

ALL GONE WEST

by Honoria Mary Robertson Dick

A MELODRAMA

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CAST

ROS	Senorita Rosalita Tequila Espana Estoy Fumando Los Cigarillos
GUS	Augusta Chittering-Brooke alias Augustus (Gus)
BEL	Bella
LIL	Lilibelle
FLO	Flossie
MOL	Mollie
LUKE	Light Fingered Luke Wilmont
HAR	Honest Harry Van Dorn
JOE	Joe Van Dorn
MAN	Manuel
GRIN	Gringo
STEVE	Steve

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Honorina Mary Robertson Dick was born in Yorkshire, England but lived much of her adult life in Perth, Western Australia. Honorina read English Literature and Classics at the University of Western Australia and wrote a series of 13 original melodramas in the 1970s-early 2000s. They were performed exclusively by an amateur cast at St Michael's Anglican Church Mt Pleasant and St Christopher's Anglican Church Bicton-Attadale for church fundraising purposes.

It was Honorina's wish that her melodramas be made available for other theatre groups to adapt and perform as required.

Setting: Texas, the Wild West

At Rise: Stage with saloon doors fitted to center entrance

HAR

Walks on stage and waves to audience

Howdy folks! You sure look happy and I do like happy people. My name's Honest Harry an' I just happened to be moseying along this here trail when I saw your smilin' faces. I suppose you're wonderin' where I come from? Well I come from....

SONG: South of the Border

You know, except for the last verse, that song just about fits the story I'm a-gonna tell you. But in my story there was a tomorrow. It all started late on a hot afternoon in Bella's Cantina, in the lil ol town of El Mucho Toro and that's where I'll be seein' you again. Hasta la vista folks!

Exit right

FLO-MOL-LIL-BEL

Enter centre

FLO

I'm sure I can hear the dulcet tones of a mocking bird!

MOL

It must be him, playing off his usual tricks.

LIL

Who is it? Someone new?

BEL

If you mean someone fresh, it sure is.

FLO

It's Honest Harry's little brother Joe. Just back from over the Arizona Line.

BEL

That hombre is always steppin' over the line.

MOL

Yeah! But he sure rides tall in the saddle.

FLO

With his handsome head held high as the sun sets slowly behind him in the west.

LIL

He sings as sweetly as a meadowlark.

MOL

He just loves a lark in the meadow.

BEL

Hang on to your enthusiasm girls, he's here, he's hitchin his horse to the hotel

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hitchin rail.

FLO and MOL each open a saloon door

Enter JOE

GIRLS

Joe Darlin'...Joe Honey...oh Joe!

SONG: Rag-time Cowboy Joe

JOE

Hey ladies! Your sweet attentions are makin me come over all peculiar-like.
Flossie sweetheart, Mollie honey and who's this pretty little senorita?

BEL

This is Lillibelle, she's helpin out in the hotel – cookin and servin.

JOE

Ah Bella, lovelier with the passing years.

BEL

I love you too, my smart buckaroo.

JOE

Hi Lillibelle, I'm Joe.

LIL

Pleased to meet you Sir.

JOE

Just Joe honey. We're all right friendly around here, ain't we girls?

FLO

Skidoo Lillibelle and close your mouth up.

LIL

Oh! Mollie, ain't he just the handsomest man in the whole wide world?

MOL

He's certainly the biggest flirt in the world.

FLO

Don't you start flirtin with young Lillibelle, Joe.

JOE

Flirt! Oh Flossie, my heart belongs only to you, and you, and you. Say, have any
of you heard if Harry is on the homeward trail?

BEL

Harry comin home? That's the best news I've heard since he left.

MOL

Say, where've you been all these months since Arizona?

JOE

I've been ridin hard, roundin up little dogeys, protecting innocent settlers, shootin

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straight from the shoulder and livin clean – in fact I'm plum tuckered out.

BEL

You're so perfect, Joe.

JOE

Yeah! I sure am!

Enter centre Gus and Steve

GUS

Pardon my intrusion Madam, but I am given to understand that you are the proprietress of this establishment?

BEL

The what? I'm what? Say you sure have a funny way of talkin mister.

JOE

He means the one in charge, Bella. I guess you must be an Englishman? I'm Joe Van Dorn, what's your moniker?

GUS

Howdy do! Name of Gus – actually Augustus Chittering hyphen Brooke, with an e naturally.

FLO

A real dude. Never seen breeches like those he's wearing.

MOL

He sure talks funny – kinda plummy – ain't much of him.

FLO

Sorta sweet though.

GUS

I require accommodation, so to who – whom do I apply for a room?

JOE

Bella here can fix you up, she manages the hotel and cantina for me and my brother Harry.

BEL

How long you intendin to stay Mister?

GUS

That will depend on how long it takes to complete my business here.

BEL

Lillibelle! Take Mr-Mr-Whadya say you was named?

GUS

Augustus Chittering-Brooke – Gus to you dear lady, at your service.

BEL

Well now – Gus – glad to have you at the El Mucho Toro Cantina. You get yourself settled then come right back here and get acquainted.

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GUS

Madam – Ladies – Joe

FLO

I ain't never met anyone so gentlemanly afore.

MOL

A shame he's so young. Bet he ain't started shavin' yet.

JOE

Anglos all have that girlie skin – it's their climate – takes 'em longer to ripen. Say here comes Manuel.

BEL

And the senora – she couldn't be – they're not – they are – both comin' into the cantina!

MAN

Buenos noches – the senora is here to await the coach and desires to do so in the cool of the cantina.

BEL

Joe – Manuel – the door! I am honoured to have the Senora in my cantina.

ROS

Buenos noches Miss Bella, señoritas and Joe. How it is I am happy to see you home again, but where is Harry?

JOE

He's due any time Senorita, and you'll be the first person he visits.

BEL

(I don't like the way she says 'Harry', and he won't be a-visitin her over much if I can prevent him). Senora, the coach has already arrived.

GUS

Do I intrude? You did invite me to return.

JOE

Ah Senora, have I your permission to present to you a young stranger just arrived with the coach? Augustus Chittering-Brooke.

ROS

Augustus – But I

JOE

Gus! This is the Senorita Rosalita Tequila Espana Estoy Fumando Los Cigarillos

EVERYONE

O'le! (*raise one arm in toreador style each time this is said*)

ROS

But of course, I am here to meet you, Senor Augustus. Forgive my confusion, I had not expected someone so young, so handsome, so charming!

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GUS

Believe me, I am at your feet Senorita Rosalita Tequila Espana Estoy Fumando Los Cigarillos, O'le!

EVERYONE

O'le! (*Thereafter, whenever Senorita Rosalita's full name is mentioned, everyone on stage cries O'le!*)

BEL

(Let's hope he takes her mind off my Honest Harry).

ROS

Manuel, meet Senor Augustus. I think my young amigo is going to be a big bang with the señoritas – si!

MAN

He who flies with the hawk sees even an insect through the trees, Senorita Rosalita.

ROS

What is that noise I hear?

JOE

It's the sound of horses hooves pounding down the hard-packed earth of Main Street as they gallop into town.

GUS

I hear the sound of horses neighing as they sniff the scent of water on the cool evening breeze.

BEL

What I hear are the voices of thirsty cowboys.

ROS

Surely I hear the call of a coyote (*howl off stage*)

MAN

All this means the homecoming of Honest Harry, I think!

Enter centre Harry

HAR

Joe! Guess who's here, my old amigo from Yale!

FLO

I didn't know Harry'd been in jail?

JOE

Yale! It's a school for big boys, Flossie.

LUKE

Make way for a real man, a cool man, a wild man (*enters centre – howls and twirls guns*)

JOE

It's Light Fingered Luke (*Luke grabs Rosalita and kisses her*)

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MAN

My Senorita insulted!

GUS

I give you ten seconds to remove your carcass from the close proximity of Senorita Rosalita or I shall be compelled to – er- I believe the expression is - plug you right between the eyes – or should I say I'll fill you full of lead?

ROS

Manuel, remove that stiletto. Gus, put up your gun. Release me Senor Diablo!

JOE

Put up your gun, Amigo. Luke's so fast on the draw, you'd look like a sieve before you could pull the trigger.

HAR

Senorita Rosalita, my good friend Light Fingered Luke did not intend an insult. Believe me, it was just high spirits.

LUKE

I reckon I can make my own apologies Harry, Ol' Pard. May I have the honour of being introduce to the Senora?

HAR

This is the Senorita Rosalita Tequila Espana Estoy Fumando Lost Cigarillos (O'le), and this, Senorita Rosalita, is Luke Wilmont.

LUKE

If it's an insult to kiss a lovely lady then I'm guilty, Senora. But if I have offended you I humbly apologise.

MOL

Now that's a purty way of speakin. Who's this handsome hombre?

ROS

As you are a stranger here and therefore to our customs, and as you are also Harry's close amigo, I accept your apology (so long ago, but the voice! And oh! The kiss! I cannot be mistaken).

LUKE

You see Senorita Rosalita, I haven't been south of the border for a lot of years and I was so plumb excited when I saw that first big beautiful star in the sky, and knew I was back home in the lone star state cos...

SONG: Deep in the Heart of Texas

LUKE

Well now that we've been properly introduced Senora, I sure hope we can be friends 'cos Harry here tells me that you run the best cattle spread in Texas.

ROS

As Harry's friend, you will always be welcome at the Hacienda "La Rosa Amarilla". Augustus, mio caro, come to my room in a little time. Harry, I am in the hotel for the time being. Buenos noches Miss Bella. Senors, we will meet later.

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Exit left

BEL

Manuel, you big handsome vaquero. Your senora has never before come into the cantina. I hadn't known that she and Honest Harry were such good friends.

MAN

The Senora Bella sees only the rabbit who scuttles in front of her.

BEL

That Mexican Indian talks riddles. Just what does he mean?

JOE

What he means, Bella, is that a bear continues free to roam only because he recognizes a bear-trap baited with honey, Honey!

Exit Bella left

LUKE

That sure is some high-born Castillian filly. Any particular interest of yours, Harry?

HAR

I'll answer you – yes and no. Neither of us ever married, we're just friends. But if I had to choose – well I guess – anyway, I don't know if Rosalita would have me – and my ambitions are not here, Luke.

LUKE

Hey young fella, I like the way you handle a gun. With a little practice you could be really fast.

GUS

Really fast! Why you puffed-up popinjay. I can outshoot you anytime. Let me tell you sir that the men of my family are the best. Their expertise in the use of all firearms is legendary.

LUKE

Hold on young fire-eater. In this part of Texas it ain't good policy to make a statement like that unless you're prepared to back it up.

GUS

I am at your disposal at any time for a challenge match with gun or rifle, Sir. And now, Manuel, please take me to the Senorita Rosalita.

Exit Manuel and Gus left

HAR

Young hot-head. Bring him out to the O Y Corral, Joe. Guess you'll teach him to hold fire, Luke. Let's stage a mock shoot-out.

JOE

That greenhorn rode scout for the stage coach, all the way from Austin, and Steve reckons he's a dead-eye with both revolver and rifle. Says he can hang on the back of a horse like a gadfly.

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STEVE

Yeah! We was hit by four renegades and he winged two of 'em.

LUKE

Well I won't hurt him. Anyway let's get cleaned up and come back to eat and enjoy the lovely company. You know I feel that I've met that young fire-eating caballero some place else. Wonder where?

Exit Luke and Harry centre

JOE

Say Lillibelle, it sure is a lovely evenin'. How about a short stroll?

LIL

Oh yes please Joe. Just so long as I'm back for dinner.

STEVE

If you ladies would like to stroll out on the patio, we could do some star gazing.

FLO

Come on Mollie. Ain't every day we have such an attractive hombre with stars in his eyes.

MOL

I sure hope you and all will be here for the fiesta.

Exit centre Steve, Mollie, Flossie

ROS

Enters left followed by Gus

Come in Senor Augustus Chittering-Brooke and since when was Augusta, Augustus? And why? Your godmother writes for me to care for a goddaughter si? Come tell me all.

GUS

You know that there are still wild areas with renegades and Indians – after all, the wars weren't so very long ago. And from Austin where the railroad ends, this part of Texas is a long way through dangerous territory, so I bought a horse and rode alongside the stage.

ROS

So! But your hair is cut like a young caballero and you wear breeches. If I am to help you cara mia, you must tell me everything.

GUS

You know I became an orphan when Papa died last year. I was engaged, betrothed to one who deemed my financial expectations to be much greater than the very comfortable competence I received. The estate was entailed so in short, the utter cad jilted me!

Your old friend, my Godmother, suggested a change of scenery to heal my broken heart. Actually the only really attractive part of Donald was his seat on a horse and he ran a superb string of hunters. That is one reason I am here. I want to buy horses.

ROS

With horses I can help. Harry and Joe breed horses. In fact, Harry has a hobby. He owns property in Kentucky and is breeding horses for racing.

GUS

Racers – oh how absolutely grand!

ROS

The other reason, cara?

GUS

Well, if I have any relations at all, they are somewhere in America and most likely in the old settlement areas. My Great Great Grandpapa had a twin sister who married a young Frenchman and they became settlers in Baton Rouge. Their name was De Gramont and we know they had a daughter, that they left Louisiana when she was about 8 years of age and moved west. After that, all letters ceased.

ROS

Si-many families lost trace during the Indian Mexican Civil Wars.

GUS

I came first to New Orleans but official records are scarce. I confirmed departure from Baton Rouge and am hoping, by enquiries through old established families, to find some trace of them. For that I need help.

ROS

But why the disguise? Thees I do not understand.

GUS

Actually it was in New Orleans that I cut my hair and became dressed as a caballero. Women are so restricted senora, unable to move freely on one's own and also there had been unwanted attentions from some who were certainly not true gentlemen.

ROS

Si Si – it is so very pleasant to encourage a handsome caballero to a flirtation but to repulse one is of a task most formidable. Hence we of Spanish descent take refuge behind a duenna.

GUS

Will you then help me? I need introductions to whomsoever you think can give me information. Particularly those of French descent.

ROS

That is no problem. In fact, it will be much easier to introduce a young, handsome hidalgo rather than a female. Already you have met Harry and Young Joe. You will see much of them, especially as I shall insist on your staying until after the fiesta. I keep these rooms in El Mucho Toro Hotel – you will have to sleep in my maid's room, I fear. But you are safe from spies and at other times you will accompany me to the Hacienda "La Rosa Amarilla" – that means the House of the Yellow Rose.

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GUS

Oh thank you Senorita Rosalita Espana Estoy Fumando ...

ROS

Stop! Just Rosalita, mia cara, or you will run out of breath before you begin a conversation.

GUS

My godmother wasn't sure about your marital status when she wrote.

ROS

I am what you call an olden maid. Si?

GUS

Surely, if you'll pardon me saying so, it is unusual to find one of your lineage to be unmarried?

ROS

I was betrothed to a man many years my senior, a friend of my father. He was a widower who lived in Monterey. My madre was dead and I was an only child – so lonely! I longed for young companions and gaiety. Father took me to Monterey to make the wedding arrangement. Unfortunately Don Jose, my betrothed, was ill with some slight complaint and it was fiesta. My Duenna was old and kept early hours, she thought me safely asleep...

GUS

But you weren't?

ROS

No! Manuel showed me the servants' exit and found me a mask and...

GUS

A forbidden romance!

SONG: It happened in Monterey

ROS

I knew him only as Will, and he names me Carmen because I always wore a red flower in my hair. For one glorious week we danced and flirted, but I did not keep the last tryst when all unmask. I could not dishonor my father by breaking the contract of marriage. Don Jose recovered his health but, just before we were to be married, he visited us here and both he and my father were killed by outlaws. I was alone and my own mistress, so for a year or two I travelled to Europe and there met your godmother. But the Rio Grande always called me back home and here I am and have been for many years.

GUS

Are you quite well, Senorita?

ROS

It is only the passion of my memories that are causing my heart to palpitate!

GUS

I'll get you some iced water!

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ROS

Augusta, is there no romance in your heart?

GUS

Yes there is! But I haven't yet met the man for whom I could palpitate. This Honest Harry, is he ... err..are you and he...err?

ROS

Harry? Harry! Well! We re good friends but nothing official. You like him?

GUS

A fine, honest, handsome gentleman. Not like his loud-mouthed friend.

ROS

Don't judge Mr Wilmont too hastily, my Gussie. And now, give me your arm, my caballero, and we will go to dine.

Exit left

Joe and Lil enter centre, hand in hand

JOE

Say Lillibelle, will you come out walkin' or ridin' with me when you get time off? There's a right pretty valley on your spread that I'd sure like to show you.

LIL

I have most afternoons and Sundays to myself, Joe. I guess it's time to say goodnight but I sure do thank you for takin' me walkin' and pointin' out the stars and tellin' me their names.

JOE

Sweet dreams little Lillibelle, I'll be around when you're free.

Joe exits centre and Lillibelle left

Enter right Bella and Gringo centre

BEL

Sorry Cowboy, we're just closing up.

GRIN

Yeah Ma'am, but Harry told me to introduce myself. I was in here earlier but you didn't notice me. I'm his new trail boss and going' to help Joe run the spread when Harry goes north politickin', name's Gringo.

BEL

That ain't a name! It's an insult in these parts.

GRIN

Well my real name is Clement, ma'am, but they call me Gringo 'cos they reckon my grin goes from ear to ear.

BEL

I'm Bella and the fellas all doss down in that part of the hotel. It has an entrance outside as well as from here. Well it's late, Gringo, so let' all get some shut-eye.

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GRIN

Night ma'am.

Bella exit left and Gringo right

Lights dim right down while Gringo and Bella exit then come on again full after a short while.

Joe and Lillibelle enter right

JOE

This here's the valley I told you about the first day we met.

LIL

Oh! Joe, it's beautiful and is it all yours?

JOE

Yeah! Well Harry and I own the spread a'tween us but this is my own favourite corner. Ain't never brought anyone here afore 'cept Harry.

LIL

I can just see a white adobe ranch house on that meadow overlookin' the stream, with the lovely yellow Texas roses a-climbing up the walls.

JOE

A ranch house! Well I guess I ain't a'planning such like for a long long time. Come on Lillibelle, give me just one little kiss.

LIL

Oh! Joe! Say do you realise it's now only a coupla weeks to fiesta? And I've got me a real pretty new dress. Everyone's so excited wonderin' who will be partnerin' them in the Rose Fandango. We ain't never danced together as yet Joe.

JOE

The Rose Fandango! (*Picks up guitar and moves to right hand corner stage*)

LIL

You know, they always dance that at the fiesta Joe. That's when a fella gives a girl a rose and it means he's sorta sayin something special.

JOE

Well I ain't much of a dancer an' I don't know if Mollie's a'goin and well...

SONG: Jingle Jangle Jingle

Lillibelle exits left at end of 2nd verse "Why I up and ran"

JOE

Them's my sentiments, Lillibelle. Lillibelle! Oh! Gosh! Women!

Exits right

Rosalita enters left and Luke enters centre

LUKE

Buenos dias Senorita Rosalita, I believe that Harry and I are riding out to the

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Hacienda La Rosa Amarilla with you?

ROS

Si! I hope you are enjoying your first visit to our territory, Senor Luke!

LUKE

Not my first visit Senora. I was born and raised just this side of the Rio Grande and my family also have land in Mexico, so this is my home territory.

ROS

You have land in Texas?

LUKE

Sure have, with good managers on my ranches. I came home after Yale but couldn't settle so I upped and travelled. Came back at reg'lar intervals and saw a lot of Harry and Joe up north at times, but now I'm ready to stop my wanderin'. I intend to improve my cattle stock so I'm sure interested in your breed of steer, Senora.

ROS

No doubt your wife and family are also ready to come home?

LUKE

Why ma'am I ain't never been married. I thought you knew?

ROS

No, Senor Luke. I did not know. And Harry did not mention it.

LUKE

(ASIDE: Why that low-down sneaky coyote. He wants her for himself! Tho' I guess I ain't shown my hand over much. Well I've waited a long time to find what I've been hoping for and in the game of love it's who has the quickest draw, my amigo!) I sure am lookin' forward to the fiesta. Harry tells me this is the first time in twenty years that you have held fiesta at your hacienda.

ROS

Si! Of course our local fiesta is on a small scale and we do not wear masks, but we shall dance the Rose Fandango, Senor. Ah! Who comes! Lillibelle, what is the trouble, mia cara?

LIL

He can go jingle jangle his spurs all over Texas – he needn't think I want to – he can give the Rose to Mollie – I didn't know he thought I was just a flirtation. Oh! Joe!

ROS

Lillibelle! You will stop that snuffling immediately. Now answer me please, do you think yourself in love with Joe?

LIL

Ye-e-s! But he's only been flirtin' and he thinks I want to corral him.

LUKE

Well Joe's been fancy free for so long, I guess he don't know the genuine thing if

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he meet up with it. Some know the instant the meet – others go around breakin' hearts without any thought of the havoc they cause. You say you love Joe, but he has to love you too, so we need to find out just whether he do or don't.

GUS

Buenos dias Senorita Rosalita! Oh! Hello Luke! What's wrong with Lillibelle?

LUKE

You're it! You're the one to do it, you are the perfect decoy.

GUS

Do what? Decoy? That means a bait! What ever it is, I won't do it.

LUKE

Young Joe seems to have been flirting with Lillibelle (Oh, do stop sniffing). What he needs is a spot of competition. Now you're a well set-up good-looking young buckaroo, smooth talkin, fancy manners. And if you was to pay court to Lillibelle, then Joe would have to decide about his own feeling toward her.

GUS

Me! Pay court to Lillibelle, you must be mad! I'm a...I'm err, well I'm just not interested in young ladies and Joe is my amigo.

ROS

Gussie, mia cara, please do this for me, Si? It will afford me so much amusement – I mean so much interest – to give Joe a tweak of the nose, si?

LUKE

And if you need a few lessons on how to lure a lady, I'll be happy to help you.

GUS

I don't need your help, sir. Just stick around and you may pick up a few sweet nothings you don't know about. Very well, I will do it for you, mia cara, but Lillibelle, you have to be quite certain that I am acting a part. However much I act the lover, you are not the one to whom my heart is given. You can call me Gussie.

ROS

(ASIDE: Gussie said "The one to whom my heart is given" so my Augusta, is it Harry? I think so but I must be certain). Lillibelle, dry your eyes and remember from now on your caballero will be Senor Augustus Chittering hyphen Brooke with an E naturally.

LUKE

(ASIDE: First Harry, now Gus, they're buzzing around her like march flies. Rosalita called him 'My Dear' and he used the same endearment for her. Guess I'll have to come to a decision quicker than I anticipated).

Enter centre: Joe, Manuel, Harry, Steve and Gringo

Enter left: Bella and girls

JOE

Ah! Mollie! Flossie! Greetings my beautiful ones. Come on everyone, let's have a

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sing song. Set 'em up Bella.

HAR

What's gotten into Young Joe, he's actin' right wild!

STEVE

Come on, someone give us a song.

LUKE

I've got an old song or two I could warble out of tune if your ears can stand it!

GRIN

It's a long ride to Galveston and Steve and me ain't a'goin to get another chance for merriment 'til we get back for the fiesta, so let it rip Light Fingered Luke!

LUKE

Right! I'll take the verses and you all join in with the chorus. Can I have a twinkle on the ivories, Amigo?

SONG: Cigarettes and whiskey and wild, wild women

HAR

Okay boys, on your way...ready Luke? We await your charming company, Senorita Rosalita.

Exit right Steve and Gringo

ROS

Dear, dear Harry. Always so flattering, so thoughtful. Senor Luke, on such a beautiful day you should not be scowling like that. Come, my vaqueros.

MAN

With your permission, Senorita, I will wait to accompany Senor Augustus.

GUS

I'll be following you in just the shake of a lamb's tail (just as soon as I get this ridiculous deception underway).

Exit centre: Rosalita, Harry and Luke

GUS

Ah! Lillibelle! My Lovely little Texas rose. How can I bear to tear myself away from all your delicate charms. Without the close proximity of your sweet self, the stars will lose their sparkle – a sparkle that is dulled only by the scintillating lights within your own luminous orbs!

LIL

Oh! Gussie! Oh! Glory!

GUS

Yes! Glory – glory in the magic of your smiling lips – lips like luscious cherries dipped in the nectar of paradise.

JOE

Now just one minute mister!

GUS

Ah! Joe! You think me intoxicated, and indeed I am, have been since I first set my eyes on sweet Lillibelle as she sashayed across the dining room floor carrying a tray of hashed potatoes!

JOE

Now lookee here mister Chittering-Chattering-Brooke. We don't play around with the emotions of our young females.

GUS

Are you accusing me of trifling – trifling! With Lillibelle's affections?

JOE

Well all them sugary sayings might give a young female the wrong ideas.

GUS

If by 'females' you mean the young ladies...

MOL

Flossie! He called us ladies! D'ya hear that Bella? He called us ladies!

GUS

And specifically Miss Lillibelle, she cannot be unaware of my – my palpitating desire for a closer relationship.

LIL

Oh Gussies! Do go on, I'm a feelin all soft and squashy-like!

JOE

Just what game d'ya think you're playing? Don't you dare listen to him, you just cover your ears, Lillibelle.

LIL

I won't and maybe if you listen, you'll learn something to your advantage, Mister.

GUS

Game? No game, Sir. I am informing Miss Lillibelle of my passionate attraction to her and of my earnest desire to possess her. Sweet Lillibelle, I kiss your hand, I kneel at your feet, I beg from you the token of your reciprocal passion – the rose in the Fiesta Fandango!

BEL

Hold on there, in these here parts, that rose means you sure have serious intentions.

LIL

Yes! When a young buckaroo loves a girl he accepts the rose, and then when he returns it, well it's...

FLO

A proposal of marriage, certain, sure and for life mister.

▣ ▣▣ ▣

LIL

A girl's – I mean, a lady's choice is kept secret until the night of the Rose Fandango, Gussie darlin' – but I sure don't know of anyone else I'd be a'given it to.

GUS

My beloved Lillibelle! I know now that I shall be the recipient of your precious promise. Farewell my lovely Rose of Texas, I shall ride like the wind to hasten my return to your side. Hasta la vista!

JOE

Not so fast, I want a word with you my young buckaroo.

BEL

Come on girls, this is man's business an' I don't like the feel of it.

MOL

Joe's bent on makin' trouble. Say Lillibelle, I just melted listenin' to your new caballero! You sure got yourself a right smart of gentleman.

LIL

Well, you've got Joe and he's, well, you've sure got Joe.

FLO

You got Joe! Why everyone knows you're all stewed up over Steve. Something funny's goin' on.

Exit left: Bella, Flossie, Mollie, Lillibelle

JOE

I don't like anyone poaching on my property, stranger!

GUS

I thought you were my friend, Joe. Seems like you are implying that Lillibelle is your property?

JOE

Yeah! And keep off my reserves. Seems to me you've grown too big for your boots and need a fast lesson to bring you back to size.

GUS

Why you vain, blockheaded cowboy. Just what do you have that makes you think a lovely young woman like Lillibelle would favour you? Treating her like a hired hand, taking her out when it suits you then forgetting her very existence for days at a time. I need a lesson? It's you who needs bringing down to size and I'm the man to do it.

JOE

Right! Pint size. Just a' soon as you return from this visit to the hacienda! We'll meet at the O.Y. Corral and meanwhile, just stay away from my Lillibelle.

GUS

I'll see my Lillibelle whenever I want to. You don't frighten me...you...you...little dogey!

■ ■■ ■

Joe exits right

MAN

Ay! Ay! Ay! The fire in your temper sure attracts trouble, senior. First Luke, now Joe! I think that you will have to be a jumping bean to get out of this big trouble.

GUS

Don't worry about me, Manuel. I can look after myself and I can outshoot Joe any day. He always aims off centre.

MAN

But Light Fingered Luke does not. Believe me senior, he is the fastest, the deadliest shot in the West, he is not a man to trifle with.

GUS

I haven't seen Luke shoot but Joe can't handle a gun.

MAN

I don't think Senor Honest Harry would take kindly to anyone who hurt his brother.

GUS

Harry! (ASIDE: Oh my goodness! I can't meet Joe in a gun duel). Manuel, why 'Honest' Harry?

MAN

Because Senor Harry is an honest man. The people give him that name.

GUS

The people?

MAN

Si! He is the man we want as our leader in Washington.

GUS

Harry, a politician! Oh! How marvelous! And of course he is a perfect leader – a paragon among men.

MAN

There is only one little thing. He is not married and the people, they prefer a man with a wife and little ones.

GUS

I agree, Manuel. Harry needs a wife, a woman who can work to further his career, help write his speeches, entertain for him, share his interest in horses. Someone elegant, well educated, someone charming who will love him as he so deserves to be loved. Someone...

MAN

Just like the Senorita Rosalita, si?

GUS

Rosalita! (ASIDE: Oh no! Not the wife of my Harry)

MAN

Come senior, we have a long ride ahead of us.

Exit centre

Enter left: Rosalita followed by Luke

LUKE

I can't being to convey to you the pleasure I have experienced as your guest at the Hacienda La Rosa Amarilla. I guess I'm a cattleman at heart. I can, and do, enjoy trips to the big cities and overseas, but always the Rio Grande calls me back.

ROS

You speak as though you are searching for something...lost!

LUKE

Yes ma'am, but I guess I've been searching far too long.

ROS

Too long, Senior Luke! Does that mean that you have abandoned the search?

LUKE

I guess it does. You haven't known me very long, Seniorita, but I guess you have heard of my reputation as 'Light Fingered' Luke. Well that reputation was earned during the wars when I was a young buck and it was a matter of survival. My whole family was wiped out in the Mexican troubles and I was determined to hang on to all that they'd worked for, so having that reputation came in mighty handy and it has sort of stuck with me. I'm really a peaceful sort of hombre.

ROS

Forgive me Senior, but I cannot quite follow this conversation. Why do you tell me these things?

LUKE

Well! There's something I want to say, but I guess I have to wait until after you give...until after the...

Enter right Manuel

MAN

Seniorita, we have returned. The Senior Gus removes the dust of travel and will attend you.

LUKE

(Oh! Shucks!) Buenos dias Manuel

ROS

(Oh! Manuel, why must you choose this moment!) Gracias Manuel and welcome. I have been telling the Senior Luke about our long-horn steers, so early tomorrow you ride with him to the boundaries of my rancho along the Rio Grande.

MAN

Ah! Senior, that is a ride we will enjoy together. Come please, we will make

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arrangements immediately.

LUKE

Okay Manuel. Excuse me Senorita, I guess I won't get back in time to see you again before the fiesta but I sure hope that...that...I sure look forward to the fiesta. You sure grow lovely roses here.

ROS

We shall meet at dinner, Senor.

Exit right Manuel and Luke

Enter left Harry

HAR

Tarnation! This hand really hurts.

ROS

You are hurt? Where? How?

HAR

Guess it's nothing much, just jammed my hand in the stable door.

SONG: Sympathy

Gus enters left on 2nd chorus sung by Harry, and Luke enters right on 3^d chorus viz the duet. Gus and Luke exit on last line of song

ROS

(*ASIDE: Both Luke and Augusta! So! A plot is only ridiculous when you know all about it. My plot now involves a flirtation fandango for three, O'le!*) There Harry, I will kiss you better.

HAR

Say Rosalita, in all these years you have never before made any gesture of affection towards me but now you have given me the courage to ask...

ROS

Here is Gus – I am so very pleased to see you Augustus. I have been asking Harry to invite you to his Kentucky property to see his horses. Gus is an excellent equestrian as you have no doubt noticed!

GUS

I am afraid that I will be unable to accept any such invitation. I have to leave most unexpectedly – for – for England.

HAR

Leaving! Say Gus, that's really bad news, but you will be coming back here?

GUS

No! I shall ride into El Mucho Torro tomorrow to arrange my shoot-out at the O.Y. Corral.

ROS

Oh! Why?

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GUS

Because that's the corral chosen by both Light Fingered Luke and Joe Van Dorn.

HAR

Now look here Gus. I'm downright sure that Luke wouldn't be serious about a shootin' match with a young greenhorn like you. He was surely joking. But what's this about a meet with Joe?

ROS

Joe has taken exception to Augustus paying suit to Lillibelle.

HAR

If Joe is hankering after young Lillibelle, why doesn't he say so? You know, Gus, you're a mite young and callow to be courtin' any girl – wait until you can grow a set of whiskers, boy!

GUS

Whiskers to you Harry Van Dorn. Callow I may be, but where my honour is at stake, I don't withdraw from a challenge unless some other man of my family can substitute for me. I'm going to meet Light Fingered Luke and as for Joe, well because I have – have such a great respect for you – you can rest assured that I won't injure him. But meet him I must.

ROS

A challenge is a point of honour as you well know Harry. So please, no further discussion. And as you are now leaving, will you carry an invitation from me for everyone to be here at the Hacienda on the Friday and Saturday of fiesta? No doubt Augustus wishes to bid you farewell.

HAR

Adios Gus! I'm hopin' that our senorita can persuade you to delay your departure until after Saturday. Don't leave without letting me know.

GUS

Via con dios, Harry. (Goodbye my darlin, now you will never know how much I care for you).

ROS

Hasta las vista, mio caro. I hope to have a lovely fiesta surprise for you.

HAR

I sure hope I'm reading the cards right, Rosalita. Until Friday, adios!

Exit right Harry

ROS

And why this sudden decision to leave, Augusta?

GUS

Well I haven't had my success in tracing the De Gramonts and – and

ROS

And! And! And! You are consumed with jealousy I think!

GUS

You know that I wish you and Harry every happiness together but yes! I am in love with him so I must leave.

ROS

You have been wearing those breeches far too long. You had forgotten you are a woman until you thought you detected an intimacy between Harry and myself. You gave your heart to him the first time you met. Si?

GUS

Si! But you love him. I heard you ...

ROS

What you heard was not what you heard. You silly Augusta! Harry has discovered in himself an affection for you which he cannot understand because he sees a boy. Harry is not a foolish young man, he has met many women but not one he wished to marry. Now he has thought he will never meet the one he has dreamed of, so there am I, a friend from childhood and what more natural than he begins, with a great deal of encouragement from me, to think that I would be a suitable wife. Which I certainly would not!

GUS

What a tangle I'm in. Now he will never know that I'm me or that I love him.

ROS

You are prepared to die for your honour, surely you can fight for your love? Augustus must disappear.

GUS

I cannot disappear – there is the duel – I told you ...

ROS

You will not say another word. Just listen! You disappear for a short time and in your place will appear the twin sister of Augustus who is named Augusta. Cara, you must fight for your happiness. Tomorrow you will say adios to all at Bella's Cantina. The fiesta has started and they will be too busy enjoying themselves to miss you. Tomorrow Manuel returns and can accompany you into El Mucho Torro, then you and he can return to the Hacienda by paths known only to a few. We will dispose of Augustus and in his stead will reign the lovely Augusta.

GUS

It's a mad scheme but Harry shall receive my rose, whatever the outcome.

ROS

It is late, Cara, so sleep well. I must see Manuel when he returns.

Exit left Augustus and right Rosalita

Enter centre Luke and Manuel

MAN

You are very silent, senior.

LUKE

Yeah! I've been remembering a time when I crossed the Rio Grande when I was a young fella.

SONG: Choice of My Imagination (unknown) or Fernando (ABBA)

MAN

The love of youth is sweet but I have thought, Senor, that perhaps my senora had found favour in your eyes.

LUKE

Oh! She has, she has Manuel. I never thought I could feel for any woman what I felt for Carmen, but Rosalita has proven me wrong. I don't know if I stand a chance with her. There's Harry and Young Gus, but I don't aim to give up trying. So before we part, Manuel, I want you to take this to your senorita (*gives him a ladies fan*). It belonged to my great great grandmama. When you give it to Rosalita, will you ask her to carry it at the fiesta, for my sake?

MAN

It grows dark, you must ride pronto to the O.Y. Corral and I to the Hacienda.

LUKE

Gracios Manuel, it's been a great ride and lots of fun singing round the campfire and playing cards with you and the boys, amigo!

MAN

Si! Someday you must play cards with the senorita. She plays with extreme finesse. Adios!

Manuel exits centre

LUKE

Finesse! That's what is needed. I've found my woman and I'm not going to lose her as I did Carmen. Neither Harry nor Gus are a mate for my passionate, haughty senorita. All I want is one little gesture that she cares for me and I'll ride off with her if I have to.

Exit Luke centre

Enter right Manuel and left Rosalita

MAN

Si! He has kept on remembering but he sends this for you which he asks you to use at the fiesta. He is a man of whom the Old Don would have approved.

ROS

Ah! Manuel, old friend. How could he know that on those mad nights in Monterey, I always had a duenna in the form of a handsome young Mexican Indian! Now! The young Augustus must disappear to make way for her twin sister.

MAN

Ay ay ay! Such a tangle.

ROS

Tomorrow you will ride into town and in the cantina you will announce the departure of Senor Augustus. You will both return here unseen.

MAN

This is going to be one great fiesta, my senorita. Buenos noches.

Exit right Manuel and left Rosalita

Enter centre Bella

Enter right Flossie and Mollie

Enter left Lillibelle and Bella

FLO

Oh! Lillibelle, you look just lovely, like, like ...

MOL

Just like the Yella Rose of Texas, honey!

BEL

And here comes your beau right on cue.

LIL

Joe!

MOL

Not Joe, your Beau, Augustus Chittering Chattering.

Enter centre Augustus followed by Manuel

GUS

Lillibelle, how very pretty you look. You'll have all the young men at your feet. Actually I've come to say goodbye as I have to leave...today.

Enter right Joe with Luke and Harry

JOE

I told you to keep away from my Lillibelle.

LIL

And I told him to stay right close to me Mister Van Dorn.

JOE

I heard he's leavin'. And good riddance. I knew he was yella.

GUS

As I am untutored in the art of fisticuffs, I am unable to put you down but I'll be back. I'll surely be back to keep my appointment with you. The men of my family don't back away from a challenge, cowboy. I'll be waiting at the road out of town, Manuel.

HAR

Now just a minute Gus!

GUS

Out of my way, Sir. I've had just about enough of your family for one day.

Exit left Augustus

LUKE

Phew! What a temper! But I admire his defence of his name. Sort of thing I can understand. Reminds me of myself when I was a young fire-eater.

HAR

Well I'm not unskilled in fisticuffs, Joe, and I won't hesitate to teach you a lesson. I don't know what has come over you lately. Just you curb your tongue and the temper.

LUKE

You can't make a woman love you, and anyway, you have to woo them not try to rope 'em in like a steer. (Young fool!). Ever thought of giving Lillibelle a hint as to how you feel about her, Joe? I'm off now Harry. See you tomorrow night at the Hacienda. So long!

Exit centre Luke

BEL

I hate fiesta. I can never get anyone to work. Flossie?

FLO

I'm right here Bella.

BEL

If anyone else says manana to me, I'll scream.

MOL

Manana?

BEL

(Screams) Manana! Manana! Manana! All I hear is Manana!

MOL

What does Manana mean, Manuel?

MAN

It is tomorrow, but means more than that. I will explain if I can.

MOL

Tell it in song.

SONG: Manana

MAN

Senorita Flossie, will you share with me a little tequila? You and me can mingle our smoke signals.

FLO

Si Manuel, I have always wanted to set a light to your fire.

BEL

Since when were they so friendly?

MOL

For a long time now. Flossie is the same mix as Manuel, part Indian, part Mexi, but I ain't never a'fore seen Manuel single out any woman.

BEL

Say Harry, I've been wanting to see you. I wondered if you would take me to the Fandango?

STEVE & GRINGO

Enter right

I'm back Mollie! Rode like the wind to be back here with you at Fiesta!

MOL

Oh! Stevie honey! You know who'll get my rose in the Fandango.

HAR

Hi boys! You've come in at just the right time. The Senorita Rosalita invites all of you to the fiesta. That's tomorrow for the Fandango and Saturday for the wind-up.

EVERYONE

Wow-ee-ee!

HAR

Hold it! I'm sorry to say that some of you have to miss out on one night. So to be fair, Bella, you have to keep the cantina open on Friday and Steve will help look after the place, but on Saturday we'll close the cantina for the night so everyone can join in the final festivities. Tomorrow night is mighty important for me, Bella, and I want you to wish me luck. My future happiness is at stake.

BEL

So it is Senorita Rosalita! Well Harry, you know I wish you all the luck in the world.

JOE

Lillibelle, you're sure lookin' pretty. I've no right to tell you who you can keep company with and I hope that you'll forgive me enough to at least dance with me tomorrow night.

LIL

I surely will save you a dance, Joe, now that you've asked me so gentlemanly.

GRIN

Say boss, how about I change places with Steve?

HAR

Sorry Gringo, I need you to keep the boys in order. C'mon Joe, let's ride. We need to get a bit slickered up for tomorrow night. Adios everyone!

MOL

If it just ain't my luck to get an invite to the Hacienda and you stuck here.

STEVE

Gringo will take you, honey, but just make sure that your rose comes to me.

GRIN

If I could escort you to the fiesta on Saturday night, Bella, I'd be the proudest hombre in Texas 'cos you're just the loveliest armful of woman that I've ever seen. Think about it. C'mon Steve, let's mosey.

Exit right Steve and Gringo

BEL

Well how about that! Come on girls, there's work to do.

Exit left Mollie and Flossie

Exit right Bella and Lilibelle

Enter centre Rosalita and Harry

Enter left Augusta behind them

ROS

It is a glorious night, Harry. Just look at those stars, a perfect setting for a lovely surprise. Augusta, mia cara, I wish to present to you a friend, Harry Van Dorn. And this, Harry, is Miss Augusta Chittering-Brooke, the twin sister of our dear departed Augustus.

HAR

Why Ma'am...Miss...I just can't believe my eyes. The resemblance to your brother is uncanny. Not that Gus was ever beautiful, as you most certainly are.

ROS

I look to you to take care of Augusta during her stay with me. Ah! Manuel.

Enter left Manuel and Flossie

MAN

The musicians are about to start the Fandango, Senorita Rosalita.

Enter left Gringo and Mollie

Enter centre Joe and Lilibelle

Enter right Luke

ROS

Senoritas, here are the roses. Senors, the Fandango begins.

SONG: The Rose in her Hair (by Dick Powell 1935)

Choreographed dance, ladies present their roses to their men as per description p20

ROS

Senors, señoritas, enjoy what is left of the night but please excuse me, I am

feeling a little faint. Manuel, your arm! Buenos noches. (ASIDE to Manuel: Now Harry and Augusta will have time together and Senor Luke can be alone with his thoughts. Tomorrow night cannot come soon enough, Manuel).

Exit centre Rosalita and Manuel

Lights dim

Men exit right, ladies exit left except Harry and Gus

GUS

Oh how much I would like to visit your Kentucky ranch and share with you all the excitement of an election. I know you will win because a truly honest politician is so rare. Can't think of one since George Washington cut down the cherry tree.

HAR

(ASIDE: Why now must I meet the girl of my dreams when I'm duty bound to propose to another?) I feel as though I've known you all my life, Augusta. I...I...I must leave, it is almost dawn but I'll never forget this night.

GUS

Thank you for squiring me tonight, Harry. And now, my handsome gallant...sweet dreams.

Exit centre Augusta

Harry stays, lights up full

Enter left Gringo and Steve

Enter right Luke and Joe

GRIN

OK! OK! So you know how you stand with Mollie, but I ain't heard an answer from Bella 'bout tonight.

LUKE

I guess a fella meets only one woman in a lifetime, who lassoes him without effort. Trouble is, though he's a willing captive, she may not want to keep him.

JOE

Yep! Thought he's free to go, it ain't fun anymore.

Enter centre Manuel

MAN

Buenos dias! Everyone looking so unhappy! But why? There is no compulsion to return the rose you have been given.

JOE

It ain't exactly that.

HAR

No! It's a case like old Wild Cat Kelly

SONG: Don't Fence Me In

LUKE

Look Harry, I outsmarted you last night. But if Rosalita loves you, she won't accept the rose from me tonight.

HAR

You! In love with Rosalita? Luke, if only she would. Oh! What's the use? C'mon fellas, let's ride.

GRIN

I'll catch up, I want to see someone.

Exit centre Harry and Luke

Exit right Steve and Manuel

Enter left Bella

BEL

Hi Gringo! I'm right pleased to see you and I'd be right happy for you to be my caballero tonight.

GRIN

Gosh Bella, ain't that somethin' and though it ain't the usual way things is done, here's a rose for you. Don't take too long before you either throw it away or I hope – give it back to me. I'll be here at sundown.

Exit Gringo

BEL

Why! Manuel was right. I did see only the rabbit under my nose and a better buck rabbit was just waitin' to jump for me. What a fool I've been.

Exit left Bella

Enter centre Rosalita

ROS

Sings first verse of 'In a Little Spanish Town'

Enter centre Luke

LUKE

Senorita, I have no right to this rose. I know it was meant for Harry, but I'm giving it back to you as though it had been mine.

Luke speaks second verse of 'In a Little Spanish Town'

I love you, but I have to tell you that you are not the first woman I loved. I lost my Carmen and until I met you, I never loved again. It was:

Luke sings chorus of 'In a Little Spanish Town'

ROS

You shall have my answer, Senor. I too loved another and will love him always.

Rosalita sings chorus of 'In a Little Spanish Town'

LUKE

Carmen! Carmen! My long lost love. Why didn't you tell me, my dearest one?

ROS

I am no longer a young girl and until you sent the fan, I was not sure if you had come to care for Rosalita.

LUKE

So now, my beloved, I return to you this rose with my heart and the desire that you will be my bride as soon as the wedding can be arranged.

ROS

Manuel will be very happy. You see, my love, he was our duenna all those years ago.

LUKE

Yippee! I want the whole world to know you're mine. Oh shucks! This will come hard on Harry.

ROS

I think not, but here he comes.

Enter centre Harry and Gus

Enter left Joe, Lillibelle, Gringo and Bella

Enter right Steve, Mollie, Manuel and Flossie

LUKE

I want you all to know that the Senorita Rosalita Tequila Espana Estoy Fumando Los Cigarillos (O'le) has done me the honour to accept my proposal of marriage and will become Senora Wilmont.

GUS

You mean we won't have to suffer from lock-jaw every time we address her!

EVERYONE

O'le! O'le! O'le!

HAR

I'm free! Augusta, I know we've only just met, but can you...will you...?

GUS

Yes! Yes! Yes! Just as soon as Augustus return to fight his gun duels.

ROS

But Augustus will not be returning ever. Then surely your husband will uphold your honour in his stead?

GUS

But Rosalita! Oh! Your lovely fan (*gifts fan to Augusta*)

LUKE

I knew I'd seen that face before. Holding that fan, you're the spittin' image of my great-great-grandmama, Arabella De Gramont. Just as she looked in the old painting I have of her.

■ ■■ ■

GUS

Did you say Arabella De Gramont? My great-great-grandpapa's twin sister.

LUKE

Yes! She was a twin too. She had a daughter, who had a daughter, who had a daughter, who had me, the very first boy in the De Gramont line. No wonder I could see myself in your fire-eating twin brother Gus!

ROS

Augustus, mia cara, how can the men of your family duel with themselves?

LUKE

(ASIDE TO ROSALITA: You called her Augustus mia cara. That's it! You did the same in the Cantina. You used the feminine address for a man, Rosalita! Manuel was right, you sure can finesse!)

ROS

(ASIDE to LUKE: Dearest one, this is forever our secret because if Augustus does not return, you will have to fight his duels for him.)

JOE

Say! We'll all be related when you marry Harry, and I sure do want to meet up again with Gus 'cos I reckon he's the spunkiest little fella I ever met. I want to withdraw any challenge. It was just jealousy over Lillibelle.

LIL

Oh Joe! You're so perfect.

HAR

Well, as I said at the start, I sure do like happy people and a happy ending for everyone.

LUKE

Everyone safely corralled but I'll be happy to preside if you want a shotgun wedding. Just look at those stars, sweetheart. 'cos....

REPRISE: Deep in the Heart of Texas