

FEUDIN' OVER YONDER

by Le Roma Greth



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SYNOPSIS: This hillbilly play is rich in Ozark Mountain humor. The story revolves around the Popoff and Fry families who have been feuding for years because one of the Popoff boys said he was going out to shoot an old skunk one day and accidentally shot Paw Fry instead. Then Rosie Belle Fry takes the only unattached male in the hills from under her sister Emmy's nose. Emmy, who'd like to get "hitched," decides she'll end up an old maid if she doesn't get one of the Popoff boys. But how can she marry a feudin' Popoff? She enlists the aid of Mountain Maggie, the local healer, who's tired of tending to victims of the feud, to put an end to it. Mountain Maggie, wise in the ways of human nature, convinces widow Maw Fry and widower Pappy Popoff to get over the feudin' with a little Mountain Maggie love concoction. In the end, everybody is happy, but not without a wild mountain finish.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 females, 6 males, 1 either, extras)

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE (f).....An old woman who is quite a character. She has unkempt white hair covered with a bright bandanna. She wears two blouses, one that opens in the front revealing the other one beneath. A number of heavy, Indian-looking necklaces hang around her neck. She wears a number of long skirts and petticoats, which bounce about her when she moves. All of her clothing is wrinkled and not quite clean. She wears Indian moccasins (bedroom slippers resembling moccasins will suffice.). She wears a bright belt from which hangs another bright bandanna bulging with herbs (dried leaves.) and small bottles. Her manner, despite her appearance, is

that of the professional nurse in the presence of illness and at all times, kind and understanding. (70 lines)

MAW FRY (f).....A middle-aged woman whose shoulders sag in a constant slouch caused, no doubt, by overwork. Her hair, merely streaked with gray, is pulled back from her face into an untied knot. She wears a bright cotton dress covered by a very dirty apron. Her cotton stockings very obviously have a hole at the heel and her shoes are old and battered. She speaks slowly with a whine. (95 lines)

EMMY FRY (f)Maw's sweet daughter with dark hair. She wears a cotton dress with a gaudy patch on the seat and no shoes. For Act Three, she changes to a prettier dress and ties her hair with a ribbon. Her manner is straightforward and sincere. (186 lines)

IZZIE FRY (m).....Maw's son, tall and handsome. He wears a shirt, tattered pants and no shoes. He radiates happiness and confidence. For Act Three, he changes to tight-fitting but comparatively neat trousers and a clean shirt (the collar of which seems too tight.). (50 lines)

CLEM FRY (m).....Maw's other son: tall, thin and too lazy to stand up straight. He hates work and evades it whenever possible. He wears the same sloppy shirt and pants throughout the play. (70 lines)

ROSIE BELLE FRY (f).....Another daughter that's a pain to the entire family. She loves the feud. Her voice is always too loud. She doesn't speak, she bellows. She doesn't walk, she strides. Her hair is short, boyish. She wears boy's dungarees, plaid shirt and no shoes. For Act Three, she needs either old-fashioned pantaloons or a voluminous petticoat and an ill-fitting dress with many ruffles. She also wears shoes in Act Three. (144 lines)

AUNT HARRY HORNHONKER (f) A domineering woman who speaks shrilly and incessantly. She wears a man's hat and shirt but a long black skirt. Her hair is gray. She wears shoes. For Act Three, she may change to a bright-colored dress. (43 lines)

BECKY MAE HORNHONKER (f) Aunt Harry's niece, a pretty girl with blond curls. She wears a clean cotton dress, no shoes; changing in the third act to a frilly gingham and putting on shoes. Her whole manner is one of happiness and summertime. (47 lines)

WILLY HORNHONKER (m).....A very tall, homely mountain boy. He is so slow mentally; he can almost be considered a moron. He wears a tattered shirt and pants and carries a yo-yo. He speaks very little and when he does, his voice, being low and slow, fits his mentality. In the third act, he wears a bright suit, several sizes too small for him, a shirt and tie, and if possible, shoes that reach his ankles. (43 lines)

PAPPY POPOFF (m).....The head of the feudin' Popoffs. A stout, really placid character. His hair is white and he has a beard. Throughout the play he wears dirty shirt, pants, hat. No shoes. (20 lines)

ZEKE POPOFF (m).....His son is a slow-moving, easy-going fellow. He is comparatively good-looking. His attire is shirt, pants, no shoes. (44 lines)

PREACHER (m).....A travelin' preacher. A serious, hard-working man of God, doing his best among the mountain people. He may be attired in the traditional black suit with turned collar or, if preferred, he may wear an ordinary dark business suit. (14 lines)

WEDDING GUESTS: Three middle-aged women, one tall and thin, one short and fat, and one with thick glasses who constantly bumps into people and things. They are dressed in their "Sunday best" which consists of dresses long out of style, old shoes, and hats reminiscent of a rummage sale.

1ST WEDDING GUEST (f)(7 lines)

2ND WEDDING GUEST (f).....(6 lines)

3rd WEDDING GUEST (f)(6 lines)

MUSICIANS (m/f): Any Number. May be members of the school orchestra who can play off-key Hillbilly music. They are barefoot dressed in shirts and dungarees.

1st MUSICIAN (m/f).....(1 line)

ENTERTAINERS (m/f).....Any number of specialty acts may be included in the third act. They may be dressed as "hillbillies" in their "Sunday best." (*Non-Speaking*)

EXTRAS (m/f).....A number of extras must be included in the wedding scene in the third act. They too are dressed as hillbillies. (*Non-Speaking*)

DURATION: 90 minutes.

SETTING: The main room of the Fry Cabin in the Ozark Mountains.

TIME: A beautiful June day.

HAND PROPS

ACT ONE

- ☐ Basin of water (Izzie)
- ☐ Plaid blouse (Izzie)
- ☐ Knife and wood for whittling (Clem)
- ☐ Shotgun (Rosie Belle)
- ☐ Pork chop (Rosie Belle)
- ☐ Suit of red underwear (Clem)
- ☐ Dead chicken, plucked and headless (Rosie Belle)
- ☐ Yo-yo (Willy)
- ☐ Axe (Rosie Belle)

ACT TWO

- ☐ Pillow and blanket (Izzie)
- ☐ Basin of water (Mountain Maggie)
- ☐ Bandages and sling (Izzie)
- ☐ Jar of salve (Mountain Maggie)
- ☐ Washtub (Maw Fry)
- ☐ White towel and soap (Maw Fry)
- ☐ Handful of soil (Rosie Belle)
- ☐ Cup (Emmy)
- ☐ Packet of sugar, in bandanna (Mountain Maggie)
- ☐ Comb, in pocket of apron (Maw Fry)
- ☐ Lipstick and mirror (Emmy)

ACT THREE

- ☐ Two white crepe paper bows (Emmy)
- ☐ Flowers for hair (Rosie Belle)
- ☐ Flowers for gun (Rosie Belle)
- ☐ Handkerchief (Maw Fry)
- ☐ Plate of sandwiches (Maw Fry)
- ☐ 2 Small bottles (Clem, Mountain Maggie)
- ☐ Plate with piece of pie and fork (Maw Fry)
- ☐ Glass of lemonade with cherry and orange slice (Emmy)
- ☐ Long handle spoon (Emmy)
- ☐ Small Bible (Preacher)

STAGE PROPS**ACT ONE/TWO**

- ☐ Round table, right center.
- ☐ Two wooden chairs, at table.
- ☐ Barrel, up right.
- ☐ Broom, up right.
- ☐ Long, backless bench, left center.
- ☐ Patched cover, on table.
- ☐ Underwear, etc. on clotheslines just outside window, up left.

ACT THREE

- ☐ Bucket filled with flowers, left center.
- ☐ Two candles in holders, on table.
- ☐ Vase of flowers, on table.
- ☐ White tablecloth with just one patch, on table

ACT ONE

SETTING: *As the curtain rises, we see the main room of the Fry mountain cabin. It is a barren room, hinting of poverty. A door left leads onto a trail just wide enough to accommodate a wagon and horse. Before the door stands a long bench, used for sleeping and sitting. A barrel up right is used for sitting. A door right opens to reveal either trees or a portion of the shed where all the cooking is done. Right center stands a round table flanked by two chairs. The cover on the table is torn and patched. Through a window in the wall up left can be seen a clothesline hung with long underwear and other apparel.*

AT RISE: *Izzie Fry is seated on the bench left with a basin of water before him. He is, with careful attention to details, washing his feet, using a plaid blouse as a washcloth. Emmy hovers at the door left, looking out. The door is open and morning sunlight streams in. Clem is seated in one of the chairs at the table. He is slumped down with his bare feet resting directly on the table. He is intent on his whittling. Nobody speaks. Rosie Belle strides through the door right, a shotgun in one hand and a pork chop in the other.*

ROSIE BELLE: *(Roughly.)* Wal, ain't you a fine lookin' bunch of critters! *(Nobody looks at her.)* Not one of you's worth a grain of salt! Sech a fine mornin', ya oughta be out shootin'!

EMMY: *(Drawing a deep breath at the open door.)* Hit shore be a fine day! I jest seen a bluebird on the hawthorne bush. The travelin' Preacher'll have fine weather fer his visit.

ROSIE BELLE: *(With loud disgust.)* Is thet all ya got t' think about? *(She begins to eat the pork chop, tearing large mouthfuls off with her teeth. She chews noisily and smacks her lips between each bite.)*

IZZIE: He oughta be due any day now.

EMMY: Yep. Hit'll shore be a welcome sight t' see him come ridin' over yonder hill on thet dapple-gray horse of his.

IZZIE: *(Holding up a foot and inspecting it critically.)* Emmy, do ya think I got hit clean enough?

EMMY: (*Turning and inspecting the foot.*) Wal, hit looks clean t' me, Izzie.

IZZIE: I shore wouldn't want t' be dirty when I ask Becky Mae t' marry me.

CLEM: Did ya wash yer elbows, Izzie? I noticed last week they wuz kinda dirty.

IZZIE: (*Offended.*) My shirtsleeves cover my elbows, Clem. I don't needa wash them!

CLEM: Wal, don't forgit an' roll up yer sleeves.

IZZIE: (*Standing up and wiggling his toes; he stares at his feet with admiration.*) Gosh! Ain't it funny how white yer skin is when ya wash?

EMMY: (*Coming to Izzie and looking at his feet.*) Yep! I never noticed afore. Maybe I'll wash mine someday. (*Rosie Belle has finished her pork chop, licked off the bone with her tongue, thrown the bone over her shoulder, and licked off each greasy finger noisily.*)

CLEM: Ya goin' over t' Becky Mae's cabin, Izzie?

IZZIE: Nope. Becky Mae's a-comin' hyar.

CLEM: Ya mean, she's a-comin' so's ya kin propose t' her?

IZZIE: Wal...not exactly. She's comin' with her aunt. Maw wants her aunt t' help with the preservin' this afternoon.

EMMY: An' Willy! Do ya know fer shore effen Willy's comin' with them?

IZZIE: Reckon.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Loudly.*) Izzie!

IZZIE: (*Jumps guiltily.*) Yep?

ROSIE BELLE: Ya be shore ya hang my blouse out on the line t' dry when yer done washin yer feet. I might want t' wear hit tonight.

IZZIE: (*Picking up blouse and basin.*) I'll do hit right now, Rosie Belle. (*Exit Izzie through the door left.*)

ROSIE BELLE: (*Hitching up her trousers and taking a firm hold on her shotgun.*) Reckon I'll go out an' kill thet rooster Maw wants fer supper.

Exit Rosie Belle through the door left. Izzie appears at the window up left, throws the blouse over the washline, and then disappears again. Emmy sits on the bench left.

CLEM: One look at Rosie Belle a-comin' at him an' thet rooster'll drop dead of fright.

EMMY: Clem, why is Rosie Belle so – so – wal, the way she is?

CLEM: Don't rightly know. I think maybe hit's this hydar feud we're havin' with the Popoff family.

EMMY: But Rosie Belle wuz only six when thet Popoff boy shot our Paw accidentally and killed him!

CLEM: Yep. An' she tuck a shotgun right off a chair an' went along out with the older boys an' started shootin' Popoffs. She ain't never stopped since. By the time she wuz eight, she cud shoot rings around me.

EMMY: I hate the old feud!

CLEM: Shh! Don't let Maw ner Rosie Belle hear ya say thet!

EMMY: But hit be so useless Clem! They didn't mean t' kill our Paw. Hit were jest a hunting accident!

CLEM: Wal, I don't know. The Popoff boy said he wanted t' go out an' shoot an old skunk an' when he shot our Paw, our Maw kinda tuck hit as a personal offense.

EMMY: (*Bitterly.*) An' how many more's daid because of hit? The boy who shot our Paw's daid, Mammy Popoff's daid, an' our two brothers are daid.

CLEM: Wal, maybe thar won't be no more.

EMMY: Oh, yes, thar will! As long as Rosie Belle's goin' around with her gun! She enjoys shootin' Popoffs.

MAW FRY: (*Offstage right.*) Clem! Clem!

CLEM: Yeah, Maw?

MAW FRY: (*Offstage.*) Come an' hang up yer long underwear. I got 'em washed now!

CLEM: (*Rising and putting knife and wood in pocket.*) Aw, Maw....

MAW FRY: (*Offstage.*) Come on, ya lazy critter! They gotta be clean next fall when I sew ya up in 'em fer the winter.

CLEM: Aw....

Exit Clem through door right. Izzie enters through the door left.

IZZIE: Emmy, I wuz thinkin' of somethin' out thar! Yer sweet on Willy Hornhonker! Why don't ya marry up with him when the travelin' preacher comes through? Me an' Becky Mae, an' you an' Willy. How's that fer an idea?

EMMY: *(Rising with a laugh.)* Don't ya think I think o' that, Izzie? But Willy ain't ask me yet.

IZZIE: He's sweet on ya, Emmy. Anybody'd know that.

EMMY: Shore, but he's shy. He'd hafta be scared into askin' a gal.

IZZIE: *(Teasing.)* Wal, one look at yer face oughta—

EMMY: *(Laughing.)* Oh, go 'long with ya, Izzie!

BECKY MAE: *(Offstage left.)* Yoo hoo! Izzie!

IZZIE: *(Suddenly paralyzed.)* Hit be Becky Mae!

EMMY: Wal, put yer eyes back in, Izzie!

IZZIE: *(Trying to speak.)* I – I – I –

EMMY: How do ya aim t' propose effen ya cain't even talk?

At the window up left, Clem appears laboriously hanging up his suit of long, red underwear on the line.

IZZIE: I'm scared! You do hit fer me, Em!

EMMY: Izzie! Are ya a man er a mouse?

IZZIE: Wal, don't let the cat in!

(Enter Becky Mae, Aunt Harry Hornhonker, and Willy through the door left.)

BECKY MAE: *(Running to Izzie.)* Izzie! Hit be so good t' see ya! *(Emmy moves to right center.)*

AUNT HARRY Hello! Hello! Say, "hello," Willy! *(Willy grunts, bashfully staring at the floor.)* Willy wuz very talkative on the way over. I think he said two whole sentences. Becky Mae's been tryin' t' teach him to say, "Will ya marry me?" After all, the travelin' Preacher only comes once a year ya know! *(She giggles.)* On, Emmy! Ain't that a pretty patch yer Maw put on yer dress! *(Emmy turns around to show off the gaudy patch on the seat of her dress.)* Hit's almost purty enough t' wear t' the weddin' parties. That is, effen ya ain't figurin' t' git hitched yerself!

EMMY: *(Blushing.)* Wal—

AUNT HARRY Ya ain't gittin' no younger, Emmy, You nor Rosie Belle an' whut with only bein' able t' git married once a year when the travelin' Preacher comes through, kinda makes things tough for a gal. Say something, Willy.

WILLY: Shucks...

AUNT HARRY (*Slapping him on the back.*) Why, Willy! I ain't never heerd ya talk so much as ya air t'day!

BECKY MAE: (*Happily; holding Izzie's hands and facing him.*) Oh, Izzie! Ain't it all excitin'? Thar's four couples fixin' t' git hitched when the Preacher comes! Thar'll be music an' dancin' and singin'! Aunt Harry made me a new dress!

IZZIE: Gosh...

BECKY MAE: (*Still holding his hand and dancing around him in a circle.*) Izzie! This is a time t' be happy! Cat got yer tongue?

EMMY: Uh- Aunt Harry, Maw's in the shed. She said fer ya t' come right out when ya come.

AUNT HARRY Yep. Let's git thet preservin' over with! I gotta git started t' fix myself up fer the excitement. Gonna make a new dress. After all, a young wider like me gotta keep up appearances.

BECKY MAE: (*Giggling.*) Did you say young?

AUNT HARRY Yer only as old as ya feel—an when the marryin' Preacher comes through, I don't feel so old! (*Exit Aunt Harry through the door right; her voice bellowing, "Hey, Maw Fry! Maw Fry! Ya in thar?" drifts back to them.*)

EMMY: Reckon I'll jest step outside fer a breath of air. (*Shyly.*) Ya wanna come along, Willy?

WILLY: Shucks....

Exit Emmy through the door right. Willy shuffles out after her. Clem is no longer seen at the window up left.

BECKY MAE: (*Dancing left and seating herself on the bench.*) Good old Aunt Harry! She'd git herself another husband effen she could.

IZZIE: How many husbands has she had?

BECKY MAE: I reckon I kinda lost count. 'Bout four er five I reckon.

IZZIE: Whut happened t' em?

BECKY MAE: Oh, some of 'em jest wandered off an' got lost. The others up an' died.

IZZIE: (*Coming left and sitting beside her on the bench.*) How come he ever got a name like "Aunt Harry"?

BECKY MAE: Wal, her Pappy had twelve girls. Aunt Harry wuz the last and he had jest plum run out of girls' names.

IZZIE: Golly, I bet thet wuz a time when the marryin' Preacher come through. Imagine – twelve gals!

BECKY MAE: Reckon.

IZZIE: (*Nervously.*) Becky Mae—

BECKY MAE: Huh?

IZZIE: Uh – thar's somethin' I been fixin' t' ask ya.

BECKY MAE: (*Knowing what's coming.*) Ya have?

IZZIE: (*Uncomfortably.*) Yep. Only—I cain't think whut it wuz.

BECKY MAE: (*Injured.*) Izzie Fry!

IZZIE: Wal—I mean ... Heck, Becky Mae! Will ya git hitched up with me?

BECKY MAE: (*Throwing her arms about his neck.*) I shore will, Izzie!

IZZIE: (*Surprised.*) Ya will?

Becky Mae closes her eyes; Izzie kisses her puckered lips.

IZZIE: (*Jumping to his feet.*) Yaahoo! Hey, everybody!

Enter Maw Fry, Aunt Harry, and Clem through the door right; Emmy, Willy, and Rosie Belle, holding a plucked chicken and her gun, enter through the door left.

ROSIE BELLE: Did a Popoff sneak in?

EMMY: Whut's wrong, Izzie? Why'd ya hollar?

AUNT HARRY Land sakes! I thought somethin' happened t' Becky Mae.

BECKY MAE: (*Rising.*) Somethin' did!

IZZIE: We're engaged!

BECKY MAE: We'll be married as soon as the travelin' Preacher shows up!

AUNT HARRY (*Rushing to center stage and hugging them both.*)

Wal, ain't thet somethin'! Lucky I made ya a new dress Becky Mae!

ROSIE BELLE: (*Astonished.*) Ya mean yer really gittin' hitched, Izzie?

MAW FRY: Shore he is! About time too! You young 'uns ain't gittin' no younger, ya know.

CLEM: (*Grinning.*) Emmy an' Rosie Belle'll be old maids afore they know it!

MAW FRY: Come on, Aunt Harry, let's git back t' the shed. These young 'uns kin wait. The travelin' Preacher ain't come yet.

AUNT HARRY But hit'll be any day! Whut a time! I recollect the fun we had when I married my third husband! Thet wuz the time Old Man Moyer wuz standin' on a barrel playin' a geetar fer dancin' when he fell off an' busted both legs.

MAW FRY: I recollect too. He would uv died effen hit hadn't been fer Mountain Maggie.

AUNT HARRY Mountain Maggie's fixed up more folks hyarabouts then any doctor could of.

Still talking Aunt Harry and Maw Fry exit through the door right.

BECKY MAE: When air you gittin' hitched, Clem?

CLEM: Wal, now – I ain't in no hurry.

EMMY: He'd hafta find a gal whut liked t' work, 'cause he don't.

BECKY MAE: Oh, I'm so happy I'd like t' see everybody else git married!

IZZIE: (*Putting his arms around her.*) Wal, I feel sorry fer the rest of the boys in the valley. They ain't got you.

BECKY MAE: (*Blushing.*) Oh, Izzie! Ya say the purtiest things! Tell ya whut—let's go down by the creek and pick wild roses. We could put them in water an' effen the travelin' Preacher comes tomorrow, maybe I could carry them at our wedding.

IZZIE: Swell idea! Let's go.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya cain't go down thar!

BECKY MAE: Why not?

ROSIE BELLE: Thet's right aside of Popoff property! Suppose one of the Popoff boys comes along an' sees ya.

IZZIE: Aw, they ain't likely t' be wanderin' around in this warm weather.

ROSIE BELLE: Wal, ya better take a gun.

IZZIE: (*Laughing.*) Nope. Hit be too nice a day fer shootin'.

BECKY MAE: Hit shore be. Come on, Izzie.

Exit Izzie and Becky Mae through door left.

ROSIE BELLE: Danged fools!

CLEM: (*Easily.*) Why? 'Cause they ain't lookin' fer trouble?

Willy seats himself on the barrel up right; takes a yo-yo from his pocket and begins to play with it.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Angrily.*) Ya git trouble even effen ya ain't lookin' fer hit sometimes! Our Paw wuzn't lookin' t' git shot in the back when he went huntin' with a Popoff neither!

EMMY: (*Wearily seating herself at the table right.*) Don't, Clem, don't git Rosie Belle going so.

CLEM: (*Shoving his hands into his pockets.*) Aw, she makes me sick! I bet effen hit wouldn't be fer her, this hyar feud would'uv been ended long ago. She keeps it going an' the rest of us cain't relax fer the shootin'!

ROSIE BELLE: (*Striding toward him and thrusting her face close to his.*) Ya don't seen t' have mech trouble relaxin'! Yer always sleepin'!

CLEM: (*Tauntingly.*) Ya know whut folks say? Rosie Belle Fry – the only way she kin git a feller t' fall fer her is t' shoot daid a Popoff.

ROSIE BELLE: Whut do ya mean?

CLEM: I ain't noticed anybody askin' ya t' git hitched when the travelin' Preacher comes.

EMMY: Clem!

ROSIE BELLE: I could have any feller I wanted, effen I wanted any!

CLEM: I ain't seen none around.

ROSIE BELLE: Jest wait! Jest you wait! I'll show ya!

Exit Rosie Belle with gun and chicken through the door right.

EMMY: *(Rising.)* Oh, Clem! Why did ya do that?

CLEM: *(Grinning.)* Effen we're havin' weddin's hyar-about's, we don't want no shootin'. I figured I'd git Rosie Belle's mind workin' on somethin' other than shootin' Popoffs.

EMMY: *(Worried.)* But you know Rosie Belle! She's worked up now an' when that happens thar's bound t' be trouble fer somebody.

CLEM: She'll go out lookin' fer a husband and'll forgit all about the Popoffs.

EMMY: I wonder...

CLEM: *(Stretching and yawning.)* Anyhow, I reckon I done a day's work. Effen Maw wants me I'll be nappin' under the apple tree.

Exit Clem through the door left. Emmy gazes worriedly after him for a moment, then turns and sees Willy, still playing with his yo-yo. She smiles.

EMMY: Willy... *(He looks up and grins. She seats herself on the bench left at the extreme right side.)* Come and sit beside me, Willy. Yer so fur away back thar I cain't talk t' ya. *(Willy awkwardly rises, trips over his feet and falls to the floor, rises again, and comes to the bench; he sits on the extreme left side.)* Wal, that ain't mech closer. Why don't ya say somethin', Willy?

WILLY: Shucks!

EMMY: Cain't ya say nothin' but "shucks"?

WILLY: *(Gulping.)* Duh—

EMMY: Wal, anyway, that's different. Willy, don't yer Maw, Aunt Harry Hornhonker, evir want ya t' git hitched?

WILLY: Shore.

EMMY: *(Shyly.)* Then why don't ya? Yer cousin Becky Mae is.

WILLY: Aw...

EMMY: Willy, I know ya like me. Why ain't ya niver said so?

WILLY: *(Squirming uncomfortably.)* Shucks!

EMMY: *(Moving along the bench closer to him.)* Willy, talk t' me. Willy don't ya talk? I know ya ain't as simple-minded as ya let on!

WILLY: When ya live with my Maw, ya don't git a chance t' talk.

EMMY: Thar! Ya said a whole sentence! I knew ya could do hit! Willy, effen ya wuz t' git hitched an' live with yer wife, maybe ya'd larn t' talk a lot. Ya wouldn't always have Aunt Harry buttin' in on everythin' ya tried t' say. *(She moves along the bench until she is close beside him; he tries to move away.)* Willy, the travelin' Preacher'll be hyar any time! Thar ain't nothin' nicer then a weddin' in June! Effen ya don't get hitched while he's hyar, ya'll have t' wait a whole year.

WILLY: *(Thoughtfully; he replaces his yo-yo in his pocket.)* Yeah...

EMMY: Effen ya could find a sweet-tempered gal whut kin cook an' mend shirts an' holes in socks, ya'd be happy, don't ya think? Willy, I kin cook an' mend shirts an' holes in socks!

WILLY: *(Turning to her.)* Emmy—

He is precariously sitting on the very edge of the bench and at that moment topples to the floor.

EMMY: *(Rising.)* Oh, Willy! Be ya hurt?

WILLY: *(Sitting up and rubbing his head.)* Nope.

EMMY: Willy, whut wuz ya gonna say? Afore ya fell?

WILLY: Huh?

EMMY: *(Desperately.)* Ya wuz gonna say somethin' t' me afore ya fell! Whut wuz hit, Willy?

WILLY: *(Scratches his head.)* Shucks! Forgot.

EMMY: *(Wailing.)* Ohhhh, Willy!

AUNT HARRY *(Off right.)* Willy! Willy Hornhonker!

WILLY: Yep?

AUNT HARRY *(Appearing at the door right.)* Willy, ya washed yer feet lately?

WILLY: *(Rising.)* Last week, Maw.

AUNT HARRY Then I reckon they be clean enough. Come along. Maw Frey's got some grapes she wants t' use fer makin jelly. You stomp around on them with yer feet t' git the juice out. *(To Emmy.)* Around preservin' time, Willy's always in demand. He's got the biggest feet in the valley fer stompin' out juice.

EMMY: But ain't thet kinda dirty?

AUNT HARRY Naw. We washed the grapes first. He won't git no more dirt on his feet. Come along, Willy. (*Exit Aunt Harry, right.*)

WILLY: (*Looking uncertainly at Emmy.*) Duh...

EMMY: (*Exasperated.*) Oh, ya might as well do whut yer Maw said, Willy!

Exit Willy through the door right. Emmy glares after him, says, "Gol dang hit!" and stamps her foot. A face pops up at the window left and stares into the room. It is Zeke Popoff. Emmy, deep in thought, looks up and sees him.

EMMY: Oh!

Zeke ducks out of sight behind the window again. Emmy runs up left and looks out.

EMMY: Whut air ya doin' out thar?

ZEKE: (*Bashfully coming into sight again.*) Howdy.

EMMY: Who air ya?

ZEKE: Name's Zeke. Least ways, thet's whut they call me. Real name's Ezekiel. Nobody evir calls me Ezekiel though. Don't rightly know why. Always kinda fancied the name myself. Whut's yer name?

EMMY: Emmy Fry. Niver seed ya hyarabouts, Zeke. Ya be a stranger?

ZEKE: Nope. Lived hyar all my life.

EMMY: (*Puzzled.*) But I know every blamed critter in this hyar valley—except some of the Popoffs. (*Horried.*) We niver git close enough t' see most o' them. You ain't—Ya couldn't be—o' them. You ain't—Ya couldn't be—

ZEKE: Reckon I am. Zeke Popoff.

EMMY: (*Badly frightened.*) Ya gotta git out of hyar! Effen my sister, Rosie Belle, sees ya, she'll kill ya!

ZEKE: Why?

EMMY: The feud! The feud thet started over our Paw gittin' shot.

ZEKE: (*Seriously.*) Emmy Fry, thet's whut I come about.

EMMY: Huh?

ZEKE: (*Crawling into the room through the window.*) My Pappy'd kill me too effen he knowed I wuz hyar but—wal, hang it all, Emmy Fry, I wanted t' see fer myself effen you folks wuz as bad as Pappy sez. I figured effen ya wuzn't, maybe we cud stop killin' each other.

EMMY: (*Surprised.*) Ya mean—end the feud?

ZEKE: Why not?

EMMY: I dunno...exceptin' Rosie Belle won't niver stop shootin' Popoffs!

They come down stage.

ZEKE: She sounds like quite a gal.

EMMY: She is.

ZEKE: I'd like t' meet her.

EMMY: Oh, no! Ya mustn't! Suppose—suppose she'd recognize ya er somethin'. She kin smell a Popoff a mile away.

ZEKE: We cain't smell *that* bad! Effen we wuzn't feudin I bet I cud like yer folks.

EMMY: Please go, Zeke. (*Glancing frantically about.*) Rosie Belle might come walkin' in—er Maw.

ZEKE: Does yer Maw still hate us?

EMMY: Shore. Ya shot our Paw, didn't ya?

ZEKE: But Hiram done it and he's daid. So's our Mammy.

EMMY: Oh, please—go.

Offstage, left, Rosie Belle is heard, singing loudly, "There'll Be a Hillbilly Wedding in June."

EMMY: (*Whirling to face door left.*) Hit be Rosie Belle an' she's a-headed this way! She'll kill ya, Zeke Popoff!

ZEKE: Maybe I better jest shinney out thet winder again.

EMMY: No! She's right out thar! She'll see ya shore!

ZEKE: Whar's the other door lead to?

EMMY: The back yard—but the shed's right near by an' Maw's out thar with Aunt Harry Hornhonker doin' the preservin'.

ZEKE: (*Sighing.*) Wal, Rosie Belle might miss.

EMMY: She never misses! Ya gotta hide!

ZEKE: Whar?

EMMY: Under the table! Quick!

Zeke dodges under the table, right center, just as Rosie Belle enters through door left. She does not have her gun, instead she carries a sharp ax. She continues to whistle a tune as she pauses inside the door to feel the edge of the ax. It is sharp enough to satisfy her. She bends down and looks under the bench, left, holding the ax ready to use. She sees nothing there and goes up to the barrel, up right. Emmy watches fearfully.

EMMY: W—Whut air ya lookin' fur, Rosie Belle?

ROSIE BELLE: Maw figured whut with the weddin' comin' off, one chicken wuzn't enough. I wuz t' kill another—only he got away. Figured he might a slipped in hyar.

EMMY: (*Relieved.*) Only a chicken. I thought—

ROSIE BELLE: (*Suspiciously.*) Whut did ya think?

EMMY: Nothin'. I—

ROSIE BELLE: The table! I'll bet thet dad burned bird got under the table!

EMMY: I'll look!

She dashes for the table, pulls up the cloth on the side facing the audience. Zeke grins up at her and waves his hand. He makes a sound imitating a chicken.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Excited.*) Whut wuz thet?

EMMY: (*Nervously dropping the table cloth.*) I didn't hear nothin!

ROSIE BELLE: (*Puzzled.*) I could uv swore I heard—

EMMY: (*Kicking viciously under the table.*) Maybe 'twas Clem snoring out in the yard. Rosie Belle—ya didn't pay no mind t' whut Clem said a while back, did ya?

ROSIE BELLE: (*Going to right center and leaning her ax on the bench.*) Shore I paid mind.

EMMY: But—

ROSIE BELLE: Clem's right. I'll be an old maid effen I ain't careful. I'm sixteen! By next June when the travelin' Preacher comes, I'll be seventeen.

EMMY: Thet ain't so old.

ROSIE BELLE: Old enough t' git hitched. (*Frowning.*) I been givin' hit a lot of thought. Most everybody in this hyar valley has already got himself promised except our brothers and the Popoff boys. They're out fer me so thet leaves...(*she pauses.*)

EMMY: (*Fearfully.*) Who?

MAW FRY: (*Offstage right.*) Emmy!

EMMY: Who, Rosie Belle?

ROSIE BELLE: Maw's callin'.

EMMY: But who?

MAW FRY: (*Louder.*) EMMY!

ROSIE BELLE: Willy Hornhonker of course.

MAW FRY: (*Off right.*) Emmy, git out hyar! I want ya t' drop the wax in the jelly glasses!

Willy enters through the door right, his feet are a vivid purple. This effect may be safely obtained by a liberal sprinkling of blue and red food coloring, available at any grocery store.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya better git, Emmy, er Maw'll be fightin' mad.

EMMY: (*Glancing from Willy to the table.*) Ohhh...

She exits through the door right.

ROSIE BELLE: I wonder what ails her. She's shore actin' queerly.
Hi, Willy!

WILLY: Duh?

ROSIE BELLE: Willy, I been givin' you a lot of thought.

WILLY: (*Bashfully.*) Aw, shucks!

ROSIE BELLE: Ya ain't mech—but stupid as ya air, yer the only feller in the valley I kin marry.

WILLY: (*Frightened.*) Huh?

ROSIE BELLE: (*Carefully inspecting the sharp edge of the ax as she advances toward him.*) I reckon when the travelin' Preacher comes through, we'll git hitched; how about hit, Willy?

WILLY: (*Backing away.*) B—but—

ROSIE BELLE: Of course ya don't have to, effen ya don't want to.

WILLY: Good!

ROSIE BELLE: *(She has backed him to the wall right; she holds the ax close to his throat.)* Nope, Willy, ya don't have to. But effen ya don't, Maw kin cook you along with the other chickens I killed! *(Willy groans loudly.)* Now, whut's yer answer?

WILLY: Yep!!!

ROSIE BELLE: Yep—we'll git hitched?

WILLY: Yep!

Rosie Belle lets out a loud, "Yaaaahooooo!"

ROSIE BELLE: *(Backing away.)* Okay, Willy. Now ya kin kiss me, jest so's ya won't forgit an' try t' back out.

Rosie Belle closes her eyes and puckers expectantly; Willy looks terrified and, turning his face to the wall, buries his face in his hands. Zeke pokes his head from beneath this table and sees the situation. He crawls out. He walks around Rosie Belle, inspecting her. She, of course, still stands with her eyes closed and remains puckered. Zeke contemplates her mouth, shrugs, and kisses her lightly.

ROSIE BELLE: *(Still with eyes closed.)* Oh, Willy!

She grabs Zeke around the neck and kisses him—not lightly.

ZEKE: Wow!

She releases him; he bolts out the door, left. Rosie Belle opens her eyes and stares at Willy.

ROSIE BELLE: Willy, I didn't know ya had hit in ya!

WILLY: *(Turning to face her.)* Huh?

ROSIE BELLE: *(Bellowing.)* HEY, EVERYBODY!

Maw Fry, Emmy, Aunt Harry Hornhonker enter through the door right. Rosie Belle grabs Willy's hand and jerks him to center stage, where she stands holding his arm up, prize-fighter fashion. Clem rushes in the door left.

MAW FRY: Balls o' fire! Whut ails ya, Rosie Belle?

CLEM: Who wuz bellowin'?

EMMY: Willy! Be somethin' wrong?

ROSIE BELLE: Willy and me is getting' hitched!

EMMY: Oh, Willy! Ya tuck leave of the few senses ya had?

MAW FRY: Good! Maybe ya'll larn t' cook an' sew instead of shootin' all the time, Rosie Belle!

ROSIE BELLE: Let Willy do the cookin'! Yaaaahooo! I feel like celebratin'!

EMMY: (*Sadly.*) I don't.

CLEM: Swell, Rosie Belle. I'll git the geetar.

ROSIE BELLE: Nope! I'm a-gonna celebrate by shootin' a Popoff!

CLEM: Rosie Belle!

ROSIE BELLE: (*Handing Willy the ax.*) Hyar. You kill Maw's chicken effen ya kin find hit. I'm goin' shootin'.

EMMY: Rosie Belle, ya cain't!

ROSIE BELLE: Who's gonna stop me?

Exit Rosie Belle through the door left.

EMMY: (*Bitterly to Clem.*) You and yer big ideas!

AUNT HARRY (*Falling into a chair at the table.*) Wal, I'm speechless!

MAW FRY: (*Interested.*) Ya air, really?

AUNT HARRY Wal, no. Willy, how come ya picked Rosie Belle? I wuz hopin' ya'd get hitched—but I niver thought I'd see the day anybody'd wanna buckle up with Rosie Belle Fry!

MAW FRY: Me neither. Hit'll take some man t'keep her in line! Paw—God rest his soul—ner me cud niver do hit.

WILLY: (*Getting out his yo-yo.*) Shucks.

A scream is heard off left. Clem turns toward the door.

MAW FRY: Now whut?

CLEM: Hit be Izzie an' Becky Mae comin' back! Thunder 'n lightenin'!

EMMY: Whut's wrong?

Enter a bedraggled Becky Mae, practically carrying Izzie. His shirt is torn and his arm smeared red with ketchup.

BECKY MAE: I—I screamed for help....I thought I couldn't make hit...

CLEM: (*Grabbing Izzie and lowering him onto the bench left.*) Oh, no! Not agin'. Not my Izzie!

AUNT HARRY Whut happened?

BECKY MAE: (*Near tears.*) The Popoffs! One of 'em seen us—I think hit wuz Pappy Popoff—an' he shot—an' I wuz so scared.

EMMY: Did ya see Rosie Belle?

BECKY MAE: Shore. She seen Izzie. She wuz goin' some place with her gun in an awful hurry!

WILLY: (*Hopefully.*) Maybe they'll shoot her!

AUNT HARRY WILLY!

EMMY: Willy!

BECKY MAE: Willy!

WILLY: (*Shrugging.*) Shucks...

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

SETTING: *The scene is much the same as Act One.*

AT RISE: *We find Izzie lying on the bench, left, with a pillow beneath his head and covered with a blanket. Mountain Maggie is seated on the barrel which has been moved to a position beside the bench. She has her bandanna full of medicines spread on the floor. A basin of hot water steams beside the bandanna and beside it sits a large jar of salve. She has just finished bandaging Izzie's arm and adjusting it comfortably in a sling. Maw Fry and Emmy stand anxiously beside the table right, looking on. Aunt Harry is beside Mountain Maggie, curiously watching. Becky Mae kneels at the left of the bench sniffing.*

AUNT HARRY Balls o' fire! Mountain Maggie, it's shore good we got you – whut with no doctor closer then fifty miles.

MAW FRY: How kin we repay ya, Mountain Maggie?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: A few vittles is all I'll be needin', Maw Fry. Wouldn't I be a funny one, knowin' how t' fix up sick folks an' not doin' hit?

BECKY MAE: *(Sobbing.)* Oh, my poor Izzie!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: *(Rising and inspecting him.)* Now, stop yer sniffin', Becky Mae Hornhonker! He might uv been killed – then ya'd really have somethin' t' sniff about.

BECKY MAE: Ohh! Don't say a thing like that!

IZZIE: *(Patting Becky Mae's hand and speaking with difficulty.)* Mountain Maggie—the travelin' Preacher'll be through any day an' me an' Becky Mae—wal, we'd hate t' have t' wait fer another year afore we git hitched. Do ya think—I mean, kin I stand up long enough t' git hitched?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: *(Cheerfully.)* Why shore, son! Thet ain't hardly more then a nick! Ya lost some blood an' ya'll be weak, but thet's about all. Ya kin git up now an' go out in the sunshine, effen ya take hit easy.

BECKY MAE: Oh, Mountain Maggie! That's wonderful!

MAW FRY: (*Sighing with relief.*) Land sakes! Aunt Harry, we better git back to thet preservin'! Mountain Maggie, I'll fix up a big box for vittles for ya t' take back to yer cabin.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Mech obliged.

EMMY: (*Softly.*) We're the ones obliged to you, Mountain Maggie. An' so's everybody else in these hills.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Ain't nothin'.

AUNT HARRY Wal, thet preservin' ain't gonna wait forever. (*She gets the basin and jar of salve.*) I'll clean these up an' leave 'em in the shed for ya, Mountain Maggie.

Exit Aunt Harry and Maw Fry through the door right. Mountain Maggie puts her bandanna on the barrel and carefully ties it again.

IZZIE: (*Sitting up slowly.*) I feel better already.

BECKY MAE: Ya mustn't git to bold, Izzie!

IZZIE: Whar's Rosie Belle?

EMMY: (*Vaguely.*) Out somewhere.

BECKY MAE: Willy an' Clem have gone out lookin' fer her.

IZZIE: Why? I always figured Rosie Belle could take care of herself.

BECKY MAE: She seen ya wuz shot. They wuz afeerd she'd go killin' all the Popoffs.

IZZIE: (*Sighing.*) Becky Mae, let's go out an' sit under the apple tree. I want some fresh air.

BECKY MAE: Yer shore he kin, Mountain Maggie?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Shore. As long as he don't stay on his feet too long.

IZZIE: (*Rising weakly and leaning on Becky Mae.*) I got somebody t' help me now, Mountain Maggie.

Exit Izzie and Becky Mae through the door left. Emmy follows them to the door and looks after them. She turns back into the room, suddenly buries her face in her hands and sobs.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Looking up.*) Why, Emmy! Yer brother's okay now. He ain't in no danger.

EMMY: (*Dropping onto the bench left.*) He is! We all a—are!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Going to her.*) Would it help t' tell me about it?

EMMY: (*Looking up hopefully.*) Oh, Mountain Maggie! You're the best person in these hills! Yer the only one whut could help us! Maybe they'd listen to you.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Who?

EMMY: My family—Rosie Belle—the Popoffs!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Ya mean, ya want this feud ended?

EMMY: (*Nodding.*) How many times have ya come out hyar t' help the sick an' the dying from this hyar feud when ya cud be helpin' folks whut air sick through no fault of thar own? I bet thar's somebody right now ya oughta be tendin'!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Old Man Kramer broke his leg. I fixed it, but he's still laid up an' he's all alone down thar—

EMMY: Thet's whut I mean! Ya cud be down thar now effen hit wuzn't fer this feud.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Returning to her herbs.*) Emmy Fry, ya mustn't think I kin do everything.

EMMY: But ya kin.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Shaking her head.*) I'm just one old woman. I know how t' make medicines out of the herbs thet grow in the garden around my shack an' I know how t' set broken bones. I do whut I kin fer folks thet air sick, but stoppin' a feud as bad as this one, be a little out of my line.

EMMY: (*Rising.*) Ya got to! Nobody else kin! (*Sobbing.*) Oh, Mountain Maggie! I'm so unhappy!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: But, Emmy—ya've lived with this feud fer a long time, why should hit be makin' ya so unhappy now?

EMMY: 'Cause I wanna git hitched when the travelin' Preacher comes, an' the only unhitched boys hyar abouts be Popoffs!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Thar's Willy Hornhonker. Emmy; (*Sobbing.*) I—I wouldn't m—m—mary thet W—Willy Hornhonker effen h—he wuz the last m—man on earth!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Frowning.*) Ya air in trouble, ain't ya, Emmy? Wal—I don't know rightly how t' go about stoppin' a feud...

EMMY: (*Running to her.*) But ya'll try? Ya will try!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Wal—

EMMY: Oh, Mountain Maggie! I knew ya cud do hit!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Hit ain't done yet.

Enter Clem, Rosie Belle with gun, and Willy through the door left. Clem is carrying Rosie Belle's shoulders and Willy her feet. She's spasmodically struggling.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya two blasted lunker heads! Whut's the big idea?

CLEM: (*Soothingly.*) Now, calm down, Rosie Belle.

EMMY: (*Relieved.*) Ya found her! Did she shoot anybody?

ROSIE BELLE: (*As they drop her.*) Shoot anybody! I'll shoot Willy and Clem effen they ain't careful!

CLEM: We had to carry her. She wouldn't come no other way.

ROSIE BELLE: All I wuz gonna do wuz shoot a Popoff er two!

EMMY: We didn't want ya to, Rosie Belle.

ROSIE BELLE: Why not? They shot Izzie.

EMMY: But yer gittin' married an' the travelin' Preacher don't like shootin' an—

CLEM: 'N Maw wanted ya t' come back and take a bath.

ROSIE BELLE: What fur? I tuck a bath in the spring.

EMMY: Yer gittin' married, ain't ya?

ROSIE BELLE: Not effen hit means I gotta take a bath.

WILLY: (*Joyfully.*) Oh, boy!

ROSIE BELLE: (*Raising her gun.*) But ain't nobody goin' t' make me take a bath an' I'm gittin' married anyhow!

Enter Aunt Harry through the door right.

AUNT HARRY: The preservin's jest about done. Oh, Rosie Belle! I see ya come back.

ROSIE BELLE: Yeah, I come back.

AUNT HARRY: We must make a purty dress fer ya t' marry Willy in.

ROSIE BELLE: Whut's wrong with whut I'm wearin' now?

AUNT HARRY: Wal—it ain't jest the thing a body wears t' git hitched.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya'll have t' got tie me afore ya git me inter one of them frilly dresses!

AUNT HARRY: (*Advancing and looking right into her eyes about an inch from her face.*) Rosie Belle, ya forgit yer talkin' t' Aunt Harry Hornhonker. I ain't niver tuck a back seat fer nobody when it came t' shootin' an' fightin'.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Who has tied her bandanna to her belt again.*) Aunt Harry, kin I see ya outside fer a spell?

AUNT HARRY: Anythin' ya want, Mountain Maggie. We owe ya a lot.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Come on then, afore we have more trouble.

Exit Mountain Maggie and Aunt Harry through the door left.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Spitting after them.*) I kin lick her with one hand tied behind my back!

CLEM: I wouldn't want t' try hit.

ROSIE BELLE: I kin spit further then she kin too!

EMMY: Rosie Belle, why don't ya try bein' nice for a change...

ROSIE BELLE: I'm always nice! Ain't nobody in the hills got a sweeter disposition then me! Ain't thet right, Willy?

WILLY: Huh?

ROSIE BELLE: (*Raising her gun.*) I'll blast anybody whut don't agree with me!

EMMY: Oh, Rosie Belle! Yer jest awful!

MAW FRY: (*Offstage right.*) Hey, thar! Give yer Maw a hand!

Exit Clem through the door right. A moment later he and Maw enter, right, carrying a wash tub with water, which they place in center stage. Maw Fry also carries a white towel and soap.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Backing away.*) Thet—thet ain't whut I think hit is?

MAW FRY: Hit be. Effen yer gittin' married, Rosie Belle, you gotta take a bath! (*She places the towel and soap on the table.*)

ROSIE BELLE: (*Raising her gun.*) I ain't!

MAW FRY: (*Striding forward and taking the gun.*) Ya wouldn't shoot yer own Maw, Rosie Belle?

ROSIE BELLE: N—Naw...

MAW FRY: Then yer takin' a bath. Put this gun away, Emmy.

She hands the gun to Emmy who places the gun on the table, right, then moves to left center.

CLEM: Haw. Haw.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Furiously.*) Hesh up! I ain't takin' a bath! Hit ain't healthy t' take more'n one a year!

MAW FRY: Clem, you an' Willy clear out o' hyar.

CLEM: Effen ya git inter trouble, call us.

Exit Clem and Willy through the door left. Maw rolls up her sleeves.

MAW FRY: Now then...Emmy, block off the door!

Emmy takes a position at the door, left.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Whining.*) Willy's so dumb he won't know whether I tuck a bath er not, Maw.

MAW FRY: Nope, but the folks comin' t' the weddin'll know.

ROSIE BELLE: How?

MAW FRY: They kin smell hit!

ROSIE BELLE: (*Slyly.*) Wal, okay, Maw, effen hit means so mech t' ya. I'll take a bath. You an' Emmy clear out.

MAW FRY: (*Hesitating.*) I don't know...

EMMY: Effen we go, she'll slip out without takin' one!

ROSIE BELLE: I will not! I give my word!

MAW FRY: Have hit yer way, Rosie Belle, but effen ya slip out without touchin' thet water an' soap, I'll jest git ya later!

Maw and Emmy exit right. Rosie Belle watches them go with a grin. She looks carefully about. She takes the soap and holding it carefully, dips it into the water. Doing so, she gets her fingers wet, and hastily wipes them on her dress. She replaces the soap on the table. She unfolds the towel and crumples it in a heap. She goes to the door, left, looks out carefully, exits, then reenters a second later with a handful of soil. She throws it into the tub of water. She looks about the room with satisfaction, then goes up right and gets the broom.

EMMY: (*Offstage right.*) I don't hear no water splashin'.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya will!

She takes the broom handle and splashes the water about in the tub, singing lustily as she does so. After a minutes, she stops, replaces the broom, and unbuttons one button on her dress.

ROSIE BELLE: I'm finished!

Emmy and Maw Fry enter through the door right as Rosie Belle, a look of extreme satisfaction upon her face, buttons the one button.

EMMY: (*Suspiciously.*) Thet shore didn't take long.

MAW FRY: The way she hates water, ya couldn't expect her t'stay in long. (*She peers into the tub.*) Wal, the water's dirty all right.

EMMY: (*Inspecting Rosie Belle.*) So's Rosie Belle.

MAW FRY: Wal, maybe she didn't git hit all off. By the looks o' thet water, she ain't tuck a bath in two years! (*Going to the soap.*) The soap is wet too. Rosie Belle, I misjudged ya. Yer a good gal.

EMMY: (*Taking the towel.*) Jest a minute.

ROSIE BELLE: I—Igotta go bed down the hogs.

EMMY: This towel ain't a mite wet ner dirty.

MAW FRY: Hit ain't?

EMMY: (*Going to Rosie Belle and rubbing the towel over her arm. She holds up a blackened portion of the towel previously folded under and only visible now.*) Look at thet!

MAW FRY: Rosie Belle, ya tricked me! Ya ain't been near thet water! (*Grabbing one of her arms.*) Git the other one, Emmy!

Emmy grabs Rosie Belle's arem and together they drag the struggling Rosie Belle to the tub.

MAW FRY: (*Panting.*) Git the soap an' towel! I kin hold her.

EMMY: (*Doing so.*) This be a job fer more then jest two , Maw!

MAW FRY: (*Shoving Rosie Belle's face down into the tub, just above the water line. There is very little actual water in the tub. Rosie Belle bellows.*) Jest wash whut shows!

Emmy wets a corner of the towel and Maw hauls Rosie Belle's head out long enough for her face to be washed. Hastily Emmy washes her arms. Maw releases Rosie Belle.

MAW FRY: I'm exhausted!

EMMY: Let's wait fer Aunt Harry t' come back.

MAW FRY: Whar's she gone?

EMMY: (*Shaking her head.*) Mountain Maggie sent her fer somethin', I reckon.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Bitterly.*) Thet gol danged soap's to sweet! The hogs won't know me.

MAW FRY: They will when they look at yer feet. We didn't get that fur. Come on, Emmy, help me carry this hyar tub.

Together Maw and Emmy carry the tub off right; Emmy also carries the towel and soap. Rosie Belle watches them go, shivers.

ROSIE BELLE: Don't see why folks cain't let a body alone. It ain't healthy t' take a bath. (*To herself.*) Hit seems lately as effen none of the folks don't like me and I cain't figure out why.

Zeke enters through the door left and stands looking at her.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Turning and seeing him.*) Oh! Who air you?

ZEKE: Oh, jest somebody passin' by. Thought I'd drop in fer a spell an' rest my legs.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya look kinda familiar, an' yet I cain't place ya—Ya be a stranger?

ZEKE: Yep. I'm a stranger to this cabin.

ROSIE BELLE: Wal, come in an' set a spell. The well's outside effen yer thirsty.

ZEKE: Yer a mighty purty gal.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Haughtily.*) I'm engaged.

ZEKE: "She's engaged. She's lovely. She uses Hamhoner's lye soap in her bath."

ROSIE BELLE: Huh?

ZEKE: Jest somethin' I heerd on the radio once down at Hoot Owl Junction.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Suspiciously.*) Effen yer so tard, why don't ya set down?

ZEKE: How kin anybody be tard when they look at you?

ROSIE BELLE: I ain't never heerd nobody talk as purty as you do!

ZEKE: How about takin' a walk with me? I'd like somebody whut knows the countryside t' show me around.

ROSIE BELLE: Don't reckon I oughta. Whut with these hyar weddin's a-comin' up thar'll be lots of killin' Maw'll want done.

ZEKE: Cain't nobody else do hit?

ROSIE BELLE: Naw. Ain't nobody as good at it as me—whether hit be butcherin' a hog er shootin' a Popoff. Come t' think of hit, thar ain't mech difference.

ZEKE: (*Uncomfortably.*) Did you say Popoff?

ROSIE BELLE: Yep. Thet's the name of a family we're feudin' with.

ZEKE: (*Nervously.*) Really?

ROSIE BELLE: Ya know whut I'd do with a Popoff effen I had one now?

ZEKE: N—No. W—Whut would ya do?

ROSIE BELLE: (*Getting her gun from the table.*) Wal, furst I'd git my gun, real slow like an' start toward him. (*She does; Zeke backs up left.*) I'd let an evil look creep into my eye jest so's he's know whut wuz a-comin'. (*Zeke is against the wall up left with the gun in his stomach.*) Then I'd start t' squeeze the trigger, real slow...

Enter Emmy and Willy through the door right. Emmy stops short with a scream.

EMMY: Rosie Belle! Whut air ya doin'?

ROSIE BELLE: (*Removing the gun and turning pleasantly towards Emmy.*) This hyar stranger wuz askin' whut I'd do effen I got a Popoff t' shoot.

EMMY: (*Visibly relaxing.*) Oh. (*She goes up center and gets the broom which she takes to Rosie Belle.*) Hyar. Maw said fer ya t' sweep the floor.

ROSIE BELLE: Sweep the floor! Ain't she got nothin' more excitin' t' do?

EMMY: (*Thrusting the broom into her hand and taking the gun.*) Nope. Hyar!

ROSIE BELLE: Be careful with thet gun. I might be needin' it.

EMMY: (*Nervously.*) I'll jest set hit outside whar ya kin git hit. (*She exits left and reenters a moment later without the gun.*)

ZEKE: (*Nervously.*) Wal, I reckon I better git.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya don't have t' go on thar account. Thet's Willy. He's my feller.

ZEKE: Yep. I know.

ROSIE BELLE: Ya know?

ZEKE: I—I mean—No! H—He looks like the kinda feller ya'd pick, thet's all.

ROSIE BELLE: (*Angrily.*) Ya think I look like the kind of gal whut would pick a moron like Willy fer a feller?

ZEKE: But ya jest said—I better go!

WILLY: Glad ya cud come, Zeke.

ROSIE BELLE: Zeke! Ya know him?

ZEKE: He—he jest seen me down the road awhile back.

ROSIE BELLE: Willy ain't been down the road thet way t'day!

EMMY: Oh, Willy! Ya don't never say nothin'! Why didn't ya keep hit thet way?

WILLY: Shucks.

ROSIE BELLE: Zeke...An' yer face looks farmiliar! Yer Zeke Popoff!

ZEKE: I'm goin'!

Rosie Belle swats at him with the broom. Zeke bolts out the door left with Rosie Belle chasing him with the broom.

EMMY: (*Sitting at the table.*) Oh, Willy! Why'd ya hafta do thet?

WILLY: (*Miserably.*) Duh...

EMMY: (*Almost weeping.*) An' why'd ya have t' ask Rosie Belle t' git hitched up with ya? She cain't make ya happy! She don't care about ya.

WILLY: Gosh!

EMMY: (*With anger.*) Cain't ya say more then thet? Ya said more a while ago when hit got Zeke Popoff inter trouble.

WILLY: I didn't ask Rosie Belle t' marry me!

EMMY: Ya didn't?

WILLY: Nope. She asked me.

EMMY: Ya didn't have t' say yes!

WILLY: Shucks!

EMMY: Oh, Willy! Git out of my sight!

Enter Mountain Maggie through the door left, crestfallen, Willy moves left.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Looks like you two ain't hittin' hit off so good.

WILLY: Shucks.

Exit Willy through door left.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Whut wuz thet thet passed me down the trail a-ways? I couldn't figure out, hit wuz a-goin' so fast.

EMMY: Most likely hit wuz Rosie Belle a-chasin' Zeke Popoff with a broom.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Lucky fer him hit ain't a gun.

EMMY: Whar's Aunt Harry?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: She went on an errand fer me.

EMMY: Ya ain't forgot about stoppin' the feud?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: *(Seating herself on the bench left.)* Nope. She went t' git Pappy Popoff.

EMMY: *(Rising.)* He'd niver come hyar!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: When Aunt Harry gits done with him, he'll come.

EMMY: I don't understand...

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: She's takin' him a love potion I made up. I'm givin' some to yer Maw, too.

EMMY: A love potion!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Oh, hit won't hurt them none. Hit ain't nothing' but sugar-water.

EMMY: Then how kin hit do any good?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Ya see, Emmy, hit ain't always whuts in medicine thet helps folks. Sometimes hits whut they think is in the medicine.

EMMY: I still don't see how thet's goin' to' end the feud!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Maybe hit ain't, but hit's worth a try. Call yer Maw.

EMMY: Maw! Maw!

MAW FRY: (*Offstage right.*) Tarnation! Whut's wrong now?

EMMY: Nothin', Maw.

MAW FRY: (*Appearing at door right.*) Then why air ya bellowin', Emmy?

EMMY: Mountain Maggie wants ya.

MAW FRY: (*Coming to center stage.*) Whut kin I do fer ya, Mountain Maggie?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Emmy, go fetch a cup o' hot water.

EMMY: Shore.

Exit Emmy through the door right. Mountain Maggie carefully unties her bundle of herbs and looks over them.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Maw Fry, hit be a wonder to me thet ya ain't niver married agin. Yer man's been daid fer a long time.

MAW FRY: (*Sitting wearily at the table right.*) I—I ain't niver thought of hit. Who'd want me? (*She waves a deprecating hand over herself.*) I been workin' so hard takin' care of the kids since Paw wuz killed. It ain't easy when ya gotta do everything fer yerself.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Yer kids is almost growed up now. Maybe hit be time ya start thinkin' of yerself a wee bit.

MAW FRY: I'm jest an old woman now...

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Ya aint! Yer still mighty handsome, Maw Fry. Ya'd make a fine wife fer some lonely old codger.

MAW FRY: (*Straightly.*) Ya really think so?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: I know so. Besides—I got somethin' thet'll help ya.

MAW FRY: (*Excited.*) Ya mean—a love potion er somethin'?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Thet's hit exactly! A love potion

Enter Emmy through the door right with a cup of water.

EMMY: (*Carefully carrying it to Mountain Maggie.*) Hyar ya air.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Thank ya, Emmy. (*She takes it, sets it on the bench and drops sugar into it from a small paper packet.*) Hyar ya be, Maw Fry. All ya needa do is drink hit an' the next man whut comes in hyar'll fall in love with ya.

MAW FRY: (*Rising; dreamily.*) Me—getting' married after all these years! (*She crosses to Mountain Maggie.*) I'll take hit!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Handing it to her.*) Oh! Thar's one thing I got t' tell ya afore ya drink hit!

MAW FRY: (*Pausing.*) Whut's thet?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: I don't know jest whut amount t' give ya. Some folks takes more than others. Effen ya git an overdose, it won't hurt ya—only it'll make the man ya fall in love with look like yer worst enemy.

MAW FRY: Hit be perculiar stuff, ain't hit?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Magic though. Who's yer worst enemy?

MAW FRY: Why—I don't rightly know. Pappy Popoff I suppose.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Wal, effen the next man ya see looks like Pappy Popoff, ya'll know ya tuck an overdose.

MAW FRY: Thet ain't so bad. I always figured Pappy Popoff wuz right handsome. (*Hastily.*) Thet didn't stop me frum hatin' him though.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Of course not.

Maw Fry takes the cup to her lips and drinks the liquid. Emmy and Mountain Maggie watch closely and sigh when it is all down.

MAW FRY: (*Smacking her lips.*) Thet tasted sweet, Mountain Maggie.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Why, shore. Love potions always taste sweet.

MAW FRY: (*Setting down the cup on the table.*) Now then—effen I'm gonna git a man, love potion er no love potion, I ain't gonna have him see me lookin' like this! Hurry Emmy! Git thet lipstick thet travelin' salesman showed to us the other day.

Emmy exits through door right. Maw Fry removes a very dirty apron to reveal a rather neat cotton dress. She takes a comb from the pocket of the apron and smooths back her hair. Emmy comes dashing back with lipstick and mirror.

MAW FRY: Thet's a good gal, Emmy. (*She takes the lipstick and mirror and quickly applies some.*) Thar!

EMMY: (*Astounded.*) Why, Maw! I niver knew ya looked like thet. No wonder Paw wanted t' git hitched up with ya!

MAW FRY: (*Flattered.*) Hit must be the love potion—though I knew thar wuz them whut use ta think I wuz mighty purty.

AUNT HARRY: (*Offstage left.*) Yooohooo! Anybody t' hum?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Rising and going to door left.*) Come on in, Aunt Harry.

Enter Aunt Harry and Pappy Popoff through the door left.

AUNT HARRY: I brung a visitor. I hope nobody don't mind.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Min hyar (*Indicating Maw Fry.*) is always glad fer company, ain't ya, Min?

MAW FRY: (*Staring at Pappy.*) Why shore. (*Aside to Mountain Maggie.*) I musta tuck an overdose! He looks jest like Pappy Popoff t' me!

PAPPY: (*Aside to Aunt Harry.*) I musta took an overdose. She looks jest like Maw Fry! This even looks like the Fry cabin!

EMMY: It worked!

MAW FRY: Huh?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: (*Hastily.*) Come on, Emmy! I have some bandages in the shed I want ya t' help me roll.

EMMY: Okay.

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: You too, Aunt Harry.

AUNT HARRY: Shucks, Mountain Maggie! Cain't I stay?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Come along. I reckon Min an' Luke don't mind. I'm shore they kin find things t' talk about. Uh—You two better call each other by first names.

PAPPY: Why?

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Hit be more friendly.

Exit Mountain Maggie, Emmy, and Aunt Harry, very reluctant, through the door right.

MAW FRY: Won't ya set down—Luke?

PAPPY: Thank ya kindly—Min.

He seats himself on the bench left. Maw Fry also sits on the bench—not very close to him.

PAPPY: Mountain Maggie is shore a strange critter, ain't she?

MAW FRY: She shore knows a powerful lot about helpin' folks.

PAPPY: Yep. Many of us in the hills'd be daid long ago effen hit weren't fer Mountain Maggie. Whar'd she larn all them things?

MAW FRY: I don't rightly know. Some say she larned a lot from the Indians. She's very old, ya know.

PAPPY: I heerd tell, she wuz the daughter of a doctor up North an' run away frum home.

MAW FRY: She don't niver talk about hit.

PAPPY: *(Moving closer to Maw.)* Yer a mighty handsome woman, Min. Ya look jest like somebody else I know.

MAW FRY: Yep. Same hyar. Maybe hit were somthin' I et er drank.

PAPPY: Maybe. *(Moving still closer.)* Kin ya cook?

MAW FRY: Wal, I ain't one t' brag but my last batch of biscuits wuz so light when I opened the oven door they wuz floatin' around the top of the oven!

PAPPY: Ya don't say!

MAW FRY: Yep, I kin sew too. Used t' make all my husband's shirts when he was alive.

PAPPY: *(Sighing.)* Hit be hard t' live alone. I ain't had a decent meal since my wife died. An' hit seems like all my buttons is offen my shirts.

MAW FRY: I'd be glad t' sew 'em on fer ya.

PAPPY: Ya would?

MAW FRY: Why, shore.

PAPPY: *(Moving even closer to her.)* Ya know, Min, maybe hit be too soon t' say hit, but appears t' me we both oughta be settlin' down again.

MAW FRY: I wuz jest thinkin' thet same thing.

PAPPY: The travelin' Preacher'll be comin' through any time. Effen we wait till we know each other better, we'd have t' wait till he comes back next June t' git hitched.

MAW FRY: At our ages, it don't pay t' wait. We' be a year older by then.

PAPPY: Yep. Thet'd be another year o' havin' t' live without buttons on my shirts.

MAW FRY: An' don't forgit my light biscuits.

PAPPY: Min... *(He bends forward to kiss her.)*

Enter Mountain Maggie, Emmy, and Aunt Harry through the door right.

AUNT HARRY: Wal! Seems like you two air gittin' along fine!

MAW FRY: *(Sighing.)* Aunt Harry, thar air times I'd jest as soon not see ya, an' this be one of them!

AUNT HARRY: Go on with whut ya wuz doin'. We ain't stoppin' ya.

EMMY: *(Eagerly.)* Maw, air ya going' t' git hitched?

Enter Izzie, Becky Mae, and Clem through the door left.

IZZIE: Whut's this Emmy wuz tellin' us, Maw?

CLEM: Air ya really gittin' hitched, Maw?

BECKY MAE: Ain't hit wonderful?

MAW FRY: *(Shyly.)* Wal, we ain't said fer shore yit.

PAPPY: I've about made up my mind, Min.

BECKY MAE: *(Giggling.)* They air goin' t' git hitched! He called her by her first name.

EMMY: Oh, hit be wonderful! Mountain Maggie, yer an angel!

CLEM: We come in t' tell ya...We seen the travelin' Preacher comin' up the trail!

AUNT HARRY Ya kin git married right away!

MOUNTAIN MAGGIE: Thet's best.

PAPPY: Shall we, Min?

MAW FRY: Why shore!

Enter Rosie Belle, with gun, through the door left. Willy trails her.

WILLY: Rosie Belle—

ROSIE BELLE: Effen another Popoff sets foot in this hyar shack, I'll blow him sky high!

PAPPY: *(Rising.)* Rosie Belle Fry!

ROSIE BELLE: Pappy Popoff!

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MAW FRY: Pappy Popoff! (*Rising.*) But—

CLEM: I didn't recognize him all cleaned up!

IZZIE: Hit be him all right!

EMMY: Whut does hit matter? You two love each other!

MAW FRY: (*Bewildered.*) But Mountain Maggie, how cud ya?

ROSIE BELLE: ya wuz gonna marry a Popoff, Maw! Why, I'm gonna kill him! An' Mountain Maggie too! Ya shouldn't a meddled in a feud, old woman!

EMMY: Stop! Ya cain't!

ROSIE BELLE: Yes, I kin! Say yer prayers!

She raises the gun directly toward Mountain Maggie's head when the traveling Preacher enters through the door left. He pauses.

PREACHER: Well! Everybody assembled for prayer! What a wonderful way to greet your traveling Preacher!

They all turn to stare at him as.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT THREE

SETTING: *There have been a few changes in the cabin. The long underwear has disappeared from the window and the pillow and blanket from the bench. A large bucket filled with flowers stands at the left of the bench. A white table cloth with just one visible hole has been placed in the center of the table and it is flanked with white candles. The barrel has been dragged down stage to a position directly before the door right.*

AT RISE: *Emmy is standing on the barrel busily placing a large white crepe paper bow above the door. Clem stands below watching her progress.*

EMMY: Am I gittin' hit straight?

CLEM: 'Pears so to me. Emmy, do ya think Mountain Maggie'll come back?

EMMY: Oh, Clem! She's got to!

CLEM: Rosie Belle swore, travelin' Preacher er no travelin' Preacher, she'd kill her on sight effen she evir came hyar agin.

EMMY: I know.

CLEM: An' Mountain Maggie shore cleared out plenty fast.

EMMY: Shore. Thar wuzn't nuthin' more she cud do then.

CLEM: Effen only Rosie Belle would uv stayed away fer jest another half hour. Maw and Pappy Popoff would uv been married 'an the feud would uv come to an end!

EMMY: Mountain Maggie'll figure out somethin' else 'an come back. I know she will!

CLEM: (*Shaking his head.*) Hit'll be harder then evir now. Rosie Belle's really up in arms.

The door right opens. Rosie Belle skirts Emmy and the barrel and dashes into the room, pausing uncertainly at the center stage to look about. She does not have her gun. Her feet are bare and she is dressed in either old-fashioned long pantaloons or a petticoat. Aunt Harry, carrying Rosie Belle's dress, enters through the door right with a determined look on her face. Rosie Belle sees her and sprints out the door left. Aunt Harry pursues her.



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customerservice@christianpub.com