

HAROLD HARDLUCK'S LUCKY STRIKE

1-Act Melodrama

By *BILL VAN HORN*

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STORY OF THE PLAY

When payrolls are robbed from stagecoach runs miles apart four times in a row, folks in Gravestone start to wonder if something's amiss! Lovely heroine Lucky Lovelight thinks Rudolph Rumble could be involved. He's paymaster for the companies and town store-hotel-barkeeper. Lately he's been burning his trash every hour and making a suspicious amount of smoke. Lucy's true love, Harold Hardluck, returns from mining with Sam Hill and as usual, has struck out. To pay back all the money he owes Rudolph, Harold must dress as a dancing girl and work at the bar. But even in a dress he saves the day when he stops Rudolph and his accomplice, who is really the outlaw twins, Dilly and Dally Robbsy. Chuckles guaranteed in this melodrama!

Setting: The town of Gravestone in the wild, wild West in the 1870's. All action takes place in the rough interior of a combination hotel, stage coach station, and general store. A counter is placed UC with shelves behind it containing a few canned goods, etc. Tables and chairs are scattered over the stage.

Costumes: Western style garb for all characters except RUDOLPH who should wear black suit with pocket watch, and stovepipe hat, if possible. Others can wear jeans, shirts, boots and vests. Ladies can wear western style dresses, if desired. HAROLD's shirt should be easy to unbutton. SHERIFF should wear a badge. SAM should wear old, dirty clothes, and be laden down with pots and pans, packs and sacks; he also needs a mask. HAROLD will need a dancing girl costume and wig. SARAH and TESSIE need driving gloves and trade off wearing a very large sombrero and regular-sized cowboy hat.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 7 f, 1 flexible part, either male or female)

RUDOLPH RUMPLE: The villain.

LUCY LOVELIGHT: Lovely heroine.

HAROLD HARDLUCK: Lucy's intended, an unlucky guy.

SARAH: Stage coach driver.

TESSIE: Another.

SHERIFF SUNDOWN: The sheriff, of course!

MILDRED: The town worrier.

CALAMITY JANE: Wants to be a sheriff.

PONY EXPRESS RIDER: Male or female part.

SAM HILL: Prospector with an odd sense of humor

DILLY and DALLY ROBBSY: Twin sisters, outlaws!

Playing Time: 30 minutes

Properties: Counter, shelves, canned goods, supplies, tables, chairs, glass, bucket, cleaning rags, pistols, holsters, money, legal papers, mail packets, wastebasket, boxes and bags of "gold dust", pots, pans, sacks, suitcases, old clothes, letters, counterfeit bills, poster, stool, barrel, rope and long cord, food tray and food, utensils, wooden hobby "horse" for Pony Express Rider.

Lighting: No special effects needed.

Sound effects: Hoofbeats, gunshots, explosion, horn, screams, etc. as called for offstage.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: RUDOLPH stands behind the counter, counting money. SARAH is asleep on a chair, legs propped up on table, and a very large sombrero pulled down over her eyes. LUCY, sighing, is on hands and knees, scrubbing the floor.)

LUCY: Oh, alas, I am so tired. It is so difficult being the do-all everything in this hotel, stage coach station, and general store.

RUDOLPH: *(Coming out from counter.)* Marry me and I'll get some help.

LUCY: Never! My heart belongs to Harold Hardluck.

RUDOLPH: But everything he does turns sour. And he doesn't have a red cent nor a green dollar to his name!

LUCY: Nonetheless I love him. *(Getting up.)* And someday I believe he will find his silver lining.

RUDOLPH: Here in Gravestone? Never! Heh-heh-heh. I own everything.

SHERIFF: *(Enters.)* Howdy, Miss Lucy. *(Tips hat. Sits down on chair.)*

LUCY: Hello, Sheriff Sundown. Would you like a glass of water?

SHERIFF: Right nice of you, ma'am. *(SHE gets HIM a drink.)* Say, where's that feller of yours? I haven't seen Harold fer quite a spell.

LUCY: Oh, dear Harold is presently farming.

SHERIFF: Farming? Where?

LUCY: The old Dustbin place. *(Sits down.)*

SHERIFF: Dustbin place? Pretty dry out there, ain't it?

RUDOLPH: As dry as a bone. *(Aside.)* Heh-heh-heh. The only thing growing on that farm is the interest on the mortgage!

SHERIFF: What happened to Harold's chicken farm?

LUCY: Oh, all the chickens got the pox and scratched themselves to death. And then he tried to raise turkeys but all the turkeys suffered ingrown feathers and got tickled to death.

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SHERIFF: I'm powerful sorry to hear about Harold's bad luck.

RUDOLPH: *(Chortling.)* Oh, I love it - I love it!

SHERIFF: Here in Gravestone we've got plenty of trouble.

(Loud COMMOTION offstage, GUN-SHOTS and SCREAMS. MILDRED rushes in.)

MILDRED: The Sheriff, the Sheriff! Where's the Sheriff?

SHERIFF: *(Rising.)* What is it now, Mildred?

MILDRED: Somebody's robbing the bank! Robbing the bank!

SHERIFF: What again? That's the third time this morning! *(HE exits with MILDRED.)*

LUCY: Oh, how terrible!

RUDOLPH: Not really. There's not much money in the bank anyway. *(Takes a huge wad of bills from pocket.)* I've got most of it.

LUCY: Where do you get all your money? You're the richest man in the territory.

RUDOLPH: Heh-heh-heh. Magicians never tell their secrets and neither do rascals. Nobody will ever know. *(Offstage CRASH.)*

LUCY: What's that?

RUDOLPH: Sounds as if someone rode into the trash cans.

LUCY: Don't be silly. *(HAROLD enters, limping.)* Why, it's Harold! *(Goes to HIM.)* Dear Harold. Why are you limping?

HAROLD: My horse threw me into the trash cans. Ohhhh. *(Sits down.)*

RUDOLPH: More bad news, eh, Harold. *(Laughs behind HIS hand.)*

HAROLD: Actually, no. My luck has changed. *(RUDOLPH looks incredulously and LUCY oohs and aahs at the following.)* After years and years of back-breaking labor, the farm has become productive. The hens are laying, the cattle are on the hoof, the sheep are in the meadow, and the cows are in the corn. *(LUCY squeals and hugs HIM.)*

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RUDOLPH: We can't have that. *(Pulls out paper from coat pocket.)* And the mortgage is due on the loan I gave you.

HAROLD: Impossible! You assured me I had plenty of time to pay!

RUDOLPH: Time flies when I hold a mortgage. Heh-heh-heh.

HAROLD: Alas, another failure. I've lost everything! *(Bows head.)*

RUDOLPH: Yes, you've lost your shirt again. Gimmee!

(HAROLD takes off shirt, gives it to RUDOLPH who throws it behind counter.)

HAROLD: Ah me. Once again I am penniless, but I am not hopeless. I shall continue to look for the silver lining. *(Sighs. HOOFBEATS offstage.)*

RUDOLPH: *(Checking watch.)* Aha. Right on time, as usual.

(PONY EXPRESS RIDER, on wooden hobby horse gallops onto stage. Stops and tries to catch his breath.)

HAROLD: Isn't that rather risky, building your hotel in the middle of the Pony Express Route?

RUDOLPH: Why? It saves me from having to go to the post office.

RIDER: *(Throws packet of mail at RUDOLPH.)* Here. *(Puffing.)* And tell the Sheriff I was robbed at the Loco-Poco River crossing. The outlaw was wearing a mask. He stole the Dirty Hole Mining Company's payroll! *(Gallops off.)*

LUCY: *(Calls offstage.)* Sheriff! Sheriff Sundown!

(SHERIFF and CALAMITY JANE enter on the run.)

SHERIFF: I heard. Pony Express was robbed by a feller in a mask who stole the Mining Company's payroll.

HAROLD: How did you get the news so quickly? The rider just told us.

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CALAMITY: Shucks. News travels like greased lightin' in a small town like this. And it's too bad about you losin' yer farm, Harold. *(Pats HIM on the back.)* Well, Sheriff, when are we going after the bandit?

SHERIFF: We - ?

CALAMITY: Yes. You and I. *(SHE takes her gun from holster, twirls it.)*

SHERIFF: Trackin' down outlaws is man's work, Calamity Jane.

CALAMITY: 'Tain't so, Sheriff! Why, I can outshoot, outrun, outpunch, outhit, out armwrestle anybody in the territory!

SHERIFF: Sure. And you can do it with one hand behind your back. Keeping law and order is my business, Calamity. So you mind your business and I'll mind mine. *(SHE kicks a chair and storms out.)*

(Sound of a loud HORN is heard offstage.)

SARAH: *(Jumps up, puts on driving gloves, and stretches.)*
Sounds like the stagecoach!

(TESSIE runs in wearing a cowboy hat.)

TESSIE: Hey, Sheriff! Listen to this! I was robbed down at the Wheehaw Pass by a masked robber. He stole the Cooper Copper Company's payroll! And he stole a crate of perfume!

LUCY: The masked bandit again!

SHERIFF: But it couldn't have been the same one that robbed the Pony Express. The Loco-Poco River and the Wheehaw Pass are 50 miles apart! And one's east and the other one's west.

TESSIE: Which outlaw are you going after? East or west?

SHERIFF: I'm not as young a man as I used to be, so I think I'll head east. *(Exits.)*

TESSIE: Now you be careful, Sarah. It's no easy job a'drivin' that wobbly-wheeled stage anytime, let alone with masked robbers on the loose.

SARAH: Shucks. I ain't worried. Who's ridin' shotgun?

End of Freeview

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