

BAD MEDICINE

(OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

by
Kris Thompson

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

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BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

for Lance, Sarah, and Alex

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Bad Medicine (or Good to the Last Drop) was originally produced by Theatre Suburbia in Houston, Texas, directed by Elvin Moriarty and Akia Lorain McPhaul, featuring the following cast:

Carl Goodall.....Jeff Henninger
Lacy McKinneyLindsay Smith
Charlie HambyIggy Nguyen
Hickory PickettThomas Ward
Becky Trueheart.....Alex Thompson
Gene RangerRaul Castillo
Sally WestAmanda Garcia
Bodkin Shamley.....Adrian Collinson
Donna PratherPhyl Deany
Maxiene FormanPamela Branstetter

CAST: 5 Men, 3 Women, 2 Flexible

CARL GOODALL	40s, town doctor, widowed, smart, sweet on Lacy
LACY MCKINNEY	30s, proprietor of Bagwell Saloon, sweet on Carl
CHARLIE HAMBY	30s, Lacy's brother, know-it-all, Hickory's pal
HICKORY PICKETT	30s, best friend to Charlie, bad dental hygiene
BECKY TRUEHEART	20s, heroine, sweet, nurse, Gene's sweetheart
GENE RANGER	20s, hero, town sheriff, 26, courting Becky
SALLY WEST	30s, beautiful con-artist, in cahoots with Bodkin
BODKIN SHAMLEY	40s, villain, well spoken, con artist, (Pronounced: BODE-KIN SHAM-LEE, often mispronounced)
DOUGLAS PRATHER	60s, Reverend, gives senseless words of wisdom (or DONNA if desired.)
MAXWELL FORMAN	50s, sounds like Foghorn Leghorn, government official (or MAXIENE if desired.)

TIME: Late 1800s, noon.

PLACE: Bagwell Saloon in the quite cattle town of Bagwell, Colorado.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

HICKORY is sitting in a chair, moaning. CARL, dressed as a country doctor with his sleeves rolled up, is leaning over Hickory trying to look in his mouth. LACY, watching Carl with admiration, is behind bar fixing two drinks for CHARLIE who is sitting at bar. A large picnic basket sits on bar or a table. Swinging saloon doors serve as front door. Another door leads to storeroom which also exits outside.

HICKORY. Oh Doc! It hurts! Aww...

CHARLIE. Hickory's been going on 'bout that tooth for weeks, Doc.

(BECKY enters front door in nurse hat and cape, and rushes doctor bag to Carl.)

BECKY. I've got your bag, Doctor.

HICKORY. Aww...

CARL. Hang on Hickory. If I've told you once, I've told you a million times, you can't be chewing on supper bones and such. Leave 'em for the dogs. *(Becky opens bag and hands Carl cotton balls and a medicine bottle.)*

HICKORY. Hurts real bad Doc. *(Carl soaks cotton balls with medicine and tries to get them into Hickory's mouth while Hickory thrashes.)*

BECKY. Hickory dear, hold still for the doc.

HICKORY. Aww, but Doc!

CARL. No buts about it. You've cracked another tooth on those darn bones.

CHARLIE. You know, Doc, it ain't the bones the problem. Hickory grinds his teeth when he's sleepin.

LACY. Now Charlie, I know you think you know everything, but how in the heck would you know that?

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

HICKORY. Aww, Doc. Aww...

CHARLIE. Yup. No disrespect, Doc. I know you been to fancy doctor school and such, but them bones got the marrow in 'em and that there marrow's good fer teeth.

BECKY. Charlie, please!

LACY. Not one day of schoolin and you think you know everything! Hush up little brother!

CARL. Hickory, hold still!

CHARLIE. 'Cause everyone knows that yer teeth is bone just like a cow bone's a bone, and bones is good fer bones.

HICKORY. Aww... Ahh...

CHARLIE. Hey Doc, maybe a drink will make him feel better.

CARL. I don't think so Charlie. (*Gets cotton balls into Hickory's mouth.*) Ok. There you go. That should start to take the pain away. You head over to my office, and we'll see about getting that tooth pulled. (*While watching Carl, Lacy wipes down bar, smooths hair, and pinches her cheeks in anticipation of talking to him.*)

CHARLIE. (*Holds up one of the glasses.*) Hickory your drink!

HICKORY. Sorry Charlie. (*Exits front door holding his face, moaning.*)

CHARLIE. Hope he's back soon. It's his day to buy the drinks. Well, don't want his to go to waste! (*Charlie drinks Hickory's whiskey while Becky returns items to Carl's bag. Carl sits at bar shyly smiling at Lacy.*)

LACY. (*Smiles warmly at Carl.*) Hey Doc! Why you always doing your doctorin in my bar? I should start takin a fee. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Although I sure don't mind. He's so handsome. Since my poor Henry passed on, I never thought I'd find love again, until the Doc came along.

CHARLIE. Think he's sweet on you, Sis.

LACY. Charlie hush up! (*Pushes the second glass to Charlie.*) Take this here drink to that there table (*Points at table.*) way over there, and mind your own business!

CHARLIE. Gosh Sis. Don't got to be so sensitive 'bout it. Everybody knows that-

LACY. Go! (*Turns attention to Carl, pouring him a drink.*)

CHARLIE. Alright already! Gosh. (*Takes drink and sits at a table.*)

You're not the boss of me Sis. (*Under his breath.*) Not anymore anyhow.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CARL. Sorry Lacy. Seems I'm always in demand when I'm taking a break. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Course that's not the only reason I'm here all the time. Since my poor wife Henrietta passed on, I never thought I'd love again, until I met Lacy.

LACY. We'll, you're our best customer Doc, (*Slides drink to Carl, puts her hand briefly over his.*) here more than not. I guess if you keep buying drinks, you can keep up the doctorin.

CARL. Well thanks, Lacy. Umm... You fix your hair different today?

LACY. Oh. (*Touching her hair.*) You like it?

CARL. Sure is pretty. (*Nervously.*) You know, Lacy, I've... uh... been meaning to talk to you. (*Takes a drink, swallowing hard, trying to get up his nerve.*) Um, you know the other reason I... uh...

LACY. Go on, Doc. I'm listenin.

CARL. Well, the other reason I'm here all the time is-

GENE. (*Yelling from OS front door.*) Hey, Doc in there?

CARL. I better see what that's about. (*Starts toward front door.*)

BECKY. Oh! (*Hurries to bar, speaking to Lacy.*) Is that Sheriff Ranger?

LACY. Come on Becky, you can call him Gene. After all, you've known him forever and the two of you are practically married! (*Carl looks out front door.*)

CHARLIE. Yeah. Practically married! (*Lacy and Becky frown at Charlie.*)

BECKY. That brother of yours!

LACY. Don't I know it!

CARL. (*Yelling.*) Hey Sheriff. I just fixed up Hickory. What do you have there?

GENE. (*Yelling from OS front door.*) Hey Doc, there you are. Come here a minute! (*Carl exits front door.*)

BECKY. It is Gene...I mean Sheriff Ranger. Want to keep it proper and all. But today may be the day he asks for my hand! (*Clutches hands to heart.*) We're going on a romantic picnic for lunch. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) My heart's aflutter! I love him so. I've never been so happy in my life! Today will be the most perfect day!

LACY. We all knew that was comin. You two are just perfect together.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

BECKY. We are, aren't we. (*Sighing, thinking of romance, then snaps back.*) But what about you and Carl? Has he said anything yet? I just know he's sweet on you.

LACY. Gosh no. It's strange. When he's doctorin he's so commanding, in control, and sure of himself. But he gets around me and he just stammers and hem haws. Been going round and round for months now.

BECKY. I just think that's cause he likes you! He's shy when it comes to women. You know, he was married back East years ago. His wife died and he took it pretty hard. I think that's what brought him to Bagwell. Ya'll have that in common, being widowed and all. Maybe you should tell him how you feel and see what happens. I just know you two would be so happy together, just like me and Gene. I'm so happy, Lacy. I only wish Pa were still here to see me married.

LACY. Oh honey. I know you miss him. We all do. How you getting on, running the ranch all by yourself?

BECKY. Oh fine. Hank and the ranch hands handle most everything for me.

LACY. Oh Gosh! That reminds me. A telegram came for your pa last week. Charlie was supposed to bring it out to you, but he and Hickory got busy with... who knows what! (*Hunts behind/under bar.*) Oh, here it is! (*Finds telegram, hands to Becky.*)

BECKY. Telegram? (*Opens telegram, skims, mumbling.*) Ewing Ranch...Saguache County... Land lease? What land lease? (*Carl and GENE enter carrying SALLY.*)

LACY & BECKY. Oh my! Oh goodness! (*Becky puts telegram in her pocket.*)

CHARLIE. Oh no. She don't look too good Doc.

CARL. Let's bring her over there. (*Becky helps them bring Sally to chair.*)

GENE. Hello Darlin. (*Winks and smiles at Becky and then delivers an aside to Audience Only.*) Ain't Becky the prettiest thing you ever did see? I love her so. By golly, today I'm going to make her mine. Today will be the most perfect day. (*To Becky.*) I can't hardly wait for that picnic of ours.

BECKY. Oh, Gene, me too! (*Distracted but then snaps back.*) What happened? What's wrong with this girl?

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

GENE. Oh, yes... found this young thing outside behind the water trough. Don't look like she's been out there for too long, but I can't seem to wake her. Thought Doc might want to take a look. Didn't see him over at the office. Figured he was here, as usual. (*Nods indicating Lacy, Becky smiles and nods in agreement.*)

CARL. OK. Let's have a look, shall we. (*Becky brings Carl's doctor bag to him, gets stethoscope out, hands to Carl who kneels and uses on Sally.*)

BECKY. Lacy, get me a damp towel, would you? (*Lacy exits storeroom door.*)

CHARLIE. Looks dead to me, Doc.

CARL. Miss! Miss! Can you hear me? (*To Becky.*) Smelling Salts. (*Becky gets bottle from doctor bag, hands to Carl.*) Smelling salts ought to do the job. (*Sally holds breath, Carl holds bottle to Sally's nose, Sally does not react.* *Lacy enters from storeroom door with damp towel, hands to Becky.*)

CHARLIE. See, Doc. Told ya. Dead.

CARL. (*Perplexed.*) That really should have worked.

BECKY. Poor thing. (*Dabs damp towel across Sally's forehead.*)

CHARLIE. D.E.D. Dead.

LACY. For heaven's sake little brother, hush up! (*BODKIN enters from front door carrying carpet bag.*)

BODKIN. Well, well, well. What do we have here?

BECKY. Oh, hello. This young girl was found outside. Doc can't seem to rouse her. You know her?

BODKIN. Surely not. I've only just arrived in town, but I heard there was someone in need of medical attention so, of course, I came quickly.

CARL. Sorry fella, who are you? Are you a doctor?

BODKIN. Of sorts. Allow me to introduce myself. (*Turns while speaking, addressing entire room.*) My name is Bodkin Shamley. I'm a purveyor of medicinal concoctions for all types of ailments. Tonics for headaches, creams for skin afflictions, ointments for scalp conditions. White blood? Green fever? Milk leg? No problem. Everyone needs something- (*Aside to Audience Only.*) -and I'll stop at nothing (*Evil laugh and moustache twist.*) to get what I need! What I have in store for these yokels, they'll never recover from! (*To entire room.*) -and I have something for everyone, even for this here young girl.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

LACY. (*Disdain.*) Oh, a peddler then. (*To herself.*) What the heck is Milk Leg?

CHARLIE. Oh, the Milk Leg. That's a bad one alright. Sis don't cha member that summer Auntie Penelope was so sick. I think she had-

BECKY. Well, thanks all the same mister, but we've got a real doctor here in Bagwell. This here is Doc Goodall.

BODKIN. I see. Well, Doctor Goodall, you don't seem to be having much luck with the young lady. Mind if I have a look?

CHARLIE. Not much can be done when yer dead! (*DOUGLAS enters front door and hurries to Sally.*)

DOUGLAS. Lord have mercy! I heard that someone is dying over here and came quick. Is this the dying girl?

CHARLIE. Yup! Better hurry Reverend. I think she's already a goner! (*Walks around the room squinting above.*) Her spirit's probably already floating up among the rafters on its way to heaven above!

DOUGLAS. Oh, the poor dear.

BECKY. No, Reverend. She's not dead.

DOUGLAS. God knows you can never be too careful. (*Folds hands and begins praying.*) Dear Lord, if you can find the time, in between runnin the universe and makin sure the Texans win the Superbowl (*Director's choice of team and sporting event.*), please save this young woman!

BECKY. Reverend, she's really not dying. Doc's trying to bring her around.

BODKIN. And to no avail, I'm sorry to say. So, Doctor, might I have a look?

CARL. I don't think that'll be necessary, thanks just the same. Excuse me, Reverend. We'll give the smelling salts another go-round. I'm sure she'll come around here right quick. (*Douglas moves out of the way. Sally holds her breath, Carl puts smelling salts to Sally's nose, Sally has no reaction.*)

CHARLIE. Keep tellin ya, Doc. Dead! (*Still walking around the room looking above.*) No amount of saltin can help ya when yer dead. (*Stops, points to ceiling corner.*) Wait! I think I see her ghost! There, in the corner. Lacy, do you see her?

LACY. For heaven's sake, Charlie, she's not dead! Just unconscious. (*Walks to Charlie and looks where Charlie is looking.*) And that, little

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

brother, is a cobweb. Looks like you got some cleaning to tend to, and soon!

CHARLIE. Wait? What? Uh, I don't see nothin. Nothin at all! (*Returns to table.*)

CARL. Mighty strange that the smelling salts aren't working. Well, (*Thoughtfully rubs his chin.*) I guess we'll take her back to my office and see if we can get her fixed up there. Gene, you want to help me get her over there?

BODKIN. I would think a progressive medical professional such as yourself would not be so closed-minded as to refuse help when offered. Doesn't the girl deserve a chance? What if she's dying? What if I have, right here in my bag, the precise medicinal concoction that will save her? What a pity if she were to die, especially when assistance was right at hand.

CARL. Well, I don't think-

CHARLIE. Yeah, Doc. These here snake oil salesmen are sometimes better than real doctors. I hear that they-

LACY. Hush up Charlie! That's ridiculous.

CHARLIE. -don't even need no schoolin!

BECKY. Ridiculous.

CARL. Well, I don't think she's on death's door, but sure, you can take a look. I suppose it couldn't hurt.

BECKY. But Doctor, are you sure? I mean, he's a-

BODKIN. I assure you, young lady, that I'm completely qualified to assist the fine doctor. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Just as I suspected. These country bumpkins will be easy to fool. Of course, it's easy to fool anyone when you're as brilliant and cunning as I am! (*Gene puts his arm around Becky. They smile lovingly at each other. Bodkin lifts Sally's eyelids, checks wrist pulse, listens to breathing, and lifts her arm and lets it fall.*)

CHARLIE. Still looks dead to me. What 'cha think Mr. Shambles?

BODKIN. It's Shamley and no, my dear man, definitely not dead. Yes, I think I know just what will do the trick... I mean what will bring her around.

CARL. Oh, yes? What's that?

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

BODKIN. I've got just the thing here in my bag. (*Bodkin digs in bag, brings out small bottle, examines attached tag which reads "AWAKE", props Sally's head, puts to her lips. Instantly Sally's eyes open.*)

SALLY. Where am I?

CHARLIE. Wow! (*Rushes to and looks closely at Sally.*)

DOUGLAS. Well, I'll be my monkey's uncle! (*Everyone looks at Douglas.*)

BODKIN. It's alright, Miss. I'm Bodkin Shamley. You're here in the Bagwell Saloon. You were unconscious.

CHARLIE. Back from the dead! See, Doc! This here medicine man does just fine!

CARL. Well, I'll be! What kind of medicine was that Mr. Shameless?

BODKIN. It's Shamley. Bodkin Shamley. And it's just a simple formula, similar to smelling salts, which can be taken orally. Frankly, I'm surprised that you don't know about this and furthermore that you don't keep it on hand. Most doctors I associate with swear by it. You attended medical school I'm quite sure. Recent graduate?

CARL. Strange. Can't say I've heard of that one. Well, how do you feel, Miss?

SALLY. A little woozy. What happened to me?

BODKIN. We're not sure yet, young lady, but we'll soon have you quite fixed up! Don't worry yourself. You're in capable hands now.

CARL. Can you tell us your name Miss?

SALLY. Yes, of course. It's... It's... Well, isn't that strange. I don't seem to be able to remember my name.

LACY. Can't remember her name? That is strange!

CARL. (*Perplexed.*) Yes, both strange and mysterious.

DOUGLAS. Blessed is he who runs in circles for he shall be known as a wheel. (*Everyone, confused, looks at Douglas.*)

CHARLIE. Back from the dead and don't know her own name! One time Uncle Jiminy got kicked in the head by a goat and forgot his name...and how to eat.

BODKIN. Not really unusual. I would think you would have learned about amnesia, the temporary but sometimes long-term loss of memory. A phenomenon that often follows a state of unconsciousness.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CHARLIE. Oh yeah, Doc. Didn't they learn you that phe-mone-e-mone in that fancy school of yours?

CARL. It's a little early to diagnose amnesia. Amnesia usually follows some sort of physical trauma. I see no evidence of trauma so perhaps it's something else.

BODKIN. It's amnesia. Of this, I have no doubt. My deductive reasoning, where medical conditions are concerned, has always been flawless.

Definitely amnesia.

CHARLIE. Yeah, ambrosia! Listen to him, Doc. Brodkin here knows what's up.

BODKIN. It's Bodkin! Bodkin Shamley. (*To Carl.*) We'll just see now, won't we? Dear, can you remember where you're from or what you're doing in Bagwell?

SALLY. Bagwell?

BODKIN. See! Amnesia! I knew my diagnosis would be proven correct!

CHARLIE. (*Mimicking.*) Proven correct!

LACY. Charlie! Hush up!

DOUGLAS. If that ain't a fact, God's a possum! (*Everyone looks at Douglas.*) Think I'll have myself a celebratory drink. (*Goes to bar, Lacy pours her a drink.*)

CARL. Alright, young lady. Let's get you up and see how you feel on your feet.

SALLY. I think I prefer that you (*Gestures to Bodkin.*) help me up. After all, you saved me, right?

BODKIN. (*Helps Sally stand.*) Well actually, Miss, I can't take all the credit. The Sheriff is the one that brought you in. He's the real hero. I was only asked to step in and assist when the Doctor here was at a loss for how to help you. And even then, I just applied logical medicine.

CHARLIE. (*Mimicking.*) Biological medicine!

SALLY. So, the Sheriff saved me?

BODKIN. That's right my dear.

SALLY. Where's this Sheriff? (*Looks around the room.*)

BECKY. Why, he's right here Miss. (*Becky proudly brings Gene over.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

SALLY. Why Sheriff, (*Takes Gene's hand.*) thank you ever so kindly for saving my life. I'll be ever in your debt. (*Suggestively.*) What ever shall I do to repay you?

GENE. My pleasure, Miss. (*Chuckles, amused but not charmed and retracts hand.*)

SALLY. Was it? Hmm, perhaps mine as well. My hero. A gentleman. And good looking to boot! (*Bodkin clears throat to remind Sally of plan.*) Oh! I feel faint!

BODKIN. Perhaps a drink would make you feel better, my dear?

CARL. I think she'd do better with some water.

BODKIN. Nonsense, my dear Doctor. Surely, you're aware of the medicinal benefits of whiskey. A good whiskey can strengthen weak constitution, aid with sleeping, and settle the stomach.

DOUGLAS. All things in moderation (*Raises his drink high.*) are a gift from the Lord... and from Jim Beam! (*Drinks.*)

BODKIN. Yes, I think a drink is just what the doctor ordered.

LACY. Uh, no he didn't.

SALLY. Oh, won't you have a drink with me, Sheriff? To celebrate your brave rescue of me?

LACY. Oh brother!

CHARLIE. (*Raises hand like for roll call in school.*) Here!

LACY. What 'cha think, Doc?

CARL. Go ahead. Guess it couldn't hurt. Just a small one to start. (*Bodkin walks to bar as Lacy pours a scant amount of whiskey into a glass.*)

BODKIN. Make that two, would you? (*Lays coins on bar and Lacy pours a second drink, slides both over to him as he watches Sally closely for his cue.*)

GENE. Miss, why don't you sit down over here (*Gestures to table.*) 'till you feel better. (*As Gene guides Sally to table, she feigns fainting into his arms, drawing the attention of everyone except for Bodkin. Lacy and Douglas rush to help.*)

CHARLIE. There she goes again! Maybe it's the dreaded Milk Leg!

EVERYONE except BODKIN. (*Ad lib expresses concern at once.*) Oh no! Miss! Miss! Oh my! Oh goodness! Lord have mercy! (*Douglas begins*

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

praying. While everyone else's attention is on Sally, Bodkin quickly opens his bag, pulls out a red bottle with a tag attached that says "LOVE".)

BODKIN. *(Aside to Audience Only while displaying the red "LOVE" potion bottle.)* With this love potion the Sheriff will have a quick change of heart and Nurse Becky will be all alone, broken-hearted, and vulnerable (*Evil laugh and moustache twist.*) to my irresistible charms! *(While everyone is distracted, pours from red "LOVE" potion bottle into one of the glasses and returns bottle to bag.)*

SALLY. Oh my! *(Pretends to recover, batting eyes at Gene.)* What happened?

GENE. Why, you fainted.

SALLY. And you caught me? Why, you saved me again! My sweet Sheriff. So big and strong. *(Strokes Gene's face.)*

GENE. *(Uncomfortable.)* Perhaps you should sit a spell until you get your strength back. Becky, honey, help me, will you?

BECKY. Oh sure, here we go you poor thing. Just right over here. You sure were lucky that Gene caught you. If you had fallen, you could have ended up with a nasty bump on the head. *(Gene and Becky guide Sally to a chair at table. Sally sits, glaring at Becky. Gene and Becky remain standing and hold hands. Bodkin leaves his carpet bag on the bar, brings the two drinks to table where Sally is sitting, putting the glass of whiskey down in front of Sally.)*

BODKIN. Here you are my dear. Drink this and I'm quite certain you'll feel better. *(Pulls out chair next to Sally motioning for Gene to sit.)* And for you Sheriff. *(Holds up glass with "LOVE" potion.)* My treat! *(Aside to Audience Only while displaying glass with "LOVE" potion.)* When the Sheriff drinks this love potion, he'll fall hopelessly in love with Sally. It will break poor Becky's heart, leaving her lonely and vulnerable. Then I'll swoop in and make her mine!

SALLY. So, that drink Sheriff? It will only take a moment. I think it would make me feel so much better. Please, Sheriff, what's your name?

BECKY. *(Gestures to picnic basket.)* The Sheriff's about to have lunch now so...

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

GENE. I'm Sheriff Gene Ranger, Miss, but Becky's right. I do have a very important picnic date to get to. (*Turns to Becky.*) I think Becky may have made my favorite. Cucumber sandwiches. (*Takes Becky's hands in his.*)

BECKY. And picnic ham. And olives!

GENE. And pickles? And meat biscuits? (*Pulls Becky closer.*)

CHARLIE. Mmmm. Love me some meat biscuits! Sis you member Mama used to-

BECKY. Sugared fruit and lemonade.

GENE. Sugared fruit! (*Aside to Audience Only and speaks as he takes engagement ring out of pocket and displays.*) But the sweetest thing of all will be if Becky says she'll be my wife! Today is the day I'll ask for her hand. (*Puts ring in pocket.*) Do you think she'll say yes? (*To Becky*) Over by the creek. Under our favorite tree?

BECKY. Of course. And I brought-

SALLY. Please, Sheriff Gene Ranger. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Will that confounded nurse ever shut up! I'd like to tell her exactly what she can do with her picnic ham! (*To Gene.*) I'm feeling faint again and I'm quite sure that a quick drink with you is just what I need.

BODKIN. Yes, (*Puts glass of "LOVE" potion on table, gestures for Gene to sit.*) I think you'd better have that drink now Sheriff!

GENE. Well, alright, since the Doc says it's ok. Becky, we'll get to that picnic in just a moment. Don't leave without me! (*Offers Becky his cheek for a kiss.*)

BECKY. (*Kisses Gene's cheek.*) Never without you!

BODKIN. Quite right. Good man!

GENE. But just one quick drink and then I'll leave you in the very capable hands of the Doc here. (*Gene slaps Carl on the back, sits, turns his attention to Sally, and picks up the glass with the "LOVE" potion. Bodkin hovers, excitedly smirking.*)

SALLY. (*Raises her glass.*) To my strong, brave husband.

BECKY. What did she say? (*Bodkin clears his throat loudly at Sally.*)

SALLY. I mean... hero. To my strong brave hero.

LACY. Oh brother!

CHARLIE. Here! (*Raises hand like for roll call in school.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

GENE. To your health, Miss. (*Gene raises his glass of “LOVE” potion, chuckling, amused, but not charmed. They both drink and then begin staring deeply into each other’s eyes.*) Oh, my goodness! Oh my gosh!

BECKY. What is it? What’s wrong?

GENE. (*Still looking deeply into Sally’s eyes.*) Your eyes.

SALLY. (*Innocently.*) Yes, Sheriff? (*Bats her eyes.*)

GENE. They’re so lovely. I could stare into those eyes forever.

BECKY & LACY. What did he say?

BODKIN. (*Rubs hands together.*) Well, well, well. Seems as if we have a budding romance on our hands!

SALLY. Why thank you ever so kindly, Sheriff. Yours are quite captivatin’ as well.

GENE. And please, Miss, call me Gene.

BECKY. Gene!?

SALLY. Why, sure thing Sheriff. (*Beat.*) I mean Gene.

GENE. I should take you over to the station. See if anyone’s looking for you.

SALLY. Why, that would be lovely, Gene. Thank you ever so kindly.

BECKY. Gene! (*Beat.*) Our picnic!

GENE. (*Continuing to look, mesmerized, only at Sally.*) Oh, sorry Becky. I’m really not that hungry right now. Perhaps another time. (*Sally shoots a triumphant smile at Becky who responds with a look of puzzlement.*)

BODKIN. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) You see! The Sheriff has forgotten all about poor Nurse Becky! And now (*Evil laugh and moustache twist.*) for my dirty work!

BECKY. But Gene! (*Beat.*) Gene? (*Pause.*) Well, ok. Alright then, I suppose our picnic can wait. (*Begins to sniff, on the verge of crying.*)

GENE. After you, Miss. (*Gene offers Sally his arm. They exit front door. Becky sits at a table, crying quietly. Bodkin sits across the table.*)

BODKIN. There, there, my dear. (*Bodkin pats Becky’s hand and gives her his handkerchief.*)

BECKY. (*Takes handkerchief and blows nose surprisingly loudly, startling Bodkin.*) Thank you ever so kindly. (*Sniffing daintily into handkerchief.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

BODKIN. I'm so sorry, my dear. (*Points to her picnic basket.*) You were all ready for a picnic, and now the Sheriff apparently has other interests.

BECKY. Yes. A very special picnic. I...I don't understand what happened. (*To herself.*) Maybe Gene doesn't love me after all.

BODKIN. Oh my, I can see that the Sheriff has broken your heart. Such a shame. Lawmen can be so unreliable when it comes to affairs of the heart. Now if it were me- (*Moves to a chair next to Becky.*) -I would never let you out of my sight. How long has the Sheriff been courting you?

BECKY. (*Modestly moves to chair across from Bodkin.*) Why, we've known each other since we were kids. Been courting almost a year. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) How can this be happening? Has my one true love really fallen for another? My poor heart is breaking. What shall I do?

BODKIN. Courting for a year! And he hasn't married you yet? My dear, I'm afraid the Sheriff is even more unreliable than most. Any levelheaded fellow would have asked for your hand long ago. (*Moves to chair next to Becky.*) Let me buy you a drink, dear. (*Becky moves to another chair while Hickory enters front door holding his face and moaning.*)

CHARLIE. (*Hurries to bar.*) Hickory! You're back! Feelin better? Two whiskeys, Lacy. (*LACY pours two whiskeys.*) Ready for that drink? (*Grabs drinks, holds them up, motions Hickory to come over.*)

HICKORY. I don't know Charlie. My tooth's startin to hurt again, and bad! Hey Doc. You commin?

CARL. Oh, my yes. So sorry Hickory. We had an incident here.

BODKIN. Another medical emergency gone awry under your watch, Doctor?

CARL. (*Ignores Bodkin, looks around room, spots Douglas.*) Reverend Prather, would you mind walking Hickory back over to my office. He needs to have a tooth pulled. I'll be along shortly Hickory.

DOUGLAS. No problem at all, my son. I can drop Hickory off on my way home. Was just heading there to feed my monkey. (*Everyone, confused, looks at Douglas.*)

HICKORY. Bye Charlie.

CHARLIE. But your drink, Hickory!

HICKORY. Sorry Charlie. (*Hickory, moaning, and Douglas ad lib instructing him on the power of prayer and whiskey, exit front door.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CHARLIE. Well, can't let good whiskey go to waste! (*Charlie drinks one drink. Lacy holds her hand out for payment.*) Uh...Hickory's day to pay. (*Charlie takes second drink to table and begins to drink. Bodkin stands, goes behind Becky and puts his hands on her shoulders, whispering loudly into her ear. Becky is wide-eyed.*)

BODKIN. (*Sinister, demanding.*) Now, Nurse Trueheart, I think it's about time we had that drink-

CARL. (*Seeing Bodkin's advance, heads to Becky's side.*) Excuse me, Mr. Shabby. Might I have a word with my nurse?

BODKIN. (*Startled.*) Oh, uh... Certainly. And it's pronounced Shamley. Bodkin Shamley. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Confounded Doctor! I nearly had Becky right where I wanted her. I really think she's warming up to me and, honestly, who can blame her? Moth to the flame. Moth to the flame! (*To Carl.*) Well then, I think I'll go check on our young amnesia patient. (*To Becky.*) Perhaps we'll have that drink later my dear. (*Carl sits with Becky as Bodkin exits front door.*)

BECKY. I can't understand what's happened. Long as I can remember, Gene's only ever had eyes for me. We've been planning this picnic for weeks now.

CARL. Yes, it's very strange behavior. In fact, this whole morning has been very strange. The girl. The smelling salts not working. That Bodkin fella. And now Gene, acting so peculiar.

BECKY. You know Gene. It's not like him to cancel plans...or to not be hungry at lunch time. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Gene loves me. I think! I was so sure of it this morning. Oh, woe is me! Woe is me! (*To Carl.*) He's acting like he's under a spell or something!

CARL. Yes, like he's under a spell. (*Pause.*) You're right. Gene is not himself. Something's definitely not right here. And I don't take kindly to being undermined by the likes of a snake oil salesman. I'm not sure what is going on, but I think we need to do a little investigating. Since Gene is obviously in no frame of mind to do it, it's going to be up to us.

BECKY. But what can we do?

CARL. I'm not sure. I'd like to have a peek at what Bodkin has in his bag of tricks.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

BODKIN. (*OS front door.*) Yes, I think the fresh air will do you good, my dear!

CARL. He's back! Here's our chance! See if you can distract him somehow. I know! See if he has a place to stay tonight. Show him the hotel. Try to get him out of here without his bag. Turn on the charm but be careful. Don't trust him. I'll only need a few minutes alone with the bag. Then, meet me here. Best come in the back, through the storeroom.

BODKIN. (*From OS front door.*) Sheriff, stay close and don't let the young lady wear herself out!

BECKY. Oh dear! Charm him you say? OK. I'll try. I'll do my best. (*Bodkin enters front door, puts carpet bag on bar to one side, sits, and motions to Lacy for a drink. Lacy serves drink. Becky walks to bar, to the opposite side of bag, and taps Bodkin on shoulder.*) Dr. Shamley, isn't it? **BODKIN.** (*Turns away from his bag and towards Becky.*) Why yes. Well, no, not officially doctor. But what's in a title? It's what you do that matters. (*Beat.*) Nurse Trueheart, isn't it?

BECKY. That's right. Mr. Shamley-

BODKIN. Please, call me Bodkin.

BECKY. Alright, Bodkin. I wanted to thank you ever so kindly for comforting me before. I was just a little shocked, you see. I thought Gene, Sheriff Ranger, was the man for me but I guess I was (*Beat.*) mistaken.

BODKIN. My dear, yes. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) I knew she'd come running to me! Undoubtedly, she finds me ravishing! She can't help herself, and really, who could? Bees to honey! Bees to honey! (*To Becky.*) I don't think the Sheriff is well suited for you at all. You'd be better off with a more professional man. A learned man. A well-traveled man.

(*Stands facing Becky, grabs her shoulders.*) A man who will love you and be devoted to you. A man who can take care of your money... I mean you... take care of you. (*Pulls Becky close while she trembles with fear.*)

BECKY. I'm sure you're quite right.

BODKIN. I think you know who I mean.

BECKY. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) I must continue to pretend affection for this scoundrel if we are to find out what he is up to! Oh my, can I do it? It is tortuously difficult, but I must be strong for my love. Strong for Gene! (*To Bodkin.*) Talking with you has made me see things so much more

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

clearly. (*Steps back from Bodkin and puts her hand on his arm.*) Well, Mr. Shamley, I'm sorry, I mean Bodkin, seeing as you're new to Bagwell, I wanted to see if you have a place to stay the night. Or are you passing on through this afternoon?

BODKIN. A place to stay? (*Raises eyebrows up and down suggestively and winks at Becky.*) Well, I think I'd better stay in town, just in case Sally has a relapse.

BECKY. Sally?

BODKIN. Wait! Did I say Sally? Sally is ummm...my sister's name. Yes, that's it! My sister's name! Oh my. Well, what I meant to say was just in case the young lady has a relapse. I'm not sure that your doctor is up to the challenge of reviving her should she fall ill again, don't you think?

BECKY. Oh, yes, absolutely. Well, there is a hotel across the way. The Bagwell Hotel. Would you like me to show you the way?

BODKIN. That would be lovely my dear. Show me the way, Nurse Trueheart.

BECKY. My pleasure. I mean a revered medical man like yourself needs his rest. (*Becky offers Bodkin her arm to distract him from his bag and leads him through front door, leaving his bag on the bar.*)

BODKIN. To the hotel! Yes...for some (*Raises eyebrows up and down.*) rest! (*Carl follows Bodkin and Becky as they head for front door.*) After you, my dear. (*Carl watches Becky and Bodkin exit front door, looking out after them.*)

LACY. Somethin' funny going on here Doc. Sheriff's acting so strangely. He and Becky were supposed to have gone on a picnic this afternoon. She was sure he was going to ask for her hand in marriage. Now he's mooning over that girl and Becky leaves with that slippery snake oil salesman? What the heck is going on?

CARL. Yes, you're right. Gene is acting strangely! (*Closes front door and rushes to bar.*) But Becky is ok. I asked her to distract Bodkin so that I could have a look in his bag. I don't trust him.

LACY. Oh, I see. Good thinkin. Here. (*Slides Bodkin's bag down bar to Carl.*) You take a peek and I'll go out front and keep a lookout. (*Lacy exits front door.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CARL. (*Looks in Bodkin's bag and pulls out an assortment of bottles and jars and handmade bags tied with strings etc...and then a bottle with a tag that says "TRUTH" and reads tag aloud.*) Truth. Truth? Strange name for a medicine. (*Puts on bar, pulls out more jars and bottles which he puts on bar, and then a red bottle with a tag that says "LOVE" and reads tag aloud.*) Love. Love? Wait a minute! What's going on here? Love. The Sheriff's strange behavior. I think I might know what's happening! (*Picks up "TRUTH" serum bottle and reads tag aloud.*) Truth! (*Picks up the "LOVE" potion bottle and reads tag aloud.*) Love! (*Holding both bottles up.*) What bad medicine is this? (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 2

Lacy and Bodkin are OS front door. Charlie is sitting at a table nursing a drink, playing with cards. Carl is looking through a collection of bottles, jars, bags, on bar from Bodkin's bag which remains open on bar.

LACY. (*OS front door, talking loudly to alert Carl.*) You're back! We haven't been formally introduced yet, but I'm Lacy McKinney.

CARL. (*Head snaps up.*) Holy Smokes! (*Begins to replace bottles, bags, and jars into bag, except the red "LOVE" potion bottle.*)

LACY. (*OS front door, talking loudly to alert Carl.*) Oh, Listen, Mr. Shameful, I hear you're a whiz with medicine. I was wondering if you wouldn't mind taking a look at this here rash I have.

BODKIN. (*OS front door.*) It's Shamley! Bodkin Shamley! And no, I'm in a bit of a hurry. Out of my way! I mean, would you excuse me please?

CARL. I better keep this love potion back here behind the bar for further investigation! (*Puts red "LOVE" potion bottle behind/under bar and closes Bodkin's bag as Bodkin, rushes in front door with Lacy following.*) Lacy looks nervously at Carl whose hand is still on the top of the bag.)

BODKIN. Besides, you have a town doctor for that kind of thing. Surely, he can handle a simple rash!

CARL. Rash?

BODKIN. My bag, Doctor.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CARL. Oh yes. (*Looks down, realizes his hand is still on the bag, picks up bag.*) Just about to bring it to you. Here you go. (*Carl gives Bodkin the bag. Bodkin looks suspiciously at Carl, then at bag, then at Carl again. Lacy looks at her own hands.*)

LACY. Oh, happy day! I guess it's not a rash after all.

CHARLIE. Yup! Got to be careful with them rashes. Couple years back over in Bixton they got the rashes bad, real bad. Nearly wiped out the entire town! Population 56 or was it 55. Can't member if Old Man Skulkie was still alive when-

CARL. Nurse Trueheart get you set up at the hotel?

BODKIN. (*Smiling.*) Yes. She showed me over and then, suddenly, (*Frowning.*) developed a terrible headache. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Isn't that the way it is with women? It's always a headache. Am I right fellas? Am I right? (*To Carl.*) I was going to give her my special tonic but had forgotten my bag. She left in such a hurry, I was sure she was on her way to see you about the headache.

CARL. No. No, she didn't come back here.

BODKIN. Well can we blame her? After what happened this morning, perhaps she's not as confident of your medical abilities as she once was. (*Gene and Sally enter front door, arm in arm.*) Back so soon? I hope the fresh air agreed with you, my dear. However, I was thinking that perhaps you will need a room at the hotel. After all, you don't know who you are.

SALLY. No. No, I don't.

GENE. Does it matter? She's lovely.

BODKIN. So, you must not know where you're going to stay tonight.

SALLY. No. No, I don't!

GENE. We have an extra room at my house!

BODKIN. That would be most inappropriate, Sheriff. I think it would be best if she stayed over at the hotel, under my supervision of course, in case she has a relapse.

SALLY. Now that you mention it, I am quite tired. Perhaps it would do me good to rest a spell.

GENE. Here, dear, you can rest your head on my shoulder. (*Sally rolls her eyes, sees Carl looking at her, and changes to a sweet smile.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CARL. You're certainly welcome to rest up at the clinic. We have a comfortable bed there and Nurse Trueheart could keep you company.

BODKIN. My dear Doctor, I don't think it would be wise to leave this young woman, in her vulnerable state, in the hands of a simple country nurse. I mean even you, the town doctor, were not able to help her in her time of need. No, no. I think I'll get her set up at the hotel, in her own room of course. Near mine, in case she needs expert medical assistance again.

SALLY. Well, if you think that's best Mr. Shamley.

GENE. Oh no! You're not leaving? Can I come with you?

SALLY. Don't worry my sweet Sheriff. I'm sure I'll be back to see you very soon! (*Aside to Audience Only.*) This is working out perfectly! That love potion turns even the strongest willed men into lovesick puppy dogs!

CARL. You've really taken an interest in this case, haven't you Mr.

Shama-Lama-Ding-Dong.

BODKIN. It's Shamley. Bodkin Shamley. And yes, I'm interested! (*Rubbs hands together in greed, realizes what he's doing and wipes hands on his pants.*) I mean just doing what any responsible citizen would do, Doctor.

CARL. Well, Miss, why don't I just stop in and check on you after you get settled.

SALLY. Uhh... (*Looks to Bodkin not sure how he wants her to respond.*)

GENE. Yes! I'll come check on you too!

SALLY. Uhh... (*Looks to Bodkin not sure how he wants her to respond.*)

BODKIN. My dear Doctor and Sheriff, that won't be necessary at all. I've got the situation completely under control. Besides, I think rest is what is in order. Come with me dear. (*To Gene and Carl.*) Good day! (*Bodkin takes Sally's arm in his and begins toward front door. Carl sits at bar and Lacy pours him a drink. Becky, unnoticed, enters partially from storeroom door watching as Gene pats pockets, pulls out a ring. Becky reacts with quiet surprise which quickly turns to dismay.*)

GENE. No wait! Uhh, girl with no name, don't go! I... I... I love you!

LACY & CARL. What did he say?!

GENE. I don't know your name, but I do know I love you. Will you marry me? (*Gene gets down on a knee in front of Sally and holds ring up. Becky, still unnoticed, exits storeroom door, crying into her handkerchief.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

LACY. Oh, for Pete's sake! He really was going to propose today! And now he's given Becky's ring to that girl!

CHARLIE. Who's Pete? Oh. You mean Cousin Pete, the one with that short leg? Always walkin in circles. Funniest thing. I member this one time-

SALLY. (*Snatches the ring and puts it on.*) Oh, my sweet Sheriff! Well, would you look at that! Diamonds and pearls! (*Aside to Audience Only.*) This is happening just as Bodkin said it would! (*Looks at ring.*) It's a little on the small side but I'm sure I can sell it for something. (*To Gene.*) Why, this is so fast but of course I'll marry you! After all, you are my hero!

LACY. Oh brother!

CHARLIE. (*Raises hand like for roll call in school.*) Here!

GENE. (*Takes Sally's hands in his, holding them close to his chest.*) I'm gonna make you the happiest girl in the world.

SALLY. Why my sweet Sheriff! I'm sure that's absolutely true! Now you sit down here and let me go get rested and freshened up and when I get back, we'll make our weddin plans!

GENE. Wedding plans! Yes! I think I'd better go find Reverend Prather. See when he can perform the ceremony. Hopefully very soon! Goodbye my darling. (*Gene tries to kiss Sally, she leans away, he shrugs, oblivious, and exits front door.*)

BODKIN & SALLY. (*Aside to the Audience Only.*) And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the power of the potion!

BODKIN. Well, my dear, your day started off rocky but look how lovely it has turned out. (*Pulls Sally to one side where others can't hear.*) So far so good, Sally. Looks as if the love potion is working perfectly on the Sheriff.

SALLY. Oh Bodkin, yes! I guess that old Indian medicine man was telling the truth after all. Everything is working exactly as you said it would.

BODKIN. Well of course it is. All my schemes always work perfectly. I am quite brilliant, as you well know.

SALLY. The most brilliant man I have ever known. So, what now?

BODKIN. Let's get you to the hotel. Then I'll look for Nurse Becky and make sure she knows about your engagement to her Sheriff. Once she is sufficiently devastated, I'll make my move and woo her into marriage.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

SALLY. But why don't you just use the love potion on Becky?

BODKIN. (Angry.) Who are you to question me? I don't need the love potion. I am quite irresistible to women.

SALLY. Of course! You're the most irresistible man I've ever known! So, what should I do?

BODKIN. Egad! Try using your tiny girl sized brain, woman! You will make your wedding plans with the Sheriff, of course!

SALLY. But I don't really have to marry the Sheriff, right? It's only a ruse for now, right? Because you're going to marry me after you get the ranch and get rid of Nurse Becky, right?

BODKIN. (Sinister.) You'll do as you are told! Let's go quickly. I've got to find Nurse Becky! (*Now speaking so that everyone can hear.*) Now, my dear, let's get you over to the hotel. You'll need your rest if you are to be married soon. Good day everyone! (*Sally and Bodkin exit front door.*

Hickory enters front door, moaning loudly, looking silly with bandages wound around his chin, over the top of his head, in a big bow at the top, to hold a cold compress up against the side of his face.)

CHARLIE. You're back Hickory! Feelin' any better? (*Hurries to bar.*) Two whiskeys, Lacy. (*Lacy pours whiskeys, gives to Charlie, hand out for payment.*) Told ya, Hickory's day to pay. (*Holds drinks up and motions to Hickory to come over.*) Ready for that drink?

HICKORY. Hey Charlie. Oh Doc. My tooth!

CARL. Oh, for heaven's sake! With all that's been going on here I've forgotten about your tooth! (*Becky, crying, enters from storeroom door.*)

BECKY. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Oh, dear me. Gene, my one and only true love, has found another. Alas, I shall never love again. I shall ripen and wither on the vine. (*Becky cries quietly into handkerchief. Lacy rushes to her side and hugs her.*)

LACY. Oh no honey. How much of that did you hear?

BECKY. (*Crying.*) Love. Ring. Marriage. Enough to know all is lost. I will here, now, and forever, be a piece of flotsam on a loveless sea of misery.

CARL. (*To Lacy.*) I'll take care of Becky. Can you walk Hickory back over to the clinic? There is a blue bottle in the tall cabinet behind my desk

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

labeled Shanghai Juice. Have him take a spoonful, would you? That should take care of the pain.

LACY. Sure thing Doc. Anything for you. (*Gives Carl a big smile.*) It'll be ok hun. (*Gives Becky a comforting pat.*) Come on Hickory, Doc wants you to wait at the clinic. Has some pain medicine waitin for you. (*Lacy guides Hickory toward front door while Carl helps Becky to a chair.*)

HICKORY. Oh Boy! Shanghai Juice!

CHARLIE. What about that drink, Hickory?

HICKORY. Sorry Charlie.

CHARLIE. Bye Hickory. (*Beat.*) Be a shame to let Hickory's drink go to waste! (*Charlie drinks one whiskey and holds the other as he returns, unsteadily, to his seat and begins to drink. Lacy and Hickory exit front door, Hickory moaning loudly, as Douglas enters front door.*)

DOUGLAS. (*Calling back to Hickory.*) Bless you, my child! (*Excited, turns attention to Becky and Carl.*) Praise be! What a glorious day! Hello Doc, Nurse Becky. I hear Gene's looking for me. I hear there's to be a wedding! Looks like you and Gene are finally going to tie the proverbial knot! (*Becky begins sobbing. Carl greets Douglas with a handshake, begins to usher him back to front door.*) Oh, mercy me! Was it something I said? Where is Gene?

CARL. Reverend Prather, I think that any discussion about weddings may be a little sensitive for Becky. Seems there may be a wedding, but Becky's not the bride.

DOUGLAS. Not Becky!?

CARL. Gene is out looking for you right now. Perhaps you can talk some sense into him. He seems a bit... confused at the moment.

DOUGLAS. Lord, help the boy. Yes, perhaps he seeks my counsel. I'll go look for him right away. Becky, my dear, have courage! You can shed tears that he is gone, or you can smile because- (*Becky sobs louder.*)

CARL. OK Reverend. (*Muscles Douglas to door as Becky sobs.*) That's good. I think you should hurry and find Gene. Off you go. (*Carl turns to Becky thinking Douglas has departed but Douglas instead turns to Becky and begins speaking. Carl tries to shield Becky as Douglas tries to get her attention and deliver comfort.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

DOUGLAS. Remember, Becky, love is never lost. If not reciprocated, it will flow back like a good Mississippi molasses and soften and purify the heart! (*Becky sobs.*)

CARL. Yes, Reverend. OK. We'll see you later then. (*Pushes Douglas out front door.*)

DOUGLAS. (*Loudly from OS front door.*) Love is an occasionally splendored thing.

CARL. Becky, I understand what you heard Gene saying was upsetting, but I think there's a reason for his strange behavior. I think what we all just witnessed may be the result of some bad medicine.

BECKY. Bad medicine?

CARL. Look what I found in Bodkin's bag. (*From behind/under bar, Carl pulls out the red "LOVE" potion bottle and puts it on top of bar.*)

BECKY. What's that? (*Stops crying, dabbing her eyes with the handkerchief.*)

CARL. (*Removes the tag that says "LOVE" and hands the tag to Becky.*) Read it. I think it's some kind of potion.

BECKY. (*Reading.*) Love. (*Beat.*) A love potion? You found it in Bodkin's bag?

CARL. Yes. Among other things. He has an assortment of tonics, and lotions, and, well, I don't know what. But this love potion-

BECKY. You think that Gene drank this potion and is under a spell of some sort? That would mean that Gene doesn't really love her! (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Be still my beating heart. Perhaps Gene loves me after all! Do you think there's hope for us yet? Do you?

CARL. He started acting strangely after drinks with that girl. I think Bodkin slipped this potion into Gene's drink so he would fall in love with our mystery lady.

BECKY. I don't understand. Why would Bodkin want Gene to fall in love with that girl? Bodkin doesn't even know her.

CARL. Well, I don't think it is a coincidence that they both showed up here at the same time.

BECKY. Wait a second. Hold on. Earlier, when I was talking to Bodkin, he called her Sally but then explained it away. Maybe her name really is Sally and maybe they really do know each other!

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CARL. That just might be the case! This amnesia business doesn't add up. I'm thinking they're in on this together!

BECKY. But, in on what? What could they gain by this Sally marrying Gene? Not like he's rich or anything.

CARL. I don't know just yet, but I intend to find out. (*Charlie, unsteady, walks to bar, puts empty glass down, sits. MAXWELL enters front door.*)

CHARLIE. Afternoon, Mister.

MAXWELL. Good afternoon. I'm on official government business and looking for a rancher by the name of Cory Trueheart. Any idea where I can find him?

CHARLIE. Cory? Heck no. How could he be here? He's been gone for months now. Many a strange thing has happened here today but nothin' that strange! Although- (*Looks up to the rafters while talking.*) -Auntie Vergie always used to say that after she lost Uncle Walter in the big accident, he used to visit her, in the outhouse of all places! Can you imagine? You're in the outhouse, gots to go bad, you're just squattin' down, getting ready to-

MAXWELL. (*Horrified, interrupts.*) Excuse me? An accident?

CHARLIE. Yes. A mining accident over in Casterville.

MAXWELL. You're saying Cory Trueheart has been injured in a mining accident?

CHARLIE. Ah... no. I was tellin you 'bout my Uncle Walter's ghost. Geeze. Thought all you gov'ment fellas supposed to be real smart like! (*Beat.*) Oh, never mind. You won't find Cory here anymore than you'll find my Uncle Walter. But his daughter, Becky, she's right over there.

MAXWELL. Uh...Thanks. (*Walks to Becky.*) Are you Becky Trueheart?

BECKY. Yes. I'm Becky Trueheart.

MAXWELL. My name is Maxwell Foreman. I'm here on official government business and need to see Cory Trueheart. I understand he is your father. Where can I find him?

CHARLIE. (*Shouting.*) Bagwell Cemetery! (*Maxwell and Becky turn to look at Charlie while Carl takes the red "LOVE" potion bottle to bar, putting it down and tucking the tag into his pocket. Charlie speaks to Carl.*) That gov'ment fella's just dumb as socks! (*Carl claps Charlie on*

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

the back, turns away from Charlie and the red “LOVE” potion bottle, faces Becky’s table, and listens with concerned interest.)

BECKY. I’m sorry, Mr. Foreman, but my father passed away unexpectedly just three months back. May I ask the nature of the government’s business with him?

MAXWELL. Oh. I’m so sorry for your loss. (*Pause.*) Well, I’m here to facilitate the final payment, I say final payment, and ownership transfer of his land lease.

BECKY. Land lease? What? Oh yes... I forgot about the telegram. (*Pulls telegram out of her pocket and starts to read.*) But this must be a mistake. I don’t think he carried a lease on any land. None that I know of anyway.

CHARLIE. Yup. Nobody owns nothin no more. It’s all leases nowadays. (*Picks up red “LOVE” potion bottle, examines it, remembers Carl is close by, puts it down.*)

MAXWELL. (*Pulls paperwork out of his bag and reads.*) Ewing Ranch Lot 19 in Saguache (pronounced suh-watch) County, Colorado... (*Charlie picks up red “LOVE” potion bottle, smells the cork, and puts it down, afraid of getting caught.*)

MAXWELL. 9,756 acres 9.5 miles east of the town of Saguache, .7 miles west of the town of Bagwell.

BECKY. Why yes, that’s our ranch. But I don’t understand. I thought we owned the property. Are you sure there’s a lease? (*Carl walks to Becky and puts a reassuring hand on her shoulder. Charlie picks up red “LOVE” potion bottle, shakes it, looks around, licks lips, holds it in his lap, admiring.*)

MAXWELL. Quite sure. A ten-year lease to be exact. I say a ten-year lease! (*Bodkin partially enters storeroom door, unseen by all, listening, twisting mustache. He cannot see the red “LOVE” potion bottle in Charlie’s lap. Maxwell hands paperwork to Becky, pointing to a paragraph.*) See here. The final payment is due this week and I have the paperwork here to execute the transfer of ranch ownership once the payment requirements have been fulfilled. And... (*Flips through pages, skimming.*) ...in the case of the death of the original lessee... (*Flips through more pages, finds what he’s looking for.*) Ah, here it is, (*Reading.*) the lease must be executed by the eldest male relative. I say, the eldest

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

male relative! So, either your brother or husband must execute the final paperwork.

BECKY. Oh my! I have no brothers. I'm an only child. And I'm not yet married. What happens then, if there is no male relative to sign the paperwork?

MAXWELL. Well, the lease will terminate. I say terminate! And the government will take possession of the property. It's all detailed in the lease agreement. (*Turns to a page and points to paragraph.*) See here.

BODKIN. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Well, well, well. Looks like Becky will be in great need of a husband in order to save her beloved ranch. This government business could certainly work to my advantage. (*Bodkin exits storeroom door.*)

CARL. Mr. Foreman, I'm Doctor Goodall. Becky is my nurse. Do you mind if I take a look at the agreement for her?

MAXWELL. Surely.

CARL. (*Takes paperwork from Becky and reads.*) Don't worry Becky. Looks like Gene can execute the agreement once you're married.

MAXWELL. Oh! You're getting married. A happy coincidence.

BECKY. Umm... yes. I'm going to be married soon. (*Gene enters front door unnoticed by all but Charlie who quickly returns red "LOVE" potion bottle to bar.*)

CARL. To Gene Ranger, the town sheriff.

GENE. Did I hear my name?

BECKY & CARL. (*Startled and surprised.*) Gene!

MAXWELL. Oh hello. Sheriff Ranger, I presume? I'm Maxwell Foreman. Miss Trueheart was just telling me about you. (*Gene and Maxwell shake hands. During this exchange Becky and Carl are nervous that Gene will blow their story.*)

GENE. Pleasure, Mr. Foreman. I trust nothing crime related needing my attention has brought you to Bagwell.

MAXWELL. No, no. Nothing like that. Just some financial business. I understand you're getting married.

GENE. That's right! I am! I'm the luckiest guy alive!

BECKY and CARL. (*Speaking over each other ad lib nervously.*) Oh, so lucky! So much luck. Lucky, yes! Extremely lucky.

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

MAXWELL. Well, yes then, that would be fine, but you'll need to make it soon. I'll be in town for only three days. Three days I say!

GENE. Huh? (*Becky pretends to cough loudly to divert the conversation.*)

CARL. (*Catching on.*) Oh, my. You OK? Hey Gene, would you get Becky a drink?

GENE. Oh, sure. Excuse me. (*Walks to bar.*) Hey Charlie. Where's Lacy?

CHARLIE. (*Looks around for Lacy and then remembers.*) Oh yeah. Took Hickory over to Doc's office for some Shanghai Juice! His tooth ya know. (*As Carl, Maxwell, and Becky continue to look through the paperwork, Gene sees the red "LOVE" potion bottle and picks it up.*)

GENE. Fancy bottle. Don't think I've ever seen a red bottle before.

CHARLIE. Must be French or something. The good stuff! (*Licks lips.*)

GENE. Hope Lacy doesn't mind me giving some of it to Becky. (*Gene pours a drink from the red "LOVE" potion bottle while Charlie looks on, licking his lips, wanting. Gene notices Charlie's desire.*) Think we'll just find some place behind the bar for safe keeping. (*While Maxwell speaks, Gene squats down putting red "LOVE" bottle on a shelf behind/under bar. Charlie, frustrated, sits at table.*)

MAXWELL. (*While Gene is behind bar and can't hear.*) As long as you marry, make the final payment, and the documents are executed to my satisfaction before I leave town, the ranch will remain in your family's possession. (*Gene stands.*) Well, I'm off. I'll be staying at the Bagwell Hotel if you have questions for me. Good day. I say good day! (*Carl walks Maxwell to front door. Gene brings "LOVE" potion drink to Becky.*)

GENE. Enjoy your stay in Bagwell! (*Maxwell exits front door w/o papers.*) Here you go Nurse Trueheart. (*Puts "LOVE" potion he thinks whiskey in front of Becky.*)

BECKY. Thank you. Listen, Gene-

GENE. Nice fella. I guess he wants to come to the wedding.

BECKY. -about that wedding. I really need to talk to you. You see-

GENE. Oh, don't worry. You'll be invited too, of course. After all, we've known each other forever.

BECKY. Well, it's not exactly about the wedding. It's about Bodkin and the girl that showed up this morning. You see I think that-

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

GENE. (Smiling.) Oh yes, the girl. She is so lovely. Becky, once you get to know her, I'm sure you'll be great friends.

BECKY. Oh, well, I'm sure she is a (*Pause.*) lovely person, Gene, but I really need to tell you- (*Bodkin and Sally enter front door.*)

SALLY. Gene, darling! I'm back to make our weddin plans!

BODKIN. Yes, our plan is working! (*Beat.*) I mean, uh, yes, you'd better get working on those wedding plans my dear!

GENE. Oh darling. (*Gene rushes to Sally and they embrace.*) It's so wonderful to see you again. I couldn't find Reverend Prather but left word for him to come over here as soon as possible.

BECKY. (*Following Gene.*) Gene! Please! I need to talk to you!

GENE. Perhaps another time Becky. I've got myself a weddin' to plan!

(*Sally shoots Becky a snarky smile. Bodkin puts his arm around Becky.*)

BODKIN. Tsk-Tsk my dear... still hoping the Sheriff will come around? (*Becky shrugs off Bodkin and sits at table with Carl. Gene and Sally sit at a far table, whispering, holding hands, Bodkin delivers an Angry Aside to Audience Only.*) Well, well, well... Nurse Becky may be a tougher nut to crack than I thought. But she must, she will be mine! (*Bodkin sits at bar. Lacy enters front door.*)

LACY. OK, Doc. Got Hickory setup with that Shanghai Juice.

CARL. Thanks Lacy.

LACY. Becky, hun, you ok?

BECKY. Oh Lacy, what do you think? (*Points to Gene and Sally.*)

LACY. Oh brother!

CHARLIE. (*Raises hand like for roll call in school.*) Here! (*Lacy gives Charlie a look, goes to bar, begins to pour a drink for Bodkin. Maxwell enters front door, walks to Carl and Becky, not noticing Gene and Sally.*)

MAXWELL. There it is. The lease agreement. I'll need to take that with me. (*Picks up papers as Gene and Sally giggle. Maxwell looks at them. Gene and Sally kiss.*) Miss Trueheart! Isn't that your future husband, I say your future husband, over there kissing another woman? I don't know what you're trying to pull but let me tell you that committing fraud against the government of the U.S. of A. is a most serious offense!

CHARLIE. (*Mimicking.*) I say, a most serious offense!

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

BODKIN. What's this? Yes indeed. A most serious offense. One that may work to my advantage! I mean, um... terrible how the government is trying to take advantage!

CHARLIE. Gov'ment's always taking advantage. Hey sis! Member when Cousin Buck's bees escaped and them gove'ment fellas come a callin and-

BECKY. But Sir-

MAXWELL. A crime, in fact, punishable by ten years in prison!

CHARLIE. (*Mimicking.*) I say ten years in prison!

BODKIN. Oh my! Ten years in prison! That's not good. I can tell you from personal experience! (*Beat.*) I mean so I've heard, personally.

CARL. Listen here-

MAXWELL. You have three days, I say three days, to produce a husband which obviously will not be the Sheriff.

BODKIN. Oh my no. Certainly not the Sheriff! (*Bodkin puts his arm around Becky which she shrugs off.*)

BECKY. If I could explain-

MAXWELL. Otherwise, you'll have 48 hours, I say 48 hours, to vacate and a public auction of property and contents will be held!

CHARLIE. Yeah, the gov'ment's always auctioning off people's property. I member one time Cousin Fester-

BECKY. Mr. Foreman, I-

MAXWELL. And don't give any thought to buying it back at auction. Union Pacific is intent on purchasing available land for their railroad expansion and they have the financial power to outbid anyone.

BODKIN. Oh, my yes. That's simply wonderful! I mean terrible, dear. Simply terrible! (*Bodkin puts his arm around Becky which she shrugs off.*)

BECKY. But sir!

CHARLIE. And the railroads, just goin around doin what the gov'ment tells em to.

CARL. Sir, if you would just please listen-

MAXWELL. Good day! I say, good day! (*Storms out front door.*)

LACY. For heaven's sake! What was that all about? (*Lacy gives Bodkin a look and puts a protective arm around Becky. Hickory enters, unsteady, singing loudly.*)

HICKORY. (*Slurring.*) Charlie! I'm back!

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CHARLIE. Two whiskeys, Lacy. Hickory, how's the tooth?

LACY. It'll be alright Becky. You'll see. (*Returns to bar, pours two drinks, gives to Charlie, holds hand out for payment.*)

CHARLIE. I keep tellin ya-

LACY. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Hickory's day to pay. Funny thing is, little brother, you're doin all the drinkin and nobody's doin the payin!

CHARLIE. (*Shrugs, holds drinks up, motions Hickory over.*) Ready for that drink?

HICKORY. Sure thing, Charlie!

CARL. Oh, good Lord! Hickory! Things have been so crazy. I'm sorry I've not come to pull that tooth yet!

HICKORY. (*Slurring.*) 's ok Doc. My tooth don't even hurt no more!

Lacy gave me some of that there Shanghai Juice and I feel wonderful!

Really, really wonderful! Don't think my tooth needs pullin no more.

CARL. Oh no. How much did you have?

HICKORY. (*Pulls a blue bottle out of jacket, cradling it like kitten, petting it.*) This here bottle. This beautiful, beautiful bottle.

LACY. (*Scolding.*) Hickory!

CHARLIE. Yeah, as far as bottles go, Hickory, that's a doozie! Bring it on over here! (*Charlie licks lips, wanting Shanghai Juice.*)

CARL. Now Hickory. I know Lacy did not give you the entire bottle.

BODKIN. Dr. Goodall! I'm quite sure that allowing a barkeep to administer powerful medications is a violation of medical ethics!

LACY. I gave him one spoonful. Hickory! I told you Doc said you could have just one spoonful.

HICKORY. It wasn't workin so good, so I had me another spoonful. And then, it was workin so good I had to have me just one more spoonful. Then a couple more! You want one Doc? Let's everyone have some! (*Holds the blue bottle up.*) Shanghai Juice for everybody!

CHARLIE. Yes! (*Fist pump in air.*)

CARL. I don't think so Hickory! (*Snatches bottle, puts in coat pocket.*)

CHARLIE. Darn!

HICKORY. Sorry Charlie.

BODKIN. I think this gross negligence needs to be reported to the medical board!

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

CARL. Why don't you head back over to the clinic? I'll be there as soon as I can. Take a nap on the bed in there. You need to sleep off some of that juice. Charlie, walk Hickory back over to the clinic, would you?

CHARLIE. Sure thing, Doc. Hold on. Don't want these whiskeys to go to waste. (*Charlie drinks both whiskeys and throws his arm around Hickory.*) Let's go Hickory, old buddy, old pal!

HICKORY. Thanks Charlie. (*Charlie and Hickory exit, stumbling out front door drunk-laughing or singing "I've Been Working On The Rail Road". Carl follows, watches them out the door.*)

BODKIN. Surely, you're not going to put that overmedicated bumpkin in the hands of that drunkin bumpkin?

CARL. I'm sure they'll both be fine Mr. Spamley.

BODKIN. It's Shamley! Bodkin Shamley for heaven's sake!

BECKY. (*To herself.*) Oh, could this day get any worse? First, I lose Gene, and now I'm sure to lose the ranch. Where will I live? Oh no! What about Hank and Chuck and the rest of the ranch hands? (*Begins to pace, wringing her hands.*) And their families? Their children? They'll be out of work and out of a place to live as well. This is terrible, just terrible!

BODKIN. (*Puts arm around Becky.*) I have the perfect solution to your problem, Nurse Trueheart. Me! (*Carl hears Bodkin's remark, extracts Becky from Bodkin.*)

CARL. Come on Becky. Let's sit and think about this. We'll figure out something. (*Carl leads Becky to a table and sits. Becky sits in front of her untouched drink.*)

BODKIN. (*Sits at bar. To Lacy.*) Whiskey. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Meddlesome doctor! I've got to get Nurse Trueheart alone. I think it's time she had some of the love potion! (*Bodkin opens bag and looks for the red "LOVE" potion bottle. Gene and Sally go to talk to Becky and Carl.*)

GENE. Ya'll keep an eye out for Reverend Prather for me would ya? I'm going to take a stroll with my lady love and don't want to miss him. If he comes by, could you tell him I'm looking for him?

CARL. Um... Sure thing, Gene.

SALLY. Yes. Tell him we need help planning our weddin. (*Sarcastic.*) Oh Becky, don't be so sad. I'm sure you'll find a husband one day! (*Gene and*

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

Sally exit front door arm in arm chatting about weddings. Lacy exits storeroom door to get broom.)

BECKY. Maybe I need this drink after all. (*Lifts “LOVE” potion, about to drink.*)

CARL. If we can’t figure this out, if worse comes to worse, I could marry you.

BODKIN. (*Hears Carl.*) What’s this? (*Stops looking in bag and starts listening.*)

CARL. To save the ranch of course.

BODKIN. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) Dagnabbit! That pesky doctor could ruin all my plans! I must find a way to get to Nurse Becky. She must, she will be mine!

BECKY. (*Puts glass down without drinking.*) Oh Carl. You’re such a good friend. But everyone knows you’re in love with Lacy. And you must know she’s sweet on you too. How’s that going to work out for you if you marry me? (*Bodkin, visibly relieved, starts looking through bag again for the “LOVE” potion bottle.*)

CARL. If only I had the courage to tell her how I feel. She’s just so independent. Running this place all by herself. Doesn’t seem to even need a man. (*Lacy enters from storeroom door with broom and begins sweeping.*)

BECKY. Love has more to do with want than need, Carl. Though, look at me! I’ve found myself in a situation in which I’m both wanting and needing Gene. Oh me! Oh my! Perhaps Gene will come around in time but if not, what’s to become of me?

BODKIN. (*Still looking in bag.*) Dagnabbit! Where is it?

LACY. What ‘cha looking for Mr. Boobkin?

BODKIN. It’s Bodkin! Bodkin Shamley! And I’m looking for... well, never you mind. I think I’ll have another drink. (*Bodkin’s voice draws Becky’s attention. Lacy puts down broom and proceeds to fix a drink.*)

BECKY. (*To Carl, but looking at Bodkin.*) I know just what I should do. I’ll confront Bodkin and get some answers about this nonsense! (*Holds high glass with “LOVE” potion.*) For courage! (*Drinks it all and, not taking her eyes off of Bodkin, approaches him.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

BODKIN. Nurse Trueheart. With all that government excitement, I forgot to check on your headache. I trust you're feeling better?

BECKY. Actually no, Mr. Shamley. I'm quite upset. I need to ask you some questions. I... I... (*Swoony.*) Why Bodkin!

BODKIN. Yes?

BECKY. Your eyes. You have such stunning eyes. I could just swim in them! Oh, Bodkin! (*Faints into Bodkin's arms.*)

LACY & CARL. What did she say?

BODKIN. Nurse Trueheart. Are you alright?

BECKY. (*Comes around, looking up adoringly into Bodkin's eyes.*) More than alright now that you're here. So strong and handsome, and smart too! And please, call me Becky.

LACY & CARL. Oh brother!

CHARLIE. (*From OS.*) Here!

BODKIN. Dear Becky. (*Stands Becky on her feet and puts his arm around her shoulders.*) Well, it was a simple headache after all! I was worried you had changed your mind about me. (*Aside to Audience Only.*) I was right after all! (*Evil laugh.*) No woman can resist my charm, astounding good looks, and unmatched intellect!

CARL. (*Picks up Becky's empty glass and sniffs it. Carrying Becky's empty glass he delivers an Aside to Audience Only.*) Oh no! This was not whiskey! Gene must have mistakenly given Becky the love potion! This can only lead to more trouble! (*Carl takes Becky's empty glass to bar, motions Lacy to smell, she smells, shakes her head, and shrugs shoulders.*)

BODKIN. Let's take a stroll and get to know each other better. You must tell me all about yourself, my dear. And this charming town. And your sizeable ranch.

BECKY. Sounds lovely! Lacy, would you be a dear and put my picnic basket- (*Points to basket.*) -behind the bar while I show Bodkin the town? It's too heavy to carry around.

LACY. Um... Sure. No problem. (*Moves basket out of sight to under/behind bar.*)

BECKY. Thanks. Alright, Bodkin, let me show you around Bagwell.

BODKIN. We've got a lot to discuss, dear Becky. Now, tell me all about your ranch my dear! It must be difficult running it all by yourself. What a

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

heavy burden for your tiny, delicate, milky white shoulders. (NOTE: *Change to appropriate description for actress or remove "milky white".*) (*Bodkin and Becky exit front door. Carl and Lacy follow, open front door and look out but do not exit.*)

LACY. Hey Doc. What's wrong with Becky? What's going on now? (*While Carl and Lacy are still looking out front door gesturing to each other as though talking, Charlie and Hickory enter storeroom door, sneaking, unnoticed by Lacy and Carl. Charlie holding his finger to his mouth, indicating to Hickory to keep quiet, points to a table. Hickory drunk tip-toes to table and sits. Charlie drunk tip-toes to bar, looks for red "LOVE" potion bottle which he thinks is fancy whiskey, remembers it is behind/under bar, and squats down behind bar to get it.*)

CHARLIE. (*Pops up with red "LOVE" potion bottle.*) Here it is! Fancy whiskey! It ain't Shanghai juice but it'll do! (*Charlie, realizing he has spoken aloud, freezes, clasps his free hand over his mouth, looks at Carl and Lacy and, seeing they did not hear him, also grabs a bottle of regular whiskey and carries both bottles, drunk tiptoeing to table, and sits with Hickory, handing him the regular whiskey bottle, keeping the red "LOVE" potion bottle for himself.*)

LACY. Do you think we should let her go with him?

CARL. I don't think she's in immediate danger. Something bigger going on here we have to figure out. (*Hickory and Charlie silently argue over who gets the red "LOVE" potion bottle, pulling it back and forth, drawing for high card etc.*)

LACY. What in tarnation is going on? And what was in Becky's glass?

CARL. I'm still not sure, but that red bottle on the bar had a tag that said love- (*Lacy goes to bar, looks for red "LOVE" potion bottle, Carl still looking out front door. Lacy does not notice Charlie and Hickory arguing silently over red "LOVE" potion bottle, thinking it fancy whiskey.*)

LACY. Uh, Carl. (*Continuing to look for bottle.*)

CARL. (*Over his shoulder as he is still looking out front door.*) I think it's some kind of love potion. (*Trying puzzle it out.*) Gene, and now Becky, both seem to have had some and now both are in love with those other two. And then, that government business. (*Closes door, rubs chin in thought.*)

BAD MEDICINE (OR GOOD TO THE LAST DROP)

LACY. Uh Carl.

CARL. The girl has Gene and now Bodkin's got Becky. And- (*During the following dialogue, Charlie wins the battle, holds red "LOVE" potion bottle possessively. Hickory shrugs, picks up the regular whiskey bottle.*)

LACY. (*Loudly.*) Carl!

CARL. What?

LACY. What bottle are you talking about?

CARL. The one I left on the bar. (*Rushes to bar.*) It was right here! It's a tall red bottle. I took it out of Bodkin's bag. (*Carl and Lacy look all over bar. Charlie and Hickory clink bottles and drink, Charlie from red "LOVE" potion bottle, Hickory from whiskey bottle. Carl and Lacy see Charlie drinking from red "LOVE" potion bottle.*) Oh no!

CHARLIE. (*Gazing into Hickory's eyes.*) Hickory, I never noticed your eyes were blue with little specks of green! They're so pretty!

CARL & LACY. Oh no!

HICKORY. (*Confused.*) Uhm, thanks?

CHARLIE. Truthfully, them's the prettiest eyes I ever did seen! Wonder why I never noticed them eyes before. So pretty. (*Touches Hickory's cheek tenderly.*)

HICKORY. (*Swats Charlie's hand away.*) Gee Charlie, I... I... (*Very confused.*) I don't know.

LACY. Well, I never! Has everyone has gone crazy? Even my little brother! (*Pause.*) Although, (*Thinking.*) truth be told, (*Thinking.*) Charlie has always been quite fond of Hickory.

CARL. Truth. Truth? Lacy! That's it! I don't know the whole truth of the matter yet, but I think I know how to find out! I've got to get back into Bodkin's bag again and find that truth serum, before it's too late!

(*Blackout.*)

END OF ACT 1

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