Clotheslined at Gumption Gulch

Or Don't Get Taken to the Cleaners

By Brian Sylvia

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DEDICATION

A huge thank you to my wife, Rebecca, who encouraged me to do another Gumption Gulch show after "Christmas at Gumption Gulch" (and had the idea to add the bubble machines for the laundry fight scene - they were a big hit!). To our Sheriff, JP Marker, who also crafted the scene change narrations and created the logo for the show. And to the debut cast - thanks for the laughs in our character development rehearsals, the fun in bringing a fictional town like Gumption Gulch to life, and the serious discussions on the never-seen Daddy Cadwaller's timeless wisdom.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Hard times have come on Gumption Gulch and Grandma Gertie Parker is forced to open a clothes-washing service to earn extra money. Actually, even Sheriff Gideon Gumption himself is 'moonlighting' (though the term has him totally baffled) at the stagecoach office and a local lunch spot. Grandma Gertie's old nemesis has sent her two boys, Luther and Ulysses Bragg, to town to help put Gertie's laundry service out of business as payback for an old feud. Add in a possum-farming brother and sister couple (Elrod has a serious case of 'the anxieties'), a blacksmith who dreams of being a comedian, a crazy wandering minstrel who sings what he overhears (and has his own secret), and the confusing love interest between the Sheriff and Chrysanthemum Parker (Gertie's granddaughter), and you have the makings for a hilarious story. The wisdom of "Daddy Cadwaller" at the end will leave the audience laughing and pondering.

ORIGINAL CAST

Performed by *inCharacter School of Ministry* in Florida on April 21-23, 2017. Directed by Brian Sylvia.

Chrysanthemum Parker ..... Nicole Miller
Sheriff Gideon Gumption ..... JP Marker
Grandma Gertie Parker ..... Mikayla Fontenot
Faylene Cadwaller ..... Annabeth Wynn
Flapjack Jones ..... Jeremy Miller
Zeke Foster ..... Christian McIntire
Ulysses Bragg ..... Hunter Peacock
Luther Bragg ..... Sean Brannon
Elrod Cadwaller ..... Jared Miller

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 3 w)

CHRYSANTHEMUM PARKER: A pretty 20-something girl who is caught in the middle of this entire scheme.

SHERIFF GIDEON GUMPTION: Easily confused, bumbling but lovable Sheriff of Gumption Gulch.

GRANDMA GERTIE PARKER: The feisty, opinionated owner of the ranch (and Chrysanthemum's grandma) who has fallen on hard financial times.

FAYLENE CADWALLER: The quirky owner of a possum farm who assists Grandma Gertie in her hard times.

FLAPJACK JONES: An eccentric traveling 'minstrel' who randomly sings plot summaries as he wanders with his ukulele and/or guitar.

ZEKE FOSTER: The town's blacksmith who falls hard for an out-of-town 'woman.'

ULYSSES BRAGG: The elder brother of Luther and son of Grandma Gertie's nemesis, Elvira Bragg.

LUTHER BRAGG: The baby brother of Ulysses and son of Grandma Gertie's nemesis, Elvira Bragg.

ELROD CADWALLER: Faylene's brother who gets 'the anxieties' easily and who delivers great news just in time.

SETTING

Outside of Grandma Gertie Parker's Barn.

CHARACTER AND STAGING HINTS

1) Whenever any character mentions Elrod and "the anxieties" it may be good to add a little motion in with the line. She could swirl her arms around her head, or something similar. It'll allow the audience to have an amusing physical connection to Elrod's anxieties.
2) Creating clotheslines where the wing curtains are will help to add to the setting and will keep the clotheslines from blocking any characters. It also allows characters who are supposed to be overhearing things to peek through clothes and still appear to be 'offstage' (example: Flapjack listening to Luther.) The original production used a barn cut backdrop, allowing characters to enter/exit the barn in full view of the audience.
3) Consider using bubble machines in the wash tubs for the laundry fight. When Grandma says her line just prior to the fight, the other characters can slowly make their way to the tubs and turn them on at the same time. They'll also need a cue to head back to the tubs to turn them off. Consider using some melodramatic music for the fight scene. That will allow for clear cueing.

ACT I
Scene 1

(LIGHTS UP. CHRYSANTHEMUM is walking around the barnyard.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: I've spent my whole life livin' right here on this ranch. And we've been through a lot here too. Good times and bad times. Times of plenty and times of little. But what is remarkable to me is how it all seems to work out. I guess we just hold to our faith and keep right on a-workin'.

(SHE sits on bench downstage right as SHERIFF enters.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: *(Cont'd.)* Me and Grandma Gertie… she's my grandma and I live on this ranch with her… we've been through some pretty interesting things. Quite a history here in Gumption Gulch. That there's Sheriff Gideon Gumption. He's a great guy. As Grandma Gertie says, he ain't the brightest candle at the vigil. But he is kind and sincere. And *(Whispers to audience.)* he and I are sweet on each other.

SHERIFF: *(Noticing CHRYSANTHEMUM.)* Well there you are, Chrysanthemum Parker! Who you talkin' to? *(Looks off into the distance, confused.)*

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Just talkin' to myself, I guess, and rememberin' all the times here at this ranch.

SHERIFF: Gumption Gulch is quite a place, ain't it?

CHRYSANTHEMUM: It sure is!

SHERIFF: My grandpappy Gumption was the first sheriff here. This whole town is named after him.

CHRYSANTHEMUM: He was a great man, from the stories I hear.

SHERIFF: Sure was!

CHRYSANTHEMUM: And the Gulch has had its share of colorful characters through the years. Remember that out of towner that came to Sarsaparilla Sam's Root Beer Emporium and Inn?

SHERIFF: Sure do! He was a mean-lookin' critter. He came in, drank a few root beers and left. We was all lookin' at each other.

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Then he came stormin' back in and said, "Okay, which of you varmints stole my horse?"

SHERIFF: Bein' the Sheriff, I couldn't take kindly to people horse stealin'. And he said "Someone done took my horse. Now here's what's gunna happen. I'm gunna order me another root beer, finish it, and when I walk back outside this time my horse BETTER be there or else I'm gunna do what I did in Texas... and believe me, I don't want to do what I did in Texas!"

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Then just like he said, he finished his root beer, walked outside and sure enough, his horse was there!

SHERIFF: Then I said, "Sir, I don't mean to bother, but as Sheriff of these here parts, I need to ask you. What did you do in Texas?" He looked me in the eyes and… remember what he said?

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Sure do! After you said, "What did you do in Texas?" He said, *(Pause.)* "I walked home."

(SHERIFF laughs uncontrollably.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: *(Cont'd.)* Uh, Sheriff, that's a cute story and all, but I'm not sure it's that funny.

SHERIFF: *(Still laughing.)* I walked home! *(Aside.)* Get it? Cuz his horse wasn't there. So, he had to *(Slowly.)* walk home!

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Yes, Sheriff, *(Referring to audience.)* we certainly *did* understand the punch line.

SHERIFF: *(Stops abruptly - shocked.)* He got punched too?

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Oh, Gideon Gumption, you're a funny feller. *(He smiles weakly.)* Oh, I almost forgot, Grandma Gertie wanted me to tell you that she's got a question to ask you.

SHERIFF: A question? Okay, well, I gotta go by town and check on Zeke Foster. Then I'll come right back.

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Zeke Foster the blacksmith? Why you gotta check on him?

End of Freeview

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