

A

ROOTIN' TOOTIN' FAST SHOOTIN'  
WESTERN

by

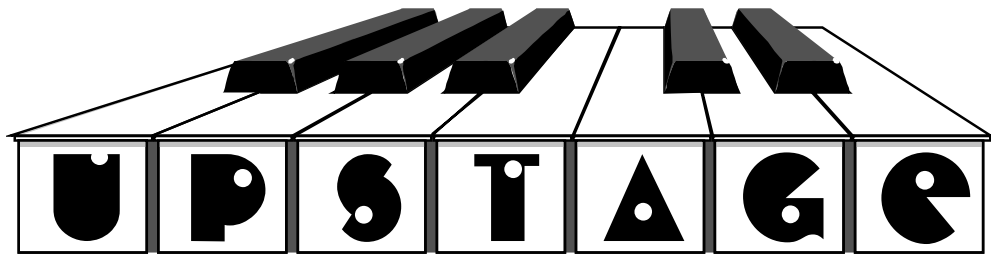
Jan McLean, Peter Hill, Neil Jackson, Doug Williams

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productions

present

# Calamity James

**A Rootin' Tootin' Fast Shootin' Western**

Music: Jan McLean

Script: Jan McLean, Neil Jackson, Peter Hill & Doug Williams

Lyrics: Jan McLean, Neil Jackson, Peter Hill & Doug Williams

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## **Calamity James**

was first performed in August 1995 at Karralika Theatre, Melbourne, by  
Bimbadeen Heights Primary School

### APPLICATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE

of

## **Calamity James**

should be made to the publisher

**UPSTAGE** Productions

Tel: 03 9726 8316 or Fax: 03 9727 4644

<http://www.upstageproductions.com.au>

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**PRODUCTION NOTES**

**Calamity James**

**Calamity James** is suitable for Upper Primary or Lower Secondary students.  
It can be readily adapted for either large or small groups.

## CHARACTERS

### GOOD GUYS

Calamity James  
Mother  
Miss Fortune  
Mr. Fortune  
Jethro  
Leroy  
Clint  
Fortune Cookie 1 (Belle)  
Fortune Cookie 2 (Alice)  
Fortune Cookie 3 (Annie)  
Gabby  
Joe  
Card Player 1

### TOWNSFOLK (also Good Guys)

Person 1  
Person 2  
Person 3  
Person 4  
Person 5

### BAD GUYS

Banker  
Banker's Gang Member 1  
Banker's Gang Member 2  
Banker's Gang Member 3  
Banker's Gang Member 4  
Bad Bart  
Bad Bart's Gang Member 1

### GROUPS

Townfolk (Saloon)  
Townfolk (Street)  
Fortune Cookies  
Card Players  
Banker's Gang  
Bad Bart's Gang

## SCENES

PROLOGUE..... In James' bedroom  
SCENE 1..... In the main street of Fortune Gully  
SCENE 2..... In the Golden Slipper saloon  
SCENE 3..... In the bank  
SCENE 4..... In the main street of Fortune Gully  
SCENE 5..... In the Golden Slipper saloon  
EPILOGUE..... In James' bedroom

## SCENERY

When first performed the production team made use of a trap door in the floor of the stage they were using. However, this may not always be possible and the script may be changed, without seeking further permission, to use a secret panel behind a curtain on the wall, or any other device which suits the properties being used locally.

# PROPERTIES

## PROLOGUE

Desk, chair, hat stand, History book, comic

## SCENE 1

Measuring tape, hay bales, hitching rails, broom, large sheriff badge

## SCENE 2

Card table, cards, carpet on floor or wall hanging to hide 'trapdoor', bar, glasses, straw, assorted barrels, tables and chairs, brooms, pram

## SCENE 3

Newspaper, map

## SCENE 4

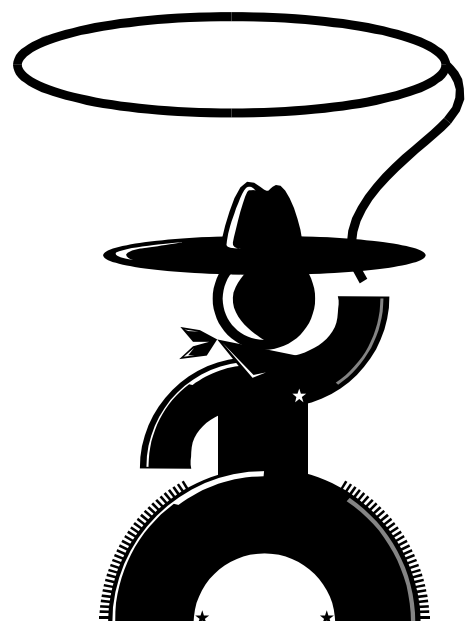
As for Scene 1, decorations for a hoedown and props for whichever 'acts' are chosen for the hoedown songs

## SCENE 5

As for Scene 2, cords for 'tying up' bad guys

## EPILOGUE

As for Prologue



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>THE SCRIPT</b>	<b>1</b>
PROLOGUE	2
SCENE 1	4
SONG 1: "WESTERN HEROES" .....	4
SONG 2: "STAND TOGETHER" .....	6
SONG 3: Reprise "WESTERN HEROES" .....	7
SONG 4: "MONEY IN THE BANK" .....	8
<b>THE LYRICS</b>	<b>9</b>
Western Heroes .....	10





**THE SCRIPT**

**Calamity James**

## PROLOGUE

ACTION TAKES PLACE IN FRONT OF THE MIDDLE CURTAIN IN LOW LIGHTING. AS A SPOT BUILDS UP, JAMES IS SEEN SITTING ON A SWIVEL CHAIR AT HIS TABLE READING A COWBOY COMIC. A CLOTHES RACK IN THE BACKGROUND HAS A COWBOY COSTUME HANGING ON IT. HIS MOTHER'S VOICE CALLS HIM. IT RAISES TO A CRESCENDO.

MOTHER: (OFF-STAGE) James, ...James, ...James!

C. JAMES: (STIRRED FROM HIS READING) Huh, Huh, yes Mum.

MOTHER: (OFF-STAGE) Remember that History project is due in tomorrow.

MOTHER POKES HER HEAD ON STAGE AS IF POKING IT THROUGH HIS BEDROOM DOOR.

Dad said you had to have it finished before everyone turns up for our fancy dress party tonight.

AT HIS MUM'S APPEARANCE, JAMES FUMBLES WITH THE COMIC HE HAS BEEN READING AND DROPS IT INSIDE A HISTORY BOOK TO CONCEAL IT. THE BOOK IS UPSIDE DOWN AND HE CONTINUES FUMBLING.

C. JAMES: OK pardner. Get that posse off my back. I'm onto it.

WITH HIS BACK TO HIS MUM, HE CONTINUES TO FUMBLE WITH THE COMIC AND THE BOOK.

MOTHER: It won't be your back you'll worry about if your Dad comes home and that's not done. It will be your back side!

C. JAMES: Are you talking blazing saddles again Mum? (SWINGS TO SHOW HER THE HISTORY BOOK COVER) Don't worry. It's OK.

MUM SLAPS HER FOREHEAD, SIGHS AND LEAVES. JAMES BEGINS TO PUT ON SOME OF THE COSTUME, BUT IS DISTRACTED BY THE COMIC

C. JAMES: (READING EXPRESSIVELY FROM THE COMIC) ... It was almost high noon at the OK Corral as Wyatt and Doc approached the closed barn door. Suddenly gun shots rang out. They dived behind the water trough as Jesse and his brothers stepped into the street.

STOPS READING AND SHAKES HIS HEAD.

"Dang that Jesse James!"

JAMES LOWERS THE COMIC AND WISTFULLY STARES INTO THE AUDIENCE. PAUSE.

C. JAMES: I'd give anything to have been one of those Western heroes.

LIGHT FADES ON JAMES.

**BLACKOUT**

AT BLACKOUT PROPS REMOVED SWIFTLY AND MIDDLE CURTAIN OPENS TO BLACK STAGE.

**END PROLOGUE**

## SCENE 1

GUN SHOTS AND SYNCHRONISED LIGHT FLASHES TO INSTANTANEOUSLY LEAD INTO FULL STAGE LIGHTING SHOWING MAIN STREET OF 'FORTUNE GULLY'. SOME OF THE CROWD IS ALREADY ON STAGE. OTHER GROUPS ENTER DURING SONG INTRO.

CLINT: Gather round folks. It's town meeting time.

### **SONG 1: "WESTERN HEROES"**

AS CLINT, LEROY AND JETHRO ENTER THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE, THE UNDERTAKER QUIETLY MOVES TO THEM AND BEGINS MEASURING THEM, PRESUMABLY FOR THEIR COFFIN. GABBY IS SEEN QUIETLY SWEEPING THE VERANDAHS.

MISS FORTUNE: It's all very well for you folks to be talking about heroes. What we need is a rootin' tootin', straight shootin', right here, right now, honest to goodness, real live hero lawman to bring some order to Fortune Gully. (LOOKS AROUND AT THE MEN) What about you Clint?

CLINT: Not me. I'm heading Eastward. (TAKES A STEP BACKWARD)

MISS FORTUNE: What about you Leroy?

LEROY: (SPEAKING IN SLOW, WHINING WESTERN DRAWL) I'd love to help you Miss Fortune, but them mean varmints done burned down my barber shop three times last week. So I'm heading Eastward with Clint. Why don't you give Jethro here a chance?

JETHRO: I'd like to help you ma'am but ... (THINKS) ... What about Gabby?

TOWNSFOLK SNIGGER. GABBY LOOKS UP, SHAKES HIS HEAD SLOWLY AND CONTINUES TO SWEEP.

MISS FORTUNE: Oh you men are all a bunch of lily livered, weak kneed, jelly boned chicken chasers.

PERSON 1: That's not fair Miss Fortune. That was no accident when the cattle stampeded through town last week. I was nearly trampled to death right here on this spot.

PERSON 2: Yeah and don't forget that the stage hasn't made it to town without being robbed for the last month. Yesterday it even came in with its wheels stoled off.

CROWD MURMURS AGREEMENT.

PERSON 3: And I can't even let my little ones play in the street no more, 'cause I never know when them desperados is gonna ride through a whoopin' and a shootin'.

CROWD MURMURS AGREEMENT.

PERSON 4: Yeah them desperados have sent three sheriffs to Boot Hill in the last three weeks.

PERSON 5: (ELDERLY) That dang Boot Hill retirement home is gonna be so full of sheriffs that there ain't gonna be no room for me.

UNDERTAKER MOVES TO MEASURE HIM. PERSON 5 NOTICES AND PUSHES HIM AWAY

In fact I think I'll mosey on up there right now and book a bed roll.

FC 1 (BELLE): Well it hasn't been easy for Miss Fortune either runnin' the saloon on her own since her dear daddy mysteriously disappeared about a month ago.

FC 2 (ALICE): Yeah you try makin' a sarsaparilla spider without the sarsaparilla. Them bandits is stealing everything that's not nailed down.

MISS FORTUNE: My daddy built this town from nothing. I might not know where he is right now, but I am gonna make darn sure that this town will be here if he ever comes back.

BANKER: (POMPOUSLY) My dear Miss Fortune, as the mayor of this town, owner of the bank and one of our most prominent and respected citizens, I too am concerned about all these despicable deeds. (THINKING) But I do remember your daddy telling me on many occasions of how he had a hankering to go back East.

MISS FORTUNE: My Daddy would never leave his town, or me, without so much as a word. (BEGINS FRETTING) I'm sure these callous crooks have something to do with the whole business. (BREAKS INTO TEARS)

ALL FCs: Don't you fret none about these weak snivellin' cowards, Miss Fortune. We'll stand by yer.

## **SONG 2: "STAND TOGETHER"**

SONG BEGINS WITH JUST THE FORTUNE COOKIES OFFERING SUPPORT, BUT AS IT PROGRESSES EVERYONE IS CAUGHT UP IN THE CAMARADERIE. THE BANKER HOWEVER IS NOT OBVIOUS.

MISS FORTUNE: That's fantastic. If we stand together we can do anything. Now all we need is just one of you to wear this badge. (HOLDS UP A LARGE SHERIFF BADGE)

JETHRO: Why don't you just holler for a marshal.

AS A SINGLE MOVEMENT ALL TURN TO SLINK AWAY. CALAMITY JAMES STUMBLES IN. AS PART OF HIS FALLING IN AND OUT OF THE TROUGH ETC. THE BADGE WHICH MISS FORTUNE IS HOLDING FINISHES UP ON CJ.

ALL: YAHOO, CHEERING, PATS ON BACK, ETC.

MISS FORTUNE: (TO THE COOKIES) Girls, if we can't get a real man, perhaps we can make use of this calamity. Follow my lead.

BANKER: (TO HIS GANG) Boys, I think we've found a live one here. This cowboy is still wet behind the ears. Follow my lead.

(SLINKING UP TO MISS FORTUNE) My dear friends, I do believe we have found our sheriff.

CJ: But ... I ... was just ...

BANKER: (CUTTING IN) But you're dressed for the part.

TOWNSFOLK CHEER

CJ: Well yes, but, ... I ... my mum hired this costume ...

BANKER: (CUTTING IN) Now would we steer a cowboy like you in the wrong direction. (BANKER'S GANG GATHER ROUND)

B'S GANG: (LOOKING AT EACH OTHER AND NODDING) Yeah, yeah.

BANKER LOOKS AT THEM DISDAINFULLY.

No, no Boss.

BANKER: (LOOKING AT THEM EVEN MORE DISDAINFULLY) Who?!?

B'S GANG: Oh, ah, Mr Mayor, ...Sir.

CJ: But ... I'm still not sure. I've just arrived here.

MISS FORTUNE: No Sir. You have been sent to us.

TOWNSFOLK CHEER

CJ: Well ... perhaps ... I could ...

BANKER: (CUTTING IN) Imagine son, you could park your horse anywhere in the town and not get a parking ticket.

TOWNSFOLK CHEER

CJ: Perhaps I might, ... but are you sure that there isn't someone else.

MISS FORTUNE: (GATHERING HER COOKIES AND SPEAKING WITH EXCESSIVE CHARM) My girls and I need you. (GIRLS SLINK AROUND HIM)

CJ: (ACQUIESCING) But, ...I .. (POSITIVELY) ... OK

TOWNSFOLK CHEER

MISS FORTUNE: Congratulations Sheriff. ... By the way, what do folks call you?

CJ: James ma'am.

MISS FORTUNE: What a purdy name. But considerin' how you dropped in on us, I think we should call you Calamity James.

CJ: James, Calamity James. I like it.

TOWNSFOLK CHEER

MISS FORTUNE: Calamity James, you are our hero.

**SONG 3: Reprise "WESTERN HEROES"**

MISS FORTUNE: Now we have a new sheriff. Let's celebrate. The sarsaparillas are on the house.

TOWNSFOLK CHEER AND FOLLOW HER TO THE SALOON. BANKER REMAINS IN THE STREET STOPPING HIS GANG MEMBERS FROM HEADING FOR THE FREE SARSAPARILLAS.

BANKER: Just a minute you cattle rustling, sheep dipping, fly swatting excuses for bad guys. Get yourselves back here.

GANG MEM 1: (COMPLAINING) Oh boss, I'm as dry as a Prairie Dog's arrr..mpit.

BANKER: Quiet coyote breath, we've gotta think not drink.

GANG MEM 2: Boss, do you think anyone suspects that you're behind the uuh ... unfortunate accidents and unexplained happenings.

BANKER: Do I look like the sort of person who would be capable of perpetrating these villainous deeds?

GANG MEMBERS PEER AT BANKER.

GANG MEM 2: Well your eyes are a bit close together.

GANG MEM 3: Well you are a banker.

GANG MEM 1: And that black hat is a dead give away.

BANKER REMOVES HAT AND BASHES THE GANG MEMBERS WITH IT

GANG MEM 4: You're a bad man boss

BANKER REGAINS HIS COMPOSURE

#### **SONG 4: "MONEY IN THE BANK"**

BANKER: (CUNNINGLY) Into my office boys. We've got some planning to do. That saloon is going to be mine.

GANG MEM 1: (COMPLAINING) Oh boss, I'm still as dry as a Prairie Dog's arrr..mpit.

BANKER HUSTLES GANG MEMBERS OFF STAGE.

**BLACKOUT**

**END SCENE 1**





## **THE LYRICS**

**Calamity James**

# Western Heroes

Words: Peter Hill

Music: Jan McLean

## INTRO

Hee -eero ... hee-eero ... hee-eero  
Where are ... the Western heroes?

## VERSE 1

Dodge City has Matt Dillon;  
Arizona has Billy The Kid;  
Glenrowan has Ned Kelly;  
Just look at what they did.  
Tombstone has Wyatt Earp;  
The West was Jesse James;  
Texas has its rangers;  
We need some famous names.

## REFRAIN

Yes, we need a Western Hero,  
A hero brave and true.  
We need a Western Hero,  
How about you!?  
We need a Western Hero,  
A hero young and tall.  
We need a Western Hero,  
Before this town just falls  
... just falls

## VERSE 2

Roy Rogers, Annie Oakley,  
Gene Autry and Cisco Kid.  
Tonto has his Ranger -  
Our town is on the skids.  
Crockett and Jim Bowie  
And there is Daniel Boone  
We need a Western Hero.  
We hope that he comes soon.

## CHORUS

## INTERLUDE

(with dancing and spruiking)

Step right up and don't delay.  
Take this badge now don't run away.

Step right up and take a look.  
I'd rather be a dirty crook.

Step right up and take a chance.  
I'd rather go and have a dance.

Hee-eero!

Now don't be modest, don't be shy.  
I gotta get goin', my cow just died.

Now don't you want to help your town?  
I'd rather be bitten by a prairie hound.

Now come on friends, what do you see?  
A hero that is You Not Me!

Hee-eero!

## FINAL CHORUS

Yes, we need a Western Hero,  
A hero brave and true.  
We need a Western Hero,  
How about you!?  
We need a Western Hero,  
A hero young and tall.  
We need a Western Hero,  
Before this town just falls  
... just falls  
We need a Western Hero,  
Before this town just falls

Hee -eero ... hee-eero ... hee-eero  
Where are ... the Western heroes?