

# **“WHO SHOT THE SHERIFF?”**

## **A Western Murder Mystery**

**by**

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**Revised July, 2004**

*(This is a revised script with no Peter Wright or Robber. Wyatt Earp is played by a guest.)*

*Time: April, 1882*

*Place: The Golden Day Saloon,  
Heartsville, Arizona*

*Main Characters*

*“KING” McKINLEY..... a rancher. Owns the “Bar K”*

*MARY PAGE McKINLEY ..... King’s daughter*

*KITTY BARCLAY ..... owner of The Gold Day Saloon*

*VIRGINIA CLAMPIT ..... the town schoolteacher*

*OLD BEN ..... a miner and owner of the Silverado Mine*

*SHERIFF MAT SLAUGHTER ..... the deceased sheriff*

*.....(Sheriff is played by the same actor who plays Gatewood)*

*LIEUTENANT GATEWOOD ..... a U.S. Cavalryman*

*JIM SNAKEOIL..... town barber, dentist and conman*

*NELLIE TOWNSEND ..... manager of the Bird Cage Hotel*

*Audience Characters*

JOHN HANDY & HANNAH..... the telegraph operator and his wife  
\*CACTUS ROSE..... a saloon girl at the Golden Day  
\*DALLAS ..... a saloon girl at the Golden Day  
DUTCH ANNIE ..... a saloon girl at the Golden Day  
LOOSE LOLLA..... a saloon girl at the Golden Day  
\*JOHNNY REBS..... ex-confederate soldiers and King's cowhands.  
(could be 1-4 characters  
ARTHUR & ANNIE ANGEL ..... town undertakers  
SAM STUDLY ..... the deputy sheriff  
JOSIAH & LILY BARINGS ..... Pres., the local Wells Fargo Bank  
and his wife  
JOHNNY RINGO ..... a bounty hunter and gunfighter  
MARY & TOM CASH ..... owners of the town's trading  
post and emporium  
JAKE HURD..... a sheep rancher  
MOLLIE GOODHEART ..... president of the W.C.T.U.  
REVEREND TIPPLE ..... the town pastor  
JIM HUGHES ..... a visiting mining assayist  
MICHAEL LANSBURY ..... a visiting railroad representative  
MAYOR & BETTY BUSH ..... the town mayor and wife  
DOC HOLIDAY ..... the town doctor  
THE TOWN POSSEE ..... 1 – 10 characters who make a rope for lynching  
WYATT EARP...based on the famous Deputy Marshall from Tombstone

## STORYLINE

The date is April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1882. The place is Heartsville, Arizona (a fictitious town which could have been located about twenty miles south of Globe).

Heartsville was originally established at a crossing on the upper reaches of the San Pedro River and is on the principle trading route between Globe and Tucson. The previous evening Mat Slaughter, the town sheriff, a man of dubious background, was shot in the back by an unknown gunman. He had been a close friend of Kitty Barclay's, owner of the Golden Day Saloon and it was rumored that they were amorously inclined toward each other. Mayor Bush has called a meeting of all the town's gentlefolk in order to determine who shot the sheriff and to elect a new one. The body of the dead sheriff is displayed in a coffin at the door of the saloon during cocktails so that the citizens may pay their last respects.

In recent months there has been much talk in the town about the possibility of extending the Southern Pacific Railroad north to Globe and then on to Phoenix. For the last twenty years, however, one of the major disputes among the good people of Heartsville has been about the control of the upstream water rights. King McKinley, owner of the Bar K ranch, has had control of these rights ever since he purchased the DoubleDay Ranch after the death of Frank Morrison, a neighbor, five years earlier - presumably at the hands of Indians (or rustlers).

There has also been much speculation about the old Silver Mine - the "Silverado". Originally opened up by the Spaniards, the silver bearing lodes were last mined economically fifty years ago. With the advent of copper

mining in Globe and further east at Morenci, it is rumored that there may be large deposits of copper. Old Ben claims ownership of the mine. The recent advent of the telegraph has greatly improved communication with the outside world and there is considerable excitement in the town about economic possibilities.

The land South of the river has been settled by a number of sheep herders. The local ranchers are concerned about the overgrazing of the land by the sheep. They are also fearful of potential attacks on them by the Apache Indians. They have been petitioning Congress for more protection. It is rumored that Fort Bowie is to be reinforced and that a major campaign against the Indians is to be initiated. Lieutenant Gatewood, an able young soldier whose father saw action at Gettysburg arrives from Fort Bowie to deliver a requisition for cattle to feed the army. A speaker of two Indian dialects, he has been sent by the government in Washington to aid General Crook in the hope that conflict can be avoided and that some sort of settlement can be reached with the Indians.

The town is a thriving, God fearing community, much concerned about law and order and determined not to allow the excesses of such places as Tombstone to take over their town. The people are proud of what they have achieved. A number of the cowhands who work for King and other ranchers fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War.

## Character Biographies

**King McKinley (45+)**..... came out West in the late fifties on his way to California to look for gold. He changed his mind when he saw the possibilities of ranching in Arizona. He bought a few longhorns and raised his herd on the open ranges. He also benefited considerably during the Civil War by supplying cattle to the government. His wife died in the great smallpox epidemic of 1872. His purchase of the Morrison's spread in 1877 enabled him to control the upstream water rights so all development in Heartsville depends on his say so. He has fought Indians, rustlers, drought and has known famine and hard times. He is stubborn to the core. When other ranchers gave up and fled to Tucson, he stayed on his land and fought. The Apaches finally left him alone out of respect.

**Mary Page, his daughter (19)**.... is King's only child (his son Ben also died during the small pox epidemic). She is almost as stubborn as King and runs away from the Bar K because she has had a fight with her father and enough of the life on the range and its hardships, especially with no mother. She yearns for femininity, reads the fashion magazines and longs for a modicum of sophistication.

**Kitty Barclay (40)**..... was originally from Atlanta, she left after her family lost everything in the civil war. She made some money in California in the sixties and has invested it in The Golden Day Saloon. (She is also the owner of the Bird Cage Hotel which is a deeply guarded secret.) A wild attractive sort of woman who will not be dictated to. She runs the saloon with an iron but friendly hand. She is well respected. Her women are

hostesses not whores and are paid on a drink commission basis. She was close to Mat Slaughter and is upset by his death.

**Virginia Clampit (31)**... is the town school teacher and a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.). She is a determined campaigner who sees the Golden Day Saloon as a place of wickedness. She feels she has been employed to bring the light of civilization into the dark places of the world. She lives in the schoolhouse where she rules her charges with like-minded determination and self-control. Underneath it all, she is lonely and wants to marry.

**Old Ben (55+)**..... is the owner of the "Silverado" - a silver Mine. A friendly but wily miner who knows how to survive on nothing. He dreams of riches and marrying Nellie (both of which are perhaps nearer than he thinks). He is treated as the town fool and drunk. He is the only person to see who shot the sheriff.

**Lieutenant Gatewood (34)**...is a career officer in the US Cavalry with unusually enlightened views about Indian affairs. (He is based on a real character by the same name.) He has been chosen by Washington to aid General Crook because he speaks two Indian dialects. His specific instructions are to endeavor to pacify the Indians. He is in his early thirties, handsome and eager to do well. Behind his friendly and affable demeanor there lurks great determination and intelligence.

**Jim Snakeoil (35+)** ....is a wily crook who is the consummate salesman. He knows the price of everything and would sell you his grandmother. He is the entrepreneurial spirit par excellence. He likes life, women and money and is always on the look out for the “big chance.” He owns the town barber shop, bath house and dentistry.

**Nellie Townsend (31)**.... is the manager of the Bird Cage Hotel, the town bordello. Originally from Texas, where she worked in service, she then went North to work in the garment industry. Finally she came out West to seek her fortune. Prostitution allowed her the possibility of escaping penury though up to now it doesn't seem to have done the trick. She is a warm hearted creature who aspires to a better life but sees Lady Luck as being against her.



## **THE OPENING**

*As the audience arrives they are directed to the room/coffin where they can pay their last respects to the body of the departed sheriff (played by Gatewood in disguise). Nellie and Kitty hand out the parts and props to guests (unless there is a stage manager). Snakeoil and Ben protect the Sheriff in the coffin as some guests get overly eager to see if he is indeed dead. In the background there is the sound of a pianola playing “saloon” type music.*

### **Scene 1: The Golden Day Saloon**

After Miss Kitty hands out some of the parts to guests, she hovers around the coffin protecting the sheriff from over zealous guests along with Ben and Snakeoil. After Nellie finishes handing out her part of the guest biographies, she mingles and hands out a poster to encourage guests to visit the Bird Cage Hotel after the dinner. Once all guests have arrived, everyone exits except Kitty and the body of the Sheriff is removed.

(BEGINNING OF ACT 1 – IN THE DINING ROOM)

Kitty: Ladies and Gentlemen the Mayor told me that I have to give you the rules for the evening. The first rule is NO SPITTIN’, I have removed all the spittoons.

The second rule is that due to Reverend Tipple’s consumptive lung addiction, I mean affliction, there is no smokin’ in the Golden Day. If you wanna smoke, please go outside.

Thirdly, the mayor has asked that you wear your name tags if you have them at all times so we don't go and lynch any strangers by mistake like we did last year.

Fourthly, don't go talkin while someone else has the floor. Mayor Bush says we are to follow somethin called Parliamentary Procedures (in other words, keep your mouth shut when others are talking).

Finally, you should have turned in your guns before coming in here. If you haven't - you better do it now. Even though our Sheriff, Mat Slaughter, is no longer with us, we will continue to obey his law about no guns in the saloon. He said it worked well for his friend Wyatt in Tombstone and it certainly has helped my saloon stay in one piece. Except of course for King McKinley. Why, he never takes his guns off. Not that I know personally...but, well, I will not be the one to get him all riled up. Mayor Bush may we make one exception to the gun rule for King McKinley.? (he agrees) Thank you.

Tonight we aim to find out who shot our sheriff. Right? (to the audience who respond "YES" ) and then we're goin to lynch them? Right? (to the audience who respond with a louder "YES") We have the posse here busy trying to make the rope. Are you ready for a hanging? (hopefully they respond with a "YES") Good! Now it seems Jim Snakeoil has something to talk to you about.

Snakeoil: Thank you Miss Kitty. Fellow townspeople we have suffered a grievous loss. I know we all mourn with Miss Kitty who was a special friend of the late sheriff's. (Miss Kitty gets out her handkerchief and has a small weep). We are all truly sorry. Ma'am (Pause) (to Kitty) Now, I know this might not be the best time to bring this up, but being' that times are hard and business is bad I was wonderin if you would be so kind as to allow me to give the good people of this town an opportunity to sample the benefits of some of my new health givin' liniment?

Miss Kitty: (*sobs*) Jim, this is a sad time for all of us in Heartsville but seein as what you're sellin' is made for keeping people alive and seein as Mat's got no more use for anything - except the grave, (*she weeps*) you go right ahead.

Snakeoil: Bless your heart Kitty Barclay, you are a real lady.

Miss Kitty: I will take that as a compliment Jim Snakeoil. (*exits in tears*) Please excuse me, I want to make sure that Mat has been laid – to rest.

Snakeoil: Sad! So Sad!!! Howdy Ladies and Gentlemen, I wanna introduce myself for some of you strangers. I'm Jim Snakeoil, the town dentist and barber. Should anyone need a tooth pulled or a haircut I'll be mighty pleased to oblige them. Fellow townspeople of Heartsville, and strangers, we live in dangerous times. (*he encourages the audience to say Amen after each question*) Which of us here has not known the loss of family, neighbors and friends? Amen! Which of you ladies has not suffered the loss of a child from disease? Amen! Why, the tragic death of our dearly

beloved sheriff should remind us all just how temporary and fleeting is our stay here on this earth. Amen! Everyday we struggle to keep body and soul together. Amen! Everyday we endure pain and disease and affliction. Everyday we bear that suffering with courage. Amen.

*(pause while he walks thoughtfully through the room and then with great sincerity. His tone becomes confessional)* Looking around at your faces tonight I know what some of ya all are thinking. It's just Jim Snakeoil trying to sell some new medicine that don't do nothin' but make you feel sicker than you did before. Let me tell you friends, ten years ago you might have been right. What I sold then was more likely to make you see double and feel single but I have seen the error of my ways. I know better now. I have read them fancy medical books. I have journeyed, even as far as San Francisco to search for the very best remedies. Doctor Holiday, if I understand rightly from John Handy, you received a telegram yesterday about my services and have come here to read it. Please carry on.

Dr. Holiday: Jim Snakeoil, you are ruining the reputation of the medical profession. I have been sent this order from the County Court of San Francisco to deliver to you. I am going to read it so that everyone will know what you are up to. *(reads)* Jim Snakeoil is ordered to appear before this court to answer charges of misrepresentation of the medicinal properties of Doctor Mintie's Kidney Remedy and having contracted to sell the aforesaid he owes the said Doctor Mintie \$500 for stock already delivered as well as substantial damages. Signed Judge Wilbur.

Jim Snakeoil: Dr. Holiday, you don't want to go listening to no San Franciskie judges. That Doctor Minte ain't nothin but a swindler. I paid him everything I owed. His remedy was no good and besides, this is Arizona Territory and the judge don't have no jurisdiction here. Now where was I?

.....My friends, thanks to the wonders of science, and the great learning of one man, Sir Astley Cooper, I bring you, for the first time in America, a discovery which will free you from pain, free you from the fear of pain itself. I have it on absolute authority that it will cure you of rheumatism and gout, shingles, milk-leg sores, cut wounds, even face ague. It is also special for all them women's conditions too - swelled breasts, inflammation of the eyes and bowels, sore nipples, bronchitis, sore throat, piles, croup and bilious colic. This ointment has been guaranteed effective by five English Lords of her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria. No other ointment of equal mildness exists for subduing pain. Ladies and Gentlemen, Green Mountain Vegetable Ointment! A positive remedy for all conditions. My only regret is that due to its popularity I have only a sample jar. At only 50 cents each I can promise you that I will make barely enough profit to cover my out-of-pocket expenses.

If you'd like to place your orders tonight I will have it delivered within a week - that's right just seven short days - thanks to John Handy's good old Western Union telegraph office. *(Jim introduces the characters to everyone)* John, you better order some of this. You are bound to develop all sorts of aches in your hand from tapping all those messages for Western Union. Rub

this on and you will have a new hand. Hannah you do that for him. Your husband needs a good hand rub. I'll put you down for two jars.

Josiah Borings - you been sitting in that big chair of yours over in the Wells Fargo Bank for too long. I seen you squirming around worried about all that money and bank robbers and gold shipments. Green Mountain Vegetable Ointment will cure those piles of yours. I'll put you down for three jars.

Reverend Tipple, I know you ain't got much money, you bein' a man of God and all but you are in dire need of some of this Green Mountain Vegetable Ointment. It'll help you with all that colic you get from that Wild Cherry Tonic that Tom Cash keeps selling you and which you say you can't do without - not to mention the face ague after all that preaching on a Sunday. I heard the way you roar to the glory of the Lord and you are going to hurt yourself. Rub some of my ointment on your cheeks and throat every Sunday and you will be a new man. You can rub it in other places too which reminds me...

Mayor Bush - let us have a round applause for our Mayor. Miss Nellie was telling me that one of the girls from the Bird Cage Hotel said you were suffering from Seminal Weakness, Exhausted Vitality and a certain amount of paralysis due to the effects of self-abuse and youthful follies. Sir, your problems are all over. I'm puttin you down for six jars. Now, don't worry folks, I am coming round to everyone to take your order for Green Mountain Vegetable ointment.

*(enter Miss Virginia Clampit.*

Virginia Clampit: Jim Snakeoil. What filthy concoction are you trying to sell to the people of this town, now?

Snakeoil: This ain't no filthy concoction Miss Clampit. This is the genuine thing - Green Mountain Vegetable Ointment.

Virginia Clampit: Why I've never heard of such a thing.

Jim Snakeoil: It's the very latest remedy. And it's used by British royalty. My I've been told Queen Victoria rubs it on herself every morning.

Virginia Clampit: If I remember rightly I paid you \$1 for a bottle of Dr. Minte's Kidney Remedy last year and I still have..... problems.

Jim Snakeoil: I didn't say it would cure your problems Miss Clampit.

Virginia Clampit: You are nothing more than a low down, cheating scoundrel Jim Snakeoil. A no good salesman, and your poor kids aren't much better. If your Lucy doesn't mend her ways in school I can no longer take responsibility for what happens to her. She's twelve years old and she still doesn't even know her letters....

Jim Snakeoil: I told you before that it ain't no use educating women. They are just gonna get married, have children and cook vittles. They don't need no book learning.

Virginia Clampit: I refuse to reply to that comment. Just you remember Jim Snakeoil, while you men are wasting your money on liquor and loose

living in places of harlotry like this, women all over this country are taking care of the home, keeping decency and Godliness alive. Isn't that true Mollie? Mollie? *(she looks around her and suddenly catches sight of Molly Goodheart)* *(shocked and surprised)* Mollie Goodheart...I can't believe my eyes... I would never have thought you would allow yourself to be seen in a place like this...and you Thomas and Mary Cash, what are you doing here? Shame on you. Weren't we just talking last week after church, how places like this should be torn down, burned to the ground, selling liquor, aiding and abetting all sorts of unChristian licentiousness. Look who you are keeping company with... *(indicating the saloon girls...)* No self-respecting citizen of Heartsville would be seen in the company of these ...hussies...these women of the night...

Jim Snakeoil: So how come you're here Miss Virginia Clampit?

Virginia Clampit: Don't you dare question me Jim Snakeoil. I came here because as the teacher in this town I have a duty to protect the young minds of this community against the wickedness that comes from indulging in intoxicating liquors. I am here to protect the family from moral pollution. As a founding member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, everyone in this town knows my position about this saloon...

*(Enter Miss Kitty)*

Miss Kitty: Why, Miss Clampit, I was tryin' to figure out what all the commotion was. I'm mighty honored to make your acquaintance. I believe



we've been living in the same town now for years and this is the first opportunity we have had to speak to each other.

Miss Virginia Clampit: I am not a woman to beat around the bush Miss Kitty Barclay. I came to this town meeting to make sure that nothing of a questionable nature should take place and to encourage the ladies of this town, if there are any left, to join the WCTU.

Miss Kitty Barclay: The WCTU?

Miss Virginia Clampit: The Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Jim Snakeoil: (*exiting*) Tell the truth Virginia Clampit, you're just looking for a husband, but...what self respecting man is going to marry someone from the (*sneeringly*) WCTU?...anyway you're too ornery to marry..... No man would have ya...(*exits*)

Miss Virginia Clampit: How dare you! How dare he talk to me like that!

Miss Kitty Barclay: Now, now Miss Clampit. Don't go getting yourself all upset.

Miss Virginia Clampit: (*very upset to the point of hysterical*) Nobody has the right to talk to a woman like that. Maybe we don't have the vote but we are not to be treated like chattel to be bought and sold by men.

Miss Kitty Barclay: I'm sure you're right. Reverend Tipple, would you be so kind as to offer Miss Clampit some of your cherry tonic to quiet her down? She seems a might ... a might ...um...

Miss Virginia Clampit: *(She takes the flask from the Reverend)* Do you think it would do something for my condition? Oh! That would be mighty kind of you Reverend Tipple. I tried Jim Snakeoil's kidney remedy but it did nothing for me.

Miss Kitty Barclay: *(short pause while Tipple helps Clampit)* Reverend Tipple, I can see that you are busy aiding Miss Clampit but I would be mighty grateful if you would begin our meeting with a prayer for the soul of our dearly departed sheriff, Mat Slaughter.

Reverend Tipple: May the good Lord take our dearly beloved sheriff, Mat Slaughter, into his everlasting bosom and make sure that them mean, low-down, dirty skunks what shot him in the back git what they deserve and may He bless the citizens of Heartsville, Arizona by protecting them and makin `em richer than they was before. Amen.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Thank you Reverend Tipple. Now I have a few more announcements from the Mayor.

He wants to let you know that Deputy Sheriff Studly is taking over the duties of Sheriff so we can all sleep safely. Sheriff Studly, congratulations, you are the new Sheriff of Heartsville. As ya'll know, Sheriff Studly came to us with an amazing reputation for killing ... *(pause)* outlaws. I believe it is customary for the new Sheriff to make a speech.

Sheriff Stud: Mat Slaughter was my friend and no lowdown snake shoots a friend of mine in the back and lives to tell about it. Whoever did this is gonna have to answer to me....

Miss Kitty Barclay: Thank you Sheriff Studly. I'm sure we're all mighty comforted by that.

Kitty: I also got a complaint about the behavior of some of our citizens. Arthur and Annie Angel, we don't want to see you goin around measuring people for their coffins before they are even dead. It makes us all feel down right nervous.

Now, the Mayor tells me we have a few strangers in town and that we are not to go lynching them without a trial, like we did last time. Who did you say they were Mayor Bush? Jim Hughes? Mr. Hughes, you better stand so we all know who you are and don't go and hang you.

Kitty: Oh, Mr. Hughes. One of Nellie's girls told me about you. I understand you are an assayist. Could I see your rocks?

Kitty: And there's a Mr. Michael Lansbury...

Virginia Clampit: He's a real gentleman. He's got a calling card. Look. *(she brandishes a card)* I'm feeling much better Reverend Tipple.

Kitty Barclay: A calling card. *(goes over to Lansbury)* I do not believe you gave me one of your cards Mr. Lansbury..(he gives her one) Why, this reminds me of my younger days in Atlanta before the war, when a gentleman came a calling. *(she reads)* Michael Lansbury, Surveyor for The Southern Pacific Railroad. So, Mr. Lansbury, what brings you to Heartsville?

Michael Lansbury: I represent the shareholders of the Southern Pacific Railway, which will be completed at Tucson next year. My company is

thinking of running a line north to Flagstaff going through Heartsville and the new town of Phoenix, to serve the people of the territory of Arizona.

Kitty: Those engines will need water from what I recall. Isn't that right Mr. Lansbury? Then there's the land the tracks are going to go through and all those new settlers coming out West.

Kitty (*continues*): Folks...We need to give Mr. Lansbury a real Heartsville welcome ... if the railroad comes through here we're all gonna make a lot of money. Now is that all the strangers? Sir, (*she approaches Johnny Ringo*) I don't believe we have met and I know most of the men in these parts. What's your name? (*he gives his name*) Johnny Ringo...now there's a name to remember...Didn't you have something to do with that trouble down in Tombstone last year?

Johnny Ringo: Wyatt Earp and his brothers are no better than cold blooded killers. I heard they gunned down Bill Clanton and the Lowrys.

Kitty: That may be but... (*enter Mary Page. She is disheveled. Her hair is awry. There is dust on her face she is as a cowgirl.*)

Mary Page: Miss Kitty. Where's Miss Kitty?

Miss Kitty Barclay: Well, I'll be... Mary Page McKinley..

Mary Page: Miss Kitty I need help. It's my pa again.

Miss Kitty Barclay: What's he doin' now?

Mary Page: *(crying, through the sobs)* We were up at Domino Creek bringin' in forty head of cattle. Everything was fine until this rattler scared my horse, which started the cattle going in all directions. Then some of them stampeded over the ridge. It weren't my fault. I tried telling pa what happened...but he was just swearing and cussing and blaming me.

Miss Kitty Barclay: There , there, Mary Page you take it easy and don't go getting yourself all riled up.

Mary Page: He threatened to whip me. I ain't gonna be whipped like no child Miss Kitty. And I ain't goin back to the ranch...

Miss Kitty Barclay: Your pa's just got a bad temper. Sometimes he gets madder than a rained-on rooster.

Mary Page: You won't let him whip me or take me back...please, Miss Kitty. You were my ma's friend. I can't take it no more.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Your pa's never been the same since your ma died.

Mary Page: I can't do nothin right.

Miss Kitty Barclay: You're safe now. Let's get you quieted down. Cactus Rose and Dallas, you two take Mary Page to the washroom and get her cleaned up. There's a spare dress in the washroom that she can have...

Mary Page: He'll come after me ... like he did last time... He's not dragging me back Miss Kitty. You gotta help me.

Kitty: Don't worry. We will protect you - least till King calms down.  
*(Exit Mary Page, Dallas, Rose)* For those of you who are strangers, that's King McKinley's daughter. He owns the Bar K - the biggest ranch round here - and controls most everything in Heartsville except the Golden Day.

Kitty: Mr. Handy, I understand you had a message for the sheriff. Mr. or Mrs. Handy, would one of you read it to us since the Sheriff can't read? Sheriff, you have got to talk to Miss Clampit about getting reading lessons.  
*(Handy reads message)*

Virginia Clampit: You should be ashamed of yourself, Sheriff Studly, not being able to read. tut...tut...tut

Kitty: So - Deputy Marshall Wyatt Earp is on his way to Heartsville and is due in today. From what I know of that man...he's not coming here for his health. You might find that kind of interesting Mr. Ringo. *(Kitty goes to look after Mary Page.)*

*(Commotion from outside the room. Shrieks. Offstage)*

Nellie: Don't you dare put your hands on me! *(Slaps him)*

Ben: *(offstage)* Ow ... Dern...that hurt Nellie.

*(Nellie enters room and then starts to speak to someone)*

Nellie: I meant fer it to. Touch me agin and it will be the last thing you ever do, Ben Crossly.

Ben: *(enters rubbing his face)* I love a spirited filly. Nellie Townsend, you, *(points and stalks up to her while she retreats)* you're the woman of my dreams.

Nellie: That's real nice, Ben, cause.... you're the man of my nightmares.

Ben: You're just kiddin', ain't you? You're like one of them wild horses, a tossin' and a kickin', won't take a rider but I'm goin to tame you Miss Nellie.

Nellie: Ben...you don't git the message....I ain't no horse and I don't need no taming but if you come near me I AM goin to kick you. *(he chases her round the tables hollering and shrieking)*

Ben: Woah! Woah there. I'm gettin fair worn out.. we'll never get nowhere like this.. Maybe you want some of that fancy talk they do back East. Is that it?

Nellie: I don't want nothin from you Ben Crossly, except for you to leave me alone. I'm not available to the likes of you.

Ben: *(cross)* Well how come you're available to everybody else in Heartsville? I know you work in that cathouse next door, the Bird Cage Hotel.

Nellie: If you must know, I am available to paying customers who got the money for my services, are less than a hundred years old and ... don't SMELL.

Ben: Why, it's natural for a man to smell. Anyhow, I had a bath last July. It's downright unhealthy for a man to take more than one bath a year.

Nellie: Well, you keep to your principles and I'll keep to mine. *(she walks off)*

Ben: *(pleading)* Nellie... for you... I'll take me a bath...I swear...I'll go down to Snakeoil's bathhouse right now.

Nellie: Huh! You couldn't afford it even if you did wanna have a bath.

Ben: Don't you be so sure of that Miss Nellie Townsend.

Nellie: Ben, you been talking about that Silverado Mine for twenty years and you ain't come up with nothing but a puddle o' trouble.

Ben: *(secretively)* That's all changed. Isn't that right Mr. Hughes? You shoulda heard what he told me about my claim last night.

Nellie: What are you talking about? You been out in the sun too long and lost your wits?

Ben: Ask Mr. Hughes. Go on. He saw my claim yesterday. *(takes claim out of his pocket)* Ben Crossly's struck it rich.

Nellie: Mr. Hughes? What's he talking about?

Jim Hughes: Ben's right. His old mine is sitting slap bang on top of one of richest deposits of copper ore that I have seen. I also reckon there's more silver there. I've got the samples in my bag to test.



Nellie: But... copper's not worth nothin'...gold or silver's worth somethin...but copper?

Jim Hughes: It's already ten cents a pound and likely to go up what with the demand for copper wire by Western Union and this new dynamo invention by Mr. Edison.

Nellie: So what's Ben's claim worth?

Jim: A few hundred thousand dollars.

Nellie: (dumbstruck) A few ...hundred thousand ... (she swoons)

Ben: There... didn't I tell you... but don't go tellin' nobody. Remember what happened to crazy ole' Billy Hatfield. He struck gold one day... and the next day they found him shot up tike a pin cushion.

Nellie: (recovering) A few hundred ...Ben... I think you better go and have that bath... and you come back here afterwards ... we've got some talkin' to do.

Ben: Sure will Nellie.... and I ain't as old as some people think ...I don't rightly know but I could swear I wasn't older than fifty...never kept count after twenty five.

Nellie: You run along Ben. Tell you what, I'll took after that deed of yourn. You don't want it to get wet in the bathhouse.

Ben: Good thinkin' Nellie. You look after it for me. I was on my way to tell the Sheriff about it last night... *(looks around fearfully, sees Ringo,*

*shudders, eyes widen as he seems to recognize him, horror struck*) and then he got himself shot. (exits)

(Enter Miss Kitty )

Miss Kitty Barclay: What's Ben looking so frightened about?

Nellie: He's goin off to have himself a bath.

Miss Kitty Barclay: `Bout time.

Nellie: He sure was gettin' mighty whiffy. (*bothered and embarrassed*)  
Can I ask you a question Kitty?

Miss Kitty Barclay: What are you worrying your head about now, Nellie

Nellie: Well, 'cause it's so hard for a woman to make it on her own these days. Do you...do you think I should marry just to be... comfortable ..... I tried bein' a seamstress but I couldn't hardly earn enough to feed myself... at least workin at the Bird Cage...

Miss Virginia Clampit: You are a walking shame Miss Nellie Townsend, a disgrace to the female sex. Selling your body to men. Submitting to lustful and lascivious embraces, pressing your flesh against the flesh of a man and pretending to love him. Then accepting money for it. Ladies, I think we have seen enough. I am asking all you to leave this place now and go back to your homes.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Just hold your horses Miss Clampit. We still have business to discuss. (*to Nellie*) Nellie you've got to do what your heart tells

you but you've also got to survive. I learned that during the war. When you've got nothin.... the only thing that matters is whether you eat or not and have a place to live. A WOMAN'S GOT TO DO WHAT (*gets audience to join in*) A WOMAN'S GOT TO DO! (*Enter Mary Page*) My.... will you look at this! Mary Page, I would never have recognized you. Everybody, give this young lady a round of applause.

Mary Page: Thank ya rightly. My pa won't let me wear fancy dresses. This is how I always dreamed of lookin'. I've been readin' all about fashion in them magazines.

Miss Virginia Clampit: Your father will not approve of you, Mary Page, dressed like a common saloon girl and being in a place like this. These women are not fit company for a young lady.

Miss Kitty Barclay: (*angry*) I think you just better sit down Miss Clampit and don't you dare talk to me about being a lady. I was a lady when Union soldiers burned my house and shot my family. I was still a lady when the carpetbaggers came and took my land. A lady is a lady here (*points to her heart*), it's not the company she keeps and it's not what she does for a living, a lady just IS.

Miss Virginia! Clampit: (*backing down*) I'm sorry. No offense meant ...I just thought that if Mr. McKinley found his daughter in the saloon he might get upset.

Mary Page: (*fearfully*) He's not coming is he?

Miss Kitty Barclay: Don't worry Mary Page. We'll protect you. You sit here. Your pa wouldn't recognize you even if he did decide to come.

*(Re-enter Ben in his underwear with a towel with the initials S.O.B. painted on it round him.)*

Ben: Nellie ...they won't let me have my bath without payin'.... I need a nickel *(he senses the audience is laughing at the S.O.B on his towel)* S.O.B.... Snake... Oil's... Bathhouse. What did ya think it was? Now hurry Nellie before I catch my death ... then we'd never get a chance to spend all that money. *(rubs his hands and tries to fondle Nellie but his towel fails off)*

Nellie: There's your nickel... now stop embarrassing everyone...and whehhhh...go and get yer bath.

Ben: This bathing is a mighty complicated business. Hey, I just saw King McKinley riding into town and he looked mad enough to kick his own dog. *(sound effect of horse coming begins)* I wouldn't want to be in the boots of any man standin' in his away. *(Exit)*

Mary Page: Please, Miss Kitty, don't let him take me away.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Don't worry Mary Page. I'm more than a match for your pa. *(Kitty goes to prepare Rebs for their song).*

Nellie: Listen. Who's that? *(someone dismounting and walking up to the door. The door opens and in comes Lieutenant Gatewood)*

Mary Page: Aaiieouuuu. (*her initial look of fear turns to one of interest*)

Lieutenant Gatewood: *(saluting)* I'm sorry for interrupting. Lieutenant Gatewood 4th Cavalry...out of Fort Bowie.... I'm supposed to be meeting a man at the Golden Day Saloon *(he checks papers)* Mr. King McKinley, a rancher.

*(As Gatewood speaks the group of ex confederate soldiers start singing Dixie)*

Lieutenant Gatewood: ...I hope I am not intruding.....

Kitty Barclay: Sorry! I forgot myself for a moment. *(to the Lieutenant)* I apologize for the singing...they...we... were on the other side.

Lieutenant Gatewood. I understand. *(goes over to them)* Gentlemen I am glad to make your acquaintance. *(He shakes their hands.)* Lieutenant Gatewood. My father had the pleasure of accepting the surrender of Lieutenant General Richard Ewell, from Arizona. Saw his first action at the Battle of Glorietta Pass. He was at Gettysburg. Any of you men there? It was a bloody day. Too many good men died. Give you rebs your due, you are brave men and it's an honor to shake your hands. The war's over. We need to let the past rest.

Kitty Barclay: So what brings you to Heartsville Lieutenant Gatewood?

Lieutenant Gatewood: Orders Ma'am. General Crook is reinforcing Fort Bowie and hoping to make a deal with the Chirachahua apache. The army's got to be fed so we're buying cattle and I'm here to make a deal with Mr. McKinley.

Mary Page: Oh help me! They were the cattle that was killed. (*She cries bitterly and sobs.*)

Lieutenant Gatewood: Pardon me ma'am, did I say something to upset you?

Mary Page: (*crying*) No

Lieutenant Gatewood: Can I be of assistance. If you don't mind my saying you are a remarkably pretty woman.

Mary Page: I am?

Virginia Clampit: Lieutenant Gatewood (*she escorts him to another part of the room*) I am the teacher here and a member of the town council and I think you ought to be introduced to our leading citizen... Mayor Tush...I mean Bush.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Pleased to meet you sir. You shouldn't worry about any more Apache raids. The government's sending nearly five thousand men to Arizona. Of course, we hope to make a peaceful settlement. We've had a belly full of killing.

Virginia Clampit: And this is Reverend Nipple...er Tipple. Reverend, I have to admit that cherry tonic is mighty powerful . Certainly better than what I got from Jim Snakeoil for my complaint. Reverend, I wouldn't mind if I did have just a bit more.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Lieutenant, would you like a whiskey?

Virginia Clampit: He doesn't want a whiskey. Do you Lieutenant? He can have some of the Reverend's tonic.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Miss Clampit if I were you I wouldn't drink any more of that tonic. Nellie, get him a whisky. *(exit Nellie)*

Virginia Clampit: I have no idea what you are talking about. *(to some of the townsfolk)* I must admit that Lieutenant Gatewood is a very handsome man. I'm feeling a little hot. Could I sit down here? Thank you. Lieutenant, would you care to join me.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Thank you ma'am but there's an extra place over there next to that young lady *(indicating Mary Page, then to Miss Kitty)*. Well, after a day in the saddle I sure would appreciate that drink Miss....*(Nellie re-enters with drink)*

Miss Kitty Barclay: Kitty Barclay... Atlanta Georgia. *(sound cue)*

Lieutenant Gatewood: And this young lady?

Mary Page: *(shyly and with much coyness)* Well... I'm... I'm Mary Page.

Miss Kitty Barclay: You'll find out all about her soon enough.

*(King enters)*

King: Well, well, well. I see we're all havin' a town get -together.



Kitty Barclay: King McKinley! We were expecting you. Nellie, get Mr. McKinley a drink.

King: No thank you Miss Kitty. I got business to attend to. Well it looks like everyone turned out for the meeting. Howdy Mayor Bush, Mr. Barings, Arthur, Annie,..good to see ya..

Kitty Barclay: They are all anxious to find out who shot the sheriff.

King: *(he continues to go round the guests shaking their hands)* Why? The man was no good. He deserved everything he got.

Kitty Barclay: No man deserves to be shot in the back...especially a sheriff. *(King stops in his tracks)*

King: Kitty Barclay, we all know you took a likin' to Mat Slaughter.

Kitty Barclay: He kept law and order, something we didn't have before.

King: He was a common bounty hunter. Shot two men up in Sioux Falls three years back. Ain't that right John Handy? He took the message.

John Handy: That's right Mr. McKinley.

King: Seems to me that someone from his past finally caught up with him.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Well, we elected him. Besides, half the lawmen in the West were gunfighters or bounty hunters.

King: That may be, but I was hoping that here in Heartsville we wouldn't scrape the bottom of the barrel.

Virginia Clampit: (*she's getting drunk on the cherry tonic which is actually laudinum*) I heartily agree with you, Mr. McKinley.

King: Miss Clampit when we hired you as the town teacher, we expected you to set an example for our children. A teacher's place is in school, not in a saloon.

Virginia Clampit: I absolutely agree. I only came here tonight to make sure nothing untoward took place and it was a thing good... good thing... I was here so that I could protect your...

Miss Kitty Barclay: (*talks over her*) Miss Clampit has not been feeling herself.....

King: She looks drunk to me. Someone selling prairie whiskey? Tom Cash, you ain't back to your old tricks, are ya? By the way, my foreman was telling me that you were getting some of this new fangled bob wire in and selling it. I hope he heard wrong. The range is free land. If we go puttin' bob wire cross everything, the cattle can't get to the grass or the water ... and they'll get all tore up. You ever seen a calf caught up in that wire? Well, I have. Next thing, those squatters will be putting it up all over the place and those damned shepherders. It'll just lead to trouble. Yeah...Jake Hurd.. you heard me ... I'm talking to you ... keep your sheep off my land! This ain't no country for sheep. We'll have the same trouble we had n '78. Next time I see sheep on my land, they'll be food for the buzzards. (*to all*) Now, I'm a

reasonable man. Everyone has a right to earn a living but there will be no bob wire and no sheep.

Nellie: Don't sound reasonable to me.

King: What was that?

Nellie: I said, it don't sound reasonable to me.

King: When I want the opinion of the likes of you, Nellie Townsend, I'll pay for it.

Virginia Clampit: I couldn't agree with you more Mr. McKinley. May I call you King?

Kitty Barclay: Nellie...

Nellie: *(angrily and sarcastically)* My profession may not be respectable enough for your likin' but you and your cowboys don't seem to mind it when you come roaring into town on Saturday night!

Miss Kitty Barclay: Nellie, hold your tongue ...I don't need trouble.

Nellie: No! I've kept my mouth shut long enough. He's just like the rest of ya. Ya'll treat me like dirt under your feet. You "ladies" walk past me on the "other side of the street" with your noses in the air and then your husbands come creeping around to my back door when you ain't looking. And you sit there listening to King McKinley laying down the law and you, Mr. Mayor, and you, Josiah Barings...would you like me to tell your wives about your late night town meetins'?

King: Miss Nellie...I think you've had your say.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Nellie.... please

Nellie: Miss Kitty, I'm sorry. I know you've nearly paid off this place and I understand why you don't want to stand up to him. But the rest of ya! Why don't you say it out loud? You don't dare talk back cause he's callin' all the shots. He controls the water in this town.

King: I never stopped anyone from getting water Nellie.

Nellie: You don't need to because everyone's so scared of ya.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Nellie, that is enough!

Nellie: No it ain't. I'm not scared of ya, am I Mr. McKinley? *(to all)* You see in my profession men talk a lot. They tell me their hopes, and dreams and some of their secrets. So I know what goes on in this town. How did you get them water rights Mr. McKinley?

King: I got `em fair and square, from the Morrisons, they had the ranch above me, the DoubleDay. I bought it ...all legal too.

Nellie: And the Morrisons?

King: Frank Morrison was killed *(pause)* by the Apaches. His wife and kids couldn't work the ranch so they moved on *(pause)* I paid a fair price ...ain't that right Mr. Borings?

Barings: It was a fair price.

Nellie: Maybe. But that ain't what I'm talking about and you know it. Frank Morrison's cowhands told me a different story.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Nellie *(Kitty pulls her aside and away from King)* I have to live in this town.

King: Nobody in this town needs to worry. Walter will be coming down those rivers and creeks just like always.

Nellie: I shoulda known he'd talk his way out of it. If only I had somewhere else to go.

King: Now if we're looking for the man who shot the sheriff, I'm telling you we should be looking at strangers.

King: *(going up to Johnny Ringo)* You ain't from these parts. What's your name? Johnny who? Johnny Ringo. Ain't you the one that was in all that trouble down in Tombstone? We don't take kindly to hired guns in Heartsville and we have ways of dealing with them. Sheriff Studly! Sheriff Studly will you do the honors. *(Sheriff Stud passes him a paper with 3711 on it. Johnny Ringo looks at it blankly)* It seems you don't understand the 3-7-11 on the back of the Vigilante's calling card. That's what folks in Arizona give to men we don't want "hangin" around too long. Just so ya know, 3-7-11 means three foot wide, seven foot long, and 11 inches deep. You got till daybreak to get out of town.

Kitty: Look I think everyone should just calm down. I'm sure Mr. Ringo is just passing through.

Lieutenant Gatewood: (snaps to attention, salutes) Lieutenant Gatewood, Sir, 4th US Cavalry, out of Fort Bowie. I'm here with the requisitioning order. Fifty head of cattle as agreed, to be delivered to the fort at once.

King: Mighty glad to meet ya Lieutenant. Been lookin' for ya. Miss Kitty, You got a spare room for the Lieutenant? Good. I see you're enjoying some of the comforts of the Golden Day Saloon already. Miss Kitty runs a good place. There's no need to be so shy ma'am.. I ain't going to hurt ya. (*Mary Page looks up but will not look at King*) You sure look awful familiar young lady.

Lieutenant Gatewood: May I? Mr. McKinley this is Mary Page ...I'm sorry, I didn't get your last name, M'am.

King: It's McKinley!

Mary Page: Pa!

King: Mary Page McKinley is that YOU in that fancy dress?

Mary Page: (*she rises*) Yes Pa.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Pa? You mean?

King: What in the name of tarnation are you doing in a place like this?

Mary Page: I was...

King: I've been looking all over town for you.

Mary Page: I was frightened.

King: Of what?

Mary Page: You said you was going to whip me.

King: Sure I said I was going to whip you. Any father would whip his kid if they just stampeded a herd of cattle over a cliff.

Mary Page: But it weren't my fault.

King: I promised your ma on her dying bed that I'd bring you up proper. She would have whipped you herself if she was still alive.

Lieutenant Gatewood: With all due respect Sir, I think the young lady is too old to be whipped.

King: I don't need no Yankee blue belly to tell me how to raise my children. Where are your clothes, Mary Page?

Lieutenant Gatewood: Sir, I am an officer in the army of the United States of America. I respectfully ask you treat me as such.

King: Son, I appreciate your position but don't come between a man and his family. Where's your clothes?

Mary Page: In there.

King: Go get em' on and get rid of that fancy saloon girl getup.

Mary Page: *(she hesitates and turns to him defiantly)* No.

King: What?

Mary Page: No. I like the way I look.

King: You look... cheap.

Mary Page: I feel like a woman.

King: But you ain't a woman. You're only nineteen.

Mary Page: Some girls are married with two youngins by 19.

King: Mary Page, you listen and listen good. I spent twenty years of my life working this range. I came to Arizona with nothing. I raised cattle. I worked from sun-up to sun-down. I fought the Apache. Your ma's lying out there along with your brother. Our sweat and blood are in this land. This is your land.

Mary Page: I don't want it Pa. I'm tired of the heat and the dust, of sitting in a saddle all day.

King: Tired ain't no reason to quit.

Mary Page: Maybe not. But all I can remember since the day I was born is crouching in a corner of the bunkhouse, while you and the men were fighting rustlers and Indians. I still remember ma screaming. To this day, I lie awake listening, wondering if I'm still alive.

King: That's what makes us who we are.



Mary Page: No. It's what makes you who you are, Pa. Ma died ten years ago yesterday, don't you remember? And little Ben a week later. We buried them. We wrapped them in a sheet and we buried them ....out there.

King: That wasn't my fault, it was the smallpox.

Mary Page: I won't be buried along side of em.

King: Mary Page, I'm warning you. Get out of those clothes, we're going home.

Mary Page: I ain't going Pa.

King: Then you ain't getting nothin'. I'll give the ranch away to strangers when I die and you'll have nothin'.

Mary Page: I don't want nothin' Pa. It just feels good sitting here dressed like a lady, talkin to other ladies. I don't want no more men talk. I just wish my ma could see me now. She never had no pretty clothes. All those years - all she did was work and worry.

King: I blame you Kitty Barclay. Putting fancy ideas in her head.

Kitty Barclay: I didn't put anything in her head that wasn't already there  
King.

King: And you. (*indicating Gatewood who has gone to comfort Mary Page*) You keep away from my daughter. It was you Union soldiers walking out on us in 61' that brought all the trouble. We ain't had peace from the Indians since.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Sir, I would remind you that the policy of this government is to make peace with the native peoples of America.

King: Peace? What does our government know of peace? Hell! The Apache don't even have a word for it.

Lieutenant Gatewood: That may be. I speak their language too, Sir. I assure you General Crook is out to make peace.

King: The Apache will never make peace. I've fought them for twenty years. I know.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Well it's time things changed. This was their land and we need to learn to live together.

King: Never!

Mary Page: *(to Gatewood)* I don't think you should argue with my Pa.

Miss Kitty Barclay: King, it is 1882. Maybe it's time to change.

King: Damn it! *(exits)*

Kitty: Lieutenant Gatewood. Try to understand. King is a good man and father, he's just....

*(Enter Ben whose hair is all plastered down, he's shaved and clean as a new pin. He is wearing his Sunday best.)*

Ben: Nellie! I had me a bath. It weren't as painful as I expected. Have ya heard the news? Wyatt Earp is on his way to Heartsville. What's wrong with ya'll? It's deader than a can of corned beef in here. Folks, if you're planning to have a bath I can recommend the bathhouse down the street. It's sure given me a mighty hearty appetite. *(spying the empty plates)* Hey! Have you all had vittles? I feel like a posthole that ain't been filled up. Kitty Barclay are you still serving cause I'm hungrier than a woodpecker with a headache.

*(King Re-enters or there can be a staged robbery - addendum A)*

Kitty: Ben, we'll get you something to eat in awhile but right now we've got to get on with our meeting. Now King, let's don't have any more trouble with the Lieutenant.

King: Ah, Lieutenant, I'm sorry about losing my temper before. I have nothin against you Yankees. It's just that... Well...

Kitty: It 's all right King. He understands. Don't you Lieutenant? Now it seems to me that we need to get to the bottom of yesterday's killin' before anything else happens and I think it's the citizens of this town that ought to be asking the questions. *(all 3 questions will be in order: Annie Angel, , the mayor's wife - Betty, and Mrs. Barings - we can identify these guests by their pre-made name tags)* Now, Annie Angel, I believe you have a question.

Annie: Nellie, who owns the Bird Cage Hotel next door?

Kitty Barclay: I dare say that is not a relevant question. It has nothing to do with finding out who shot the sheriff.

Virginia Clampit: Wait a minute Miss Barclay. The sheriff was found shot outside the Hotel. It seems to me it is very relevant – relevant - who owns that place of sin.

Nellie: Kitty, seems like I better tell them the truth.

Miss Kitty Barclay: No! I'll tell em. Everything was taken away from me by the war. I had nothing left but my mother's jewelry. I sold some of it and went to California where I met Nellie and made a bit of money in the gold fields. We came to Heartsville and I invested the money in the Golden Day and...the Bird Cage Hotel. I knew nothing of the trade, personally, only that I was providing what some people wanted. I have always been a respectable member of this community.

Nellie: Kitty, I'm your friend but there's something else you ain't telling. I heard you arguing with the sheriff last night.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Oh that! That was earlier in the evening and besides, it didn't mean anything. He found out I owned the Bird Cage and he couldn't understand why I didn't like people to know. I told him that it was because I wanted to be respectable like I was in Atlanta, like my mama and daddy taught me to be. Why, they'd roll over in their graves if they knew I owned a house of ill-repute. I told him that if he didn't keep his mouth shut I'd kill him. But I wouldn't have done it. Besides, I was upstairs in my

office when the shot was fired. Now, Betty Bush, I believe you have a more relevant question.

Betty Bush: Mr. McKinley. We all heard you speak ill of the sheriff. Why was that?

King: Like I said before one of my men was in Sioux Falls three years ago when Mat Slaughter walked into the saloon and shot two brothers. Seems these fellas owed him some money. I don't take kindly to those who shoot other folk over money. I'm tellin' ya' he was no good. The townspeople of Heartsville voted to hire him as our sheriff. I had nothing to do with it.

Nellie: Tell 'em the truth King McKinley.

King: What do you mean the truth?

Nellie: You're not likin' Mat Slaughter had nothing to do with Sioux Falls. It's about him finding out about Frank Morrison's death five years ago.

King: (*angry*) I've told you all there is to tell about that.

Nellie: Kitty, tell 'em what you told me.

Kitty Barclay: I don't mean to get you involved King but Mat was telling me about a week ago that he was looking through some old affidavits he found in a drawer in the Sheriff's Office. He said they were very strange. Apparently, when Frank Morrison didn't return from rounding up mavericks

in the High Pass, a few men went out lookin' for him. When they found him he had a bullet hole in his head. The thing was he still had his rifle and his colt 45. Then they found his horse grazing two miles away. Mat said it was strange because if Indians or rustlers had shot him, they would have taken everything. There was also an affidavit that said the night before Frank left he rode over to your place and you had an argument ...the water rights were mentioned and there was talk about money.

King: (*nervously*) He just wanted a loan and I wouldn't give it to him. I told the judge that. Morrison said he couldn't feed his family because the rustlers from across the border had taken half his herd.

Kitty Barclay: Mat said he was going to ask you about it, King.

Nellie: And there's more. Tell everybody where you was last night when the sheriff was shot.

King: I had nothing to do with shooting the sheriff.

Nellie: Dutch Annie, you're an honest girl. Tell 'em. I told her to write it down because she didn't want to make no mistakes.

King: Annie, you got no right letting everybody know about my personal life.

Dutch Annie: Sorry King. Every Thursday night Mr. McKinley comes visitin' at the Bird Cage. Always comes at 10 o'clock. Only last night he was late so I was waiting for him and lookin' out the window when I saw him arguing with the Sheriff. King told him to mind his own business and let

sleeping dogs lie. He came upstairs after that. I fell asleep...sorry Nellie...but I was woke up later by the shot.

Virginia Clampit: Mr. McKinley, a man of your standing going into a place like that. What is the world coming to? That's terrible Reverend Ripple...don't you think so. I don't mind if I do have a little bit more "terry chonic". I think it's doing me good.

Nellie: Least now it's out in the open. We were busy last night at the Bird Cage weren't we Mr. Barings? Seems you were entertaining some clients along with the Mayor.

Virginia Oh...you are a wicked man Josiah Barings and you, Mayor..tut..tut...tut

Nellie: Loose Lolla read us what you wrote down about what you saw.

Loose Lolla: Well, it was about 9 o'clock and I was on the balcony of the Bird Cage, and there was three gentlemen below me talking to a stranger.

Nellie: Would you point out these gentlemen.

Loose Lola: The Mayor, Jim Snakeoil, and Mr. Barings They was talking about doin' a killing with some stranger. I didn't hear too well. They said it had to be done quiet so no one would know. They asked the stranger if he had any experience of doing this before. He said he had. I couldn't see the stranger but I knew the other gentlemen because they had been...you know...to the Bird Cage regular like. I wrote everything down but my writin' ain't too good.

Nellie: That's O.K. cause your readin' is just fine.

Kitty: That's mighty interesting. Mrs. Barings, do you have a question?

Mrs. Barings: Nellie. What did you do when you heard the shot?

Nellie: It were about half past ten when I saw the sheriff lying in the street. It was real dark but I could make out a man bending over the body. I think he was wearing a black hat (*looks at Mayor Bush*). I saw him take a paper out of the sheriff's pocket and start tearing it up into little pieces. I looked around to see if there was anybody else around and when I looked again he was gone. Then Kitty came out of the Golden Day. Next thing, all hell broke loose. I remember there was a wind blowing but I did manage to find a piece of what was being ripped up. It didn't mean nothing to me. Here. I still have it (*she brandishes the piece of paper from her bosom which is a torn up piece of a wanted poster for Johnny Ringo*).

Virginia Clampit: You're a no good hooker Nellie Townsend, nobody is going to believe you. Mayor Bush wouldn't kill anyone. Would you?

Lieutenant Gatewood: Excuse me but it seems like it would be better to write down these depositions. We'll also get to the truth quicker if someone like myself asks the questions, since I am a stranger here. Miss Clampit would you oblige me by writing things down.

Miss Virginia Clampit: Lootinant, leetanant Gootwood, ward...I....I feel a little dizzy....I think I'll have to ... (*she puts her head on the table*) Now what did you want me to do?



Lieutenant Gatewood: Ma'am I think its better if you just take it easy.  
Miss McKinley, would you be so kind as to write some things down for me?

Mary Page: Would you say that again?

Lieutenant Gatewood: Why?

Mary Page: I've never had a gentleman talk to me that way.

Lieutenant Gatewood: You sure are a pretty woman!

Kitty Barclay: Lieutenant, are we going to find out who shot the sheriff  
or are you two just going to flirt with each other?

Lieutenant Gatewood: Yes. erm.... there was one shot at half past ten ...  
a man in a black hat was seen tearing something up and then ran away. That  
is if Nellie is telling the truth. An hour before that Jim Snakeoil, Josiah  
Barings and the Mayor were seen outside the Bird Cage Hotel. You got that  
down Miss McKinley? That sure is pretty writing ... ah, yes ... and Miss  
Kitty was in her office.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Leave my name out of it, Lieutenant. I don't even  
carry a gun. *(there are protests because most people in the audience have  
seen the derringer she carries in her garter,)* Well, just this little one for  
personal protection.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Was anyone else out in the street last night about  
half past ten before the killing? Mrs. Cash, you said you have some notes.  
Would you read them to us?

Mary Cash: I wrote this down last night straight after the shootin' about half past ten. At about ten twenty-five, I remember because I was about to close the shop. I was doing the books as my shop is just down the street from the Bird Cage. It was a warm evening so I had the door open. I remember thinking there was a mighty strange smell outside. I thought I saw someone when I got up to close the door but all I could think about was this smell. I didn't know what it was till this evening when old Ben came in... then, I recognized it.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Ben, what have you got to say to that?

Ben: Golly gosh darn, I just had me a bath.

Lieutenant Gatewood: No, about being in the street at half past ten.

Ben: Sure I was in the street. I was on my way to see the Sheriff, to tell him about my ... tell him about somethin ... mighty important.

Lieutenant Gatewood: What were you going to tell him?

Ben: I ain't sayin! Miner comes up with a strike and 'for you can whistle up a catfish you're burying him. I ain't ready to be buried.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Did you see who shot him?

Ben: I ain't sayin nothin. It were so darn dark yuh could feel it.

Lieutenant: Did you see anyone else on the street?

Ben: I think I did see the Mayor, Mr. Barings, Snakeoil and some gentlemen comin out of the Bird Cage earlier but I couldn't rightly tell for sure. My eyesight ain't so good... spect I need spectacles.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Did you hear anything being torn up?

Ben: I didn't see nothin, I didn't hear nothin, I didn't say nothin and it ain't a crime to smell.

Lieutenant Gatewood: It doesn't look as if we're going to get much else from Ben.

Ben: And I ain't about to git myself shot neither.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Thank you Ben. Now Mr. Cash where were you? *(Cash hopefully tells how he was in the store with his wife.)* Do you frequent The Bird cage Hotel? *(hopefully he answers no)*

Nellie: This ain't gettin' nowhere. I know who came to the Bird Cage last night and what time they left but because I don't want to embarrass them in front of their wives I will not mention their names. Deputy Sheriff Studly was making his usual rounds *(to Studly)* You are going to have to stop lookin in on people like that. It's downright unhealthy. Now I know for a fact the Johnny Rebs was in the Golden Day like they always is, John Handy was not there - he's always too busy doing whatever he's doing and Dr. Holliday only comes when there's work for him. It strikes me that the man we ain't got one clear answer from tonight is this Johnny Ringo. He may scare you but he

don't scare me. Where were you last night at half past ten Mr. Ringo? You wasn't in the Golden Day and you wasn't in the Bird Cage.

Ben: Someone is going to git themselves killed! *(he goes under the table)*

Kitty: Nellie, don't get your temper up. He's a dangerous man. Now Mr. Barings. I understand from Pete your hat was found this morning outside the saloon. I was wondering if you could explain that? *(he ad libs answer)*

Gatewood: Well, Ben said he saw Snakeoil, Mr. Barings and Mayor Bush outside the Bird Cage with another gentleman. What were you doing Sir? And you? Jim Snakeoil, who was the fourth gentleman?

Snakeoil: I hate to reveal a business confidence but seeing as this would help to clear a person's name. It was Michael Lansbury. We was discussing about the railway coming through Heartsville.

Gatewood: Is that true Mr. Lansbury? *(wait for answer...ad lib)* Now Loose Lola were these the gentlemen you heard talking about a "Killing" *(Loose Lola hopefully says yes after checking her notes)* So what was this killing Jim?

Snakeoil: Making a killing has nothing to do with shooting anybody. It is a phrase we businessmen use for making a good profit.

Gatewood: I see. Does anyone else have a question? *(waits for audience to respond).*

Snakeoil: I have a question. Cactus Rose, what are you doing later tonight?

Gatewood: That's enough Snakeoil. I think I have a good idea who was responsible but I have one last question. Dutch Annie. Would you stand please? You saw the Sheriff arguing with King McKinley, right? *(yes)* And you heard the shot right? *(yes)* How much time was there between you seeing them arguing and the shot going off. *(hopefully she will say she was asleep)* Was King McKinley in your room when the shot went off? *(she could be vague about this)*

Virginia: You can't trust the word of a hooker. *(faints)*

Gatewood: I think it's time to take a town vote on who you think shot the sheriff. We are going to need some voting slips.

Mary Page: *(goes and picks up voting forms and rushes up to him with a pile)* Here they are Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Gatewood: It appears you are reading my mind so you must know there's more on it than voting slips.

Mary Page: There's a lot more than voting slips on my mind Lieutenant... may I call you John?

Lieutenant Gatewood: I would like that Miss McKinley.

Mary Page: You may call me *(she kisses him on cheek)* Mary Page.

Virginia Clampit: *(recovering)* Can we get on with the voting. As soon as we know who did it, we need to have a lynching and get this town cleaned up.

Lieutenant Gatewood: *(stunned)* Mary Page, I would be mighty appreciative if you would go around and help me hand out the voting forms. *(they give out the slips in a haphazard way staring at each other all the time)*

Mary Page: It would be my pleasure...John. Are you planning to stay on in Heartsville fer a while?

Lieutenant Gatewood: I just may have to. It could take me at least two days, perhaps more ... to finish my business with your father.

Mary Page: Well I sure would like to show you the country round here. We got some beautiful places in Arizona.

Lieutenant Gatewood: I can think of nothing nicer.

*(THERE IS BACKGROUND MUSIC WHILE THE AUDIENCE VOTE. S.M. CUES BEN TO RESTART WHEN ALL VOTING SLIPS ARE IN AND TURNS OFF MUSIC. IF THERE IS NO STAGE MANAGER, KITTY CUES THEM TO BEGIN.)*

Gatewood: Now, do I have all the votin slips? *(Ben and Nellie have been in earnest debate in a corner)*

Ben: I tell ya I ain't gonna do it. I'll git myself shot.

Nellie: Ben, if you're too yella to stand up fer yourself, how are you going to stand up fer me?

Ben: I wanna marry you Nellie...I wanna make you happy.

Nellie: Then do it. Act like a man! *(she walks off into a corner and Ben follows her)*

Ben: Oh.....Nellie?

King: Miss Kitty... I'm not sure which way to go here. Sometimes it's hard for a man to face up to who he is. I've worked all these years just to make a better life for my family. I know I got a reputation for being a hard man but I like to think I was always fair and honest. Anyways, I ain't sure how all this is going to turn out for me and ... I would like to tell you ... I'd like to thank you for what you did for Mary Page. I think you're a mighty fine woman.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Thank you King McKinley. You are a good man and a hard man is good to find *(as though this was a slip of the tongue. Use discretion, if audience is too prim and proper just say it correctly. A good man is hard to find.)*

King: If something was to happen to me, I would be mighty grateful if you would look after Mary Page. I know she admires you and you could teach her all that women's stuff she ain't learnt since her mom died.

Miss Kitty Barclay: I would be pleased to do that King. She's a beautiful young lady.

King: Thank you kindly, Ma'am.

Mary Page: Pa ... I'm sorry..I didn't mean to hurt ya.

King: Mary Page, sometimes you love someone so much that you lose sight of what's real. I realized for the first time tonight that you're your ma and young Ben all rolled up together for me. I've been forgetting about you as a young person growin' up yourself. I've been burying myself out there with them.

Mary Page: I'll come back home Pa.

King: No need. I'll be fine. You stay with Miss Kitty. She'll teach you about bein' a woman.

Ben: I'll get myself kilt like old Tom did. Dr. Holiday, if I get shot, I got money fer patchin me up. You look after me. I know you can take bullets outta a man quicker 'n old maid can crawl under a bed.

Nellie: Ben, if you wanna marry me stand up there like a man and tell them what you saw. I don't give a darn about yer money but I ain't gonna live with a man who's all gurgle and no guts.

Ben: But Nellie ...

Nellie: You're makin me madder than a frog on a hot skillet!

Ben: O.K. Nellie. I'll do it. Folks, seems Miss Nellie ain't gonna marry me, unless I fess up to what I saw last night. It was dark enough to slow down a bat ... and I have to admit I'd finished off a bottle of whisky,



celebratin' about the mine and all, but I wasn't so drunk I couldn't hit the ground with ma hat in three tries. I wanted to tell the Sheriff the news so he would know if they was to find me starin' at the sky an' seein' nothin so to speak, they would know it was because someone wanted my mine. Anyways, first I passed Pete Wright's place and he was beaverin' away at his newspaper busier than a one armed paperhanger, then I saw Snakeoil, Mr. Barings and the Mayor outside the Bird Cage. Then if I remember rightly, I had myself another little drink. Next thing, I seen the Sheriff with Miss Kitty or someone who looked liked her and they were arguing fit to bust a blood vessel. She's getting' all upset and cryin' an' throwin up her hands like she was bein' robbed. Finally she whallops him one and storms off. Well, the sheriff walks on towards the Bird Cage and meets up with King McKinley, I knew it was him because I recognized his spurs, walking down the street towards the Bird Cage from the stables. I can't hear nothin exceptin' they was arguing, then I passed Tom Cash's place and scooted on round the corner. Suddenly I'm as jumpy as a bit up old bull at fly time ... the Sheriff was walkin' back down the street, when there's a shot ... Then quicker than lightnin' a shadow comes out near the wall with a black hat on, goes over to the body, looks in the sheriff's pocket, takes out a paper and starts rippin' it up like it was his own epitaph. Then he disappears - right into thin air. Next thing I know I'm bumping into Jim Snakeoil and then people start hollerin' and Nellie comes out ... and I'm thinkin' if someone sees me here, I'm in a heap a trouble ... so I skedaddled out of there real fast.

King: What Ben says is true. I did see the sheriff. I ain't told you the truth about Frank Morrison. It wasn't the Apache or rustlers that shot him. Frank and I had agreed to meet. He knew I wanted part of his land and I thought he had finally decided to sell. I knew that with the water rights I could control the whole valley. He begged me for a loan, just to keep goin'. He had debts back East and had to pay his hands; he'd borrowed money and the bank was hounding him. He said he'd shoot himself if I didn't lend him money. He said if he told his wife he couldn't support her, he wouldn't feel like a man. He said I was his last chance. I told him I couldn't do it. He had to sell me the water rights. He refused. I walked away ... and he shot himself I didn't know what to do...people might have said I'd shot him...so I figured it was better just to leave him there. I felt real bad when I bought his place. If I'd known he was really goin to shoot himself... Anyway, Mat Slaughter was goin to drag it all up again and that's what we were arguing about.

Miss Kitty Barclay: Well Sheriff? I hope you are going to make an arrest. A man with a black hat. It's either Snakeoil, Josiah Barings, the Reverend or that stranger, Johnny Ringo.

Jim Snakeoil: I never kilt no one. I was keepin' an eye on what was goin on. It was like Ben said. I was talking with Mr. Barings and them other gentlemen. We was hoping to get together and convince the people of this town to invest in the railway. Mr. Lansbury, you'll back me up and you Mr. Barings, ain't that right? (*ad-libs yes*)

Miss Kitty Barclay: If you were with Josiah Barings and we all know that the Reverend probably couldn't even aim a gun straight, then that just leaves one man. Johnny Ringo. Arrest him Sheriff. (*Johnny Ringo is arrested*)

Ben: Tie him up real tight. (*he helps*) It wasn't me that pointed the finger Mr. Ringo. I never said it was you. You remember that.

Virginia Clampit: We don't arrest men. We lynch 'em,

Nellie: Hold it folks. Let's not get too hasty like we did last time. How many of you votes to lynch him? Mr. & Mrs. Angel you better get him measured up. We'll take a collection for the coffin. Least we can do.

Ben: No need fer that Nellie. I can well afford to buy this man a coffin. What sort would you like son? Arthur and Annie get him a real fancy one. With handles.

Nellie: Ben, you are not to go wasting money on fancy coffins for strangers. Reverend Tipple. This man is about to meet his maker. You got any words for him to pass on. (*Nellie assists the Reverend in finding the following passage in his Bible.*)

Reverend Tipple: I can recommend Dr. Swayme's Wild Cherry Tonic. Do you have anything to confess my son?

Nellie: Are we going to lynch this man? Do we hang him? (*the audience all agree*) Well then let's get him hung. Come on posse, let's see yer hangin rope.

*(the event is interrupted by the sound cue of the arrival of a horse)*

Kitty Barclay: Wait a minute folks. Who could that be? (Enter Wyatt Earp)

Wyatt Earp: I am sorry to break up your little celebration, but I have a warrant here for the arrest of John Ringo on the charge that he did willfully and with malice of forethought take the life of Morgan Earp, U.S. Marshall, in Tombstone on May 26th. Marshall Earp was shot down while playing billiards. John Ringo, you'll get your trial and probably a hanging but you're leaving with me. You are under arrest. Sheriff, please see that this man is held in your jail overnight. I will pick him up in the morning - and I WANT HIM ALIVE. You better say goodbye to your loved ones tonight, Mr. Ringo. You won't be seeing them again. At least not in this life.

Virginia Clampit: Oh that's a shame.

King: Miss Clampit. I think you better take it easy.

Kitty Barclay: I think we should all take it easy. Sit down folks.

Virginia Clampit: That Mr. Burp is a nice man ... I mean Earp ... Mr. Wyatt...are you married?

Wyatt Earp: Sure am Ma'am - sorry. O.K. Ringo I will see you in the morning.

Gatewood: Speaking of marriage?

Virginia Clampit: Yes?

Gatewood: No, I was speaking to Mr. McKinley.

Virginia Clampit: Oh..*(sadly)* I thought...

Gatewood: Mr. McKinley, I realize you don't know much about me and this may not be an appropriate moment ...but...well...er...could I have the hand of your daughter in marriage? If she'll have me?

King: Well I'll be! To tell you the truth son, I think you better ask her but I'll warn you now, she's mighty hard to keep at home.

Lieutenant Gatewood: Whoooooeeiii. Hot damn!! Sorry Ma'am. Mary Page, will you marry me?

Mary Page: *(stiffly)* Who do you think you are talkin to? If you are going to ask me to marry you, you better do it right. I am a lady.

Lieutenant Gatewood: *(gets down on his knees and is formally exaggerated)* Miss Mary Page McKinley I would take it as an exceedingly great compliment if you would accept a proposal of marriage from me.

Mary Page: I accept but only if you promise to love me and stay out of that Bird Cage Hotel.

Lieutenant Gatewood: You have my word.

Kitty Barclay: Well now, seems the funeral is turning into a wedding which means Reverend Tipple still has some work to do. Come on over here and marry these folks. I'm sure you've got all you need in your bible.

Reverend Tipple: Anybody objectin to this marriage? Do you....

Ben: Reverend Tipple, hold on. Can you do the same for me? Nellie? Do you say you do? Cos' I do if you do. I done all you asked me. And we got all that copper. *(brandishes claim)*

Nellie: Maybe - but your better ask me right. *(he gets on his knees like Gatewood did.)*

Ben: Well, do ya wanna marry me?

Nellie: I suppose I do. But you are gonna have to take a bath regular like.

Ben: wooooh...I had me a bath and got me a wife. A'm as happy as a flea in a doghouse. Carry on Reverend.

Reverend Tipple: Lieutenant Gatewood do ya take Mary Page for...all that stuff? Do you Ben take Nellie?

Lieutenant Gatewood & Ben: We do.

Reverend Tipple: Do you Mary Page & Nellie?

Mary Page & Nellie: We do

Reverend Tipple: Then if you all do too, you all is husbands and wives and God help all of you.

*(They are about to kiss.)*

Kitty: Stop! Mr. Handy has a telegram for Mr. Lansbury. Just arrived. They said it was mighty important. *(gets telegram from Handy and gives it to Lansbury)*

Michael Lansbury: *(he reads)* Ladies and Gentlemen I have an announcement from the Directors of the Southern Pacific Railroad. They have decided that the new railroad from Tucson to Flagstaff will run through Heartsville.

All: *(actors coordinate)* Hooray.. *(congratulations all round)*

Kitty Barclay: I told ya, we're all gonna be rich.

Jim Snakeoil. I have here genuine certificates of ownership of shares in the Southern Pacific Railroad. \$20 a piece. Ladies and gentlemen, you are going to make a killing.

Kitty Barclay: Jim Snakeoil this is neither the time nor the place for you and your certificates. Now, are you going to stand there all tongue tied and let this opportunity go by. Just tell her what you told me this morning.

Jim: *(deeply embarrassed)* Eh ...well...oh no...gee... er... well seein' how yer single Miss Clampit..... *(falters)* May I help you back to the school house?

Kitty Barclay: Ask her! She can only say no.

Jim: Miss Clampit would you marry me?

Virginia Clampit: I thought you'd never ask. Of course I will.

Kitty Barclay: King McKinley, I think we make a mighty fine looking couple. Do you think you could plant cotton on the Bar K?

King: Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn! But I think we're goin' to find out. (*Exeunt*)

*S.M. announces "this has been a production etc.... cast introduce each other ... prize given out ... announcements etc...)*

**THE END**