

DAY 1 DRAMA

Characters: DALTON CLYDE, NETTIE ZELMA, MARSHAL, REVEREND, VERA.

Theme music.

Scene opens in the town of Wonder Junction. DALTON CLYDE and NETTIE ZELMA sprint onto the stage.)

DALTON CLYDE: *(huffing and puffing between laughs)* Ooooh-weee! What a big score, Nettie Zelma! I can't believe that baby let me steal all his candy!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(glaring at DALTON CLYDE)* Quit that, Dalton Clyde. We're professional thieves. We don't steal candy from no babies. We rob unsuspectin' citizens, the occasional stagecoach, and one day, banks. Now give it back before you make a scene!

DALTON CLYDE: *(frowns while revealing a shirtful of candy)* No need for bein' rude. I may be your younger brother, but that ain't no way to treat family *(then tosses the shirtful of candy into the audience)*. There. You happy? It's all gone . . . and now there ain't gonna be no snacks for our travels.

As DALTON CLYDE brushes off his shirt, NETTIE ZELMA moves toward the bank which has a several "Wanted" posters posted below a sign that reads "Wonder Junction – News and Notices."

NETTIE ZELMA: *(staring at the bank)* Naw, Dalton Clyde, don't worry. We ain't leavin' jus' yet. This here is Wonder Junction. And it looks to me like they got a bank prime for the pickin'! *(then sees the "Wanted" posters)*. Oh, goodness gracious!

DALTON CLYDE: What's wrong?

NETTIE ZELMA rips a poster off the wall and shoves it in DALTON CLYDE's face)

DALTON CLYDE: Who's that?!

NETTIE ZELMA: Whataya mean, "Who's that?" It's you and me, silly!

DALTON CLYDE: *(thinks she's kidding)* Oh . . . don't be ridiculous! It is not!

NETTIE ZELMA: It is so! See yer birth mark? *(as she points to it in the photo)*

DALTON CLYDE: *(surprised)* Well, I'll be . . .

NETTIE ZELMA: It's an old picture, that's all.

DALTON CLYDE: Hey . . . maybe that's a good thing, Nettie Zelma! We won't be so easily recognized!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(irritated)* I s'ppose yer right. But, they're still callin' us the Bumblin' Bandits! They think we're a joke!

DALTON CLYDE: Bumblin', huh? That ain't too far of a jump, I reckon . . . *(he kicks at the floor in embarrassment)*

NETTIE ZELMA: Yeah, well I'm sick and tired of it! And that's why we need to rob this here bank. We gotta earn us a more respectable reputation!

DALTON CLYDE: And ya think robbin' a bank'll do it?

NETTIE ZELMA: Sure do. Then, maybe we'll have us a proper name like the "Dangerous Duo," or the "Awful Outlaws"!

DALTON CLYDE: *(looking at his reflection in the window, he tries to fix his hair then smells his armpits)* Hmm . . . I think the "Ugly and Stinky Outlaws" is more like it!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(offended)* Speak for yerself, Dalton Clyde!

Then the MARSHALL strolls in. NETTIE ZELMA jumps in surprise and slightly hides behind DALTON CLYDE.

MARSHAL: *(tips his hat to NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE as he approaches)* Hello there! You wouldn't happen to know where I could find the mayor, would you? Or any other official I could speak to?

NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE see the MARSHAL's law badge and start to panic.

DALTON CLYDE: *(in a loud whisper to NETTIE ZELMA)* It's an officer of the law!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(stammering and crumpling the paper in her hands)* Why, I wouldn't . . . you know, that's such a . . . I . . . I don't . . .

Then the REVEREND enters the stage, looking down at a book. He's also carrying a small cage.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(points at the REVEREND)* Talk to him! He looks official!

MARSHAL: Uh, excuse me, sir. Can I speak with you for a minute?

As soon as the MARSHAL's back is turned, the Bumblin' Bandits stumble their way offstage.

REVEREND: Oh . . . sure! You here for the jamboree? I'm Reverend Halbrook, by the way *(as he shakes the MARSHAL's hand)*. So, what do you need? A tour around town? A pipin' hot meal? Mrs. McKee's chicken-fried steak is so good. It'll rattle your ears!

MARSHAL: No thanks, Reverend . . . I'm Marshal Metcalf and I'm here on official business.

REVEREND: Oh . . . sounds serious.

MARSHAL: It is . . . because I know you're without a sheriff right now. Anyway, I'm after some criminals who might be hiding out here in Wonder Junction.

REVEREND: *(jumps as if startled, which rattles the cage he's holding)* Criminals? Here? My goodness . . . whatever makes you think that?

MARSHAL: Well, I've been tracking a duo known as the "Bumblin' Bandits." They were minor criminals, not really doing much of anything save for the occasional stick-up . . . until last week when they robbed the bank in Golden City! So, I've been hot on their trail ever since and it led me here to your town.

REVEREND: Oh, my . . . *(then glances down at the open cage he's holding)* Oh, my!

MARSHAL: I know! And your bank might be next if we don't act quickly!

REVEREND: *(begins nervously looking all around on the ground and tip-toeing)* Well, Marshal . . . right now I think that's the least of our worries!

MARSHAL: What? Nonsense! We should be treating those two as highly dangerous and volatile individuals! *(then notices the REVEREND tip-toeing)* What on earth are you doing, Reverend?

REVEREND: *(continuing to tip-toe)* Well . . . you see, my daughter, Vera, is a bit of a –how should I say it? A self-proclaimed critter-wrangler.

MARSHAL: An admirable profession.

REVEREND: Well, yes, but it's not her profession . . . it's her hobby—and perhaps one she's not very good at.

MARSHAL: Why would you say that?

REVEREND: Long story short, she asked me to transport a critter in this crate *(as he lifts the small, empty cage)*, but he's not here anymore. I think she forgot to lock the cage door!

MARSHAL: Oh . . . well, here . . . let me help you look for it. *(then he hikes up pant legs and pushes up shirt sleeves, and gets ready to start searching on the ground)* So, what kind of a critter are we looking for?

REVEREND: A snake.

MARSHAL: *(freezes in place)* Really? What kind??

REVEREND: A rattler.

MARSHAL: *(unnerved)* Rattlesnake, huh?

REVEREND: Yep . . . get too close and he'll let you know. But, we've gotta catch him alive. Vera will be a mess if I bring him home in pieces.

MARSHAL: *(begins to stutter)* Yeah, well . . . I'm sorry, Reverend, but hunting for venomous snakes is a bit above my paygrade. *(then tips his hat and hurries off stage)* Good day!

The MARSHAL exits.

REVEREND: Hmm . . . well, Buford . . . looks like it's just you and me! *(as he looks around the stage)* You can't stay hidden forever!

The REVEREND exits the stage briefly as he continues looking for the snake. Then DALTON CLYDE enters, followed by a more cautious NETTIE ZELMA.)

NETTIE ZELMA: *(loud whisper)* Is he gone?

DALTON CLYDE: Is who gone?

NETTIE ZELMA: The Marshal! Who else would we be hidin' from?

DALTON CLYDE: Oh . . . right *(suddenly becomes more cautious)* . . . I forgot. Maybe we should—*(gets cut off by NETTIE ZELMA)*

Then the REVEREND enters, still looking for the snake.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(sees the REVEREND with his back facing them, loud whisper)* Hush up, Dalton Clyde! Act normal!

REVEREND: *(stands up, rubs his back)* My word. Where has Buford gone off to? Vera's gonna have a conniption if he doesn't turn up soon. *(then turns and sees NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE)* Oh . . . more new faces! You here for the jamboree?

NETTIE ZELMA: Uh . . . no, sir . . . we're jus' passin' through.

REVEREND: Oh, well, you might want to stick around a little longer! The annual harvest jamboree is in a couple days with all sorts of fun and festivities. Folks from the surrounding towns have been flocking in all week!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(you can almost see her ears perk up at this)* Festivities? People from the surrounding towns? Then there'll be lots of buyin' and sellin' going on?

REVEREND: You better believe it! People will be selling food, handmade goods, and holding contests for fun. It'll be a grand old time!

NETTIE ZELMA: Hmm . . . and then the bank'll be chock full of all that extra cash? Maybe we should stick around for a while, an' see what this jamboree is all about! Thanks fer the tip, mister!

REVEREND: Oh, goodness, apologies for my manners! I didn't even introduce myself. I'm Reverend Halbrook . . . at your service.

DALTON CLYDE: *(to NETTIE ZELMA)* Wow, we never met no Reverend before!

REVEREND: Really? Then I'm happy to be the first one! And you are . . .

Not wanting DALTON CLYDE to reveal their identities, NETTIE ZELMA gives him a dirty look.

DALTON CLYDE: Oh . . . well, I'm Dalton Clyde, and this here's my sister, Nettie Zelma.

NETTIE ZELMA elbows DALTON CLYDE.

DALTON CLYDE: *(in pain)* Oww!

REVEREND: Well, I'm pleased to meet you *(as he shakes their hands)*.

Then VERA enters carrying a picnic basket.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(anxious to be moving on)* So, I s'ppose we need a place to stay now that we ain't just passin' through no more. Can ya point us in the direction of the nearest inn?

REVEREND: *(takes a sharp breath in)* Well, I could, but it wouldn't do you any good. I just heard that all the rooms are booked for the rest of the week . . . on account of the jamboree.

VERA: They can stay in the barn!

REVEREND: What?

VERA: The barn. It's dry and clean . . . well . . . it's dry, at least. But it sure beats sleepin' out in the cold night air!

REVEREND: This is my daughter, Vera. *(then to VERA)* Honey, this is Dalton Clyde and his sister, Nettie Zelma.

DALTON CLYDE: Howdy, ma'am.

VERA: Nice to meet you both. *(as she shakes their hands)* Well . . . Pa? What about the barn?

REVEREND: It's okay with me.

VERA: Good! Then it's settled!

DALTON CLYDE: That's awful kind of ya, Reverend. And how much would you be chargin' us for a couple nights' stay?

REVEREND: Oh, no charge. It's on the house . . .

DALTON CLYDE: Really??

REVEREND: Well . . . save for a few chores you could help me out with . . .

NETTIE ZELMA: *(annoyed)* Chores?

REVEREND: Oh, nothing major . . . just—

VERA: Hey, let's not talk about that right now. How about a glass of lemonade? *(as she motions them over to the barrel tables and chairs)*

DALTON CLYDE: *(big smile)* I won't say no to that!

They all go to sit at the barrel tables. NETTIE ZELMA is obviously not thrilled at being further delayed. Then VERA opens her basket and sets out glasses.

VERA: Pa, would you do the honors? *(hands REVEREND the pitcher)*

VERA: *(as REVEREND pours)* You know this situation kinda reminds me of Mary and Joseph. The guest room wasn't big enough so they had to stay in the area the animals usually slept.

DALTON CLYDE: Oh . . . so, you done this before?

VERA: *(serving the lemonade)* Done what before?

DALTON CLYDE: Had folks stay in yer barn.

VERA: *(confused)* Uh . . . no, this is the first time.

REVEREND: She was talking about Christmas. You know . . . when Jesus was born?

DALTON CLYDE: *(confused)* Oh . . .

REVEREND: Friend, are you not familiar with the birth of Jesus?

DALTON CLYDE: Nettie Zelma, are we familiar with the birth of Jesus?

NETTIE ZELMA: No, we are not.

DALTON CLYDE: No, Reverend, we are not.

REVEREND: Well, then . . . we've got lots to talk about!

An impatient NETTIE ZELMA, gives DALTON CLYDE an elbow and a frustrated look.)

REVEREND: So, where should we start? At the beginning, I reckon. You see, when God created the universe, everything was good. Nothing bad ever happened. Then the first people disobeyed which brought a curse on the world. But God had a plan to fix it, because he loved the world

so much. And that plan was to send a Savior who could pay the penalty for all the wrongs we've done.

VERA: And that Savior is Jesus, the eternal Son of God and Creator of the Universe!

DALTON CLYDE: Wait . . . so, you mean God sent himself?

REVEREND: Well . . . in a way, yes. Remember that God is a Trinity—one God existing as Father, Son, and Spirit. So God the Son stepped into history to take on human flesh as a man.

VERA: Actually, a baby! And that's what we celebrate at Christmas . . . the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the World!

DALTON CLYDE: Wow! That kinda blows my mind!

REVEREND: I know . . . it's a wonder of wonders!

Then something under the table catches the eye of NETTIE ZELMA.

NETTIE ZELMA: What on earth?

VERA: What? Is something wrong?

NETTIE ZELMA: *(suddenly realizes it's a snake)* It's a snake!! *(as she backpedals out of the chair, knocking things over in the process, including DALTON CLYDE)* Run for it, Dalton Clyde! *(Both scramble to get up. NETTIE ZELMA starts away first.)*

Then the REVEREND and VERA look under the table.

REVEREND: *(excited)* Oh! It's Buford!

VERA: *(confused)* Buford! What's he doing here??

DALTON CLYDE: *(running after NETTIE ZELMA)* I'm right behind ya, Nettie Zelma!

Theme music.

DAY 2 DRAMA

CHARACTERS: DALTON CLYDE, NETTIE ZELMA, MARSHAL, REVEREND, VERA, townspeople

Theme music

It's the next morning and NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE enter the stage.

DALTON CLYDE: Beautiful morning, ain't it!

NETTIE ZELMA gives a big yawn.

DALTON CLYDE: What're you yawning about?
Didn't ya sleep good last night?

NETTIE ZELMA: *(shoots him a withering look)* Well, after that near-death experience yesterday and the fact that we were basically sleepin' in that snake's home, I reckon I didn't get more than a couple hours. Gimme rats and mice any day . . . they don't bother me none, but reptiles . . . that's a different story!

DALTON CLYDE: *(tilts his chin down, giving her a knowing look)* Says the grown woman who shrieked her little lungs ragged when she found a nest of field mice in her fancy boots!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(jabs her finger at DALTON CLYDE)* Watch it, bub. I ain't never seen you happy to see a rodent hangin' around your fancy garments! But, never mind that . . . after our first bank heist, we'll be rollin' in enough dough to buy more fancy clothes than any critters can ruin! This is the best opportunity we've ever had and it's right in front of our noses!

DALTON CLYDE: *(conflicted)* You really think so?

NETTIE ZELMA: O'course I do! It's gonna fix all our problems! You'll see. *(then tilts her head)* Why? Are you gettin' cold feet on me, Dalton Clyde? You ain't a yellow-belly, are ya?

DALTON CLYDE: No, I ain't no coward, Nettie Zelma. You know that. I'm jus' havin' what ya might call a . . . a twinge a conscience. It jus' don't feel right this time.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(annoyed, she feels his forehead)* Well, maybe you need to lie down 'til the feelin' goes away!

Then the Train Whistle [sfx] is heard as VERA enters from the opposite side of the stage with a chicken in her arms and two TOWNSPEOPLE in tow. The MARSHAL trails a little ways behind them. The Bumbling Bandits watch the group approach until the MARSHAL comes into view. Then they panic, darting this way and that, until NETTIE ZELMA has the idea to "calmly" walk over to the barrel tables and sit down. They raise newspapers to cover their faces as the people cross the stage. Then, unbeknownst to the audience, they put on disguises while hidden behind the newspapers.

VERA: *(she points to a spot above the town)* And finally, up there on the ridge is our church. We call it High Point Chapel . . . not so much because it's the highest point in town, but because there's nothing better than learning about Jesus! And that's the truth of it! Sunday service starts at 10:00, by the way. *(pause)* Alrighty, folks . . . sorry to say, but this is where I get off. Mae Belle's boarding house is right around the corner *(as she points offstage)*. If you have any questions or need anything, she'll fix you right up! Have a great day, and again, welcome to Wonder Junction!

Then the TOWNSPEOPLE exit the stage.

MARSHAL: Sorry, Miss Vera, for tagging along. I don't mean to cause any undue stress, but with the threat of those bandits nearby, we can't be too careful.

VERA: I understand, Marshal. You're just doin' your job.

MARSHAL: That's right . . . and I won't quit 'til I find 'em! *(pause as he looks up at High Point Chapel)* High Point Chapel, huh? I'll bet it's a beautiful view from up there.

VERA: That it is, Marshal. And if you're still in town this Sunday, you can see for yourself. We'd love to have you join us!

MARSHAL: Maybe I will . . . but right now, I got some bandits to catch!

Then the MARSHAL steps toward the notices on the bank wall, grabs a poster of the Bumbling Bandits, and strolls over to the table where DALTON CLYDE and NETTIE ZELMA are seated. Meanwhile, VERA kneels downstage, sets her chicken down, and feeds it. She's still within earshot.)

MARSHAL: Howdy, folks. It sure is a beautiful day, isn't it.

Realizing they can't hide any longer, NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE, disguised with chef's hats and mustaches, lower their newspapers. NETTIE ZELMA's mustache is set between her eyebrows to function as a unibrow. DALTON CLYDE's mustache sits askew on his face.

DALTON CLYDE: *(to NETTIE ZELMA, trying to speak with a Russian accent)* He speak to us?

NETTIE ZELMA: *(with a Russian accent)* Yes! To us.

MARSHAL: Uh . . . can I ask you a question?

DALTON CLYDE: What question?

MARSHAL: Well . . . it just so happened that a pair of criminals popped into town the other day, and I've been lookin' for 'em. *(holds up "Wanted" poster)* Have you seen 'em around?

NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE look closely at the poster, squinting their eyes and oohing and ahing for added effect. Marshall stands between them peering over their shoulders.

DALTON CLYDE: *(rubs his chin in thought but grazes his askew mustache, which causes it to flutter off of his face)* Hmm. Not seen them. Is that two men in picture?

NETTIE ZELMA: *(offended, she glares at DALTON CLYDE)* No, Heinrich! That is most definitely woman. Not man. Perhaps you need to see physician to craft you spectacles!

MARSHAL: *(ignoring their conversation, he's fixated on the mustache that fell off)* Well, I declare . . . *(as he picks up the mustache and examines it)* . . . you done lost your hair! You feelin' alright?

DALTON CLYDE: *(quickly feels his upper lip then panics and starts to break character)* Nettie??

NETTIE ZELMA: Is fine, Marshal. I will get him home to bed. Nothing good pot of soup can't fix, eh? *(she pats DALTON CLYDE on the shoulder*

as she quickly snatches the mustache from the MARSHAL and sticks it to DALTON CLYDE's cheek)
Have a good day!

NETTIE ZELMA ushers DALTON CLYDE offstage, then they sprint as soon as the MARSHAL turns away.

MARSHAL: *(faces VERA and shakes head)* Well, that didn't help any . . . it was interesting, though. *(looks at his pocket watch)* Well, I better be goin'.

VERA: See ya, Marshal. Don't forget about Sunday!

MARSHAL: I won't!

The MARSHAL exits. VERA continues to pet her chicken, and then sighs deeply.

VERA: Well, Flora Ellen, it's jus' you an' me.
Chicken clucks [sfx]

VERA: What? I know you're often right about things. So what?

Long Irritated Chicken clucks [sfx]

VERA: *(surprised)* Good night, Flora Ellen, why would you say such a thing?? Those out-of-towners weren't strange at all! They're jus' from a different country, that's all. Mind your manners!

Sassy Chicken clucks [sfx]

VERA: *(scandalized)* FLORA ELLEN!

The REVEREND enters as VERA shoves Flora Ellen the chicken behind her to keep her quiet. Then Muffled Chicken clucks [sfx] are heard.

REVEREND: There you are! I've been lookin' for you. *(notices the chicken)* Is that Flora Ellen?

VERA: Yes, and she's fixin' to start a fight, so I figured I'd better give her some time to think about what she said.

REVEREND: Sounds like you've got the situation under control. Unfortunately, that's not the case at home right now. Darnell got himself into quite a pickle.

VERA: *(stands up, leaving Flora Ellen the chicken on the floor)* What has that rascal roadrunner done now?

REVEREND: Well, seems like he saw his reflection in the window and didn't quite like what he

saw . . . and now there's shattered glass all over the place.

VERA: *(sighs)* Darnell. I'm gonna have to give him a talkin' to when I get home.

NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE enter, their disguises nowhere to be seen.

REVEREND: Why, it's Dalton Clyde and Nettie Zelma! How'd you sleep last night?

NETTIE ZELMA looks around to make sure the MARSHAL is gone

DALTON CLYDE: Jus' fine, Reverend. Thank you fer yer hospitality.

VERA: Say, were you two just here a little bit ago? *(holds her finger up horizontally to her lip like a mustache)*

NETTIE ZELMA: *(stutters a bit)* Uh . . . no, that was someone else.

Sassy Chicken clucks [sfx].

VERA: *(gasps)* Flora Ellen! What did I tell you earlier?

REVEREND: I just wanted to apologize for the snake incident yesterday.

VERA: Yeah, somehow Buford got out of his cage, but it won't happen again. I'll make sure of it.

DALTON CLYDE: That's alright . . . it may have been a close shave, but we survived, didn't we, Nettie Zelma?

NETTIE ZELMA: *(still unnerved by the snake)* If you say so, Dalton Clyde.

REVEREND: Well, anyway . . . it caused an abrupt ending to our conversation which we'd like to continue if that's okay . . . the one about Jesus, I mean.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(still shifty-eyed and watching for the Marshal)* Sorry, Reverend . . . I don't quite reckon we have much time for that today.

DALTON CLYDE: Aw, hush up, Nettie Zelma. I wanna hear what he has to say!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(mutters meanly)* But we ain't got time for this!!

DALTON CLYDE: Oh, simmer down! Whatever's on that agenda of yours can wait a spell! *(then to*

the REVEREND and VERA) Sorry, y'all. She can get madder than a wet hen sometimes!

Offended Chicken clucks [sfx]

VERA: *(to FLORA ELLEN)* Calm down, Flora Ellen! He didn't mean anything by it!

REVEREND: *(clears his throat)* Okay, now where were we?

DALTON CLYDE: I think we were talkin' about Jesus bein' a baby.

REVEREND: Oh, that's right, but, of course, he didn't stay that way! He grew into a kid—a kid who was like all other kids in some ways, but also a kid who was totally different.

DALTON CLYDE: *(confused)* Huh?

DALTON CLYDE gives a confused glance at NETTIE ZELMA. She shrugs.

REVEREND: Let me explain. When Jesus was a boy, he needed to eat, just like you. He got tired, just like you. He got sad sometimes, just like you, but was often happy, too, just like you.

DALTON CLYDE: And this is that same Jesus who made the universe?

VERA: Absolutely! Amazing, isn't it?

REVEREND: It sure is! He also had parents who loved him and taught him all kinds of things. And he had brothers and sisters, too.

NETTIE ZELMA: Well, I could tell you a thing or two about annoying younger brothers. *(gives DALTON CLYDE a jab in the side with her elbow. He yelps and pushes her back.)*

REVEREND: But, the amazing thing is Jesus never fought or got annoyed with his brothers and sisters. He never disobeyed his parents. He never lied or complained or had a bad attitude. In fact, he never, ever did anything wrong.

DALTON CLYDE: Ever?

REVEREND: Never! Can you imagine that — always doing the right thing?

NETTIE ZELMA: Ha! Not hardly! *(as she looks at DALTON CLYDE)*

REVEREND: And that's because he wasn't only a kid, he was also God! Fully human and fully God.

DALTON CLYDE: Wow! That's makin' my brain hurt.

REVEREND: I know! Only God knows exactly how it works, but it's a wonder for sure!

Chicken clucks [sfx]

VERA: What? Are you kiddin' me?

REVEREND: What's wrong?

VERA: Oh, Darnell's up to no good again! Don't ask me how she knows it, but she does. Sorry, folks, but I gotta tend to a naughty roadrunner right now. C'mon, Flora Ellen. *(moves to the stuffed chicken on the floor and scoops her up)*

Happy Chicken clucks [sfx] as VERA quickly exits.

REVEREND: It still boggles my mind how she's able to understand that chicken. Flora Ellen doesn't enunciate well enough for me.

NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE exchange glances.

NETTIE ZELMA: Uh . . . Reverend . . . Dalton Clyde and I were wondering if it'd be alright to impose on your kind hospitality a bit longer.

DALTON CLYDE: *(confused)* We were?

REVEREND: *(rubs his chin as if he's thinking)* Well . . . I suppose so. But you gotta promise me something.

NETTIE ZELMA: Whatever you want, Reverend.

REVEREND: Remember the chores, I mentioned ealier?

NETTIE ZELMA: Yeah, I reckon.

REVEREND: Well, I may need a little help at the schoolhouse. We're tryin' to get it ready for our new teacher and it's in need of some repairs. *(short pause)* Oh, and one more thing . . . make sure you behave yourselves. I don't want any trouble finding its way under my roof. *(shakes his finger at the two bandits)*

NETTIE ZELMA: I dunno what yer talkin' about, Rev—

DALTON CLYDE: *(interrupting, he eagerly shoves his hand out to shake the REVEREND's)* We have ourselves a gentleman's accord, sir!

REVEREND: *(smiles)* Very good. Now, here in Wonder Junction, whenever two parties agree on something, we have a special tradition. Dalton Clyde, come on over here, and I'll show you how it's done. It might take you a few minutes to catch on.

The REVEREND and DALTON CLYDE embark on a complicated handshake that lasts for a little while. Toward the end of the handshake, NETTIE ZELMA acts like she's joining in, but instead whisks DALTON CLYDE out of the handshake and waltzes him offstage, where he yelps in surprise and flops out of sight.

DALTON CLYDE: Whadaya doin'?? We ain't finished!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(smiles apologetically)* Sorry, Reverend! Gotta go!

NETTIE ZELMA exits after DALTON CLYDE.

REVEREND: Strange folks . . . I'm not sure this is gonna end well.

Theme music

DAY 3 DRAMA

CHARACTERS: DALTON CLYDE, NETTIE ZELMA, MARSHAL, REVEREND, VERA

Theme music

It's early morning and the scene begins with the REVEREND doing some touch up painting to the front of the schoolhouse. As is his custom, he likes to sing as he works.

REVEREND: *(sing to the tune of Movement 12 in Handel's "Messiah")* For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Then the MARSHAL enters.

MARSHAL: Reverend, is there anything you don't do around here?

REVEREND: *(laughs)* Yeah, well the school's been looking a little rough around the edges lately, and we thought it'd be nice to clean it up a bit for our new teacher.

MARSHAL: Good idea. By the way . . . did the rattlesnake ever turn up?

REVEREND: Well . . . as a matter of fact, you're standing on him right now!

MARSHAL: *(he immediately jumps)* What?? Where is it?? I don't see anything!!

The Reverend laughs

MARSHAL: Hardy, har, har . . . very funny.

REVEREND: *(laughing)* Sorry . . . I couldn't resist. No, actually . . . we found Buford wrapped around the base of that table right there *(as he points)*.

MARSHAL: Really? *(takes a couple steps back and looks under the table from afar)* Wrapped around the base, huh? Wow, I'm gonna have to be more careful when I sit down at a table from now on.

REVEREND: I'm sure you will! So . . . any progress in finding those bandits?

MARSHAL: The Bumblin' Bandits? Sadly, not . . . but I know they're here. I can feel it my bones!

REVEREND: The only thing I feel in my bones is aches and pains!

MARSHAL: Yeah, I hear you. Well, I better get back to work . . . those bandits aren't gonna catch themselves! See you later.

REVEREND: See you, Marshal.

Then the REVEREND resumes painting and reciting memory verses as he paints.

REVEREND: Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. John chapter 21, verse 25.

Then VERA enters carrying a covered basket.

VERA: I knew I'd find you here . . . painting and working on your memory verses.

REVEREND: I wanted to get an early start, before the sun gets too hot.

VERA: Good idea. I brought you some warm muffins. *(as she hands him a muffin)*

REVEREND: Aww . . . thanks, sweetheart. So, when does the new teacher arrive? Miss Griggs, isn't it?

VERA: *(crosses to the table and sets the basket down)* That's right. Winnie Griggs. Actually, she arrived on the train yesterday . . . all the way from Kentucky. You know . . . I think the kids are gonna love her!

REVEREND: I hope so. A good teacher is worth her weight in gold!

VERA: I agree! Now, if we can just find a sheriff.

REVEREND: Yeah, but at least the Marshal's here. I just hope he stays through the jamboree. *(short pause)* So, have you seen our guests this morning?

VERA: No, I haven't. I think they were up early as well.

REVEREND: Hmm . . . I was hoping they could help me with a few chores inside.

VERA: Oh, of course! Want me to fetch 'em?

REVEREND: Would you? You know what they say, "many hands make light work."

VERA: I'm on my way, Pa!

VERA exits to look for the Bumblin' Bandits.

REVEREND: *(stands back from the schoolhouse to look at his work)* Hmm . . . not too shabby. It'll do for now, anyway. Let's see what the back entrance looks like.

The REVEREND exits through (or behind) the school as NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE enter from the rear of the auditorium and make their way toward the stage. NETTIE ZELMA is looking for a stash of tools but can't remember where she hid them. DALTON CLYDE is following along after her, clueless as to what she's doing.)

NETTIE ZELMA: *(stops to wipe her brow with her bandana)* Wheeeuww . . . It's gonna be a hot one.

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah . . . I could sure use one of them tall glasses of lemonade right now.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(to herself)* Hmm . . . where could they be?

DALTON CLYDE: What was that?

NETTIE ZELMA: Huh? Did you say somethin'?

DALTON CLYDE: Nevermind. *(long pause)* You know it may surprise you, Nettie Zelma, but I wonder about things sometimes. Things like . . . do dogs lick us 'cause they know we got bones inside? Or . . . how does a sponge hold water when it's full o' holes? I reckon we'll never know.

Deep in thought, NETTIE ZELMA doesn't respond.

DALTON CLYDE: *(Sighs, then remembers a joke he heard)* Hey, wanna hear a joke? It's a humdinger! You ready? Here it is . . . Why do cowboys ride horses? *(pause)* Give up? Because they're too heavy to carry! *(laughs hysterically)* Get it?

NETTIE ZELMA: Would you hush up, Dalton Clyde!

DALTON CLYDE: Alright! Alright! *(then he pulls out his harmonica, brushes it off, and starts to play)*

NETTIE ZELMA: Oh, for cryin' out loud! Can't you see I'm tryin' to think??

DALTON CLYDE: *(defensive)* About what, Nettie Zelma?? Why on earth are we out here in the middle of the desert jus' walkin' around aimlessly? I'm sure it ain't fer the exercise!

NETTIE ZELMA: No, it ain't! I stashed some tools that we'll be needin' an' I'm jus' tryin' to remember where I hid 'em, that's all. *(then suddenly remembers)* Wait a second! This looks kinda familiar. *(then she locates the bag)* Aha!

DALTON CLYDE: So, when did you have time to come all the way out here to stash tools? *(then looks at the tools NETTIE stashed)* Lockpicks, crowbars . . . dynamite? Hey, these ain't tools for chores, Nettie Zelma! These tools are for thievin'!

NETTIE ZELMA: What's so surprisin' about that?? We're thieves, remember?

DALTON CLYDE: Nettie Zelma, we can't do this! We shook on it with the Reverend. We made a gentleman's accord!

NETTIE ZELMA: No, we didn't! I interrupted that cockamamie handshake, remember? So, we ain't breakin' no oaths 'cuz we didn't make no oaths! *(proud of herself)* You can thank me later.

DALTON CLYDE: *(shakes his head in disgust)* But I don't wanna break his trust! He's been nothin' but kind to us. He sees us as more than just worthless criminals.

NETTIE ZELMA: O'course he does . . . he's a reverend.

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, but he's also suspicious about us! You heard what he said . . . an' here you are provin' him right!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(irritated)* Oh, I knew you'd be hard-nosed about this . . . which is why you need to let me do the thinkin', Dalton Clyde! Listen! Everyone'll be busy during the jamboree, an' no one'll be guardin' the bank 'cuz Wonder

Junction ain't got no sheriff right now. So, you see . . . this is the chance of a lifetime and we can't afford to pass it up!

DALTON CLYDE: But what about the marshal?

NETTIE ZELMA: Oh . . . he don't scare me none.

DALTON: *(conflicted)* Well . . . I don't know.

NETTIE ZELMA: Listen, if we pull this off, it can be our last heist. Then we can retire an' settle down somewhere! I promise.

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, I wish I could believe that.

The MARSHAL enters quietly.

MARSHAL: Morning, folks . . . havin' a little disagreement over here?

The bandits panic and drop their tools.

DALTON CLYDE: *(gulps loudly)* Uh . . . no, sir! Not really. Jus' some verbal sparring with my sister.

MARSHAL: *(suspicious)* Is that so? What'cha got there? *(referring to the bag of tools)*

NETTIE ZELMA: *(stammers as she and DALTON CLYDE share nervous looks)* Oh . . . uh . . . just a . . . bag of tools, that's all. Ain't that right, Dalton Clyde?

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, that's exactly right. Just a bag of tools.

MARSHAL: Tools for what?

NETTIE ZELMA: Oh . . . uh . . . well, you see . . .

Then VERA enters.

VERA: There you are! I've been lookin' all over town for you two! Excuse me for interrupting, Marshal.

MARSHAL: That's okay, Miss Vera. What can we do for you?

VERA: Well, Pa wanted me to fetch our friends here right away. He needs 'em for some chores he's workin' on at the schoolhouse.

Then DALTON CLYDE's and NETTIE ZELMA's eyes meet as they get the same idea.

DALTON CLYDE: Chores!

NETTIE ZELMA: That's right! Chores! That's what the tools are for!

DALTON CLYDE: *(picks up a crowbar)* Ya see, Marshal? We got ourselves a crowbar for pryin' shingles off the roof! *(then he sets the crowbar down and picks up a stick of dynamite, immediately wishing he hadn't)* And then we have a . . . oh, uh . . . well . . . *(then looks to NETTIE ZELMA)*

MARSHAL: *(his suspicion grows)* Looks like a stick of dynamite to me, son.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(quickly jumps in)* That's right, Marshal. An' it's fer blowin' up the junk pile . . . if it gets too big o' course. At least that's how it's done where we come from.

VERA: *(casts a doubtful look toward the tools presented by NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE)* Yeah, well, I reckon those aren't the kinda chores Pa had in mind. But, anyway, *(turns to the MARSHAL)* Marshal, would you mind excusin' the siblings?

MARSHAL: Well, alright, Miss Vera . . . I know your pa is workin' hard.

VERA: Thanks, Marshal.

Then VERA, NETTIE ZELMA, and DALTON CLYDE walk over to the school.

MARSHAL: *(to himself)* Hmm . . . there's something suspicious about those two.

Then the MARSHAL exits.

DALTON CLYDE: *(relieved)* Little miss, you done squirreled us out of a mighty sticky situation. I dunno what the Marshal was gonna do, but it seemed like we was gonna get busted for somethin'!

VERA: And would the Marshal have had a reason to bust y'all? Were you doing something you shouldn't be doing?

NETTIE ZELMA rolls her eyes and makes faces while VERA looks intently at DALTON CLYDE.

DALTON CLYDE: *(doesn't know what to say)* Uh . . . well . . . not exactly.

VERA: Listen . . . I dunno y'all very well or what your lives are like outside of Wonder Junction, but I do know that when I'm pulled into a situation where I'm tempted to do somethin' that ain't right, I think of Jesus. And because I love him, I want to live for him and do right.

DALTON CLYDE: Jesus . . . that boy we were talkin' about.

VERA: That's right . . . but, of course, he didn't stay a boy! He became a preacher of sorts and began an amazing ministry when he was around 30 years of age. That's about how old y'all are, right?

NETTIE ZELMA: *(shakes her head indignantly)* A lady never tells her age.

VERA: Well, anyway . . . during his ministry, he did many works and wonders that astonished everyone around him. Even his words were a wonder—after all, he is the one who spoke the universe into existence! He wanted everyone to know there was only one true God—a God of love and holiness and power.

While NETTIE ZELMA remains skeptical, DALTON CLYDE nods in understanding. NETTIE ZELMA crosses to the table, discovers the basket, and starts eating it.

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, I reckon Jesus, being God, could do some mighty powerful things!

VERA: He could! He had power over sickness and disease. He opened the eyes of the blind, healed sick people who were on death's doorstep, and even brought dead people back to life! And even he himself came back to life!

NETTIE ZELMA: *(skeptical, hiding muffin)* How'd he do all that? Some kind of trick?

VERA: *(smiles kindly)* No trick—just God's power! He also had power over nature. He spoke to a storm and it stopped. He walked on water. And he fed more than 5000 people with just 5 small loaves of bread and 2 fish . . . with food left over! *(removes the basket from the table and looks knowingly at NETTIE ZELMA)*

DALTON CLYDE: Wow! That's incredible!

VERA: But the power I like to talk about the most is the power he has to forgive sins. When we disobey and sin, Jesus is the one who can and will forgive us, if we ask him to. Now, that's a wonder! *(offers DALTON CLYDE a muffin)*

DALTON CLYDE: *(taking muffin)* It sure is, Miss Vera.

VERA: Well, I s'pose we've left Pa waiting long enough, but I hope I've given you something to think about. C'mon . . . let's get you inside.

VERA leads the way into the schoolhouse with DALTON CLYDE close behind. NETTIE ZELMA hangs back for a moment.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(frustrated, puts the muffin down on the table)* I gotta find me a way to reel Dalton Clyde back in. All this talk is fillin' his mind with ideas that're distractin' him from our main objective! *(short pause)* Oh, why'd we have to cross paths with a reverend! *(then she proceeds to enter the schoolhouse)*

Theme music

Day 4 Drama

CHARACTERS: DALTON CLYDE, NETTIE ZELMA, MARSHAL, REVEREND, VERA, Calamity JACK, Calamity Mack

Theme music

Scene begins with DALTON CLYDE and NETTIE ZELMA outside the schoolhouse finishing up some chores. NETTIE ZELMA is washing windows while DALTON CLYDE is busy mounting a few paper (or cardboard) flowers rather erratically along the base of the schoolhouse.

DALTON CLYDE: I ain't never seen flowers quite like this before. They're kinda flat like. *(as he holds one up and looks at it)* Prob'ly don't have to water 'em neither.

NETTIE ZELMA doesn't respond.

DALTON CLYDE: Whatcha thinkin' about, Nettie Zelma? You ain't said a word since we been out here.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(grumbling)* I'm thinkin' that we got more important things to do than washin' windows, sweepin' floors, an' plantin' flowers!

DALTON CLYDE: Well, I dunno know . . . I think this is kinda important. We're helpin' people . . . an' that makes me feel good.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(annoyed)* Whatever you say, Dalton Clyde.

DALTON CLYDE: *(stands back to admire his work)* There . . . how does that look?

NETTIE ZELMA looks at the flowers and makes a disapproving face.

DALTON CLYDE: Well, I like it!

NETTIE ZELMA: I'm sure you do . . . now listen closely. Tomorrow, when the jamboree's in full swing, we'll sneak out of the festivities and back into town, where no one'll be! Our thievin' tools will be planted near the bank, and . . . *(then notices DALTON CLYDE's negative demeanor)* . . . what? What's wrong?

DALTON CLYDE: Sorry, Nettie Zelma, but yer on yer own. I decided I ain't gonna be part of it no more.

NETTIE ZELMA: What? O' course you are! Don't be ridiculous!

DALTON CLYDE: I ain't bein' ridiculous, and I ain't helpin' ya rob the bank!

NETTIE ZELMA: Say, what's gotten into you, Dalton Clyde?? We're bandits! It's what we do an' what we've always done . . . all the way back to great grandpa, Cheatin' Charlie!

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, well, no disrespect to our ancestors, but maybe it's time we do somethin' more respectable fer a change!

NETTIE ZELMA: I can't believe I'm hearin' this! So whadaya gonna do, huh?

You got no marketable skills. Legal ones, anyways.

DALTON CLYDE: That ain't true . . . I got skills.

NETTIE ZELMA: Like what?

DALTON CLYDE: Well . . . *(he thinks)* . . . I can fit 47 marshmallows in my mouth at the same time. Ain't many folks can do that!

NETTIE ZELMA: That ain't a marketable skill. That's just silly.

DALTON CLYDE: Oh . . . an' I can crack my knuckles to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*! Wanna hear?

NETTIE ZELMA: No! I don't wanna hear!

DALTON CLYDE: Aw . . . c'mon!

NETTIE ZELMA: I said no! Now, you listen to me, Dalton Clyde. We got one more job to do . . . an' you're gonna help me do it . . . understand?

Then the REVEREND, who was working inside the school, enters.

REVEREND: So, how's it going out here?

NETTIE ZELMA: Oh . . . well, I reckon we're about finished, Reverend.

REVEREND: Okay. *(then sees the flower “collage” that DALTON CLYDE created)* Wow . . . look at the flowers.

DALTON CLYDE: Oh, you like ‘em?

REVEREND: *(awkwardly tries to hide his true feelings)* Uh . . . well . . . they’re interesting.

Vera enters holding FLORA ELLEN, the chicken, and Buford’s cage.

VERA: Oh! Who did the flowers? *(as she sets Buford’s cage down)*

DALTON CLYDE: *(proudly)* I did! All by myself.

Laughing Chicken clucks [sfx].

VERA: *(to FLORA ELLEN)* What? That’s a terrible thing to say! Now, you apologize right now! *(long pause)* Flora Ellen? We’re waiting . . .

Long Slow Chicken clucks [sfx].

VERA: There . . . that’s better. *(then to DALTON CLYDE)* She said she’s sorry for what she said about your flowers.

DALTON CLYDE: Aw . . . that’s alright. No hard feelings.

NETTIE ZELMA, chomping at the bit to leave, rolls her eyes at the thought of her brother forgiving a chicken!

VERA: *(to DALTON CLYDE discretely so FLORA ELLEN won’t hear)* Sorry . . . she found out we had fried chicken for supper last night and she’s been in a mood ever since.

DALTON CLYDE, the REVEREND, and VERA laugh about it while NETTIE ZELMA is not amused.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(insincere, impatient to leave)* Well . . . this sure has been fun! Let’s do it again sometime real soon . . . *(DALTON CLYDE interrupts)*

DALTON CLYDE: Say, Reverend . . . I was meanin’ to ask you about the cross in there.

NETTIE ZELMA almost boils over inside with impatience. Everyone else is oblivious to her frustration.

REVEREND: The big one on the wall?

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, how’s come ya got one in the school? I ain’t never seen a cross except in a church or on a grave.

REVEREND: That’s because the school used to be the church.

VERA: Yep . . . until we built High Point Chapel up on the ridge. *(as she points to the church)*

DALTON CLYDE: Oh . . . well, that makes sense. So, you want me to help ya take it down, then . . . since it’s a school now?

REVEREND: No, no . . . we decided to keep it right where it is for a reason because after all, God is the ultimate source of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding and we want the children to remember that.

DALTON CLYDE: But what does a cross got to do with it? I don’t reckon I understand.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(impatient to leave)* That’s okay, Reverend. I’m sure you got much better things to do than answer my brother’s silly questions. *(to DALTON CLYDE)* C’mon, let’s go. *(pulls DALTON CLYDE)*

REVEREND: *(pulls DALTON CLYDE back)* No, it’s quite alright. I’d love to answer his question, because it’s an important one. You see, the cross is all about Jesus, the one who holds the keys to wisdom, knowledge, and understanding . . . and also eternity.

NETTIE ZELMA: *(mutters to herself)* This is startin’ to feel like an eternity.

REVEREND: Jesus came, lived a perfect life, then died on a cross and rose from the dead, so we wouldn’t—

DALTON CLYDE: Wait . . . you said he died and then came back to life?? Did I hear that right?

REVEREND: Yes, he died, was buried in a tomb, and then on the third day he came back to life! It’s a wonder of wonders and proved that Jesus is who he said he is—the Son of God and Savior of the world. And he did it so we wouldn’t have to be separated from God for all eternity when we die. It’s truly the most glorious, wonderful gift ever given!

DALTON CLYDE: Wow! But I’m sure it don’t apply to a good-for-nothin’ scoundrel like me.

REVEREND: Oh, but you’re wrong, Dalton Clyde. You see the reason Jesus died was not for his

own sins, because he didn't have any. He was totally pure and innocent. No, he died to pay the penalty for our sins because we're all guilty . . . every last one of us.

DALTON CLYDE: No matter what our sins are?

VERA: That's right . . . no matter what they are. It's a wonder, isn't it!

REVEREND: Have you heard about the two men who were crucified next to Jesus?

DALTON CLYDE: No . . . I haven't.

REVEREND: Well . . . according to the Bible, the day Jesus was put on that cross, two criminals were put on crosses, as well . . . one on either side of him. And they talked to him while they hung there. One didn't believe and mocked Jesus, but the other did believe and asked Jesus to remember him when he entered his kingdom.

DALTON CLYDE: And what'd Jesus say?

REVEREND: Jesus told him that that very day he'd be with him in paradise.

DALTON CLYDE: (*quietly*) Wow! So, he saved him, too . . . even though he was a criminal.

(*NETTIE ZELMA's head snaps up in surprise.*)

VERA: He sure did. So, you see . . . to be in God's forever family and go to heaven someday, you just need to turn from your sins and trust in Jesus' forgiveness.

DALTON CLYDE: That's mighty powerful. I think I'm beginning to understand.

DALTON CLYDE looks as if he's close to tears in wonder and amazement. NETTIE ZELMA is beginning to look a little confused and conflicted. Then the MARSHAL suddenly enters the scene carrying handcuffs. NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE freeze.

MARSHAL: Good afternoon.

REVEREND: Oh, howdy, Marshal. Can I help you?

MARSHAL: I got some business here with the Bumbling Bandits.

REVEREND: What??

NETTIE ZELMA: I hate that name.

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, that ain't our real name, Marshal.

MARSHAL: Nevermind about that. Nettie Zelma and Dalton Clyde Doolittle . . . you are under arrest for robbing the Golden City bank.

The BUMBLING BANDITS exchange glances, while VERA gasps, and the REVEREND sighs.

DALTON CLYDE: What? (*then to NETTIE ZELMA*) What's he talkin' about??

REVEREND: Marshal, are you sure you have the right people?

MARSHAL: No doubt about it, Reverend. (*then to DALTON CLYDE and NETTIE ZELMA*) Didn't think I'd figure it out, did you!

DALTON CLYDE: But Marshal, we couldn'ta done it!

NETTIE ZELMA: That's right! We came in from Greentown down south. Besides, we ain't never even been to Golden City . . . ever!

DALTON CLYDE: (*pleading, looking at the REVEREND*) You gotta believe us, Marshal! We didn't rob no bank!

MARSHAL: You expect me to trust the words of criminals?? Now we can do this hard way or the easy way. What's it gonna be?

DALTON CLYDE: (*reluctantly submits*) I guess . . . the easy way.

MARSHAL: That's the right answer, boy. (*as he cuffs DALTON CLYDE's hands*)

NETTIE ZELMA: Yer makin' a mighty big mistake.

MARSHAL: (*confident*) Oh, I don't think so. (*as he cuffs NETTIE ZELMA's hands*) Alright, let's go. (*then to the REVEREND as he leads the BUMBLING BANDITS away*) If you want to drop by for a visit, you know where we'll be.

The MARSHAL leads NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE offstage. The REVEREND and VERA stand by helplessly, exchanging looks. Then FLORA ELLEN Chicken clucks the first few notes of "Taps" [sfx].

VERA: Flora Ellen! This is not the time, nor place!

REVEREND: I can't believe they're going to jail.

VERA: Yeah . . . I mean, I know they were a little suspicious, but bank robbers?? And to think they were sleepin' in our barn!

REVEREND: But Dalton Clyde is so interested in learning about Jesus. I think his heart is changing . . . I really do.

VERA: We should pray.

REVEREND: Good idea. *(he puts a hand on her shoulder and they bow their heads)* Dear Heavenly Father, you gave us a command to tell others about your Son, Jesus. So, please bless the words we've shared with Dalton Clyde and Nettie Zelma and make their hearts soft toward you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

VERA: Amen. *(pause)* Well, I reckon I better get home. I've still got pies to bake for the jamboree. *(as she starts to walk away)*

REVEREND: Hey, don't forget Buford. *(as he picks up the cage, then realizes it's empty)* Uh, oh . . .

VERA: What's wrong?

REVEREND: No Buford. We've done it again.

VERA: Oh no! You mean I'VE done it again! This is not good, Pa! A rattlesnake on the loose with the jamboree starting tomorrow! And he could be anywhere! I've been all over town this afternoon!

REVEREND: Then we better start looking for him! You go that way and I'll go this way.

The REVEREND and VERA exit in different directions. Then Outlaw Entrance [sfx] is heard as the CALAMITY GANG enters.

CALAMITY JACK: Wonder Junction. You know, I've always had a special place in my heart for this little town.

CALAMITY MACK: An' why's that Calamity Jack?

CALAMITY JACK: 'Cuz it's where I got my start, Calamity Mack! Yessiree! Stole my first piece a candy in that there General Store. *(as he points)*

CALAMITY MACK: Really? Didja ever get caught?

CALAMITY JACK: Naw. An' that's when I decided that this is the life for me!

CALAMITY MACK: Wow! An' now you're a part of the Calamity Gang!

CALAMITY JACK: Yep! Meanest outlaws in the West!

CALAMITY MACK: That's a beautiful story, right there, Calamity Jack!

CALAMITY JACK: That it is, Calamity Mack!

CALAMITY MACK: So, ya really think this bank'll be easier than the one in Golden City?

CALAMITY JACK: Absolutely! 'Cuz Wonder Junction's got no sheriff right now.

CALAMITY MACK: Yeah, but I just heard tell there's a Marshal pokin' around.

CALAMITY JACK: Oh, yeah? Hmm . . . then we'll have to deal with him before we pay a visit to the bank. C'mon . . . the Calamity Gang's got some plannin' to do!

As the calamity gang exits, they walk past the wanted posters.

CALAMITY MACK: *(laughing and points to the Bumbling Bandits poster)* And they call themselves bandits!

CALAMITY JACK: *(chuckling)* They're not even worth the \$500!

Theme music

DAY 5 DRAMA

CHARACTERS: DALTON CLYDE, NETTIE ZELMA, MARSHAL, REVEREND, VERA, Calamity JACK, Calamity Mack

Theme music

It's the day of the Jamboree. Scene begins in the morning, with the BUMBLING BANDITS on stage having just escaped the jail.

DALTON CLYDE: (*frantic*) So, what do we do??

NETTIE ZELMA: Whadaya mean, “what do we do”? We get outta here! This is our chance!

DALTON CLYDE: But, we can't just leave! The Calamity Gang will rob the town blind!

NETTIE ZELMA: An' what're you gonna do about it? Take 'em on all by yerself? I don't think so! C'mon! Let's go!

DALTON CLYDE: (*Pacing*) No, we gotta find the Reverend and Miss Vera! They'll know what to do!

NETTIE ZELMA: Are you outa yer mind, Dalton Clyde?? You jus' got sprung from jail! You think the Reverend's jus' gonna look the other way?

DALTON CLYDE: All I know is we're wastin' time! C'mon!

NETTIE ZELMA: I can't believe we're doin' this!

The BUMBLING BANDITS run to the schoolhouse.

DALTON CLYDE: (*knocks on the schoolhouse door*) They ain't here!

NETTIE ZELMA: Okay, at least we tried. Now, let's get outta here!

DALTON CLYDE: Maybe they're still at the house!

DALTON CLYDE quickly exits the stage.

NETTIE ZELMA: Dalton Clyde! That conscience of yours is gonna get us in trouble!

DALTON CLYDE: (*from offstage*) No, just the opposite! You'll see!

As soon as NETTIE ZELMA exits, the REVEREND emerges from behind the schoolhouse. He's got a broom and sings as he sweeps.

REVEREND: (*sings to the tune of All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*) All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all. Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all!

Then VERA enters the stage. She's on her way to the jamboree with a basket of pies but stops to see her Pa first.

VERA: Morning, Pa!

REVEREND: Oh, good morning, Vera.

VERA: Still no Buford?

REVEREND: No, I'm sorry to say.

VERA: What are we gonna do? He could turn up at the jamboree!

REVEREND: I really doubt he could've gotten that far. No, I'm sure he's still in town somewhere. We just need to keep our eyes peeled.

VERA: I just hate knowing there's a rattler on the loose in Wonder Junction. What if he bites someone?

REVEREND: I don't know, sweetheart. But, I'm sure they'll get a warning first.

VERA: Yeah . . . that's one good thing about rattlesnakes.

REVEREND: (*changes the subject*) So, what do you think? (*looking at the schoolhouse*)

VERA: Well, it's lookin' better, that's for sure! You're gonna straighten the flowers, though, aren't you?

REVEREND: Nope.

VERA: What? Pa . . . you got to!

REVEREND: Dalton Clyde was excited about his “artistic display” and far be it from me to mess with it. I wouldn't want to hurt his feelings.

VERA: But he's in jail . . . he's not gonna see it . . . but, we sure will.

REVEREND: I understand . . . but you know, it's kinda growing on me.

VERA: You're kidding.

REVEREND: And you know what, the kids (*looking at the kids in the audience*) just might like it the way it is. They're not just little adults, ya know. They think differently. And who knows, perhaps it'll spark a conversation about flowers and creativity and God's beautiful creation . . .

VERA: Oh, it'll spark a conversation, all right. No doubt about that! Well, I better get these pies delivered.

Before VERA leaves, DALTON CLYDE and NETTIE ZELMA sprint onto the stage.

DALTON CLYDE: Reverend! Miss Vera! I'm so glad you're here! We've been looking all over for ya! You gotta help us!

REVEREND: What's wrong??

VERA: And how'd you get out of jail??

NETTIE ZELMA: The Calamity Gang did it!

REVEREND AND VERA: What??!

VERA: The meanest outlaws in the West? That Calamity Gang?

NETTIE ZELMA: That's the one!

DALTON CLYDE: Yep . . . they burst into the Sheriff's office an' tied up the Marshal faster than a calf-ropin' cowboy!

VERA AND REVEREND: A calf-ropin' cowboy??

DALTON CLYDE AND NETTIE ZELMA: Yeah, a calf-ropin' cowboy!

DALTON CLYDE: Then they kicked us out and locked *him* in the jail cell instead! (*turns and walks upstage, noticing the schoolhouse*)

NETTIE ZELMA: An' threw away the key . . . so, there was nothin' we could do!

DALTON CLYDE: Hey, the schoolhouse is lookin' real nice, by the way—especially, the flowers!

NETTIE ZELMA: Focus, Dalton Clyde!

DALTON CLYDE: Right! Well, anyway, it was awful! They was braggin' about robbin' this and robbin' that . . . an' then said they was gonna rob

the bank here in Wonder Junction just like they did in Golden City!

NETTIE ZELMA: See! Told ya we didn't do it!

VERA: Pa, we gotta do something!

REVEREND: Right . . . first thing's to get the Marshal out. We're gonna need him.

DALTON CLYDE: But, how're ya gonna do that?

REVEREND: I don't know. We'll figure something out.

VERA: Maybe there's a spare key somewhere!

REVEREND: Yeah, let's hope! C'mon . . . and be careful!

The REVEREND leads the way as they all exit the stage on their way to the jail. Then, almost immediately after they've exited, the CALAMITY GANG enters. CALAMITY MACK is carrying a large sack.

CALAMITY MACK: (*happy*) Haha! Man, that was way too easy!

CALAMITY JACK: Yeah . . . our nasty reputation is really startin' to pay off! Just mention "Calamity Gang" an' everybody freezes! (*laughs*) So, didja get it all?

CALAMITY MACK: Yep . . . the only thing left in the vault is dust!

CALAMITY JACK: Good . . . let's take inventory!

CALAMITY MACK: Here? In broad daylight?

CALAMITY JACK: Sure! Why not? I don't see nobody around, do you?

CALAMITY MACK: Hmm . . . I guess everyone's at that jamboree down the road.

CALAMITY JACK: An' the Marshal ain't gonna bother us neither. (*laughs*)

CALAMITY MACK: Well . . . alright. Let me see what we got (*as he slowly rummages through the bag, excited about all the loot*) Gold . . . cash . . . more cash . . . diamonds . . . rubies . . . a rattlesnake . . . sapphires . . .

CALAMITY JACK: Wait! Did you say, "a rattlesnake"?

CALAMITY MACK: (*suddenly becomes anxious*) Uh . . . I don't know . . . did I?

CALAMITY JACK: I think ya did. Check the bag again.

CALAMITY MACK: No sir! I ain't lookin' in there! You know me and snakes don't get along . . . especially rattlers!

CALAMITY JACK: *(reluctantly)* Oh, alright . . . I'll do it. *(then he looks back in the bag and a Rattlesnake rattle [sfx] is heard)* Aaaaaaah! *(as he jumps away from the bag)* It's a rattler!

CALAMITY MACK: *(suddenly becomes lightheaded)* Suddenly, I don't feel so good.

Then the Rattlesnake rattle [sfx] is heard again and CALAMITY MACK faints.

CALAMITY JACK: *(to himself, frustrated)* Aww! Well, that's just great! Now, what am I gonna do? *(fans CALAMITY MACK with his hat)*

Immediately, the MARSHAL enters with the others following behind.

MARSHAL: How 'bout go to jail!!

CALAMITY JACK: *(surprised)* Marshal?? What're you doin' here??

MARSHAL: My job! And you're under arrest for bank robbery in Golden City and Wonder Junction! Now . . . we can do this hard way or the easy way. What's it gonna be?

CALAMITY JACK: Hmm . . . I guess . . . the hard way! *(as he takes off running)*

The MARSHAL and the REVEREND look at each other.

DALTON CLYDE: Go ahead! We'll guard this one! *(referring to CALAMITY MACK who's still lying on the ground unconscious.)*

MARSHAL: *(to the REVEREND)* Let's go!

Then Chase music [sfx] begins as the MARSHAL and the REVEREND run after CALAMITY JACK out into the auditorium. DALTON CLYDE puts his foot on CALAMITY MACK to "hold" her in place. Vera wanders back and forth not knowing what to do. Nettie Zelma watches the chase with interest Eventually, CALAMITY JACK gets sandwiched between the MARSHAL and the REVEREND and has no place to go.

CALAMITY JACK: Rats! I reckon I made a wrong turn somewhere.

REVEREND: That you did, son . . . a long time ago.

MARSHAL: *(to CALAMITY JACK)* And which Calamity are you? Mack or Jack?

CALAMITY JACK: Calamity Jack . . . at your service *(as he bows)*

MARSHAL: Well, Calamity Jack . . . you may think this is just a game, but I'm sorry to tell you, the fun's over . . . time to pay the piper. *(as he cuffs CALAMITY JACK's hands)* Let's go.

The MARSHAL and the REVEREND escort CALAMITY JACK back onto the stage as CALAMITY MACK regains consciousness.

CALAMITY MACK: Where am I?

MARSHAL: *(to DALTON CLYDE)* You can get her up.

DALTON CLYDE and the REVEREND lift CALAMITY MACK to her feet.

CALAMITY MACK: Jack? What's goin' on??

MARSHAL: You're under arrest. *(as he cuffs CALAMITY MACK)* That's what's going on. The Calamity Gang is officially out of business!

CALAMITY JACK: Guess our luck ran out.

REVEREND: No . . . there's no such thing as "luck." But there is a God and I'd advise you to get right with him. Need help, Marshal?

MARSHAL: No, thanks . . . I've got 'em. *(as he proceeds to escort the CALAMITY GANG offstage)* But, you can return the goods to the bank.

REVEREND: Okay, we'll do that.

Then, as the REVEREND starts to pick up the sack of gold and jewels, a Rattlesnake rattle [sfx] is heard. DALTON CLYDE and NETTIE ZELMA jump back in fear, but VERA gasps with excitement.

VERA: *(excited)* Buford?? *(then she quickly opens the sack)* It is Buford! We found him! Oh, I'm so relieved! *(as she picks him up and holds him)*

NETTIE ZELMA: Does she know that snakes bite?

VERA: *(concerned)* Oh, Pa . . . he's lookin' kinda thin and rubbery. I better get him home where he belongs!

REVEREND: Yeah, go on . . . but just remember to lock the cage door this time.

VERA: Don't worry! It won't happen again! I'll make sure of it!

REVEREND: *(to himself with a smile)* Yeah . . . I've heard that before.

VERA exits with Buford.

REVEREND: Well, you two . . . thanks for what you did. You could have taken the easy road and just run for it . . . but you didn't. You chose to do the right thing.

DALTON CLYDE and NETTIE ZELMA exchange glances.

REVEREND: And now a bank robbery was foiled, and the infamous Calamity Gang is in jail. Well done.

DALTON CLYDE: Thanks, Reverend . . . we wouldn'ta done no different.

NETTIE ZELMA: Ya mean, YOU wouldn'ta done no different, Dalton Clyde. Truth is . . . if it'd been up to me, we woulda been long gone.

REVEREND: *(disappointed)* I'm sorry to hear that, but I do appreciate your honesty.

NETTIE ZELMA: Yeah . . . but now I'm glad it wasn't up to me.

REVEREND: *(hopeful)* Really? Why's that?

NETTIE ZELMA: I can't explain it . . . maybe all this talk about Jesus is finally gettin' through. An' now I jus' wanna hear more!

DALTON CLYDE: That makes two of us, Reverend!

REVEREND: Wow! Well, there's so much more to tell. I think the last thing we talked about was Jesus dying and rising from the dead.

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah, so what happened next?

REVEREND: Well, after he rose from the dead, he appeared to many people proving that he was alive. And he also gave his followers a job to do.

NETTIE ZELMA: Dalton Clyde and me are looking for a new job. . . . What was it?

REVEREND: To go tell the whole world about him.

DALTON CLYDE: The whole world? That's a mighty big job, Reverend!

REVEREND: It is . . . and we've been doing it for the last 2000 years!

NETTIE ZELMA: So, where's Jesus now?

REVEREND: That's a great question. So, 40 days after he had risen from the dead, when he was with his followers, according to the Bible he was taken up into heaven right before their eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight.

DALTON CLYDE: *(eyes grow big)* Whoa! That musta been somethin' to see! Wish I coulda been there!

REVEREND: I know! It was another wonder of wonders, for sure! So, Nettie Zelma . . . to answer your question, Jesus is in heaven until he returns.

NETTIE ZELMA: Returns?? So, he's comin' back??

REVEREND: Absolutely . . . we don't know when, but some day he's gonna come back and every eye will see him. Then he's gonna right all wrongs and set up his eternal kingdom. And those who love him and are in his family will be with him forever and ever. And things will be so different . . . there'll be no more crying, or pain, or disease, or death, and nothing bad will ever happen again! It's gonna be wonderful!

NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE lock eyes for a moment.

REVEREND: What is it?

NETTIE ZELMA: Reverend, my brother and I believe what you're tellin' us. We believe in Jesus and we're sorry for all the bad things we've done.

DALTON CLYDE: Yeah . . . we want things to be different from now on. We want to be part of God's family.

NETTIE ZELMA: Just like you and Miss Vera.

REVEREND: Really? Wow! I am so happy to hear that! It's the BEST decision you could ever make! *(picks up sack of stolen items)* C'mon, let's take this loot back to the bank and then we'll go inside where we can open a Bible and pray.

The REVEREND leads NETTIE ZELMA and DALTON CLYDE toward the bank. NETTIE ZELMA exits last. As they walk past the WANTED poster, NETTIE ZELMA pauses and removes the poster from the wall. She looks at it thoughtfully, turns it over, and places it on the table.
Theme music