Lil Red and the Cowboy Who Saw the Light

By Lee Ann Hotovy

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Synopsis: Set in the Wild West, Red must set off to visit her grandmother, but meets the nasty Sheriff Saul along the way. The Sheriff works for Meano the Mayor who doesn’t like folks getting in “The Way”. Sheriff tries to round up Lil Red and her Granny’s gang, but thanks to a heavenly Light, he sees things in a New Way. Throw in some talking ponies, a few baked beans, a theatrical tumbleweed, and you have the makings of a fun and inspirational musical!

CAST:

Narrators and Dancers:

N1-N6 *Cowboys/Cowgirls who narrate story with song and dance*

Lil Red *Cowgirl set on delivering the “Good E.” News*

Buckskin *Lil Red’s pony*

Sheriff Saul *Almost meanest man in the west*

Chester *Slightly overweight horse of Sheriff*

Granny Smith/Anna Nice *Lil Red’s Grandmother*

Weston  *Granny’s pony*

Meano the Mayor *Boss of Sheriff and posse’/Meanest man in the west*

Deputy Doug *Deputy to Sheriff Saul*

Sidesaddle *Deputy’s pony*

Buffalo Bev *Member of Posse’*

Sassy Parillo *Member of Posse’*

Ma/Darlene Van Camp *Lil Red’s Mother/Saloon Owner*

Tumbleweed *Talking Tumbleweed*

Stumbleweed *Talking Tumbleweed*

Cactus Lily *Talking cactus*

Cactus Spike *Talking cactus*

Cactus Yuk Yuk *Talking yucca plant*

Outlaw 1 Calamity Carla *Cowgirl for the “Way”*

Outlaw 2 Milly the kid *Cowgirl for the “Way”*

Outlaw 3 Wyits Steve *Cowboy for the “Way”*

Cowgirl 1 Miss Roppa Barrel *Cowgirl*

Cowgirl 2 Miss Dolly Pardonme *Cowgirl*

Cowgirl 3 Miss Annie Oaktree *Cowgirl*

Rodeo Rex *Rodeo rider and member of posse’*

Francis *Talking mule*

Voice of God

*Set Design: Western style motif with rodeo barrels, cactus, etc.*

*Stage 1 is used as entrance and backdrop for Saloon, Granny’s house, and Mayor’s Ranch. Two side stages are offset to right and left of Stage 1. These sit slightly higher and operate as Picture frames in opening scene; dance hall stages; Rodeo seats.*

*A center stage sits in middle of room with audience wrapped around it/entrances from all four sides with connecting walkway stage to Stage 1. This centered stage is used for rodeo, dessert and canyon scenes, Damascus City.*

Act 1/Scene 1: Cactus Valley

*Stage is set for open Cactus Valley /narrow stream runs down center of stage/side stages empty with fake cacti placed for stick-horses*

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SONG:

*Sound of galloping/western music/ cowgirls enter riding stick horses. They tie horses to cacti and climb to positions on side stages. Dust blows across stage/sound of wind*

*Tumbleweeds “roll” in to scene. Stand center stage.*

TUMBLEWEED: This here’s the Wild West…

STUMBLEWEED: Where anything can happen!

N4: That’s right Tumbleweed, and something did happen…right where you’re standing!

N2: Oh it wasn’t there…it was back a pace or two…

N4: No it weren’t! I remember it plain as the day is long…it was right there!

N2: You sayin’ I got a poor memory?

N4: I never said no such thing…I just remember it better’n you…on account of your poor memory!

N2: Why I oughtta …where’s my rope?

N1: Now, now ladies…we have a story to tell. You’ll have to do your gun slingin’ and rope tying some other time.

N2 and N4: Well…all right then.

N3: Lyda Rose, may I?

N1: A course…before the sun sets if you don’t mind.

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*side stage*

N3: You see, Tumbleweed, a while back, afore you were even green, some folks discovered a treasure in this here valley. A stream ran through it, and it was full of wondrous things…

N6: Gold Miners would sift through the sand for gold nuggets that washed down from the hills.

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SONG:

*Soft whispery song by narrators in background*

*Fog machine cue/or dust blowing*

*Tumbleweed and Stumbleweed move off stage/Meano and Anna Nice(Granny) move into place working as panhandlers along the stream /center stage*

N3: It was a fine work; day after day, two miners rolled their pans in the stream sifting for gold, chatting about this and that, always hoping they’d strike it rich, but never really expecting to…until one day…

MINERS: Eureka!

*Anna Nice spots sun shining on stream, then looks up*

*Meano finds large gold nugget and holds it up*

ANNA NICE: What a glorious golden Light!

MEANO: What a glorious golden nugget!

N2: As the two stood admiring their treasures, a beautiful brown pony wandered in between them to drink from the stream.

N3: Meano, the first miner, noticed the amazing creature and snatched at its neck…the pony bolted and found himself in the kind embrace of the other miner, Anna Nice.

N2: She whispered nicely in his ear to calm him and he did.

N6: That very minute, a jealousy rose up in Meano and he thought to himself:

MEANO: At last I’m rich…rich! And with this nugget I’m going to buy up all of Cactus Valley, including this stream. If’n there’s any more gold in it, or any ponies come to drink from it…they’ll be mine…all mine!

*exits*

N6: Anna Nice and the pony just shook their heads.

N3: Anna Nice knew she had found a treasure worth more than any gold…the sun’s reflection dancing on the water had made her suddenly see the Light above…

ANNA: I must tell others about this Light…it will be a new *Way* of living. Will you help me pony?

*Pony nods head and whinnies*

ANNA: I think I will call you Weston.

*Exits with pony*

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SONG: *Whispering song continues to finish out story/Narrators move to center stage*

N1: Many years passed, and Meano made himself Mayor of Cactus Valley and governed all the little towns around, including Damascus City.

N4: His stream dried up on account of the mining, and all the ponies wandered off to other lands. The only thing left for folks to ride was stick horses.

N 5: He made laws that folks *had to* follow unless they wanted to end up in his rodeo, scooping manure or roping barrels on foot.

TUMBLEWEED: That’s terrible!

N5: And to make matters worse, he had his own posse’!

STUMBLEWEED: His posse’? What’s that?

N1: Cowboys who represented the law, Meano’s law anyway

N5: There was a sheriff, a deputy, Buffalo Bev, and Sassy Parillo.

N4: They rounded up anyone who broke the law.

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*These characters appear in photo stage/spotlights/Narrators take opposite side*

STUMBLEWEED: Well that don’t sound so bad…I mean breakin’ the law is wrong, ain’t it?

N1: Yes, unless the law is erroneous!

TUMBLEWEED and STUMBLEWEED: Huh?

N1: Just plain bad.

TUMBLEWEED and STUMBLEWEED: Oh.

N4: You see, Meano had made it against the law to follow *the “Way”.*

N1: And if you decided that living in the Light was for you, Meano was determined to clear you out of Cactus Valley or make you learn the *Hard Way* instead.

N5: And that’s where Granny Smith and her gang of outlaws come in.

LIGHT CUE: Spot on stage right picture frame

TUMBLEWEED: Why that looks like a sweet little old lady…how can she be an outlaw?

N4: Don’t let the curlers fool ya kid! Granny had learned *about the Light from Anna Nice*…and she helped lots of folks find it too, so that’s why Meano had it in for her.

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SONG:

*LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

N3: Now one day three ponies wandered into Cactus Valley. As you know this was a rare thing…

N2: And these ponies were special…

N6: Because they could talk!

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Lights change as three ponies (Chester, Buckskin, Sidesaddle) enter/center stage/T.weeds and cowgirls move offstage/two large bushes are pushed into place on stage one*

CHESTER: Watch yer step Buckskin…there’s little bitty sandburs all over the place!

BUCKSKIN: Aw Uncle Chester you worry too much…ouch!

*Buckskins jumps around as if a sticker is in his foot*

SIDESADDLE: *whinnies as if laughing*

CHESTER: Now lookey’ there…didn’t I tell you to be careful. Come here and I’ll help you pull it out!

*Buckskin moves to Chester*

CHESTER: Hush up Sidesaddle…tain’t very nice of you to laugh at ole’ Buckskin!

SIDESADDLE: Aw he deserves it for being so “blind”! (more whinnies and laughter)

BUCKSKIN: I admit I didn’t believe you Uncle Chester… I’m sorry.

CHESTER: That’s all right Buckskin, but a pony can never be too careful…especially in strange parts.

SIDESADDLE: Oh yer just skiddish on account of that ole’ mining accident…why that *dynamite* sent you a mile high in the sky! Good thing there was a watering hole nearby for you to land in, or you would’ve been a goner for sure. (whinnies and laughs)

CHESTER: It weren’t no dynamite, and you know it!

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

N 3: The three ponies were minding their own business when all of a sudden from out behind a bush, a carrot appeared!

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

N6: It was the only thing green and edible for miles so…

N2: Sidesaddle, who was a greedy little pony, went for it!

*Sidesaddle moves towards bush (SL) and reaches for carrot/he’s whisked behind bush*

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

N1: Strangely so, a sugar cube appeared from behind another bush…

N5: And Buckskin, who had a soft spot for sweet things, went for it!

*Another hand on opposite side (SR) holds out sugar cube/Buckskin takes it and is whisked behind bush*

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

N4: This left ole Chester rather perplexed and disturbed so he thought it’d be in his best interest to “head for the hills” when…

*Chester looks from side to side and starts to bolt forward when a black rope catches him around the neck and he’s pulled into bushes/exit*

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*SONG: Set changed to rodeo as narrators sing and move things into place*

# Act 1/Scene 4: Sunset

# *Wild West desert scene: Tumbleweed player rolls across stage.*

Lil Red and Buckskin stand center-stage looking at sunset in distance.

Cacti in background/face away from audience

BUCKSKIN: Ain’t that the purdiest sunrise you ever seen, Lil Red?

LIL RED: It sure is, Buckskin! The Good Lord paints a purdy picture don’t He?

And you know what?

BUCKSKIN: What?

LIL RED: I am so happy I have a talkin’ pony. It’s not every cowgirl that gets a friend she can talk to and ride!

BUCKSKIN: Aw shucks…it just runs in my family. My great uncle Chester can talk too.

LIL RED: Uncle Chester…I don’t recollect you mentioning him afore’? Where’s he live?

BUCKSKIN: Don’t know exactly…we ain’t seen him for a while, on account of him joining the military.

LIL RED: The army?

BUCKSKIN: Well not exactly…I heard he works for a sheriff!

LIL RED: If he has a posse’, that’s kind of like a small army, ain’t it?

BUCKSKIN: Yep.

LIL RED: I sure am glad I have you, Buckskin!

BUCKSKIN: And I’m glad I have you, Red.

MA(offstage): Lil Red? Lil Red?

*Red and Buckskin meet Ma upstage*

MA: Red, your Granny isn’t feelin’ none too well, I’m sending her some things to read. I think she’d like to hear some *Good E. News.* Plus I packed her some cactus jelly and toast. I want you to take it over afore noon…so she has it for lunch. You understand, Honey?

LIL RED: Yes, Ma’am.

MA: This is your first time on your own, so I want you to watch out for rattlesnakes…

LIL RED: Yes, Ma’am…

MA: And don’t dilly dally along the way…no picking up lizards or cactus lilies…

LIL RED: Yes Ma’am…

MA: Buckskin…you make sure she don’t talk to no strangers…especially about “The *Way* to Granny’s house”.

BUCKSKIN: Uh…yes Ma’am.

LIL RED: Why is that so dangerous Ma…we talk about the “*Way* to Granny’s house” all the time around home?

MA: I know honey, but out in the big world…we’s considered outlaws for it…and I don’t want you to get hurt. So just act like you don’t know nothin’ about it.

LIL RED: But ain’t that bein’…kind of unfaithful-like?

MA: Lil Red…you are a very bright and brave young cowgirl…and I think you just need to concentrate on stayin’ on the path today…just think about Granny…Buckskin, you’ll help her won’t you.

BUCKSKIN: Yes Ma’am.

MA: Here’s a sugar cube for being so sweet….oh, and I put the map right here in case you get lost. All right have a good trip and I’ll see you tomorrow.

Ma exits, while Red and Buckskin begin journey. Red carries basket (song)

Clippity clop sound heard for Buckskin. At end of song, cacti turn and face audience.

LIGHT CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC CUE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SONG:

BUCKSKIN: Hey Red, do you know why yer Ma asked me to keep you away from strangers?

LIL RED: Cuz they can’t be trusted. You know that Buckskin! This *is* the Wild West we’re livin’ in. Anything could happen.

BUCKSKIN: Oh yeah. I’m getting a little spooked.