

FIT TO BE TIED
or
The Train's Already Been Here,
'Cause It Left Its Tracks

A Melodrama in One-Act

By Craig Williams

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The Poor family is struggling to keep the ROCK (Railroad Of Central Kansas) on track. Vil Lain, the local banker, holds the mortgage on the railroad. He has learned that there is a large cattle drive headed toward the railway station with plans to move the cattle back East by rail. This will result in big money to the owners of the ROCK and naturally Lain sees a chance to steal the Poors' money. Lain and his sidekick, Hinch Man, scheme to get the money meant for the railroad by foreclosing on the ROCK. Lain tries to entice Terri Blee Poor, the heroine and by coincidence, a train whistle virtuoso, to become his wife to save the Poors. But a brakeman on the ROCK, Earnest Lee, intercedes and helps Dirt (that's Dirk) Poor foil the plans of the villains.

This melodrama features lots of puns, creative banter and of course, a traditional "tie the heroine to the railroad track" climax.

(Running time: 35 minutes.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 3 w, 1 flexible)

DUSTY TRAILS: The Triple X Ranch trail boss of the only completely female- run ranch in Texas.

HINCH MAN: The villain's sidekick. A quick draw but a slow think.

VIL LAIN: The greedy, contemptuous villain.

DIRK POOR: The owner and engineer of the ROCK.

TERRI BLEE POOR: The heroine, a train whistle virtuoso.

AUPHILLY POOR: Dirk's wife and a great cook.

LIL BIT POOR: The youngest (boy or girl) of the Poores.

EARNEST LEE: Our hero. He is sincere.

Fit To Be Tied
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NOTES

Fit To Be Tied

(AT RISE: The ROCK depot. There is a bench, a large barrel, a small barrel or nail keg, a water pail and crates on the dock. LAIN is sitting on the bench counting his money when the cattle woman, DUSTY TRAILS, enters from SR. HINCH MAN is sitting on the crates SL. In the background there is a window or sign with the initial letters R-O-C-K highlighted, indicating that this is the Railroad of Central Kansas Depot.)

TRAILS: Howdy partner, I'm looking for the owner of this train.

HINCH: That would be the Poors –

LAIN: *(Interrupts.)* He means pour yourself some water and have a seat.

(TRAILS gets herself a cup of water. As LAIN continues, Trails takes a drink and throws the rest over her shoulder, hitting HINCH.)

LAIN: Where are your manners, Hinch? How can I help you?

TRAILS: The Triple X ranch, the only completely female-run ranch in Texas, is planning to bring its entire herd of 10,000 cattle to the rail head here in Kansas to be shipped back East. We believe that we can pay one dollar a head to the railroad and still make a profit on the sale. Can you steer me to the right people?

LAIN: *(Aside.)* That's a lot of money, no bull! *(To TRAILS.)* Let me introduce myself. I'm Vil Lain, and this is my partner, Hinch Man. This railroad will serve your purposes.

HINCH: I thought they were bringing cattle, not porpoises.

LAIN: Purpose, not porpoise, you bottle-nosed nitwit. Where was I? Oh, yes, the local railroad. We're a small organization ...

LAIN: (*Cont'd. HINCH starts to interrupt, but LAIN stops him with an exaggerated wink.*) but the line does connect with the major lines. It would take a special train to handle that many cattle, but with the money you're talking about, we would be eager to assist you.

HINCH: How much money would that be? Let me see ... (*Counts on his fingers.*) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 ... (*HE takes off his boot, revealing a bright red sock with a hole in the big toe.*) 11 ...

LAIN: (*Takes HINCH'S hat and hits him with it.*) Stop it, Hinch, we've got better things to do.

TRAILS: As I was saying, we've already begun the cattle drive from the Triple X Ranch. So we have to know if that option will be available, and I've got to know now.

LAIN: You can count on me. All you have to do is put your cattle and money in my hands – (*Aside.*) especially, the money – (*To TRAILS.*) and I will take care of you.

TRAILS: I forgot to mention that if this works out, the Triple X is planning to make this a yearly trip, and we're willing to sign a long-term contract to carry our cattle each year. We've even expanded our herd for next year. The railroad that gets our contract will be on track to earn a considerable sum of money.

HINCH: The Poors will be happy to hear that. (*To LAIN.*) They haven't had a good year since you caused their train to derail near Buhler (*Byou-ler*) Buttes.

TRAILS: What was that?

LAIN: (*Glaring at HINCH.*) He said just leave the details here with cooler galootes, like us. We'll make sure that your cattle are ridden out of here on a rail. And you can bank on it. (*Aside.*) At least I will.

TRAILS: I hope you're a man of your word, Lain, because I don't take kindly to being hornswaggled. The last man that attempted to swindle me is a part of the scenery back in Texas.

HINCH: Oh, he's a man of his word all right. You just have to know which side of his mouth he's talking out of.

TRAILS: What do you mean by that?

LAIN: He means that we get so busy around here we sometimes forget which big deal we are talking about.

TRAILS: Well, if you are too busy, I'll find some other agent to work with. *(Starts to leave, is stopped by LAIN.)*

LAIN: No, no!! We have all the time in the world for you. Hinch sometimes gets confused about our business deals.

HINCH: I must be confused. I don't remember any big deal around here in the last year, unless you count that time when you stole the money from the widow Harvey.

LAIN: Hinch, you mean when I sold the Widow Harvey the Sink Hole Flats Ranch.

HINCH: That's what I said.

LAIN: Why don't we go ahead and draw up a contract now and save you some time?

HINCH: Oh, goody, I'll get my colors.

TRAILS: Colors?

HINCH: *(Whips out a box of crayons from his holster and proudly displays them.)* Yeah, I'm the quickest draw in the country.

LAIN: I meant that we'll write a contract with Miss Trails here to close the deal.

HINCH: Shucks! *(Begins to draw on paper on the crate.)*

TRAILS: I don't need no paper contract; my handshake is my bond. And I only do business with people I can trust to do the same. How about it, Lain?

LAIN: *(Aside.)* This is easier than I thought. I'll be able to swindle her out of her money, and there won't be any record of what was said here. *(To TRAIL.)* Of course, that's the way I prefer to do business. There seems to be so little trust these days.

HINCH: *(Continues to color.)* The only truss that's here is the one Lain's wearing.

TRAILS: *(Offers to shake hands.)* Put'er there, partner.

(LAIN shakes hands with TRAILS. Lain kneels because of the pain from the handshake. Trails continues as if nothing has happened.)

End of Freeview

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