



Peter Campbell

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

THE GOLD MINE

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FARCE. Yearning for adventure, Buzz and Hank are mysteriously transported to the Yukon town of Quagmire (pop. 57, temp. -40°) where they join forces with two dance hall singers to locate a missing gold prospector. However, the only clue they have is in the form of a riddle: “Where sits the black-feathered Goop on the bough of a kinkajou tree, a star will align a path to the mine for those with patience to see.” After seeking the help a mysterious Eskimo woman, they learn that the only kinkajou tree in the Yukon is located in avalanche territory. But before they can reach the site, the greedy mayor of Quagmire and his henchmen abduct the foursome, hoping to find the mine and keep the gold for themselves. But with the help of a Turkish belly dancer and an invisible grasshopper, the foursome manage to foil their captors only to suffer an avalanche and a serious case of snow blindness! This hysterical farce features a simple set, a host of quirky characters, and nonstop laughs.

Performance Time: Approximately 30-45 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(6 M, 4 F, 9 flexible, opt. extras)

(With doubling: 5 M, 3 F, 5 flexible)

BUZZ BAKER: Adventurous dreamer; wears a winter coat and a hat with earflaps.

HANK FITZPATRICK: Buzz's best friend and fellow adventurer; wears a winter coat and a hat with earflaps.

SOLO MIO: The prettiest girl in town who is in search of her missing father; disguised as a dance hall singer.

SALLY MAE BUTTERFIELD: Solo Mio's best friend; disguised as a dance hall singer.

IRA GRINDLEFINGER: Mayor, sheriff, judge, and undertaker of the Town of Quagmire as well as owner of the Golden Canary Dance Hall; wears a winter coat and hat.

VIOLET VAN DAMM: Grindlefinger's girlfriend; wears a fur coat.

JACK SUGGS: Grindlefinger's henchman.

DIRK MCSURLY: Grindlefinger's henchman.

SLICK WATSON: Grindlefinger's bodyguard; flexible.

NONOOK: Elderly Eskimo woman who wears scruffy fur clothing.

HARRY/HARRIETTA HOOPER: Piano player at the Golden Canary; flexible.

BIG MAC/BIG MAMA: Bartender and bouncer at the Golden Canary; flexible.

BILLIE BARKER: Master of ceremonies at the Golden Canary; flexible.

SPEEDY GONZALEZ: Slow-moving mailman; wears a postal uniform; flexible.

ANTONIO MIO: Solo's father; wears miner's garb and has a 2-foot-long beard.

CHAD/CHARLOTTE MURCHISON: Missing Quagmire mayor; wears miner's garb and has a 2-foot-long beard (even if played by a female); flexible.

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JETE FORTESQUE: Turkish belly dancer; wears traditional belly-dancing costume; can be played by a male dressed as a belly dancer; non-speaking; flexible.

VERY UGLY DANCE HALL GIRL: Can be played by a male dressed as a dance hall girl; non-speaking; flexible.

STAGEHAND: Non-speaking; flexible.

EXTRAS (Opt.): As Gold Miners and Dance Hall Girls.

Options for doubling:

Male: Antonio Mio/Dirk McSurly or Jack Suggs

Female: Violet Van Damm/NoNook

Flexible: Big Mac (Big Mama)/Jete Fortesque

Harry (Harrietta) Hooper/Speedy Gonzalez

Billie Barker/Very Ugly Dance Hall Girl

Chad (Charlotte) Murchison/Stagehand

NOTE: For flexible roles, change names and pronouns in the script accordingly.

SETTING

Town of Quagmire (population 57) located in the far reaches of Yukon Territory (temperature -40°F), where the meek seek to inherit the earth and where the un-meek seek to take it away from them.

SET

Golden Canary Dance Hall: There is a bar, a battered upright piano, a small staircase, and some chairs and small tables.

NoNook's igloo: Large cutout representing an igloo.

Dungeon interior: There is a flat painted with giant boulders to suggest the interior of a dungeon. Played in front of the curtain.

PROPS

- Large white half-moon suspended above the stage
- 4 Sleeping bags
- 4 Cell phones
- 2 Winter coats, for
- 2 Winter hats with earflaps
- Large sign with a large crooked arrow
- Roadside sign that reads, "Welcome to Quagmire. Est. 1902. Pop. 57" with the number 57 crossed out and replaced by 56.
- 2 Fake moustaches and beards, for Buzz and Hank
- 2 Glasses
- Chalkboard that reads, "Grindlefinger 3, Murchison 54"
- Small curtain
- Letter
- Sign that reads "North" and bears a crooked arrow that can be suspended above the stage
- Large fish
- 2 Small fish
- Wristwatch
- 2 Burlap bags
- Traditional Turkish belly dancing costume, for Jete
- 3 Large fake rocks with a notes attached to them
- 2 Clubs
- Large dog sled loaded with provisions on wheels
- Stuffed Chihuahua or another small dog (or a real dog may be used if desired)
- Dolly
- Small crooked tree
- Yellow cardboard sun attached to a long stick
- Gold glitter

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Beeps from a phone being
dialed

Phone ringing

Honky-tonk piano music

Howling wind

Fake snow

Loud knock

Door slamming

Turkish belly dancing music

Loud rumbling sound

Great crashing sounds

"WHERE SITS
THE BLACK FEATHERED GOOP
ON THE BOUGH
OF THE KINKAJOU TREE
A STAR WILL ALIGN
A PATH TO THE MINE
FOR THOSE
WITH THE PATIENCE
TO SEE."

ACT I

(The stage is dark, the curtain down. A spotlight shines on a large white half-moon suspended high above the stage. We hear the loud beeps of a phone being dialed and then the phone ringing.)

BUZZ: *(Heavily accented, thick, and guttural.)* Allo? You haff reached the tent of Attila. I am out looting and pillaging. Leave your name and the number of oxen you haff, and I vill raid you soon.

(A spotlight comes up on Hank Fitzpatrick, who is in a sleeping bag at one side of the stage in front of the curtain. He holds a cell phone to his ear.)

HANK: *(Exasperated.)* Buzz, will you turn that stupid machine off?! It's me.

(Another spotlight comes up on Buzz Baker, who is sitting in a sleeping bag three-quarters across the stage from Hank. He also holds a cell phone to his ear.)

BUZZ: You don't like it? It's new. It's Attila the Hun.

HANK: It's ridiculous. Whoever heard of a phone answered by somebody like that?

BUZZ: They had a special at the novelty shop. I was going to put some battle sounds on the tape, too.

HANK: Okay. That part sounds good. So what's up?

BUZZ: Nothing. Even the Web is boring.

HANK: Tell me about it.

BUZZ: It'd be great if we could have an adventure.

HANK: Like what?

BUZZ: I don't know. Maybe deep-sea diving...

HANK: How about an expedition to find the giant squid?

BUZZ: Climb the Matterhorn...

HANK: Search the caves of Brazil for the giant vampire bat...

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BUZZ: We just have to figure how to do it without money.

I'm a little short this week.

HANK: I've got five bucks. I don't think that'll get us to the Matterhorn.

(The spotlights on Buzz and Hank blink out quickly, one after the other. As they do, we hear another phone being dialed and then ringing. A spotlight comes up on Solo Mio, sitting up in a sleeping bag a quarter of the way across the stage holding a cell phone to her ear. Another spotlight comes up on Sally Mae Butterfield a quarter of the way from the wings on the other side of the stage. Sally Mae sits up sleepily in her sleeping bag and answers her cell phone.)

SALLY MAE: *(Into phone.)* Hello?

SOLO MIO: *(Into phone.)* It's me. Did I wake you up?

SALLY MAE: Don't be silly. I'm always awake at one in the morning.

SOLO MIO: Good.

SALLY MAE: What's the matter?

SOLO MIO: Nothing. I just felt like talking.

SALLY MAE: What about?

SOLO MIO: Did you ever feel like you're in a rut?

SALLY MAE: All the time.

SOLO MIO: If you could change your life, what would you be?

SALLY MAE: A beautiful teenage vampire hunter.

SOLO MIO: That's good. You'd get to sleep late.

SALLY MAE: How about you?

SOLO MIO: I can't make up my mind. Part of me wants to be a Nobel Prize physicist. Another part wants to be a warrior princess on TV. I'll call you back when I figure it out.

(Sally Mae and Solo Mio hang up, and their spotlights go out. Offstage, a piano plays honky-tonk music, then slows, stops, and is replaced by the sound of a howling wind, which diminishes. A

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spotlight CS reveals Buzz and Hank wearing winter coats and hats with earflaps.)

HANK: *(To Buzz.)* It's freezing. What are we doing out here?

Where are we anyway?

BUZZ: *(Sheepishly.)* I kinda had a dream.

HANK: You dreamed about us?

BUZZ: I dreamed we went to Alaska.

HANK: Alaska? And you dragged me into this?

BUZZ: It'll be exciting.

HANK: But I don't want to go to Alaska. You couldn't pick someplace warm?

BUZZ: You'll like it. *(A handful of fake snow falls on them from above.)* A blizzard!

HANK: I knew this show was over-budget, but this is ridiculous.

BUZZ: If we stay here, we'll freeze. Which way shall we go?

HANK: You're asking me? It's your dream.

BUZZ: *(Concentrating.)* Well...

(From above, a large sign is quickly lowered bearing a crooked arrow.)

HANK: That's more like it. Let's go! *(They trudge away in the direction indicated by the arrow. After a few steps, they reach the side of the stage where a spotlight indicates a roadside sign that reads, "Welcome to Quagmire. Est. 1902. Pop. 57." The number "57" is crossed out in black ink and replaced by the number "56" above the old number. A honky-tonk piano is heard in the distance. The music swells as the curtain rises. The scene is the Golden Canary Dance Hall. Harry Hooper is banging away at a battered upright piano amid the hubbub caused by a dozen rough-hewn Gold Miners and an equal number of Dance Hall Girls. Buzz and Hank peer curiously at the scene from the side of the stage where the dance hall's door would be, if there was a door.)*
Looks like a tough place.

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(Buzz removes two fake moustaches and beards from his coat pocket and hands a pair to Hank.)

BUZZ: We better look tough, too. Put these on.

(Buzz and Hank attach the moustaches and beards.)

HANK: You look like the Abominable Snowman. It's an improvement.

BUZZ: Let's get in out of the cold.

(Hank and Buzz sidle up to the bar.)

BIG MAC: What'll it be, boys?

HANK: I'll have an anti-freeze on the rocks.

BIG MAC: *(To Buzz.)* What about you?

BUZZ: Gimme a Dr. Pepper.

BIG MAC: We don't serve no sissy drinks in here.

HANK: Where exactly is "here"?

BIG MAC: You're in Quagmire, the toughest town in the Territory. And this here's the Golden Canary.

BUZZ: *(To Hank.)* We're in Quagmire.

HANK: Garden spot of the Western World.

BIG MAC: *(To Buzz.)* So what's it gonna be, shorty?

BUZZ: I'll have a 7-Up martini—

BIG MAC: *(Ominously.)* What?

BUZZ: *(Hastily.)* With a black widow spider ridin' the olive!

BIG MAC: We're outta black widows just now. How about a nice tarantula?

BUZZ: They give me gas. I'll just have it straight.

(As Buzz and Hank down their drinks, Hank's whiskers fall off onto the bar. He quickly reattaches his whiskers.)

HANK: Mighty strong stuff, that anti-freeze. Burns the whiskers right off'n a feller's face.

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(A commotion between Suggs and McSurly is heard at the other end of the bar.)

BIG MAC: *(To Hank and Buzz.)* That's Suggs and McSurly. *(Suggs and McSurly grimace fiercely and let out a loud "Aarrgh!" This sends three terror-stricken Miners fleeing for their lives.)* Meanest critters in town.

BUZZ: What does "arrgh" mean?

BIG MAC: You don't want to find out.

(Ira Grindlefinger and his bodyguard Slick Watson approach Buzz and Hank.)

IRA: *(To Buzz and Hank.)* Howdy, boys. Always like to greet new arrivals to our community. Name's Grindlefinger, and this here's Slick Watson, who guards my body. You have me at a disadvantage.

BUZZ: What's the matter? Forget your gun?

(Hank sticks an elbow into Buzz's midriff to shut him up.)

HANK: *(To Ira.)* Pay no attention to my friend... *(Indicating Buzz.)* ...here. He's been in the sun too long. You know what Confucius say: "Bald man who sit in sun get baked bean."

BUZZ: Who's bald?

SLICK: Who's Confucius?

IRA: What sun? It's been night here for six months.

HANK: A figure of speech, my good man. I'm Fitzpatrick, and this here's Baker.

IRA: Welcome, boys. I own this place. I'm also the sheriff, judge, and undertaker. And, today, I was elected mayor of Quagmire. How long you planning to stay in town?

BUZZ: We don't plan to stay long...if we can help it.

(Hank elbows Buzz to shut him up.)

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HANK: *(To Ira.)* Just passing through. Fascinating place you have here. *(Very Ugly Dance Hall Girl saunters past them.)* Lovely ladies.

SLICK: *(Leering.)* She's single, if you're interested...except she's got a little lisp.

BUZZ: Well, nobody's perfect.

IRA: I mention my credentials so's you'll know if you plan on killin' somebody, I'll have to do my duty as sheriff and arrest you. But if you're able to pay the fine, I'll do my duty as judge and find you not guilty.

HANK: Is the fine much?

IRA: How much you got?

BUZZ: About five bucks.

IRA: You're in luck, boys. That happens to be just the right amount.

BUZZ: *(Acting tough.)* What if we happen to bump off two people?

(Hank elbows Buzz to shut him up.)

HANK: *(To Ira.)* Pay no heed to my friend. He's suffering from acid reflux.

SLICK: I thought you said he was in the sun too much.

HANK: That was yesterday. Today he's got acid reflux.

BUZZ: Hey, how come I get all this stuff? You could get a couple of things, too, you know.

IRA: See you around, boys.

(Ira and Slick saunter over to a table in the corner.)

HANK: *(To Big Mac.)* The town elected *him* mayor?

BIG MAC: There's the tally board right over there. *(Big Mac points to a chalkboard propped on the far end of the bar. It reads, "Grindlefinger 3, Murchison 54.")* It was a landslide for Grindlefinger.

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BUZZ: What kind of arithmetic is that? The other guy won easy.

BIG MAC: Old Chad Murchison was walkin' in a gully when a cliff fell on him. Like I said, it was a landslide. Happened the day before the election.

HANK: The day before?

BIG MAC: A lot of folks figgered a dead man'd be a better mayor than Grindlefinger.

HANK: Not too popular, huh?

BIG MAC: That's one man you don't want to cross, boys.

BUZZ: So he wins with just three votes?

BIG MAC: There'll be a special runoff election in the spring after we dig Old Chad out from under the avalanche.

(Harry Hooper strikes up a chord on the piano and the Golden Canary's lights dim. A spotlight reveals Billie Barker, the Master of Ceremonies, at the foot of a small staircase.)

BILLIE: Ladies and gentlemen, your attention, please. The Golden Canary is pleased to present for your entertainment two great chanteuses, direct from London, Paris, and Broadway. The incomparable, the inimitable, the two-and-only...Solo and Sally Mae! *(A spotlight opens on the top of the stairs. From behind a small curtain, Solo Mio and Sally Mae emerge and wave to the crowd.)* Their first show is at eight o'clock tonight. So make your reservations in advance, folks.

(After Sally Mae and Solo Mio take their bows, the lights in the dance hall dim, leaving Solo Mio, Sally Mae, Hank, and Buzz together in a pool of light.)

BUZZ: Sally Mae...

HANK: Solo...

BUZZ: *(To Sally Mae and Solo Mio.)* Don't you recognize us? *(Lifts up his beard.)* It's Buzz under the fuzz.

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HANK: *(To Sally Mae and Solo Mio.)* Me, too. *(Lifts up his beard.)*

SOLO MIO: Take it easy. We spotted you right away.

SALLY MAE: Yeah, keep the fur on. This place is dangerous.

HANK: What are you doing? How'd you get here?

SOLO MIO: *(Indicating Buzz.)* Ask him.

BUZZ: What did I have to do with it?

SALLY MAE: We're in disguise, too.

SOLO MIO: We're chanteuses.

BUZZ: What's that?

SALLY MAE: It's like high-class singers.

HANK: In this place?

SOLO MIO: What can I tell you? We need a better agent.

BUZZ: Why are you in disguise?

SALLY MAE: You should know.

BUZZ: I have no idea.

SOLO MIO: We're looking for my father.

HANK: What's your father doing in Quagmire?

SOLO MIO: That's the problem. He's not here.

HANK: Where is he?

SALLY MAE: We don't know. That's why we're looking for him.

HANK: *(To Buzz.)* Now see what you've done.

BUZZ: I didn't do anything.

SOLO MIO: Daddy came here to prospect for gold.

HANK: I thought he sold life insurance.

SOLO MIO: He did. But now he doesn't. Now he prospects for gold.

SALLY MAE: He found a big mine...full of gold.

BUZZ: He did? Where is it?

SOLO MIO: We don't know that, either.

HANK: What's that got to do with you being chanteuses?

SOLO MIO: We've got to find the mine before Grindlefinger and his men do.

BUZZ: They know about the mine?

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SALLY MAE: They know about it, but they don't know where it is.

HANK: What is this, "The Twilight Zone"? Nobody knows anything.

SOLO MIO: But we've got a clue. (*Shows them a letter.*) Daddy sent me a letter telling me how to find the mine. He wrote it just before he disappeared in an avalanche.

HANK: What're we waiting for? Let's go.

SALLY MAE: It's not that simple.

HANK: Somehow, I didn't think it would be.

SOLO MIO: The clue's in the form of a riddle.

BUZZ: Let's see it. I'm good at riddles.

(Buzz takes the letter from Solo Mio.)

SOLO MIO: Be careful. Grindfingler's watching us.

HANK: (*To Buzz.*) What's it say?

BUZZ: (*Reads.*) "The riddle of the great El Dorado Mine:
Where sits the black-feathered Goop
On the bough of the kinkajou tree
A star will align a path to the mine
For those with the patience to see."

HANK: What's that supposed to mean?

SALLY MAE: That's what we want to find out.

SOLO MIO: Grindfingler mustn't get the riddle. (*She tears the letter in quarters and hands one quarter to Hank, another to Buzz and another to Sally Mae. To Buzz and Hank.*) You keep two quarters, and we'll keep the other two.

BUZZ: We don't know what it means, and we've got all the quarters.

HANK: It can't be so hard. We've just got to find a what-cha-ma-callit tree with a black bird sitting in it.

SALLY MAE: How do you know this Goop thing is a bird?

HANK: Says here it's got feathers and sits in a tree. What else could it be?

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BUZZ: There's no such thing as a black-feathered Goop. A

Goop is a flightless bird. It has no feathers.

SOLO MIO: What's a kinkajou tree?

HANK: *(To Buzz.)* Dream on, Macduff.

BUZZ: A kinkajou is like a big raccoon.

SALLY MAE: Why would a bird that couldn't fly be sitting on a raccoon?

BUZZ: A Goop would definitely not sit on a raccoon—unless they were very friendly.

HANK: I thought you said there was no such thing as a Goop?

BUZZ: I said there was no such thing as a *black-feathered* Goop.

HANK: If it doesn't exist, what's it doing sitting on a raccoon?

BUZZ: It may just be resting for a minute. Maybe the Goop didn't see the raccoon when it walked by.

HANK: When who walked by? The raccoon?

BUZZ: The Goop.

HANK: So Goops walk?

BUZZ: The flightless ones do.

HANK: Do they walk fast?

BUZZ: They just sort of saunter.

HANK: Saunter?

BUZZ: Maybe like amble.

HANK: What's the difference between sauntering and ambling?

SOLO MIO: *(To Hank and Buzz.)* Will you two stop it? This is serious, and you're acting like a couple of schoolboys.

HANK/BUZZ: We are schoolboys.

SALLY MAE: I heard some miners talking about an old Eskimo woman they said had special powers. Maybe she can solve the riddle for us.

HANK: Good idea. Let's go!

(They slip away from the bar and move downstage. The curtain closes behind them.)

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BUZZ: *(To Sally Mae.)* Which way?

SALLY MAE: North.

HANK: Which way's that?

(Another cardboard sign is lowered from above bearing the word "North" and a crooked arrow.)

SOLO MIO: Cool!

BUZZ: *(Turns up his coat collar.)* Tell me about it. *(As they start in the direction the arrow is pointing, Slick Watson sneaks out from the far corner of the curtain and follows them. After a few steps, they reach the other side of the stage, where there is a large cardboard cutout representing an igloo. Hank steps forward and knocks on the igloo. Sound effect of a loud knock is heard. This startles them and they look around apprehensively.)* The man doesn't know his own strength.

(From behind the cutout, NoNook appears. She is an elderly Eskimo woman wrapped in scruffy furs. As they turn back and see her, Buzz jumps in alarm.)

NONOOK: Yass? What you want?

SALLY MAE: Are you NoNook, the Eskimo?

NONOOK: Who do I look like...Zorba, the Greek?

SOLO MIO: We heard you had special powers for solving problems.

NONOOK: That depends on problem. What you got?

HANK: We need somebody to decipher a riddle for us.

NONOOK: You're in luck. Riddle's half-off this week. Buy one, get one free.

BUZZ: We don't want to buy one. We want you to solve one.

NONOOK: Okay.

HANK: What's this gonna cost us?

BUZZ: This ought to cover it.

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(Buzz pulls out a large fish from the pocket of his coat and hands it to NoNook, who eagerly takes it from him.)

NONOOK: What's the riddle?

BUZZ: Don't I get any change?

NONOOK: You want me to figure this out or not? Here.

(NoNook hands Buzz two small fish. He counts the fish and pockets them. Solo Mio hands NoNook her piece of the riddle.)

SOLO MIO: This is part of the riddle.

(The others hand NoNook their parts of the riddle.)

HANK: Take your time. We enjoy the minus 40 wind chill factor.

(NoNook puts the pieces of paper together and reads the riddle.)

NONOOK: This is in code. Impossible to read. I tell this information free of charge. *(Hank reaches out, takes the torn pieces of papers from her, turns them right side up, and hands them back.)* Much better this way. *(Shouts.)* Ah-ha!

SALLY MAE: *(Excitedly.)* What is it?

NONOOK: You must first find a kinkajou tree. Then wait until Goop bird flies down and sits on branch.

BUZZ: Where can we find a tree like that?

NONOOK: There is only one kinkajou tree in the whole territory. On south side of Bird Mountain. But there are many avalanches there. You must be very careful.

SOLO MIO: When will the flock of Goops come?

NONOOK: No flocks. Only one Goop bird left. You must wait by tree until it comes. Maybe by spring.

HANK: Spring? We can't wait that long.

BUZZ: Yeah. We haven't got months to spare.

SOLO MIO: It's a matter of life and death.

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NONOOK: (*Consulting wristwatch.*) Spring be here in two days.

BUZZ: Well, that's better. I think we can swing that.

HANK: Speak for yourself. I've got icicles on my icicles.

SALLY MAE: (*To NoNook.*) What's the rest of the riddle about?

NONOOK: The sun will cast a shadow from the Goop branch in direction of mine.

SOLO MIO: That's easy.

NONOOK: Maybe not easy.

HANK: What do you mean?

NONOOK: Says here mine is called "El Dorado."

BUZZ: So what?

NONOOK: Maybe is big joke. "El Dorado" no mine. Is John Wayne movie.

SOLO MIO: What?

NONOOK: Duke is gunfighter who settles range war.

HANK: What?

NONOOK: Co-stars Bob Mitchum and Jimmy Caan.

BUZZ: What?

NONOOK: Technicolor. Three stars. The "Times" no like it, but "Variety" said it rousing mix of action and comedy.

SOLO MIO: Thanks anyway, NoNook, but I'm sure that's the name of the mine.

NONOOK: Okay. Don't say I no warn you.

HANK: Who cares what the name is? Where is it?

NONOOK: Go to Bird Mountain. Find tree. Wait for bird.

BUZZ: That ought to be easy. Bird Mountain, huh? A lot of birds must go there.

NONOOK: Is ironic name. No bird seen there for 50 years.

SALLY MAE: It's the only clue we've got.

SOLO MIO: We've got to try it. Goodbye, NoNook.

BUZZ: Yeah, keep your blubber dry.

(As they turn to leave, Slick Watson, who has been watching from a distance, slips away. The spotlight on Slick goes out. Buzz, Hank,

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Solo Mio, and Sally Mae trudge offstage behind NoNook's igloo, after which the spotlight dims. Lights up on Ira, Violet, and Slick sitting at a table in the Golden Canary.)

IRA: I'll have Suggs and McSurly take care of Fitzpatrick and Baker. *(To Violet.)* Vi, you keep an eye on the women. Get them to go down to the cellar and lock them in. They've each got half of the clue to the mine. And we've got to figure out where it is.

SLICK: I don't know nothin' about riddles.

VIOLET: How am I supposed to make them want to go to the cellar?

IRA: You'll think of something.

SLICK: Maybe we should grab NoNook, too.

IRA: We'll take care of her later. The important thing now is to find out where the mine is.

(Lights out on Ira, Violet, and Slick. Lights up on Hank, Buzz, Sally Mae, and Solo Mio, who are approaching the Golden Canary.)

HANK: *(To Sally Mae and Solo Mio.)* You gals better go in first. We don't want to be seen together.

BUZZ: We'll go around to the side door.

SOLO MIO: Are you sure it's a good idea to come back here?

SALLY MAE: That Grindlefinger gives me the creeps.

HANK: We have to get supplies and a dogsled.

BUZZ: We'd never make it to Bird Mountain on foot. Besides, they don't suspect you.

HANK: Right. You're the floor show, remember?

SOLO MIO: Okay, so what do we do?

(Violet is seen listening at a corner of the saloon.)

HANK: Just play it cool. Go on with your show. We'll get the dogsled and meet you out back.

SALLY MAE: Watch out for Suggs and McSurly. They work for Grindlefinger.

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BUZZ: *(With bravado.)* Those two goons? No problem. We can outsmart them anytime.

HANK: Brain power always triumphs over muscle power. They won't pull the wool over our eyes.

(Sally Mae and Solo Mio enter the saloon through the front door, stopping at a table to talk to some Miners. Outside, Hank and Buzz sneak along the side of the saloon. Suddenly, Suggs and McSurly leap out of the shadows, throw burlap bags over Hank and Buzz's heads and drag them behind the curtain. Inside, Violet Van Damm approaches Sally Mae and Solo Mio.)

VIOLET: *(To Sally Mae and Solo Mio.)* Hey, chanteuses!

SOLO MIO: What do you want, Violet?

VIOLET: Don't be so hostile. I'm just trying to be friendly with my co-workers.

SALLY MAE: What's on your mind?

VIOLET: Two guys want to see you before you do your act. They said it was about a dogsled. They're waiting for you downstairs.

(Violet leads Sally Mae and Solo Mio to a darkened side of the stage. The girls enter the darkness and Violet slams the door behind them. Sound effect of a door slamming. Blackout. Optional intermission. Honky tonk piano music can be played during the intermission if desired.)

ACT II

(Inside a dungeon, played in front of the curtain. Spotlights up on Hank and Buzz. Behind them are flats painted with giant boulders to suggest a dungeon.)

HANK: Now look what you've gotten me into.

BUZZ: Me? What'd I do? You're the one who said brains always beat brawn.

HANK: I was misinformed. It doesn't look good, Buzz, old boy.

BUZZ: Maybe we're doomed.

HANK: Well, if we have to meet our fate, there's nobody I'd rather meet it with than you.

BUZZ: That's a compliment, right?

HANK: We'll always be friends.

BUZZ: Buddies...

HANK: Pals...

BUZZ: To the end...

HANK: I don't like the sound of that. There must be a way out of here. *(They examine the set pieces.)* No windows in this place.

BUZZ: Iron bars on the door. They've thought of everything.

HANK: They forgot one thing.

BUZZ: What's that?

HANK: They forgot about you. This is your dream, right? So just dream us outta here.

BUZZ: How?

HANK: I don't know. Just concentrate. Change the dream. *(Buzz concentrates ferociously, holding his ears and twisting his face into a scowl. After a few seconds, Turkish belly-dancing music is heard. Jete Fortesque floats in from the side of the stage, wearing the traditional costume of a Turkish belly dancer. She dances languorously past them and out the other side as the music fades slowly.)* What the heck was that?

BUZZ: My brain must be tired. I had algebra today.

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HANK: Give it another try. (*Buzz concentrates again. Suddenly, a large rock crashes onto the stage.*) Dancers and now rocks! Your dreams are weird, you know that?

BUZZ: I didn't dream that rock. Look, it's got a note on it. (*They unwrap the note and Buzz reads it.*) It's been in the snow.

HANK: What's it say?

BUZZ: It says... (*Reads.*) ..."Blah derah oompa sescepe briddly dee doo—"

HANK: What?

BUZZ: It's wet. The ink is running. Wait. Here's a dry part. (*Reads.*) "This is an escape plan. Follow all directions carefully..."

HANK: That's all?

BUZZ: (*Reads.*) "See next rock."

(*Another rock crashes onto the stage.*)

HANK: Will you stop with the rocks? (*He looks around.*) How are they getting in here, anyway?

BUZZ: I'm telling you, they're not mine. (*They rush to the new rock and open the note. Reads.*) "Follow escape plan carefully. Move to center of dungeon."

(*They move a few steps to the center.*)

HANK: This seems to be about right.

BUZZ: (*Reads.*) "Start to dig tunnel here. Dig 30 feet deep, then make main tunnel compass heading 178 degrees south by southwest—"

HANK: (*Looks around.*) South by southwest?

BUZZ: (*Reads.*) "Ground very rocky here. Use power equipment. Dig 236 yards. Do not go farther or you will fall off side of Bird Mountain—"

HANK: Wait a minute...

BUZZ: (*Reads.*) "Put iron beams every 15 feet so tunnel does not collapse—"

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HANK: Iron beams?

BUZZ: (*Reads.*) "Use industrial-strength pump to get air into tunnel—"

HANK: Let me see that. (*He takes the note from Buzz. Reads.*) "Make sure tunnel does not go lower than 30 feet or you will dig through ice crust. If this happens, use life jackets to swim to safety. But be careful of the killer whales—"

BUZZ: Killer whales?

HANK: I think they're like dolphins, only bigger and meaner—much meaner.

BUZZ: What's the *porpoise* of it all?

HANK: Where are we going to get a ruler to measure 236 yards?

BUZZ: The same place we got the power equipment...

HANK: And the air pump...

BUZZ: And the life jackets and the compass. (*Another rock comes crashing down onto the dungeon floor. They rush to open the note tied to it. Reads.*) "Yours truly, NoNook."

HANK: NoNook? This great escape was her idea?

BUZZ: Somebody's coming. Maybe it's her.

(*Suggs and McSurly enter from the wings each carrying a club.*)

SUGGS: Okay, you two, you've stalled long enough.

MCSURLY: You're gonna talk. Or else.

HANK: Don't get upset, boys. What do you want to talk about?

BUZZ: Yeah. We're open to suggestions.

SUGGS: Where's the mine?

HANK: Mine? I'm afraid you fellows have me at a loss. (*To Buzz.*) Do you know anything about a mine?

BUZZ: No. (*To Suggs and McSurly.*) But if we hear about one, we'll be sure to get in touch.

HANK: Right. We could take a meeting or have lunch. But right now, we're late for an appointment. Our people can

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discuss it with your people. We'll keep you posted. Come, Buzz, old boy.

(Buzz and Hank start to edge away, but Suggs and McSurly block their way.)

MCSURLY: *(To Hank and Buzz.)* Just where do you think you're goin'?

BUZZ: Sorry to run out, but I have an appointment with my psychiatrist.

HANK: And not a moment too soon, if you ask me.

BUZZ: You fellows should see him. He's great at anger management.

SUGGS: Don't gimme that stuff. *(To Hank.)* Git over here, you.

(Suggs and McSurly grab Hank by the collar and drag him into a corner.)

HANK: Take it easy, fellows. Come, let us reason together.

MCSURLY: Where's that mine? *(Raises his club menacingly.)*

HANK: Don't do anything you'll be sorry for later. I can stand anything except pain. Buzz, this seems like a bad dream. Anything you can do about it? *(Buzz gets the idea and begins to concentrate desperately. Suddenly, the Turkish belly-dancing music is heard again and Jete dances across the stage past Suggs and McSurly. Spellbound, Suggs and McSurly stare at her. As she dances off into the wings, they drop their clubs and rush off after her. To Buzz.)* I was hoping for a platoon of Marines, but that'll do.

BUZZ: I almost dreamed a trained seal. *(Spies open door.)* They left the door open. Let's beat it before they come back.

(They go to the edge of the Golden Canary set. A spotlight comes up revealing Ira, Slick, and Violet sitting at a table. Hank and Buzz listen at the window.)

VIOLET: Those two songbirds are locked in the basement.

IRA: Under gold rush rules, the first one to get to the mine and stake a claim owns it. Keep them locked up until we find out what they know.

SLICK: Suggs and McSurly are with those two new guys now. They'll make 'em talk.

IRA: Suggs and McSurly have been doing some nice work. I'm thinking of making them vice-presidents in charge of customer relations. *(At this moment, Suggs and McSurly enter disheveled and breathless and sheepishly approach the table.)* Hello, boys. What've you got for me?

SUGGS: Well...

IRA: Don't be bashful. I was just telling Slick, here, that you boys do real nice work.

MCSURLY: It wasn't our fault.

IRA: What're you talking about?

SUGGS: They got away.

IRA: What?

MCSURLY: We couldn't help it.

IRA: *(Furious.)* What happened?

SUGGS: Well, it was...

IRA: *(Screeching.)* What?!

MCSURLY: It was that Turkish dancer. She tricked us.

IRA: *(Beside himself.)* You idiots! There aren't any Turkish dancers in Quagmire. You've been hitting the moose juice again, haven't you?

SUGGS: No, boss.

IRA: I'll give you one more chance. Get down to the basement and make those two females talk. And stay away from the bottle. If you give me one more cock-and-bull story, I'll plug you. Now, get outta here!

(Suggs and McSurly scramble out in the direction of the basement. Spotlight on the table dims and another spotlight comes up on Hank and Buzz outside, listening at the window.)

HANK: We've got to help Solo and Sally Mae get away from those gorillas.

BUZZ: Yeah, but how? I don't think they'll fall for a Turkish dancer twice.

HANK: We've got to think of something.

BUZZ: I've got it.

HANK: What?

BUZZ: The old grasshopper ploy.

HANK: I've never heard of it.

BUZZ: I'll write it down for them. But we've got to figure out a way to get the note to them.

HANK: We can't use a rock. There aren't any windows down there.

(Buzz concentrates, making a face. From the wings, a uniformed mailman slowly crosses to them.)

BUZZ: Meet Speedy Gonzalez.

HANK: A mailman?

SPEEDY: *(Haughtily.)* A federal employee, if you don't mind.

[END OF FREEVIEW]