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Norman Maine Publishing

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*“So You Want to be a Cowboy”  
is dedicated  
to the hundreds of students  
and fellow teachers  
throughout the years  
whose energy and passion  
made the teaching of theatre  
a joyous experience.*

## So You Want to be a Cowboy

**MUSICAL.** When Pecos Bill suddenly appears at a cowboy play rehearsal, he decides to set the kids straight and show them that there's more to being a cowboy than singing and dancing. The kids soon find themselves transported back in time to the Old West town of Pecos, where the local sheriff has just captured Gabe, the leader of the notorious Hills Gang. When Gabe's three outlaw sisters arrive in Pecos, it doesn't take long for them to break Gabe out of jail, take over the town, and appoint themselves to the positions of mayor, sheriff, banker, and even dogcatcher! It's up to the kids to take back the town, show the cowardly townsfolk that being a cowboy means standing up for what is right, and convince the Hills Gang that there's nothing wrong with living like ordinary people instead of outlaws. This delightful musical is perfect for young actors and features six original songs.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 80 minutes.

## About the Story

The cowboy tradition in the Americas began with the arrival in the 16<sup>th</sup> century of Spanish conquistadors and settlers who first brought their cattle-raising traditions to Mexico and Florida. These settlers also brought with them Spanish longhorn cattle and domesticated horses, which had been extinct in the Americas since the Ice Age. Even the present day wild mustang is a descendant of these Spanish horses.

The work of a cowboy usually involved herding cattle and watching the cattle at night to prevent stampedes and theft during cattle drives. Cowboys wore cowboy hats to shield their heads from the sun and overhanging brush; a bandanna to mask their faces in dust storms and to wipe away sweat; cowboy boots with pointed toes to help guide their feet into the stirrup and heels to keep their feet from slipping out of the stirrup; and blue jeans or sturdy canvas trousers to protect their legs.

By the 1880s, barbed wire fencing became the standard in the northern plains as railroads expanded to cover most of the United States and meat packing plants were built closer to major ranching areas. Thus, the era of the open range and long cattle drives ended. Today the cowboy tradition exists throughout North and South America, Australia, and even Hawaii.

## Characters

(2 M, 6 F, 22 flexible, opt. extras)  
(With doubling: 2 M, 6 F, 18 flexible)

- CHARLEE ZIMMER:** Papergirl who yearns to be a cowboy.  
**PECOS BILL:** Grizzled cowboy famous for tellin' tall tales; male.  
**GABE:** Outlaw and member of the Hills Gang; male.  
**RALPHIE:** Gabe's outlaw sister and member of the Hills Gang.  
**BONNIE:** Gabe's outlaw sister and member of the Hills Gang.  
**LARIETA:** Gabe's outlaw sister and member of the Hills Gang; loves dogs and hopes to become dogcatcher.  
**SHERIFF FLAGSTONE:** Sheriff of the town of Pecos who doesn't like guns; flexible.  
**MRS. ZIMMER:** Charlee's no-nonsense mother.  
**PIÑATA:** Dance hall girl at the Big Old Saloon.  
**JAKE/JACKIE:** Bartender at the Big Old Saloon; flexible.  
**SURVEYOR:** Stakes out new towns in the Wild West; flexible.  
**KIDS 1-10:** Charlee's friends who help her deliver newspapers; flexible.  
**CITIZENS 1-4:** Fearful of the Hills Gang; flexible.  
**COWBOYS 1-5:** Dusty and disheveled; flexible.  
**PIANO:** Piano player at the Big Old Saloon (optional); flexible.  
**EXTRAS (optional):** As additional Kids and Citizens.

**NOTE:** For flexible characters, change pronouns in the script accordingly. Cowboys can double as Citizens to accommodate a smaller cast.

## Songs

1. "So You Want to be a Cowboy" (Company)
2. "Really True Cowboy" (Pecos Bill)
3. "Bob Wire Blues" (Cowboys)
4. "Dirty Rotten Bad Guy" (Gabe)
5. "Ordinary People" (Hills Gang)
6. "So You Want to be a Cowboy" (Company)

## Setting

Town of Pecos, 1897. Present day, play rehearsal.

## Set

**Sheriff's Office and Jail:** There is a desk and chair SR, and a jail cell SL with a cot.

**Big Old Saloon:** There is a makeshift bar UR and one table DL.

**NOTE:** The play is intended to use very simplistic sets in order to provide as much space as possible for the players. The piano and Piano Player are optional and can remain onstage throughout the show, if desired.

## Synopsis of Scenes

### ACT I

**Scene 1:** Play rehearsal, present day.

**Scene 2:** On the prairie outside the town of Pecos, 1897.

**Scene 3:** Sheriff Flagstone's office and jail, Pecos, 1897.

### ACT II

**Scene 1:** Big Old Saloon, Pecos, 1897.

**Scene 2:** In the hills, 1897. Played in front of curtain.

**Scene 3:** A lonesome hideout in the hills, 1897.

**Scene 4:** Cowboy play rehearsal, present day.

## Props

Desk

Chair

Cot

Newspaper bag

Old-looking newspapers

Modern newspapers

Glass of milk

Table and chairs

Piano, optional

Bar

Jail keys

4 Guns

Purse

Tree stump

Fire pit

Blanket

Armload of firewood

## Sound Effects

Sound of cattle and assorted animals  
Strange cattle sounds  
Train whistle

“So you want to be a cowboy  
You want to wear spurs and ride a horse  
To feel the wind blowin’ in your face  
And sleep out under the stars of course.”

# ACT I

## Scene 1

(AT RISE: Theatre, present day. Cowboy play rehearsal. Song:  
"So You Want to be a Cowboy.")

ALL: (Sing.)

So you want to be a cowboy  
You want to wear spurs and ride a horse  
To feel the wind blowin' in your face  
And sleep out under the stars of course  
A horse and spurs, the wind in your face  
And sleepin' out under the stars  
Bein' a cowboy's the next best thing to livin' in a dream  
Bein' a cowboy's the life for you and me.

So you want to be a cowboy  
You want to wear a six-gun and ride the range  
Feel the sun beatin' in your face  
While you're chasin' longhorns across the plain  
Wearin' a six-gun, ridin' the range, chasin' those mossy old  
cows  
Bein' a cowboy's the next best thing to livin' in the sky  
Bein' a cowboy's the life for you and I.

Cowboys...that's the life!  
Cowboys...for you and me  
Cowboys...just open your mind  
Cowboys...and you will see  
So come with us and we'll take you where  
The sun's beatin' down and the wind's in your hair  
It's a life once you've started you'll never want to change  
Livin' so free out on the range.

Yes, we want to be cowboys  
And we want you to come along  
You can let all your worries go  
And you can help us singin' our song  
So sing it out loud, sing it out strong, sing it from your heart  
And we will be the best darn cowboys the world did ever  
see  
Yes, bein' a cowboy's the life for you and me.

*(All characters exit except Kids 1-10 and Charlee. Pecos Bill enters.)*

PECOS BILL: Hey, you kids, what's goin' on here?

KID 1: We're doing a show about cowboys.

KID 2: Yeah, we're acting and singing and dancing and—

PECOS BILL: You're what?

KID 1: We're doing a show about cowboys.

PECOS BILL: Yeah, I heard that part. What was the rest of it?

KID 2: We're acting...

KID 3: And singing...

KID 4: And dancing...

KID 5: Like this. Watch. *(Sings.)* "So you want to be a cowboy..."

PECOS BILL: Enough. I heard that part, too. Where did you youngsters get the idea that bein' a cowboy had anything to do with actin' or singin' or dancin'?

KID 1: We've seen it...

KID 2: In the movies...

KID 3: On television...

KID 4: On videos...

PECOS BILL: Now hold on one darn minute, you kids. That stuff you see on TV and videos has got nothin' to do with bein' a cowboy. By gosh...there's nothin' true about any of that nonsense.

KID 1: How do you know?

KID 2: *(To Pecos Bill.)* Yeah?

PECOS BILL: I know, because my name is Pecos Bill!

KID 3: Who?

KID 4: Who did he say?

KID 5: Pecos Bill?

KID 1: Never heard of him.

KID 2: *(To Pecos Bill.)* What songs do you sing?

KID 3: What a dumb name.

KID 4: Pecos Bill? Come on. We know that cowboys have names like [Charlie Major] or [Patricia Conroy] or [Paul Brandt] or... *[Or insert the names of other famous cowboys.]*

KID 5: But Pecos Bill...no way!

PECOS BILL: Listen, youngster, I told you already that real cowboys aren't nothin' like you think they are, and I guarantee there ain't no other cowboy like me. Just listen up. *(Song: "Really True Cowboy." Sings.)*

If his boots are shiny and his hat is clean

He ain't a really true cowboy.

If she looks like she stepped out of a movie scene

She ain't a really true cowboy.

'Cause a cowboy's more than boots and a hat

It's a way of thinkin' and you want to know that.

There's a whole lot more than a guitar to bein' a cowboy.

If he's braggin' bout rodeos and pickup trucks

He ain't a really true cowboy.

If her jeans are real tight and she's afraid of the muck

She ain't a really true cowboy.

'Cause a cowboy's tired and he's broke and he's bent

He generally doesn't know where his life's been spent.

There's a whole lot more than lookin' good to bein' a cowboy.

If you want to know about a cowboy's days

Forget about the movies – take a look at his ways.

Head out to the horizon and search way out beyond

And only look back when you know you're truly gone.

If he's holdin' out his hand to help a stranger who's down  
Then he's a really true cowboy.  
If she's lookin' for the stars when there's darkness all around  
Then she's a really true cowboy.  
If you're takin' on a job and you're seein' it through  
And you keep pushin' on even when you're black and blue  
Then you'll start to know just a bit about bein' a cowboy.  
Bein' a cowboy...bein' a cowboy.

*(Kids gather around Pecos Bill.)*

KID 1: Are you saying that a cowboy doesn't need to have a horse?

KID 2: Or a cowboy hat?

KID 3: Or spurs?

KID 4: Or a bandana?

KID 5: But he has to spit!

KID 1/2/3/4/PECOS BILL: What?!

KID 5: Everybody knows that cowboys spit...right?

PECOS BILL: No, kids. A real cowboy doesn't need any of those things, and he doesn't have to spit, either...although it is good for the image. No, some of the greatest cowboys in the world have gone through their lives without people even knowin' they were cowboys. Some of them didn't know they were cowboys themselves!

KID 1: That's crazy. How could you be a cowboy without knowing it?

PECOS BILL: Well, bein' a cowboy is a way of actin'...it's a way of lookin' at the world and behavin'. It's stickin' up for what you know is right and not lettin' anyone else push that aside. If you believe in yourself and have the courage to stand up for what is right, then you're a cowboy!

CHARLEE: You mean we could be real cowboys?

KID 2: Don't be stupid, Charlee. Your mom would never let you have a horse.

CHARLEE: Yeah, but if I don't need a horse to be a cowboy, then who's gonna stop me?

PECOS BILL: Charlee's right, you know. Nothin' can stop her if she wants to be a cowboy.

CHARLEE: *(To Kids.)* Yeah, see...Pecos Bill said I could be a cowboy. So there!

MOTHER: *(Offstage. Calls.)* Charlee! Charlee! Charlee Zimmer, where are you?

*(Charlee's Mother enters, carrying a newspaper bag filled with newspapers.)*

CHARLEE: Oh, no! It's my mom! Don't let her see me. I was supposed to be home already.

*(Charlee hides behind the other Kids.)*

KID 3: Some cowboy you are, Charlee!

MOTHER: *(Calls.)* Charlee! *(Looking around for Charlee.)* I know you're here! *(Kids move aside. Mother sees Charlee and takes Charlee by the ear.)* You get yourself home!

CHARLEE: But, Mom...I want to be in this play. I want to be a cowboy.

MOTHER: There's plenty of time for you to be a cowboy later, but right now, you get home and get these papers delivered. I'm not doing them for you again, and that's all there is to it.

KID 4: But, Mrs. Zimmer, we need Charlee in our show.

MOTHER: Well, that may be, but she's got her paper route to do and that comes first.

KID 5: Well, we don't want to do the show without Charlee.

KID 1: And we can't stop for an hour to wait for her.

KID 2: No... *(Points to audience.)* ...all those people out there would go home.

KID 3: So we have to go on without her, or we could each take a couple of papers and get the job done in ten minutes. *(To*

*audience.)* We'll be right back, everybody. Don't go away.  
*(To Kids.)* Come on, guys!

*(Kids grab a couple of papers each and exit in different directions. Blackout. Note: Scene can end with one character being instructed to entertain the audience while the others are delivering papers. A short song/mime/poem could be used to cover the exit and allow cast to get in place for next scene.)*

## Scene 2

*(On the prairie, 1897. The stage is black. Kids 1-5 enter. Unseen by Kids, Cowboy 1, 2 are sitting quietly CS.)*

KID 1: Boy...this is some paper route. Is it ever dark out here!

KID 2: You're not kidding...

KID 3: Maybe we took a wrong turn or something. I haven't seen any houses for a while.

KID 4: You know, you're right. Where are we? This isn't any street I recognize.

KID 5: I'm not even sure it is a street. *(Shouts.)* Hey! Hello! Is there anyone around?!

KID 1: *(Shouts louder.)* Hello!

*(Lights come up slowly.)*

COWBOY 1: *(To Kids, stage whisper.)* Hey there! Quiet down! Are you tryin' to start a stampede?

KID 2: *(Stage whisper.)* A what?

COWBOY 1: A stampede...when the cattle get scared and go tearin' across the prairie and we have to spend weeks chasin' them to get them back together again.

KID 3: What cattle?

*(Sound of cows and other assorted animals.)*

COWBOY 2: Those cattle.

COWBOY 1: Hey, they don't sound too healthy, bub.

COWBOY 2: You're right. *(More strange cattle sounds.)* Maybe they got into the loco weed or somethin'.

KID 4: Is this [10<sup>th</sup> Avenue]? Are you Mr. and Mrs. Cowan?  
*[Or insert the name of a local street.]*

COWBOY 1: [Tenth Avenue]? There ain't no avenues for a hundred miles around here, youngster.

COWBOY 2: And as for Mr. and Mrs. Whatever-you-said, well, me and Johnny, here, have been called a lot of things, but husband and wife we ain't.

COWBOY 1: *(To Kids.)* Ain't that a fact! Think I'd marry an ugly-lookin' sidewinder like him?

COWBOY 2: *(Insulted.)* Hey, hold on there. Who you callin' ugly, you old skunk!

COWBOY 1: I'm callin' you ugly, and you got yourself the face to prove it.

COWBOY 2: Oh, yeah...well, that's 'cause you're seein' a reflection of yourself!

*(Cowboy 1, 2 start to fight.)*

COWBOY 1: Take that, you varmint!

*(Cowboy 1 knocks Cowboy 2 to the ground. Cowboy 2 gets up and brushes off the dust and the two circle each other calling each other names and exchanging insults. During this time, the cow sounds are getting louder and louder. The sound builds until we hear hoof beats trailing off into the distance. Cowboy 1, 2 stop fighting.)*

COWBOY 2: Oh, no! Stampede! Now we got to chase those mossy old longhorns again. This is all your fault!

COWBOY 1: My fault?! It's your fault for bein' so ugly in the first place!

*(Cowboy 1, 2 start to exit.)*

KID 5: *(To Cowboys.)* Hey, guys, before you go, could you tell us—if this isn't [10<sup>th</sup> Avenue]—where are we?

COWBOY 2: You mean you really don't know where you are? Heck, you had to cross a hundred miles of prairie to get here. Where did you come from?

KID 1: From the [Shuswap Theatre] in [Salmon Arm]. We were delivering papers, and all of a sudden, here we are. *[Or insert the name of your local theatre and town.]*

COWBOY 1: *(To Cowboy 2.)* These youngsters must be related to Pecos Bill to think we're dumb enough to believe a story like that. *(To Kids.)* Where did you really come from?

KID 2: We're telling you the truth.

COWBOY 2: *(To Cowboy 1.)* I think we better sit these youngsters down by the fire and have ourselves a little talk. *(To Kids.)* Come on over here, kids.

KID 3: But what about your cows...cattle? Don't you have to go round them up or something?

COWBOY 1: Nah...we just say that for effect. That little crick over yonder's the only water around for miles. They'll be back by mornin'.

*(Looking dusty and disheveled, Cowboys 3, 4, 5 limp in.)*

COWBOY 3: Bub! Johnny! Did you two start another stampede?

COWBOY 4: We were washin' up down by the creek and those cows ran right over us. The boss is goin' to skin you alive runnin' all that weight off those critters.

COWBOY 5: *(Notices Kids.)* Hey, who're they? *(To Kids.)* They send you out to help with the drive?

KID 4: No, we're just lost kids. But we want to be cowboys.

COWBOY 3: You do?! What for?

KID 5: I want to have a black horse and a big hat and ride across the mountains and rope cows and—

COWBOY 4: You're talkin' about a rodeo cowboy, youngster— one of them fancy cowboys. You sure you want to be a real cowboy?

KID 1: What's a real cowboy?

COWBOY 5: *(Points to other Cowboys.)* Well, you're lookin' at some right here. *(Proud.)* A real cowboy is just like me.

COWBOY 3: Kind of sad and melancholy 'cause we got no home other than out here on the range.  
COWBOY 4: No homes 'cause we never stay put where people live.  
COWBOY 5: Dirty and dusty.  
COWBOY 3: (*Sniffs the air.*) And stinky.  
COWBOY 4: 'Cause there generally ain't no water for washin' or shavin'.  
COWBOY 5: And sore and bowlegged from spendin' all day in the saddle tryin' to move those old cows.  
COWBOY 1: And ugly... (*Points to Cowboy 2.*) ...like him!  
COWBOY 2: Who you callin' ugly, you two-toed yellow-bellied—  
COWBOY 3: Settle down, you two. You've already scared away the herd.  
COWBOY 4: Cowboys love to sing...and we're darn good at it.  
COWBOY 5: And we're friendly as all get out!  
COWBOY 1: (*Proud.*) And some of us, like me, are darn good-lookin'.

(*Cowboy 2 gives him an ornery look.*)

COWBOY 3: And brave. Why, there ain't nothin' on earth can scare a real cowboy.  
COWBOY 4: But most of all what cowboys is...is—  
COWBOY 1/2/3/5: Liars!  
KIDS: Liars?  
COWBOY 5: Yep! Cowboys is known throughout the West as the world's greatest liars. Mind you, we call it "tellin' tall tales," not lyin'.  
COWBOY 1: You see, when you spend all day with the same bunch of ugly hombres... (*Cowboy 2, 3, 4, 5 give him an ornery look.*) ...you can't tell the same story all the time. It would get borin'.  
COWBOY 2: So what we do is exaggerate just a little bit.

COWBOY 3: To make it more interestin'-like.

COWBOY 4: And the best there ever was at tellin' tall tales was Pecos Bill!

KID 2: Pecos Bill! Do you know Pecos Bill?

COWBOY 5: Everybody knows Pecos Bill...leastways if they don't know him, they've heard of him. He's the most famous cowboy and the best darn storyteller there ever was. If we're real lucky, he'll show up any minute and tell us one of his stories.

*(Pecos Bill enters.)*

PECOS BILL: Hey, kids, what are you doin' out here?

KID 3: We don't know!

COWBOY 1: They just showed up, Bill. Hey, how about one of your stories?

PECOS BILL: Well, for sure I'll tell you a story. But seein' as we've got guests here, maybe I can get them to help me out a little. What do you say, kids?

KIDS: Sure!

PECOS BILL: Okay, then... *(Thinks.)* ...now let me see. I think I'll tell you the story about the great [Fly Plains]. *[Or insert the name of a local mountain range or hillside.]*

KID 4: [Fly Plains]!

KID 5: *(To Pecos Bill.)* Don't you mean the [Fly Hills]?

PECOS BILL: Well, they may be hills now, but once upon a time...well, once upon a time, the [Fly Hills] was nothin' but a great big flat prairie—some of the best grazin' land in the whole world.

KID 1: No way!

PECOS BILL: Sure enough was. You just set down for a bit, and I'll tell you how it all changed. I'm gonna tell you all the story of the [Great Fly] Plain.

KIDS: [Great Fly Plain]? What's the [Great Fly] Plain?

PECOS BILL: Well, a long time ago, before you kids was ever born, the [Shuswap] was nothin' but a big huge prairie with

the best grassland for cattle that there ever was. Why, we could put a calf out on that prairie in the mornin', and by nightfall, that calf would be a full-grown cow. That's how good the grassland was. And no matter how fast the cows grazed it off, that grass would grow back overnight. Well, we had cattle on that prairie stretchin' for miles and miles. And because the grass was so good, the cattle didn't ever want to go anywhere, so it only took one or two cowboys to look after a whole herd...except for that one night. Oh, my goodness, was that a night!

KIDS: Tell us about that night, Bill!

PECOS BILL: Well, as luck would have it, that was the night that I was ridin' herd and my partner was just new out on the range and didn't know much about cowboyin'. 'Round about suppertime, we saw a storm workin' itself up out to the east...seems like most of the bad stuff that happens out here comes from the east. Anyway, we could tell that it was goin' to be a thunder buster, and a big one, and it was comin' fast. Now when you've got a storm comin', you want to ride around the herd and sing to the cows to keep them gentle. Somethin' quiet and relaxin'...good ol' cowboy kinds of songs. Now that's what I was doin' on my side of the herd, but what I didn't know was that my new partner was on the other side singin' rock 'n' roll. Well, the last thing a full grown cow wants to hear is rock 'n' roll, and that was what set them off. Thunder and lightnin' and rock 'n' roll will do it every time. Stampede!

KIDS: Then what happened?

PECOS BILL: Then what happened? I'll tell you. *(The following is performed as a choral speech. Pecos Bill says a line and the Kids echo him.)* Well, the cows were stampedin' across the plain

KIDS: Cows stampedin' across the plain.

PECOS BILL: It was thunder and lightnin' and pourin' rain.

KIDS: Thunder and lightnin' and pourin' rain.

PECOS BILL: I jumped on my horse and I started to chase em'.

KIDS: He jumped on his horse and he started to chase 'em.

PECOS BILL: I only had one chance. I had to outrace em'.

KIDS: He only had one chance. He had to outrace em'.

PECOS BILL: Thank goodness that the prairie went on forever.

KIDS: Thank goodness that the prairie went on forever.

PECOS BILL: Else I never would have caught 'em in that kind of weather.

KIDS: Else he never would have caught 'em in that kind of weather.

PECOS BILL: Well, it was two days later that I finally got ahead.

KIDS: Two days later he finally got ahead.

PECOS BILL: But I had to act fast 'cause my horse was nearly dead.

KIDS: He had to act fast 'cause his horse was nearly dead.

PECOS BILL: So I lassoed a gopher hole and tied it up tight.

KIDS: Lassoed a gopher hole and tied it up tight.

PECOS BILL: And then me and my horse we pulled with all our might.

KIDS: He and his horse they pulled with all their might.

PECOS BILL: Well, we pulled that gopher hole right out of the ground.

KIDS: They pulled that gopher hole right out of the ground.

PECOS BILL: And before you knew it, it made a big mound.

KIDS: Before you knew it, it made a big mound.

PECOS BILL: Fifty feet high! Then 200 feet high! Then as high as the eye could see.

KIDS: No!

PECOS BILL: Yes! And then I knew what I had to do. I went around ropin' every gopher hole that I could find and pulled 'em up as high as I could. Well, two weeks later, I had built a corral that turned all those cows around so that they could never escape and those gopher holes had turned into

mountains and all those gophers had turned into mountain goats and we had the Rockies and the Purcells and the Valhallas and the Selkirks. And that was the end of the [Great Fly] Plain!

KIDS: Yes, that was the end of the [Great Fly] Plain.

KID 2: Wow, what a great story!

*(In the background, a train whistle is heard twice. Cowboys freeze. Train whistle is heard again, this time a long blow.)*

COWBOY 1: Darn, there it goes again.

COWBOY 2: That sound scares me.

COWBOY 3: Me, too.

KID 3: It's just a train whistle.

COWBOY 4: It's more than just a train whistle, youngster.

COWBOY 5: That sound means people are comin' and settin' up towns and churches and schools.

COWBOYS: Yuuuch!

COWBOY 1: And that means progress, and most of all, that means—

COWBOYS: *(Shout.)* [Bob wire]! [Barbwire]

KID 4: Who?

COWBOY 2: Not who! What! Bob wire!

COWBOY 3: Strung across the prairie for miles...

COWBOY 4: And miles...

COWBOY 5: But most of all, bob wire means the end of...  
*(Gulp.)* ...real cowboys!

KID 5: How?

COWBOY 1: We'll tell you.

*(Song: "The Bob Wire Blues.")*

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)* Train whistle blowin'

KIDS: *(Sing.)* Oooo-wooo

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)* Singin' a mournful song

KIDS: *(Sing.)* A sad song

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)* Tellin' all us cowboys

KIDS: *(Sing.)* Hey, cowboy

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)* We've got to be a-movin' along

KIDS: *(Sing.)* Bye-bye.

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)*

We've got the hold 'em in, lock'em out

Dirty rotten bob wire blues

KIDS: *(Sing.)* Bob, bob, bob wire blues

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)*

They're tryin' to citify us, civilize us

Tie us down but we refuse

'Cause we choose

To get on our horses and head for the sunset

We may be out of fashion, but we ain't quite done yet

Those dirty rotten fences, well, they haven't quite won  
yet

Got the bob bob bob wire blues.

Hey, look at the horizon

KIDS: *(Sing.)* Way far

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)* And tell me what you see

KIDS: *(Sing.)* My gosh.

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)* Is that my old schoolteacher

KIDS: *(Sing.)* Oh no!

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)* Chasin' after me?

I got the hold 'em in, lock 'em out

Dirty rotten bob wire blues

KIDS: *(Sing.)* Bob bob bob wire blues

COWBOYS: *(Sing.)*

They're tryin' to citify us, civilize us

Tie us down but we refuse

'Cause we choose

To do our learnin' out here in the natural

We don't carry a lunch, and we don't pack a satchel

We don't know a lot, but what we do know is factual

Got the bob bob bob wire blues.

COWBOYS: (*Sing.*) Bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda  
bobbeda bob wire blues

KIDS: (*Sing.*) Bob bob bob wire blues

COWBOYS: (*Sing.*) Bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda  
bobbeda bobo wire blues

(*Kids dance for 16 bars.*)

COWBOYS: (*Sing.*) Bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda  
bobbeda bob wire blues

KIDS: (*Sing.*) Bob bob bob wire blues

COWBOYS: (*Sing.*) Bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda bobbeda  
bobbeda bob wire blues

Well, my momma she once told me  
That she'd love me no matter what  
But she told me not to mess with cowboys  
'Cause they'd never amount to much  
We got the hold 'em in, lock 'em out  
Dirty rotten bob wire blues  
They're tryin to citify us, civilize us  
Tie us down but we refuse  
'Cause we choose  
To keep on movin' and to live our lives free  
There ain't no homestead for him or for me  
We may be lonely, but we don't need a door key  
Got the bob bob bob wire blues  
Yeah, the bob bob bob wire blues.  
We got the bob wire blues.

KID 1: You mean that bob wire is really that awful?

COWBOY 2: There ain't nothin' worse than bob wire. (*To Kid*  
2.) Hey, what's in that bag you been carryin' all this time?

KID 2: Oh, this? This is just newspapers

COWBOY 3: Newspapers! Why, I ain't seen a newspaper in  
years.

COWBOY 4: What would you want with a newspaper, bub?  
You can't read.

COWBOY 3: Can so. (*Proud.*) I went to the third grade. I  
know my letters and my numbers.

COWBOY 5: Come on, bub, we all know that you just look at  
the pictures. (*To Kid 2.*) Let me see that newspaper.

(*Cowboy 5 spreads it on the ground and the Kids look over his  
shoulder.*)

KID 3: Hey, look, guys! The date on this newspaper is 1897!

KID 4: What?!

KID 5: How can that be?

KID 1: That's impossible...unless when we got lost we—

KIDS: Went back in time!

COWBOY 5: (*To Cowboys.*) Oh, oh! We better get those cattle  
together and get movin'.

COWBOY 1: Why's that?

COWBOY 5: It says that... (*Pause.*) ...the Hills Gang have  
broke out of jail, and they're comin' through the territory to  
break their big brother Gabe out of jail!

COWBOY 2: The Hills Gang! Oh, no!

COWBOY 3: The Hills Gang! Let's get goin'!

(*Cowboys get up and hurry to get their s together.*)

KID 2: Wait a minute! Where are you going? Who are the  
Hills Gang?

COWBOY 4: The Hills Gang is the most dangerous bunch that  
ever rode a trail in the West.

KID 3: But I thought you said that cowboys were brave...that  
you weren't afraid of anything?

COWBOY 5: Yeah, but we also said we lied a lot! See you,  
kids. You better high-tail it, too! Good luck!

(*Cowboys exit.*)

KID 4: Now what? We're lost in the middle of who-knows-where, and there's a bunch of bad hombres on the way.

*(Scared, Kids huddle together.)*

KID 5: I'm scared.

KID 1: Now, everybody, relax. We'll get out of this...I think.

SURVEYOR: *(Offstage.)* Over here, boys. Bring the transit. Put that first stake in right there. *(Enters and notices Kids.)* Hi there, youngsters. You'd better get out of the way while we are workin' here.

*(Kids rush up to Surveyor.)*

KID 2: We're lost, mister. Can you help us?

SURVEYOR: I'm pretty busy, kids. I've got to get a town surveyed here before the day is done. I'll tell you what...my assistant has a map back at the wagon. If you go see him, he can probably give you some directions.

KID 3: Thanks, mister.

*(Kids exit.)*

SURVEYOR: *(Shouts.)* Okay, second stake over there! *(Picks up a newspaper that has been left behind.)* Looks like the Hills Gang are comin' this way. We're gettin' this town ready just in time! *(Shouts.)* Hurry it up, boys, we've got to get the jail built in time for a breakout!

*(Blackout.)*

## Scene 3

*(Town of Pecos, 1897. Sheriff's office and jail. Sheriff's office is SR and jail is SL. Stage is dark. Kids 6-10 enter.)*

KID 6: Where are we?

KID 7: I don't know. I'm following Charlee's directions, but I don't remember being in this part of town before.

KID 8: This is really strange. It smells like...cows...and horses...and dust.

*(Lights up SR on Sheriff's office.)*

SHERIFF: Well, howdy, youngsters.

KID 9: Howdy? Who are you? Where are we? What is going on?

SHERIFF: Well, now, that's a lot of questions to answer all at once.

KID 10: Is this [Auto Road]? *[Or insert the name of a local street.]*

SHERIFF: Whoa...slow down. First off, I'm Sheriff Flagstone, and you're in Pecos, the newest little town west of the Great Lakes. As for [Auto Road], well, we've got a total of three streets in our little town, and I guarantee there's not one of them with that name. Now it's my turn to ask some questions. Who are you? *(Kid 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 call out their names.)* Okay, okay. Now, what are you doin' here in Pecos?

KID 6: We don't know. We were doing a show called "So You Want to be a Cowboy" in the [Shuswap Theatre] in [Salmon Arm], and then we were talking to Pecos Bill, and then we went to deliver newspapers, and now we are here!

SHERIFF: So you want to be cowboys, and Pecos Bill sent you, eh? Well, you look a little scrawny to me, but if you want to be cowboys, there's an outfit just east of town needin' some

help. Seems like all their cowboys took off last night and left 'em high and dry. You might want to try out there.

KID 7: No, we aren't real cowboys. We were doing a play about cowboys.

SHERIFF: Oh, so you're actors...you go around pretendin' to be somethin' instead of bein' the real thing.

*(Lights up SL on Gabe, who is leaning on the bars of his jail cell.)*

GABE: You ought to know about that, Sheriff. Pretendin', that is. It was one thing to drag me off to jail and lock me up when I was out cold, but we'll see if you're a real sheriff when my sisters get here.

SHERIFF: You be quiet, Gabe. Your sisters are locked up in the federal penitentiary. Times have changed since you and those girls ran wild around the country. People won't stand for that kind of thing any longer.

GABE: You go on believin' that, Sheriff, and maybe your last few days here will be happy for you. There ain't no jail my sisters can't break out of! *(Evil laugh. To Kids.)* I wouldn't be makin' real good friends with the Sheriff, if I were you, kids. It won't be a *lastin'* relationship. *(Evil laugh.)*

KID 8: Sheriff, can you help us? We're really lost.

SHERIFF: Well, I don't know. It seems to me that Pecos Bill tells a story about a little town called [Salmon Arm] and how there was a big cattle drive out of control, and so he built some mountains to catch em' all. But that was a long, long way from here. *[Or insert the name of a local town.]*

KID 9: We're really in trouble.

GABE: You ain't the only ones in trouble, kids. Sheriff, maybe it would be a good idea for you to head out with these youngsters to see if you can find this faraway place. Maybe that'd be good for your health...real good.

SHERIFF: Gabe, I don't want to hear another word from you!

GABE: Or what, Sheriff? You gonna hit me with one of the kid's newspapers? You don't even carry a gun!

KID 10: *(Sees that Sheriff has no gun. To Sheriff.)* Hey! You don't have a gun. How come, Sheriff? I thought all lawmen carried guns and wore big badges and were quick on the draw and were deadly shots and—

SHERIFF: Whoa there, youngster. You've been readin' those dime-store novels, haven't you? The law doesn't always need a gun. Sometimes the law is just people sayin' this is how things are.

KID 6: But what about when you run into bad guys like... *(Points to Gabe.)* ...him?

SHERIFF: Who? Gabe? Gabe, there, makes a lot of noise, but most of the folks who cause trouble are only a problem when you allow them to be, and our little town has plenty of folks who won't stand for his kind of shenanigans.

GABE: Yeah, you and those town folks were mighty brave when there was all of you and me by myself, Sheriff, but just you wait until my sisters get here.

SHERIFF: Gabe, your sisters are in jail, just like you.

GABE: I'm warnin' you, kids, pretty soon this peaceful little town's gonna turn into a real ugly place for sheriffs...and them that hangs around with them. *(To Kid 7.)* Hey, kid, give me one of those papers.

KID 7: I can't. We have to deliver these papers. Charlee would get into trouble.

KID 8: I don't think it matters now. We're so far from home, I don't know if we'll ever see Charlee again.

KID 9: *(To Gabe.)* Well, all right, but don't cut out any pictures or mess it up. I told Charlee we'd deliver this paper and we're going to. *(Cautiously edges closer to the cell.)*

GABE: I ain't gonna bite you, kid. Come closer...

SHERIFF: *(To Kid 9.)* That's far enough. *(Takes the newspaper from Kid 9 and hands it to Gabe through the bars. To Gabe.)* Now sit down, and don't cause any more fuss.

GABE: Don't worry, Sheriff Flagstone. I won't cause any more fuss...at least not for the moment. You got enough problems comin'.

*(Sheriff turns to Kids.)*

SHERIFF: Well, kids, you must be kind of hungry after travellin' all the way from...well, wherever it is, you've come from. Do you want to get somethin' to eat?

KID 10: Can we go to [McDonalds] or [Wendy's]? *[Or insert the names of other restaurants.]*

SHERIFF: I can't say I've heard of either of those places, but the Widow Purkey runs a fine eatin' establishment across the street. Let's say we go over there.

KID 6: Okay. *(To other Kids.)* Why don't we take the newspapers and see if we can sell any of them at the restaurant?

SHERIFF: What would you like, Gabe?

GABE: It ain't gonna do you any good tryin' to make pals with me, Sheriff. Your goose is already cooked! *(Evil laugh. Sheriff and Kids exit. Gabe starts pacing around his cell. Song: "Dirty Rotten Bad Guy." Sings.)*

I'm the meanest man west of the ocean  
I'm the nastiest hombre you will ever find  
If you know I'm around and you can't see my face  
Then I'm probably sneakin' up behind.

I like to make people fear and tremble  
I like to leave them in a state of fright  
I like to make you lock your doors and your windows  
And to lie in bed sleepless at night.

I'm a dirty rotten bad guy with a nasty attitude  
I'm the worst of the bunch, I'd even steal your food  
My heart is black and wicked and I never ever cry  
I'm known throughout the West as a dirty rotten guy.

Now don't think I'm a bad guy on purpose  
There was a time when I was nice as nice could be  
But I learned very quick a simple lesson

That good guys finish last, and that's not where I want to be.

So I snarl and I growl and I threaten  
And very soon I'll break out of this jail.  
And then poor Sheriff Flagstone and his deputies  
I will take them and I'll send them straight to—. (*Catches himself. Pause. Sheepish.*) Sorry.

I'm a dirty rotten bad guy with a nasty attitude  
I'm the worst of the bunch, I'd even steal your food  
My heart is black and wicked and I never ever cry  
I'm known throughout the West as a dirty rotten guy.

*(Gabe lies back down on his bunk and begins to read the newspaper. Kids 6-10 rush in.)*

KID 7: I can't believe we sold all those papers! Charlee's gonna be happy. But I still can't figure out how they had the date 1897.

KID 8: She's not going to be happy that you only got a penny each for them.

KID 9: Thanks, Sheriff. That was the best chili I ever ate.

KID 10: Me, too!

GABE: Sheriff, did you eat Widow Purkey's chili again? (*Squishes up his nose.*) Oh, no! And I've got to stay in here all night! I think there's human rights legislation against cruel and unusual punishment.

SHERIFF: That will teach you to be so uncivil, Gabe.

GABE: Maybe you're gonna learn a lesson pretty soon too, Sheriff. (*Points to newspaper.*) Look at the headline of the paper that these kids have been carryin' around.

SHERIFF: What headline?

GABE: Read it yourself. (*Hands Sheriff the newspaper.*) Here.

*(Sheriff takes the newspaper to his desk and the Kids gather around his desk.)*

KID 6: Who are the Hills Gang, Sheriff?

KID 7: *(To Sheriff.)* And why are they coming to Pecos?

GABE: Tell them, Sheriff...if you dare!

SHERIFF: Well, youngsters, the Hills Gang are Gabe's sisters who *were* servin' time in the federal penitentiary. They have just broken out and they are headin' here because they think they can break their big brother Gabe, here, out of our little jail.

KID 8: What are you going to do, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: *(Indicating newspaper article.)* Well, accordin' to this, those girls broke out about a week ago, so chances are, they'll be arrivin' here any day.

GABE: That doesn't give you much time to make your getaway, does it, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Gabe, nobody here is makin' any plans to get away, and if I were you, I wouldn't plan on it, either. The citizens of Pecos will take care of this.

GABE: *(Sarcastic.)* Oh, those brave citizens of yours, Sheriff. We'll see just how brave they are any minute now.

*(Citizens 1- 4 enter, each carrying a newspaper.)*

SHERIFF: Come on in, folks. What's on your minds?

CITIZEN 1: Uh...well...we see you've got a paper too, Sheriff, so you probably already know that the...the—

CITIZEN 2, 3, 4: *(Shout.)* The Hills Gang is comin'!

GABE: That they are, citizens. Now ain't we gonna have some fun!

SHERIFF: You be quiet, Gabe. Now, there's no need for anyone to get all fussed up about this.

KID 9: *(To Gabe.)* Yeah...the Sheriff says this town has plenty of folks who won't stand for your antics. They'll stand up to you and your sisters!

CITIZENS: Right! *(Pause.)* We will?

CITIZEN 2: *(To Kid 9.)* That may be true in some situations, youngster, but this bunch is dangerous!

GABE: Yeah, real dangerous!

SHERIFF: *(To Citizens.)* Now, I know they're dangerous, but even more dangerous is a town full of people lettin' a handful of rowdies push us around. If we stand together and tell them we aren't goin' to put up with them, then they'll go. I know they will.

CITIZEN 3: I wish I had your confidence, Sheriff.

CITIZEN 2: Me, too.

KID 10: I believe you, Sheriff!

CITIZEN 1: Listen, youngster, it's all very well for you to believe in the Sheriff, but you don't even live here. We're the folks who have to live in this town and with whatever happens.

CITIZEN 4: That's right! Sheriff, what are you plannin' to do about this.

SHERIFF: Nothin'.

CITIZENS: Nothin'!

SHERIFF: That's right...nothin'. When the Hills Gang arrives, we are just goin' to tell them to get out of town...that we don't want them here.

CITIZEN 3: Well, you might be plannin' to do that Sheriff, but don't count me in. I'm goin' to be at home, locked up in my house. *(Exits.)*

CITIZEN 4: Me too, Sheriff. I'm sorry. I'd like to be able to stand there with you, but I've got a family to think of. I can't take a chance like that. *(Exits.)*

SHERIFF: *(To Citizen 1, 2.)* How about you two? Are you goin' to stand up with me or not?

*(Citizen 1 and Citizen 2 look at each other shamefacedly. Citizen 2 exits.)*

CITIZEN 1: *(Starts to exit.)* Sorry, Sheriff, looks like you're on your own.

*(Citizen 1 exits. Pause.)*

KID 6: So...now what are you going to do, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Nothin'. The law is the law, and that's all there is to it. I'll tell those girls to leave town and...and...and with any luck they will.

KID 7: We'll stand there with you, Sheriff.

KID 8: We will?

KIDS: We will!

SHERIFF: Thanks, kids, but this is a job that I'm goin' to have to do on my own, and that's all there is to it.

GABE: Well, you're a brave man, Sheriff, but that won't do much against the Hills Gang.

KID 9: Hey, it's not just us. There's a whole bunch more of us somewhere...and we know one person who won't let this happen.

KID 10: We do?

KID 6: Who?

*(Kids huddle and put their heads together.)*

KID 7: All we have to do is to figure out how to get back to where we came from. Come on, guys. We'll be back, Sheriff.

*(Kids exit.)*

GABE: Well, Sheriff, it looks like it's just you and me...and the Hills Gang. *(Evil laugh.)*

*(Blackout. Optional intermission.)*

## ACT II

### Scene 1

*(AT RISE: Big Old Saloon, Pecos, 1897. Jake, Piñata, and Sheriff are at the bar UR. Sheriff is drinking a glass of milk. There is an empty table DL. Piano Player sits at piano (optional). Note: This scene can open with song and dance. At the conclusion of the song, all leave except for Piñata, Jake, and Sheriff Flagstone.)*

PIÑATA: Well, Sheriff, it looks like you are all alone tonight.

It must be because everybody heard the Hills Gang was comin' to town.

SHERIFF: I guess so, Piñata. I kind of hoped the people of Pecos would be here and realize that by standin' together we are stronger than the Hills Gang.

PIÑATA: Don't be angry with them, Sheriff. It's not that they don't want to be here, it's just that they are not as brave as you.

SHERIFF: It's got nothin' to do with bein' brave, Piñata. They have families and homes and businesses to look after. I don't blame them. I might even do the same if I were in their shoes.

PIÑATA: Not you, Sheriff. You are the bravest man I know. *(Laughs.)* Also the cheapest. You spend all night in here and you only have one drink...of milk!

SHERIFF: Well, Piñata, I thank you for thinkin' I am brave, but I think maybe I'm just stupid.

PIÑATA: Stupid! You?! That's not possible, Sheriff. You're the one who read to me the newspaper about the Hills Gang. You are a very intelligent man. You believe the law is an important thing and you are right. I am not afraid of this Hills Gang. I will be standing with you.

JAKE: Me too, Sheriff, and I've got my shotgun.

SHERIFF: Thanks, but no guns, Jake. Guns just make more trouble.

*(Ralphie, Bonnie, and Larieta swagger in DC. Although they are the villains, they should be played for comic effect. Sheriff, Piñata, and Jake pay no attention to them.)*

RALPHIE: *(To Bonnie and Larieta.)* Kind of deserted in here, girls. I thought the folks of this little town would clear out once they heard we were comin'.

BONNIE: Yup!

LARIETA: Yup!

RALPHIE: I say we have us a drink, and then we'll go get Gabe out of that pokey little jail.

BONNIE: Okay.

LARIETA: Okay.

*(Ralphie, Bonnie, and Larieta sit at the empty table DL.)*

RALPHIE: Hey, bartender, let's have a drink here. Make it a double. We've been ridin' a long ways.

BONNIE: A long ways.

LARIETA: A real long ways.

BONNIE: Gettin' kind of talkative aren't you, Larieta?

LARIETA: Guess so.

BONNIE: Yup!

*(Jake approaches the table.)*

JAKE: So where have you girls come from?

RALPHIE: Oh...down yonder where they got themselves a penitentiary.

JAKE: A penitentiary?

RALPHIE: That's right!

BONNIE: That's right!

LARIETA: Yup!

JAKE: You mean you're the...the...

RALPHIE: That's right! We're the...

RALPHIE/BONNIE/LARIETA: (*Facing the audience, they do a cheerleading type of movement in unison. Shout.*) Hills Gang!

LARIETA: Yup!

BONNIE: That's us!

RALPHIE: The Hills Gang!

LARIETA: Yup!

RALPHIE: And we're here to get our brother Gabe out of jail, and we was just wonderin'...before we get started...who is gonna get in our way. (*Looks around the room.*) So...it's Sheriff Rockhead...

SHERIFF: Flagstone!

RALPHIE: Sorry....Flagstone. So it's Sheriff Flagstone and a bartender and a dance hall girl and a piano player standin' up against the Hills Gang, is it? But I don't see any guns.

RALPHIE/BONNIE/LARIETA: Draw! (*They laugh.*)

RALPHIE: Now then, Sheriff, let's have the key to Gabe's cell.

SHERIFF: Sorry, girls, I can't do that.

RALPHIE: There's not much you can do about it, Sheriff. Seems like we got guns and you don't. Now then... (*Pulls Piñata over.*) What's your name?

PIÑATA: It's none of your business...you—

RALPHIE: Okay, Sheriff, Bonnie here is goin' to take the keys, and you're not goin' to do anythin' about it or Miss None-of-Your-Business is goin' to be in serious trouble. Get the keys, Bonnie, and then bring Gabe back here. We'll celebrate a little before we tear this town apart.

(*Bonnie takes the keys from the Sheriff.*)

PIÑATA: I'm sorry, Sheriff. I didn't mean to be a problem for you.

SHERIFF: It's okay, Piñata. You were only tryin' to help.

PIÑATA: If everybody would help, we wouldn't be in this situation.

KID 6: (*Offstage.*) Here it is. This is the place.

(*KID 6, 7, 8, and Charlee run in.*)

KID 7: Hi, Sheriff.

CHARLEE: Boy, I don't remember this place on my paper route.

(*Kid 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 run in.*)

KID 9: We're here to help, Sheriff!

RALPHIE: (*Laughing.*) What's this, Sheriff? Are these your deputies?

SHERIFF: Thanks, kids, but I'm afraid we're not goin' to be able to stop them.

RALPHIE: That's right, kids. This is a case of too little too late.

LARIETA: (*Laughing.*) Too little...too late!

CHARLEE: Who are you calling too little?

(*Charlee kicks Larieta in the shins.*)

LARIETA: Ow!

RALPHIE: All right, you kids, over there with the Sheriff.

(*Kids go stand with Sheriff.*)

KID 10: What happened, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Well, I guess I put too much faith in things I can't control.

GABE: (*Offstage. Shouts.*) Get in there, you! (*Gabe and Bonnie enter, pushing Citizens ahead of them. To Ralphie and Larieta.*) Well, girls, looks like the Hills Gang is back together again, and I brought some of the leadin' citizens of Pecos along to help us celebrate. (*To Ralphie.*) You took your time, sister. Another night in that cell with those beans, and I might not

have made it! *(To Citizens and Kids.)* Now, folks, before we start our celebration, we got ourselves a little business to conduct.

RALPHIE: What kind of business, Gabe?

GABE: Well, I kind of decided that this here is a nice little town where we might just like to settle down for a while, so we're goin' to have an election. I'm nominatin' Bonnie there for sheriff, and me for mayor, and, Ralphie, you can run the bank, and Larieta....well, Larieta, you can be the dogcatcher.

LARIETA: Oh, boy, I love dogs!

GABE: Now then...all in favor... *(Gabe, Ralphie, Larieta, and Bonnie raise their hands.)* That would be four. Anybody opposed? *(Points his gun at Citizens. Citizens are afraid so they keep their hands down, but Piñata, Jake, Piano Player, Kids, and Sheriff raise their hands. Gabe points his gun over their heads and yells "Bang!" Piñata, Jake, and Piano Player lower their hands. Only the Sheriff and Kids have their hands raised.)* You kids aren't old enough to vote, so it looks like it's four in favor and one opposed. *(To sisters.)* Congratulations, we're now in charge of the little town of Pecos.

SHERIFF: You won't get away with this, Gabe.

GABE: Looks like I already have, Sheriff. Ralphie, how about you go over to our new bank and get us some of our money so we can have a party.

*(Ralphie starts to exit.)*

MOTHER: *(Offstage. Shouts.)* Charlee! Charlee Zimmer! Where are you? And what's the problem that I had to come all this way?

CHARLEE: *(Shouts.)* In here, Mom!

*(Charlee's Mother enters and stops short when she notices it's a saloon.)*

MOTHER: Charlee! What is this? A saloon? Charlee Zimmer, what are you doing in a saloon? *(To Kids.)* And the rest of you...do your parents know where you are?

KID 1: Mrs. Zimmer, we don't even know where we are. We were just delivering papers and we ended up here.

MOTHER: Well, I'm phoning the newspaper office tomorrow and taking this place off your route, Charlee. *(Approaches Gabe.)* And you...that's a gun, isn't it? Didn't your mother ever tell you not to play with guns?

GABE: Lady, I don't think you know where you are.

*(Mother takes the gun from Gabe. Charlee kicks Larieta in the shins and she drops her gun. Sheriff grabs the gun from Ralphie. Piñata grabs the gun from Bonnie.)*

SHERIFF: *(To Mother.)* I think you're the best person to look after these, ma'am.

*(Sheriff gives all the guns to Charlee's mother, who promptly puts them in her purse.)*

MOTHER: Thank you. *(To Gabe.)* Now, young man, it is time for you and... *(Indicating Ralphie, Larieta, and Bonnie.)* ...these young ladies to find another place to play. So off you go, all of you, and don't let me catch you playing with guns again.

*(Hills Gang gathers together and moves slowly toward the door.)*

GABE: We'll go, but we'll be back. We can get more guns. We'll be back, you can count on that. And, Sheriff, you better have more than just a bunch of kids and an old lady to help you!

MOTHER: *(Insulted.)* Old lady!

*(Citizen 1 steps in front of Mother.)*

CITIZEN 1: *(To Gang.)* The Sheriff won't need guns, and he won't need these kids and this kind lady next time. We have learned our lesson, and you had better know that the citizens of the little town of Pecos won't let you threaten us ever again. If you want to come back and be part of our town, you're welcome, but if you bring your guns, we'll send you on your way.

SHERIFF: Good for you, Mr. Mayor. Now, Gabe, off you go.

LARIETA: Gabe, does this mean I can't be dogcatcher?

GABE: Be quiet, Larieta!

*(The Hills Gang exits, muttering and grumbling to themselves.)*

SHERIFF: Well, thank you, kids, for savin' our little town. Jake, how about a drink for everyone? *(Mother gives him a disapproving look.)* Milk for me and strawberry sodas for everyone else!

*(During the following exchange, the Hills Gang re-enters, and unseen by the others, kidnaps Charlee's Mother, who is standing near the door.)*

JAKE: Comin' right up, Sheriff. Piñata, give me a hand, will you?

CITIZEN 2: Three cheers for the Sheriff and his deputies!

ALL: Hip, hip, hooray!

SHERIFF: And three cheers for Charlee's mother!

*(All start to cheer but the cheer stops halfway through when they realize Charlee's Mother is no longer there. The sound of hoof beats and then Gabe's evil laugh is heard.)*

MOTHER: *(Offstage. Yells.)* Chaaaaaleeeeeeee!

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**