THE PERILS OF A FRONTIER FOTOGRAPHER

or

They Kissed in the Darkroom but Nothing Developed

By Eddie Cope and Buster Cearley

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information.

On all programs and advertising the author's name must appear as well as this notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Company."

PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
www.histage.com
© 1996 by Eddie Cope and Buster Cearley

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/perils-of-a-frontier-foto

STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's a sparkling mellerdrammer that has more plot twists than a pretzel factory. Only, in this case, the setting is a near-bankrupt photo studio in the Territory of Arizona. The owner is Mrs. Paula Roid, a widow who divides her time between her sickbed and her lovely daughter, Aster, "The dainty darling of the darkroom."

But several other Arizonans have their beady eyes on Miss Roid, including the dastardly Mayor Gobblecrud who owns the building that houses the photo studio. And natcherly, Mrs. Roid is behind in her rent. Just when the situation is about to explode, a stagecoach arrives with several interesting characters including Jacques-Louis Daguerre, a photographic genius from Paris (and a handsome one at that!).

With one easy set and a grand mix of characters, this play has delighted audiences in community theatres and professional melodrama dinner theatres. Performance time about 50 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 M, 7 W)

JACQUE-LOUIS DAGUERRE: A photographic and inventive genius from Paris
LUNGE GOBBLECRUD: He owns the town and don't you forget it!
ASTER ROID: Dainty darling of the darkroom
MRS. PAULA ROID: Her ailing mother
MATTIE HARI: A seductive spy from Berlin
LOVEY GIGGLE: Silly sister
DOVEY GIGGLE: Silly sister
***QUID SKINNER:** Stage coach agent (in black hat)
***GRID SKINNER:** His identical twin (in white hat)
MRS. GEORGE EASTMAN: A tourist from Washington
MRS. MATTHEW BRADY: Her companion

***One actor plays both parts

PLACE: The Roid Photo Studio in Hotfoot, Arizona Territory
TIME: 1890.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

Scene 1: Mid-morning.
Scene 2: Five minutes later.

SETTING

There are doors DSR to street; URC to darkroom; and DSL to Roid living quarters. The sign on the URC door reads, "Darkroom." Furnishings include couch and chairs, studio backdrop in USL corner, camera on tripod slightly left of CS. Other furnishings to suit the director.

PROPS

AGENT: White hat, white vest, black hat, black vest, gun, check.
ASTER: Rubber apron, rubber gloves.
LUNGE: Black cape, black plug hat, white spats, stretcher, small bottle, handkerchief, two black hoods, rubber mallet, gun, rope.
JACQUE: White beret and cravat, white suit, trunk, coin, handkerchief, camera, handful of 8 x 10" pictures, piece of paper with writing.
PAULA ROID: Tray with pitcher of water and glasses.
MATTIE: Five gags.
MRS. BRADY: Small handgun, purse, hat.
MRS. EASTMAN: Small handgun, purse, hat.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: MRS. PAULA ROID, a neatly dressed middle-aged lady, is dusting and polishing the camera. There is a KNOCKING on the SR door.)

MRS. ROID: Come in! *(AGENT, middle-aged, polite, enters. He wears Levi's, white cowboy hat, white vest.)* Well! It's about time you showed up.
AGENT: Time for what?
MRS. ROID: To pay us for last year's photograph of your stage coach building.
AGENT: Begging your pardon, ma'am, er, Mrs. Roid, I wasn't here last year. You must be thinking of my evil twin brother.
MRS. ROID: Piffle! Trying to beat me out of payment by laying it on an imaginary twin brother.
AGENT: Honest, dear lady, I have an identical twin. Please believe me.
MRS. ROID: Maybe you have and maybe you don't. *(Looks at HIM intently)* H'mmmm. At least you have an honest face.
AGENT: Very much obliged.
MRS. ROID: Then, why are you here?
AGENT: I'm on a mission of great import.
MRS. ROID: Oh, pooh! Don't take up my time, sir, with your fake emoting. Just get out and leave me to my poor health.
AGENT: Anything I can do for you?
MRS. ROID: Just get out.
AGENT: But...but...
MRS. ROID: And take your "buts" with you.
AGENT: (*Leaves through SR door)* Yes, ma'am...

(MRS. ROID grasps her face in pain. Then totters around in a circle, finally collapsing on the couch.)

MRS. ROID: Oh, I'm not long for this world. *(SHE attempts to raise her head, but falls back on the couch.)* Woe is me. Woe is me. I'm dying. *(SHE sits up and shouts in a bullhorn voice.)* Daughter! Daughter!

ASTER: *(Entering from darkroom. SHE is a dainty beauty, wearing a rubber apron over her dress and rubber gloves on her hands.)* Did you call, Mother?

MRS. ROID: No, I didn't call "Mother," I called "Daughter."

ASTER: How do you feel, dear?

MRS. ROID: How do I look? *(With sudden vigor, SHE leaps off couch and stands in front of ASTER.)*

ASTER: Never better. *(To audience)* She really does look a little pale, but I must keep her spirits up.

MRS. ROID: All must go well this morning. I'm expecting two cash customers.

ASTER: How wonderful!

MRS. ROID: The Giggle Sisters will be here soon for a sitting.

ASTER: I hope they pay in advance. Gold. None of that Arizona Territory paper money.

MRS. ROID: Now, Aster, you leave the finances to me.

ASTER: How right you are. I have my little hands full developing the negatives and making prints.

MRS. ROID: Making Prince? What's his last name?

ASTER: Alas, there is no Prince in my life. Although I wish there were a man to help with our financial burden.

MRS. ROID: True, we are penniless, but we must consider ourselves lucky that your late father, my late husband, taught us how to run the studio.

ASTER: Indeed.

MRS. ROID: *(To audience)* We couldn't afford to send him to the Gobblecrud Hospital.

ASTER: Well, back to the developing tanks. *(Starts to leave)*

MRS. ROID: To the what?

ASTER: Tanks.

MRS. ROID: You're welcome.

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/perils-of-a-frontier-foto

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!