

## ***The Library* by Kendall Gordon**

### **Synopsis:**

As a happy-go-lucky cowboy enjoys a night under the starry sky, he is soon joined by the company of some unlikely characters. One by one, each of them finds themselves in the Wild West and they eventually begin to wonder how they happened upon this unusual situation.

### **Characters:**

*Each character is meant to be portrayed as an archetype in order to add to the imaginative atmosphere. While accents aren't required in your audition, please feel free to have fun and get creative with these characters!*

The Cowboy (male): Carefree and content; welcoming to all who join him, yet somewhat conflicted; *Western accent*

The Knight (male): Pompous and proper; his noble quest is interrupted by discovering the Wild West; *British accent*

The Aristocrat (female): Privileged, entitled, and in love with her country; *French accent*

The Detective (male): Sharp; mysteriously concealing a dark past and constantly searching for an explanation to everything

The Pirate (female): Lives a life of adventure; has created her own definition of morality and respectability; *Pirate accent*

The Scholar (female): Brings the audience and characters back to reality; familiar with the background of this unusual situation; older and wise

### **Sides:**

The Cowboy: pages 2-3 "I am but a humble cowboy" - "You, then me"

The Knight: pages 1-2 "Ho there" - "Good dusty sir"

The Aristocrat: pages 3-4 Cowboy's "Who are you?" - Aristocrat's "Curious people here together"

The Detective: pages 4-5 "Did someone say a mystery" - "And an Aristocrat"

The Pirate: pages 8-9 "I am but a humble pirate" - "Unless you make it bad"

The Scholar: pages 9-10 "There you are, Mike" - "Your imagined utopia is true"

ACT IScene 1

The COWBOY, in chaps, a vest, and a white hat, sits alone in a wide, empty field. The night sky is filled with stars, and a fire burns at his feet. He sits on a log, a guitar in his hands, and a couple of cans of beans at his side.

COWBOY

Nothing like sitting down after a long day's work to relax and sing a couple songs by the fire. I guess other people would be feeling sorry for me. 'Why do you stay out there?' they'd ask. 'Out there, in the wilderness without a friend in the world? Don't you get lonely?' I've never minded being alone, and really, I'm not alone. Just look at all those stars above me. If there're as many people as there are stars, I'm bound to have a friend out there somewhere.

(laughs)

What else can I ask for? I've got a guitar, a fire, can of beans. I'm set for life. Yes, there's nothing quite like life in the Old West.

KNIGHT

(offstage)

Ho there, hear I a voice?

The Knight steps on, a sword in his hand and a crossbow on his back.

KNIGHT

Ah, indeed I do. Wherefore art thou under this strange sky?

COWBOY

Why, I'm just a simple cowherd out on a cattle drive in the Old West.

KNIGHT

Thou speakest in tongues, peasant. Whither might I go to seek the Holy Land?

COWBOY

There ain't nothing holy in this here land. It's a cold, solitary life here in the west. Sit with me, have some beans, partner.

KNIGHT

Thou tempts me with a crackling fire and the hand of friendship. Alas, I cannot sit, for from my quest I have too long tarried.

(CONTINUED)

COWBOY

You sure are a strange looking fellow. Got a strange way of speaking. A quest?

KNIGHT

A divine calling. A vow, to uphold yonder values of honor, chivalry, and the good King of England.

COWBOY

Oh. Do you want some beans?

KNIGHT

And what do you call yourself, good dusty sir?

COWBOY

I am but a humble cowboy, here to herd these noble beast. Here, I sit under the night sky, with a guitar in my hands and a pistol in my holster.

KNIGHT

What is a pistol?

COWBOY

(stands; holds pistol)

It's a gun. Watch.

(fires pistol off into the distance)

KNIGHT

(jumps)

Like byzantine fire! What sorcery is this?

COWBOY

It ain't sorcery, Knight, it's gunpowder.

KNIGHT

Your heathen weapons are no match for my longsword.  
(brandishes sword)

COWBOY

(steps back)

Only if you can get close enough.

KNIGHT

(sheathes sword; brandishes crossbow)

Then it is no match for my crossbow. Behold, o cow man, the power of the Orient! Ten times stronger than any mere Saracen bow.

COWBOY

I could out-shoot you with one hand behind my back.

(CONTINUED)

KNIGHT

A knight never retreats from a challenge.

COWBOY

Okay.

(picks up an empty can, sets it  
offstage, and returns, stepping back)

I put the can on a tree stump. We'll each try to shoot it.  
You, then me.

KNIGHT

Very well. I shall shoot first.

(aims and fires his crossbow)

The ARISTOCRAT shouts from  
offstage.

KNIGHT

Lo, what sound be that?

The ARISTOCRAT enters.

ARISTOCRAT

I was almost hit by a crossbow bolt!

(stops)

*Sacre bleu*, a knight in shining armor! Europe has seen no  
knights in 500 years!

KNIGHT

A woman!

COWBOY

Who are you?

ARISTOCRAT

Who am I? Who are you, *monsieur*? And you?

KNIGHT

The language of the Franks. Fair maid, wherefore thou  
hither, on such a night as this?

ARISTOCRAT

I was dreaming, and the sound of a gunshot woke me. I dreamt  
the streets of France were drowned in blood -- *terrible!* --  
and in my terror, I ran.

COWBOY

(laughs)

Lookie here, a Knight and an Aristocrat. Who'da thought a  
lonely cowboy like me would be in company like this?

(CONTINUED)

ARISTOCRAT

I am a Lady of the court of the King of France. I live my days far more kindly than you. Each leisure is mine. Every privilege is my right.

COWBOY

What about poor people? What about people like me?

ARISTOCRAT

I do not see people like you.

KNIGHT

How strange this is, this dream or vision. What is this place?

COWBOY

Looks like Texas to me.

KNIGHT

A witch's doing, surely.

ARISTOCRAT

Do not be ridiculous. Foolish superstition. I believe what my senses can tell me.

KNIGHT

Yet you say I am 500 years old.

ARISTOCRAT

*Incroyable.* A real and honest Knight. And a dusty colonial. *Mais pourquoi?* Why such curious people here together?

COWBOY

That's a mystery, ain't it?

DETECTIVE

(offstage)

Did someone say a mystery?

The DETECTIVE, in a trench coat and fedora, steps onstage.

I think I can help you with that.

KNIGHT

Who are you?

DETECTIVE

I, my aluminum friend, am a Detective, addicted to solving mysteries as much as smoking cigars, or brooding on my dark past. Partner killed, never caught the killer.

(CONTINUED)

COWBOY

Want some beans?

DETECTIVE

Sure.

(sits)

I have insomnia, a symptom of my tragic past. So I went for a brooding, night-time walk and happened by the light of your fire. What are you doing out here, Buffalo Bill?

COWBOY

I'm herding cows. What does it look like I'm doing?

ARISTOCRAT

Yet another strange character. You said you can solve this mystery?

DETECTIVE

That I can, Dollface. There isn't a case in this world that I can't solve. We've got a Knight, a Cowboy, and an Aristocrat.

ARISTOCRAT

*Au contraire*, I am much more than that. I am a painter, a philosopher, a dancer...

COWBOY

You know, not everyone gets to do all that. Some of us have to work. Take me, for example. I spend all my lonely days out here, in the company of harlots, gunslingers, Injuns, prostitutes, Mexicans, charlatans--

DETECTIVE

Alright, alright. We get the picture. And you, Knight, anything to add?

KNIGHT

What godless lives you lead. Idle, seeking only physical pleasures. My people would string you up for the crows, examples of how to--

DETECTIVE

Nevermind. Well, folks, looks like we got a case of the Sartes.

COWBOY

What?

DETECTIVE

You all are a bunch of random, historical characters, here to play off of each other.

(CONTINUED)

PIRATE

At last, I've found others! Arr, luck hasn't run out quite yet for this old pirate!

(sits down)

A day full of treasure hunting leaves me famished, me hearties. There's not a lot I wouldn't trade for an hour or two spinning yarns with a couple salty dogs like myself.

COWBOY

You're a pirate?

PIRATE

As sure as the sea is blue. A free-spirited soul, cast off by the conventions of society. What do I spy with my scurvy-free eye? A knight! With a crossbow and a longsword.

KNIGHT

Who are you?

PIRATE

I am a humble pirate, my liege.

(bows)

Bunch of mangy sad-sacks you are. That's where convention gets ya. You gotta live a lively life. Otherwise you end up stuck in a corset like powder-face here.

ARISTOCRAT

I'll have you know I live a very happy life.

PIRATE

Not the life for me. And you, got a barnacle up your butt?

DETECTIVE

I'm just thinking.

PIRATE

Thinking gets you nowhere. You gotta live, by no rules but your own, and I live by the Pirate Code.

KNIGHT

A code, you say?

PIRATE

Everyone has a code, don't they? What a night. I sure wouldn't mind spending a couple empty nights out here, eh, cowboy?

COWBOY

That's right, ain't it?

PIRATE

You know, I was thinking about robbing this trove here blind, what with my hankering for treasure. But I like you.

(CONTINUED)

KNIGHT

You are a thief, then, and a criminal.

PIRATE

Never said I wasn't.

KNIGHT

I do not like this code of yours.

PIRATE

Most people don't like my code. Only pirates like the Pirate Code.

DETECTIVE

You sure have a calming presence, don't you?

PIRATE

Now that's the first time I've heard that. Arr!

DETECTIVE

There isn't anything bad about being a pirate?

PIRATE

There isn't anything bad with anything, unless you make it bad.

ARISTOCRAT

Hear, hear! A life of hedonism is just as good as a life of chivalry.

SCHOLAR

Hello?

The Knight, Aristocrat, Detective, and Pirate seem to change. They are not as free spoken as they were.

The SCHOLAR steps onstage, wearing a loose blouse reminiscent of classical Greek clothing, but an otherwise modern outfit.

SCHOLAR

(cont.)

There you are, Mike. It's time to go.

COWBOY

I don't want to go.

KNIGHT

Who is she?

(CONTINUED)

COWBOY

She's a scholar. She works in a library.

SCHOLAR

I'm sorry, but it's closing time. You can always come back tomorrow.

COWBOY

Five more minutes?

SCHOLAR

(looks at the Pirate)

A pirate.

COWBOY

Yeah, I like pirates.

SCHOLAR

You know, real pirates were thieves.

COWBOY

I know. But they're cool. Treasure and adventure.

SCHOLAR

Scurvy, rats, weevils...

PIRATE

At least I'm free, matey.

SCHOLAR

But you're also trapped, in a way. Stifled in a man's world of sickness and violence. It's dangerous to forget the truth, even if the stories are fun.

(looks at the Knight)

And what about him?

COWBOY

He's a Knight. Like of the Round Table. He's all about chivalry. He's a protector of the weak.

SCHOLAR

Yes, there are few in his world with real power. But it's not him. It's the church. He may talk of honor and piety, but he'll use it as an excuse to oppress people unlike him.

KNIGHT

You cast me as the villain.

SCHOLAR

You may be as pure as you think, but you can't really believe your imagined utopia is true.

(to the Aristocrat)

Tell me about her.

(CONTINUED)