

DEPUTY JAN

by Richard Gremel



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SYNOPSIS: The old west, a time when cattle roamed free, cowboys walked the streets, and outlaws lurked in every corner. But not to fear when you have, Deputy Jan... right? Unfortunately, Deputy Jan is a coward and lets all the outlaws escape. When the Sheriff tells Jan that she needs to catch the next outlaws or else, Jan sets out to take on the most notorious outlaws in the West: Hombre and Millie Nair. Will Jan find her bravery and save the day or will Hombre and Millie Nair get their big heist?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 females, 4 males, 2 either, 1+ extras)

DEPUTY JAN (f).....	The cowardly deputy. She can never catch the bad guys because she is not brave. <i>(102 lines)</i>
SANDY (f).....	Jan's best friend. She is a saloon girl and Pops' daughter. <i>(46 lines)</i>
POPS (m)	Sandy's father and the owner of the Rootin' Tootin' Root Beer Saloon. He makes root beer from a secret family recipe. <i>(18 lines)</i>
SHERIFF (f/m)	The sheriff of Dustville and Jan's boss. <i>(26 lines)</i>
HOMBRE (m).....	A city slicker and criminal. He likes to steal and wants a big heist which will make him rich. <i>(84 lines)</i>
MILLIE NAIR (f)	Hombre's sidekick. She wants out of the life of crime so she can settle down and get married to Hombre. <i>(77 lines)</i>
WILLY "THE LITTLE" KID (m)	The roughest, toughest outlaw this side of the Rio Grande. <i>(21 lines)</i>
GRANNY SMITH (f)	An old lady in the town. <i>(26 lines)</i>

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JOE (f/m) The piano player at the Rootin’
 Tootin’ Root Beer Saloon.
(13 lines)

CLARABELLE (f)..... A citizen of Dustville. *(10 lines)*

SOURFACE SAM (m) Another citizen of Dustville. He has
 a sour face. *(7 lines)*

WILLY’S MOTHER (f) The mother of Willy “the Little” Kid.
(3 lines)

MASKED MAN (f/m) A purse-stealing criminal.
(Non-Speaking)

OPTIONAL EXTRAS as citizens.

ALL LINE COUNTS ARE APPROXIMATE

SET

The setting of the show is the old west. A time of cowboys and bandits. The play takes place in the town of Dustville, in a few different locations. (The street outside the saloon, The Rootin’ Tootin’ Root Beer Saloon, and the desert). In the original production, different backdrops were used to show each location; however, the set can be as elaborate or minimal as needed. Just a few tables, a cactus, a boulder, etc. can show the difference in location.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE 1: DUSTVILLE STREET FRONT

SCENE 2: THE ROOTIN’ TOOTIN’ ROOT BEER SALOON

SCENE 3: THE ROOTIN’ TOOTIN’ ROOT BEER SALOON

SCENE 4: DESERT SURROUNDING DUSTVILLE

SCENE 5: DUSTVILLE STREET FRONT

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PROPS

- ☐ Purse
- ☐ Water pistol
- ☐ Barrel
- ☐ Menus
- ☐ Cups
- ☐ Pitcher of root beer
- ☐ Wanted posters
- ☐ Letter
- ☐ Safe*
- ☐ Sign reading “Perfect Safe Opening Spot”
- ☐ Crowbar
- ☐ Hammer
- ☐ Stick of dynamite
- ☐ Pistols
- ☐ Cactus
- ☐ Rope
- ☐ Clothes pins
- ☐ Shovel
- ☐ Bag

**A note about the SAFE prop: The safe should be constructed of cardboard or some other lightweight material. It needs to be easily lifted by a child from the audience.*

LIGHTS

The script calls for a spot on Deputy Jan every time she goes to address the audience; however, if you cannot do this, then Jan should just step forward to signify that she is talking to the audience.

The show is melodramatic in its style. The characters should be larger than life. We should love the hero (Deputy Jan) and we should love to hate the villains (Hombre and Millie Nair). Also, the actors address the audience and acknowledge their presence. Because of this acknowledgement and the melodramatic nature of the show, you can encourage the audience to participate by cheering for Jan and booing/hissing the outlaws.

SOUNDS

- LOUD BOOM
- MELODRAMATIC VILLAIN MUSIC (“BUM BUM BUM”)

SCENE 1
THE STREET FRONT

AT RISE: *Lights come up to reveal a street front. A building with a window reading "Rootin' Tootin" Root Beer Saloon" stands in rear. There is also a WANTED poster for WILLY "THE LITTLE" KID hung on the building. There is an optional hitch to tie up the horses in front of building. GRANNY SMITH enters the stage from one side. WILLY enters from the opposite side.*

WILLY: Hello madame.

GRANNY: The name is Granny Smith, young man. But you can just call me Granny. Everyone 'round here does.

WILLY: Well, Granny. I was just seeing if you needed help across the street from a sweet and innocent boy...like myself.

GRANNY: I would love some help. *(She looks at the Wanted Poster and then at WILLY.)* You know...You look oddly familiar.

WILLY: I must just have a friendly face.

GRANNY: Must be. *(They begin to walk across the street.)* Say, young man, I don't think I caught your name.

WILLY: Oh. It's Willy. Willy "the Little" Kid.

GRANNY: *(Jumping back in shock.)* Willy "the Little" Kid?! Why, you aren't a sweet and innocent little boy. You are the roughest, toughest, littlest outlaw this side of the Rio Grande.

WILLY: That's right. And... *(He grabs her purse.)* ...I've got your purse. Adios Granny! *(He exits.)*

GRANNY: Help, help! Come quick! I've been robbed.

DEPUTY JAN: *(Enters stage.)* What was that, Granny?

GRANNY: Oh, Deputy Jan. I'm so glad that you're here. I've just been robbed.

DEPUTY JAN: Robbed?!

GRANNY: Sure enough. Willy "the Little" Kid just ran off with my purse.

DEPUTY JAN: Willy "the Little" Kid?! The roughest, toughest, littlest outlaw this side of the Rio Grande? That, Willy "the Little" Kid?

GRANNY: None other. And, he ran off with my purse.

DEPUTY JAN: Willy "the Little" Kid? *(Gulp.)*

GRANNY: Yes, That's what I said. And, he is getting away as we speak.

DEPUTY JAN: Well then, somebody better go catch him before he gets away.

GRANNY gives JAN a look.

What?

GRANNY: Aren't you going to go catch him?

DEPUTY JAN: Me?!

GRANNY: Yes you.

DEPUTY JAN: Go after Willy "the Little" Kid? The roughest, littlest outlaw this side of the Rio Grande?

GRANNY: You forgot toughest.

DEPUTY JAN: Sorry. The roughest, *toughest*, littlest outlaw and you want *me* to go after him?

GRANNY: Well, you are the deputy.

DEPUTY JAN: Oh, right. So, which way did he go? (*GRANNY points.*)
(*To audience.*) Well, here goes nothing. (*JAN runs off in the direction GRANNY pointed.*)

GRANNY: (*To audience.*) I have a feeling this is not going to end with me getting my purse back. (*She exits in the same direction.*)

A silent movie-type chase scene begins underscored by music. WILLY runs across the stage. He is followed by DEPUTY JAN. WILLY runs off stage, JAN follows. Then GRANNY follows after them but stops to take a break. Then JAN runs back across the stage with WILLY chasing after her. GRANNY sees this and heads in their direction. But before she can get off, WILLY runs back on followed by JAN and they spin GRANNY as they run by. GRANNY regains her footing and then runs off after them. Finally, JAN walks back on stage with her arms up, WILLY walks behind her, pointing a gun at JAN'S back.

WILLY: You better listen good. I'm going to run away with this here purse and you're going to let me. Got it?

DEPUTY JAN: I... I... got it. Go ahead and go... Just don't hurt me.

WILLY: Hurt you? This is a water pistol. (*He squirts JAN in the face.*)
What did you think it was, a real gun? My mother wouldn't let me

play with real guns. I'm only ten years old. Good grief. (*WILLY runs off stage.*)

GRANNY: (*Entering.*) Well Deputy Jan, did you stop Willy and get my purse back?

DEPUTY JAN: You see Granny Smith...

GRANNY: (*Looking around.*) Where is that little menace?

DEPUTY JAN: I didn't exactly...

GRANNY: And where is my purse?

DEPUTY JAN: The thing is...

GRANNY: You let him get away, didn't you?

DEPUTY JAN: Yes.

GRANNY: Was he just too fast for you?

DEPUTY JAN: No.

GRANNY: Did he outsmart you?

DEPUTY JAN: Kind of, but...

GRANNY: Did he get a group of outlaws to help him, and they had you surrounded? But you worked as hard as you could to fight them off, but there were just too many? So, they overpowered you and then hopped onto their horses and rode off into the sunset with Willy waving my purse behind him?

DEPUTY JAN: Not even close.

GRANNY: Then why'd you let him get away?

DEPUTY JAN: I got scared and let him go?

GRANNY: You got scared?

DEPUTY JAN: Well, he is the roughest and toughest outlaw.

GRANNY: Sure, but he is also the littlest. And a big ol' deputy like you should be able to stop an outlaw. Especially if that outlaw is only ten years old and still answers to his mommy. What good is a deputy if she isn't brave?

DEPUTY JAN: I'm sorry Granny Smith.

GRANNY: It's okay. I just wish he hadn't got away. That purse had my card for the ice cream parlor in it and I was one double scoop away from a free cone. Oh well. Better luck next time, Jan. (*She exits.*)

Lights dim except for spot on JAN, center stage.

DEPUTY JAN: I can't believe I screwed up again. The Sheriff is going to be real mad this time. (*Looking at audience.*) Oh... In all that

commotion, I forgot to welcome you all to town. Welcome to Dustville. Howdy, my name is Deputy Jan...Well it's actually just Jan, but since I am the deputy in these parts, everyone 'round here calls me Deputy Jan. I ain't much of a deputy, though, as you might have seen. It's not that I can't catch a bad guy, it's just that... I get scared. I know this might sound funny, but any time there's danger around I tense up. My hands get clammy, I start to sweat, a tingly chill goes up my spine and usually, I faint. I just can't face danger, I just wish I knew how to be brave.

Lights back to full.

SHERIFF: Deputy Jan, am I glad I found you.

DEPUTY JAN: Howdy Sheriff. Meet the new tourists to the town. (*She motions to audience.*)

SHERIFF: (*To audience.*) Howdy, y'all. I'm the Sheriff of this here town. So, if you need anything while you're here, just give me a call. (*The SHERIFF looks at JAN'S feet and notices she is wearing a pair of Converse shoes.*) Jan, what is that you're wearing on your feet? What happened to your boots?

DEPUTY JAN: These are my boots, sort of. I thought my boots were making too much noise when I walked, so I had the tailor cut off the heel and use string to tie them up. I call them sneakers, because now I can sneak around without making any noise. Do you like them, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: That is the weirdest thing I've ever heard of. Sneakers? Geez...what will they think of next? Now what was I going to tell you, oh yeah, Willy "the Little" Kid just escaped from the jail.

DEPUTY JAN: I know

SHERIFF: What do you mean you know?

DEPUTY JAN: I chased after him but he sort of...got away.

SHERIFF: What do you mean he *sort of* got away? Did he get away or didn't he?

DEPUTY JAN: He did.

SHERIFF: You let him get away? It took us two years to put that little menace behind bars, and you let him get away? You're older than him, bigger than him, smarter than him, and faster than him. How could you let him get away? Let me guess, you got scared.

DEPUTY JAN: Wow Sheriff, how'd you know?

SHERIFF: Deputy Jan, you've let a lot of criminals get away; cattle wranglers, robbers, gamblers, and the list goes on. All of them got away, because you were a coward. You are the most cowardly deputy the west has ever seen. Now, I've been understanding of all this, but letting a kid get away is the last straw.

DEPUTY JAN: But Sheriff, Willy ain't no ordinary kid. He's the roughest, toughest, littlest outlaw this side of the Rio Grande. That *kid* is a real menace.

SHERIFF: The fact of the matter is, Deputy Jan, that you let a *kid* get away, menace or not. If this town can't count on you to catch a little kid, then this town can't count on you at all.

DEPUTY JAN: What are you saying Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Look Jan, I like you and I know how hard you've worked to be deputy, but you just aren't cutting it. I'm afraid I might have to let you go.

DEPUTY JAN: Sheriff please, I know I can do a better job. Please let me prove to you that I can be the deputy you want in this town.

SHERIFF: Alright Jan, I'll give you one more chance. Either you catch the next criminal that enters this town, or you will never be deputy again.

DEPUTY JAN: But Sheriff...

SHERIFF: No buts about it, Jan. Catch the next criminal or you're out of a job. Do you understand me?

DEPUTY JAN: Yes...yes Sheriff, loud and clear.

Sheriff: Good. Now, go do your rounds, and be on the lookout for any criminals.

DEPUTY JAN: Okay Sheriff.

SHERIFF: Well...?

DEPUTY JAN: Well, what?

SHERIFF: Don't you have some rounds to do?

DEPUTY JAN: Oh, you mean now?

SHERIFF: Yeah.

DEPUTY JAN: Right.

SHERIFF: Then go.

DEPUTY JAN: Sorry. Got it.

SHERIFF: (*Exiting.*) You just can't find good help these days.

Lights fade to spot on JAN.

DEPUTY JAN: (*To audience.*) Did you hear that? I have to catch the next criminal or else I can't be deputy anymore. That means people round here would just call me Jan again. Oh if only I could be brave, then I could keep this town safe.

JAN exits stage. From opposite side of stage, HOMBRE and MILLIE NAIR enter. They are walking very lightly as if they are sneaking around.

HOMBRE: This looks like a pretty good place.

MILLIE: A good place for what?

HOMBRE: A good place to hide out from the Sheriff's posse. He won't think to look for us in this little town. It will take him days to get around here, and by that time we'll have come up with a plan for our get away.

MILLIE: But Hombre, (*Music like the evil sounding, "Bum bum bum."*) I don't want to get away. You promised me we could settle down and get outta this life of crime.

HOMBRE: And we can, my dear, as soon as we make a big heist.

MILLIE: I thought this was the big heist. We made off with a thousand dollars.

HOMBRE: It was big...but, not big enough. Besides, we haven't got away with it yet. We still have to make our getaway.

MILLIE: A thousand bucks isn't a big enough heist? Oh, at this rate we'll never have a big heist and never get out of this life of crime and settle down. All I want is my little house, my little yard, my little garden, and my little white picket fence. (*She starts to cry.*)

HOMBRE: Now Millie, don't get all soft on me. (*She cries louder.*) Millie. (*She cries even louder.*) Millie!

MILLIE: What?!

HOMBRE: Look Millie, I'll tell you what. I promise you that as soon as we get the big heist, we'll stop our life of crime and get hitched.

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MILLIE: Really?!

HOMBRE: Cross my heart.

MILLIE: Oh hombre. (*Evil music. MILLIE hugs HOMBRE tightly.*)

HOMBRE: Get off me. (*He pulls MILLIE off, but not without a struggle.*)

Now we have to try and find somewhere here that we can lay low for a while. Just until we have time to come up with a getaway plan. Now where could we hide out?

MILLIE: I saw an abandoned cave as we were coming into town.

HOMBRE: Nah, sheriff's posses always look for robbers in caves. Besides it's too risky, there is usually only one way in and one way out.

MILLIE: Well we could hide out in someone's barn.

HOMBRE: Too smelly.

MILLIE: The hotel?

HOMBRE: Too expensive.

MILLIE: The bank?

HOMBRE: Too tempting.

MILLIE: Well, I don't know. These Western towns ain't that big and I'm running out of places to suggest.

HOMBRE: (*Points offstage to where JAN had exited earlier.*) Look! Someone's coming, and it looks like she's wearing a gold star on her chest.

Millie: I think you're right. Ain't it pretty how it sparkles in the sun?

HOMBRE: Don't you get it?

MILLIE: Get what, exactly?

HOMBRE: That gold star means she's a lawman... or... woman, or... whatever. If she sees us, we'll be locked up for sure.

MILLIE: So what do we do?

HOMBRE: Quick, let's hide over here.

MILLIE: Whatever you say, honey.

HOMBRE and MILLIE hide behind a barrel.

DEPUTY JAN: (*JAN enters and goes center stage. Lights fade to spot on her. To audience.*) I don't know what I'm going to do. I've been searching all day for a criminal but there ain't a bad guy in sight. I thought I saw a stagecoach being held up, and it sort of was, but you can't arrest a cow for standing in the middle of the road.

HOMBRE and MILLIE begin to sneak into the saloon.

Maybe I'll get lucky and no bad guys will ever come to the town again. Then I wouldn't have to catch the next criminal and I could keep my job. That would be great. (*Beat.*) On the other hand, if there aren't any criminals in town, then there's no need for a deputy. Oh, I just can't win. I'm gonna have to catch the next criminal that comes to town, if I want to keep my job as deputy. Hey, have you all seen any bad guys round here? (*Waits for response from audience.*) No? Oh well, there's always tomorrow.

Starts to exit the stage as lights fade up. JAN stops, goes back to center, lights quickly go to spot.

DEPUTY JAN: You know, I think I'll stop in the saloon for a nice frosty root beer.

JAN exits into the saloon. Lights fade to black.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

THE ROOTIN' TOOTIN' ROOT BEER SALOON

AT RISE: *Lights come up to reveal the saloon. We see action taking place and hear the music being played. The scene has been changed to show a bar with two bar stools, and a couple of tables with chairs. POPS stands behind the bar. HOMBRE and MILLIE sit at a table. SOURFACE SAM and CLARABELLE sit at the other table. JOE sits playing the piano and SANDY stands near him. JAN sits at the bar. After a moment of action, everyone freezes and the lights spot JAN.*

DEPUTY JAN: *(To audience.)* Welcome to the Rootin' Tootin' Root Beer Saloon. Home of the best root beer in the whole wild west. Why, folks travel miles just to come here and try some. This here is Pops. He owns the saloon and makes the root beer from his secret family recipe. Over there is Clarabelle and Sourface Sam. People call him that on account of his sour face. They are two of the locals here in Dustville. On the keys there is Joe and next to him is Pop's daughter and my bestest friend in the whole world, Sandy. And those two over there are... um...well, I don't know. I've never seen them round these parts before.

POPS: Jan?

DEPUTY JAN: Yeah Pops?

POPS: Are you about done with the introductions?

DEPUTY JAN: Sure am, in fact, I just finished.

POPS: So...we don't have to stand here frozen like this anymore?

DEPUTY JAN: Nope.

POPS: Did you hear that y'all, she's done. You can all go back to doing what you were doing.

ALL: *(Ad-lib.)* Oh thank goodness. Finally. I didn't know how much more I could take.

POPS: How 'bout a root beer to wet the whistle?

DEPUTY JAN: Make it a double.

SANDY: *(Going to the table of SAM and CLARABELLE.)* Sam, is the root beer not to your liking?

SAM: Huh?

SANDY: Do you not like the root beer?

SAM: No, I love it. The best root beer I've ever had.

SANDY: Then why the sour face?

CLARABELLE: Don't worry about it, Sandy. He always looks like that. That's why they call him "Sourface Sam."

SANDY: Oh, sorry.

CLARABELLE: Just be glad he likes it. If you think his face is bad now, you don't want to see it when he tries something he doesn't like.

HOMBRE: *(Speaking across the room to SANDY.)* Excuse me, reckon we could get some service over here?

POPS: Are you sure Jan? A double?

DEPUTY JAN: I'm sure.

POPS: (*Pours her the root beer.*) Something must be bothering you.

HOMBRE: Any day now.

MILLIE: Would you be polite? Just because you're a bad guy, doesn't mean you don't have to use your manners. (*Spoken across room.*)

You just take your time getting over here, honey, we'll be just fine.

SANDY goes and takes their order.

DEPUTY JAN: This root beer sure hits the spot, give me another...double.

SANDY: (*Handing order to POPS.*) Oh, Jan, what's the matter? Are you having a bad day?

DEPUTY JAN: The worst!

SANDY: Why? What happened?

DEPUTY JAN: Well, I sort of let Willy "the Little" Kid get away. (*Music suddenly stops.*)

All: You did?!

JOE: Willy "the Little" Kid? But, I thought he was in jail?

DEPUTY JAN: He was...but then he escaped. And I let him get away...after he stole Granny Smith's purse.

CLARABELLE: But Willy "the Little" Kid is the roughest...

SAM: Toughest...

JOE: Littlest outlaw this side of the Rio Grande.

CLARABELLE: With him on the loose, none of us are safe. Jan, how could you let him get away?

SANDY: Now you all take it easy on Jan. I'm sure she didn't mean to let Willy get away. I'm sure that if she had the chance, she would have caught him. Right Jan?

DEPUTY JAN: Actually, I did have the chance. But, I got scared and let him run off. And now the Sheriff says if I don't catch the next criminal that comes into this town, then I can't be deputy anymore.

SANDY: I'm sorry, Jan. I'm sure you did the best you could.

CLARABELLE: (*To SAM.*) That Jan is the most cowardly deputy the west has ever seen.

POPS: Don't mind the Sheriff, Jan. S/He's always grumpy. Why, the other day s/he came in here and complained that my root beer was too foamy. So I said, "It's supposed to be foamy, if it isn't foamy, then it isn't root beer." And do you know what he said to me, he said that...

SANDY: Pops we get the point, the Sheriff is grumpy. But what we need to worry about now is what Jan is going to do and not about the foamy root beer.

DEPUTY JAN: I don't know what I'm going to do, if only I could get a sign, something that would let me know where there is a couple outlaws I could catch.

SHERIFF enters. S/He posts a Wanted Poster of HOMBRE and MILLIE on the wall. HOMBRE and MILLIE see the poster and duck behind their menus.

JOE: What's that Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Those are wanted posters for two bank robbers that were seen heading this way. They robbed an armored stagecoach in Cactus County. They are none other than the notorious Hombre. *(Music.)* Joe?

JOE: Yes, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Why did you play that music when I said Hombre? *(Music.)*

JOE: What music?

Sheriff: That evil "bum bum bum"-type music.

JOE: I didn't play that.

SHERIFF: You didn't?

JOE: Nope.

SHERIFF: Anyways, the outlaws are Hombre. *(Music.)*

JOE: Wasn't me.

SHERIFF: And his partner Millie Nair. I got this message from the sheriff of Cactus County today. It says, be on the lookout for two people fitting this description.

While the description is read, HOMBRE and MILLIE try and cover the things being described.

SHERIFF: *(Continued.)* Hombre *(Music.)* is a city slicker with _____
[Insert the color hair the actor has] hair, a curly black mustache and
a black hat. His partner, Millie Nair, is in a simple country dress...
MILLIE: *(Standing up.)* It's not simple! It's refined.

HOMBRE pulls her back down.

SHERIFF: She has a bonnet, and her hair is in pigtails. Be on the
lookout for these two crooks. But be careful, they are armed and
dangerous. Who knows what danger lurks when they're around.
(He puts the letter in his pocket.)

CLARABELLE: Oh my. I can't believe those two crooks are on their
way here. They sound horrible.

JOE: Be careful, Clarabelle. They could already be here in our town.
Who knows, they could be right under our nose.

POPS: Sam, I know the news of those two outlaws headed this way is
a little scary, but there is no need to worry. The Sheriff and Jan will
keep us safe.

SAM: Oh, I'm not worried.

POPS: You're not? I just thought, since you have a worried look on
your face...

CLARABELLE: That's just his sour face.

POPS: Oh... sorry.

SHERIFF: Jan, now's your chance to prove that you can be my deputy.
I can't believe I'm saying this... but I'm counting on you to get the
job done. Later ya'll. *(He exits.)*

All: Later Sheriff.

JOE: I best be going too. I'll be back to tickle the ivories tomorrow,
Pops.

POPS: Thanks Joe.

JOE exits.

CLARABELLE: Come on, Sam. I'll let you walk me home just in case
those bank robbers are nearby.

SAM: Okay.

CLARABELLE: Well, you don't have to look so down about it.

SAM: For the last time, that's just my face! Bye ya'll.

SANDY: Bye Sam.

SAM and CLARABELLE Exit.

SANDY: Jan, did you hear that? The criminals are on their way here.

DEPUTY JAN: That's what I was afraid of.

SANDY: Now you can save the day and keep on being the deputy.

DEPUTY JAN: But how am I going to know where the criminals are?

No criminal would hang around here. Would they?

POPS: None that I could think of, (*MILLIE and HOMBRE are trying to sneak off stage.*) except for maybe those two.

POPS points at MILLIE and HOMBRE. They run back to their seats.

DEPUTY JAN: Who? Those two? No, they couldn't be criminals; they are probably just some nice couple passing through town. (*Walks to table where HOMBRE and MILLIE sit again.*) How you folks doing, my name is Jan. You can call me Deputy Jan, on account that I'm the deputy 'round these parts. You two just passing through Dustville or are you looking to stay?

HOMBRE and MILLIE speak simultaneously.

HOMBRE: Just passing through.

MILLIE: Looking to stay.

DEPUTY JAN: Well, which is it?

HOMBRE: We're just passing through. (*HOMBRE takes a sip of root beer.*)

MILLIE: Yeah, we're on our honeymoon, we just got hitched.

HOMBRE spits out his root beer.

DEPUTY JAN: Well, congratulations. You two be safe now, I hear there's two bank robbers heading this way and they are very dangerous.

HOMBRE: Oh, believe me; I don't think we have anything to fear.

POPS: Jan, before you go rounding up some bank robbers, could you help me and Sandy move the root beer barrels down in the cellar.

DEPUTY JAN: Sure thing Pops, but then I think I'm going to have to head back home.

They start to exit.

POPS: You know, it's a good thing I keep that secret family root beer recipe locked up in this safe. *(He places the safe up on the bar.)* You can never be too careful, especially when there are robbers headed this way.

They all exit.

HOMBRE: Millie, did you hear that? They know we're here. We better lay low for a while. Millie, Millie, are you listening to me?

MILLIE: Huh? Sorry I was just drinking this delicious root beer. Don't you think it's delicious?

HOMBRE: *(Taking a sip.)* Yeah. It's pretty good.

MILLIE: I think it tastes like it's worth a million bucks.

HOMBRE: *(He takes another sip.)* Hey, you're right. I bet if we could get our hands on the recipe we could sell it back East for a pretty penny. Folks would come from miles just to drink this stuff. We could bottle it up and sell it in all the big cities.

MILLIE: Yeah, all the big cities.

HOMBRE: We could make a franchise.

MILLIE: A franchise?

HOMBRE: Better yet. We could go national. We could get filthy rich. All we have to do is come back here, when everyone's sleeping, and steal the recipe out of that safe.

MILLIE: Will that be the big heist?

HOMBRE: The biggest.

MILLIE: Then you can count me in because after that, like you promised, we can get married.

HOMBRE: So it's settled. We'll spend all of tomorrow coming up with a plan and gathering supplies and then we will come back here and steal that recipe tomorrow night.

MILLE: Oh I can hear the wedding bells chime already. Now do you think daisies for the bouquet or roses? Oh what does it matter, we are going to get that big heist and then we can settle down!

HOMBRE: So that's the plan. We will break into this saloon tomorrow night and get the root beer recipe out of the safe. We're going to be rich, I tell you. Rich, rich, rich.

They both evil laugh.

POPS: *(Offstage.)* Jan, thanks for helping us in the cellar.

DEPUTY JAN: *(Offstage.)* No problem Pops, but I really should be getting on home.

MILLIE: Quick Hombre, let's get going before they discover our plan.

HOMBRE: Good thinking.

HOMBRE and MILLIE go to exit but they run into each other. They try another way, but run into each other again.

HOMBRE: You go.

MILLIE: No you go.

HOMBRE: I insist.

MILLIE: No, I insist.

HOMBRE: Well one of us needs to go before they come up here and figure out our plan.

MILLIE: Fine. *(They go to exit but run into each other once more.)* I thought I was going?

HOMBRE: Well, you made it seem like you wanted me to go.

MILLIE: Well, you made it seem...

HOMBRE: Forget it! I'm going to go first and you are going to follow. Got it?

MILLIE: Got it.

HOMBRE: Good, now let's go.

They exit stage as JAN and SANDY enter.

SANDY: Cheer up Jan, you'll catch those crooks, I know you will. And then you can keep on being deputy.

DEPUTY JAN: I wish that were true. But I'm not brave enough to catch any bad guys. I guess it's time for me to look into a new line of work.

SANDY: You can be brave, Jan. I just know you can.

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DEPUTY JAN: I don't know, Sandy. Everyone has something they're good at. You're good at singing and dancing. Pops is good at making root beer. All I'm good at is being a coward.

SANDY: That's not true, Jan.

DEPUTY JAN: Then what else am I good at?

SANDY: You're good at being a friend. You're the best friend in the whole world.

DEPUTY JAN: Thanks, Sandy. But I don't think being a friend will help me keep my job as deputy.

SANDY: You never know, Jan. You might just surprise yourself.

DEPUTY JAN: I hope you're right. Well I better go home and get some rest. I've got some outlaws to catch tomorrow.

SANDY: Bye Jan. And cheer up will you?

DEPUTY JAN: I'll try. Good night.

SANDY exits. JAN goes to leave but turns around and talks to the audience.

DEPUTY JAN: *(To audience.)* You may be thinking that I'm not too bright right now. But I know that those two newlyweds are actually the bank robbers: Hombre *(Music.)* and Millie Nair. I also overheard their plan to steal the recipe. Well, I'm not going to let them. I'll be back tomorrow night to catch them red-handed and keep my job as deputy...as long as I stay brave. *(Exits.)*

SCENE 3

THE ROOTIN' TOOTIN' ROOT BEER SALOON

SETTING: *The Rootin' Tootin' Root Beer Saloon, the following night.*

AT RISE: *The lights come up on the scene while HOMBRE and MILLIE'S voices are heard offstage.*

MILLIE: Open the door already, would you? It's getting cold out here, and anyone could walk by and spot us.

HOMBRE: Be quiet, you're ruining my concentration, if I could just get this to turn, there...

MILLIE and HOMBRE fall through the door.

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I told you I could get us in here.

MILLIE: Yeah, you just didn't tell me it was going to take you over an hour.

HOMBRE: Stop complaining and start looking for that safe.

MILLIE and HOMBRE search around stage, MILLIE picks the safe up, not realizing it is the safe, and holds it over her head to see underneath, then puts it back down and keeps looking around the saloon. Finally, she spots the safe she just picked up.

MILLIE: Here it is, I found it.

HOMBRE: Great! Bring it over here.

MILLIE tries to carry the safe, but now that she knows it is the safe, it is too heavy for her to pick up.

MILLIE: Do I have to bring it over there?

HOMBRE: Sure...this (*He points to a spot on the floor.*) is the perfect safe-opening spot.

MILLIE: But couldn't we just open it right here?

HOMBRE: Nope. This spot right here (*Points again.*) is the perfect spot to open a safe.

MILLIE: Now why do you think *that* spot is the perfect spot? It looks like any other spot.

HOMBRE: (*Pulls out a sign from behind the bar that reads, "Perfect Safe Opening Spot" and places it at the spot.*) Because the sign says. That's why.

MILLIE: Fine. But the safe is too heavy for me to carry.

HOMBRE: Try harder.

MILLIE: (*Struggles to pick up the safe.*) I am trying. It's really heavy.

HOMBRE: Here let me have a go at it. *(He spits on his hands and gears up to lift the safe. He tries to lift it, but struggles. He is able to get it off of the bar, but he quickly drops it to the floor.)* You're right. This safe is heavy.

MILLIE: I told you.

HOMBRE: Well, how are we supposed to get it to the perfect safe opening spot?

MILLIE: Maybe one of these audience members can help us.

HOMBRE: Good idea.

At this point, HOMBRE and MILLIE go into the audience and grab a kid to come up and move the safe. With the guidance of the two, the kid should pick up the safe and carry it to the spot. MILLIE and HOMBRE can improv lines about the kid being strong or eating their Wheaties, etc.

HOMBRE: Now that the safe is in the perfect safe opening spot all we have to do is open it. *(Tries to open the safe.)*

MILLIE: Well... open it then.

HOMBRE: I can't.

MILLIE: Why not?

HOMBRE: *BECAUSE*, sweetheart, I don't have the combination.

During MILLIE'S following speech, WILLY sneaks in and hides behind the bar.

MILLIE: Well that's just great. You add another crime to our list by breaking into this saloon, and the thing we come for we can't get? Isn't that just dandy. Now we can't be rich, and we can't have the big heist, and we can't settle down, and we can't get married. *(Starts to cry.)*

HOMBRE: Oh, calm down, it's not that bad. We can open it.

MILLIE: We can?

HOMBRE: Sure, all we need is something to pry it open.

WILLY holds up a crowbar from behind the bar but still keeps his face hidden.

MILLIE: *(Pulling a crowbar out.)* How about this crowbar?

HOMBRE: Perfect. *(He tries to open the safe but it does not work.)*
It's not working. We need something to... smash it open!

WILLY holds up a hammer from behind the bar, still keeping his face hidden.

MILLIE: *(Pulling out a hammer.)* How about this hammer?

HOMBRE: That should do the trick. *(He hits the safe with the hammer once, then again a little harder, then again just a little harder. Finally he quickly pounds it several times in frustration.)* This isn't working either. We need something that could...blast it open! But what could we use?

WILLY holds up dynamite from behind the bar.

MILLIE: How about this stick of dynamite?

HOMBRE: That will work. Wait, where do you keep finding this stuff?

MILLIE: I just look over there, towards the bar, and a hand holds it up.

HOMBRE: Oh, that makes sense. Wait?! Whose hand holds it up?

MILLIE and HOMBRE look at each other, then out to the audience, then back at each other. Then they sneak up to the bar and look behind it. WILLY pops up from behind the bar.

WILLY: Howdy.

HOMBRE and MILLIE: Who are you?

WILLY: Why, I'm Willy "the little" Kid. I'm the roughest, toughest, meanest, rottenest, most ruthless criminal under 11-years-old, this side of the Rio Grande.

HOMBRE: What are you doing here?

MILLIE: Yeah, isn't it past your bedtime, kid?

WILLY: Bedtime? Ha! I'm here to help you two steal the secret family root beer recipe, so we can take it back East, sell it for a pretty penny, and make it rich, rich, rich *(Evil laugh.)*

HOMBRE and MILLIE: Huh?

MILLIE: How did you know that we were stealing the recipe?

HOMBRE: And that we were going to take it back East, sell it, and get rich.

WILLY: You two aren't the sharpest tools in the shed, are you?

HOMBRE: What do you mean?

WILLY: I mean that you two are not very bright?

MILLIE: Why do you say that?

WILLY: Well, everyone in town knows that you're stealing the recipe. We could hear you talking about it a mile away. You would think that experienced crooks, like yourselves, would be smart enough to whisper their evil plan. So, what do you say... Partners?

HOMBRE: Sorry kid, we work alone.

MILLIE: Maybe when you're a little older.

WILLY: Come on, I could be a lot of help.

HOMBRE: The answer is still no.

WILLY: But...

MILLIE: Sorry kid. You should just stick to small crimes for a while. Now, go on home, I'm sure your mom is missing you.

WILLY: Fine. Well, good luck. I hear that Deputy Jan is looking for you.

WILLY exits.

HOMBRE: Deputy Jan is looking for us? Don't make me laugh. That cowardly deputy could never capture us. Now, where were we...oh yeah, how are we gonna open this safe?

MILLIE: We still have this dynamite.

HOMBRE: Perfect. We will blow up the safe and get the recipe.

SANDY enters. HOMBRE and MILLIE freeze. SANDY walks right in front of them, goes and gets a drink of root beer and then heads back to the door like she is sleepwalking. MILLIE has to sneeze and HOMBRE keeps covering her nose to stop her. Finally, MILLIE sneezes and SANDY says, "Bless you." SANDY gets to the door and then she turns around and says:

SANDY: Hey, what are you two doing in here?

HOMBRE: Nothing, we were...just a little thirsty, so we...stopped in for some root beer.

SANDY: In the middle of the night? And, what are you guys doing with my pop's safe?

HOMBRE: *(Sitting on safe, trying to cover it up.)* What safe are you talking about?

SANDY: The one you are sitting on. The one that belongs to my pops.

HOMBRE: Oh, this safe. Well you see... we're stealing the recipe. *(He pulls out a pistol and points it at SANDY.)*

MILLIE: That's right. We're going to take it and get rich.

SANDY: Get rich?

HOMBRE: That's right. We're going to take the recipe back East and make a fortune selling the root beer, and there's nothing you, or anyone else, can do about it.

SANDY: You won't ever get the recipe because only my pops and I know the combination to the safe.

MILLIE: We already got that covered. *(She waves dynamite in SANDY'S face.)*

HOMBRE: Millie, you tie this girl up in the cellar, I'll blast the safe open, and we'll hit the road.

MILLIE: Got it.

MILLIE starts to pull SANDY offstage when JAN enters holding her pistol.

SANDY: Help, help! Somebody please help me. These two criminals are stealing my pop's recipe, and kidnapping me. Help.

HOMBRE: Be quiet already.

DEPUTY JAN: Hold it right there you two.

HOMBRE and MILLIE: Deputy Jan?

DEPUTY JAN: That's right. It is I, Deputy Jan, and I just caught you two red-handed.

MILLIE: Ha, Ha. We don't have red hands.

HOMBRE: That's not funny.

MILLIE: *(If audience is laughing.)* They laughed.

HOMBRE: How did you get in here?

DEPUTY JAN: I snuck in through the back door.

MILLIE: You're good. We didn't even hear you.

DEPUTY JAN: I know. It's my new sneakers. Do you like them?

MILLIE: Oh yeah, those are really nice. Where did you get them?

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DEPUTY JAN: Well I had a tailor cut off the heel of my boot and use string to tie them up.

MILLIE: Really? I'm definitely going to have to get me a pair just like them. Hombre, did you check out these... *(To JAN.)* I'm sorry, what did you call them?

DEPUTY JAN: Sneakers.

MILLIE: Did you see her sneakers?

HOMBRE: Yeah, yeah, yeah real nice.

DEPUTY JAN: Thanks. But enough about that, put down your guns and give Sandy to me.

HOMBRE and MILLIE put down their guns and put their hands in the air. As JAN goes to get the guns, HOMBRE grabs the dynamite from his pocket.

HOMBRE: Hey Jan... catch.

HOMBRE throws the dynamite at JAN. JAN drops her pistol as she catches the dynamite.

DEPUTY JAN: D...D...DYNAMITE. AHHHH! *(JAN runs off stage.)*

HOMBRE: Quick Millie, I'll grab the safe, you grab the guns and the girl.

SFX: A LOUD BOOM.

DEPUTY JAN: You guys almost got me there. Now where was I, oh yeah, I'm taking you two in. *(JAN holds up her hand like a gun.)*

HOMBRE: I don't think so.

DEPUTY JAN: You better or I'll...I'll...I'll shoot.

MILLIE: Shoot what? Your fingernail?

DEPUTY JAN: Huh? *(JAN realizes that she is no longer holding a gun.)* Well, I am still taking you two in... please?

HOMBRE: I don't think so. We're taking the girl, and the safe, and we're getting out of here. So long, Deputy Jan.

MILLIE: Or should we just say Jan? *(They start to exit.)*

SANDY: Jan, save me. You can do it. I know you can. You just have to be brave. Hurry, Jan. I'll be waiting for you. I want you to know,



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