

Much Ado Out West

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Pedro, Benny and Claude should be heroes! Okay, so they spent most of their time holed up in a lonely outpost during the entire Civil War. And fine, so the only injury they received was from that overheated pot of campfire coffee, but still they should at least get a warm welcome from the gals at Aunt Sue's ranch. They should at the very least get their cowboy jobs back! Instead, the boys discover that while they've been away, Betty and the other womenfolk have been doing all of the roping and ranching.

This Western romp is inspired from Shakespeare's hilarious battle-of-the-sexes romantic comedy, "Much Ado About Nothing." Despite how much the cowpokes and the ladies of the ranch taunt each other, love seems to be in the air. Claude falls head over heels in love with Winny, a lovely Southern belle, new to the ranch. And in the midst of it all, Calamity Jane, a rambunctious tomboy, secretly longs for Claude's affections, and is bent on stirring up a big bowl of trouble when she doesn't get her way. Meanwhile, Benny and Betty are arch-rivals, only happy when they are insulting each other... or is it just their way of masking their deeply guarded feelings for one another?

This easy-to-produce, fun-to-perform show is filled with witty, Western-flavored dialogue, Shakespearian twists and turns, and lots of wild and untamed characters just waiting to come to life on your stage.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 9 w, extras)

BETTY: Cowgirl, strong and tall in body and in spirit.

MAGGIE: Cowgirl, tough but obviously more of a lady.

AUNT SUE: An older, more matronly woman.

PONYTAIL SALLY: Pretty cowgirl with a ponytail.

WINNY: Behaves like a Southern belle. Speaks in a refined manner; almost prissy.

COWGIRL: Extra ranch hand.

PEDRO: Good-natured cowboy. Suave, crafty, leader of the group. Has more worldly experience and does not have as strong of a “cowboy” accent.

BEN: Sarcastic and smug cowboy. Also with more worldly experience.

CLAUDE: Handsome but dim cowboy.

CLAMITY: Cowgirl disguised as a boy with a hat and fake mustache. She has long, flowing hair.

SHERIFF: An old, foolhardy man. Has a gun.

WUGLY TWIN #1 and #2: Comic hillbilly-type young women.

MAN/DRAKE: Short and nerdy, wears thick glasses.

EXTRAS: Cowgirls and cowboys, as desired.

SETTING

End of the Civil War at Aunt Sue’s ranch out West.

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: End of the day on Aunt Sue's Ranch.

Scene 2: Same day as cowboys are on their way home.

Scene 3: Later that evening at the hoedown.

Scene 4: Afternoon in the garden two days later.

ACT II

Scene 1: The same day.

Scene 2: The next day early morning.

Scene 3: Later that day.

Scene 4: That same evening.

PROPS

Drapes (Winny)

Fan (Winny)

Lassos (Betty and Ben)

Wallet with pictures (Drake)

Chart (Drake)

Ring with a box (Claude)

Sack and supplies (Claude and Pedro)

Rubber bands (Pedro)

Stick on the ground (Calamity)

Rope (Winny)

Fiddle (Sheriff)

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Act I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: BETTY and MAGGIE ENTER SR, fresh from a hard day of working on the ranch, wearing dirty overalls, tool belts and gloves.)

BETTY: Have you pounded them fence posts?

MAGGIE: Yep. We can put the cattle in there tomorrow at sunup if you've got a mind to.

(AUNT SUE ENTERS SL.)

AUNT SUE: The roof's patched up. Oughta hold us through the next rainstorm.

(PONYTAIL SALLY, wearing cowgirl chaps and riding gloves, ENTERS SL.)

PONYTAIL: *(Removing her riding gloves.)* Well, that ol' bronco's buckin' days are over. After a few rounds with me, he's more cream than coffee now. He's like a tired old smell hound after a five-minute belly rub, if you know what I mean.

AUNT SUE: Truth be told, hun, we rarely understand a word you say.

BETTY: *(To AUNT SUE.)* You hush now. What Aunt Sue means is "Thank you."

MAGGIE: Ponytail Sally, you have such a way with them critters. Why, we wouldn't be able to run this ranch without you.

PONYTAIL: Nonsense. We've all been pulling together. Everyone of us is essential.

(WINNY ENTERS SR. She carries drapes.)

WINNY: Look, ya'll. I finished making curtains for the hen house.

AUNT SUE: Winny! The chickens don't need no curtains!

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MAGGIE: They ain't even got windows.

WINNY: *(Disappointed, still admiring the drapes.)* That's a shame. They match the new carpet.

BETTY: Another fine day of work, ladies. The ranch has been operating without a man for almost two years now. We should all be proud.

AUNT SUE: When those boys went off to that gol' darn war I thought for certain we'd have to close things down.

MAGGIE: If it weren't for Betty

PONYTAIL: That's right; you've run this ranch better than any fella ever could.

MAGGIE: And showed us just how strong we women can be.

WINNY: But surely we couldn't do this for the rest of our lives. Am I right? Why, it wouldn't be ladylike.

BETTY: Winny, don't tell me that you'd want to go back to a life of sewing' and bakin' and the rest o' them domestic arts. We're self-sufficient now. We're empowered. I, for one, don't plan on giving that up.

MAGGIE: And I'm agreein' right along with you.

PONYTAIL: Me too. After all, who needs those stinky, gruffy, sour-headed cowboys. We got all we need right here.

(EVERYONE except WINNY ad libs in agreement. A COWGIRL runs IN.)

COWGIRL: The war's over! The men are coming home!

(The LADIES instantly turn giddy and excited.)

ALL: *(Except BETTY.)* The men!!!!

COWGIRL: They're on their way home now!

ALL: *(Except BETTY.)* Now?!

WINNY: We've got to get to changing! We look positively dreadful.

BETTY: Hold on now; we don't need to change nothin'.

MAGGIE: Betty, that's a double negative.

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BETTY: I apologize for my grammatical errors, but I'm a little disappointed right now. Here we've been doin' all this work, and now as soon as them fellas return, you wanna go and get gussied up, pretending we're all docile, feminine creatures, just the way they left us. But, we don't need to do that. Those men should see us for who we truly are

(THEY stare at HER for a moment.)

WINNY: *(Suddenly realizing.)* We'll need to put on makeup too!

(The LADIES let out shrill cries of urgent excitement and rush OFF, SL.)

BETTY: *(Shakes HER head.)* Hmmph. Women. *(Follows them OFF stage, disgruntled.)*

End of Scene

Scene 2

(AT RISE: ENTER PEDRO, BEN, CLAUDE and CALAMITY. OTHER COWBOYS can join them if casting allows.)

CLAUDE and CALAMITY: Yee-ha!

PEDRO: Ah, it feels good to return home after years in the service of the mighty Union Army.

BEN: *(Breathing in deeply.)* I love the smell of manure in the mid-afternoon.

CLAUDE: It's strange to be back. Everything looks how it used to ... but it don't feel the same. I hear warfare can change a man.

BEN: Though it should be noted that we didn't see a trace of gunfire.

PEDRO: No. Not a single Johnny Reb.

BEN: Two years in a lonely lookout post up in the Appalachians. What better place to wait out the war?

End of Freeview

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