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Lumberjacks and Weddingbelles

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Kelly, Tim (Book) and Larry Nestor (Music and lyrics). *Lumberjacks and Weddingbelles*. Pioneer Drama Service, 1981. Contact publisher regarding price. 54 pp.

Reviewer: Charlene Gan

Reading Level: Young adult;

Rating: Excellent;

Genre: Musicals; Historical plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Marriage--Juvenile drama; Washington--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Sometimes women are the smart ones.

Production Requirements: Fairly simple set for a musical, but you would have to find singers, and possibly dancers. The show could be done with one set or multiple depending on your finances and resources. Costumes can be done with modern clothes made to look the time period.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 70 Min

Characters: 11 M, 14 F

Cast: 25 total Characters. You can combine characters but remember this is a musical, meaning that it needs to be either all adults or a mix of young adults and adults.

Time Period: Early 1900's

Asa, a lawyer, goes to Boston to get a group of girls to bring back to the Washington Territory to marry all the single Lumberjacks. Ma Scrubbs and Mayor Crook don't like Asa or the new girls. They plot a scheme to frame the girls for stealing and say that Asa was in charge of it. This was done so Mayor Crook could continue alone in his political affairs and Ma Scrubbs could continue to trap without her animals running away because there were no more trees. A hermit, who saw the whole thing, is hunted down by the lumberjacks to testify but he doesn't want anything to do with people. Ma Scrubbs tries to kill the hermit but Charity, one of the Belles, sees that he is only wounded and decides to fake the hermit's funeral. That way she knows that the hermit will be safe. The judge comes to town for the trial of the belles and the Hermit decides to testify. The Belles are proven innocent and the lumberjacks get to marry and keep their Belles.

The show is a lot like 'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers' but simpler. It is a fun play and has some very good characters. Ma Scrubbs and Mayor Crook (the name says it all) are the antagonists. They are sly, and Ma Scrubbs' family of misfits is very comical. Her son is lazy and overly large while her daughters are boy crazy and are always trying to flirt with the Lumberjacks. These characters make for comical elements. Charity and Asa are the protagonists of the play. They are the first to really fall in love. They are companionable and enjoyable to watch. The music is fairly simple and could be fun for a very young audience. Although, for teenagers this music could be very boring because it is too simple, but the play, without music, would work just as well or even better. What brings this play down is that there are long periods where the dialogue seems to drag. Some of this is accounted for when a song is about to begin, which makes for a slowing down in the tempo of the dialogue. There isn't a large amount of action in the play but what action there is has a purpose and moves the plot along. The theme sends its message clearly without being in the forefront of plot or characters.