

VILLAINY IN THE VINEYARDS

**Also Known As
“Everything Happens for a Riesling”**

**By
Gary McCarver**

**A Full-Length Melodrama
Including Music & Staging Resources**

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VILLAINY IN THE VINEYARD

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Welcome to Villainy in the Vineyard ... the ultimate audience participation old west melodrama set outside the small town of San Juan Capistrano. All served up a generous supply of old time music and humor. In case you didn't know, until the 1880s when you said California wine everyone thought of Southern California. There were well over fifty wineries in early Orange County. With nearly a half million vines in Anaheim alone and production exceeding a million gallons a year in the 1880s. At least until the great grape blight of 1886.

This is the story of Kaye Syrah trying so hard to keep the family vineyard alive after her family went missing. It is the story of a ruthless land speculator willing to do just about anything to build his empire. Along the journey discover the stagecoach line and vineyards of old San Juan Capistrano. It is the story of dreamers and schemers, heroes and villains, but mostly about family.

Learn the fate of the once great Southern California Vineyards in this long-forgotten seldom-told mostly-true tale about one man that kept wine alive not just for California, but for the whole planet. A family-friendly musical play that's a lot of fun.

DISCLAIMER: Although the content depicted in this play, including but not limited to events, locales, entities or persons, living or dead, and a bazillion other things, were inspired directly by history, be advised that they have been adjusted as a work of old-west style musically melodramatic humorous fiction so, any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, even those based on real people, is entirely a miracle. Let me add that all characters in this Melodrama may be considered as composite characters for the constraints of time, and space. So, don't go using the play as a textbook in history class or try to win a bet with your friends at the local historical society who will undoubtedly fact check everything. Besides it is in a Melodrama where we pay tribute to some very likable people, like the Tom Munson character that actually saved wine on this planet ... just saying.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

Listed roughly in their order of Appearance.

(Optional Character) **NARRATOR – JEAN-CLAUDE** – Former owner of a winery and connoisseur of wine having published the first treatises describing California grape growing to advance the science of winemaking. A man that truly understood the art of wine.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – ANGELICA – Jean-Claude's wife shares his love of Northern Rhone wines that are even found on their family crest. Schooled in the ways of science, she's a worthy match for Jean-Claude's "know-it-all" personality. She is named after a wine, so it is fitting she married a wine master.

PIANO PLAYER – TRUDY LITE – Our resident musician returns to bring melodramatic antics to life as she tinkles out the tunes you expect from an old west style Melodrama!

CUE-CARD MAVEN – PAIGE TURNER – Paige reminds the audience to join in the fun by holding up "Hiss - Boo", "Shameful Plug", or "Oh My" Cue-Card signs as appropriate.

THE HEROINE – KAYE SYRAH – Heiress to the Syrah Winery and Vineyards when her parents died on a trip to San Francisco. Against all odds, she retains hope that they will be coming back. Only her neighbor Rose keeps her spirits up.

THE FRIEND – ROSE MADEIRA – The daughter of one of the many local vineyard owners who promised to take care of Kaye and her winery when Kaye's parents never came back from a trip to San Francisco. She has a quick wit and quicker temper.

THE STAGECOACH STATION MASTER – BUCK SHOTT – A stagecoach driver who tired of choking dust and unrelenting cold on the trails. Now as station master in San Juan Capistrano, he serves up his wife's lethally black coffee.

STATION MASTER'S WIFE – AGNES SHOTT – A former saloon entertainer in San Francisco who preferred being called "OnYes", which she says is the fancy French pronunciation of her name. Now instead of singing, she helps her husband and stage coach station visitors with her "fearful bad" cooking.

THE BARRON – VICTOR VON VINEUS – A cape-wearing smooth-talking opportunistic phony nobleman willing to do just about any dastardly deed to accomplish his nefarious plot of secretly creating a wine empire in Southern California.

THE BLACKSMITH – RUSSELL GRUB – A childhood friend of Kay's parents and rather sweet on Kaye's best friend Rose. When he not pestering stagecoach station patrons, he lends the occasional hand to whomever might need help.

GRANDFATHER – GRAN SYRAH – Kaye's grandfather who made the trip from his home in Cadillac France to help with the vineyards since he is a 5th generation winemaker. A big heart and he loves his granddaughters as much as his wine.

THE COUSINS – ADELLA – BELLA - STELLA – Three stunning women who came from France with their grandfather to help save their cousin's winery. They speak very little English, but join in all the songs and as might be needed.

THE HERO – TOM MUNSON – Horticulturist and grape breeder. Childhood sweetheart of Kaye who moved to Texas with his family years ago. Now back to San Juan Capistrano on the stagecoach hoping to help solve the grape blight.

SENATOR – FOWLER FAIRWEATHER ESQ – A Bureaucrat with delusions of grandeur. Mildly villainous ... but not much more than any other politician. He failed in his run for Senator but insists that everyone call him by that name, hoping that it becomes a reality.

OPTIONAL WALK-ON EXTRA – MOTHER MADEIRA – The mother of Rose who occasionally checks in on her. The Madeiras are having their own issues and recently sold their vineyard. Mother Madeira has not had the heart to tell her daughter yet.

SONG LIST FOR THE MELODRAMA

Songs are Listed in Order of Performance.

Hello Heaven

By Sam M. Lewis, Jean Schwartz, and Gary McCarver

Keep your eye on the one you love

By Howard Johnson, Ira Schuster, and Gary McCarver

Wine – Wine - Wine

By Billy Gaston and Gary McCarver

The Villain's Song

By Theodore Morse and Gary McCarver

San Juan Blues

By Dave Ringle, Fred Meinken, and Gary McCarver

Hard to Say Goodbye

By J. Will Callahan, Paul Pratt, and Gary McCarver

City on a Hill

By Seymore Brown, Albert Gumble, and Gary McCarver

Oh! Those Days – CURTAIN CALL SONG

By Harold Atteridge, Sigmund Romberg, and Gary McCarver

PROLOGUE

(Optional Prologue to match the optional Epilogue)
SKIP THIS TO REDUCE RUN TIME OF THE PLAY

The Place: In the Audience or at Cabaret Table

(THE NARRATOR is seated at a small cabaret table near the audience with two chairs ... or two seats in the front row of the audience. He has a glass of wine in hand.)

(LIGHTS follow NARRATOR'S WIFE from on stage through to her seat with her husband.)

(NARRATOR and his wife are free to engage the audience.)

THE NARRATOR – (calling) Mon Cher. I am over here. You had better hurry it looks like they are about to start.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – Oh, there you are.

THE NARRATOR – (holding up his glass of wine) Zee grape is a wonderfully versatile fruit. Zey can be eaten fresh, dried for raisins, or lovingly caressed to make zee wine.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – There you go again ... it is always grapes or wine with you.

NARRATOR – As you know I enjoy zee glass of wine for its health benefits. (beat) Zee other glasses I drink are for my witty remarks and my flawless dance moves.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – Health benefits? That stagecoach has left the station. And as for witty remarks ... you are only half right.

NARRATOR – I'm sensing zee little sarcasm in your voice.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – Sarcastic? Me? (beat) It will be starting any moment. Let's see what happens.

NARRATOR – I was born in a winery. So, you could say zat zee wine ... it is in my blood.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – More than that ... based upon how many glasses you have had?

NARRATOR – There may be more wonderful things in life than wine, but wine makes you feel better about not having those things.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – Not so loud ... people are looking at us.

NARRATOR – I had no idea that they could hear us. (standing and looking around) How did we get here anyway? Strange ... I remember ... nothing.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – Sit down. How many glasses have you had already? (looking at his wine glass) Although ... strange ... I can't quite place how we got here either.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – Hush now ... it is going to start.

OPTIONAL VILLAIN INTRODUCTION

SKIP THIS TO REDUCE RUN TIME OF THE PLAY

(THE BARRON enters the stage carrying a large map. The narrators are not talking with the Barron, but they are heckling.)

THE BARRON – (ASIDE TO THE AUDIENCE) – I surmise that you came here to hear the story of the vineyards that once covered this part of California.

(THE BARRON shows his map of all of the Vineyards that he has under control.)

THE BARRON – (ASIDE) – See this map. Soon I will own all of this ... vineyards as far as the eye can see. You just watch. Only one vineyard to go and it will all be mine.

(THE BARRON turns to EXIT but has a quick afterthought.)

THE BARRON – Don't worry ... I'll be back soon enough.

(THE BARRON laughs and EXITS)

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

ACT 1 SCENE 1

The Place: Hills outside San Juan Capistrano
Syrah Family Vineyard

When: Late at Night - 1884

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – San Juan Capistrano 1884

CUE-CARD – The Syrah Family Vineyard

CUE-CARD – Late at Night

(SOUND EFFECT – Sounds of crickets, coyote, and owl.)

(Only KAYE and ROSE are putting things away after a long day of work. There are wine barrels and crates in the barn.)

ROSE MADEIRA – Oh Kaye? Kaye Syrah? (beat) You seem lost in thought ... more than usual this evening.

KAYE SYRAH – (looking away) It wasn't that long ago when everything was so perfect. Why is that we don't know how good we have it until it is gone?

ROSE MADEIRA – Talk like this never does you any good Kaye. I know that things have not been going as well as they should be.

KAYE SYRAH – Not going well? That's an understatement. Most of neighbors have sold their property and moved away.

ROSE MADEIRA – It's not their fault. The whole valley has been affected and ...

KAYE SYRAH – (interrupting) ... with grapes falling off the vine.

ROSE MADEIRA – That is true.

KAYE SYRAH – I wish I had paid more attention to what it takes to run this winery when Father and Mother were here ...

ROSE MADEIRA – I know you miss your parents since they ...

KAYE SYRAH – Don't say it ... they are only missing!

ROSE MADEIRA – The sheriff said that their stagecoach was attacked by bandits and ... well ... wishing won't change things. (beat) Missing. (beat) ... of course ... missing.

KAYE SYRAH – You are my best friend ... but I am not ready yet to admit ... well ...

ROSE MADEIRA – Kaye, it just pains me to see you like this. You used to be so carefree ... what will be will be. But now ... (changes the subject). I promised to watch out for you and feed the chickens while your parents were gone ... and I always keep my promises. I will see you in the morning.

KAYE SYRAH – I don't know what I would do without your help managing the vineyards and the winery.

ROSE MADEIRA – ... and the chicken. (Walking away)

(SOUND EFFECT – Chickens)

ROSE MADEIRA – ... Try to get some sleep. (ROSE EXITS)

KAYE SYRAH – I will try. (talking to herself) I do so wish things were like they were before ... well before ... now.

(MUSIC STARTS)

(KAYE looks up into the night sky to sing into a spotlight)

KAYE SYRAH – (talking to herself) Oh, look! The first star of the night just waiting for one more wish.

SONG – Hello Heaven

By Sam M. Lewis, Jean Schwartz, and Gary McCarver

When the gray shadows creep, And the world's half a-sleep
in the still of the night, when there's hardly a light
Then I look in to see, where my parents should be,
I find an empty room, with their bed made
The mem'ry's starting fast to fade.

CHORUS

Hello Heaven, Seems like yesterday,
my dad was here, with mama cooking.
I'd tip-toe off to bed ... after my pray'rs were said
I know that I should be sleeping,
all though I feel more like weeping.
I'm afraid to be here on my own
'Cause I'm alone why don't you answer?
I want to know why I still want to weep
when I say now I lay me down to sleep
hello heaven tell me what to do

(KAYE EXITS sadly and wipes a tear from her eye with her handkerchief as she rushes offstage.)

FADE TO BLACK

ACT 1 SCENE 2

The Place: San Juan Capistrano Stage Station

When: The Next Morning

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – The Stagecoach Station

CUE-CARD – The Next Morning

(BUCK SHOTT is organizing the counter in the back of the Stagecoach Station under a sign that says Tickets and Telegraph. His wife AGNES SHOTT is just dusting a table in the front of the station, straightens two chairs, grabs a plate and a cup and EXITS through the kitchen door as the lights come up. One customer RUSSELL GRUBB is sitting at one table having a cup of “coffee”. BUCK holds a pot of coffee.)

(THE BARRON enters)

BUCK SHOTT – Welcome to the San Juan Stagecoach Station. We are a family station, so you can get vittles before you head off on your journey. My name is Buck ... Buck Shott.

THE BARRON – “Vittles” ... how quaint. So, when are your stagecoaches scheduled to arrive and depart?

BUCK SHOTT – Coaches arrive at 10, noon, and 3. But this is San Juan Capistrano, so we have no idea when it will leave. Your guess is good as mine.

RUSSELL GRUB – That’s for dang sure.

BUCK SHOTT – Most people think the Concord stage like Wells Fargo uses as the best stagecoach ... but when you want to travel up a slippery slope or a muddy quagmire ... you’re a heck-of-a-lot smarter to trust your life to a Henderson and Clark Omnibus to get you there safe and back. (beat) Have a cup of coffee while you’re waiting. (pouring cup of coffee) And you might be ... mister ...?

THE BARRON – Actually it is Barron ... Barron Victor Von Vineus.

BUCK SHOTT – Barron, you say? We don't get much royalty in these parts.

RUSSELL GRUB – (ASIDE TO AUDIENCE) – By the looks of him ... we still don't.

AGNES SHOTT – (offstage yelling) I'll be right there.

BUCK SHOTT – That's my wife and she should be back any minute with some food.

RUSSELL GRUB – Food? Is that what you call it? I've eaten here before friend, and while some worry about safe travel after that stagecoach got all shot up about three months ago ... Barron ... if'en you don't want to take your life in your hands, I'd avoid anything loosely described as "food" in this here station.

BUCK SHOTT – Russell ... read the sign ... we will have none of that kind of talk in here.

RUSSELL GRUB – No gabbing about the fearful bad food?

BUCK SHOTT – Russell Grub ... you can disparage my wife's cooking as much as you like. I can't fault you on that. What's not allowed is to harass passengers or talk about ... you know what.

RUSSELL GRUB – That "stagecoach ambushed by outlaws". Fine.

(Buck offers a cup of coffee to THE BARRON.)

BUCK SHOTT – Barron, my apology that my wife's coffee is a thick sludge that only resembles coffee by its color.

THE BARRON – Well then you might want to have her switch to Hidden House Coffee ...

(BUCK takes a sip of the coffee and grimaces and smiles.)

THE BARRON – I thought you said that it was "sludge".

BUCK SHOTT – Well ... usually not so much for the first cup ... all bets are off for what comes out of that pot next. (takes another sip and lets out a gasp) Passable as coffee or maybe paint thinner. It's an acquired taste ... like ... wine I suppose.

THE BARRON – Wine? Funny you should mention wine. As a connoisseur of the fruit of the vine ... perhaps you might uncork a bottle while I am waiting. (a smile)

BUCK SHOTT – It is not even noon yet ... we have few requests this early in the morning for ...

THE BARRON – (interrupting) ... The difference between a glass of wine and your opinion is that I asked for a glass of wine. (beat) Never mind ... all I need is to send a telegram. You DO have someone competent enough to handle that?

BUCK SHOTT – My wife handles the telegraph. As soon as she arrives with fresh coffee.

(THE BARRON hands a telegram order and some cash to BUCK who places both next to the telegraph desk.)

RUSSELL GRUB – Fresh coffee? That would be a surprise.

BUCK SHOTT – For some reason my wife never really got the knack of cookin'. I hoped that one day she would, but after 20 years of marriage ... I recon' "that horse has left the stable".

RUSSELL GRUB – That IS truly disappointing.

THE BARRON – If I wanted to hear a life story ... I would have picked someone with a far more interesting life. (beat) Any Idea when I can have my telegram sent? Time is of the essence.

(AGNES SHOTT ENTERS carrying a tray of food ... mostly strange looking muffins.)

BUCK SHOTT – Mr. Barron ... as promised the food has arrived. This is my wife Agnes.

AGNES SHOTT – You know I prefer it be pronounced “On Yes” like they do in “France”. I think it sound so much more ... swanky.

RUSSELL GRUB – “Swanky”?

AGNES SHOTT – Here you go while you’re waiting ... my special recipe muffins. Enjoy.

THE BARRON – Enchanted ... “On Yes”. Muffins you say?

(THE BARRON tentatively reaches for one of the muffins then thinks twice about it.)

AGNES SHOTT – Oh, come now ... they aren’t going to bite.

RUSSELL GRUB – (to AGNES) What exactly might be in them muffins that would have bitten us ... if en they were still alive.

THE BARRON – They don’t smell atrocious ... so ... I suppose I’ll take just one.

(THE BARRON takes a muffin and a napkin.)

RUSSELL GRUB – That’s a BIG mistake.

(THE BARRON wipes the corners of his mouth with a napkin first then takes a big bite of the muffin. He smiles then loudly spits what remains of the muffin into his napkin.)

RUSSELL GRUB – Don’t say I didn’t I warn you.

BUCK SHOTT – Just ignore him Barron. Russell Grubb is our local blacksmith and it seems that he has nothing better to do than shoot his mouth off. Ignore his jibber-jabber.

THE BARRON – See that my telegram gets out immediately. I will be back later. (THE BARRON EXITS)

BUCK SHOTT – (to RUSSELL) Don’t you have something better to do than aggravate paying customers? Next time try to speak only when spoken to.

RUSSELL GRUB – Most things in life don't happen until they're spoken. At a wedding we all know that preacher's gonna say "I now pronounce you man and wife" but until he says them words ... there ain't no wedding. Saying equals doing ... at least as far as I'm concerned.

BUCK SHOTT – I'm just asking you to be the strong silent type. Emphasis on silent. Don't you have blacksmithing to do?

RUSSELL GRUB – That "Barron" struck me as the kind'a sort that didn't give a lick as to what I was saying anyway. If I chased him away ... I did you and the misses a favor.

BUCK SHOTT – Speaking of chasing someone away ... where is Miss Rose today? I thought you and her ... were ... a ... well.

RUSSELL GRUB – Um ... I'm not the kind that's ready to settle down with just one gal.

(MUSIC STARTS)

BUCK SHOTT – She has a hankering for you. If you haven't figured that out yet ... you'll be in for a rude awakening.

SONG – Keep your eye on the one you love

By Howard Johnson, Ira Schuster, and Gary McCarver

Take a tip from one who knows what life's all a-bout.
If you've a girl to call your own, don't ever leave her all alone.
If temptation come her way, will she pass it by?
That's a question so my suggestion I'll over simplify

CHORUS

Keep your eye on that girl that you love
there's a beau you might know nothing of
who may be there to call when you're out of sight,
of course she may not stray, but maybe she might.
Never leave her for more than a day
Cause there's a sure way to lose 'em one day,
so, keep your eye up-on your girl - man.
If you don't some other fellow can.

REPEAT CHORUS

(KAYE enters the stagecoach station with a small carpetbag. She walks over to the stagecoach station master and wife.)

BUCK SHOTT – Where to Miss KAYE?

KAYE SYRAH – Anywhere ... that's not here.

AGNES SHOTT – (coming forward) Excuse me?

KAYE SYRAH – I don't care where the next stage is going, but I am going to be on it. I have just got to get out of town. I was just fooling myself to think that I could save the winery.

AGNES SHOTT – Whatever you want miss KAYE ... the stagecoach should be here any minute.

(SOUND EFFECT: the sound of horses and of the stagecoach arriving at the station. Then a loud cracking sound!)

OFFSTAGE VOICE – (stagecoach driver's upset voice) Dag dog blast it all! Consarn it!

BUCK SHOTT – (to his wife) Honey ... I best go out to help with the luggage and see what the trouble is with the coach. Russell ... come and make yourself useful. My guess is that we might be needing some of your blacksmithing skills.

RUSSELL GRUB – Sure thing. And afterwards maybe I'll go take that sweet Rose a nice bouquet of pansies ... you think?

BUCK SHOTT – I think ... she'll like that ... a lot.

(BUCK SHOTT and RUSSELL GRUB EXIT to the stagecoach)

KAYE SYRAH – Does that mean the stage is not going out.

AGNES SHOTT – If anyone can get you on your way ... it will be my husband Buck. He was a driver for years and he know just about everything there is to know about stagecoaches.

(AGNES grabs a coffee mug and pours a cup of sludge and kindly offers it to KAYE. KAYE takes a taste of the coffee looks around then secretly spitting it back into the cup.)

KAYE SYRAH – My good-ness! That is strong coffee.

AGNES SHOTT – Thank you kindly. (changing the subject) But if I may ask KAYE ... why really is it you're leaving town Dearie?

KAYE SYRAH – I just can't do it on my own anymore. Even with my neighbor Rose's help ... it can't be done. I try my hardest to take care of the vines and the winery ... but no matter what I plan or do ... it is never enough. (starting to cry)

AGNES SHOTT – A tissue for your issues my dear? (handing KAYE a handkerchief) Did I ever get to tell you how I met my husband and came to this town?

KAYE SYRAH – (drying her tears) No ... I always figured you had been here forever.

AGNES SHOTT – Oh, my goodness no ... being here was the last thing that I had planned. I was an entertainer up in San Francisco. As a headliner you can make pretty good money, but just being in the chorus you are living from hand to mouth.

(SOUND EFFECT: horses and bangs of metal on wood.)

OFFSTAGE CONVERSATION – (upset voice) Dad blast it!

KAYE SYRAH – Oh my ... go on ...

AGNES SHOTT – But ... then one day the most handsome and dashing man I had ever seen in my life walked into the saloon and swept me off my feet.

KAYE SYRAH – Was that Buck?

AGNES SHOTT – (laughing) My goodness ... of course not. You've seen him. No one's ever confused Buck with "handsome" or "dashing". And the only sweeping he does is when I remind him to clean out the corral.

KAYE SYRAH – Sorry.

AGNES SHOTT – No need to be ... I'm not. More coffee dear?

KAYE SYRAH – Oh please no! ... I mean ... no thank you.

AGNES SHOTT – That handsome man was nothing more than a cad and a scoundrel with delusions of grandeur. Couldn't trust a thing he said ... only one thing on his mind (beat) ... His-self.

KAYE SYRAH – Oh my ...

AGNES SHOTT – Water under the bridge. (beat) Buck might not be much to look at ... but he's as honest as the day is long and a good provider. When I met him, he was a stagecoach driver and every time he rode from Cheyenne to Los Angeles, he stopped in San Francisco to see me perform. He'd sit right in front.

KAYE SYRAH – How sweet.

AGNES SHOTT – It was love at first sight and after six months of courting ... he said (done in a good imitation of Buck's voice) "The life of a stagecoach driver's wife is a lonely one and you deserve more than that". Then he kissed me, said goodbye and rode out of town. I thought I'd never see him again.

KAYE SYRAH – What happened next?

AGNES SHOTT – Two weeks later ... he sent me a stagecoach ticket and twenty dollars he had saved up and asked me to join him here in San Juan Capistrano. He called in a favor and got the job as stagecoach station master. Stages back then were not much more than bone jarring mud-wagons, but when I arrived in town he gave me a bouquet of daisies and took me to see Judge Egan to get married that day.

KAYE SYRAH – How romantic.

AGNES SHOTT – Not really. It wasn't romance so much as he he loved me as much as I loved him.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)
CUE-CARD – Oh ... My!

AGNES SHOTT – Buck's what you might call a man of action. I suppose. San Juan is a home station, so Buck can stay put and have a family.

KAYE SYRAH – Everyone in town says you sing just like a songbird. Entertaining in that swanky town of San Fran-cisco ... must have been hard to leave? Do you ever miss it?

AGNES SHOTT – (not answering) Never be afraid of something that you didn't plan for. That is where we all live.

(BUCK SHOTT comes in with dirt on his hands carrying several large bags - shaking his head and grumbling under his breath.)

AGNES SHOTT – If your heart's telling you to go then you better take the next stage, but if it's not ... Buck and I are here for you.

BUCK SHOTT – Looks like a wheel and axel need to be replaced ... Stage won't be leaving until tomorrow at the earliest. After I water and feed the horses ... Russell will start working on a fix.

(BUCK SHOT puts a big bag next to KAYE)

BUCK SHOTT – Oh and here. This needs to go with you Miss Kaye when you head back home.

KAYE SYRAH – With me? What do you mean?

BUCK SHOTT – Someone on the stage asked if I knew the way to your Vineyard ... and I told them you were here. They are pretty excited to meet you.

(BUCK SHOTT EXITS as KAYE'S GRANDFATHER ENTERS with a bouquet of random flowers he hands to KAYE)

GRANDFATHER – Kaye?! ... How did you know zat I would be coming in today? We wanted to surprise you.

KAYE SYRAH – Grandfather! Is that you? I've only seen you in photographs. Father said you'd never leave your winery in France.

GRANDFATHER – My little plum ... when I got zee telegram zat your Father and Mother ...

KAYE SYRAH – (interrupting) ... are missing!

GRANDFATHER – ... Missing ... of course. (changing subject) I knew zat we had to come to help you with your winery.

KAYE SYRAH – I can use all the help I can get. (hugging him) Grandfather you don't know how good it is to see you. My wagon is just outside let me get your bag. (beat) Wait ... You said "We"?

(The 3 French Cousins – Adélla, Bella, and Stella – come in with their carpet bags and speaking in French. See additional French phrases in back of the play. They all hug KAYE and kiss her on the cheeks then stand directly behind)

GRANDFATHER – Your three cousins ... Adélla, Bella, and Stella came with me ... not much reason for zem to stay in France when all zee vines started dying.

KAYE SYRAH – Your vineyard is dying?

GRANDFATHER – Not just mine ... as far as zee eye could see ... vineyards withered and looked as if zey had been ... how you say ... "set ablaze".

COUSINS – (Adélla, Bella, and Stella all looking down sadly) Vignes mortes ... si triste ... j'ai faim ... "a-blaze?"

GRANDFATHER – A vine or two would sicken, zee leaves turning yellow and red before dropping off. Zee second year zee vines were dead. Zee only answer was to uproot and burn zee stricken vines ... but zee blight spread.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Oh ... My!

GRANDFATHER – But zat is a world away. And WE are here. (changing the subject) In ancient Rome zey would say ... zere are five reasons for drinking ... zee arrival of a friend, one's present or future thirst, zee excellence of the wine, or ... any other reason. (laugh) We finished one last vintage and I brought zee last bottle to give you a taste of home.

(He pulls a bottle of wine from his bag and hands it to KAYE)

KAYE SYRAH – Oh My. Look ... it has the Syrah Family Vineyard Label on it. Exactly like ours. (showing the bottle)

GRANDFATHER – Exactly, your father used zee label our family has used for 50 years. “A little bit of France in America” he said in his letters to me.

(BUCK SHOTT and RUSSELL ENTER carrying luggage.)

BUCK SHOTT – Looks like you have a lot of work ahead of you fixing that coach Russell.

(The COUSINS drop their bags and approach RUSSELL.)

ONE COUSIN – Hello “Rus-sell”... I am Adelle.

RUSSELL GRUBB – That's a purdy name.

ONE COUSIN – Adelle means ... “sweet”. ... very sweet.

ONE COUSIN – And I am Bella ... which means “pretty”. Don't you think? (batting her eyes at RUSSELL)

RUSSELL GRUBB – Well I recon' ...

ONE COUSIN – And I am Stella ... which means “star”.

THE COUSINS – What does your name mean? Mr. “Rus-sell”?

RUSSELL GRUBB – Some think it's a kind of potato, but actually it means ... “the sound of walking on leaves”.

THE COUSINS – (The cousins all giggle) ... Leaves.

(RUSSELL looks at BUCK and the COUSINS)

RUSSELL – But ladies ... ahhh ... I ... have this gal I'm sort of sweet on so I ... better get fixing that stagecoach axel.

BUCK SHOTT – A very good idea.

(RUSSELL nervously EXITS)

AGNES SHOTT – (to KAYE) Men are like wine. Some turn to vinegar, but the best ones improve with age. (she hugs BUCK)

BUCK SHOTT – Looks like you won't be needing that stage just yet.

KAYE SYRAH – At least not today.

AGNES SHOTT – (to KAYE) Here are some of my famous muffins for your guests, to welcome them to San Juan Capistrano.

BUCK SHOTT – What did they ever do to you?

AGNES SHOTT – Pay him no never mind. I know the blueberry ones are atrocious. I won't eat them myself ... I gave you corn muffins. They are Buck's favorite.

KAYE SYRAH – Thank you for your kindness. "On - Yes"

AGNES SHOTT – Anytime dearie. And remember ... Life is all about not knowing what will come next and making the best of it. (beat) Now Skedaddle ... the lot of you.

(SOUND EFFECT – Telegraph STARTS)

(THE WIFE is writing down the telegraph message as the scene continues.)

GRANDFATHER – Adélla, Bella, and Stella ... Grab your bags ... Prenez vos sacs - out to zee wagon we go.

COUSINS – (in unison) Wagon. Oui. (they grab their bags)

GRANDFATHER – I forgot. A man I met on zee stagecoach who knows more about zee vines zan anyone I have met ... was asking about you.

(TOM MUNSON ENTERS with a bag and notes and papers in disarray under his arm. COUSINS see TOM MUNSON as they EXIT and wave at him flirtatiously speaking French.)

COUSINS – (giggling and talking to each other) ... il est beau ... Oh mon Dieu ... quel hunjk!

GRANDFATHER – Zhis is zee nice man I was talking about.

KAYE SYRAH – (showing joy and recognition) Thomas?

TOM MUNSON – Kaye! I came as soon as I heard the news.

GRANDFATHER – You know zis man?

KAYE SYRAH – Know him? We grew up together ... until his family packed up and moved lock-stock-and-barrel to Texas.

AGNES SHOTT – (to GRANDFATHER) They were childhood sweethearts. Just like peas and carrots.

TOM MUNSON – (to AGNES) Good to see you again Maam.

AGNES SHOTT – Likewise.

TOM MUNSON – (to KAYE) Oh, I see your Grandfather has given you that bottle. He showed it to me on the stagecoach. Be sure to save that one for a special moment.

(TOM gets close staring into KAYE's eyes.)

KAYE SYRAH – I will. Oh ... I will.

TOM MUNSON – Your father started writing to me about a year ago with questions about his grapes.

KAYE SYRAH – Really ... he never said a word about it.

TOM MUNSON – But my favorite topic ... was when he would write about you.

(KAYE EXITS crying)

TOM MUNSON – (calling after) Kaye ... was it something I said?

GRANDFATHER – Let her go ... Tout est bon ... all is good. Zose tears have been held inside too long I think. Come. Let us both see zose spécial vines you told me my son wrote about.

TOM MUNSON – The problem he wrote about ... concerns me more. Let's get out to examine the vineyards.

(TOM and GRANDFATHER EXIT)
(SOUND EFFECT - Telegraph STOPS)

AGNES SHOTT – Buck ... I got this telegraph about passengers coming in on the next stage. You recognize that name on the bottom of this list?

(AGNES hands the message to her husband.)

BUCK SHOTT – Smack bottom of my list too. I voted for the other guy. Maybe you should take a day to go visit your sister in Hemet.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)
CUE-CARD – Hemet?

AGNES SHOTT – That won't be necessary. I suspect he has forgotten me.

BUCK SHOTT – Forgotten you? Not possible! If I got a nickel for every time I saw someone as beautiful as you ... I'd only have five cents. (reaching out to hold her hand)

(BUCK and AGNES EXIT.)

FADE TO BLACK

ACT 1 SCENE 3

The Place: Hills outside San Juan Capistrano
Syrah Family Vineyard

When: Early in the Evening - 1884

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – The Syrah Family Vineyard

CUE-CARD – Early in the Evening

(GRANDFATHER is coming to the end of a story about Kaye's father. The COUSINS, ROSE and TOM are listening.)

GRANDFATHER – ... And Zat was when your father obtained a passport in Bordeaux and boarded zee vessel "Comète" under zee command of Captain Antoine Plassiard. Zey landed in zee Sandwich Islands. Then he sailed to Monterey and travelled to Los Angeles planting a vineyard where we now stand. Somewhere along zee way he met your mother and married her.

TOM MUNSON – In one letter your father said your mother insisted that he plant orange trees from Mission San Gabriel. He said he did it because she loved to make marmalade.

KAYE SYRAH – That is true. Mother loved ... I mean ... loves marmalade. I never knew that story. (starting to tear up)

GRANDFATHER – Maybe zis is a good time to look at zee vines Mr. Munson.

TOM MUNSON – Call me Tom, sir.

GRANDFATHER – "Tom-sir"?

TOM MUNSON – No just ... Tom.

GRANDFATHER – Let us look at zee vines ... "Just-Tom".

TOM MUNSON – Close enough ... I suppose. (beat) Excuse us ladies we will be right back.

KAYE SYRAH – Don't be too long. (looking lovingly at TOM)

(TOM and the GRANDFATHER EXIT)

ROSE MADEIRA – He is a good one KAYE ... almost too good to be true. I wouldn't let him get away ... again. Unless of course you are not interested ... then I might ...

KAYE SYRAH – I'm interested ... I mean ... if he ... well you know ...

ROSE MADEIRA – I know exactly what you mean. Anyway ... I am kind of sweet on the local blacksmith ... Russell.

KAYE SYRAH – You can never have too many horseshoes ...

ROSE MADEIRA – No ... what would horses do without shoes?

KAYE SYRAH – Probably good if we changed the subject now ...

ROSE MADEIRA – Were we talking about something?

KAYE SYRAH – Not at all ...

(GRANDFATHER and TOM return holding several bunches of grapes in their hands.)

TOM MUNSON – We have been looking at your grapes falling off the vines.

GRANDFATHER – We must harvest and crush them immediately.

TOM MUNSON – I will spread the word that it is time.

(TOM EXITS to the vineyards)

KAYE SYRAH – My father created a press that by turning a lever ... grapes would give up their juice. Unfortunately, the press is broken and there is no way to crush the grapes.

GRANDFATHER – Well zen ... we will just have to do zee crush like when I was zee boy... zee old fashion way ...

KAYE SYRAH – (interrupting) By hand?

GRANDFATHER – ... No ... by foot. Still zee best way to crush zee grapes.

(TOM'S) OFFSTAGE VOICE – Right this way folks.

(TOM returns with the COUSINS, BUCK, AGNES and RUSSELL and any EXTRAs you might have around.)

BUCK SHOTT – Word has it that you might need some help.

AGNES SHOTT – It's been years since we helped pick grapes ... but we can give it a go.

KAYE SYRAH – We need all the hands we can get. Thank you so much.

TOM MUNSON – I took the liberty of inviting people from the town to help in the harvest and crush ... I hope you don't mind?

KAYE SYRAH – Not at all ...

GRANDFATHER – Bring over zat barrel ...

KAYE SYRAH – That old thing? It hasn't been used since before I was born.

(The COUSINS, ROSE and RUSSELL, and BUCK bring over a large cut off barrel that is roughly the size of a child's wading pool. In it the COUSINS will be singing the song and stomping the grapes that others are bringing.)

GRANDFATHER – Zen it is over-due. Your cousins know what needs to be done. We did zis every year since zey were children.

(Everyone goes back to the vineyards and returns with boxes full of grapes for stomping.)

The song is sung by the Grandfather or Tom or Rose and then joined in by everyone as the wine is crushed. The Cousins remove shoes and begin crushing the grapes that are brought over in the large cut off barrel.)

(MUSIC BEGINS)

SONG – Wine – Wine - Wine

By Billy Gaston and Gary McCarver

Why do we do all the things that we do
and why are we happy or shy or are blue?
What do we do when we're needing some cheer,
just forget the cider, or coffee or beer?
Why are we mushy and foolish at times?
and why do we spend all our nickels and dimes?
It's wine that's the answer to every old pun,
and I'd sooner be dead than to be with-out some

CHORUS

Oh! You, wine, wine, wine
to live with-out you is a crime.
Oh! You wine, wine, wine
We love you and you are sublime.
We can do without dancing and dining
and to live without spring-time is fine,
but I'm darned if we ever can do with-out
Wine, wine, wine

REPEAT CHORUS

(At the end of the song the barefoot cousins step out of the tub with purple feet and are offered towels to wipe them off.)

TOM MUNSON – Sample it. (takes a ladle from the barrel where grapes are crushed and hand it to the GRANDFATHER)

GRANDFATHER – (tasting) Magnifique, how-you-say amazing.

(TOM helps the COUSINS and ROSE EXIT)

(SOUND EFFECT: a horse arriving.)

OFFSTAGE VOICE – WHOA! I said whoa.

(THE BARRON walks from around the grape vines behind the barn house while dusting himself off. He approaches KAYE and the GRANDFATHER)

THE BARRON – What a beautiful piece of land you have here. (beat) Miss Syrah. That is ... who you are?

KAYE SYRAH – Yes sir. Kay Syrah. And who might you be

THE BARRON – My name is Barron Victor Von Vineus ... Land speculator “par excellence”. My card.

(THE BARRON hands KAYE an extremely large calling card)

KAYE SYRAH – That is quite a calling card.

THE BARRON – Never do anything in a small way I always say. It is my understanding that things have not been going very well for you and I wanted to make sure you did not lose everything. I have wanted to purchase this property for several years ... and since your parents are ...

KAYE SYRAH – (interrupting to stop him) Ahhh ...

THE BARRON – (continuing) ... “missing”. It seems that you are in a little over your head.

KAYE SYRAH – We just harvested the grapes and now that my Grandfather, Adélla, Bella, and Stella are here I am certain ...

(TOM MUNSON comes from around the corner of the barn holding a bunch of withered grapes. TOM and BARRON stare at each other.)

THE BARRON – You must be the misguided Mr. Munson. Miss Kaye ... has he told you the REAL REASON that he is here?

KAYE SYRAH – Tom ... Is there something that I should know?

THE BARRON – It seems that your friend Mr. Munson thinks that the grape blight has attacked your vineyards as it has throughout the valley. And I suspect that he will tell you “proof” in his hands.

KAYE SYRAH – Tom ... is this so?

TOM MUNSON – (to THE BARRON) Yes ... but I don't know how you know that ... I submitted survey reports to Sacramento, but they ignored my findings. How did ...?

THE BARRON – (to TOM) I'm sorry, I have neither the patience, the time, nor the coloring crayons to explain it all to you.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Boo ... Hiss!

THE BARRON – (to KAYE) There you have it Miss KAYE. Even your misguided friend believes that your vineyard will soon be worthless. It seems that I am the only thing between you and ruin.

KAYE SYRAH – (to TOM) Is this true?

TOM MUNSON – I did report that I surveyed blight affecting vines from Anaheim south, but ...

THE BARRON – (interrupting) I have written a check which I believe is a fair price to take this worthless land off of your hands.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Boo ... Hiss!

THE BARRON – As an act of good faith ... I am giving this check to you to hold until ten o'clock in the morning. (Handing KAYE a check). I will be back with a deed. Simply sign the vineyards over to me and the check is yours to keep. Refuse and I will take my check and be on my way.

KAYE SYRAH – (reading the check) One thousand dollars?!

TOM MUNSON – The land is worth ten times that amount!

THE BARRON – It's a fair price for worthless hillsides. Think about it. But don't think too long ... I will be back tomorrow precisely at ten for your decision.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)
CUE-CARD – Boo ... Hiss!

(THE BARRON EXITS)

KAYE SYRAH – (face to face) You knew about this?!

TOM MUNSON – It is not exactly what he is saying. He must have had something to do with my report being ignored in Sacramento.

KAYE SYRAH – You said that you could help ... but you are as helpless as we all are.

TOM MUNSON – I hoped to explain after the grapes were picked.

KAYE SYRAH – That is enough ... you gave me hope. (beat)
You could have been honest!

TOM MUNSON – But if you will let me explain ...

KAYE SYRAH – (interrupting) Not another word from you.
(grabbing the grapes from TOM) I ... think you should Leave.

(KAYE EXITS rushing off crying)

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)
CUE-CARD – That's So Sad!

(ROSE walks over to TOM)

ROSE MADEIRA – A good man can make you feel strong,
sexy and able to take on the whole world. Oh ... wait ... that's
wine that does that.

(ROSE EXITS)

TOM MUNSON – Thanks Rose.

(TOM hesitates and then EXITS rushing off after KAYE.)

TOM MUNSON – KAYE ... (calling out after KAYE) Kaye ...
I'm so ... so sorry. Let me explain.

(Everyone EXITS except for THE BARRON who ENTERS
centerstage to sing a song.)

(MUSIC BEGINS)

(start with the vamp - repeat vamp several times)

THE BARRON – There you all are ... I suppose you would like
to throw a foam rock or two my way.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Boo ... Hiss!

THE BARRON – But before you throw that first stone ... Have
you ever wondered if you are a hero or a villain? Maybe you're
a villain and you don't even know it? Let me ask you - How
many of you out there occasionally break the rules ... even a
little?

THE BARRON – Raise your hands. If so, you might just be a
villain and I have a song just for you.

(OPTIONAL: Make this an audience participation sing along.)

SONG – THE VILLAIN'S SONG

By Theodore Morse and Gary McCarver

VERSE

In - the dark of night - in faint moonlight - without a sound
That's - where I will be - the Villain's life - is one for me.
When you have to choose to help the many or the one ...
always choose to help yourself - because it is much more fun.
Come and see - you'll agree. - You'll wish - that you - were me.

CHORUS

(So) Sing - the Villain's song.

We've all done wrong - you know it's true.

Every scheme or plot that's made - to my ear's - a serenade.

Every - "boo" or "hiss" - is like a kiss - just wait and see.

There - is no - debate. Winning is great!

A Villain's life - for - me.

REPEAT CHORUS

There - is no - debate. Winning is great!

A Villain's life - for - me.

A Villain's life - for - me.

(THE BARRON EXITS after applause/rocks)

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Intermission!

FADE TO BLACK

INTERMISSION

WELCOME BACK FROM INTERMISSION

SONG – San Juan Blues

By Dave Ringle, Fred Meinken, and Gary McCarver

(The Entire Cast ENTERS to sing and dance)

VERSE

Pack up all your troubles and get here on the double
if you choose to roam.
Capistrano's sweet and it's a place that's hard to beat
you'll want to call it home.
Pretty vineyards you'll get to see,
The stage-coach visits at ten, noon, and three.
Each little swallow guides you to where you're s'posed to be.

CHORUS

Oh, those San Juan Blues ...
that means, you're overdue,
You'll hear that stage go by ...
it's like a lullaby.
(those) Mission bells that ring,
(they'll) taunt you in your dreams
So, pack your travlin' shoes,
and lose, your San Juan Blues.

Oh, those San Juan Blues ...
that means, you're overdue,
One Place you'll long to be ...
It makes you want to see,
(those) Mission bells that ring,
The soothing old hot springs.
So, pack your travlin' shoes,
and lose, your San Juan Blues.

FADE TO BLACK

ACT 2 SCENE 1

The Place: Hills outside San Juan Capistrano
Syrah Family Vineyard

When: Late at Night

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – San Juan Capistrano 1884

CUE-CARD – The Syrah Family Vineyard

CUE-CARD – Late at Night

(Candles are flickering - after dinner conversation in progress.)

TOM MUNSON – A meal and a glass of wine can't undo all misunderstandings ... but I am glad you accepted my apology.

ROSE MADEIRA – What exactly happened during intermission between you two?

COUSINS – We will clear zee table ... Good night.

KAYE SYRAH – (to TOM) I am still angry with you for not telling me the whole story ... but your heart was in the right place.

(COUSINS clear plates and cups and EXIT. TOM grabs a basket then EXITS himself.)

KAYE SYRAH – (to GRANDFATHER) Grandfather, I was told you were afraid to travel.

GRANDFATHER – Your cousins insisted we make zee journey to see you. We are all afraid of things. Some of zee future. But it is a future we all know. Zere will be joy ... zere will be sorrow. Zee secret is to ask ... "What would I do if I were not afraid". So, I booked passage to see you.

KAYE SYRAH – I am so glad you did.

GRANDFATHER – After we pulled up zee last vines to be burned ... zere was nothing holding me in France.

KAYE SYRAH – And now you have arrived in time to see another vineyard be destroyed ...

GRANDFATHER – What did zee grape say when it was crushed? Nothing. (beat) It just let out ... a little wine.

KAYE SYRAH – (laughs)

GRANDFATHER – Running any winery is zee struggle ... but one with patience zee vines would renew with life each year ... your father knew zat. But zis time it is different ...

(ROSE looks behind some barrels in the tasting room of the winery. She finds several bottles hidden with notes on each.)

ROSE MADEIRA – (changing subject) What's your favorite wine?

GRANDFATHER – Same answer always. Zee open bottle in front of me!

KAYE SYRAH – My father's special collection of wine ... I have not had the courage to look in there. He said he saved them "to remember yesterday and celebrate tomorrow".

ROSE MADEIRA – No time like the present.

GRANDFATHER – Your friend she is right. We have until morning ... we might as well share zee good bottle of wine. Let's see what your father has hidden away for us.

(GRANDFATHER joins ROSE to examine several of the collection of bottles.)

GRANDFATHER – Wine is not only for zee special occasion.

ROSE MADEIRA – Look at the bottles. They have notes tied to them. This one is dated "18-69" and says ... "Our First Vintage".

GRANDFATHER – With every bottle shared, whether in consolation or celebration, zere is a moment of remembrance.

ROSE MADEIRA – This one has your birthday on it Kaye and the note says ... “Best Day Ever”.

GRANDFATHER – The day you were born. Zat is one very special day.

(KAYE grabs her handkerchief and dries a tear from her eye.)

(ROSE continues to look at the bottles placing them from up onto the top of a wine barrel and then reading the labels.)

ROSE MADEIRA – Look ... this one says ... Oh my. (Stops)

KAYE SYRAH – What does it say?

ROSE MADEIRA – It says ... “Save for Kaye’s wedding”.

KAYE SYRAH – Oh my! ... (another snuffle)

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Oh My!

ROSE MADEIRA – Here’s one that says ... “My Favorite Red”.

GRANDFATHER – Zhat is zee one to open.

(GRANDFATHER opens the bottle of wine)

KAYE SYRAH – Grandfather ... I have to know ... how can you bear that you never had the chance to say goodbye to my parents.

ROSE MADEIRA – That’s just so sad.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – That’s So Sad

GRANDFATHER – Kaye. I can sum up everything I have learned about life in ... “What will be will be”.

(GRANDFATHER EXITS)

(Lights begin to fade except for a spotlight on KAYE as she walks center stage.)

(ROSE pats KAYE on the back and then EXITS)

KAYE SYRAH – (talking to herself) I suppose they are right. But it is just so hard to say goodbye. (stifling a tear)

(MUSIC STARTS)

SONG – Hard to Say Goodbye

By J. Will Callahan, Paul Pratt, and Gary McCarver

Yesterday seemed like a garden.
Fragrant with vineyards in bloom,
(but) Just like a flower that bloomed for an hour,
Now it's gone far too soon.
Still I must live as the time it rolls on,
Still I would dream of those days
now long gone.

CHORUS

Hard to say the word goodbye ...
It just brings grief and pain.
Although it seems, I prefer dreams,
(That) Happiness will come again.
What's left behind are mem'rys
sweetest that lips can tell.
It's all in the past
Sorrows don't last ...
So, I'll just say farewell.

(KAYE starts to sob and EXITS in tears)

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – That's So Sad

FADE TO BLACK

ACT 2 SCENE 2

The Place: The Stagecoach Station

When: The Next Morning - 1884

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – The Stagecoach Station

CUE-CARD – The Next Morning

(The scene opens with THE BARRON sitting at the small table in the front of the stagecoach station. BUCK SHOT ENTERS with a coffee pot and two coffee mugs.)

BUCK SHOTT – So ... what will you have sir? ... A mysterious concoction my wife calls “slumgullion,” her lethally black coffee, or a “nasty compound of dried apples” masquerading under the name of apple pie.

THE BARRON – I am not sure whether to commend your honesty or your excellent sarcasm.

BUCK SHOTT – Perhaps a little of both.

THE BARRON – I will have a cup of coffee and some apple pie ... without so much nastiness in it.

BUCK SHOTT – Coming right up. (Starting to leave)

THE BARRON – Leave an extra cup - and make that pie for two.

(BUCK EXITS to fetch the grub as the SENATOR ENTERS from the stagecoach.)

SENATOR – Well there you are ... you ... old conman. Now for what reason on earth did you tell me to meet you in this dam town? You know ... a town with a “dam” right up in the valley.

THE BARRON – Fowler Fairweather ... I brought you here to California’s wine country because I’ve been told that you are a wine enthusiast.

SENATOR – That is so true. The more wine I drink, the more enthusiastic I get. I have told you to call me “Senator”.

THE BARRON – But Fowler you only RAN for senator ... and you LOST the election.

SENATOR – ... I only lost the popular vote. (beat) So I will be running again in the next election. And since incumbents have the advantage ... I am telling everyone to call me “Senator”. And since you are throwing stones ... what “country” is it exactly that gave you the title “Barron”?

THE BARRON – I get your point. How was your trip, “Senator”?

SENATOR – See ... now doesn’t that sound better?

THE BARRON – Enough with the pleasantries. The reason I called you here is that I am one property away from getting that wine vineyards monopoly we discussed years ago when you were only a records clerk. Remember?

SENATOR – A monopoly? I have one of the best memories in Sacramento, (beat) but I must not have been paying attention. If you would be so kind as to remind me ...

THE BARRON – (interrupting) With your help ... I have been able to purchase most of the wineries for a song.

SENATOR – How precisely did I help you?

THE BARRON – That report that Tom Munson wrote ... gave me the ammunition I needed.

SENATOR – I actually thought you could make a positive difference, not take advantage of the situation.

THE BARRON – I read Munson's report. Most was scientific mumbo jumbo about grafting and a list of chemicals, but it did list one way that would save grapes from the blight caused a little bug called phylloxera win.

SENATOR – So it is a bug causing the wine blight?

THE BARRON – Out in the distance you will see a dam. That report said one way to save my vineyards is to flood them with water ... and the easiest way to do that is with a few well-placed sticks of dynamite.

SENATOR – A flood will not endear you to Sacramento.

THE BARRON – Flooding is the only solution. (looking at pocket watch) When that dam bursts Ten Minutes after Noon Tomorrow ... it will send a 90-foot wave blotting out the lives of those insects feeding on the roots of my vineyards.

SENATOR – But what about the lives of the farmers, ranchers, and their families.

THE BARRON – Accidents do happen. I don't have to apologize to you ... or anyone ...

SENATOR – I don't think anyone would accept your apology anyway.

THE BARRON – Sometimes sacrifices must be made for the sake of the many.

SENATOR – Or in your case ... the few.

THE BARRON – (interrupting) LISTEN ... just be sure to be out of town by NOON tomorrow.

(SENATOR rises to leave but is blocked by THE BARRON)

SENATOR – I can't let you get away with this. If you will excuse me ... I believe that it's time to leave on the next stage.

(SENATOR turns to leave again)

THE BARRON – Not so fast! "If you're in for a penny ... you are in for a pound". What would the voters of this fine State think of you if the newspaper found out your part in all of this?

SENATOR – But that is a LIE! I never! You're the one that ...

THE BARRON – (interrupting) ... Believing a lie is easy – if told often enough and loud enough.

SENATOR – You are reprehensible.

THE BARRON – So true. Sit and have a cup of coffee.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Boo ... Hiss!

(SENATOR sits as BUCK returns from the back with plates of “Apple Pie” for each.)

BUCK SHOTT – Enjoy your food gentlemen.

(BUCK EXITS again)

THE BARRON – (To the Senator) I took the liberty of ordering you some apple pie to go with your coffee.

SENATOR – (looking at the food) Are you sure that’s food.

THE BARRON – (To the Senator) I’m not quite sure myself.

SENATOR – (Taking a bite and gasps. Takes a sip of the coffee and gasps.) First you try to extort me then you try to poison me.

(SENATOR EXITS mumbling to himself)

THE BARRON – (calling after the senator) You have NO CHOICE in the matter if you want that title of “Senator” to be a real one. Remember ... be out of town by NOON tomorrow.

(THE BARRON EXITS after THE SENATOR)

(BUCK and his wife ENTER. They both look at each other.)

BUCK SHOTT – The walls are thin ... you heard what I heard.

AGNES SHOTT – I’m afraid so.

BUCK SHOTT – The sheriff is out of town. Kaye’s vineyards are just below the dam ... we better tell her what’s about to happen.

AGNES SHOTT – I do love a man of action. (cozying over to BUCK) I was talking to Miss Kaye about how we met, and I remembered that song we used to sing. Do you remember it?

(MUSIC STARTS)

(BUCK sings verse and AGNES joins in the chorus echo.)

SONG – City on a Hill

By Seymore Brown, Albert Gumble, and Gary McCarver

In the City on the hill she’d entertain.
Such a beau-ty waits for me, and Ag-ness is her name.
When we wandered down the lane.
Just we two and she was grieving ‘cause
I kept leaving ... but then I promised to be true.

CHORUS

When the honey suckle vine,	(AGNES ECHOES)
twines itself around the door.	(AGNES ECHOES)
a sweet heart mine,	(AGNES ECHOES)
is waiting patiently for me,	(BUCK SINGS)
I can hear the whip-poor-will,	(AGNES ECHOES)
Tell me softly from the hill	(AGNES ECHOES)
her mem’ry haunts me,	(BUCK SINGS)
because you want me,	(AGNES SINGS)
I’ll come back to San Francisco.	(BUCK SINGS)

BUCK SHOTT – Weren’t we in a hurry to do something.

AGNES & BUCK (in Unison) – “The Flood”!

AGNES SHOTT – You’re right ... we better saddle up the horses and head to KAYE’s vineyard to see what we can do.

(BUCK and AGNES rush off.)

FADE TO BLACK

ACT 2 SCENE 3

The Place: Hills outside San Juan Capistrano
Syrah Family Vineyard

When: Later That Day

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – The Syrah Family Vineyard

CUE-CARD – Later That Day

ROSE MADEIRA – Kaye ... Did you know that wine doesn't make you fat?

KAYE SYRAH – Oh really?

ROSE MADEIRA – It makes you “lean”. Against tables, chairs, floors and walls.

KAYE SYRAH – It is nearly 10 am and ... and that “Barron” will be back for his answer. Looks like we will have to take his offer.

ROSE MADEIRA – ... I am sure that Tom ...

KAYE SYRAH – Tom? ... I don't know what good he will be able to do.

(THE BARRON ENTERS and walks over to talk to KAYE looking at his pocket watch)

THE BARRON – TIME is of the essence. So ... have you made your decision?

(TOM MUNSON ENTERS)

(TOM walks over to the supply of bottles KAYE's father saved, but grabs the bottle that her Grandfather brought from France and holds it up in the light)

TOM MUNSON – KAYE ... I think this is that moment to open that bottle of Syrah Family wine to prove to The Barron here the special value of this particular plot of land.

KAYE SYRAH – But that bottle is the one that Grandfather ...

TOM MUNSON – (interrupting) The bottle your Grandfather ... would love to share.

TOM MUNSON – (to KAYE quietly) Trust me.

(TOM hands the bottle to the GRANDFATHER to uncork it.)

GRANDFATHER – I understand ... allow me.

(SOUND EFFECT – uncorking sound.)

THE BARRON – This part of the state is planted entirely with the mission grape ... a wretched dreggy wine.

TOM MUNSON – Wine is one of the things that make life worthwhile. I can tell you are a true connoisseur ...

THE BARRON – I do like to think so.

TOM MUNSON – And you know the true value of a great wine. I will let you in on a secret ... KAYE's father was a man ahead of his time.

(TOM pours a taste of wine in a glass)

THE BARRON – Wait! I can smell the aroma from here ... is that Black Burgundy?

TOM MUNSON – A single cutting from France. One he coaxed to maturity to produce a special wine. Try it ...

(THE BARRON swirls the glass and sips.)

THE BARRON – It is as if I am no longer in California ... light and sound disappear. Artistry. Perfection.

TOM MUNSON – California is the land of the vine. And can there be no doubt that we can produce the finest wine?

THE BARRON – You have changed my mind.

TOM MUNSON – Not only this wine ... but this entire vineyard is the home to new varieties of grapes ... like the Flaming Tokay, the Rose of Peru, and the white Muscat.

KAYE SYRAH – Is that true?

TOM MUNSON – (to KAYE) Your father planted them hidden between rows of Mission grapes. He detailed all of this in his letters to me.

(TOM holds up the letters for all to see)

GRANDFATHER – Kaye it is true. I sent zem to him.

THE BARRON – I must have this vineyard.

KAYE SYRAH – Not for one thousand dollars you won't. (giving the check back to THE BARRON) You may know wine ... but you don't know the human heart. ...

THE BARRON – I don't believe that you realize that I hold the winning cards my dear. I own the vineyards that surround you as far as the eye can see and as the main shareholder of the Water District ... I control the water you need to survive.

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Oh My!

KAYE SYRAH – Is that true Rose?

ROSE MADEIRA – To meet financial obligations, my Father had to sell to this despicable man. We could not pay the mortgage. I was going to tell you.

THE BARRON – Because I want to be magnanimous ... I will double my offer ... \$2000 ... a more than fair price.

TOM MUNSON – Hold on there ... (TOM whispers to KAYE)

KAYE SYRAH – I am afraid that you do not realize that we have our own irrigation system from artesian wells. You will not have this vineyard for one penny less than \$10,000.

THE BARRON – \$10,000? Absurd! And people said I was a villain ... Totally unacceptable.

(TOM is whispering into KAYE's ear again)

KAYE SYRAH – Fine ... then it looks as if you have failed. So sorry. You can leave any time now.

THE BARRON – I never fail! Fine ... will you take a check?

KAYE SYRAH – I would prefer gold.

THE BARRON – Fine. Ten thousand in gold if you sign right here Miss KAYE. (THE BARRON holds a deed of sale)

KAYE SYRAH – You have a deal.

(KAYE signs the paper and hands it over as she receives two canvass bags of gold coins. THE BARRON puts the deed in his jacket pocket while looking at his pocket watch.)

THE BARRON – I see you have already started packing ... so then it won't be hard to have you out of my Winery within the hour.

ROSE MADEIRA – I'm sorry I called you despicable ... it was obvious to everyone ... so I thought you knew.

THE BARRON – Bahhhh! I will take this ... remember ... one hour ... not a minute longer. (He grabs the bottle and EXITS)

KAYE SYRAH – (rushing to TOM) Thank you for turning \$1000 into \$10,000. Tom. I could kiss you

(TOM and KAYE gaze into each other's eyes)

TOM MUNSON – Then ... what's stopping you.

(TOM and KAYE embrace)

FADE TO BLACK

ACT 2 SCENE 4

The Place: San Juan Capistrano Stage Station

When: The Next Day - Almost Noon

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – The Stage Station

CUE-CARD – Almost Noon

(BUCK SHOTT and his WIFE welcome KAYE,
GRANDFATHER and THE COUSINS all arriving with bags.)

AGNES SHOTT – Welcome back.

BUCK SHOTT – Looks like you brought half the town with you.

KAYE SYRAH – I think it is about time I take that stage Buck.
You have tickets for my family.

(TOM MUNSON rushes into the Station)

TOM MUNSON – I will take care of that and you will find
several crates that you can ship to my vineyards in Texas when
you get the chance. (TOM hands BUCK SHOTT a large wad of
money with a telegram order.) And if you could have your wife
send off this telegram right away ... I would be much obliged.

BUCK SHOTT – Sure thing Mr. Munson ... but I think you paid
me too much.

TOM MUNSON – You deserve it.

(TOM and KAYE hold hands. BUCK hands AGNES a telegram.)

AGNES SHOTT – Sorry to see you go dearie. (looking at the
telegram order then speaking to Tom) Is this true?

TOM MUNSON – After study of native wild grape vines ... I
discovered several that are immune to blight. Those are
shipping arrangements with my vineyards in Texas to send
rootstock to California.

KAYE SYRAH – You have vineyards in Texas?

TOM MUNSON – I have about 5000 acres planted with blight-resistant rootstock and they are ready to be sent to California.

BUCK SHOTT – Well that would be a good start.

TOM MUNSON – Unfortunately, Southern California vines are too far gone for grafting.

KAYE SYRAH – So ... what are the vines for ...

TOM MUNSON – During intermission I met with The Senator and he told me that vineyards are being planted in northern California in Sonoma, Napa, Lake and El Dorado counties and they could use my help.

ROSE MADEIRA – Who would ever want wine from there?

TOM MUNSON – With strong rootstock ... they should recover ... I am sending half of my rootstock supply up north.

BUCK SHOTT – You do know he's not a real Senator?

TOM MUNSON – When the state finds out he helped save the wine industry ... he will be.

(RUSSELL GRUB ENTERS leading the BARRON on stage wearing handcuffs. RUSSELL GRUB is holding a large bundle of dynamite with a clock attached to it.)

RUSSELL GRUB – Buck and Agnes tipped told me to head up to the dam and I saw that Barron was up to no good. Good thing that the sheriff deputized me before he left town. (shows a badge) Good thing I know how to disarm one of these.

(RUSSELL GRUB shows the dynamite bundle to the audience then tosses it to one cast member who tosses it to another)

AGNES SHOTT – (ASIDE) That is an amazingly convenient coincidence. (said to the BARRON) But Barron ... why in tartation would you want to blow up the dam?

THE BARRON – It is the only way to save the vineyards. And what would the world be without wine?

BUCK SHOTT – Good thought ... but the worst possible way to accomplish it.

TOM MUNSON – The Professor misread my report ... flooding only works for one season ... those pests just come back in 2 or 3 years. Sure, I listed flooding and chemicals as possible solutions, but the only lasting way to save grapes is through grafting vines to resistant rootstock. The rest are impractical ... if he had read the whole report.

THE BARRON – I should not have just skimmed. Curses!

RUSSELL GRUB – Good thing the Sherriff left me his extra handcuffs.

THE BARRON – CURSES!

RUSSELL GRUB – With the Barron behind bars Kaye ... it looks like you'll be get'in your vineyard back and you gets to keep the money that Barron gave you. I'm about to take him to the hoosegow to lock him up. Any last words Barron?

THE BARRON – Only this ... You've not seen the last of Barron Victor von Vineus ... CURSES foiled AGAIN.

(RUSSELL GRUB has his gun drawn as he talks with THE BARRON leading him off stage in handcuffs.)

RUSSELL GRUB – Again? Has this happened to you before?

THE BARRON – Interestingly enough ... it has. I should have learned from that ... but you know what they say about old dogs and new tricks ...

(RUSSEL EXITS with THE BARRON)

TOM MUNSON – Couldn't happen to a more deserving man.

ROSE MADEIRA – I guess everything happens for a "Riesling".

GRANDFATHER – So, Mr. Murton ... Will zis “grafting” of yours really work?

TOM MUNSON – Absolutely. The pesky critters remain, but grapes flourish anywhere there is good soil, sun, water, and a family to help the vines do what they do best.

GRANDFATHER – In zat case ... what will you be doing with zee other half of your rootstocks? Grape growing in France is nearly coming to its end. Perhaps ...?

TOM MUNSON – ... Your Grandfather has an excellent idea. I will send the rootstock to France and start with your family vineyards.

GRANDFATHER – Send them? ... You should take them.
(to KAYE) Kaye ... then I can show you your home in France. Your father and mother would like zat ... I think?

KAYE SYRAH – (to Grandfather) I know they would. (beat)
(taking TOM's hand) But ... only if you will be going too?

TOM MUNSON – I took the liberty of bringing along this bottle that your father set aside. The one that says ...

(TOM shows KAYE the bottle to read)

KAYE SYRAH – (long pause) ... for “KAYE's Wedding”?

TOM MUNSON – (getting down on one knee showing a large diamond ring) I meant to do this a long time ago. Kaye ... if you'll do me the honor. Not as big as I'd like it. So ... what do you say?

KAYE SYRAH – Of course I do ... I mean I will ... I mean yes!

(PAGE TURNER – Shows cards then EXITS)

CUE-CARD – Oh My!

(TOM and KAYE embrace as he gives her the ring and she puts it on her finger)

(SOUND EFFECT – horses and stagecoach)

BUCK SHOTT – Right this way folks ... the stage is leaving for docks at San Francisco. Where a ship will take you to France.

(BUCK SHOTT directs everyone towards the stage coach and everyone EXITS except BUCK and AGNES.)

BUCK SHOTT – (to his wife) Looks like I'm a stagecoach man in what will soon be "train town". Agnes ... after all these years ... you still glad we got hitched?

AGNES SHOTT – Years ... it's nothing but a number. Doesn't really matter unless, you happen to be a bottle of wine.

BUCK SHOTT – You know ... we've got two extra seats on the stage. I've earned some time off ... so ... you want to maybe spend a few days in San-Fran-Cisco?

AGNES SHOTT – Why would I ever want to do that ... I have everything I ever need (taking his hand) ... right here. (a kiss)

BUCK SHOTT – I couldn't agree more.

(BUCK SHOTT and HIS WIFE EXIT hand in hand through the other door She kisses him on the cheek.)

(SOUND EFFECT – Stagecoach and horses)

FADE TO BLACK

EPILOGUE

(Optional scene to match the optional Prologue)

The Place: San Juan Capistrano

When: Moments Later

(Lights come up on the table with the Narrator and his wife)

NARRATOR's WIFE – Jean-Claude ... that was simply beautiful and perfect story. I remember it all now. (beat) We were on that stage attacked by bandits ... weren't we?

NARRATOR – What is zee perfect story anyway? A story need not be long to be perfect. (changing subject) Kaye and Tom found each other again and that's all that matters.

(The Narrator's Wife walks on stage and looks at the winery and picks up a bottle with a note on it about Kaye's birthday.)

NARRATOR's WIFE – (reading the note) This note you wrote ... "Best day ever". (beat) She was the perfect daughter you know.

NARRATOR – On zat ... you and I will always agree. Mon Cher.

NARRATOR's WIFE – Do you remember what happened next?

NARRATOR – But of course. Tom's plan saved wine ... not just here and in France, but everywhere. You wouldn't believe it ... but France awarded him zee Legion of Honor and zay made him zee knight ... for saving zee wine of France.

NARRATOR's WIFE – The Medal of Honor. I remember.

NARRATOR – Thanks to "Thomas Volney Munson" and the roots he grew ... zere is a taste of America in each glass of wine! Without him this fine audience would not have had wine at intermission.

NARRATOR's WIFE – You do know it is merely wine dear.

NARRATOR – “Merely” wine? ... “Merely” wine?

(Holding up his glass of wine then setting it down on the table as he continues.)

NARRATOR – Angelica ... no wine is “merely” wine. Wine is not just wine ... it is a dream of wine ... zat may never come again.

(A very bright light shines from back stage They start walking towards the light.)

NARRATOR's WIFE – I think that our stagecoach has arrived Jean-Claude. Are you ready?

(The NARRATOR retrieves his wine glass.)

NARRATOR – Almost forgot ... I can-not leave without zis. My favorite glass. (referencing his wine glass in his hand)

NARRATOR'S WIFE – Of course not. That would never do.

NARRATOR – You know I was zee one zat suggested zee name “Orange County”.

NARRATOR's WIFE – Really? Is that so?

NARRATOR – Most people were growing grapes or raising hogs, but “Orange County” sounds so much better than Vineland or Hogton. Don't you think.

NARRATOR's WIFE – Whatever you say dear. I was always very fond of my small grove of oranges that you planted. When Kaye returned from France ... she covered the hillsides with them.

NARRATOR – ... Sacrebleau ... will you look at that ...

(Both stop and look into the light)

NARRATOR'S WIFE – It is ...

NARRATOR – ... So beautiful.

NARRATOR'S WIFE – You know we can't come back.

NARRATOR – Why ... do you think I brought my favorite glass?

NARRATOR'S WIFE – How do you know they have wine there?

NARRATOR – Well ... it would not be 'heaven' ... without it.

(NARRATOR and WIFE walk hand in hand into the light with the following dialogue coming from offstage.)

(KAYE) OFFSTAGE VOICE – Mother? Father?

(ANGELICA) OFFSTAGE – Look. There's Kaye and Tom.

(TOM) OFFSTAGE VOICE – Good to see you again sir.

(NARRATOR) OFFSTAGE VOICE – Zee pleasure ... it is all mine.

FINAL FADE TO BLACK

CURTAIN CALL

SONG – Oh Those Days

By Harold Atteridge, Sigmund Romberg, and Gary McCarver
(Song to use while everyone comes out for bows & applause)

Oh, those days with Heroes and with Villains!
Oh, those days, where men were strong and will 'in.
Your best plans might go astray,
but a plot twist saves the day,
with Cue-Cards!

Oh, those days of cads and haughty charmers
with their evil ways.
When you thought the worst would follow,
it all turns out, thanks to a Hero,
in Melodrama days.

REPEAT CHORUS

LIST OF CUE-CARD SIGNS

San Juan Capistrano 1884

The Syrah Family Vineyard

Late at Night

The Stagecoach Station

The Next Morning

Oh My!

Early in the Evening

Late at Night

**That's So Sad
Hemet?**

Boo ... Hiss!

Intermission

Almost Noon

Shameless Plug

SIGNS TO DISPLAY ON STAGECOACH STATION WALL

While in the Stagecoach:

Gentlemen must refrain from the use of rough language in the presence of ladies and children.

Don't snore loudly while sleeping or use your fellow passengers shoulder for a pillow - friction may result.

Buffalo robes are provided for your comfort in cold weather. Hogging robes will not be tolerated, and the offender will be made to ride with the driver.

In the event of runaway horses remain calm. Leaping from the coach in panic will leave you injured, at the mercy of the elements, hostile Indians and hungry coyotes.

Forbidden stagecoach topics of conversation are: stagecoach robberies and Indian uprisings.

SIGN TO DISPLAY ON WINERY WALL

Thankful for the liberal patronage bestowed by a discerning public we beg to assure our customers that they may rely upon obtaining our wines of exceptional quality ...

Syrah Family Table Red
Angelica's Favorite Angelica
Syrah Family Port
Syrah Family Brandies
Syrah Family Wine Bitters

A FEW FRENCH PHRASES

For the Cousins – Adélla, Bella, and Stella

Si la beauté était le temps, tu serais une éternité.

Certaines personnes disent que je suis indifférent ... mais personnellement ... je m'en fous. ... Je l'ai vu en premier.

¿Eh bien, je suis là. Quels étaient tes deux autres souhaits?

il doit y avoir quelque chose qui ne va pas avec mes yeux. Je ne peux pas les enlever.

il n'y a pas de place comme à la maison. ¿que me ferais-tu?

EXAMPLE SHAMELESS PLUG

THE BARRON – "That coffee you serve is indeed horrible. Couldn't you convince your wife to switch to Hidden House Coffee instead? ... I hear it's really good."

PAIGE TURNER – CUE-CARD - Shameless Plug

CHARACTER NAMING

“A rose by any other name ... would be just as thorny.”

Unlike melodramas, plays, and musicals provided by other companies ... with a HeroAndVillain.com play you have the freedom (and permission) to rename characters or even the play itself to better match your venue, town history, or even your own peculiar sense of humor. Just be sure to keep it family-friendly and G-rated. Should your town have a seaport instead of a stage station or train depot ... feel free to make the modification. If you want a “tannery” instead of a “cannery” or an “orchard” instead of a “vineyard” ... go for it. Melodrama is historically a platform for community involvement and people love local references. That is why the Cue-Card “shameless plug” is can be added several times during your performance to poke fun at local people, places or businesses. One such poke at a local town called “Hemet” can be changed to any other town you wish.

As for character names ... additional choices can be found on the heroandvillain.com website should you need some inspiration.

Here are a few names if you wish to remoniker a character.

Alan Rench
Kylian Moore
Corey Publican
Sal Ubrus
Adam Baum
Hooker Crooke
Lance Boil
Bill Foldes
Brighton Early
Chris Cross
Craven Cash
Craven Money
Craven Power
Craven Moore
Craven Green

Forrest Green
Foster Child
Harden Rock
Noah Way
Owen Cash
Pierce Hart
Pierce Hyde
Ray Zenz
Richard Mann
Seymour Paine
Stan Still
Ty Coon
William Wynn
Reed Toomey
Lou Scannon

MELODRAMATIC EMOTIONS

Anger – The actor's hands are shoulder high with eyebrows pushed toward each other and the actor's face tense with a grimace ... hands in tight fists are almost vibrating with tension.

Fear – The actor's face is turned to the right side... eyes wide ... with the right hand to the mouth, fingers curled under touching the top of the palm. Both hands to cheeks with fingers extended.

Grief or Sorrow – The actor's shoulders are rounded with his or her head down and hands cupping their face. Sobbing.

Love (Man) – The actor's chest is held high with his right hand crossing the chest and resting upper left over the heart - opening out to the right and in the direction of his loved one.

Love (Woman) – The actor's chest is held high with her head cocked a bit to one side the opposite leg goes out with foot pointed ... hands are under her chin with fingers entwined and bent at the first and second knuckles, hands then go out towards her beloved with a broad beaming smile on her face.

Villainous Scheming – One eyebrow raised while the other is down. There is a grimace on the scoundrel's face and his hands are rubbing together with fingers twiddling nervously.

Feeling Overwhelmed – One arm dropped limp to the side and the other hand open with the palm towards the audience on the top of the actor's forehead.

VILLAINOUS HECKLER RESPONSES

Here are several heckler responses that your resident villain can use to keep control of the performance when a barrage of heckles, jeers or taunts ensues. A comprehensive compendium of responses can be found online at <http://heroandvillain.com>.

The trick, my friend, is to keep an open mind, but not so open that your brains fall out!

A sharp tongue is no indication of a keen mind.

I hear you're a self-made man. It's nice of you to take the blame!

Am I ambivalent about your comment? Well, yes and no.

I'm not paranoid! Which one of my enemies told you that?

Some people say I'm indifferent ... but I don't really care.

It must be nice to be free from the burden of intelligence.

If I agreed with you ... we'd both be wrong.

You have nothing to say ... but you do it so well.

I'd like to help you out ... which way did you come in?

If I promise to miss you will you go away?

Your mind is like a soup dish ... wide and narrow.

The shallower the brook ... the more it babbles.

OPTIONAL AUDIENCE INTERACTION

(Use Villain Certificates for Audience Member)

THE BARRON – (ASIDE TO AUDIENCE) None of you look boring ... Heroes are a boring lot. Villains have a trick or two up their sleeves. Do you have a trick or two up your sleeve? If so ... you might just be a villain. Villains often have brilliant minds ... heroes ... not so much. I think most of you are really smart. So ... each of you might just be a villain. Since Villains tend to lurk. Dark or red clothes help the villain camouflage. By a show of hands ... how many of you out there are wearing dark colors tonight? If so ... you might just be a villain.

THE BARRON – So ... which ones of you would prefer to be a villain? I knew I could count on you. But before you can be a villain ... you need to do some time as a henchman. How about you (pointing out an audience member)? Would you prefer to be a villain or a hero? (If they say 'villain' ... say 'excellent'.) Want to help me out a little before intermission ... stand up? A round of applause for my latest victim ... I mean volunteer. (to henchman) Every Villain has an evil grin or stare or laugh ... go ahead and show the audience yours. (after henchman tries a grin or stare or laugh) Probably needs a little work.

THE BARRON – Finally, ... to prove that you qualify as a honorary villain ... you think you can take a hit from a foam rock and keep that grin/stare/laugh? Let's see. Stand right there ... (moving them back a bit so the foam rocks are not too strong)

THE BARRON – Go ahead you (pointing out one person in the audience with a foam rock in hand) Give him your best shot. ... take aim and let it fly. (after throw) Not bad.

THE BARRON – Every one of us has a little villain in us. You ... more than most ... I would wager. Well done and congratulations ... you are now an honorary villain second class. (give a prepared certificate) Another round of applause. You may be seated.

PROPERTY LIST & RESOURCES GUIDE

They say that “clothing makes the man” I prefer to think that “Wardrobe makes the Melodrama”. There are countless sources for clothing and props that are appropriate for the late 1800s. Here are a few of the author’s favorites. Stick with top quality brands like Wah Maker, Frontier Classics or Scully. The Professor has a top hat ... maybe a short top hat, men wear vests with collars, women dress in Victorian style western wear ... don’t forget millinery for your heroine and you will need a couple of old 1890s style full body bathing suits for those that decide to enjoy the curative waters of the hot springs and a few towels. And a small water spray bottle. Plus, a critical prop is the antique hotel counter bell.

Wild West Mercantile	www.wwmerc.com
Texas Jack’s Outfitter	www.texasjacks.com
Gentlemen’s Emporium	www.gentlemansemporium.com
Western Stage Props	www.WesternStageProps.com
Village Hat Shop	www.villagehatshop.com

Most of what you need in the way of props will be found in any theatre’s prop room others you can build

WHY PUBLIC DOMAIN MUSIC IS USED

Here are a few reasons why the songs used in this Melodrama are derived from music with expired copyrights (i.e. in the Public Domain). Besides the fact that they “feel” right for the time period ... since they came from the late 1800s ... Under U.S. copyright law, any edition of sheet music that was first copyrighted before January 1, 1923 is in the public domain in the U.S., even if the copyright was renewed, the book that contained the sheet music is still in the public domain as long as it was initially copyrighted before January 1, 1923. Prior to 1998, U.S. copyright law featured a "75 year" rule whereby copyright on a musical work lasted 75 years from the first year it was copyrighted. In 1998, that was changed to 95 years. However, the 1998 law was not retroactive and works that were out of copyright before the law was passed are still out of copyright and anyone is free to use its music and lyrics in the U.S. without permission.

Even though this manuscript is protected by copyright, since the songs are in public domain ... they stay there and cannot be copyrighted again in their original form. However, some of the lyrics share only a passing resemblance to the original works from which they were derived, and as such, the new lyrics written specifically for this play are protected. Any copyright notice in this manuscript is for the play content and modified lyrics only. There are many Web sites with enormous data bases of works in the Public Domain and that is where the songs selected for this melodrama were found. If, however some work used as the basis for this Melodrama’s music wound up in a purported Public Domain database by mistake, please inform the author and immediately actions will be taken to remove that song from future publications of this manuscript.

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visit www.HeroAndVillian.com for details

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