEM: (*With great pride.*) Told 'em we'd shoot 'em if they didn't.

MA: What *exactly* did ya say when you done proposed?

CLEM: (*Puzzled that Ma didn't understand what he just said.*) Jist told ya. Told 'em we'd shoot 'em if they didn't.

CLETUS: Did we do good, Ma?

CLEMATIS: Is thet how it's done, Ma?

MA: What did they say?

CLETUS: They each told us they needed a week ta cogitate the matter.

MA: And I can understand why. You boys warn't vary romantic. When yer daddy... (*Indicates the picture of Festus Scraggins on the wall.*) ...bless his soul, proposed ta me, he spoke real romantic-like.

CLEM: What'd Daddy say, Ma?

MA: Told me he loved me more than Josephine.

CLEMATIS: Were Josephine his other sweetheart?

MA: No, daughter. Josephine twere his best sow. Told me if I'd marry him, he'd build me a big white house with green shutters, with mornin' glories twinin' 'round the door, and plant roses fer me in the front yard and put lots of manure on 'em.

CLAUDE: Daddy always had a fine way with words.

CLEMATIS: Don't remember ever livin' in thet house.

CLAUDE: Me, neither.

MA: Yer daddy never got around ta buildin' it. But he still proposed real nice.

CLEM: Sure did.

CLETUS: Ma, would you be ready to inspect our espoused womenfolk?

MA: Have a feelin' thet I better.

CLEMATIS: You can untie the bags, Cletus.

(Cletus unties the rope and pulls the bag off of Prudence.)

CLETUS: *(Proudly.)* This one is mine, Ma.

(Ma crosses to Prudence)

MA: What's yer name, gal?

PRUDENCE: Prudence. Prudence Pleasing.

MA: What do you do for a livin', girl?

PRUDENCE: I'm a switchboard operator, ma'am.

CLEMATIS: But there ain't any phones in town.

PRUDENCE: That's okay. There ain't any switchboard, either.

MA: *(To Cletus.)* She talks real good. *(Ma then checks out Prudence much like she would a horse. Ma pinches Prudence's mouth open to see her teeth.)* Well, she still got all her teeth. *(Checks her muscles.)* Real strong muscles, too. Should be able ta slop the hogs real good.

(Prudence crosses to Cletus.)

PRUDENCE: *(To Cletus.)* I don't slop hogs. *(Turns back to Ma.)* If I marry him... *(Turns back to Cletus.)* ...that will be his job.

CLETUS: If'n I'm gonna have ta slop the hogs, what's the point of gittin' married? *(To Prudence.)* Kin you drag tree stumps out of a cornfield?

PRUDENCE: That'll be your job, too.

(Cletus crosses to Ma.)

CLETUS: Darn. I'm beginnin' ta think thar ain't any point in gettin' married. *(Turns back to Prudence.)* Kin ya cook?

PRUDENCE: No.

MA: Sure ya still want ta marry her, Cletus?

CLETUS: Think I needs time fer ferthur consideration.

PRUDENCE: *(Takes his arm warmly.)* Take all the time you need, honeybunch.

(Ma crosses to Gloria, who is still bagged.)

MA: *(Indicating Gloria.)* Who's gonna marry this one?

CLEM: Me, Ma. *(Unbags Gloria.)* Ain't she the purdiest little thing you ever did see, Ma? And look at the size of her feet.

CLEMATIS: Purdiest size thirteens I ever did see.

MA: *(To Gloria.)* Don't suppose you can cook?

GLORIA: I cain't imagine why you'd suppose thet. Why jist the other day I was speakin' ta Gertrude Gossip—she's the wife of the preacher over at Slippery Rock Junction—and she told me thet she was visitin' with Grace Gobblegook, who informed her thet Grace's grandmother, Gladys Gooblegook, couldn't cook when she first got married, so she had her husband do it, and he said ta his friend, Ralph Rumor, thet he didn't mind a bit.

CLEM: What'd she say, Ma?

MA: I think she said if'n she marries you, you is gonna do the cookin'. *(To Gloria.)* Thet about it?

GLORIA: Did you know, thet during the winter of '82, Durward Dimbulb told his friend, Norm Nonplus, thet his wife, Diane Dimbulb, said ta her cousin—thet is her cousin twice removed, Mary Christmas—thet it was very dangerous for women ta shovel snow. She said women are very susceptible ta havin' heart attacks.

(Clem crosses to Ma.)

CLEM: Now what'd she say?

MA: Thet you're shovelin' all the snow, too.

CLEM: *(To Gloria.)* Is thet what you really said, ma'am?

GLORIA: My mother told me about men like you. *(She crosses to Ma.)* She said her mother told her thet she was

told by her mother that some men never listen, and that them are the worst kind ta marry.

CLEM: I'm listenin' real hard. I jist cain't understand a word yer sayin'. *(To Ma.)* Think I need a week, too, Ma.

MA: If she explains things jist two more times, I think yer gonna need two weeks. *(To Cletus and Clem.)* I don't think you boys done picked too good. They ain't at all like the gal thet married dear old dad. Why I cooked...

PRUDENCE/GLORIA: We eat out.

MA: And done the wash...

PRUDENCE/GLORIA: Thet's what maids is fer.

MA: And cut the firewood...

PRUDENCE/GLORIA: Don't do thet neither.

MA: And took out the garbage.

PRUDENCE/GLORIA: Thet's man's work, too.

(Ma crosses to Belle, who is unbagged.)

MA: *(Indicates Belle.)* Who's this one?

CLAUDE: She's Belle Golden, Ma. She belongs ta me.

MA: Why ain't she in a bag?

CLAUDE: Weren't 'nuff bags.

CLETUS: She were too big ta stick in his pocket.

CLEM: And she done promised ta pretend she were put in a bag.

(Ma looks Belle over real good.)

MA: Well, she ain't too bad ta look at. *(To Belle.)* What kin ye do around the house?

END OF FREEVIEW