

The Howl Of The Wild Wolf

by Honoria Mary Robertson Dick

A MELODRAMA

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CAST

E. NELL	Eskimo Nell
KATE	Klondike Kate
ROSE	Rose Rambler
SILVER GOLD TINSEL	Three bar girls
D. DAN	Dangerous Dan McGrew
YUKON JACK	
B.B. BILL	Baffin Bay Bill
VELVET JOE	
S. SAM	Saskatchewan Sam
RUNNING BEAR	

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.

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Setting: The Dead-Eye Dick Saloon

-ACT ONE-

KATE

Looking for someone dearie?

ROSE

Not exactly. I'm looking for work.

Laughter from bar girls

KATE

Now girls! Mind your manners, that ain't nice behaviour.

To Rose:

Well honey, I'm afraid you're a bit over the hill for this kind of work.

ROSE

Over the hill? What do you mean?

Enter Yukon Jack from side – behind Rose

KATE

Well! You know honey, a bit too old – and let's face it, you're not exactly a beauty although you do have a trim ankle.

Loud laughter from bar girls

ROSE

Why! You have the impertinence to think that I want to join you, well thanks for nothing. You can mock me, but for any man you can get, I can get two.

TINSEL

She's a comedienne!

ROSE

I'm not very young, nor am I beautiful, but I have hidden assets. See these hands, come on, take a good look ladies. With these hands I can catch any man.

SILVER

Any man with lead in his shoes.

GOLD

Where are all these men you've caught?

KATE

That's enough girls. Go on honey, you tell us how to hook a man.

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Winks at girls and Yukon Jack

ROSE

I play a man, the way an angler plays a fish. First, I woo him – with my Welsh Rarebit. When he's interested, I tease him with a trifle, and gradually lure him on with Melting Moments. Then, when he is all unsuspecting, I snare him with my sumptuous soufflé.

YUKON JACK

Dear lady, are you, can you possibly be a cook?

ROSE

I'm the best cook in Canada and all I need is a chance to prove it.

YUKON JACK

Then this is a most fortuitous meeting. My Chinese cook has just gone way up north to Alaska and I need a cook for my hotel.

ROSE

Oh! Sir, give me a chance to prove my skill, you will never regret it.

YUKON JACK

Allow me to present myself – Yukon Jack, owner of this saloon and of the adjacent hotel. This lady is Klondike Kate, my very beautiful saloon hostess, the girls are Silver, Gold and Tinsel, and this is Velvet Joe – barman, friend and the fanciest card player in the North.

ROSE

I'm Rose Rambler, and I just know I'm going to be happy here.

Loud howls off stage

What is that terrifying sound?

Flings her arms around Yukon Jack

YUKON JACK

That's the hunting call of the wild wolf – a sure sign of approaching winter, and a warning of danger to all unwary travellers in this wild country.

Enter Saskatchewan Sam flailing his arms

S. SAM

I'm as cold as a frog in an ice-bound pool. Come and thaw me out Tinsel.

KATE

Set the glasses up Velvet Joe, the boys are on their way here.

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YUKON JACK

Hello Saskatchewan Sam. This is our new cook – Miss Rose Rambler. Allow me to take your cloak and bag Miss Rose.

Exit Yukon Jack by side entrance

VELVET JOE

Hi! Sam, I guess the trappers will be starting to move out once the Eskimo weather arrives. The frost is already as cutting as a well-honed tool.

Howls

ROSE

Flings her arms around Velvet Joe

There is that dreadful noise again.

Howls off stage

There's something about that sound that freezes the very blood in my veins.

S. SAM

That's the howl of the wildest wolf I know.

KATE

That can only mean... it's coming nearer all the time...skidoo girls! Run for cover!

The howls get louder

It's Dangerous Dan McGrew!

Enter D. Dan singing. Grabs Rose and emits an electrifying wolf call.

D. DAN

No use struggling, no use pleading for mercy, I have you in mi clutches.

Rose struggles fiercely

I am Dangerous Dan McGrew, I wrestle bears with mi bare hands and mi heart is as cold as a polar bear's chuff.

Direct to audience:

Just take my word for it, that's cold enough!

ROSE

Let me go you grizzly bear. Won't anyone help me?

Enter centre Eskimo Nell

E. NELL

Take your greasy paws off her you skunk! And don't get any ideas about pulling

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out yer pistol! Cos I've got a bead aimed right at yer holster!

D. DAN

There's only one critter with a voice like a screeching wild goose – it has to be Eskimo Nell.

E. NELL

You've gone too far this time you wild coyote. That female you're frisking with is my little sister, Rosie, and I'm going to teach you a lesson you won't forget.

KATE

Oh! Come on Nell, a stolen kiss ain't reason enough for a shoot-out.

YUKON JACK

Simmer down Eskimo Nell, Dan hasn't hurt your sister, it was only a kiss.

ROSE

Only a kiss!

SONG: Only A Kiss

ROSE

The only kisses I give away to anyone are Sweetmeats. Now will someone please show me my room and the kitchen.

D. DAN

Don't spit fire at me.

Exit Rose head tossing

I wouldn't have even wasted a bullet on you, let alone a kiss if I'd known you were related to that ice-bound she-wolf, Eskimo Nell.

To Nell:

And you can thank your lucky stars that the only reason I didn't grab my pistol was because I was concerned about Kate and her girls getting in the line of fire. Just don't count on that advantage being repeated.

Enter centre Running Bear & Baffin Bill

E. NELL

Advantage! Why you sneaky snake, I can out-shoot you any time. What's more, I'm not only faster with a gun but I'm also a better trapper than you are, Dangerous Dan.

B.B. BILL

You cut him down to size Nell.

To Dan:

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I'd back Eskimo Nell against yer any time, both shooting and trapping.

D. DAN

To Nell:

I'll print my name in bullets all over your hide if I have any more cheek outta you. I hunt alone and you, you always have that half-breed Indian, Running Bear trapping with you and most of the winters lately, Baffin Bay Bill's been around too.

YUKON JACK

Seems to me that you're both mighty generous with your boasts, but words are cheap. Are you willing to back up your boasts by pitting your skills against each other in an organized contest?

S. SAM

Yippee! I'll start the betting with a handful of gold-dust on Dangerous Dan.

B.B. BILL

I'll triple that bet in favour of Eskimo Nell.

KATE

To Velvet Joe:

Say Joe, who's the fellow throwing the gold around?

VELVET JOE

That's Baffin Bay Bill, he owns the richest goldmine in the North.

YUKON JACK

Hold it boys. First of all we have to decide on the type and terms of the contest.

ROSE

Enters side

What contest? Not a shoot-out Nell.

YUKON JACK

No! No shooting, I have a better idea. You trappers will be leaving for the North within two or three weeks now that the snow is here. When the passes are negotiable in the springtime you will come back here, and whichever of you brings in the finest pelts, of the greatest value according to prices current at that time, will be deemed to be the best, most skilful trapper in the frozen North.

E. NELL & D. DAN

Done! Register the bet.

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YUKON JACK

One more thing. You have to trap your own pelts. Any pelts collected by a team mate have to be kept separate.

D. DAN

I'll up the ante! I'm putting down five hundred dollars on mi own behalf to be given to that squawking she-seal if she beats me.

ROSE

And I'll match you dollar for dollar on Nell's behalf you great big bull moose.

RUNNING BEAR

Wise woman runs fast when wild wolf howls.

E. NELL

Why don't you go and tangle with your teepee Running Bear. Rosie, where can you get all that money – oh! No, not that, not that! I can't let you part with it. Not your tiny treasure.

ROSE

Dearest Nellie, through all the years of deprivation, when you struggled through the snow-drifts of the ice-land to make enough money to help support me and our dear departed Auntie. I hoarded and saved my little treasure. Now, in order to prove my faith in you I will gladly surrender it.

E. NELL

Oh! Rosie, how noble you are.

Exit Dangerous Dan

KATE

I wish I had some small treasure with which to place a bet on Eskimo Nell.

B.B. BILL

Lady, your beautiful thought is matched only by your beautiful face. Allow me to place a bet for you. Here Joe, on Nell for...

KATE

I'm known as Klondike Kate and I surely am deeply in your debt Mr!

B.B. BILL

Baffin Bay Bill Ma'am, and your lovely smile repays your debt.

E. NELL

What's gotten in to Baffin Bay Bill? I've never heard him talk like that before. Come on Bill meet little Rosie.

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B.B. BILL

Pleased to meet you Miss Rose. I'll be seeing you later Eskimo Nell.

ROSE

Come on Nellie dear, I'll unwrap my treasure.

E. NELL

Rosie, I don't like the way Baffin Bay Bill is acting, it just isn't natural. I've never seen him look at a woman and well, as a matter of fact, I always hoped that maybe – someday – well, you know what I hoped Rosie.

Exit Rose & Eskimo Nell

KATE

Clear the floor boys, I'm going to sing a song, just for you Baffin Bay Billy boy.

SONG: Ta-Ra-Ra Boom-De-Ay!

YUKON JACK

Kate, you are incomparable. Come into the other bar, boys, the drinks are on me.

ROSE

Come out for a breath of air Nellie. It sure is a lovely view from this verandah. What is that tinkling noise?

E. NELL

That's the waterfall just below the hotel verandah, soon it will be frozen over.

ROSE

Nellie...this Baffin Bay Bill... I'll be so happy for you if your hopes come true but don't forget the curse of the Ramblers. You know that the male Ramblers always marry pretty women and have plain daughters, that's us, and the female Ramblers always finish up as old maids and that's us. We're old maids Nellie. You may be the fastest gun and the smartest animal trapper this side of the North Pole, and I may be the best cook in Canada, but we can't compete with a fine figure and a pretty face like those of Klondike Kate. We just have to accept facts and get our priorities right!

E. NELL

Oh! Rosie, I'm so glad that you are here, you're so practical. Baffin Bay Bill has never given me any reason to hope, but he did seem to enjoy trapping with me and Running Bear last season. Come on, let's go and get your bag unpacked.

VELVET JOE

I didn't see you come in Dangerous Dan.

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D. DAN

I came to give you my five hundred dollars in gold to be handed over to Eskimo Nell if I lose the bet. Who does that icicle think she is betting against Dangerous Dan?

Time passes. Three weeks later.

D. DAN

Where are the men? The snow is thickening all the time, and where are all the girls?

Enter Yukon Jack, S. Sam, B.B. Bill & Running Bear

Every time I come into the Dead-Eye Dick, all the girls disappear and I was all set to tell them about my wrestling match with a big bull moose. You know, I stalked that critter for miles, he was the biggest moose I've ever seen, and his antlers! He had horns the size of a tree. Every time he moved, I moved, until finally I had him cornered so he had to turn to run. Down went his mighty head and he charged at me. But I stood my ground and faced him and I grabbed his antlers. Over his head he tossed me, right onto his back, and there I stayed, riding him like a pony. It took two days and two nights before that bull moose tired himself out and sank to his knees in surrender with me still on his back. I let him go, but it sure made me sad to lose that branch of horns, it would've taken three men to carry them.

YUKON JACK

Sure sounds like a lot of bull, Dan.

B.B. BILL

Where's Kate? Where are all the girls?

S. SAM

Tinsel just told me to vamoose, said I smelt like a dead pole-cat.

D. DAN

Even Eskimo Nell ain't here, what's wrong with them females?

B.B. BILL

Seems like all the women are avoiding us.

YUKON JACK

Can you blame them? Now look here you fellows, we all know that this is a country where men are men, and women are glad of it. Women want a man strong enough to protect them but women are sort of funny about some things.

VELVET JOE

You tell them Yukon Jack, no-one knows women like you do.

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YUKON JACK

Women like a man to wash the bear-grease off himself before he comes a-calling.

S. SAM

You mean use water?

YUKON JACK

Yes, and soap too. And another thing, ladies like to get presents. Pretty things like flowers and furbelows.

B.B. BILL

Furbelows! What the heck are they?

YUKON JACK

The sort of things that ladies wear to make them look attractive. You men have to learn to finesse, to pitch a little woo. Look, I'll show you.

SONG: Pretty Things

Enter Kate & Bar Girls

KATE

What's going on here? What are you doing with my shawl Yukon Jack? Are you men paralysed or something?

All men turn toward side entrance and sniff

ROSE

I thought my sister Nellie might be in here, she's been making arrangements for a new team of huskies. Why men, what is the matter?

S. SAM

I ain't smelled anything as beautiful as this aroma since I left mi old Mother's.

ROSE

Why I do declare, they're all fascinated by my Steak and Kidney pie. Here boys, I'll lay it on the table if you'll come into the dining room.

YUKON JACK

Say, if that tastes anything like as good as it smells, it must be angel food.

KATE

I don't believe it, hey fellows! Come back here. Not Yukon Jack too. Say girls, this cooking game is a real threat to us.

Exit centre all men except Dan

I've got an idea. Here she comes.

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Enter Rose

You know honey, I didn't really believe your boast about your cooking, but I'm always open to conviction. Your sister, Eskimo Nell, says she's the best shot and the best trapper this side of the North Pole. You say you're the best cook in Canada. Well Eskimo Nell aims to prove her prowess, how about you doing the same?

ROSE

I don't think I understand what you're getting at.

KATE

You have to prove that you are the best cook and can catch any man you please.

ROSE

That's what I said and that is what I can do.

KATE

Are you willing to have a wager on it?

ROSE

If you mean am I willing to stand by my statement, then the answer is , yes I am.

KATE

Then pit your cooking against the sweet smiles of me and my girls and get a proposal of marriage from a certain man.

ROSE

Ever since I came to the Dead-Eye Dick Saloon you've been laughing at me because I'm plain and I don't get the attention from the men that you, and Gold, and Silver, and Tinsel, get. Well I'll prove my worth, but I haven't any treasure left with which to seal the wager.

KATE

You won't need any cash dearie.

ROSE

Done! You name the stake and I will accept it.

KATE

The stakes are, that you get a gold nugget from each of the girls if you can get Dangerous Dan McGrew to propose marriage to you before the end of next springtime.

VELVET JOE

Dangerous Dan – say Kate, that's not a bet, it's an impossibility. Even Yukon Jack would be at least a sporting chance. Don't take the bet Miss Rose.

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KATE

You hold your tongue Velvet Joe. You may be the most famous card player south of the snow-line but I'm the one who's dealing this hand.

ROSE

I accepted the terms and you have told me what I can win. You haven't told me what I forfeit if I lose.

KATE

You quit the Dead-Eye Dick Saloon and Hotel and you leave this territory forever.

ROSE

You mean leave – Nellie and, leave everyone, all my new found friends?

KATE

Yes.

ROSE

I sure was wrong about you Klondike Kate. I felt that you had a heart as big as this country and that here, in The Rockies, there was space for both of us to live and expand in. How wrong I was, but I've accepted the bet and I'll keep the terms, whatever the cost.

Exit side Rose & Velvet Joe

KATE

Well now girls, I don't think we have any more worries. Dangerous Dan will be up North until springtime and that leaves Miss Cookie only a few weeks in which to try to win her bet. We sure will have some sport when springtime comes.

Exit Kate

Enter side Eskimo Nell & Baffin Bay Bill

E. NELL

Oh! Bill, I haven't seen you for days. I've got all the provisions loaded and Running Bear is rounding up the huskies. I just can't wait to put on my snowshoes and head for the Eskimo country. There's nothing so exhilarating as trudging through miles of snow or over oceans of ice. A few more days and we'll be away, just Running Bear, you and me. I'll show Dangerous Dan how to trap furs.

B.B. BILL

Eskimo Nell, I won't be leaving with you. I'll be around here for a few days longer and then I'm heading for my mine.

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E. NELL

Right Bill, when and where can we expect to meet up with you? We'll be trapping up to the northern snowline for most of the season.

B.B. BILL

I won't be meeting up with you.

E. NELL

But Baffin Bay Bill, you always join me and Running Bear for part of the winter and I sure need you to bring me luck if I'm going to win the bet.

B.B. BILL

Eskimo, you've been the best mate a man could have, just like a young brother to me. You see, I've worked hard all my life and I struck lucky with my gold mine and now I want to enjoy myself and live civilised. I want some polish, I want to learn how to please a lady, a lady like Klondike Kate.

E. NELL

Oh! Bill, can't you see she's nice to all the men, not just you. Klondike Kate can pick any man she fancies. She'll make a fool of you.

B.B. BILL

Don't malign the woman I love. Running Bear will take care of you, you don't need me along on the trail. Come on Eskimo, smile, take your disappointment like a man.

E. NELL

The woman you love. Bill I'm a woman too and I'm a better trapper and shot than her.

B.B. BILL

I never think of you as a woman Eskimo. Come on, shake hands before we part.

SONG: Are We To Part Like This Bill?

B.B. BILL

All the best of luck Eskimo Nell. Don't let Running Bear get you into any awkward situations.

Exit side

E. NELL

Twirling her guns

Dangerous Dan I can deal with but with Klondike Kate I can't. Come on Nell, get your priorities right and show that howling timber wolf what a determined female Rambler can do.

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Enter centre Dangerous Dan

D. DAN

Still boasting – why look here, even now I can pull a gun faster than you can think.

E. NELL

Why you – unkempt, loud-mouthed, uncouth grizzly bear, what are you, a man or a mouse? Reach you yellow varmint.

D. DAN

Struggling to get his gun out of his holster while Nellie twirls hers

Why is it that my doggone pistol always sticks at a critical moment?

E. NELL

Ha! Ha! Ha! You wriggling weasel! You pesky polecat!

D. DAN

Eskimo, I've had enough of your lip. You're as mad as fire because Baffin Bay Bill's been making calf-eyes at Klondike Kate.

Enter Velvet Joe

Well, can you blame him – look at you. You dress like a man, you act like a man, you even walk like a man. You call me unkempt, well, take a good long look at yourself. And another thing, you're pretty fancy with those guns but it's a rifle you'll be needing for trapping Nell, and I've yet to have my marksmanship with a rifle bettered by any man let alone a mixed-up female.

Exit centre

E. NELL

Velvet Joe, if you ever repeat what you just heard I'll...

VELVET JOE

On my oath I won't Eskimo.

E. NELL

Have you seen my little sister Rosie, Joe?

VELVET JOE

Yes! She's out there on the verandah with Yukon Jack. He's looking at the waterfall, if it's freezing it's time to harness the huskies.

YUKON JACK

See that waterfall Miss Rose? By tomorrow it will be frozen and we must get away while the passes are still open.

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ROSE

We? I didn't know that you were going North with the trappers.

YUKON JACK

Sure thing – I want to trap some very special stoats. I want enough to make an ermine cloak for a very special lady.

Hums "Pretty Things"

ROSE

When will you be back Yukon Jack?

YUKON JACK

When the thaw sets in and the passes re-open it will be springtime and we'll be back. You just watch the waterfall Rosie, when you hear the sound of flowing water you can get ready to welcome us home. Don't lose your heart to anyone while I'm away, I don't want to lose the best cook I ever had.

Exit side

ROSE

And when it's springtime I have to have Dangerous Dan McGrew eating out of my hand.

E. NELL

Enter centre

Rosie it's time I was tightening the straps on my sled. What's wrong with you?

ROSE

Why do I have to be so practical, why wasn't I born impractical and pretty? How can I lure Dangerous Dan into a proposal of marriage?

E. NELL

Are you stark, raving mad?

ROSE

Nell, I've got to get him to propose, I've got a bet on it and I have to win.

VELVET JOE

Listen Rosie, why don't you learn how to exploit your feminine charms? You're not bad looking but you need some help and I'd like to help you win your bet Rosie.

E. NELL

I don't know how, but if you're going to teach Rosie some tricks you'd better include me as soon as I get back.

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Enter all except Running Bear

S. SAM

Get your snowshoes on, the sleds are loaded and the huskies are as fresh and frisky as springtime.

D. DAN

I'm on my way. I must go where the wild goose goes, way up North, to Alaska.

YUKON JACK

Goodbye girls, goodbye my beautiful Kate, see you in the springtime.

SONG: When It's Springtime In The Rockies

Enter centre Running Bear

S. SAM

How!

RUNNING BEAR

You got your problems, I got mine. Eskimo Nell, someone has let loose your huskies.

E. NELL

It's that furtive fox Dangerous Dan McGrew, but I'll catch 'em, all I need is a team to start with. Here, Running Bear.

MEN

Hey Nell, what are you doing?

E. NELL

I'm off – off to the frozen wastes, to the land of the midnight sun, back to my little igloo on the ice-pack. Back to Eskimo land. Mush! You huskies. Let's go Running Bear – take me back to the Yukon where the nights are six months long!

-END OF PART ONE-

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-PART TWO-

ROSE

Come on Nellie, don't be shy – no-one except Velvet Joe is going to see us.

E. NELL

I feel like a newly skinned rabbit in these next-to-nothings, and my holsters won't hang right.

ROSE

You can't tote your guns when you're wearing a cabaret outfit Nellie. Here, give them to me.

E. NELL

Put them on the bar where I can see them and where they're handy to get at.

VELVET JOE

Enter from side

Well I'll be a chattering chipmunk – ladies, you look like...

E. NELL

Like old hens with only the tail feathers left!

VELVET JOE

Nellie you're all woman, and you, Rosie, well you needn't depend on your cooking.

ROSE

I feel like a fool, but to get that proposal is worth any sacrifice.

E. NELL

Old hen or not, I can still flap my feathers, and I aim to show Baffin Bay Bill that I have weapons other than my six-shooters. Come on Joe, how do we start?

VELVET JOE

The way a woman moves is the magnet that draws a man's attention to her. This movement keeps pace with the fashion in dancing. For instance:

SONG AND DANCE: Every Little Movement

ROSE

How are we progressing Velvet Joe?

VELVET JOE

I can't get over the way you look and move.

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E. NELL

We weren't always old maids Joe. Before Rosie and I were left with the responsibility for taking care of our old Auntie, we were a couple of flibbertigibbets but that was a long time ago.

Enter centre S. Sam

S. SAM

Howdy Joe, who are the new sweeties? Say Bill!

Enter centre B.B. Bill

B.B. BILL

What's wrong with Saskatchewan Sam? No! It can't be, I don't believe it. It is, it's Eskimo Nell! Well I'll be a barricaded beaver. Gee Nell, you're prettier than a newly-feathered goose. Dangerous Dan McGrew has just come into town and he sure has a heavy pack. No-one mentioned seeing you Nell.

ROSE

Has anyone sighted Yukon Jack? He's the referee so he has to be here for the count.

E. NELL

Dangerous Dan in town – out of my way – what's wrong with you Joe? Oh! I forgot, I sure am happy to see you, you old cuddly bear Billy boy.

Gives wolf whistle

You've heard the hunting call of the wild wolf, well, that whistle is the mating call of the she-wolf.

Enter centre D. Dan

Exit side B.B. Bill

D. DAN

Wild howl

Say hello to the best trapper in the North. Shivering Eskimos! What kind of critter is this? Must be a black seal!

E. NELL

I'll skin you alive you ranting racoon, where are my guns – out of my way.

D. DAN

Easy, easy Eskimo Nell, remember you have to face up to the pelt count before you eliminate me.

Turns to Rose

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Why Miss Rose, you look like a beautiful star-studded night and, if I may say so, I've been dreaming of a tasty dish such as only you can provide.

E. NELL

Are you sickening for something? Keep your shifty eyes off my little sister, Dan McGrew, I'll be settling with you later. Rosie, come and put some decent clothes on.

ROSE

Waving to Dan

I'm coming Nellie dear.

Exit side Nell & Rosie

KATE

Enter centre

Where is everyone? I thought I saw Baffin Bay Bill come in here.

VELVET JOE

He's in the hotel. He sure is sweet on you Kate.

KATE

Baffin Bay Bill is a darling man but –

VELVET JOE

But he isn't Yukon Jack.

KATE

Yukon Jack is a breed apart, so soft-spoken and smooth. He makes a woman feel so precious. And yet, I sometimes get the feeling that underneath the surface smoothness there is something wild and primitive about him. He's like a smouldering fire just waiting to burst into flame and I'm going to be the woman to stir that fire into flame. Say, I thought I heard Eskimo Nell's voice, is she back?

Enter side B.B. Bill

VELVET JOE

Yes, she was the first trapper to come in. I'll go see what news there is.

Exit centre

B.B. BILL

Hello you gorgeous gal. I've got a present for you when I've had time to unpack it.

KATE

Baffin Bay Bill, well now, how's your little old gold mine?

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B.B. BILL

Yielding enough to keep me in reasonable comfort. Kate, I seldom get a chance to see you alone and there is something I want to talk about.

KATE

Well I'm rather busy just now, did you know that we're having a real big party at the Dead-Eye Dick Saloon to celebrate the winner of the bet? Yukon Jack arranged it all before he left. Did you bring any pelts Bill? I really do have a lot to do.

Enter Velvet Joe

Oh! Velvet Joe, get Bill a drink, I'm going out for a breath of air.

Exit side

B.B. BILL

Right – but Kate, I'm not going to be put off for long.

Drinks

D. DAN

Enter centre

Where are the wild cat and her sister?

Exit centre B.B. Bill

VELVET JOE

Eskimo went looking for Running Bear and the last I saw of Rosie she was heading for the waterfall. Never known you take an interest in a female Dan.

D. DAN

Enter Rose during Dan's speech

You're the expert and you know well enough that if a man is to win at stud-poker he plays his cards close to his vest. By the way, I've heard tell that Yukon Jack is bringing in some perfect ermine pelts. I would have thought that mink or sable would have suited Kate better. Guess I'll go and get tidied up for tonight's shindig, should be an interesting celebration.

Exit centre

SONG: By A Waterfall

Enter side Kate during chorus of song

Enter centre B.B. Bill end of song, Rosie moves to her right from centre stage

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ROSE

I thought I saw Dangerous Dan with you?

VELVET JOE

You did. Say, you look just like a wild mountain rose.

ROSE

Why hello Kate, I'm just going out into the town to welcome Dangerous Dan home.

Exit centre

KATE

I didn't know she would look so good all dressed up. Still, my bet's safe enough.

B.B. BILL

Get lost Velvet Joe.

Exit side Velvet Joe

Kate, what I have to say won't wait. I love you Kate and I want to marry you.

Enter centre behind them Eskimo Nell, exits after proposal to Kate

KATE

You said you had enough money to keep you in comfort Bill, well I don't think our ideas of comfort are identical. I've worked all around Alaska and the Yukon, it was there that I first met Jack and he gave me my big chance to act as a hostess in this saloon. He's loaded Bill, more money than you can imagine – enough to take a woman even to Europe, to buy her jewels and dresses and oh! Bill, honey, I want more than just comfort, I want luxury. I've schemed and planned for it.

B.B. BILL

I never really thought I had a chance with you Kate so as soon as the result of the bet is announced tonight, I'll be leaving town. Some man will sure be lucky to win you. So long Klondike Kate.

Enter side Velvet Joe

Exit centre B.B. Bill

VELVET JOE

Yukon Jack is back and everyone is heading this way.

Enter side Rose

Enter centre Yukon Jack

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YUKON JACK

Kate my own darling – lovelier than ever. Hi Joe, everything going as planned? Why Rose Rambler, you've changed, you've blossomed since I left. You look just like one of the wild roses that blossom in springtime.

ROSE

Do you think so Yukon Jack? I hope Dangerous Dan is of the same opinion.

YUKON JACK

I think you're going to have a lot of men paying court to you and not just for your culinary delights. Why Dangerous Dan in particular?

ROSE

Because I'm hoping je will like me enough to propose to me.

YUKON JACK

What are you talking about? You and Dangerous Dan, why that's a laugh.

ROSE

Well just wait and see Yukon Jack, because any moment now Dangerous Dan will be walking through that door. I'm going to meet him in this dress, and with a newly baked steak and kidney pie in my hand, and I'm hoping with all my heart that he will propose marriage to me.

E. NELL

Enter centre

I heard you were back Yukon Jack. Running Bear told me you were ready to count and cost the pelts. I saw the ermine skins you brought in, Kate is sure going to look like a queen in them.

Enter centre B.B Bill, S. Sam & Running Bear

KATE

I can't wait to see the ermine Yukon. Hello fellows! How! (That Indian gives me the creeps.)

RUNNING BEAR

I know how, when!

S. SAM

Dangerous Dan has his pelts ready for checking Yukon.

Enter centre D. Dan

E. NELL

There sure is a smell of stale whale blubber around here – why it's Dangerous Dan. What's that in your hand?

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D. DAN

Greetings Miss Klondike Kate. Howdy Yukon Jack!

To Nell:

Why don't you stuff that mangy tail on your hat into your big mouth – she-wolf.

To Rose:

Good evening Miss Rose! Will you accept this bouquet from an humble admirer?

ROSE

Why Mr. McGrew, or may I call you Daniel? Did you pick these lovely spring flowers just for little me?

D. DAN

I most certainly did. I heard you warbling like a little bird down by the waterfall, and I wanted to give you some small token of my admiration and affection – an affection I sincerely hope that you will return.

E. NELL

First it's Baffin Bay Bill with Klondike Kate, and now the hardest case of them all Dangerous Dan McGrew and my little sister. There must be some mysterious disease affecting everyone around here.

ROSE

I thank you for the pretty flowers, and for your protestation of affection for me which I most heartily reciprocate Sir.

E. NELL

Rosie, I forbid you to have anything to do with that! That! That!

ROSE

Nellie dear, I know what I want.

D. DAN

Oh! How joyful I am! You must know that my heart is at your feet, that what I am offering you is a proposal.

Kate sags between Velvet Joe and Yukon Jack

Nell sags between S. Sam and Running Bear

YUKON JACK

You've certainly surprised us all. Congratulations Dan. I hope you'll be very happy Rose. I guess romance is in the air because I was just about to ask Klondike Kate to take over permanent management of me and my affairs. How about it Kate?

Nell looking very thoughtful and twirling her guns

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KATE

Oh Jack! Oh! Darling, will I enjoy managing you. Yippee!

YUKON JACK

And because I'm so happy, I'd like to give to Rose, as a wedding present, the pack of ermine furs I trapped. And for Kate, a bag of gold nuggets to spend on furbelows.

Exit centre B.B. Bill followed by E. Nell

D. DAN

Why Yukon, those pelts are perfect, they're worth a fortune.

ROSE

I'm the one to whom he offered the furs. I thank you Yukon Jack but I'm not the ermine type. You can trap me some bear skins Dan, they're more my style. And if you're all going to eat at the shindig tonight I'd better get back into my kitchen.

Exit side

KATE

Listen to these nuggets jingling. What a glorious sound they make. That's my kind of music.

Exit side D. Dan

SONG: Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay-I-Ay

YUKON JACK

Let's go and check the skins then we can all gather here and celebrate the engagements and the announcement of the best trapper in the frozen North.

Enter centre E. Nell

E. NELL

Running Bear will go with you to look after my interests.

YUKON JACK

Righto Eskimo Nell. Round up all the trappers, miners and lumberjacks. Velvet Joe, we'll be back. Come on boys.

Exit centre

E. NELL

I always said that you could have any man you chose Klondike Kate, and I warned Baffin Bay Bill about making a fool of himself but you led him on Kate. You used him to make Yukon Jack jealous and I think you've broken Baffin Bay Bill's heart.

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KATE

The only heart you know anything about Eskimo Nell, is the cardboard one you use for target practice, so just freeze up. I'm the dealer in this game and both you and your saucy sister are out-bid.

Enter Velvet Joe

I hold all the cards, all 52 of them.

VELVET JOE

Don't forget the joker Kate!

YUKON JACK

Enter centre

Wow! Is the result of the bet going to be a surprise?

ROSE

Enter side

Speaking of bets, hand over the nuggets in settlement of our bet, Kate.

YUKON JACK

What bet?

ROSE

Kate bet against my ability to win a proposal of marriage from Dangerous Dan. Well! I've got the proposal and won my bet. I hope that you're satisfied with the results of all your scheming Klondike Kate. You've broken Baffin Bay Bill's heart, ruined Nellie's hopes, made a fool out of me, and what's more you...

YUKON JACK

Rose! Rose! Calm down, don't be so wild.

VELVET JOE

You'll pardon my intrusion...

SONG: Wild Rose

Enter centre all men

S. SAM

Who won? Dangerous Dan I'll bet.

B.B. BILL

It must be Nell!

S. SAM

What an alluring aroma! What are you cooking Rose?

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KATE

Not another steak and kidney night, I couldn't stand it.

ROSE

I'm cooking someone's goose Sam.

KATE

Well mind you don't singe your own feathers.

YUKON JACK

Ladies! Ladies! Put aside your petty bickering, no-one is interested in them. Everyone is waiting to hear the result of the contest between the two most famous trappers in Canada. On my right that rumbustious Rambler, the lady known as Eskimo Nell

Cheers

And...

Enter centre Dan

On my left, that libidinous leader of the wild-wolf pack – Dangerous Dan McGrew.

Cheers

E. NELL

Skunk! I'll peel the hide off you and use it to fringe my trousers before I let you have Rosie.

D. DAN

Ferret! You frozen carnivore, I wouldn't even shred you for pemmican.

YUKON JACK

Cut the compliments and listen. This contest was so close, that only one pelt decided the issue.

S. SAM, B.B. BILL, VELVET JOE, KATE

Who won? Who won?

YUKON JACK

I pronounce the best trapper in the Frozen North to be... Dangerous Dan McGrew!

D. DAN

What!

ROSE

Oh! Nellie! Nellie! There must be some mistake

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E. NELL

No Rosie! Yukon Jack is the very best judge, and I hope I can take my defeat like a man. You've beaten me fair and square Dangerous Dan... but I can still out-shoot you, you pesky polecat!

D. DAN

Why don't you bite a bullet and shut up! Here Yukon, let me see the count. I can't understand it, I coulda sworn that there were more skins in Nell's pile than there were in mine, and of better quality.

YUKON JACK

Well Dan, there were other judges besides me, so I can guarantee the result and, before the count we had Running Bear watching the skins so that no-one could tamper with them, so your win is established. Congratulations Dan and also congratulations on your engagement to Rosie. Sorry Eskimo Nell, no-one else but Dan could have matched you.

D. DAN

I think congratulations are due to you Yukon Jack. You have won yourself the heart of the loveliest, loving lady. Klondike Kate is the sort of woman that fill men's dreams.

YUKON JACK

She sure is a dream. But I'm not taking her so far away that you fellows won't be able to visit us often. You can visit us on my ranch in The Rockies where we're going to settle down for the rest of our lives. Now come on Dan, give Rosie a kiss.

RUNNING BEAR

Stop! Running Bear, great warrior and hunter of the Cree Tribe will speak. Come here my daughters.

ALL

Daughters!

KATE

What's all that sign stuff, can anyone interpret his hocus-pocus?

D. DAN

I can.

YUKON JACK

So can I.

D. DAN

He says, "Just before my blood-brother, Randy Rambler, go to happy hunting

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ground, he give me his little girls to be my daughters. Them live with old Lady Aunt, I keep hunting lodge supplied. When Nell old enough she hunt with me. Rose stay in lodge until old lady join nephew in hunting ground. Many men want to marry my daughters I say no... so that's how...

KATE

Go on, what's he saying now.

YUKON JACK

He says, "I, father, choose husbands for my squaw-daughters. Elder daughter, Nell, brave and fearless, she need great warrior hunter for husband. Nell – Baffin Bay Bill too gentle to grasp ice that burns. Younger daughter bright and thrifty like young squirrel, give much comfort to wise man who sits and thinks. Rose – Dangerous Dan not subtle enough to avoid thorns to pick rose.

ROSE & E. NELL

Oh! Give us freedom to go Running Bear.

RUNNING BEAR

Will let rose wither and ice melt than give to wrong man for wife.

ROSE

Well, Daddy Bear, you don't have to worry about me marrying Dan. My bet with Kate was that I get a proposal, not that I accept it.

D. DAN

Rosie!

E. NELL

Not accept it! Not marry Dangerous Dan! Why you should jump at the chance. He's the best and bravest man in the world. Who was it when I was hugged by a grizzly bear that crept up behind that critter and wrestled him with his bare hands?

ALL

Dangerous Dan.

E. NELL

Who was it when I was cast adrift on an ice floe, dived into the freezing waters and swam out and dragged that ice floe back to land?

ALL

Dangerous Dan.

E. NELL

Who was it when I was chased by a pack of howling wolves, took over the lead of

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the pack and drew them away from me?

ALL

Dangerous Dan.

E. NELL

Who was it, I'll tell you who it was, it was Dangerous Dan McGrew. Why I'd be the proudest woman in the world to be married to such a man.

D. DAN

Nellie, oh! My frozen dessert, my Eskimo pie. At last! At last! I've heard you say that you care. I've loved you for so long Nell that I'd almost given up hope. Marry me my burning ice-cube and I'll build you the finest igloo you've ever seen. I'll hang the walls with sable and chinchilla and we'll sleep snug and warm in nothing but white bear skins.

KATE

What's that joker saying now?

YUKON JACK

That Dan put a pile of his best pelts with Eskimo Nell's so that she would win the bet. Running Bear put them back on Dan's pile.

E. NELL

Oh! Daniel! It wasn't until I saw you courting Rosie that I knew I loved you all along but I wasn't going to spoil Rosie's chance of happiness. Rosie are you sure you don't...

ROSE

You've been snow-blind Nell. You've always loved Dan but wouldn't admit it, and Dan has loved you. When he overheard you telling me about your hope of a proposal from Baffin Bay Bill, he thought he was going to lose you. Then he heard the bet between Kate and I so he asked me to help him. Our courtship was all a game to try and make you jealous. We tricked you Kate, because I couldn't marry any man unless I loved him with all my heart.

KATE

Oh Nell! Oh Rose! Forgive me. I've been such a scheming female that I've lost both my heart and the man I love. Yukon Jack, you're the finest man I know, and the richest, but I can't marry you and now the man I love has gone.

VELVET JOE

He can't be further down the trail than the waterfall Kate, try calling him.

KATE

Bill, Bill, come back to me.

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SONG: By A Waterfall – Chorus

B.B. BILL

When I heard you calling me Kate, I flew back on wings of love. My darling Kate I knew that gold couldn't charm you away if you really loved me. Kate, I'm just as rich as Yukon and I'll take you anywhere in the world you want to go. I want the world to see and admire your beauty and your marvellous boom-de-ay.

KATE

Baffin Bay Billy boy, I can't cook, but I too have hidden talents. Yukon Jack, I don't think I've broken your heart, I saw you lose it the day Rosie walked into the Dead-Eye Dick Saloon.

YUKON JACK

My lovely Kate, you lucky man. Rosie, my wild Rambler, will you feed the fire in my hunting lodge? Will you spend your life rambling around my heart?

ROSE

Oh! Yukon Jack, my love! I'll keep your lodge as bright and gay as springtime, and I'll cook such delicacies just for you alone.

YUKON JACK

Just promise me one thing my Rose – promise me, that only I shall share with you your sumptuous soufflé.

E. NELL

What I can't figure out is why you thought I needed help to win that contest.

D. DAN

Because I'm a better shot than you are Nell.

E. NELL

Why, you loud-mouthed boasting coyote, I'll plug you full of lead, dance you devil.

D. DAN

Oh! Nellie, Nellie, lay your pistol down will you.

SONG: Lay Your Pistol Down

D. DAN

That's better. You ain't going to let a little thing like a bear pelt come between us are you?

E. NELL

My warrior! Nothing is ever going to come between us again. But I'm still a better shot than you.

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D. DAN

I ain't going to argue with you Eskimo Nell, but I warn you, I'm aiming to prove you wrong.

RUNNING BEAR

Me Happy Warrior.

D. DAN

I once read a poem by a sourdough, name of Service. It went something like this:
I have clinched and closed with the naked North,

E. NELL

I have learned to defy and defend:

D. DAN & E. NELL

Shoulder to shoulder we have fought it out –

D. DAN

But the wild (wild wolf howl) must win in the end.

RUNNING BEAR

Peace at last. Now Running Bear do rain dance. Rain make ice melt, and rose grow. How!

SONG: When It's Springtime In The Rockies (Entire Cast)

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