

NELLIE WAS A LADY
" A Melodrama in the Rough"

-----By Wayne Allen

DIRECTOR'S SPEECH****(After reciting a short prelude and a few explanatory notes, the director begins the show by pointing out Little Nell and the Hero coming down the balcony steps. They have been to a square dance and the Hero, Honest Hubert, is escorting her home) The Spotlight will follow the two characters down the steps and onto the center of the stage, where they pause for the first scene in the melodrama.

HERO: (With bashful gestures) You shore looked pretty tonight Nellie.

NELL (With hand to mouth etc.) Thanks to lux toilet soap?

HERO May I call on you Saturday night to take you to Mrs. Wigglebottom's corn bee?

NELL. Shucks! I'd like to go Hubert, but I'm eloping with Phil Updebucket.

HERO. That woiif? I saw him eyeing you tonight Nell. You can't elope with him. You haven't even got a ladder?

NELL. We're using a rope made out of sheets!

HERO. Nell, I can't let you do this. What will your poor father do?

NELL. He'll just do without. Phil Updebucket asked me to be his bride and I have con-sented. He wants to share his modum stars, my money with me. I remember his very words, "I know it is Big-O-Me, but I want you to enjoy life as I do.

HERO. He thinks your pa is rich, that's all! Wait until he discovers that it is confederate money that your old man has under his mattress!

NELL. You are very insulting Hubert. I think you ought to go----and you needn't bother about coming back to me ---EVER! (Exit Nell into curtain)

HERO***(speaking to audience) You heard what she said, "Never"! All right! If that's the way she wants it! I'll go right out there and watch the show from there and see how they get along without a Hero! She can't do this to me! The train can just run over her for all I care! I'm through! (exit into audience--preferably on front row)

DIRECTOR**Oh don't be that way Hubert! Nell was only kidding. It's just in the script. She had to say it. You'll win in the end. Just wait until the Villian desserts her--she'll beg you to come back.

HERO. Let her beg. I ain't a coming!

DIRECTOR. You heard Nell say that Phil Updebucket is coming after her Saturday night to elope. Well, its Saturday night and Nell is home with her aged father. As the curtain opens we find him cutting out paper dolls and making faces at the cat. Nell is peeling apples and anxiously awaiting the arrival of her new beau.

FATHER. (gives the raspberry sign to the imaginary cat)

NELL. (peeling apples and throwing the peelings over her shoulder) Hark! I hear footprints! Who can it be?

PESSIMIST. You know very good and well who it can be! You've been expecting him for days now!

FATHER. 'Tis only the wind and the wind, my dear
It always happens this time of year
Ther's going to be a storm I fear.

CHOIR. Twas a dark and dreary night
All the stars were shining bright.

Pessimist. Ya dopes! Stars don't shine bright on a dark and dreary night!

CHOIR. AND THE STARS WERE SHINING BRIGHT!

ENTER VILLIAN. (knocks at the door)

FATHER. Answer the door, Nell.

NELL. Answer yourself, you ain't crippled and besides I answered it last!

FATHER. (Greeting villian) Welcome!

VILLIAN. Welcome! I have come to ask the hand of your sweet little innocent daughter

Nell. I love her and wish to protect her always.

CHOIR. Sweet little innocent Nell
As Walter Winchell will tell
Is the prettiest thing in the land
She uses Jergon's on her hand.

PESSIMIST. How do you know it isn't Italian Balm?

CHOIR. SHE USED JERGEN'S ON HER HAND!

FATHER. You can't have my Nell. She only a baby!

NELL. I am not!

FATHER. YOU ARE TOO!

NELL. I am not!

FATHER. You are too!

CHOIR. SHE IS NOT!

PESSIMIST. I'd say the old man's right!

CHOIR. She is not!

(F) GOOD SPIRIT. (tapping Nell on the shoulder) Nell, you aren't even thinking of leaving your poor old father, his hair is turning grey.

(F) EVIL SPIRIT. (Also taps Nell on shoulder) Don't be a drip! Here's your chance! He's a man ain't he? Your dad ain't so poor! Look underneath that mattress! Do you think he dricks color-back? That was opportunity knocking!

NELL. 'Tis hard to determine!

CHOIR. She oughtn't to go away--It will hurt him so!

WILL SHE LEAVE HIM?

Can he do without her?

Can he stand not seeing that loving in her eyes?

PESSIMIST. I Know!

CHOIR. SHUT UP YOU'LL SPOIL THE STORY!

NELL. YOU can't fool me, I know! He just wants me to stay and sweep the floor.

CHOIR. AND DO THE LITTLE CHORES.

PESSIMIST. And dig that well next spring!

NELL. (very, very, dramatic) Pa, I'm a going!

FATHER. Is this your final diffusion?

NELL. OUI Oui Pop ee!

VILLIAN. (as he embraces her) Ha Ha me proud beauty! You shall be happy! I will dress you in splendor! (Turns to audience with hand to mouth) Little does he know I'm stealing all his dough!

FATHER. (to audience with hand to mouth also) Little does he know.
That I have no dough!

NELL. FAREWELL to thee! Be good! (exit Nell with Villain)

CHOIR. Weep not heart broken father

She's just going to have a new home!

PESSIMIST. What's wrong with the one she's got?

CHOIR. SHE'S GOING TO HAVE A NEW HOME!

FATHER. (shaking his hand full of paper dolls at them) You cannot return to the peavine! You are an ungrate! You must never again darken my door! Don't think I'll forward your mail either!

CHOIR. TWAS A DARK AND DREARY NIGHT

WHEN NELLIE WENT AWAY

(sing) OH THEY HAVE TAKEN HER AWAY, THEY HAVE TAKEN HER AWAY AND YOU'LL NEVER SEE YOUR NELLIE ANYMORE!

DIRECTOR'S 2nd SPEECH (comparatively short explanation regarding the marriage and sad life of Little Nell after she becomes Mrs. Updebucket!)

FATHER. (still cutting out paper dolls) Perhaps I should put a light in the window for my wandering daughter.

(M) GOOD SPIRIT. That is an excellent idea! She may need the flame to guide her footsteps homeward, and besides, it can't hurt anything.

(M) EVIL SPIRIT. Why leave a light? You must remember your threat---Never again must she darken your door! She ain't blind! And you might burn down the house. What if there should be an air-raid? (blows out candle)

FATHER. Hark! I hear footprints! (to Evil Spirit) Open the door.

EVIL SPIRIT. I can't you fool, I'm a spirit!

FATHER. (goes to door and opens it) Good evening.

STOUGE. (steps inside door. Is dressed like a high school student) I'm from Hickman High School. Our English class is making a survey for the victory garden campaign and I would like to know if you are going to plant a garden this spring.

FATHER. No hoo! And besides, I've leased my plot to Ringling Bros. (Exit Stoooge and father resume position. Again there is a knock at the door.

FATHER. (refusing to go to the door) Who is it?

NELL. (offstage shouting) OPEN the door. Open the door.
I'm your sweet little Nellie
Don't you love my anymore?

FATHER (opens the door and Nell enters in gorgeous creation from Harzfeld's)

DIRECTOR. Wait just a minute! Listen Helen! What do you mean by appearance with such a lovely gown on? You are supposed to be portraying a girls who has been unhappy and poverty stricken for one year. Do you think she would look like that?

NELL. (Very perturbed) Listen here Wayne Allen! I went down to Harzfeld's three weeks ago to get permission to wear this. I spent two hours being fitted. If you think I'm not going to get a chance to wear it, you're crazy!

DIRECTOR. Very well! But you look very silly and you'll never will the Acadamey Award at this rate!

FATHER. (to director) Where were we?

DIRECTOR. "I'm your sweet little Nellie, don't you know me anymore?"

FATHER. (resuming character) What do you want?

(M) EVIL SPIRIT. Are you kidding?

FATHER. (Pointing to baby) What's that you've got?

(M) EVIL SPIRIT. Are you kidding?

NELL. She's Dummy. He's my son!

GOOD SPIRIT. You're a grandfather!

FATHER. Looks just like it's grandmother, poor thing! Where did you get him?

(M) EVIL SPIRIT. Are you kidding?

NELL. Father, will you ever forgive me? I was so young and he was so handson and the wedding was so beautiful! But we've had a misunderstanding. He doesn't love me anymore. He has brought me sorrow. He left me without a penny, so I ran away! Incidentally, I had the most wonderful time in Reno!

FATHER. Come to me arms me beavous lad! Come to me arms Kid!

CHOIR. And so Nell is back again

Nell is back again

She's back

Look at her.-----BACK!

PESSIMIST. She's black if you ask me!

CHOIR***WHO DID?

(Father and Nell resume positions as in beginning)

VILLIAN. (bursts into room without knocking) Ha Ha me ex-proud beauty! I have found you. I have come to take my dummy!

NELL. YOUR DUMMY!

VILLIAN. My dummy!

NELL. Your dummy?

Villiam. My dummy!

FATHER. Leave this house you cur! Hark! I hear footprints! Sounds like a mule!

CONSTUBULE. (entering) It ain't no mule

You gol darn fool

Can't you see

I'm the constubule?

FATHER. THEN arrest this rodent. He has brought sorrow to my daughter and me!

VILLIAN. I have not.

FATHER. You have too!

VILLIAN. I have not

FATHER. You have too!

CONSTUBULE. What did he do?
 What did he do?
 What is the harm that
 He's brung to you?

FATHER. He's wrecked my farm and ruined my daughter. He ought to be tried for
 man-slaughter!

PESSIMIST. Why?

CHOIR. NEVER MIND!

The dialogue is getting rough
 Mrs. Williams may not like this stuff
 And she's Will Hays her, you know
 She has the power to stop this show!
 BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU DO*****OR MRS. WILLIAMS WILL HOODOO YOU!

Arrest this man. He's wrecked the farm.
 He has brought harm and harm and harm
 The chickens haven't layed since the day
 He took sweet little innocent Nell away!

PESSIMIST. Why doesn't he try Neutrina?

CONSTUBULE. 'Tis an awful Jam that you are in
 You must pay the price of sin
 You've wrecked the farm and ruined his daughter
 I reckon I ought to fine you about a dollar and a quarter.

VILLIAN. But I can't pay the fee! Oh fiddle dee dee!

CONSTUBULE. You must pay the fee!

VILLIAN. But I can't pay the fee!

CONSTUBULE. (draws gun and shoots Villian) I've killed a man! What shall I do?
 Election is next fall! (kills himself)

NELL. (runs and feels each heart) They're dead!

PESSIMIST. Are you sure? It just couldn't end like this!

FATHER. (FALLS DEAD)

PESSIMIST. Pleurisy!

NELL. Are you sure? What must I do? What must I can? Can must I what?
 What to do? What to do? What to do? What to do? What to do?

DIRECTOR. (Interrupting) That's your cue Hero!

HERO. (shouting from audience) I'm not a coming! You heard what she told me!

DIRECTOR***Come on -----be a good sport!

(F) GOOD SPIRIT. Halt! Don't kill yourself! He's just kiddong. He'll come in a
 minute. He just has to. They always do down at the Varsity!

(F) EVIL SPIRIT* Might as well make it snappy. You see him as well as I do--
 sitting right out there in the audience. He's not budging an inch.

PESSIMIST---It serves you right! (To Hero) I don't blame you, I wouldn't take that
 from nobody! She says she's a good actress-----WELL BETTE DAVIS!-----Here's
 your chance!

NELL (asks director) Shall I kill myself?

DIRECTOR---Sure! YOU'LL come nearer winning the prize with a tragic ending.

NELL. (to hero) Arent you coming, really? What shall I do?

PESSINIST. Flip a coin.

NELL (flips a coin) Tails! (motions to one of her spirits to get a sheet from
 the property man)

DIRECTOR WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

NELL. I can't swoon on this dirty floor with this on! Mrs. Van Coutren would
 skin me alive! (When sheet is spread -she takes a pill)

DIRECTOR (To Hero when Nell dies) See what you've done?

PESSIMIST. Might as well make it a massacre! (kills dummy and attempts to kill
 Nell's Evil Spittit)

CHOIR-----STOP! YOU CAN'T KILL HER SPIRIT!