

Blame It on the Pony Express

- Or - *The Bride Came C.O.D.*

By Whitney Ryan Garrity

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DEDICATION

To Karen Miller, a very talented director. Your friendship and your support have been an inspiration to me.

STORY OF THE PLAY

In this long-awaited prequel to the Calamity Gulch series, we find out how Ma and Pa Culpepper met and how Horace Prickley inspired pretty flower-peddler Flossie McDurdle to become the legendary Sahara Hartburn!

Gideon Culpepper opens the Last Chance Inn and the guests pour in immediately! Dashing Horace Prickley agrees to help poor Flossie become a lady, so she can win her heart's true love, the spineless but wealthy Theodore Vanderthistle. Teddy's scheming mother, Vedalia, has other plans though. She sends for Posey Lee Perriwinkle, a beautiful Southern belle who arrives via Pony Express as a mail-order bride. Unfortunately, Posey falls for Gideon instead. Meanwhile Horace finds that he is falling for Flossie and facing the dilemma of helping her and therefore losing her to Teddy. This clever play weaves together elements of *My Fair Lady* and *Gone with the Wind* for one hilarious evening of laughs.

Be sure to check out the additional Calamity Gulch plays by Whitney Ryan Garrity.

Last Chance Inn, Calamity Gulch

Return to Calamity Gulch

Hartburn Hotel

Cheerio, Y'all

CAST OF CHARACTERS (5 m, 5 w)

IVORY KEYES: The resident piano player.

MA CULPEPPER: The no-nonsense proprietress of the Last Chance Inn.

PA CULPEPPER: The thorn in Ma's side.

HORACE PRICKLEY: A dashing loan officer.

GIDEON CULPEPPER: A handsome young drifter.

COL. REGINALD DIJON: A retired British military officer. In his 50s.

FLOSSIE McDURDLE: A pretty flower girl with a Cockney accent.

VEDALIA VANDERTHISTLE: A wealthy, snobbish matron.

THEODORE VANDERTHISTLE: Vedula's meek son.

POSEY LEE PERRIWINKLE: Lovely young Southern belle.

TIME: The turn of the century, after the Civil War.

PREMIER PRODUCTION

Blame it on the Pony Express (or the Bride Came C.O.D) received its first public reading in Lubbock, Texas in February of 2010. The cast was as follows:

IVORY KEYES Joan Downing
MA CULPEPPER Mickie Klafka
PA CULPEPPER..... Whitney Garrity
HORACE PRICKLEY Cody Maggard
GIDEON CULPEPPER Dustin Fuller
COL. REGINALD DIJON..... Peter Contreras
FLOSSIE MCDURDLE..... Jacie Hood
VEDALIA VANDERTHISTLE Michelle Dillard
THEODORE VANDERTHISTLE ... Zach Kocurek
POSEY LEE PERRIWINKLE Kim Klafka

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SETTING

The Last Chance Inn, Calamity Gulch, USA. Louvered, swinging doors decorate the entrance/exit at SL, which leads out into the street. A doorway DSR, leads to the kitchen and a staircase SR leads to the guest rooms. A bar stands USC; a few stools are positioned in front of it. A table with 2 chairs is set DSR. An uptight piano is located near the door, SL.

PROLOGUE

(AT RISE: The LIGHTS fade up to reveal the Last Chance Inn. Presently, the inn is fairly empty and void of any decoration. IVORY KEYES, the resident pianist, is seated at the piano. She plays an appropriate tune for the beginning of a melodrama. At the conclusion of her piece, Ivory stands to accept her applause.)

IVORY: Thank you, thank you. Welcome to the Last Chance Inn, located right here in lovely downtown Calamity Gulch. This may be your last chance to visit the Last Chance Inn! Yep, that's right. Ma and Pa Culpepper have finally decided to retire and give up the inn. But don't you worry about yours truly. No sir. Why, I have already received a wealth of offers befitting a performer of my talent and skill. *(Scanning the audience indignantly.)* And I am not referring to the offers that some of you...um...gentlemen have scrawled on the outhouse wall! *(Wicked smile.)* But I did copy down some of the more pertinent information. *(Looking around the inn wistfully.)* The end of the Last Chance Inn. Who'd have believed it? I'll miss this place, you know? The camaraderie, the laughs, the—

MA: *(Yelling from off-stage.)* Ivory...!

IVORY: *(Rolls HER eyes.)* I won't miss her!

(IVORY moves back to the piano and sits. MA bustles in from the kitchen, wiping her hands on her apron.)

MA: There you are. I might have known I'd find you settin' at that dang piano again!

IVORY: *(Surlly.)* I'm the piano player! Where else would I set?

MA: You watch your tongue with me, Missy. *(Looks around.)* Well...that's the last of it, I think. The wagon is almost completely loaded up and I just dumped the last of the trash out back. Oh, Ivory. This place holds so many memories for me. Some good, some bad. Some I don't even remember anymore!

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MA: *(Cont'd. Emotional.)* There is only one thing that I'm *not* going to miss about this place ...

PA: *(Off.)* Ma ...?

MA: *(Annoyed.)* Unfortunately, he's coming with me! *(Calling off.)* In here, Pa.

(MA moves to behind the bar as PA CULPEPPER enters. He carries a cardboard box marked "Fragile.")

PA: *(Bewildered.)* I just don't understand it.

MA: *(Produces a rag from her apron pocket and begins wiping down the bar.)* What's that, Pa?

PA: I found this box out back. It's my valuable rock collection. How in tarnation did it end up dumped with the trash?

MA: *(Feigning innocence.)* Oh, my! Well, I just can't imagine how that could happen, Pa.

PA: *(Setting the box on the bar.)* Oh now, Ma. You know this collection is very important to me. Every single rock in this here box holds a special memory for me. *(Producing a rock from the box.)* Why, I found this here rock when I was just fifteen years old. *(Chuckles to himself.)* Truth be told, this rock found *me!* *(Moving to IVORY.)* I had just gotten my first horse, see? Algernon, a fine strong palomino. But he was a little on the skittish side and he throwed me right off. *(Moving back to the box.)* Nearly cracked my head wide open! *(Setting the rock back in the box.)* Yes sir, good times. *(Produces another rock.)* And this here is the rock that hit my head the day I set out to seek my fortune. No sooner had I mounted when ol' Algernon went up and throwed me off again! *(Sifting through the rocks.)* Come to think of it, I reckon I hit my head on every single one of these rocks 'cause of that stupid horse!

MA: *(Dryly.)* That would explain a lot.

PA: *(Producing another rock.)* Ah! Now this here rock--

(MA grabs the rock from PA and brandishes it menacingly.)

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MA: This here's the rock that's gonna hit you on the head if you don't finish getting the wagon loaded! *(Sets the rock on the bar.)*

PA: Whatever you say, Ma.

(PA starts toward the outside door. MA spots something behind the bar.)

MA: Wait! Oh my, I can't believe that I almost left this behind... *(MA produces a very elaborately-festooned hat from behind the bar.)*

PA: *(Startled.)* What in tarnation is *that*?!

MA: Oh now, Pa. *(Dons the hat and moves out from behind the bar.)* Back in the day, a hat like this was all the rage.

PA: Rage...yup, that's exactly what it fills me with when I see it!

MA: *(Removing the hat, annoyed.)* Never you mind about that, Pa. *(Places the hat on PA's head.)* Just get it loaded on the wagon. *(Picks up the rock off the bar and hands it to PA.)* And you can take your stupid rocks with you too.

(PA moves to the door. He stops and turns to MA, holding out the rock.)

PA: I was gonna say that this here is the rock that hit me on the head the day I rode into Calamity Gulch and met you!

(PA exits. MA calls after HIM.)

MA: Then it should've been the rock that hit *me* in the head! *(Muttering to herself.)* Knock some sense into me before it was too late!

IVORY: Honestly! The way the two of you are always going at each other, it's a wonder that you ever fell in love in the first place.

MA: *(Moving to IVORY.)* Ivory, don't you remember? You were there!

(IVORY looks at MA blankly and shrugs.)

End of Freeview

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