JIM DANDY'S RUDE, CRUDE DUDE RANCH

By Les McClain

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SYNOPSIS

At Jim Dandy's Dandy Dude Ranch for Children, nasty city kids learn good manners and improve their self-images! The Dandy ladies, including the lovely young Melody Dandy, are running the ranch while Jim Dandy is serving an undeserved prison sentence. Trouble is, the ranch is close to the future railroad line and villain Rash von Sphincter is determined to make a tidy, albeit unfair, profit on it.

Rash tricks the gals into letting him manage the ranch. He enlists several dusty Cowboys, who have no manners, to work for him, turning all the dude children into brats, ruining the ranch's reputation, and (hopefully) forcing Mrs. Dandy to sell. Rash's goody-goody son, Vincent, doesn't understand his father's evil actions. And the brave, shy hero, Elliot Bond, who has just finished his graduate work in international law enforcement, child abuse and cattle rustling, doesn't understand why he has such a bully of a son, Bradley, at all.

Melody finds out about Rash's plans from Crystal Starlight, his reformed accomplice. So Rash makes three rather creative attempts to silence Melody. All are foiled at the last moment by our hero. And Jim Dandy, out on furlough, finds out Rash is the real criminal of the crime Jim was convicted.

But there's unfinished business here. Crystal and the Cowboys turn out to the have birthmarks that prove they are the Dandy's long-lost eldest children and Melody confesses that when she was a nurse, she accidentally switched two baby boys (and we know which two!) Adding humor to the already pun-filled play are a know-it-all Narrator, an old Sheriff who has a line for the women, a piano player who has one line, and a few other minor parts which can be doubled.

Playing Time: About 1 hour, 30 min.

THE CAST
4 w, 5 m, 3 others *(men or women)*,
and 5-7 kids *(or adults dressed as kids)*

Melinda Dandy...wife, co-owner of Dandy Dude Ranch
Jim Dandy...husband, co-owner of Dandy Dude Ranch
Melody ...Dandy sweet daughter
Aunt Sophie...Melinda's sister, Melody's aunt

Dusty Cowboy 1...crude drifter*
Dusty Cowboy 2...rude drifter*

Rash von Sphincter...the villain!
Vinny von Sphincter...polite son of the villain
Elliot J. Bond...the hero!
Bradley Bond...nasty son of the hero

Sheriff Badge...the law
Crystal Starlight...accomplice of Rash
Stage Driver, Governor...2 small parts, same actor*
Stage Narrator...on stage story teller
Piano Player...short lived
3 Kids, (one doubles as Newsboy)...small parts

*Cowboys and Stage Driver/Governor can be either men or women. The parts are written for men; if woman are used, simply change the gender references throughout. The only other dialogue change would be in Scene 8 where the cowboys are referred to by name. The female names would be Finnette *(Fine-et')* and Justise *(Just-teese').*

SCENERY

One interior set, room of the dude ranch, and two simple drops, the desert and a main street of old west town.

SFX

Entrance and exit music, rapid door knocks, belches, gun shots, banging noises, crash and cattle stampede.

COSTUME NOTES

RASH: traditional villain suit, black cape

VINNY: dark or black colors

ELLIOT: traditional hero's outfit *(all white)* with holster and gun *(either a cap pistol or a blank gun that can fire 6 times without reloading)* Add white gloves for Scene 7

BRADLEY: light or white colors

KIDS: mixed colors *(not all dark or all white)*

CRYSTAL: 1) traditional dance-hall floozy outfit, dark stockings; 2) white nurse's smock; 3) regular, period dress, bonnet

MELODY: softer, lighter colors than other women, ribbon in hair

COWPOKES: dusty*(flour)*, dirty clothes; then regular, clean, neat clothes

GOVERNOR: old-fashioned, gray suit

SOPHIE, MRS. DANDY, SHERIFF, JIM DANDY, COACH DRIVERS: traditional period clothes, mixed colors such as plaids, not real dark or real light. First Driver has arrow through cowboy hat; second is dressed as an Indian.

NARRATOR: unkempt, but distinguished; light pants, dark jacket, frilly or fancy shirt, Western gambler-drifter stereotype; ever-present wine or whiskey bottle *(or grape Kool-Aid bottle).*

Scene 1
The Desert

(AT RISE: RASH and VINNY enter. RASH is carrying a map, counting his paces.)

RASH: 13,452…13,453…13,454…13,455! Aha! Here it is Vinny! 13,455 paces due west of town. X marks the spot! *(Holds up map, showing big X)*

VINNY: *(Speaking rather formally.)* Father, you know I prefer to be called Vincent. But anyway, how do you know we're at the right place?

RASH: *(Picks up a piece of poster board that has been laying flat on stage, displays a large X painted on the poster)* Well, my boy, the X on my map matches perfectly with the X here on the ground. This is the place!

VINNY: What's so special about this place, Father?

RASH: Right here, Vinny, my boy, is probably the most valuable piece of property in the <u>old</u> west …

(STAGE NARRATOR walks onto stage, carrying script papers, interrupting RASH. He speaks to audience.)

NARRATOR: Excuse me folks, this really isn't the <u>old</u> west. Well, to you it may be old but to these play characters, it was fairly <u>newly</u> discovered. And it's not really the <u>west</u> west, like California or something like that, it's just somewhere between the southwest, the northwest and the midwest. So, here we are.

I guess I should tell you that I'm not really <u>in</u> this play, like they *(Points to RASH & VINNY.)* are - I'm just around here to help out where I can. See, this play is not very well written and you might get confused trying to follow the story line, so I'll explain some things from time to time. And *(Holding up the script papers.)* I can offer some fascinating biographical material about the players *(Takes drink from bottle.)*

NARRATOR: *(Cont'd.)* You'll have to excuse me if I take a nip now and again — it's dusty and dry out here in the desert and a fellow's throat could get sore. Well, let's find out why this particular piece of desert land is so valuable *(Sits in corner or at side and watches.)*

RASH: Anyway, according to the unpublished government document that I…uh…borrowed, the railroad from the northwest and the railroad from the northeast will meet right here on this very spot and then connect with the railroad to the south. The railroad will pay a pretty penny for this land. AND the surrounding property will be ripe for development. Whoever owns this land, once they sell it to the railroad and to the developers, will be wealthy beyond imagination. Now, I wonder who does own this land? *(HE looks around and sees the sign that says: "DANDY'S DANDY DUDE RANCH FOR CHILDREN, JIM DANDY PROPRIETOR.")* Aha, this is the Dandy Dude Ranch!

VINNY: Oh, Father, the Dandy's will be so happy to find out that they are going to be rich! I can't wait to tell them!

RASH: No, No, Vinny boy. The Dandy's mustn't know about the coming railroad and this financial bonanza. I will act as intermediary in this transaction. I will buy the Dandy's property and I will sell it to the railroad *(Aside to audience.)* for a handsome profit.

VINNY: But, Father, that would be unethical. The Dandys would not receive their fair share of profit. That's not fair!

RASH: *(Aside to audience.)* I sometimes don't understand that kid. Now I realize that a kid's personality, to a certain extent, is determined by environmental factors…such as who his peers are, the economic-social conditions to which he has been exposed, etc. However, you'd think that some personality traits would be inherited — but he just doesn't seem to have my savvy for survival. *(Speaks to VINNY.)* We will do this my way, Vinny.

VINNY: Whatever you say, Father.

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