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### Taming the Wild, Wild West in a Dress, or, Let's Give the Villain the Slip

Rebeca Wallin

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St. John, Billy. *Taming the Wild, Wild West in a Dress, or, Let's Give the Villain the Slip*. Pioneer Drama Service, 2001. \$50. 64 p.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Plays; Adventure plays; Western plays;

Subject: Old West--Juvenile drama; Melodrama; Drama--Reviews;

Theme: Good conquers evil.

Production Requirements: Single interior set with some scenes done in front of main current. Needs lighting and a piano.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 90 minutes

Characters: 26+

Cast: 11 male, 10 female

Time Period: Old West

This is a classic melodrama full of puns, gag humor, and stock characters. Clarence Rawlins and his traveling acting troupe are on their way to Nevada where his aunt, Iva Fortune, has just left him what he thinks is a saloon. Upon arrival they discover that he actually inherited the salon next door to the saloon. Since they have given up their acting careers, his troupe decides that they will all work at the salon. The two men decide that men can't fix hair, so they dress up as women to do it. The owner of the saloon next door, Colt, is a villain who wants to buy the salon so he can tunnel his way to the bank in order to rob it. When this plan doesn't work he kidnaps Clarence's love interest and also Clarence who is dressed up like a woman. Eventually everyone ends up down a mine shaft where they are about to be blown up by Colt with dynamite. More help arrives and they are able to capture Colt instead. Clarence and his troupe decide to buy the saloon and turn the salon and saloon into their own theatre. Almost every male and female in the play ends up with a love interest.

This play is a melodrama and that just about sums it up. The story is far-fetched, every character has a pun based name--Iva Fortune, Bobbie Pinz, Nell Clipper, Will Reader, etc.--and most of the lines are pun-based. That being said, the play could still be a success if the characters were energetic and committed to their characters. Since there are so many puns, it is more suited to an older audience.

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