

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

A comedy in four acts
by
Andrew D. Doan

based on the opera by Gaetano Donizetti

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*Dedicated to all my cast and crew members—
past, present, and future*

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

A comedy in four acts

by

Andrew D. Doan

based on the opera by Gaetano Donizetti

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(10 male, 6 female, plus extras)

Norman –	<i>A young man in his early 20's</i>
Doctor Dulcamara –	<i>a travelling salesman</i>
Adina –	<i>A young woman in her mid-20's</i>
Sergeant Belcore –	<i>a soldier in the U.S. Army</i>
Hattie –	<i>the Sheriff of Riley's Ridge</i>
Oscar –	<i>Norman's best friend</i>
Old George –	<i>Norman's grandfather</i>
Mabel –	<i>a young woman who works at the General Store</i>
Susannah –	<i>Mabel's friend and co-worker</i>
Constance –	<i>co-worker of Mabel and Susannah</i>
Nog -	<i>Dulcamara's assistant</i>
Marietta –	<i>Hotel owner and Adina's mother</i>
Mr. Donatelli –	<i>owner of the General Store</i>
Larsen –	<i>a soldier in Belcore's regiment</i>
Hollis –	<i>a soldier in Belcore's regiment</i>
Lambert –	<i>the town Assayer</i>
Townfolk and Soldiers as needed	

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Setting: Main Street of the western U.S. mining town of Riley's Ridge

Time: The 1870's

Act I – A Saturday morning in early summer

Act II – The next afternoon

Act III – The following Saturday evening

Act IV – The next afternoon

The *Elixir of Love* premiered on May 18-20, 2017
at the Amato Center for the Performing Arts in Milford, NH.
The play was produced in conjunction with
South Merrimack Christian Academy of Merrimack, NH
and was directed by Andrew Doan with the following cast and crew:

Norman –	<i>Jonathan Cohn</i>
Doctor Dulcamara –	<i>Nathan Sidman</i>
Adina –	<i>Grace Metaxatos</i>
Sergeant Belcore –	<i>Dominic Paladino</i>
Hattie –	<i>Kaylah Paul</i>
Oscar –	<i>Cole Rasmussen</i>
Old George –	<i>Luke Heisler</i>
Mabel –	<i>Rebekah Stevens</i>
Susannah –	<i>Isabelle Laughlin</i>
Constance –	<i>Kaitlyn Kleppinger</i>
Nog -	<i>Blane Burbach</i>
Marietta –	<i>Danielle Doan</i>
Mr. Donatelli –	<i>Andrew Hubbard</i>
Larsen –	<i>Nathan Radzelovage</i>
Hollis –	<i>Joshua Stevens</i>
Lambert –	<i>Clarke Ryder</i>

Townsfolk

Paul Chu, Evelyn Doan, Kelsea Helmig, Alex Johnson, Rachael Johnson, Hannah Kleppinger, Elora Maxwell, and Andrew Spurr

Soldiers

Gavin Mangum and Zachary Safford

Sound –	<i>Katerina Matthews</i>
Lights –	<i>Isaac Boyd</i>
Spotlight –	<i>Eldan Doan</i>
Production Assistant –	<i>Molly Horsley</i>
Production Assistant –	<i>Aubrey Spurr</i>
Composer –	<i>Michael Shaughnessy</i>
Graphic Design –	<i>Wookie Jones</i>
Scenic Design –	<i>Bevin Anderson</i>
Costume Design –	<i>Phyllis Naegeli</i>
Dramatic Consultant –	<i>Erika Nevue</i>
Assistant Director –	<i>Kathy Mangum</i>
Production Supervisor –	<i>Danielle Doan</i>

ACT I

Scene 1

As the curtain opens, we see the main street of an Old West mining town. The fronts of the hotel, general store, Sheriff's office, and Assayer's office are visible at center and stage left. The right side of the stage is more open with a split rail fence or other western looking décor. Oscar is napping in front of the general store as Norman enters the scene.

- Norman: *(Attempting to wake Oscar up)* Oscar...Oscar...OSCAR!!!
- Oscar: *(Startled and foggy)* I'm up! I'm up! I promise I don't know nothing about what happened to that pecan pie, Mama! It musta been—*(recognizing Norman)* Oh. Norm. It's just you. I thought you was my mama.
- Norman: Oscar, if I was your mama I think I might just check myself into the nut house!
- Oscar: Well, why'd ya have to go and interrupt my nap? I was dreamin' that me and Mabel went to the Founder's Day dance together. I was gonna kiss her right on the jaw!
- Norman: The day you kiss Mabel on the jaw is the day I sing a solo in church.
- Oscar: Well then you better start warmin' up yur lungs, my friend, cause it's gonna happen some day.
- Norman: *(Grabs a broom and begins sweeping off the boardwalk in front of the buildings)* Not likely, Oscar, not likely.
- Oscar: Hey, just cause you're never gonna get Adina to notice you don't mean the rest of us have to give up hope of finding love. *(Norman winces)* Sorry. I shouldn't a said that. I know that's a sore spot.
- Norman: It's not that she doesn't notice me. We're friendly and such. Been friends for a long time, in fact. She just doesn't notice me...like *that*.
- Oscar: I know. Maybe she'll come around some day—and Mabel too. In the meantime, I can just keep dreamin' can't I?
- Norman: I reckon so, but you oughta limit your dreaming to nighttime. It's Saturday, remember? We gotta bring the shipment down from the train depot and get it ready. Mr. Donatelli pays us a

dollar each for it. Don't know about you but I need that money. Why are you napping right now anyway?

Oscar: I always nap this time a morning. It's first nap.

Norman: First nap? How many do you take?

Oscar: Well, let's see. There's first nap, lunch nap, afternoon nap, and...after dinner nap!

Norman: You are worse than my grandpa, you know that? At least he's got an excuse. He's 78!

(Both men begin to setup a table—a piece of plywood across two sawhorses)

Oscar: How is Old George doin' these days?

Norman: Oh, you know. He keeps diggin' away on that claim of his up there on the north side of the mountain. A little deeper every day.

Oscar: Why's he stick around there? Everybody else has taken up in the hills west a here. Nobody's had a lick of luck on the north side. Not one grain a gold in the last ten years up there!

Norman: I know it! But Grampy says everyone else is wrong. Says he's gonna hit paydirt one of these days.

Oscar: How's he know that?

Norman: I don't know. He's not exactly the easiest person to make sense of as you know. I just try to keep an eye on him as best I can. I figure that's what my pa would want if he was still around. *(Train whistle heard in the distance)* There's the train. We best get up there and unload that shipment before everyone gets here. You know how cranky Mr. Donatelli gets.

Oscar: Boy, do I!

(Both men exit)

Scene 2

Three young women emerge from the general store and begin setting out items for a sale. That is, three girls are SUPPOSED to be setting up for the sale, but one of them is looking intently at a handheld mirror instead of working.

Constance: *(As she carries out some packages and sets them on the table)*
Mabel! Put that thing away and help us!

- Susannah: *(Also carrying out goods from the store)* Yeah, why should we do all the grunt work?
- Mabel: *(Still admiring herself)* Ah, simmer down you two! I'll git goin' in a bit. I wanna make sure that my hair looks just right.
- Susannah: Why ya fussin' over it so? Ya look just fine!
- Mabel: *(With an air of superiority)* Well, that's easy for YOU to say.
- Susannah: What do you mean—easy for ME to say?
- Mabel: Oh, nothin'. It's just that some of us—well—*some* of us care a mite more about our appearance than others. That's all.
- Susannah: Is that so? Well, *I* say that some of us care a mite too much about our appearance. Don't matter how much paint you slap on an ugly, ol' barn. It's still an ugly, ol' barn!
- Mabel: Why you sassy, little—
- Constance: *(The only one who has been working the whole time)* Girls! Quit it—both of ya! Git over here and help me with these baskets, ya hear? Mr. Donatelli don't care a lick about the looks of either of ya! But he'll care a whole heap if we don't get everything ready in time. *(All three girls proceed with their work)*
- Susannah: Why you so worked up about your hair and your face anyway? You expectin' some handsome prince to come sweep you off yur feet today?
- Mabel: Maybe not a prince, but I wouldn't fuss too much if one of the eligible men round here gave me a glance.
- Susannah: You mean someone like Oscar?
- Mabel: *(With a look and sound of disgust)* Oooh! No! Didn't you hear what I said? I want one of the *men* round here to look at me! *(She and Susannah laugh mockingly)*
- Susannah: Well, fur once I agree with you, Mabel. It sure would be nice to get noticed once in a while.
- Constance: Mr. Donatelli is gonna notice if we don't have all this stuff ready. Can't you two quit gushin' about men and get your work done?

Mabel: You're just sore 'cuz no one's asked you to the Founder's Day Dance.

Constance: I don't believe anyone has asked either of you!

(Mr. Donatelli, the owner of the store, emerges in a huff)

Donatelli: Girls! Girls! You to please stop with your silliness! We must be ready! It's Saturday! Customers are coming! Big sale day! Chop! Chop! *(He claps his hands and goes back inside the store)*

All 3 Girls: *(As he is leaving)* Yes, Mr. Donatelli.

(As the girls continue to setup for the sale, the stage gradually begins to fill up with townsfolk who position themselves around the General Store)

Norman: *(Entering with Oscar as they both pull a cart laden with packages)* Here we are. Just in time!

Oscar: *(To the shop girls)* Mornin', ladies! Hi, Mabel. *(The girls respond unenthusiastically)*

(The shop girls, Norman, and Oscar all help with the final setup for the sale. Mr. Donatelli emerges from the store again and rings a bell loudly to get everyone's attention)

Donatelli: ATTENTION! ATTENTION! Everyone to please listen! Welcome to Donatelli's Saturday Sale! We have latest shipment of supplies from the East. All items you ordered from catalog are here. We also have many fine items for you to buy. I will give out catalog items first, then we have big sale! *(To Constance)* Girl, you to please give me the list of orders. *(Constance locates a stack of papers and hands them to Mr. Donatelli)* Very good! *(Looks over the list and locates the first name. As he calls out the orders, one of the shop girls hands the items to the buyer)* First, for Mr. Tucker Hampson—1 frying pan, 1 wooden bucket, and 20 feet of rope! *(Tucker steps forward from the crowd and collects his items)* Next, for Mr. Willie Harper—2 boxes of nails and a canvas tent! *(Willie claims his items as well)* Next, for Mr. George Watterson—two new petticoats and a yellow bonnet! *(Snickers from the crowd. Donatelli looks down at the list in confusion and surprise. Old George sits near the back of the crowd oblivious to what is going on.)* Wait! This is not right! *(Looks at the shop girls in anger)* What has happened here? *(The girls shrug and deflect. Adina, who stepped out from the hotel a few*

moments earlier and has been listening to Donatelli, comes forward)

Adina: I believe that's my order you're reading there, Mr. Donatelli.

Donatelli: Yes! Yes! That makes more sense. My apologies, Miss Adina. *(Glaring once again at the shop girls)* We will not make mistake again, I promise.

Adina: You needn't fret, Mr. Donatelli. I reckon Old George would look just fine in a yellow bonnet. *(Calls out to Old George)* Isn't that right, George?

Old George: *(Looks around in confusion before answering)* What's that? I'm hungry. You got any of that blueberry pie in there?

Donatelli: *(Still looking annoyed)* Yes...well... WE CONTINUE! *(Consults his list once again)* Next, for Mr. George Watterson—no mistakes this time—I new pickaxe and a washboard! *(Waits for Old George to claim his items, but George is still oblivious)* George. *(Grows impatient as George fails to respond)* George! GEORGE!

Old George: Yessir! What can I do for you? At your service, sir!

Donatelli: You to please come collect your items.

Old George: What items?

Donatelli: The pickaxe? Your washboard? The items you ordered that arrived today on the train.

Old George: What train?

Donatelli: *(With increasing frustration)* The train that—oh you bat-headed old man! You to please come here and—

Norman: It's okay, Mr. Donatelli. I'll take 'em. *(Claims the items and carries them over to Old George)* Here you go, Grampy.

Old George: *(Looking at the items)* Oh, hello, Norm. That's some nice equipment you got there. You know, I ordered a pickaxe and washboard just like that. Should be gettin' here on the train any day now!

Donatelli: ARGHHHH! *(Throws up in hands in frustration and consults his list in order to move to the next name on the list.)*

Norman: I know, Grampy. These are yours. These are the things you ordered. *(Hands them to Old George.)*

Old George: *(Finally understanding what's happening)* Oh, well isn't that just fine! I been needin' myself a new pickaxe and washboard! My old axe is plum worn down, and I haven't washed my clothes for—well, it's been a while I guess.

(The crowd has been watching the exchange between Norman and George. The next few lines are shouted from various members of the crowd in quick succession.)

Townsfolk: Yeah, we could smell you comin' a mile away! Whatcha need an axe for anyway? Ain't never gonna find no gold up there! Why don't you give up that dusty ole mine of yours and retire?

Donatelli: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! PLEASE! We continue!

(Donatelli and the shop girls continue to hand out items to various townsfolk in the background as Norman and Old George move downstage to talk. Old George leaves his new items behind)

Old George: You're a good boy, Norm. Just like your pa was.

Norman: Thanks, Grampy. Listen, maybe those folks are right. Maybe it's time for you to give up the mine and settle down somewhere. You been at it for a long time. Almost 30 years, I think.

Old George: At what a long time?

Norman: Mining for gold.

Old George: Oh...yes! I've been mining for over 30 years! Lasted a lot longer than most folks around here. They blow in and out like a tumbleweed, but not Old George. I keep digging away. A little deeper...

Norman: ...deeper every day. I know, Grampy. But—maybe it's time to think about quitting.

Old George: Now why would I do that?

Norman: Well, you're getting'—that is...I mean...you been out there a really long time and...well, you've never really found anything.

Old George: I found plenty!

Norman: Yes, but nothing of value. You've never found any gold have you?

Old George: (*Unflappable*) No. Not yet. But I'm gettin' close! I can feel it!

Norman: (*Regarding the old man with great admiration and care*) I really hope you can, Grampy. I really do.

Old George: You really do what?

Norman: Nothing. Never mind.

Old George: Well, if you say so! I reckon I'm gonna head on back up to my place. I ordered some new supplies from Mr. Donatelli, but I guess they haven't come in yet. A pickaxe and washboard and such. I'll have to get 'em next Saturday, I suppose. (*Begins to exit*)

Norman: (*Seeing the items upstage and moving toward them*) Grampy! Wait!

Old George: What's that?

Norman: Um... (*Recognizing the futility of trying to explain it again*) I'll just bring those items you ordered up to your place when they come in. Ok?

Old George: Well, now, that would be mighty kind of you, Norm. You're a good boy. Just like your Pa was.

Norman: Thanks, Grampy!

(Old George exits. The crowd has thinned somewhat by this time and Mr. Donatelli is finishing up with the distribution of supplies.)

Donatelli: Ladies and Gentlemen, that is all the orders for this week. You to please come in my store! We have many items on sale this week.

(The majority of those on stage exit to the store, the hotel, or off stage to the wings. A couple of townfolk can remain and pantomime conversation in front of the store. Norman remains on stage.)

Scene 3

Adina emerges from the hotel with several tablecloths. She descends from the boardwalk in front of the hotel and begins shaking them out. The sound startles Norman who has been lost in thought.

Adina: Hello, Norman!

Norman: Oh! Hello, Adina.

Adina: Why do you look so long in the face?

Norman: What?

Adina: You look sad.

Norman: Oh, right. Well, I guess I'm just a bit worried about Grampy.

Adina: Old George? Oh, I hope you didn't take offense to my saying he would look good in a yellow bonnet. I was just givin' Mr. Donatelli what for, you know.

Norman: Oh, yes, I know! I wasn't worried about that. I'm just—I guess I'm just tired of him being the laughing stock of the town, that's all.

Adina: They do like to poke fun at him, don't they?

Norman: Yeah. They do. I don't like it. He's a good man. He just gets...confused real easy. Doesn't help that he spends all that time up there diggin' in that blasted mine of his. He's never found anything and probably never will! It's just foolish! (*Realizing he's said too much*) Pardon me. I don't mean to disrespect him.

Adina: Course not. But even if he never finds any gold up there, I don't think it's foolish.

Norman: You don't?

Adina: Not at all. Actually, it's kinda admirable, if you ask me.

Norman: How so?

Adina: He's following his dream—his heart! He came out here from the east all those years ago with the hope of finding gold and gettin' rich! He hasn't given up yet. That takes a lot of courage. Most men woulda given up by now. I fancy a fella who has the backbone to do something like that. Don't see much of that round these parts.

Norman: No, I guess not. (*Probing*) So you're not too keen on the men here in town. Is that right?

Adina: *(Laughing)* Around here? Hardly! Most of the men in this town are as courageous as a prairie dog and about as good looking too!

Norman: *(With disappointment)* Oh.

Adina: *(Seeing his reaction)* Oh, Norm! Not you! I didn't mean you. I wasn't talking about you. I meant all the men in town—I mean—all the *other* men in town.

Norman: Yup.

Adina: You're...you're real nice. A real sweet fella.

Norman: Thanks.

Adina: You've always been so helpful and kind to me.

Norman: I have?

Adina: Sure! Don't you remember the time when we were just youngins' right after I first moved here with mother, and that hornet's nest fell from the roof and landed right in front of me?

Norman: *(Looking down bashfully)* Yeah. I remember that.

Adina: You ran over real quick like and pushed me out of the way so those hornets couldn't get me.

Norman: Yeah. I still feel bad about pushing you so hard. Didn't mean for you to fall right into that pile of horse manure.

Adina: *(Smiling brightly)* Well, at least I didn't get stung. That's more than I can say for you. How many times did they get ya?

Norman: *(Struggling it off)* Oh, not that many. I reckon about six or seven...teen.

Adina: *(Still trying to recover)* I guess I'm just the kinda girl who's looking for something a little different...a little *more* in a man. *(A comparison pops into her head)* I'm kinda like your Grampy George. I'm looking for a real nugget and all I find around here is bits of fool's gold now and again. You see what I mean?

Norman: *(Attempting to mask his disappointment)* Sure! Yes! I see exactly what you mean. Gold nuggets are rare. They're special. You can't expect to find gold in just anyone.

Adina: Exactly. I'm waiting around until I find a real special one. Somebody with courage. A man of action. Someone with...with panache!

Norman: Panache?

Adina: Yeah! You know? Flair...flamboyance! Someone with a zest for life and adventure. Someone who will go out and seize the day! Someone like...Cyrano or Porthos or Achilles! (*Norman looks befuddled*) Do you read much, Norman?

Norman: Uh...no. Not much.

Adina: That's too bad. Reading is such a joy! It improves the mind and imagination! The men and women I've met in books are far more interesting and adventurous than most people I've met in real life!

Norman: (*Deflated*) Is that right?

Adina: (*Oblivious to the way she's just slighted Norman*) Oh, yes! (*Pulls a small book out of her pocket*) For instance, I'm reading a story right now from the Middle Ages. It's about a man named Tristan and a woman named Isolde. Tristan is a mighty warrior who defeats a knight and then bravely protects Isolde during their long journey home. It's really something! Love. Adventure. Bravery! It's all in there. You should read it.

Norman: Yeah, I guess I should.

Adina: Really? Wonderful! I can let you borrow it.

Norman: Oh, no! That's fine. I really wouldn't want to take it from you, I—

Adina: Don't you worry at all! I've read it before—three times.

Norman: You have? Well, still I—

Adina: Tell you what. You go ahead and take it. I want you to start right away. You'll love it. I just know you will! (*She puts the book into his hands*) Oh! And I've got a bunch more you can borrow after you finish that one. I'm gonna go pick some out right now! (*She moves quickly back toward the hotel*)

Norman: (*As she's leaving*) Really, you don't have to trouble yourself! I—(*Once she's gone*) I—don't read real good. But I sure would love...to go to the dance with you or...or get married or

something! (*Slaps his forehead in frustration*) What am I saying? That ain't never gonna happen. She's looking for a man with panache! Shoot, I don't even know how to spell panache let alone how to have it!

Scene 4

Norman is now alone on the stage. He drifts to the side of the stage opposite of the town buildings and mulls over the conversation he just had with Adina as he puts the book in his back pocket. He tries to work up some panache and begins miming a pistol quick draw. After several cycles of drawing and firing he is startled and confused when, on the last draw, an actual gunshot sounds off at the exact second he fires his imaginary weapon. He looks at his fingers in bewilderment. More gunshots are heard as well as the sound of horses galloping and approaching. Norman looks off stage in the direction of the sounds as Oscar emerges from the store.

Oscar: Norman! Did you hear that?

Norman: Yup. I did. (*Still peering suspiciously at his hand*) I think I may have even done it!

Oscar: What are you yapping about? (*More gunshots and horses*)

Norman: Nuthin. What's going on over there?

Oscar: Blamed if I know!

(The horses conclude their approach. The sound of a group of soldiers coming nearer can be heard off stage. Belcore and several of his soldiers march into town. Belcore orders them to "Halt!" As Belcore talks with Norman over the next few lines, townsfolk gradually begin filtering onto stage from various locations—drawn to the scene by the gunfire and ruckus. The shop girl's are especially excited about the arrival of the soldiers.)

Belcore: Good morning, young man! (*Tips his hat*)

Norman: Morning.

Belcore: And what is the name of this fine town?

Norman: Uh—this is Riley's Ridge.

Belcore: Ah! Riley's Ridge. Well that's just fine. Yes sir! Fine indeed! (*Speaking to one of his soldiers*) Hollis!

Hollis: (*Snapping to attention*) Yes, sir!

Belcore: Run back that way and instruct the other men to pitch camp right where they are. We will stay here for a few days—on the

outskirts of...*(Looking around and taking in the scene)* Riley's Ridge!

Hollis: Yes, sir! *(Salutes and exits in the direction from whence the soliders came)*

Belcore: *(Noticing the crowd that has gathered and is watching him intently)* Greetings, good people of Riley's Ridge! My name is Sergeant Armitage Belcore. I am the commanding officer of the 113th regiment of the Western Division of the United States Army. My men and I are on our way to Fort Walker in the mighty state of California. We have chosen to encamp here outside your pleasant little village for several days before we continue moving westward. During our time here, we hope to serve as ambassadors of goodwill on behalf of the United States Army, to offer our services as instruments of protection for you brave, pioneering, frontier-dwellers, and... *(Directing his final comment in the direction of the shop girls)* to engage socially with you in all manner of pleasantries. *(The girls giggle with glee)* As you get to know us over the next few days, I believe you will find us to be well disciplined, physically fit, courteous, and... *(Noticing Adina for the first time)* quite pleasant to know. *(Adina smiles politely but is not swooning like the shop girls)*

(Several moments of awkward silence and private whispers transpire. It is obvious that the townsfolk aren't exactly sure what to make of this grand pronouncement.)

Marietta: *(Stepping forward from the hotel doors)* Well, Sergeant Belcore, let me say 'Welcome' to you and your men. My name is Marietta Genero. I own and operate this hotel with my daughter, Adina. We don't have a lot of rooms in the building, but I am sure you and your men will find that the ones we have are clean and comfortable. *(The soldiers perk up at hearing of the chance to sleep indoors)*

Belcore: *(Greeting both women with a bow and a flourish)* It is my pleasure to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Genero and that of your daughter. Thank you for your kindness, but my men and I will not need any rooms. We are soldiers, ma'am. We are not accustomed to the kind of luxuries a hotel room can provide. We will be just fine in our tents. *(The soldiers droop with disappointment)*

Marietta: I see. Well, I should also mention that we provide 3 full meals a day for our hotel guests and for anyone in town who is hungry. Our prices are quite reasonable.

Townsperson: Yeah, and the food is soooo good!

Belcore: Of that, I have no doubt. Once again, ma'am, I applaud your kindness and generosity. I believe we might take you up on that offer. It's difficult to get a good meal out on the trail, despite our best efforts. *(Stepping a bit closer to her)* Please pardon me if you find this a bit forward, but I must ask. Does Mr. Genero have a part in the operation of this establishment? Or perhaps your son-in-law?

Marietta: Um...no, sir. My husband passed away many years ago—when Adina was just a small girl, and she is not yet married.

Belcore: *(Trying to mask his pleasure at hearing the answer)* I see.

Mabel: *(Stepping forward from near the General Store—much to the irritation of Mr. Donatelli)* Sergeant Belcore, have you and your men run into any Indians out there on your travels?

Belcore: And who might you be, young lady?

Mabel: *(Swooning even more)* My name is...is Mabel, sir.

Belcore: Pleased to meet you Miss Mabel. *(Kisses her hand)* Your question is an excellent one. We have indeed encountered several Indian tribes since we left St. Louis last year.

Susannah: Did you fight with 'em?

Belcore: *(Sensing the fascination most of the crowd is showing and responding appropriately)* It is one of our jobs to insure that the Indian population is kept under control. We will use whatever means necessary to accomplish this task.

Mabel: Wow! That must have been...dangerous. *(Belcore nods with satisfaction and his men do the same)*

Donatelli: Mabel! You to come here this minute! *(Stepping down from the storefront and pulling Mabel behind him)* You to please excuse her, sir. She is a silly girl. My name is Henri Donatelli. I run the General Store here. We carry many helpful goods for you and your men. Good prices too.

Belcore: *(Shaking hands with Donatelli)* Thank you, sir! I have no doubt that we will visit your store to resupply before we break camp and head out.

Townfolk: When will ya'll be leaving? How long you gonna stay?

Belcore: *(Again engaging the entire crowd)* I have not yet determined the length of our stay here in Riley's Ridge. The day of our departure is dependent upon...*(glancing at Adina)* many things. In the meantime, please get to know us and continue to offer such good questions as these fine folk have today.

Hattie: *(Calling out from the back of the crowd before stepping into view)* I got a question!

Belcore: Yes! Yes, ma'am.

Hattie: *(Walking directly toward Belcore)* Who gave you permission to come traipsing into this town and getting' everybody all stirred up by shooting your guns?

Belcore: *(His smiles hardens slightly)* Beg pardon?

Hattie: I said, who gave you permission to come into my town and stir everybody up by discharging your firearms? You know we got ourselves an ordinance that says you can't do that kind of thing inside the town limit.

Belcore: *(Sizing her up and noticing her badge)* I see. *(Turning the charm back on)* Well, ma'am, I'm sure that if you will speak to your boss and let him know that we are soldiers in the United States Army, he'll have no problem with our use of firearms.

Hattie: My boss?

Belcore: Yes. Your boss. The sheriff? *(Whispers and ripples in the crowd)*

Hattie: Oh! I see. *(Stepping closer to Belcore and speaking with sarcasm that goes unnoticed by Belcore)* You think that if I speak to the *sheriff* that the *sheriff* won't have a problem with you breaking the law cause you and your men are soldiers in the army. Have I got that right?

Belcore: *(Nodding)* Yes. Precisely. I'm sure he is a reasonable man who will be glad to have us here providing protection and goodwill to the fine folks of Riley's—

Hattie: I've spoken with the *sheriff* and unfortunately the *sheriff* doesn't take as kindly to the situation as you were hoping.

Belcore: I don't understand. How can you say you've spoken to him? You've been here in front of me the entire time. (*Pointing toward the sheriff's office*) Ma'am, I really believe, if you'll go inside and talk with him—

Hattie: (*Stepping even closer and fingering the badge*) I am the sheriff. (*The whole crowd is watching intently, but Norman is especially engaged*)

Belcore: (*Laughing as if he has been told a joke until he realizes it's not a joke*) That's impossible!

Hattie: Why is that?

Belcore: Because— (*Another short burst of laughter*) A lady sheriff? Really?

Hattie: (*Not giving an inch*) That's right. And as sheriff, I am informing you and your men that we have an ordinance around here that says you can't come into the town limits and discharge your firearms like you were a few minutes ago. We'll consider this incident as a first offense and I'll only give you a warning. But, I have to tell you, if it happens again...I'll be forced to confiscate your weapons. All of em.

Belcore: (*A short, subtle burst of incredulous laughter. He looks around at the townsfolk for support or confirmation. Donatelli shrugs.*) I see. (*He takes a moment to adjust his mind to a world with a woman sheriff. It's important for us to see that he's intimidated by her just enough to back down.*) Well...Sheriff, I must apologize. We had no idea your town had such an...ordinance in place. I can assure you that my men will be on their best behavior during our stay.

Hattie: That's just fine, Sergeant. What about you?

Belcore: Me? I'm afraid I don't follow you.

Hattie: Will you be on your best behavior during your stay?

Belcore: (*Coldly*) Oh, yes. Of course.

Hattie: Dandy! Then we shouldn't have any problems.

Marietta: (*Trying to lighten the awkwardness of the confrontation*) Sergeant Belcore? Would you and your men like to come

inside and enjoy some dinner? Adina has whipped up a fine pot of chili and some delectable cornbread today.

Belcore: Why, yes, ma'am. I believe that would be just the thing for us right now. *(Calling to one of the soldiers)* Larson?

Larson: Yes, sir!

Belcore: Run out to camp and tell the men to report here immediately for dinner. Tell 'em we will be enjoying a wonderful meal prepared by a wonderful cook. *(Smiles at Adina who is still unsure of what to think of him)*

Larson: Yes, sir! *(Exits)*

(Belcore follows Marietta and Adina into the hotel as the rest of the crowd disperses to various points around town. Some of the extras can remain on stage and talk in huddled conversations about what just occurred. Hattie begins moving toward the Sheriff's office as Norman catches up to her.)

Scene 5

Norman: Wow! How did you do that?

Hattie: *(Noticing him for the first time)* Oh, hello, Norm. How'd I do what?

Norman: Stand up to that army sergeant like that?

Hattie: What? That? *(Shrugs)* Shoot, that wasn't nothin. I was just doin' my job! It is my sworn duty to enforce the laws of this town. The Sergeant and his men were breaking one of those laws. All I did was call 'em on it. Nothin' to write home about, in my opinion.

Norman: Still, you did it with such...panache!

Hattie: With what?

Norman: You know...panache.

Hattie: What's that?

Norman: I'm not exactly sure. All I know is I don't have it and people like you and Sergeant...Belfast do!

Hattie: I think it's Sergeant Belcore.

Norman: Well, whatever his name is. Did you see how all the shopgirls were swoonin' and swayin' the moment he showed up? Even

Miss Marietta looked a little bit fluttered by him. I don't see what the fuss is all about. You women are so silly and confusing sometimes.

Hattie: You lumpin' me in with those girls from the store?

Norman: No, I guess not. You're different. You're not silly. (*Glancing toward the hotel as several soldiers cross the stage and enter the hotel*) Still don't see why the other ones get all worked up about him and these soldiers.

Hattie: (*Following his gaze*) Oh, I see what the problem is. You're still pining away over Adina, aren't you?

Norman: Why do you say that?

Hattie: Norman Watterson, how long have I known you?

Norman: Bout 5 years, I reckon.

Hattie: That's right. And for most of that time you have followed Adina Genero round town like a little lost puppy. You're hopelessly in love with her and you know it!

Norman: Well, you got the hopelessly part right. I won't never have a chance with her. Not with men like Sergeant Belcore around. He's got panache and I don't. Pure and simple.

Hattie: There's that word again. What are you talking about?

Norman: Nothin. I just don't think Adina is ever going to give someone like me a decent look.

Hattie: How do you know? Have you ever told her how you feel about her? Have you ever even asked her to go for a walk at sunset or something of the like? What about the Founder's Day Dance comin' up? Why don't you take her?

Norman: (*Considers it for a moment before shaking his head*) I—I can't say anything to her like that. I—I just can't. I just know how it would go. I don't have what she's lookin' for, trust me.

Hattie: Well, you seem to be some sort of expert in matters of the heart. I'm not, that's for sure. Like you said, I'm different than most other silly girls around here. But, if I was ever to be sweet on a man and get engaged or something of the like, I'm pretty sure he'd have to say something to me about it first. (*A thought strikes her*) Or, maybe I'd just walk up and say

somethin' to him first! I don't see no reason why I should have to wait around for him to grow a backbone.

Norman: See! That's what I'm talking about. You got that—that courage. That—

Hattie: Panache?

Norman Yes! Exactly! I don't got that. I'm not like you.

Hattie: *(Putting a hand on his shoulder)* Norm, you're my friend, and you've been my friend for a long time, so I'm gonna shoot straight with you. I don't reckon anybody expects you to be like me or Sergeant Belcore or anyone else. If you are what Adina wants and needs, then she'll figure that out. Don't waste your time trying to be something you're not. I learned that a long time ago.

Norman: *(Still dejected)* Thanks. I reckon you're right. Problem is—I just don't think I'm what she wants or needs.

Hattie: She's the only one who can tell you that for sure, Norm. Listen, I'm gonna get inside and grab me some chili before those army men snatch it all up. You take care, okay?

Norman: Sure.

(Hattie exits stage to the hotel. The rest of the extras have cleared off the stage by this time so that Norman is alone. He sits on a bucket or barrel and leafs through the pages of the book. Oscar emerges from the hotel a moment later with a bit of cornbread still in his mouth.)

Oscar: Hey! Norman! Whatcha doing?

Norman: Readin'.

Oscar: Oh...why?

Norman: Cuz it's a good thing to do! It improves the mind and imagination and that sort of thing!

Oscar: Oh. *(Walks up to Norman and begins looking over his shoulder. He points to a spot on the page)* What's that word right there?

Norman: *(Looking irritated)* Beloved.

Oscar: Oh. *(Pointing again)* And how bout that one there?

- Norman: *(Increased irritation)* Matrimony. Look! Are you gonna ask me about every word in the whole blamed book?
- Oscar: I'm sorry! I don't know how to read. *(Smiling devilishly)* I'm just trying to improve my mind and imagination and that sort of thing!
- Norman: *(Snapping the book closed)* You beat all, you know that? *(Moving to where he left the pickaxe and washboard earlier)* Come on. I gotta get these things up to Grampy's camp. Why don't you quit makin' jokes and be useful for a change? *(Hands him the washboard and then grabs the axe)*
- Oscar: Just as long as I get back in time for my afternoon nap!

(Both men exit the stage in the opposite direction that Belcore and the soldiers entered)

Scene 6

The stage is empty as a train whistle and the sound of a departing train can be heard. Eventually, Dr. Dulcamara and his assistant, Nog, enter from the direction of the train station. They are lugging a large steamer chest and several other pieces of luggage between them.

- Dulcamara: *(With irritation)* Well! It appears that the farther west one travels in this country the less civility one is likely to encounter! That train conductor was downright...ogreish! Wouldn't you say?
- Nog: *(Nog never speaks verbally but instead communicates through facial reactions and occasionally through writing on a small slate board he carries with him. Instead of lines of dialogue, the script will indicate what type of reaction Nog should have for that particular moment.) Eyebrows raised questioningly*
- Dulcamara: I understand that, Nog! Really, I do! Of course, the man was simply doing his job. Is it too much to expect him to do it with a little more grace and refinement? I think not. The amount we paid for our train tickets in Denver was not enough to get us all the way to San Francisco. We knew that at the time. We didn't pay the amount required to get us to San Francisco because we didn't have enough money to do so.
- Nog: *Writes on the tablet matter of factly*
- Dulcamara: *(Reading then responding)* You're absolutely correct, as always, Nog. We *still* don't have enough money to get us to

San Francisco. With all of this, I completely agree! I was simply asking the conductor if some sort of amenable arrangement could be reached which would allow us to continue on board the train! I ask you—what great sin did I commit to warrant his shameful mistreatment of us?

Nog: *Ignoring the question and walking around to take in his surroundings*

Dulcamara: Quite right! This is where we are and this is where we shall stay—until we've sold enough to get us out of here and on our way to San Francisco, that is. If we do really well here, we might even be able to get out on the 3:15 train tomorrow afternoon! (*Glancing around*) Here, let us make ourselves ready. If we are to have any hope of getting out of this town, we must be prepared to woo and charm our way into the hearts—and wallets—of the citizens of...of...gracious me, Nog! Where exactly are we?

Nog: (*Writes on the tablet*)

Dulcamara: (*Reads*) Riley's Ridge! (*Looking around*) Sounds and looks positively...dreadful. No matter. We will make the best of it. Let us hope that the townfolk around here are in poor health, generous, and most importantly of above average unintelligence! (*Oscar enters and moves toward the hotel. Dulcamara spots him and gives a familiar tap on Nog's shoulder before cutting off Oscar's intended path to the hotel.*) Ah, hello my good sir!

Oscar: Uh, hello.

Dulcamara: (*Shaking Oscar's hands vigorously*) And how are you faring on this gloriously sunny morning?

Oscar: (*Pulling his hand away as Dulcamara continues to shake it*) Uh, fine, I guess.

Dulcamara: Just...fine. That's all?

Oscar: I'm good, I suppose.

Dulcamara: Good. Good? (*Moving in and putting his arm around Oscar's shoulders*) Wouldn't you like to be great? Wouldn't you like to be fantastic?

Oscar: Sure.

Dulcamara: Of course you would. Who wouldn't? Let me ask you, sir. Do you ever suffer from headaches? Throbbing in your cranium or temporal lobes?

Oscar: Um...I get headaches every now and again, but I'm not sure about them other things you said.

Dulcamara: *(Smiling as he realizes he's found a suitable target.)* What would you say if I told you I have something that can keep you from getting anymore throbbing in either your cranium or your temporal lobes?

Oscar: That sounds good.

Dulcamara: *(Pulling a small bottle out of his pocket)* I have such a substance in this small bottle right here. As a gesture of kindness and generosity to you, sir, I am going to give it to you.

Oscar: *(With surprise)* Really?

Dulcamara: Really. In fact, I want you to try some of it right now!

Oscar: Right now? *(Dulcamara nods)* Okay. *(Oscar takes the bottle hesitantly. At Dulcamara's urging, he opens it and swallows a small amount. His face tightens up at the bitter taste of the unknown liquid.)*

Dulcamara: Now, let me ask you—do you have a headache?

Oscar: *(Evaluating for a moment then answering excitedly)* No! No, I don't!

Dulcamara: See? Didn't I tell you it was an amazing substance?

Oscar: That is amazing! How'd you do that?

Dulcamara: My name is Dr. Dulcamara. What's yours?

Oscar: Oscar

Dulcamara: Oscar, I didn't do anything. It is the power of the liquid inside that bottle that is preventing you from getting a headache. It is but one of dozens of exotic and mysterious medicines, potions, and tonics I have in my collection.

Oscar: Really?

Dulcamara: Really. Ordinarily, I would charge as much as two dollars for the bottle you have in your hand.

Oscar: *(With disappointment)* Wow. That's a lot of money.

Dulcamara: But in this case, I am going to give it to you—free of charge!

Oscar: Really?

Dulcamara: Really. The only thing I ask in return—uhh—*(Realizes he has forgotten his target's name as Nog scribbles it quickly and comes to the rescue by showing it to the Doctor)*—Oscar—is that you go around town and tell everyone about what just happened here. Tell them about your headaches, Oscar. Or rather—about the headaches you *don't* have. You see?

Oscar: Sure. I can do that.

Dulcamara: Excellent! Tell them about the elixir you tried.

Oscar: The what?

Dulcamara: The elixir. *(Oscar looks confused)* The potion. *(He's still doesn't understand)* The medicine in the bottle? *(Oscar smiles and nods)* Tell them about the miraculous effect it had on you and tell them that there is a man in town who has many, many more just as miraculous and powerful! Tell them he is here right now! Tell them to come see for themselves! Can you do that, Oscar?

Oscar: Yup. Sure can! *(Starts to leave)*

Dulcamara: Oh! And Oscar? Please don't mention my generosity in giving you the bottle for free. As much as I would love to give all my potions away, I am a businessman. I have...expenses of my own I must cover. You understand?

Oscar: Sure! *(Exits into the hotel)*

Dulcamara: *(To Nog who has been sitting on the steamer chest and watching the scene with disinterest)* Excellent, Nog, excellent! I could not have asked for a better person to be my skill. Oscar will round up the townsfolk and we will certainly round up enough cash to get out of here and on our way to San Francisco!

(Dulcamara and Nog open up the steamer chest and begin setting up their display that should include dozens of small medicine bottles and a poster or banner of some sort. People—including Adina, Marietta, Donatelli, the shopgirls, Belcore, his soldiers, and townsfolk—gradually begin entering and reacting with curiosity to the scene.)

Dulcamara: *(Once the display is set, he turns and beckons the crowd to come closer)* Step right up, ladies and gentlemen! The presentation is about to begin! Don't be coy! What you are about to see and hear in the next few minutes can change your life forever! *(Once the crowd is large enough and close enough for his liking, Dulcamara begins)*

Good afternoon, good citizens of Riley's Ridge! My name is Dr. Dulcamara and this is my assistant, Nog! *(Acknowledges Nog with a sweeping gesture but Nog remains stone-faced)* Fate has brought us to your fair town this day for a purpose of great importance. Our paths have crossed today, not by mere coincidence, but by divine appointment! You see I am on a mission of mercy to you and people just like you all along the frontier. You have, no doubt, noticed the plethora of bottles we have on display here today. You are, no doubt, wondering what they contain. Well, it would be my sincere pleasure and privilege to tell you...*(Nods toward Nog who pulls several bottles from the display. Dulcamara should either recite or sing the following section.)*

I am Doctor Dulcamara.
A man of skill and mystic aura.
My life is quite the story
Of world renown and glory.
I'm a master of all things medical.
And ideas theoretical.
A benefactor to the masses.
An angel to all ranks and classes.
For whom all wrongs are righted
Wherever I'm invited.

I will not duff or dawdle
About what's inside the bottle.
Simply turn to me your faces,
And I'll share my healing graces.
I sell good health
As through the world I go,
And I'm offering it to you
The price is very low!
Come one! Come all!
And listen to my call.
The price is very low!

(Nog begins throwing him various bottles to use as examples)
I've got the great solution
For ailment absolution.
Miraculously potent
To rid of mice or lice or rodent!
This tonic ends senility
And increases flexibility!
Does growing old depress you?
Erase those wrinkles that distress you!
Young ladies! Are you dreaming
Of skin like satin gleaming?
Young men! Increase your chances
Of plentiful romances!
Just buy my magic medicine!
The price is very low!

I can move the paralytical.
Pep up the apopletical!
Asthmatic and dyspeptical.
Rheumatic and the skeptical!
I'll perk up the persnickety,
The scrofulous and the rickety!
A marvelous insecticide.
All sickness will be rectified!
Just buy my magic medicine!
The price is very low!

(The crowd applauds enthusiastically) Thank you! Thank you for your generous reaction! I only hope that your enthusiasm for your own well-being is as strong as it is for my presentation. Step right up! All of my potions, tonics, and medicines are available for purchase. My assistant and I will be glad to serve you. *(Several from the crowd move in to make purchases while others linger back. Sheriff Hattie enters the stage from the hotel and begins observing the situation. Dulcamara notices the skeptics)* If you remain unconvinced, I have scores of testimonials from men and women all over the world! *(Noticing Oscar)* Why even one of your own fellow citizens from here in Riley's Ridge can testify! Oscar, how is your headache? *(All eyes turn toward Oscar)*

Oscar: What headache? I don't have no headache.

Dulcamara: That's right! You don't. And not 15 minutes ago you drank an elixir especially designed to prevent headaches, did you not?

Oscar: Yeah, that's right! He's right everybody! It's real! My cranium don't ache like it has before! *(Several more citizens step up to make a purchase)*

(As Dulcamara and Nog continue to sell bottles, the crowd thins gradually. Adina looks curious but unconvinced.)

Dulcamara: *(Seeing Belcore standing off a ways watching)* Greetings, good sir! Would not the fine fighting men of the United States Army benefit from more vitality and exuberance? I'm quite certain they would!

Belcore: My men are free to do what they want. *(Several members of the regiment step up to buy. Belcore says the next part loudly enough for Adina and the other women in the group to hear)* I, however, have no need for any of your medicines, sir. I am in the best of health and my mind is quite sharp. Thank you for your offer, but I must refuse. *(Exits the stage toward his camp)*

Scene 7

Dulcamara and Nog continue doing business with the crowd which should be considerably smaller by this time. Hattie perches herself outside of the sheriff's office and watches. Norman enters, locates Oscar, and pulls him downstage to talk.

Norman: Oscar, what's going on? Who are those men?

Oscar: That's Doctor Dul...ci...mer or somethin' like that. I can't remember the other one's name. They're here from out of town by divine anointment!

Norman: What?

Oscar: It's the truth! He's a magical doctor and he's got all sorts of special potions and medicines and eli...eli...Oh! I can't remember the other word.

Norman: Elixirs?

Oscar: Yes! That's it! Elixirs! Say, how'd you know that?

Norman: *(Looking down at the book)* I just read about one in this book not 5 minutes ago.

Oscar: Really? Wow, that's—that's gotta be some sort of sign. You reckon? *(Norman shrugs)* Well, all I know is that this Doctor Whatchamacallit has all sorts of 'em. Potions to stop folks from agin', make girls look prettier, even one to take away those headaches I'm always gittin'.

Norman: What headaches?

Oscar: Exactly! Isn't that something else? He's here sellin' his medicines to all the townsfolk.

Norman: *(Looks at Dulcamara who is still conducting business on the other side of the stage. Then he looks down at the book again.)* Sounds pretty amazing.

Oscar: You bet your barn doors it is!

Norman: Listen, Oscar, I'll catch up to you later. *(Turns to leave)*

Oscar: Where you headin'?

Norman: *(Stops and turns back midstep. Speaks in a semi-whisper.)* To get some money out of my mattress! *(Norman leaves. Oscar shrugs and exits into the hotel)*

(The crowd of customers has no dwindled to nothing. Hattie has watched all of the proceedings with interest. Once the customers are gone, Dulcamara begins counting the cash while Nog takes down the display. As they are doing this, Hattie saunters over to them)

Hattie: *(With very little friendliness)* Howdy.

Dulcamara: *(Looks up and sees her.)* Why, hello there! *(Stuffs the cash into his pocket)*

Hattie: And you are?

Dulcamara: *(A little confused by the question)* Why...I am Dr. Dulcamara. *(Goes back into sales pitch mode)* I've come here to town selling good health and vitality!

Hattie: *(Unimpressed)* Is that a fact?

Dulcamara: Yes...it is. *(Grabs one of the remaining bottles)* Can I interest you in some—

Hattie: I'm not interested in what you have to offer, Doctor.

Dulcamara: (*Sensing her antagonism*) Oh. I see. Very well. Perhaps sometime later I could talk with you about—

Hattie: But I am interested in this town and the people who live here. (*Taps her badge*) You see I'm the sheriff of Riley's Ridge.

Dulcamara: (*With an inscrutable smile*) Is that right? Well, that's just...marvelous!

Hattie: Maybe it is and maybe it ain't. What I can tell you is this. (*Begins stepping toward him as she talks*) As sheriff of this town, it is my sworn duty to defend its citizens against threats—whether they come from inside the town or out of it, whether the threat is obvious or harder to detect. You follow my meaning, Doctor?

Dulcamara: (*Unfazed*) I believe I do, sheriff. And may I say it is admirable to find someone so dedicated to their job. In a way, we are similar—you and I. We're both just honest, hard-working folks who try to make our corner of the world a better place. Wouldn't you agree?

Hattie: (*Sizes up Dulcamara, Nog, and the whole setup for several seconds before responding*) I suppose so. (*Starts to leave*) I best be on my way, but I am sure we'll speak again. I do my best to keep in close touch with all that goes on in town. Have a nice afternoon, Doctor. (*Tips her hat and leaves*)

Dulcamara: You as well...Sheriff, you as well. (*Turns back toward Nog and begins counting the cash again. Norman enters and approaches Dulcamara timidly. He is still holding the book Adina gave him earlier*)

Norman: Excuse me?

Dulcamara: (*Stuffs the cash into his pocket once again and whirls around expecting to see the sheriff*) Yes, ma'am! (*Realizing it's not Hattie, he quickly recovers*) I mean, sir. Yes, sir! What can I do for you...

Norman: Norman.

Dulcamara: Norman. Yes. What can I do for you, Norman?

Norman: (*Hesitant*) Well, I...I heard about your medicines.

Dulcamara: Wonderful!

- Norman: Yeah. And I was wondering...well, you see...I was wondering...
- Dulcamara: *(Steps closer and puts a hand on Norman's shoulder)* Norman, there is no need for timidity. How can I help you?
- Norman: I want to know if you have any potions here that...that could make a girl fall in love with me! *(Expects ridicule and derision but Dulcamara gives neither. Instead the Doctor looks intrigued.)*
- Dulcamara: Interesting. That's quite a request, Norman. *(Nog, who has finished putting most of the display away, begins listening with keen interest)*
- Norman: *(Gaining confidence after Dulcamara didn't laugh at him)* Yeah, you see, I'm reading this book someone gave me, and in this story there's a secret potion that makes two people fall in love!
- Dulcamara: *(Pointing toward the book)* May I? *(Norman gives him the book, and Dulcamara looks it over)* Tristan and Isolde. I fear I've never read this particular piece of literature. *(Hands the book back to Norman)* So there is a potion in there that has the power to make a person fall in love you say? An elixir of love?
- Norman: Yes. That's right.
- Dulcamara: *(Making it all sound a little unbelievable)* And you are wondering if I have in my possession such an elixir—an elixir from a make-believe story?
- Norman: *(Recognizing the ridiculousness of the request)* Well, I—
- Dulcamara *(Smiling brightly)* My good man, you've come to the right place! Of course such an elixir exists and of course I have it in my possession! *(Nog frowns in disapproval and disbelief)* I have travelled far and wide, Norman, to collect the most powerful medicines and tonics in the world. The potion of which you speak is rare, to be sure, but I happen to have a small amount with me.
- Norman: You do? *(Nog echoes this sentiment facially)*
- Dulcamara: I do indeed. *(Looking back at his assistant)* Nog? Please retrieve for me a bottle of the love elixir. *(Nog stares blankly)* You know, the ancient, rare extract we acquired in...oh, now where was it? China! Yes, that's where it was—China! *(Nog*

continues to stare. Dulcamara pulls Nog aside and whispers) Just take one of the empty bottles and mix something together. With haste! (*Nog begrudgingly complies while Dulcamara turns back toward Norman*) Now, Norman, such a rare and powerful elixir was not easy to acquire and it is, therefore, not inexpensive. Am I correct in assuming that you are prepared to pay for this potion?

Norman: (*Sticking his hand inside his pocket*) Um, yessir! I don't have much, though.

Dulcamara: Well, this particular bottle costs around twenty dollars.

Norman: I can't do that much.

Dulcamara However, for a limited time only, I am able to offer it for fifteen... (*Norman gives the same negative facial expression for each amount Dulcamara lists*)...that is, twelve or rather, ten dollars per bottle! (*Norman turns to leave*) With an additional first time customer discount, however, I can give it to you for...eight dollars?

Norman: I can do that much. (*Pulls out a wad of bills*)

Dulcamara: Excellent! Most excellent! (*Turns toward Nog who has been mixing together random potions into one bottle*) Nog? Have you located the elixir? (*Nog nods and tosses Dulcamara the bottle. Dulcamara gives the bottle to Norman in exchange for the cash.*) There you go. You are one of the few individuals in the world to ever have this substance in your hands.

Norman: (*Looking at the bottle in awe*) Wow! Thank you!

Dulcamara: No, thank you, Norman! Thank you for believing in the power of my potions! Now, there are a couple of things you need to know before you ingest the elixir.

Norman: Before I do what?

Dulcamara: Before you drink it. First of all, the potion does not begin to work immediately. If you take some of it today (and I am assuming you will), I would not expect to see any effects until after at least... (*Looks toward the train station or a bulletin board listing train arrivals and departures*) 3:15 tomorrow afternoon! Yes! It will be at least that long.

Norman: (*Still looking at the bottle*) Okay.

Dulcamara: And there's one other thing. With a potion this powerful, you must give it the respect it is due. *(Paces around in such a way that it's obvious he's making the next part up)* As you know, this love elixir deals with matters of the heart. Once you have ingested—that is—once you have drunk it, you must be cautious to allow no one to stand next to you on your left side other than the person you want to fall in love with you.

Norman: Really? Why?

Dulcamara: Your heart, Norman, your heart! Anyone standing on your left side will be closest to your heart! If someone other than your intended is near your heart when the elixir is...emanating, the results could be disastrous! *(Grabs Norman by the shoulders and speaks to him with intensity)* Protect your heart, Norman! Protect it!

Norman: *(Swallows nervously)* Ok. Yessir! I will! Thank you, Doctor. Thank you so much! You have no idea what this will do for me.

Dulcamara: Oh, but I do, Norman. I know exactly what it will do for you, and I am so happy to be able to help. *(Norman smiles and walks away quickly clutching the bottle tightly. As soon as he's gone, Dulcamara takes the money Norman gave him and adds it to his stack.)* Well, Nog, we have done well here—quite well! We have been good to Riley's Ridge and...*(fanning out the money)*...in return, Riley's Ridge has been very good to us! *(Nog glares at him)* What? What's the problem? *(Nog continues to glare)* The young man? Norman? That's what has you so upset? *(Dulcamara smiles and laughs)* Fret not, Nog. All I did was give him what he needed—a little boost in confidence. All will be well. Even if it's not, my plan is for both of us to be on our way to San Francisco on the 3:15 train tomorrow afternoon! So, let's just relax and enjoy the fruits of our labors, shall we? *(Looks toward the hotel)* I believe we will partake of some of the local delicacies in here! *(Walks into the hotel)*

(Nogs shakes his head in disapproval before closing up the steamer trunk and walking slowly into the hotel as the curtain closes.)

END OF ACT I

THE SCRIPT SAMPLE
CONTINUES WITH THE LAST
TWO SCENES OF ACT IV

Scene 5

Belcore retreats to his circle of soldiers who have watched the scene unfold. He gives them orders for a few moments after which they exit. Adina pulls Norman downstage and talks to him. Everyone else observes them.

Adina: Norman, I am so happy that you're okay.

Norman: Me too.

Adina: Norman, I want you to hear something. I know what I want. I was confused and overwhelmed a few minutes ago when I first learned about—about all of *this*, but now I know. I know what I want.

Norman: What is it?

Adina: Norman, I—

Belcore: *(Walking up to them)* Private Watterson! You will report to camp immediately.

Adina: What?

Belcore: Have you forgotten already? This man committed to be a soldier in the army. It is my duty to see that he fulfills that obligation.

(Once again, Belcore is speaking loudly enough for those still on stage to hear. His words draw their attention.)

Adina: But...but, that's just—cruel! You're only doing this out of spite—to punish him...and me! Because I've broken off our engagement!

Belcore: I can assure you—I am above such pettiness. It is simply a matter of duty, ma'am. *(Pulls a paper out of his pocket)* Norman signed a contract with the army. He gave his word. Therefore, I am required to include him in the regiment and take him with us to Fort Walker. *(Norman looks resigned)*

Adina: *(Frantic)* This can't be! *(Looking around for support)* Sheriff? Can't you do something? *(Hattie steps down but looks helpless)*

Belcore: Even the Sheriff must admit this is an issue that falls outside of her jurisdiction. Isn't that right, Sheriff? *(Hattie nods sadly. Belcore speaks to Norman in an official sounding tone)* Private Watterson, you will accompany me to the regiment's camp and

assist your fellow soldiers in their preparations for our journey to Fort Walker.

Norman: *(Looks at Adina sadly)* I'm sorry, Adina. He's right. I signed the paper. I gotta go. I didn't know it would turn out like it did. I'm sorry. *(He begins walking toward Belcore)*

Adina: Norman, please! *(Looks around frantically)* Doctor?

Dulcamara: *(Stricken with guilt and regret, he steps forward)* Sergeant! Please? Can't we reach some sort of arrangement? Norman joined the army under false pretenses. Surely such a scenario renders the contract void and null!

Belcore: Are you a lawyer, Doctor?

Dulcamara: No. I'm not.

Belcore: Then I don't really think you are in a position to argue about the validity of the agreement. Even if I could cancel the contract, there is still the matter of compensation. Last night, Norman received his first month's salary. A sum of thirty dollars. This money would have to be returned before I could even begin to consider releasing him from duty. Norman, do you still have the thirty dollars?

Norman: *(Looks briefly at Dulcamara)* No. I don't.

Belcore: *(Looking around the stage)* Is there anyone here able or willing to pay this amount for him? *(Dulcamara's hand instinctively goes to the pocket where he has his cash. He looks toward the train station and remains silent. No one volunteers.)* Just as I thought. *(To Norman)* Come, soldier. You've got work to do.

(Belcore struts off stage in the direction of the camp. Norman looks longingly at Adina one last time before following Belcore.)

Adina: I can't believe it! It's just...too awful to believe!

Marietta: Darling, I am so sorry. I've always wanted the best for you, and this—this is just dreadful. I wish I could help, but I don't have that much money! *(She hugs Adina)*

Adina: No one does, mother. No one around here is gonna have that kind of cash. It's just...hopeless.

Marietta: I should get inside. As much as I hate to bring it up, I do need to get supper started.

Adina: *(Starts to rise)* I'll help you.

Marietta: No, you won't! Of course you won't. I can handle it all by myself tonight. You just stay out here, and...and hope for a miracle. *(She glances at Dulcamara and then exits into the hotel.)*

Hattie: *(Approaching Adina softly)* Adina, I—I wish there was more I could do, but Sergeant Belcore is right. It's out of my hands.

Adina: I know.

Hattie: Norman is a good kid—I mean—a great man. He'll come back for you. Even if he has to wait till his time in the army is done. I know he will.

Adina: Thanks.

Hattie: I guess I'll leave you be. Let me know if you need anything. *(She exits toward the Sheriff's office.)*

Adina: *(Looks at Dulcamara with tears in her eyes)* He's gone.

Dulcamara: *(Stepping toward her)* I know. *(He looks toward the train station once again as Nog drags the steamer chest out from the hotel and toward the depot.)* I'm sorry to leave you here like this, but—I have to go. *(He moves briskly away but turns before leaving)* Goodbye, Adina. *(He exits)*

(Adina sits alone on the stage. She buries her head in her hands and weeps. The lights dim briefly.)

Scene 6

The dimming of the lights denotes the passage of about an hour. When the lights fade up once more, Adina is still sitting alone on the stage. She stares sadly off in the distance until Oscar emerges from the hotel.

Oscar: Oh, hi, Adina. You still sittin' out here? It's been almost an hour.

Adina: *(Without getting up)* Yes. I'm still here. Not sure why, but I am.

Oscar: *(Coming near her)* I'm real sorry about what happened—with Norman and Sergeant Belcore and such.

Adina: I'm sorry too. I've known Norman for years, but I—I never realized how much he meant to me until today. He is—a very good and brave person.

Oscar: Yeah. Say, Adina? I was wondering if—well, I know this probably ain't the best time to bring it up, but—I was wonderin' if you would still give me some reading lessons. Like you talked about before?

Adina: Why?

Oscar: Well—(*stammers around a bit*) it's just that—well, I noticed that Norman started reading more these last few days, and—well, he started changing!

Adina: What do you mean?

Oscar: It's just that ever since he started reading more, he got more bold, and strong, and brave. I really noticed it after he started reading this. (*Oscar holds out the copy of Tristan and Isolde.*) I found it in his room. I know it belongs to you. I figured I would return it to you.

Adina: (*Takes the book and smiles as she remembers*) Tristan and Isolde...(*she finally puts all the pieces together as she talks to herself*)...the love potion. So that's how this all started!

Oscar: So, I thought that maybe, if I learned to read better and I started readin' like Norman, then...(*looks down with embarrassment*)...well, then maybe I would change to be more brave and strong like him.

Adina: (*Standing and putting her hand on his shoulder*) That's very sweet, Oscar. You are a good friend to Norman...and to me. I would be glad to give you those reading lessons. In fact, I could use some sort of distraction just now. Why don't I go up and get a good book for beginners right now? We could start right away!

Oscar: That would be just fine, Adina. I have to finish up a few chores for Mr. Donatelli first, but then I've got the rest of the afternoon free! (*Begins to move toward the store*) I'll see ya real soon!

(Oscar exits into the store. Adina crosses over toward the hotel. She is just a step or two away from the door when Norman comes running on stage from the direction of the army camp.)

Norman: Adina! Adina! Wait!

Adina: Norman? What are you doing here?

Norman: I'm back! I came back!

Adina: Norman, how can you be here? (*A dreadful thought crosses her mind*) Wait, you didn't desert, did you? Sergeant Belcore will never rest until he finds you and—

Norman: No! No, I didn't desert. Sergeant Belcore let me go.

Adina: He what? But, Norman, he was so insistent about it before!

Norman: I know. I know. I am just as surprised as you are.

Adina: But...how did it happen?

Norman: I'm still not exactly sure. We got to the camp, and Sergeant Belcore put me to work with the other soldiers. I didn't see him for a while, then he came back out of the blue and told me I was free to go. Said he didn't really want someone like me in his regiment anyway. He even tore up the contract right before my eyes!

Adina: But, what about the money? Your first month's salary?

Norman: That's the really strange part. He told me that the money had been paid back to him. My debt was gone. He told me to get out as quick as I could 'cause the regiment was movin' on to Fort Walker right away!

Adina: Norman, it's...it's a...miracle!

Norman: I reckon so!

Adina: Norman, I have to tell you something right away before anything else happens. (*Looking him right in the eyes*) I know what I want. I've made up my mind. I want to stay here in Riey's Ridge...with you.

Norman: You...you do?

Adina: I do. (*Stepping toward him*) Do you remember a few days ago when I said that most men around here are nothin' but fools gold?

Norman: Yeah.

Adina: You're not, Norman. I see that now. You're...the real thing. And I'm the one who would be a fool if I let you go. (*She reaches out and hugs him. Norman is caught off guard by this at first, but then realizes his dream has come true. He embraces her tightly.*)

Oscar: *(Coming out of the store and looking with surprise at Norman)*
Norman! You're back from the army already?

Norman: I sure am!

Oscar: Hey, everyone! Come look! Norman's back! He's back!

(The townsfolk emerge from their various locations, pointing and wondering at Norman's return)

Hattie: *(Crossing over from the Sheriff's office)* Norm! You're here!
How can this be?

Norman: All I can say is...it's...*(smiling at Adina)* it's a miracle!

(Dulcamara enters the stage from the direction in which he left. He is followed by Old George and Lambert the Assayer)

Norman: *(Seeing Dulcamara but not the other two at first)* Doctor!
Doctor, you won't believe it! Sergeant Belcore let me—
(Noticing Old George)—oh, hello, Grampy! What are you
doin' here?

Dulcamara: Norman, I need to tell you something. *(Notices that the entire town is watching and listening)* Well, I guess there's no real
reason why the whole town shouldn't hear.

Norman: Is something wrong?

Dulcamara: No, Norman. It's right. It's very, very right.

Norman: I don't follow ya.

Dulcamara: Norman, your grandfather has done it. He struck gold in his
mine! *(Astonished reactions from Norman and all of the townsfolk)*

Norman: But that old mine is as dry as a creekbed.

Dulcamara: No, Norman. It's not. In the last few days, your grandfather
has hit paydirt like no one else I've ever heard of in all of my
days! He has unearthed 22 gold nuggets!

Old George: No, I haven't.

Dulcamara: *(Turning to him anxiously)* But, last night you told me—

Old George: I've found 47 gold nuggets.

Dulcamara: (*Turning back to Norman*) Well, there you go! He's found even more!

Old George: Yup. I told everybody I would get there one day. Just gotta keep diggin' ... a little deeper everyday!

Norman: Grampy! That's wonderful. I am so happy for you!

Old George: Well, don't be.

Norman: Why?

Old George: You should be happy for *you*!

Norman: What do you mean?

Old George: Well, I finally tracked down Lambert early this morning. He was able to give me his professional opinion about my gold nuggets.

Lambert: They are ... the purest nuggets I've ever seen. Nearly solid gold—each one of 'em! They will be worth a large fortune!

Old George: That's right. And we just rode back from a trip over to Warton to make it official.

Norman: To make what official?

Lambert: We sent a telegraph to the State Commission in order to officially transfer ownership of the mine.

Old George: It's your, Norman. Every last nugget and every last specka dirt in that place is yours.

Norman: Mine?

Old George: You're a wealthy man, Norm! It's all yours. (*More crowd reactions*)

Norman: But, Grampy, it's *your* mine. You're the one who did all the work! You should keep the gold.

Old George: I don't need it. I wouldn't even know where to begin with all that money. Too much work for me. No, sir! It's all going to you. Every last nugget!

Norman: Thank you so much, Grampy! (*He hugs George*)

Old George: (*Matter of factly*) Sure thing!

Norman: *(Lightbulb moment)* So, *that* must be where the money came from to pay my salary back to Sergeant Belcore.

Old George: Who?

Norman: Sergeant Belcore. The man in charge of the army regiment? The one you paid \$30 to so I could come back to town?

Old George: I don't know any Sergeants. And where in tarnation would I get \$30?

Norman: From the gold...in your mine.

Old George: I used to have a gold mine. Not anymore though. I gave it away. If you need \$30, you'll have to ask someone else.

Norman: But, Grampy...I don't understand.

Old George: Why are you nannerin' on like that, boy?

Norman: It's just that, sometimes I wish you could—

Old George: What?

Norman: Oh, never mind! Everything is fixed, so I'll leave it at that!

Mabel: *(Stepping down from the store)* Say, Norman. Now that you've got all that money, what are you gonna do?

Norman: Do?

Susannah: Sure! What are your plans?

Norman: Well, I haven't had much time to consider it yet. I'll take care of Grampy, that's for certain. Other than that, I don't rightly know. I like it here in Riley's Ridge. *(Smiles at Adina as she takes his arm)* I reckon I'll just stick around for a while. *(Turns to Oscar)* I do wanna give some of my money to you, Oscar.

Oscar: Me?

Norman: Sure thing! You've always been a good friend to me. I wanna help you out. Is that okay with you?

Oscar: That's great, Norm. That's just great! *(Mabel and Susannah take great interest in this revelation.)*

Old George: You're a good boy, Norm. Just like your pa was. *(Starts to head in the direction of his mine)* Now, if you'll excuse me, I

gotta get back to diggin'. You know what I always say—a little deeper—

Norman: But, Grampy, you gave the mine to me! You don't have to dig anymore, remember?

Old George: By George, that's right! *(Looks confused)* Well, now, I reckon I don't know what to do with myself. I been diggin' up there every day for over thirty years!

Marietta: *(From the doorway to the hotel)* I've got an idea! Why doesn't everyone come in for some pie? We can have a celebration! I've got supper on. We can make a whole night of it!

(Cheers and shouts of agreement from the crowd. Everyone goes into the hotel except Norman, Adina, Dulcamara, Hattie, Oscar, and all three shop girls.)

Mabel: *(Sidling up to Oscar with a flirtatious smile)* Say, Oscar. Whatdya say we sit together at supper?

Oscar: No, thanks.

Mabel: How's that again?

Oscar: No, thanks. I don't wanna sit with ya, Mabel. *(Looking at Constance)* I was figuring maybe I would sit with Constance. I don't know her real good, but I think I would like to.

(Constance is flabbergasted as Oscar approaches and offers his arm to her. She eventually takes it, and they walk arm in arm into the hotel. Mabel and Susannah slink in behind them with pouty looks on their faces. Norman and Adina walk arm in arm toward the hotel. Just before exiting, Adina turns toward Norman)

Adina: Norman, I want to ask you. When you stepped over to face Sergeant Belcore, you looked so confident and...strong. How did you know it would turn out okay?

Norman: I didn't.

Adina: *(Shocked)* You didn't?

Norman: Nope. After Doctor Dulcamara told me the elixir was fake, I had no idea what would happen. I was scared witless!

Adina: But, then, how did you act so daring and...brave?

Norman: I was just pretending. Sometimes, a person's gotta do that and hope everything just falls into place! (*Smiles at Hattie.*)

(Adina shakes her head at Norman in wonder and admiration. They walk arm in arm into the hotel. Hattie saunters over to where Dulcamara is standing awkwardly.)

Hattie: Howdy, Doc.

Dulcamara: Hello, Hatti—Hello, Sheriff. How are you today?

Hattie: Well, Doc. I'm doin' some thinking.

Dulcamara: Is that so? (*Nervously. He doesn't know exactly what her intentions are.*) About what?

Hattie: Well, about my good friend Norman and his...situation.

Dulcamara: I see.

Hattie: Yup. (*She begins circling around him like during their earlier conversation.*) You see, for the last few minutes I've been standing back over yonder listenin' to everything.

Dulcamara: Listening? (*Very nervous*) To everything?

Hattie: That's right. Everything. And there's one part of Norm's story I just can't figure out. It seems kind of suspicious to me.

Dulcamara: Suspicious?

Hattie: Yup. It's the part about the money. I just can't figure where the thirty dollars came from. Norm seemed to think Old George paid the money back to Sergeant Belcore, but I don't reckon.

Dulcamara: You don't...reckon?

Hattie: Nope. George is nice enough, but I suppose he'd be like a calf staring at a new gate if he tried to figure out all the convolutions of Norm's situation.

Dulcamara: Yes, I suppose that's true.

Hattie: And as best as I can figure, none of the other townsfolk around here have that kind of money. (*Moves in toward Dulcamara*) So, I suppose I'm left with only one conclusion.

Dulcamara: And that is?

Hattie: *(Smiles)* It's a miracle! I guess that potion of yours worked better for Norman than we first thought. *(Leans in toward him)* You follow my meaning?

Dulcamara: I—*(It takes him a moment to realize that she's letting him off the hook)*—Yes! I believe I do, Sheriff!

Hattie: So, it seems to me that everything worked out just fine. Everybody's happy. Satisfied customers all around!

Dulcamara: That's...wonderful, to be sure. But...the fact is...I'm getting out of the sales business.

Hattie: That right?

Dulcamara: Yes, ma'am. I'm done with that for good. It's just too...costly.

Hattie: Well, then—I reckon you'll be leaving town. Off to find something new?

Dulcamara: Well, the truth is—things haven't gone quite like I planned in Riley's Ridge, and—*(looks back toward the train depot as a train whistle can be heard in the distance)*—and I don't have enough money just now to get a ticket out of here, so...I suppose I'll be staying around for a while. I hear there's good money to be had in the mining business.

Hattie: *(Smiles)* I heard that too. *(Glances at the hotel)* Well, I reckon I best get in there before all the pie gets eaten. *(She steps toward the hotel)* I'll be seeing ya, Doctor.

Dulcamara: Yes. I'm sure you will, Sheriff.

(Hattie exits into the hotel. Dulcamara smiles and looks around, taking in his surroundings as Nog comes running from the train depot.)

Dulcamara: Ah! Nog! Where have you been?

Nog: *Writes frantically*

Dulcamara: *(Reading then smiling)* Yes, Nog. I am quite aware that I told you to take our things down to the depot, but now I am telling you to bring them back up to our hotel room.

Nog: *More frantic writing as the sound of the train leaving can be heard in the distance*

Dulcamara: Yes, I know the 3:15 train is leaving right now and that we are not on it.

Nog: *Raises his hands as if to say, "What gives?"*

Dulcamara: Ah, dear Nog! What strange events have transpired here in this little town! The dramatic changes that have come about in these folks—in *myself* even—are truly remarkable! Some might even say—*miraculous*. I'm just not ready to leave, Nog. *(Looking intently at the Sheriff's office)* There are more treasures to be discovered in Riley's Ridge, and I think you and I are just the ones to find them. *(He steps toward the hotel, but then stops short. He pulls out the bottle of elixir Norman gave him earlier, opens it, and takes a large swig. When he notices Nog looking at him curiously, he responds)* What? This? This is...just in case! Never hurts to have a little help, you know! *(He smooths out his hair, straightens his coat, and steps confidently into the hotel.)*

Nog: *(Watches him go. He walks around the stage for a few moments and checks to make sure no one is around. He then breaks the fourth wall by looking directly at the audience and uttering his only line of the play.)* Well, I guess that's that! *(He shrugs and exits the stage in the direction of the train depot.)*

END OF THE PLAY

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