

It's Cold in Them Thar Hills

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Le Roma Greth



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 MEN, 8 WOMEN)

PA.....Pa appreciates a good nap. His hair is graying. He wears pants held up by gaudy suspenders and, if possible, red flannel underwear over which is no shirt. (96 lines)

MA.....A slow-moving, tired old woman who somehow gets things done. She wears a long wash dress and flowered apron. Her gray hair is unattractively pulled straight back and wrapped in a bun. She wears old shoes. (30 lines)

SNODDY.....Their oldest daughter, nineteen and not at all pretty. Her hair is untidy to the point where it looks as if it's never been combed. She wears a dingy wash dress, belt-less. She is barefoot. (41 lines)

PRISSY LOU.....Neat and pretty seventeen-year old. She wears a wash dress, clean and tied with a belt. Her shoes are old. Her main joy in life is reading. (26 lines)

MANDY.....A very happy sixteen-year old. She wears a wash dress like her sisters and no shoes. (5 lines)

BECKY MAE.....Fifteen and sweet. She also wears a wash dress. (9 lines)

SARRAY Fourteen-year old; lazy and indolent.
She is dressed like the others. (18 lines)

NEELIE ANN The youngest. She would be a brat if she
had the ambition. Wash dress, no shoes.
(4 lines)

ZEKE A boy of the hills, bashful and awkward.
He wears pants that are too short for
him, a plaid shirt, no shoes, and a heavy
scarf around his neck. (12 lines)

BILL VANDEMERE A good-looking city boy who knows
how to dress. (34 lines)

MRS. VANDEMERE Bill's elegant mother, clad in a coat, suit,
hat, etc. She is haughty and dignified.
(16 lines)

PREACHER A preacher of the hills. He speaks better
than the others. He wears shoes and a
conventional, dark suit. (9 lines)

SETTING

The "parlor" of a mountain cabin.

TIME: Afternoon in late spring. The present.

STAGE PROPERTIES

Wooden bench, right center

Table/chairs, left center

Table cloth, on table

Two occasional chairs

PROPS

Book - - Prissy Lou

Green leaves, cooking pot - - Sarray

Wood or twigs - - Ma/Becky Mae

Flower - - Mandy

Shotgun - - Pa

Apple - - Zeke

Cracked basin - - Becky Mae

Pie - - Sarray

Small bouquet of real or artificial flowers - - Sarray/Becky Mae

Piece of curtain - - Snoddy

Slip of paper - - Pa

Perusal
Not for
performance

SETTING:

The curtain rises to reveal the “parlor” of a mountain cabin. It is an uncomfortable room, lacking the refinements of civilization. At right center is a bare wooden bench. Behind it, in the wall right, is a door leading to the rest of the cabin. Up right is an occasional chair; another is up left. Directly up center is a door leading outside into a weed-choked yard. At left center is a table covered with a torn checkered table cloth. On the table is a tin can containing a few wilted flowers. Three chairs are scattered around the table. A window is in the wall left.

AT RISE:

PA is discovered stretched out on the bench right, snoring loudly. PRISSY LOU is seated at the table, left, reading a book. NEELIE ANN and SARRAY are seated on the floor, center, with a pile of green leaves between them. They are picking over the leaves very slowly and throwing them into a battered cook pot. MA enters through door up center with BECKY MAE right behind her. They both are carrying an armload of wood. MA pauses, contemplating PA. She abruptly drops her wood and goes to the bench, shoves him, then returns and picks up the wood and exits with BECKY MAE through the door right. The others ignore them.

PA: *(Picking himself off the floor and rubbing his back.)* Thet woman can't bear t' see nobody rest no more! Now whut d' ya suppose she wants?

SARRAY: She's been actin' weird lately, Pa. Can't figure her out!

NEELIE ANN: I wisht we was finished picking over this dandelion! We got most enough fer supper anyhow. Ma was mighty mean t' make us young'ums do hit.

SARRAY: Almost froze gettin' hit too! Hit's been mighty cold this hyar spring. Almost wisht I had shoes.

PA: Ya kin take turns with Prissy Lou wearin 'em effen ya want to. *(Sinking down on the bench again.)* Hit ain't fittin' fer nobody t' do as mech work as Ma wants done these days.

Enter MANDY through the door up center. She has an utterly silly expression on her face. She holds a small flower at arm's length.

PA: Now whut in 'tarnation's got into you, Mandy?

MANDY: *(In a happy daze.)* He picked that flower fer me, Pa! An' he put it in my hand hisself!

NEELIE ANN: So what?

MANDY: *(Haughtily.)* You wouldn't understand, Neelie Ann! You're just a young'un *(Running to table left.)* Prissy Lou! Press my flower in yer book so's I kin keep it always to remind me of - - HIM!

PA: *(To SARRAY.)* Who's him?

SARRAY: Young Jod Hinklebelter down the road. Mandy's got a case on him, I reckon.

PRISSY LOU: *(To MANDY.)* No! Ya cain't use my book theta way! It ain't fittin' t' use books theta way!

MANDY: *(Glaring.)* Oh you and yer old books! I'm agonna tell Ma yer readin' agin an' - -

PA: Now, looky here! Don't you two go scrappin'! I'd as soon raise a pack of onrey polecats as a tribe of female young 'uns!

Enter MA through door right.

MA: Git! All of you! You young'uns is gonna make the supper.

SARRAY: But Ma - -

MA: Git! Afore I takes down that shootin' iron!

Exit SARRAY and NEELIE ANN with their greens and cook pot.

MANDY and PRISSY LOU, with book and flower, follow them through door right.

PA: *(Whining.)* I reckon ya got somethin' fer me t' do too, Ma?

MA: Nope.

PA: Then why'd ya wake me up?

MA: I been hankerin' t' have a talk with ya, Pa. I reckon ya noticed I ain't been myself. I'm worried!

PA: Ya been as onrey as a new colt in spring, Ma. We kin talk sittin' down, I suppose?

MA: *(Wearily settles into chair at table, left.)* Pa, Mandy's sweet on John Hinklebelter.

PA: Reckon.

MA: He aims t' marry up with her.

PA: Wal, we won't have t' feed 'er then. She's sixteen - - plenty old enough t' git hitched.

MA: I ain't agonna have hit!

PA: (*Surprised.*) Ya out of yer head, woman?

MA: If Mandy was t' git married afore Prissy Lou an' Snoddy, they'd never have a chance. They be older than she is!

PA: (*Worried.*) Effen they wasn't t' git hitched, we'd have t' support 'em fer the rest of our born days!

MA: Keerect!

PA: All the boys hereabouts is sweet on Prissy Lou. The only trouble is - - she's taken so much to this confounded book larnin'!

MA: We got to start at the beginning, Pa, an' git the oldest one hitched first.

PA: (*Groaning.*) Snoddy?

MA: Yep! It's yer duty as a Pa t' git a husband fer Snoddy! She be gittin' up in years, Pa. She's nineteen!

PA: Thet old already? Why, she's almost an old maid!

MA: (*Rising.*) Ya don't have t' do no work, Pa, all ya have t' do fer a spell is think about gittin' Snoddy hitched.

PA: (*With panic.*) But who'd want t' hitch up with Snoddy? I'd as soon hitch up with Old Man Dougle's black-haired mule!

Enter SNODDY, very, very dirty through the door up center.

SNODDY: (*In her usual whine.*) Wuz anybuddy mentionin' my name?

PA: (*Wincing and turning away.*) Reckon we wuz.

MA: (*Surveying SNODDY.*) Looks kinda hopeless, don't it, Pa?

PA: Kinda.

MA: Wal, do the best ya kin.

MA shuffles slowly through the door right.

PA: Snoddy, how come ya got so dirty?

SNODDY: Been playing with my pet hog, Hubert.

PA: In the pigpen?

SNODDY: Sure. Whar else would I play with him?

PA: Wal - -

SNODDY: I could bring him in hyar. Hit be cold out thar in the hog pen - - but Ma don't like it effen he comes in. (*Giggles.*) Reckon Hubert don't like it neither. He don't rightly hold with you folks. Likes me, though! Reckon he thinks I'm another hog!

PA: Smart pig!

Enter ZEKE through the door up center. He stands there bashfully looking at the floor, his hands clasped behind him and twiddling his toes.

SNODDY: Hit be Zeke!

ZEKE: Duh - -

PA: Ya look cold, Zeke. Shouldn't be with thet nice scarf on!

ZEKE: Duh - -

PA: Effen yer lookin' fer Prissy Lou, an' I reckon ya are, she be in t'other room.

ZEKE: Duh - -

Exit ZEKE through the door right.

SNODDY: Ain't he purty? Why does he hafta be hankerin' after Prissy Lou 'stead o' me?

PA: Wal - - thet's just one o' them things.

SNODDY: He don't never say a word. Jest follows Prissy Lou around like an' old hound dog.

PA: Bashful type.

SNODDY: Reckon.

PA: Snoddy, be ya hankerin' t' git yerself a husband?

SNODDY: Shore!

PA: (*Sighing.*) Wal, yer Ma sez I got t' git ya one. Pick one out.

SNODDY: (*Near window left.*) Kin I pick any one?

PA: Shore thing.

SNODDY: (*Pointing out the window.*) I want him!

PA: Jest a minute! (*He dashes off stage right, returns a second later with his gun and joins SNODDY at the window.*) Now then - - which one?

SNODDY: (*Pointing again.*) Thet purty dude in them fancy clothes!

PA: (*Pointing gun out window.*) I'll wing him jest enough t' bring 'im down. Then we'll go out an' collect 'im. Ought t' be as good as new purty soon.

SNODDY: (*Grabbing hold of the gun.*) Be ya out of yer head, Pa?

PA: Hit be the only way t' git a husband fer ya, Snoddy!

SNODDY: (*Determinedly.*) Nope! I want one fair an' square!

PA: Fair an' square?

SNODDY: Yep. We kin trick him into marryin' me any way a'tall, but I ain't agonna marry up with nobody that's got t' be shot t' make 'im do hit!

PA: (*Laying gun on table.*) But nobody in his right mind would - -

SNODDY: Would whut, Pa?

PA: Never mind.

SNODDY: (*Grasping his arm.*) Git thet dude fer me, Pa! Please! I tuck a shine t' him!

Knock on door up center.

MA: (*Appearing at door right.*) Be somebody at the door?

PA: Effen they ain't, we got termites agin. (*He goes to door up center and opens it to reveal BILL and MRS. VANDEMERE.*) Howdy!

SNODDY: It's him! It's the dude! An' he's come t' our door!

MA: Hesh, Snoddy!

BILL: Pardon us, sir, but we are lost. My mother and I had located a lovely tourist cabin on the map, but, well, we can't seem to find it. I was wondering if you could help us.

PA: This is a tourist cabin!

MRS. VANDEMERE: You must be jesting!

PA: Naw. Come in! Come in!

MRS. VANDEMERE: (*To BILL.*) Come, William. I think we better get back to the car. I wouldn't stay in an - - er, establishment like this!

BILL: But, Mother, we've got to spend the night someplace. It's getting very late and - -

PA: Right you are, son! An' thet ain't all! See them clouds over yonder mountain? Rain clouds they be. Last time it rained hereabouts, that thar road wuz washed clean off the mountain! Some city slickers was a-drivin' on hit thet time an' nobody never heerd tell of 'em fer two months. Then we found out they wuz washed clean out t' the Atlantic Ocean an' wuz picked up by a fishin' boat!

MRS. VANDEMERE: What a fantastic story! Come, William.

SNODDY: (*Grabbing PA's arm.*) You cain't let him git away, Pa!

PA: (*Quickly.*) That ain't all. Drivin' in these hills at night kin be dangerous. Thar's bears an' wild cats an' - -

Meanwhile, the other girls have gathered at the door right with MA and are staring curiously at the newcomers. PRISSY LOU comes forward.

PRISSY LOU: What's got into ya, Pa? Tellin' such wild tales! Ain't been no wild cats huarabouts fer nigh unto two years! (*To the VANDEMERE.*) But thar is danger. The Hawkenshaw boys down yonder in the valley don't take none t' strangers. You wouldn't be the first tourists what got stopped on the road at night. Mrs. Hawkenshaw dresses real purty always from sech goings-on. Sometimes I think she puts the boys up to hit!

MRS. VANDEMERE: Oh, dear! I wish we'd never decided to take this trip! If only your father were still alive, William!

BILL: If you'll take my advice, Mother, you'll stay here for the night. Tomorrow we'll head for the main highway and stay on it hereafter!

MRS. VANDEMERE: Well, I guess we'll have to - -

PA: Come in! Come in!

They enter and stand uncertainly upstage looking about. ZEKE enters door right and stares. He is loudly munching on an apple.

MA: I'll fix up the bed real purty fer ya.

MRS. VANDEMERE: Oh, driving makes one so tired and dusty! I'd like to wash up if you don't mind.

NEELIE ANN: Why? It ain't Saturday.

MA: Hesh up, Neelie Ann! City folks does things different!

BECKY MAE rushes offstage right.

SNODDY: (*Sliding toward BILL.*) My name's Snoddy.

BILL: Really? Quite distinctive, I should say.

SNODDY: Huh?

BILL: That means, well, it means it's a nice name.

PRISSY LOU: He's making fun of you, Snoddy! Don't listen to him.

BILL: Oh, I say - -

Enter BECKY MAE through door right with a cracked basin. She rushes eagerly to MRS. VANDEMERE and shoves it into her hand.

MRS. VANDEMERE: Oh! What's that?

BECKY MAE: Ya said ya had a hankerin' t' wash. That's the basin!

MRS. VANDEMERE: You mean - - (*Dismayed.*) you don't have a bathroom!

BECKY MAE: We got a pump out on the porch - - an' ya'll find some of Ma's soap on the bench. It's so strong it almost takes yer hide off, but it sure makes the dirt go.

SARRAY: Becky Mae! I had the dandelion fer supper soakin' in the washbasin!

BECKY MAE: I jest dumped it out fer a spell, Sarray. Ya kin put it back when the lady's finished washin'.

MRS. VANDEMERE: (*Dropping the basin on the floor.*) Ohhh - - I think I'm going to faint!

BILL: (*Supporting her.*) Steady, Mother!

MRS. VANDEMERE: Show me to my room! I'll lie down for awhile.

MA: Take 'er upstairs, Pa! Supper'll be ready soon, ma'am! Ya like sow's belly an' black bean soup, ma'am?

MRS. VANDEMERE: Ohhh!

BILL: Can you walk, Mother?

PA: She looks poorly. (*He abruptly picks her up bodily and heads for the door right.*) Reckon we oughta git old Doc Sniffenguth over?

MRS. VANDEMERE: Ohh! Put me down!

He strides offstage right with her. NEELIE ANN, MANDY, BECKY MAE, with basin, SARRAY and SNODDY follow curiously. ZEKE remains behind.

MA: (*Hurrying after them.*) We got company, girls! Git out the pickled pig's feet! Mandy, run over an' borry some o' thet good, smelly cheese from Mrs. Knauderstein! Sarray - - (*Exit MA through door right.*)

BILL: Look - - what's your name?

PRISSY LOU: Prissy Lou.

BILL: I'm William Vandemere - - Bill for short. I wasn't trying to make fun of your sister - - really, I wasn't.

PRISSY LOU: (*Looking down at her feet.*) I guess I really knowed you wasn't. I - - It's jest thet - - well, I reckon I'm ashamed an' then it makes me kinda mean.

BILL: What are you ashamed of?

PRISSY LOU: (*Waving her hand.*) This. And us - - the way we live.

BILL: You can't help that you're poor, Prissy Lou, any more than I can help that I'm rich.

PRISSY LOU: Hit be more then jest bein' poorly. I read in them books I got from the schoolmarm - - other places poor folks is at least - - clean.

She hides her face and runs out door right.

BILL: Hey! Wait! Prissy Lou!

SNODDY enters through door right.

SNODDY: Howdy!

BILL: Uh - - Hello.

SNODDY: (*Advancing and taking his arm.*) Pa sez t' entertain ya. He an' Ma is fixin' the bedroom so's yer Ma'll sleep thar. Them sheets was only on fer a week, but she made 'em change 'em.

BILL: (*Grinning.*) I wonder why.

SNODDY: I don't rightly know. Would ya like t' see my hog?

BILL: I beg your pardon?

SNODDY: I got a pet hog - - Hubert.

BILL: (*Hastily.*) Uh - - Well, maybe I can see him later. Excuse me.

He hurries out door right, almost colliding with PA, who enters.

PA: Any luck, Snoddy?

SNODDY: (*Dejected.*) Naw . . .

PA: Tell you what - - (*Seeing ZEKE.*) Ain't ya soon goin' home, Zeke?

ZEKE: Duh - -

PA: Prissy Lou ain't got time fer ya now anyhow. Ya kin come back later.

ZEKE: Duh - -

PA: (*Turning his arm and hurrying him toward the door up center.*) Been nice havin' ya, Zeke. Hurry back.

ZEKE: Duh - -

Exit ZEKE through door up center.

PA: As I wuz sayin' . . . the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Did I ever tell ya how I come t' marry up wif yer Ma, Snoddy?

SNODDY: Nope.

PA: She baked a sour cherry pie fer me. The minute I ate ther pie, I knowed she was the woman fer me.

SNODDY: So thet's how hit's done!

PA: Yep. You bake a pie fer him.

SNODDY: No wonder I ain't got hitched! I cain't cook! An' we only got till tomorrow morning, Pa! I cain't larn t' bake so quick! I wuz always too busy with the hogs t' larn. Liked 'em better.

PA: Prissy Lou kin bake good - - she's got a peach pie out thar now! *(Bellowing.)* SARRAY! BRING THE PEACH PIE IN HYAR! We'll let him think it's yours.

SNODDY: Ain't thet dishonest?

PA: Ya want 'im, don't ya, Snoddy?

SNODDY: Shore.

Enter SARRAY with peach pie through the door right.

SARRAY: What's up, Pa? Gittin' hungry?

PA: *(Taking pie.)* Shet yer tater trap, Sarray. If ennybuddy asks, Snoddy baked this pie.

SARRAY: But, Pa - -

PA: Snoddy baked it, er do I take ya out to the woodshed, Sarray?

SARRAY: *(Quickly.)* Snoddy baked hit.

PA: *(Bellowing.)* HEY! YOUNG FELLER!

Enter BILL through the door right.

BILL: Were you calling me?

PA: Yep. Git, Sarray.

SARRAY: I'm gittin'! *(Exit through door right.)*

PA: Uh, Snoddy has got somethin' fer ya. She wanted me t' give it t' ya 'cause she's too shy herself, Snoddy's a very shy gal.

BILL: Uh - - yes. Anybody can see that.

PA: (*Handing him the pie.*) Here hit be. She jest baked it.

BILL: Before or after she fed the hogs?

PA: Oh, before, o' course!

BILL: (*Smelling it.*) Ummm - - it smells delicious! I'll bet it tastes good, too. Thank you, Snoddy.

SNODDY: (*Giggling.*) I jest love t' bake!

BILL: Fine. You ought to make a good wife someday.

PA: Yer right, son, dead right!

PRISSY LOU: (*Seeing the pie.*) Why, what are you doing with my pie?

PA: Uh, Prissy Lou - -

PRISSY LOU: Ma's going to be mad! She told me t' bake it fer supper!

PA: (*Hastily.*) This hain't the pie you baked, Prissy Lou! Snoddy baked this hyar pie fer Mr. Vandemere.

PRISSY LOU: Why, Snoddy cain't bake!

BILL: (*Placing pie on table, left.*) Well, I'm sure it'll be a good pie for - - supper. Show me the springhouse, Prissy Lou! You promised.

PRISSY LOU: Sure. . . that's where I do a lot of readin'. It's so purty with ferns an' moss . . .

Exit BILL and PRISSY LOU through door up center.

PA: Wal, that's thet.

SNODDY: Prissy Lou didn't mean t' do hit, Pa.

PA: I know - - but now he knows ya cain't cook, Snoddy. Whut air we going t' do now? (*Suddenly snapping his fingers.*) He might go fer a purty gal! If we wuz t' fix ya up wif new-fangled lip rouge an' curl yer hair with an iron an' . . . (*Looking over her.*) Nope, it ain't no use . . . you'd still look like Snoddy!

SNODDY: (*Wailing.*) Oh, Pa! I'll never git no man!

PA: Sure, ya will! All we got to do is git an idea . . . I got it!

SNODDY: Whut Pa?

PA: (*Yelling.*) Ma! Neelie Ann! Sarray! Mandy! Becky Mae!

They all enter excitedly through door right.

MA: Whut's up, Pa?

SARRAY: Did thet old skonk crawl down the fireplace agin?

PA: Nope! Snoddy's a-gittin' married! Mandy! You run fer Reverend Obediah Hinnerhalter! Neelie Ann, you set up a weddin' feast in the kitchen.

MANDY heads for door up center.

PA: Mandy, don't stop t' talk t' Jod Hinklefelter neither.

MANDY: I won't, Pa!

Exit MANDY up center.

PA: Sarray, Becky Mae, you git some flowers effen ya kin find some!
We gotta git the cabin lookin' fit fer a weddin'!

MA: But who's she gonna marry, Pa?

PA: Shet yer tater trap, Ma. I'm a-handlin' this! Git, young uns!

*SARRAY and BECKY MAE scurry out through door up center.
NEELIE ANN rushes out through door right.*

MA: Snoddy, go wash yerself!

SNODDY: (*Whining.*) Whut fer, Ma?

MA: Effen yer gittin' married ya gotta have a clean face. (*Taking
SNODDY by the ear.*) Out to the pump!

SNODDY: Aw, Ma!

*Exit MA and SNODDY through door up center. ZEKE enters as they
exit. He looks after them in surprise.*

PA: Snoddy's a-gittin' married, Zeke.

ZEKE: Duh - -

PA: Reckon Prissy Lou'll be next.

ZEKE: Duh?

NEELIE ANN peeps through door right.

NEELIE ANN: Reckon the sow's belly an' black bean soup'll be
enough fer the wedding, Pa?

PA: Shure. Put water in the soup.

Enter SARRAY and BECKY MAE through the door up center. They are carrying large sprays of flowers.

SARRAY: It's been cold this year. We couldn't find much.

BECKY MAE: It'll make the place purtier anyhow.

SARRAY and BECKY MAE putter around the room, straightening furniture and arranging the flowers. SNODDY and MA enter up center. SNODDY's face is clean. She has a piece of thin curtain tied over her head, veil fashion.

MA: 'An ya gotta wear shoes!

SNODDY: Aw, Ma!

SARRAY: See! Gittin' married ain't much fun. Ya gotta wear shoes!

MA: Git, Snoddy!

Exit MA and SNODDY, right, as BILL enters up center. He stops in surprise as he surveys the activity

BILL: What's going on here?

PA: Snoddy's a gittin' hitched at last!

BILL: Wonderful! Who's the happy bridegroom?

PA: You'll find out. An' I ain't sure happy is the word!

BILL: Well, let me know when the ceremony starts. I'd like to attend.

PA: Don't worry! You'll be there!

BILL exits through door right.

PA: You young 'uns git a move on! Come on, Zeke! Let's see effen we kin help wif somethin'!

ZEKE: Duh!

He signs and exits right, after PA, his head drooping. PRISSY LOU enters up center.

PRISSY LOU: Whut's going on?

SARRAY: Snoddy's gittin' hitched.

PRISSY LOU: Snoddy! Who'd marry Snoddy?

SARRAY: I don't know. I can't figure hit out.

BECKY MAE: It's awful sudden-like. I got some suspicions!

PRISSY LOU: Whut kine o' suspicions?

BECKY MAE: I think Pa's fixin' everything ready fer the weddin' - - then he's agonna poke the shootin' iron in Bill Vandemere's ribs an' make him be the bridegroom!

PRISSY LOU: (*Shocked.*) No! Pa wouldn't do thet!

SARRAY: Sure he would! An' Snoddy told me she was hankerin' after thet dude an' Pa said he'd git him fer her!

PRISSY LOU: It ain't possible! Them things don't happen no more!

BECKY MAE: When Pa's around, they happen!

PRISSY LOU: I must warn him!

She heads for door right; PA enters.

PA: Warn who, Prissy Lou?

PRISSY LOU: Warn Bill!

PA: (*Taking the gun from the table.*) No, you ain't! He's a gonna marry up wif Snoddy!

PRISSY LOU: Ya cain't do it, Pa.

PA: I jest locked up his Ma in the hog pen till after the ceremony. (*Chuckling.*) She's hollarin' worse than them hogs!

PRISSY LOU: (*Frantic.*) Ya won't git away with it, Pa!

PA: Who sez not?

PRISSY LOU: I'll stop you! I'll run fer the Sheriff an' - -

PA: (*Grabbing her arm.*) I think ya better stay in the hog pen wif Miz Vandemere till the weddin's over, Prissy Lou!

SARRAY: (*At left window.*) They be comin' Pa! Mandy an' the preacher!

PA: (*Dragging PRISSY LOU toward door right.*) I'll be right back!

Exit PA and PRISSY LOU through door right.

BECKY MAE: Prissy Lou's right. Reckon we ought t' do somethin'?

SARRAY: An' git locked up in the hog pen? Uh uh!

Enter MANDY and the PREACHER through door up center.

MANDY: We're back! Whar's Pa?

BECKY MAE: Out in the hog pen.

PREACHER: Good evenin', children. Cold today, wasn't it? I trust I'm here fer a weddin'. Where's the happy couple?

SARRAY: (*Yelling.*) HEY! THE PREACHER'S COME!

PA, still carrying gun, MA, SNODDY, NEELIE ANN, and ZEKE enter, all talking excitedly.

PA: Let's git it over wif! (*Hands the PREACHER a slip of paper.*)
These be the names! (*Grabbing SNODDY's arm.*) Snoddy! You stand thar!

The PREACHER stands before the door up center, facing the audience. PA places SNODDY directly before the minister, facing him. ZEKE stands close to her. BILL enters through door right.

BILL: Hi, there! May I watch?

PA: Ya kin have the place of honor, son!

He leads BILL to a position right beside SNODDY. The others group about. MA wipes her eyes with her apron.

PA: Okay! Git on with it, Parson!

PREACHER: Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the presence of these witnesses to join together this man and this woman in the bonds of holy matrimony.

MA: (*Sobbing.*) Ain't it purty? I neever seed Snoddy wif a clean face afore!

PA: Hush, Ma!

PREACHER: William Vandemere, do you take Snoddy to be your lawful wedded wife?

BILL: WHO - - ME?

PREACHER: (*Looking at slip of paper.*) You're Bill Vandemere, aren't ya? That's who the groom's suppose t' be.

BILL: There's some mistake! I - -

PA: Ain't no mistake. Snoddy tuck a shine t' ya! An' I aim t' see she gits ya!

BILL: (*Going toward door.*) I'm getting out of here!

PA: (*Raising gun.*) No, ya ain't, young feller!

BILL: You wouldn't - -

PA: Git back 'long side o' Snoddy!

BILL, shaking, returns to SNODDY's side.

PREACHER: (*Clearing his throat.*) We ready to proceed, Pa?

PA: Yep.

PREACHER: Now, where was I? Oh, yes! Snoddy, do you take Bill t' be your - -

ZEKE: Stop!

PA: HUH?

ZEKE: I cain't stand it no more! Snoddy, I been hankerin' after ya fer years! Only I was always too bashful t' say nothing, an' they thought I was likin' Prissy Lou. Snoddy, ya cain't marry this hyar dude! Ya won't like it none livin' in them big cities. I was to Pine Creek Holler once, and I know big cities. They ain't fer ya! Effen ya marry up wif me, we kin live on my hog farm. I'll even build a special pen fer Hubert!

SNODDY: Ya will, Zeke?

ZEKE: Shore will!

SNODDY: (*To BILL.*) I hope ya ain't too disappointed, but I'm agonna marry up wif Zeke instead!

BILL: (*Dismayed.*) Disappointed - - !

PREACHER: Wal, let's git somebody hitched! I haven't got all day!

Enter PRISSY LOU and MRS. VANDEMERE through door up center.

MRS. VANDEMERE: Stop! Stop at once!

PA: How'd ya git out of the hog pen?

PRISSY LOU: I found a way to unlock it from inside! Pa, ya cain't do this awful thing!

PA: (*Innocently.*) Whut be ya talkin' about, Prissy Lou?

PRISSY LOU: Why, forcing Bill to - -

PA: Ain't nobody forcin' nobody t' do nuthin'!

MA: Snoddy an' Zeke is maryin' up!

PRISSY LOU: Snoddy an' Zeke? But I thought - -

MRS. VANDEMERE: Oh, let's get out of this awful place.

MA: Aw, stay fer the ceremony! Ya kin have some o' the sow's belly an' black bean soup wif us then!

BILL: We might as well, Mother. Everything's under control now. And, Mother - - you know that trust fund Dad's will set up?

MRS. VANDEMERE: The one providing for the education of deserving but poor young people?

BILL: Yes. I was wondering if maybe that wouldn't include Prissy Lou here. She could go back to New York with us and get enrolled at a good private school.

MRS. VANDEMERE: Why, that would be fine! I'm sure she's just the type your father had in mind.

PRISSY LOU: Ohhh! Do you think I could? Ma - - Pa - - may I?

PA: What's ya think, Ma?

MA: She takes t' book larnin'. We'd have a harder time marryin' her off than we had wif Snoddy.

PA: That settles it! She kin go.

PRISSY LOU: Ohhh! I've never been so happy in my life!

PREACHER: Wal, are we going t' have a wedding or aren't we?

SNODDY: Ya kin bet we are! Come on, Zeke!

She grabs ZEKE's hand and they stand before the PREACHER.

PREACHER: Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God - -

MA blows her nose loudly in her apron; BILL and PRISSY LOU join hands as . . . the curtain falls.

THE END

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