The Saga
of the
Prospector's Daughter
- Or -
She Was Only
a Miner's Minor

By Pat Cook

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STORY

Here's a hilarious melodrama spoof whose oddball characters seemingly ad lib their way through the wildest plot ever to come down the pike.

Lovely, innocent Constance Purdy is about to lose her home to that low-down, lying, two-faced, double-dealing, back-stabbing villain-about-town Wiley Schlink. Will he take the ranch away from our heroine? Will hero Monroe Mannerly ride to the rescue in time? Will her long-lost prospector father show up and save the day?

None of these questions are really answered because we're laughing too hard at the sheriff who has a mortgage on her own jail, a medicine man who ends up in a dress, and a saloon-smashing suffragette whose ax works great on cuticles. Add a piano player with an attitude and a grizzly old prospector/narrator who'd like a different ending to the play, and you get some idea of folks who populate this fool's gold rush town.

Great fun to watch and to perform. You'll swear the actors are making up their own lines, especially when they're are caught napping and playing cards as Act II opens.

From the same author that gave you MURDER RUNS IN THE FAMILY, MANDATE FOR MURDER, CRAZY-QUILT CLUB, MONEY TO BURN and other comedy favorites, this one is sure to provide you with an evening of down-home fun.

CHARACTERS

(7 m, 7 w, extras and piano player. Doubling possible.)

GABBY: The narrator, a grizzled old prospector.
CONSTANCE PURDY: The naive, helpless heroine.
WILEY SCHLINK: A low-down, back-stabbing villain.
MONROE MANNERLY: The hero, a yokel.
INDIAN: A con artist who goes by the name of "Buddy."
SHERIFF HILDA: An overweight lady constable.
J. BARNABY CUSTARD: A fast talking medicine man.
FREDDIE: Custard's assistant who's a bit dense.
CATASTROPHE KATE: A rough lady stagecoach driver.
MARY CARNATION: A saloon-crashing suffragette.
ELMIRA PLANKTON: The town gossip.
MISS CLYDESDALE: A sarcastic hotel owner.
JUDGE BLIND: A loud, pompous judge.
PIANO PLAYER: Man or woman, doesn't have to play piano; also changes the easel cards.
WAITRESS: A wise cracking old biddy.
EXTRAS: For the minor scene changes, group scenes and one- liner parts.

COSTUMES

All wear typical western/melodrama clothes. In addition Custard wears a dress and wig; Constance wears a long beard and later an Indian woman costume; Freddie has a patch of fur on his chest; the waitress wears a hooded cape; and the Judge wears a long judicial robe.

SYNOPSIS

PLACE: An old gold rush town.
TIME: Anybody's guess.

SETTING

The stage is set with two tables and several chairs to be used to form the different "locales" called for in this little embroidery. A piano with stool is located USC. Behind it should be a phone. There is also an easel on-stage, ready to hold such audience advisers as "Boo," "Rah," "Hiss," "Cheers and Whistles," "Mumble," and "Awww."

A NOTE ABOUT THE PLAY

This is a broad spoof of not only the old-fashioned melodrama but several other "sketches" relating to other types of plays up as well. It is to be played as broadly as possible. Some casting may be doubled if needed. The actor playing Gabby can also play Judge Blind. The two scene changers and several "one liner" characters at the beginning may be separate characters or double cast with some of the main characters. The Piano Player may be either a man or a woman, and with a taped music, doesn't necessarily have to be able to actually play the piano. If the actor/actress IS gifted along these lines, songs from the era may be added. Drop them in anywhere - nobody will know the difference.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: GABBY is seated in a chair and is whittling on a piece of wood with a large Bowie knife. He is singing to himself.)

GABBY: *(To the tune of "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze.")* He flew through the air with the greatest of ease. Then the rope broke and he flew through the trees. A twig caught the flap door of his BVD's. Now, shine on, shine on harvest... *(HE takes notice of the audience and stops singing.)* Oh, didn't see you folks come in. Come on in and git outta the heat, why don'cha? *(HE rises.)* Got a little story to tell you. Parts of it is funny, parts of it is sad and parts of it is stolen jist to help it along. Now, they's lotsa tales 'round these parts. Well, there's this one about the Mountie and the fair maiden. *(A MAN wearing a Mountie hat and a WOMAN in a bonnet come CS.)* And how their love helped them surmount a whole passel of problems. *(The MOUNTIE and MAIDEN embrace, face to face, and face the audience.)* But this ain't it.

MOUNTIE: Huh?

MAIDEN: It's not us.

MOUNTIE: Oh. *(THEY exit.)*

GABBY: But they's this other one about these two hillbillies who belonged to warring families. *(A HILLBILLY and HILLBETTY come on, each wearing a ragged hat and smoking a corncob pipe. They stand next to each other and embrace.)* It was sort of a mountain-style Romeo and Juliet. But this ain't their story, neither.

HILLBILLY: It ain't?

HILLBETTY: S'what he jist said.

HILLBILLY: Well, I swan. *(THEY exit.)*

GABBY: Then there's this other one about the traveling salesman and the farmer's daughter.

(The FIRST COUPLE enters again. He is wearing a loud coat and straw hat. She is carrying a bundle that looks like a baby. As they approach CS, GABBY stops them.)

GABBY: But we can't tell that one here.
MAN 2: Why, you dirty...

(The WOMAN shrugs and lobs the "baby" offstage. THEY then move closer to GABBY.)

GABBY: And, a'course, there's the one about nurse and the Flying Walendas...

(The SECOND COUPLE comes on-stage and, together with the FIRST COUPLE, they cross to GABBY.)

MAN 1: Hold it, hold it, hold it. Gabby, what story are you going to tell? We're starting to work up a sweat.
GABBY: Oh, sorry. I sorta got carried away.
WOMAN 2: You're going to be, wearing a lovely tar jacket with feather lining in about two minutes...
GABBY: Stage folk can be so touchy sometime, can't they?
ALL: GABBY!!!
GABBY: Anyhows, today I'm going to tell you the "Saga of the Prospector's Daughter."
MAN 2: *(Trying to remember.)* "The Saga of..." huh?
WOMAN 1: Ain't that the one where I play the prospector's daughter?
WOMAN 2: No, you're too old.
WOMAN 1: *(Closes in on 2.)* How old you have to be to be a prospector's daughter?
WOMAN 2: Well, you can't be older than the prospector!
WOMAN 1: *(Fists clenched.)* How'd you like to be beaten senseless with a theater trunk?
WOMAN 2: Why, you old bat, I ought to...

(Just as THEY go for each other, the MEN pull them back.)

End of Freeview

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