



## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Murder at the Shootin' Show!* was written specifically for a dinner-theater environment; the dialogue reflects as much. The production, however, can take whatever unique spin it wishes, replacing “dinner” with drinks, small plates, desserts, or even snacks. It is important that each Act is punctuated by a short break during which the characters interact with the audience, with each other, and that they perform particular stage business crucial to the mystery and the plot.

The production may use a variety of set-ups. The method originally used, and suggested, is an immersive “surround” set-up. For the debut, the show was performed on an ordinary stage. Approximately 12 circular tables were scattered throughout the space where the audience was seated. Upstage was the bar, behind which CARSON performed her business. The teaser curtains were clipped together to form a solid black barrier between the audience and the wings. Additionally, pipe and drape were erected along the stage apron to create a fourth wall that completely enclosed the audience.

The key to a successful production is the performer-audience interaction. As long as the characters can mingle with the audience at-will, the illusion will successfully transport your story to Lonely Meadow.

Have fun!

## CAST of CHARACTERS

SPURS ROBERTSON - Former outlaw.

SANDY CREVITZ - Beautiful, sultry bawd.

DUSTY SHOEHORNS - Former outlaw; female.

NIGEL WICKERBATCH - Verbose visitor from Great Britain.

CACTUS BRAMBLETOES - Disgruntled assistant to SNAKETOOTH. May be played by either a male or a female.

SNAKETOOTH "RATTLENECK" JOHNSON - Former bandit turned celebrity.

CARSON RENO - Owner and Bartender. May be played by either a male or a female.

SKIP TUCKINS - CARSON'S plucky assistant – ideally the same gender as CARSON.

SHERIFF BOGART BACKWASH - Explosive and biased lawman.

OLGA }  
MARIA } Three gossiping HENS.  
IRENE }

ADORABLE TOWN ORPHAN – A fan of SNAKETOOTH JOHNSON.

TOWN DRUNK - A woman named "Jackie" Daniels.

ROSITA FLORES - A señorita with a temper.

MARCY O'FLANNIGAN - The town harlot with a heart of gold.

TOWN BARBER and TOWN DOCTOR - May be played by the same actor

SERVERS

## SETTING

The Lonely Meadow Saloon & Hotel in the mostly uninhabited desert valley, soon to be known as Las Vegas. The action of the play takes place in the bar area of the saloon. An exit to the KITCHEN, where SERVERS may bring food and drinks; an exit to the HOTEL ROOMS; and an exit to the STREET. Characters are able to interact directly with each audience member, especially during meal service in between Acts. The Time is the summer of 1890. The West is still quite wild. In the previous years the "Old Gang" split up, and Snaketooth Johnson's performance career has ballooned since.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

### ACT I

The invitees to the Shootin' Show arrive and await SNAKETOOTH JOHNSON'S highly anticipated arrival. When he appears, however, the presence of old acquaintances threatens to ruin the whole event.

### ACT II

SNAKETOOTH prepares for the show while his friends, new and old, pepper him with requests and simmering passions. One-by-one he spites them, planting seeds of murderous aspiration.

### ACT III

A raucous outside leads to consternation until a horrific discovery is made: the dead body of SNAKETOOTH. SHERIFF BACKWASH attempts to bring order and truth to the matter but finds himself unable to make an objective decision.

### ACT IV

The surviving members of the Old Gang try to put the pieces back together, but not before the SHERIFF brings the audience's accusation forward. If the audience is right, the KILLER attempts to flee but is gunned down by CARSON. If the audience is wrong, CARSON still guns down the KILLER, but not before the SHERIFF dies.

ACT I

*The Lonely Meadow Saloon and Hotel, in the tiny but expanding town of Lonely Meadow (soon to be better known as Las Vegas). Tickets should read as invitations: "To bearer of this (here) ticket – you are cordially invited to the One and Only 1890 Shootin' Show Extravaganza! with awards and reception to follow. Y'all dress accordingly." As audience members arrive and are seated, CARSON RENO tends his bar. The TOWN DRUNK is already positioned, as she shall be for the majority of the evening, upon a barstool at one end of the bar. At the other end of the bar is a bowl of peanuts that characters may take from throughout the show, and possibly even offer to audience members – though it should never be empty. CARSON may refill it as necessary. Tables should be ready with their own bowls of snack food and, perhaps, baskets of bread.*

*As seating nears its end, OLGA, MARIA, and IRENE – the three gossiping hens of Lonely Meadow – enter, chattering loudly; they sit at the DC table. Each has something that she is sewing; OLGA has a newspaper. SKIP, CARSON'S assistant, rushes out and wipes down the table as the three hens sit.*

SKIP: Sorry, sorry – just give 'er a minute... Ready!

MARIA: Thank you, dear.

OLGA: How ya doin', Carson?

CARSON: I'm doin' fine. Sure is great to have some new faces here in Lonely Meadow!

IRENE: New faces, indeed! (*To a gentleman.*) Hello, you!

MARIA: Irene, cut it out! You'll make us look like a bunch'a uncivilized buffoons out here!

OLGA: Ain't that what we are?

MARIA: Hush now! You two are intolerable.

IRENE: (*To another audience member.*) And where are *you* from? (*IRENE takes what the audience member says and sounds it out, trying to assemble whatever word she hears.*)

MARIA: (*To the same audience member.*) You gotta use plain English with this one. (*To IRENE.*) You're hurtin' yourself, sweetie. Let it go.

OLGA: (*Reading from the newspaper.*) Hey, you two, hear this. (*Reading.*) "Come one, come all, to the Lonely Meadow Saloon..."

IRENE: That's here!

OLGA: (*Smacks IRENE on the arm with the newspaper.*) I know *that*. (*Reading again.*) "...to the Lonely Meadow Saloon and Hotel for the 1890 Shootin' Show Extravaganza! One night only, only ten cents to attend. Awards and reception to follow. Y'all dress accordingly." Well, how about that!

MARIA: Let me see that! (*Seizes the paper.*)

IRENE: They're holdin' a show here? How exciting!

OLGA: No one told me about it.

IRENE: I wonder if any rootin' tootin' heart-breakin' cowboys are gonna come!

MARIA: Don't let your bloomers fly up over there, sister.

OLGA: I can't believe they're havin' a show out here. Who wants to come here?

IRENE: I don't know, but if they're havin' a show, we might as well get excited about it. Right?

OLGA: (*Referring to IRENE:*) The only kind of show that's gonna bring folks to a place like this is the kind that features her bare, wigglin' tushy!

IRENE: I'll never!

MARIA: (*Cackles:*) Who'd come to *that* show?

OLGA: (*To another audience member:*) He might!

MARIA: My sister, for sure.

IRENE: Oh dear, what family you got yourself, there, Maria.

MARIA: Just sits at that bar over there. *Drunk!*

TOWN DRUNK: You go 'head and keep talkin' before I... because you know I'll...I'll... (*Her insult fizzles.*)

IRENE: Ooo, she's out!

MARIA: Told you. (*Reads the newspaper in more detail.*)

OLGA: Why don't you just leave that girl to herself? Teach her some manners.

MARIA: Olga! My sister may be a helpless slave to the bottle, but blood is thicker than liquor.

OLGA: Her blood *is* liquor.

TOWN DRUNK: There's blood in my liquor!?

IRENE: Carson!

CARSON: What?

IRENE: Why you still serve her when she's floatin' like that?

OLGA: Yeah!

CARSON: Why? Is she intoxicated?

IRENE: She's always intoxicated! She's the town drunk!

TOWN DRUNK: Hey, don't talk about him, he's a good man....

MARIA: We're talkin' about *you!* Go back to sleep!

CARSON: Excuse me, ma'am – how many fingers am I holdin' up? (*Holds up three fingers.*)

TOWN DRUNK: You have a funny foot. Are you alright?

CARSON: Ma'am, I'm gonna have to cut you off. (*CARSON snatches the DRUNK'S bottle away and walks offstage, towards the hotel rooms.*)

TOWN DRUNK: You can't cut me off! (*Leaning towards an audience member, hushed whisper:*) Because I'm not driving! (*During the following exchange, the DRUNK sneaks behind the bar and pilfers a bottle of whiskey.*)

OLGA: (*To MARIA:*) Good luck with that one, honey.

IRENE: Trade her back if they'll take her.

MARIA: (*Back to her paper:*) Would you believe it – it says here that Snaketooth Johnson is comin' to Lonely Meadow for the Shootin' Show!

OLGA: Who's comin' here?

IRENE: Oh, Snaketooth Johnson – he's a household name.

OLGA: Not in my household.

MARIA: He's a stunt-show performer who travels around the West and puts on shootin' shows. Apparently he's rich.

IRENE: And handsome.

MARIA: And a great marksman.

IRENE: And quite physically fit. I've seen him.

MARIA: I heard he used to be an outlaw.

IRENE: Oh, they're the hunkiest!

OLGA: You seen him before?

IRENE: Oh, yes.

*OLGA and MARIA look at IRENE inquisitively.*

MARIA: Is there somethin' you're not tellin' us?

IRENE: I watched his show in Sacramento when I went to get my hair did.

MARIA: Did you meet him?

IRENE: (*Nodding*) Sure did.

OLGA: Oh, Lord.

MARIA: We know what that means.

IRENE: And what does it mean?

OLGA: You and him *sinned*.

MARIA: Oh Lord, hear my prayer for the soul of my ever-straying friend, here!

IRENE: I did nothing of the kind! Shame on you to judge me so!

MARIA: Dear Jesus, who washeth clean the dirtiest of dirty spirits –

IRENE: I am not dirty! I didn't even touch the man... sadly.

OLGA: Well, it says that Snaketooth is on his way here, so he better watch out.

MARIA: – I beg you, Lord, to cool the proverbial jets of your daughter Irene, in your mercy.

IRENE: Stop it! Both of you! This is how rumors get started!

OLGA: You're a never-ending rumor, sweet heart.

IRENE: Because of you two!

MARIA: Ayeeeeeee-men!

*CARSON re-enters as the ADORABLE TOWN ORPHAN follows. He is breathing excitedly and runs up to CARSON.*

ORPHAN: Mr. Carson! There's a couple of strangers outside askin' if this is your place!

CARSON: What'd you tell 'em?

ORPHAN: I said, 'of course'! I'm gonna carry their bags for a dime!

CARSON: You don't need to do that, Skip can come out and do that for you.

ORPHAN: But I need the dime! I'm gonna see Snaketooth Johnson's Shootin' Show! Can I please carry for 'em?

CARSON: Alright, but be careful. You don't wanna drop those bags and owe 'em a bunch of dimes yourself.

ORPHAN: Yes, sir!

*He runs out excitedly.*

ACT II

SNAKETOOTH: Ladies and gentleman, I will return shortly! I'm gonna head outside to warm up. In the meantime, enjoy the delightful amateur stand-up comedy of Mr. Carson Reno!

*All exit except for CARSON, who climbs up on top of the bar as a stage hand in black carries out a stand-up microphone. The sound of gunshots and cheering can be heard softly in the background, as SNAKETOOTH warms up. CARSON proceeds to crack 3-4 dead-pan jokes that should be relevant pop-culture material to the audience. Planted actors or servers should heckle him. CARSON is about to begin a final joke when SHERIFF BACKWASH rises from a far corner of the room, where he has been silently listening and waiting.*

SHERIFF: Go back to bartending, Reno! *(He strides to the front of the bar.)* Get down.

CARSON: Nobody tells me what to do in my own place.

SHERIFF: What if that Nobody is *the Law?* *(SHERIFF BACKWASH flashes his badge.)* Now get down. You're about to fall on this lady here. *(He indicates an older audience member. Saying to the lady:)* I'm here to serve and protect ma'am. *(He tips his hat.)* Now listen up everyone. As you can see, we've got three famous criminals on the loose. Now what I need from ya'll is to keep your eyes and ears open tonight. Whatever they're planning, they're gonna

talk about it. And I need witnesses. Now this guy *(He indicates a gentleman audience member, preferably a verbose one)* would say anything I asked him to. Wouldn't ya? *(Despite the response, SHERIFF continues:)* Forget about it. I won't need you, gabby. I've got enough warm bodies here to put each of these scum buckets away 'til kingdom-come. *(He approaches a table. As he discusses each individual, he pulls out a playing-card sized mug-shot of each person and uses it as a prop. Based on the size of the card, SHERIFF may walk through the crowd, showing the picture to audience members.)* Any of you heard of Spurs Robertson? Wanted for thievery, assault, bank robbery, and sagging his pants in public. But I'm sure he's done worse. Keep an eye out for anything suspicious. *(He approaches another table.)* And you – have you heard of Dusty Shoehorns? Seems like a nice, innocent tomboy, right? That's a dangerous desert flower, there, believe me you. But the worst of all – and I'm sorry, but ya'll signed up for it – is that Snaketooth "Rattleneck" Johnson, posin' as some legitimate circus-performing monkey. He's the best con man the West has ever seen! He's kidnapped kidnapers! Made lawyers cry! Tricked politicians into bein' honest! He's the best of the best, and I want to put his slippery hands in a set of iron wristwatches!

CARSON: Mister Sheriff?

SHERIFF: What is it?

CARSON: I'd appreciate you not insulting my guests in front of...my guests.

SHERIFF: Your guests are polluting the very ground this shack is built on. Don't stand up for such trash, son.

CARSON: Not all of them are so bad. What about Mr. Wickerbatch?

SHERIFF: Ha! *(He produces a card of WICKERBATCH.)* You'd be surprised. We can't link him to a single crime in this country, and yet he's been a witness to hundreds. *Hundreds!* Some say he even works for the dreaded assassin, "El Gringo".

CARSON: El Gringo!? And Miss Sandy Crevitz?

SHERIFF: *(Producing another card.)* The Tart of Tulsa? Please. Petty crimes breed hefty sins, my friend. And she will pay for them.

CARSON: And what about that assistant of Snaketooth's....

SHERIFF: Cactus Brambletoes? (*Pulls out the last card.*) It's a tragedy, isn't it? That creature is inseparable from Snaketooth. And so are their crimes.

*One by one he drops all six cards on the bar CARSON awkwardly scoops them up and looks at them fretfully, one by one – he should deliberately let audience members look at them with him.*

So here's how it works. Any of you links one of these dirt bags to a crime gets a reward. A *handsome* reward. (*Getting really close to a younger audience member.*) But don't you dare make stuff up! I need proof! Evidence! Got it!? (*The sound of voices outside gets louder, as the characters are returning. To CARSON:*) And that goes for you, too, Reno. And don't say a word about me being here! (*If an audience member does say anything, SHERIFF can cough loudly and scurry out of the room, or a character can deflect.*) Now. I'm going to head out there and check up on our little line-up. And when I get back, ya'll know me as Mr. Blackvein, representative of the Pacific-Central Railroad Company. Good day.

*He exits with a harrumph. Once some audience members have been able to see the cards, CARSON gathers them. Secretly, he keeps the Snaketooth card and replaces it with an extra SPURS card; this switch must be performed prior to the following text.*

CARSON: Well, geez. I've always wanted to be a detective. To solve the case! But then, I've always wanted to be a small business owner who doesn't get shot. I guess I'll be the small business owner. But.... (*He eyes the cards warily.*) I don't know. I can't watch everyone at once! I guess I'll keep an eye on just one of them. To be safe. (*He approaches the table furthest DS, and finds a child in the audience.*) You look like a smart guy/girl. Could you help me? Pick one of these cards for me, but don't look at it! That wouldn't be fair. Pick it out, and give it to me.

*This previous section and the card-picking can be re-worded or phrased depending on the audience and CARSON'S interaction with the volunteer. The volunteer should pick a card and give it back to CARSON. CARSON should hold the card up, facing him, and nod – it is very important that*

*CARSON'S body language clearly communicates that the card selection is key to the identity of the killer.*

Okay. I'll watch you! You're not getting away with *anything*, mister or missus, though I can't say which and not spoil the evening!

*He puts the other cards in his pocket. Upon returning to the bar, he places the card in a fixture on the wall behind him, far enough away that audience members can see it but not reach it. The character whose card CARSON has pulled is the KILLER. The production then changes based on the identity of the KILLER from this point forward. CARSON holds on to the other cards while talking to the audience – in a moment, when the other characters return, he will exit offstage briefly and hand them to a stage-hand so the KILLER'S identity may be determined.*

ACT III

SHERIFF: Snaketooth Johnson... is dead.

*There is a collective gasp, complete with muffled screams and murmuring. The following five lines, spoken by the five suspects, are spoken at the same time.*

SPURS: I don't believe it!

SANDY: Snaketooth is *dead*?

DUSTY: Oh my dear Lord Jesus!

CACTUS: Aw, hell.

NIGEL: Master Snaketooth!

ROSITA: Lies! Lies!

SHERIFF: Ma'am, calm down.

ROSITA: He just told you that to get away from me!

SHERIFF: Ma'am, I guarantee you, Snaketooth did not tell me he was dead. He is lying on the floor of his room, dead as a pig on a spit.

MARCY: What happened?

SHERIFF: I'll ask the questions from now on, missy.

MARCY: Did he just die?

SANDY: Yeah, like of natural causes?

SHERIFF: You could say so.

KILLER: Come on, Sheriff! Did somebody kill Snaketooth or not?

*Pause.*

SHERIFF: I believe so.

*Another collective gasp.*

SANDY: Well, how did he go?

SHERIFF: Snaketooth was found lying on the floor, his face and neck all swole up real bad. And his mouth was filled... with peanuts.

ALL: Peanuts!?

TOWN DRUNK: (*At the same time as above:*) Tell 'im to give the peanuts back!

SPURS: I'm sorry – peanuts?

DOCTOR: Mr. Snaketooth suffers from a very severe allergic reaction to peanuts!

SHERIFF: Suffered, past tense. Which means that someone here – in this very room – is guilty of murder. And not just murder, but murder-right-under-my-nose, which gets me angrier than a warthog with hemorrhoids! Now each and every one of you line up at the bar! (*Nobody moves.*) Line up at the bar, now!

SPURS: Sheriff, are you serious?

SANDY: *Is* he serious?

SHERIFF: Serious as you'll ever see me, Robertson.

CACTUS: This is hilarious.

SPURS: Sheriff, give it up. None of us did anything and Snaketooth's not dead – you're just tryin' to get us to confess to some bogus charge. I'm callin' your bluff.

SHERIFF: I'm not gonna ask again, Robertson. Move!

DUSTY: You're lyin' through your yella' teeth, Backwash!

SPURS: Yeah, you hated Snaketooth more 'n the rest of us!

SHERIFF: (*Aims his pistol at the resistant suspects:*) I'm gonna count to three.

SANDY: If you can count that high.

NIGEL: Shouldn't we just do what he says?

SHERIFF: One.

NIGEL: Look, I'm sitting! I'm sitting right where you told me to!

SPURS: Relax, Shakespeare.

DUSTY: You'll be fine.

SHERIFF: Two.

CACTUS: (*Taking some whiskey from the bar:*) Here's to a good run, ole boy.

NIGEL: No, no, no!

SHERIFF: Three.

CARSON: No! (*He pushes the SHERIFF'S arm to the side.*) This isn't how to do this, sir!

SHERIFF: What would you know about the law, Reno?

CARSON: There's got to be some evidence, right? You got all these witnesses here to help you. Just *please* don't start shootin' in my place!

SHERIFF: You don't know these characters like I do, Reno. You don't know what they're capable of!

SKIP: Mr. Sheriff!

SHERIFF: What do *you* want, Skip?

SKIP: Me? Nothing, sir. It's just that, well, I'm Pre-Law at UNLV, and I *might* have something to say about this....

SHERIFF: Well, this oughtta be grand. Go ahead, Skip.

SKIP: It would be grievous of me not to mention to you case law that establishes precedent in this matter. Namely, *Miranda v. Arizona*, and *Ali v.*

*Fraser* in which the arresting officers did not provide grounds for arrest and the accused was acquitted, and the arresting officers were stripped of all authority and merit –

SHERIFF: Okay, I get it. (*To CARSON:*) Pre-law?

SKIP: And a minor in dance.

SHERIFF: Well, then. I would hate to forget the rights of these... *people*.

SPURS: Besides, we got about a hundred souls here that could attest to you using your firearm against unarmed, innocent civilians.

DUSTY: I believe they bust you to inmate for that.

SHERIFF: Well then, Carson, since you seem to be on top of things out here, I'm gonna take a closer look at the crime scene and see if I can't gather some evidence. Might just find enough to string up *one* a these outlaws tonight. You good with that, Carson?

CARSON: Got it, sir.

SHERIFF: (*To the SUSPECTS:*) Now, don't none of you move from this hotel! I'll be right back soon. (*He storms off, towards the rooms. Awkward pause.*)

CARSON: Well, how 'bout some whiskey on the house?

*The next six lines are spoken over one another.*

SPURS: Sure.

SANDY: Why not?

NIGEL: I'll try some, I suppose.

CACTUS: More, please.

DUSTY: I shouldn't, but....

TOWN DRUNK: What? You're given a "me" a drink?

SPURS: So... (*Holding his glass aloft:*) To Snaketooth....

ALL: To Snaketooth.

*They clink glasses and take a drink.*

SPURS: Hell, he can't be gone.

DUSTY: I know.

NIGEL: I never got to see him perform.

SANDY: Can we at least look at him? Just to be sure he's actually dead?

CARSON: He's dead, Sandy. Trust me.

CACTUS: Good riddance.

SANDY: Hey! Shouldn't you show a little respect?

NIGEL: Yes, he has passed on, after all!

CACTUS: (*Without any authenticity:*) Poor Snaketooth.

SPURS: I can't believe it. I was through with him, myself, but I thought there would at least be another chance, maybe. One more time for us to ride again, side by side like we was.

DUSTY: I don't know what you're bein' all sentimental for, Spurs Robertson. You always hated that man.

SPURS: Not as much as you, and for good reason.

SANDY: (*Adolescent bragging:*) Hey, I hated him too!

NIGEL: How could you hate that man? He was so... *valiant*.

DUSTY: We don't see it that way.

NIGEL: You all should be ashamed of yourselves! To hate a man so much that you would kill him! How could you?

DUSTY: How could I? I didn't do anything!

SPURS: Englishman – I'm not gonna warn you again. Watch your mouth around me and my friends here.

NIGEL: I – I'm not scared of you! I'm brave! Very brave!

SPURS: Then why are you shakin'?

NIGEL: I – I'm going to assist the Sheriff's investigation! You stay right here, *criminal!*

CARSON: Nigel, just sit down at the bar.

NIGEL: No, I'm helping!

CARSON: Sit! The Sheriff don't need none of your help. As far as he's concerned, each and every person in here is a suspect – even you, Nigel.

NIGEL: Me!? Are you bloody mad? I'm just a visitor! A foreign emissary from a faraway land, bringing good tidings from afar! How am I a s-s-suspect?

SPURS: You're in this just like the rest of us.

DUSTY: Each of us is under suspicion, so calm down.

NIGEL: But I didn't do anything!

CACTUS: Shut up! Your goose is roastin' too, so just shut up!

*Pause.*

SPURS: Are we *sure* this wudn't no accident? Or a set-up?

DUSTY: Hell with it. We're all walkin' out of here, anyway.

CACTUS: Why?

DUSTY: Sheriff Bogart Backwash is the unlucky penny of western law enforcement.

SPURS: He tried for years to put Dusty, Snaketooth and I away with no luck. Lord knows how he knew about the Shootin' Show in the first place.

SANDY: (*Suspiciously:*) Right? It makes no sense!

CACTUS: He's tried to bust up our shows, too. Or set up "accidents" meant to incriminate me or the boss.

DUSTY: Carson – you realize helping him ain't gonna make no difference.

SPURS: We didn't do anything, the lot of us here.

SANDY: Snaketooth probably ate those peanuts himself! He ain't so smart, after all!

CACTUS: Sure, sounds good to me.

NIGEL: And I just want to go home!

DUSTY: You know, Cactus... you got yourself an idea there!

CACTUS: I do?

SPURS: Whadda you mean, Dusty?

DUSTY: Snaketooth ate the peanuts himself! Did ya'll ever hear him mention his peanut allergy? (*Pause.*) No?

CACTUS: Well....

SPURS: Actually, yeah.

DUSTY: Come on, Spurs. No you didn't.

SPURS: Actually, I did. Winter of '81, him and me was hunkered down in this train car, ridin' down south to meet up with Freddy "Six-Fingers" Fernandez – but that's another story. We realized we was in a circus car. All was in there was crates of peanuts, but Snaketooth tried to play it off. His eyes got all red and swole up just from bein' near the things. Damn near killed 'im.

DUSTY: Well, that's too bad. Any other ideas?

SANDY: (*Trying too hard:*) And he told me too, kinda.... It was on our cruise to the South China sea. He refused to eat anything with peanut oil, peanut sauce, or kiss me when I was wearin' my glossy peanut lipstick.

DUSTY: You went on a cruise with him?

NIGEL: Oh, forget it! He didn't commit suicide. One of you *did him in!*

CACTUS: What did we tell you, vinegar-boy? Be quiet!

DUSTY: Hell, there ain't no way. You're tellin' me he never touched the things?

SANDY: (*Unable to help herself:*) Oh, he touched the things!

DUSTY: Not you!

SPURS: Oh, would you two quit? We gotta come up with somethin' before Bogey comes back in here and pins it on one of us!

NIGEL: I'm trapped with *murderers!*

*The SHERIFF re-enters, carrying a glove. Based on the KILLER'S identity, it should be either black/tan. For the following scene, insert the correct color where indicated.*

SHERIFF: Ya'll calm down now. (*With triumphant glee:*) We ain't goin' nowhere.

SPURS: Give it up, Backwash! This ain't no hom-ocide – it's suicide!

DUSTY: (*Playing along:*) Snaketooth must've swallowed those peanuts hisself.

SANDY: (*Still over-eager:*) Yeah, we just came up with a *real* good story about it, too!

CACTUS: Sandy....

SPURS: She means we were talkin' about how Snaketooth was so low down and miserable on himself lately.

DUSTY: Real low down.

CACTUS: Writing in his diary all night long.

SANDY: Yeah... and eatin' lots of ice cream.

SPURS: Buckets and buckets of whiskey-flavored ice cream.

DUSTY: We're deadly serious, Sheriff. Snaketooth was just sick of it all.

SPURS: He had so many regrets, Backwash.

DUSTY: We've been prayin' for his soul, too.

SANDY: Aaaaamen!

SPURS: So can't we all just shake hands, pat our bellies, and ride outta here and imagine this night never happened?

SHERIFF: That sure is a movin' tale ya'll weaved for me here. (*False drama:*) I...I'm getting' steamy in my eyes! Carson – you got a tissue?

*END OF SAMPLE*