

FOOL'S GOLD

By Melody Jacobson

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The Fool family has found gold on their homestead and now the whole county has been drawing gold diggers -- including two outlaws, the evil Wiley Slithers, and Dr. What, a hopeless kleptomaniac. Slithers devises a plan to get rid of Ma and Pa Fool and son Ura so he can marry the lovely daughter, Ima. However, she is stronger than a horse and refuses to marry any man until he can beat her in arm wrestling. Not only that, but Slithers and Dr. What must also outsmart the guy Ima has her heart set on, the handsome milkman, Sam Lactose.

To complicate their evil plan there's a lunatic waitress and two old codgers who have been sitting in the same chairs for weeks to finish the battle of wits over a checkerboard. And don't forget the three neighborhood busybodies, each looking for a "man to meet their expectations." They find the men in the audience and escort them on-stage to the exciting arm wrestling match. (They will also get involved in a wedding!) Put it all together and you've got 14-karat fun.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 m, 6 w)

WILEY SLITHERS: The villain. Need we say more?

DR. WHAT: Slithers' sidekick. Hopeless kleptomaniac and bumbling thief.

IMA FOOL: Beautiful, fragile-looking girl who is stronger than any man in the county.

URA FOOL: Ima's brother. Acts dumb, but a little smarter than the rest of the clan.

SAM LACTOSE: The county milkman in love with Ima and determined to marry her.

PA FOOL: He found gold on his homestead. Excited about digging up and hiding his treasure.

MA FOOL: Wife to Pa and mother of Ima and Ura.

BESS: Gossipy neighbor.

IDA: Gossipy neighbor.

CLAIRA: Gossipy neighbor.

WAITRESS: Bossy woman who runs the restaurant.

REV. BEEKS: Old man sleeping at table.

FRANK HOTSY: Other old man sleeping at the table.

Performance time: About an hour.

SETTING

There are two sets. One is the Fool family living room and the other is the town restaurant. The Fool's living room has a small table with two chairs CSR, a couch with pillows CS, and a chair SL. On an upstage wall is a fireplace and set of fireplace tools. A door USL leads out of the front of the house, and a door USR leads behind the house to the gold mine.

The restaurant has two tables with three chairs each. There is a door USL that leads to the street. In front of the door SL is a sign that says "Wait To Be Seated." There is also a door SR leading to the kitchen.

PROPS

ON STAGE in the restaurant: Checkers game, candlesticks, fake plants, glasses of water.

ON STAGE in the Fool home: Small pillows on the sofa, wreath on wall, book on end table, lightweight (papier-mâché) vase or urn large enough to fit over one's head, fireplace poker.

WILEY SLITHERS: Chicken feathers, perfume bottle.

DR. WHAT: A whoopee cushion.

IMA FOOL: Tray with three cups, plate of cookies, and two glasses of lemonade.

SAM LACTOSE: Old-fashioned milk jug.

PA FOOL: Bucket of gold rocks, child's floating device (such as an inflatable ring).

MA FOOL: Bucket, bowl of strawberries, child's floating device (such as inflatable ring).

URA FOOL: Slingshot and popcorn, fireplace poker, small notepad and pen in pocket.

WAITRESS: Small order pad and pen, platter, two bowls, rubber chicken, two plates of food and a few small wedding decorations.

REV. BEEKS: Bible.

FRANK HOTSY: Hand-held microphone. (Cordless, need not work)

COSTUMES: In addition to their villain costumes, Slithers and What will also be "disguised" as women wearing dresses, heels, and purses. Further, they will both need to fit into one extra large jacket and pair of pants.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The restaurant. One table is empty. At the other REV. BEEKS and FRANK HOTSY are playing checkers. They occasionally fall asleep, snore, and then wake one another up for their move. Sign in front says "Wait To Be Seated." SLITHERS and DR. WHAT enter SL and wait.)

DR. WHAT: Dang, I'm tired. Why do they always have to run us out on a rail? Stealing chickens and selling them to those Easterners as household pets is no way to make a living.

SLITHERS: I've had it with being tarred and feathered with my own loot. I'm tired of chicken. I don't ever want to see another chicken again! *(Coughs out chicken feathers he has hidden in his hand.)* There has got to be a better way to make a dishonest living, Dr. What. *(THEY seat themselves at the empty table.)*

(WAITRESS enters SR. She is irritated.)

WAITRESS: Excuse me, who sat you here?

SLITHERS: We sat ourselves.

WAITRESS: Did you read that sign?

SLITHERS: Yes, but the table was empty so we sat ourselves.

WAITRESS: The sign says, "Wait To Be Seated." Now, you get your sorry carcasses behind that sign before I boot you over there. *(SLITHERS and DR. WHAT rush behind the sign with the WAITRESS at their heels. Sweetly.)* Do you have reservations?

SLITHERS: No.

WAITRESS: Then I'll have to see if I can fit you in. *(SHE walks back through the tables and returns.)* How many?

SLITHERS: Two.

WAITRESS: Smoking or non-smoking?

SLITHERS: *(Becoming agitated.)* Non.

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WAITRESS: Sorry, we only have smoking. Would you like to wait for non-smoking or would you like to take a smoking seat?

SLITHERS: We'll take smoking!

WAITRESS: (*Leading THEM to the empty table.*) Since they found gold, this town has been swarming with people. Ain't had near enough seating for everybody.

SLITHERS: Did you say gold?

WAITRESS: Sure did. Ma and Pa Fool discovered it on their homestead and the whole county has been drawing gold diggers like a dirty artist draws flies. Rumor has it when the gold is mined Ma and Pa will be the richest folks in the state. Yep, Ma and Pa and those young'uns will have it made.

SLITHERS: Did you say young'uns? How many young'uns do they have?

WAITRESS: Two. A girl and a boy. The daughter is the prettiest little thing you ever saw but she is strong as an ox. Says she can't marry 'til she finds a man stronger than herself. She is sweet on the town milkman though. His name is Sam Lactose, and he is ever hopeful that he will one day be her husband. The son's name is Ura. He's the smartest one of the bunch. Don't know if that says much, though.

SLITHERS: Just where might this Fool family live?

WAITRESS: About a half mile south of town. Why?

SLITHERS: Uh, we are looking for work.

DR. WHAT: (*Looking alarmed.*) I don't want to work. (*SLITHERS elbows WHAT to hush him and knocks his elbow he is leaning on, off the table.*)

WAITRESS: Well, that would be a good place to go then. They are as busy as bees out there. Now what can I get for you?

DR. WHAT: Do you have a menu?

WAITRESS: Ain't no need for that. We only have one thing.

DR. WHAT: What's that?

WAITRESS: Chicken and dumplings.

SLITHERS: We'll take that, uh, hold the chicken.

WAITRESS: (*Writing on HER pad.*) Alrighty. (*Exits SR.*)

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SLITHERS: Dr. What, are you thinking what I am thinking?

DR. WHAT: I don't know. Are you wondering if you can hide those candles in your sleeves? *(Eyeing the candles on the table.)*

SLITHERS: No, you idiot. Did you hear what that waitress said?

DR. WHAT: *(Still eyeing the candles.)* Yeah, all they have to eat is...*(Lower HIS voice to a disgusted whisper as though he can barely say the word.)*...oooooh, chicken and dumplings.

SLITHERS: Not that. I'm talking about the gold.

DR. WHAT: Yeah, so?

SLITHERS: Don't you see? This is our big break, our way out of the chicken business, our destiny!

DR. WHAT: *(Trying to stick the candles down HIS sleeves.)* How so? *(Drops a candle off stage front and retrieves it.)* *(To someone in audience as though they were trying to get it from HIM.)* That's mine!

SLITHERS: We will remove Ma and Pa Fool, leaving their children without a guardian. Then I will marry the Fool girl and we will inherit the gold. Then we'll ditch the brats and take the wealth for ourselves. Ha, ha, ha, ha.

(SAM enters SL, carrying milk jugs for restaurant. He notices SLITHERS and WHAT and goes to introduce himself.)

SAM: Howdy, strangers. Are you new in these parts?

SLITHERS: Why yes, we are. I am Wiley Slithers.

SAM: And who might you be?

DR. WHAT: *(Shaking SAM'S hand and stating HIS name.)* What.

SAM: *(Louder.)* I said, "Who are you?"

DR. WHAT: *(Louder also.)* I said, "What."

SAM: *(Even louder.)* What's your name?

DR. WHAT: *(Louder also.)* I know. *(Nodding HIS head.)*

SAM: *(To audience.)* Ino, hmmm? Must be Italian. *(Turning back to SLITHERS and WHAT.)*

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