

WOMEN OF ARIZONA
A full-length historical play
Based on real people and incidents

ACT ONE
THE CITIZEN-SARAH BOWMAN

CHARACTERS

Sarah Bowman, 54, six feet two inches, takes place during a day in December 1866
An unnamed servant replacement, helping her get dressed

Man A

Adolphus Aue
Officer at Fort Brown
Albert Bowman

Man B

Charlie Buchette
Colonel Lincoln
Colonel Washington

SETTING

Act 1

The entire scene takes place on December 23, 1866. The stage is set in two areas, partially as a dressing room, very disorganized, with areas that can be used for vignettes of memories. The furniture should reflect that era but can easily be transformed with tablecloths, pillows and various properties for quick set changes for the other two women and their time frame.

Furniture can include for this scene should be wood:

Small desk and chair
Small and large traveling trunk
Hat rack or hall tree for clothes
Table
Settee
Formal chair
Dresser
Standing Mirror
Large coffee pot

Accessories:

Hats, hatboxes
Old-fashion apron
38 Colt
Quilts

Hurricane lamp
Shawls
Clothes scattered about
 Petticoat
 Large feather hat
 Satin skirt
 Old-fashion blouse
 Sun umbrella

ACT 1

Scene 1

(Lights up on set. A maid with a feather duster can be seen dusting. Sarah enters dressed in pantaloons and a camisole.)

SARAH

Do I have to get ready?

MAID

It's that time.

SARAH

It's two days before Christmas and Yuma is hot, hot. Where's Juanita?

MAID

She couldn't come. I'm taking her place today.

SARAH

She's never around when I need her. Probably off making eyes at some boy. Sixteen and that's all she thinks about. I don't want to get dressed.

MAID

It's going to be a big occasion. Everyone is preparing for it.

SARAH

Everyone?

MAID

(Picks up a petticoat and holds it up)

You'll want to wear this one. It's your best.

(Helps her put it on.)

SARAH

Yes, it is. How did you...? Oh that Juanita, she has a way with my clothes. When I was sixteen I wanted so much more.

MAID

Who did you tell?

SARAH

Mama...I said, Mama, it's 1828 and I'm sixteen. I want to do something exciting. I don't want to live the rest of my life on the Missouri frontier. There's got to be more.

MAID

Didn't she want you to get married?

SARAH

(Looks at maid puzzled)

Yes. But what would that get me? Babies year after year after year, never having a chance to travel, wear pretty clothes, learn about things. You see I had this yearning inside me.

MAID

What happened?

SARAH

I grew, that's what happened. Oh, I heard what the neighbors said. T'aint natural the way she grew. Who ever heard of a female being six feet two inches? Towers over all the men.

MAID

Well, you are a tall one considering that the average man is five feet five inches and the women, why they rarely top five feet.

SARAH

I did stand out in a crowd, still do. And if that weren't enough, nature crowned my head with a halo of copper colored hair. And the neighbors...humph...she's nothin' but a freak of nature and the men always eyeing her.

MAID

(Chuckles)

No goods gonna come out of that one, that's for sure.

SARAH

That's exactly what they said? Lot of good come out of me. Of course it helped that Adolphus Aue had his eye on me.

ACT 1
SCENE 2

(Lights up on settee)

SARAH

Mama? Adolphus here? I don't want to get married. Oh all right, just give me a minute while I make myself presentable.

(Maid helps her put on an apron and shawl. Lights down on maid and dressing area. Sarah goes to settee where Adolphus is sitting)

SARAH

Mornin' Adolphus

ADOLPHUS

Mornin' Sarah, you're lookin' mighty fine this morning.

SARAH

Why thank ya, Adolphus. Fine day isn't it?

ADOLPHUS

Yes fine...Sarah...would you be willing to marry me?

SARAH

No beating around the bush with you, Adolphus. As you know there are other men wanting to marry me but I have certain requirements for a husband.

ADOLPHUS

Requirements?

SARAH

Uh huh. For instance, what are you planning to do with your life?

ADOLPHUS

Take over my parents' farm when they get too old.

SARAH

Farming? I'm not interested in being a farmer's wife. Have you any other ideas of what you'd like to do?

(Pause)

Any ideas at all?

ADOLPHUS

I've been thinking about joining the United States Army and going to Florida. Sure would like to do some fighting in those Seminole Indian wars.

SARAH

Florida? *(Flirtatious)* Well, what's stopping you?

ADOLPHUS

Oh, I don't know.

SARAH

That's no answer. If you want to do something, you should do it.

ADOLPHUS

Oh, I don't know.

SARAH

Well...what if we wed and I went with you.

ADOLPHUS

No place for a wife. You'd best stay here with my folks on the farm.

SARAH

Not if you're wantin' to marry me.

(Gets up and puts on straw hat, moves seductively downstage. Adolphus follows.)

SARAH

Oh Adolphus, don't you feel it? Florida feels good. Smells good too.

ADOLPHUS

Sarah, I feel a lot, the way you always talking and joking with those army men and them giving you a name. Why are they calling you that?

SARAH

Stop your fussing. It's nothing, just a nickname.

ADOLPHUS

Don't like them army men being free and easy with my wife. What's it mean?

SARAH

The Great Western is the name of the largest steamship in the world. Kind of fitting calling me that. Don't ya think? Better than back in Missouri where they kept calling me a freak a nature.

ADOLPHUS

But I worry for you.

SARAH

No call to. I'll manage just fine. Just take care not to get yourself killed out there fighting.

ACT 2

THE FLAPPER – MARGUERITE (PEG) JENSON

CHARACTERS:

Use the same actors from Act 1

PEG JENSON - 25 years, had been an aspiring movie starlet, married to Martin Jenson

MARTIN JENSON – 26 years, a hotshot pilot, owns a small barnstorming plane

WOMAN NEWSPAPER REPORTER from The Daily News– any age

MAN TO PLAY SEVERAL ROLES – radio announcer, Louis B. Mayor, B. F. Mahoney, off-stage mechanic's voice

THE FLAPPER

SETTING

Takes place primarily in 1927 in August and September 14,15. The set uses furniture from Act 1 except the décor now reflects the 1920's look. The stage will be in several areas: the Jenson apartment, with table, chairs, a settee and drinks cart or side table, Mahoney's office, front stage for open space for scenes. Eliminate old-time trunks, quilts and gingham tablecloth.

Table and two chairs

Small desk with telephone and chair

Side table or a roll out cart for drinks, hat rack

Settee covered now with a glamorous fringe shawl

1920's suitcases

Radio suitable to the period

ACT 2

Scene 1

(Peg enters wearing a coat, cloche hat and carrying a suitcase, goes over to the radio and turns it on. Music from the 20's can be heard. She takes off coat, hat and puts suitcase away.)

ANNOUNCER

We interrupt this program with a news report. Martin Jenson...*(Static)*...second pilot to survive...*(Static)*...first air race across the Pacific from...*(Static)*...to Hawaii is ten thousand dollars richer. Mr. Jenson is back in LA and was met...*(Static)*...and is now on route to...*(Static)*

PEG

Where? *(Goes over to radio and hits it.)* Where? Oh you stupid machine!

ANNOUNCER

We'll be back with more details at the six o'clock news...*(Static, then music starts up again.)*

PEG

Marty, you were supposed to come here. Now what are you up to? If anything happens to you, I swear...I'll strangle you. Pilots lost their lives with that Dole Californian-Hawaiian air race. And you had less than twenty minutes of fuel left. You could have crashed into the ocean. You could have...

(Doorbell rings)

Just a minute

*Straightens her hair, gets purse and finds lipstick.
More doorbell ringing.)*

Coming, hold your horses.

(Goes to the door and opens it.)

Finally, you're ... who are you?

LADY REPORTER

Mrs. Jenson? I recognize you from the newspaper photos, only you're much prettier in person. I'm from The Daily News. May I come in?

PEG

Don't you reporters ever give up? Why should I let you in?

LADY REPORTER

I want to do something different. Everyone's focusing on your husband, but I want to focus on the wife's perspective. Could you please help me?

(Pushes past Peg into the room.)

Please, Mrs. Jenson, I need a break. All I ever do is social announcements or funerals. This could be my chance. To have won ten thousand dollars, that's big money. What are you and your husband planning to do with all that money?

PEG

(Closes the door and motions her to a chair at the table.)

Pay our bills. Flying in an air race costs big bucks. We used all our savings, borrowed from everyone we could think of. I even hocked my jewels. We're broke.

LADY REPORTER

Broke?

(Starts writing furiously in her notebook.)

'Wife Says Crack Racing Pilot Loses Everything'.

PEG

I didn't say that. Don't put words into my mouth.

LADY REPORTER

But what will you do?

PEG

Do what we've done before. Go back to barnstorming around the country, landing our plane in farmer's fields, back roads, anywhere it's flat and for a fee, give people a chance to get a bird's eye view of where they live.

LADY REPORTER

Do you help?

PEG

Of course, I put up signs, collect money, sooth nerves and I'm part of the entertainment.

LADY REPORTER

Doing what?

PEG

Marty taught me how to do wing walking exhibitions. Anyway when I was a starlet out in Hollywoodland, I did a lot of stunts. I should have figured out when Marty proposed I'd be in for the ride of my life?

LADY REPORTER

Tell me about being married to a prize-winning racing pilot. 'Married to a Prize-Winning Racing Pilot'... Was it exciting, adventurous,

(Dramatic sensual pause.)

Dangerous? Where did you get married?

PEG

Where else? Up in the air. I remember it was like yesterday.

(Gets up, goes to hat rack or desk drawer and pulls out a wedding veil. Moves to front stage, Lights up on Marty as he comes in wearing a pilot's outfit)

WOMEN OF ARIZONA

THE PROFESSOR, LOUISE HENRIETTE FOUCAR MARSHALL

ACT 3

CHARACTERS:

Louise Henriette Foucar Marshall, the professor and very wealthy woman, 60's

Mrs. Helen Blair, her secretary

Thomas Keith Marshall, husband of Louise, younger than wife, former miner and student at University of Arizona

Mr. James Boyle, attorney for Louis Marshall

ACT 3

SETTING:

Takes place on September 14, 1931 in a courtroom in Nogales, Arizona and in flashbacks. Using furniture from Acts 1 and 2 the stage will be set in several areas. Prominently placed in center stage is a witness chair. Surrounding the witness chair will be areas in Louise Marshall's home:

A desk and chair, a settee for a sitting area.

Table and two chairs

Small desk with telephone and chair

Side table, hat rack

Settee, pillows

ACT 3 SCENE 1

(Start with darkened stage and the sound of three bullets being fired. Lights come up on Louise Marshall standing center stage dressed in a long black skirt, old-fashioned look of early 1930's. The rapping of a judge's gavel can be heard. Louise goes over to the courtroom chair and sits. Her attorney stands by the witness chair.)

MR. J. BOYLE

Mrs. Marshall, will you tell the court exactly what happened on that evening of April 26, this year 1931?

LOUISE MARSHALL

I don't know what happened. I did the most horrible thing a human being can do...All I know is that I was standing on the back steps of our porch in my nightgown...I was very cold.

BOYLE

How did you get there?

LOUISE

I don't know. Mattie, Mrs. Edwards my housekeeper, heard me banging on the door and let me in. She's explained all of this to you.

BOYLE

Do you remember going outside?

LOUISE M.

No.

BOYLE

What do you remember?

LOUISE M.

Tucson had been very warm for April. Tommy suggested we sleep out on our sleeping porch. I hadn't had a decent night sleep in weeks. I was afraid all the time.

BOYLE

So on that evening of April 26, you both retired to the sleeping porch?

LOUISE M.

Yes. For the first time in weeks, Tommy gave me a good night kiss on the cheek. I fell into a deep sleep. Then in the middle of the night something woke me.

BOYLE

Could you be more specific? Was it a noise?

LOUISE M.

I don't know. Maybe it was a sound. I thought there was a burglar in the house as there had been some robberies in the neighborhood.

BOYLE

Could you tell if your husband had heard anything?

LOUISE M.

I don't think he did. I could hear Tommy's steady breathing in the bed next to mine. But it was very dark on the porch and I was frightened.

BOYLE

What did you do?

LOUISE M.

I remembered that I had put my gun in the nightstand next to my bed. Very quietly I reached for it.

BOYLE

You had a gun.

LOUISE M.

Yes, because of the robberies and...I asked my handyman to buy me a gun and show me how to shoot it, just in case I would need...

BOYLE

Did you see or hear anything else that night?

LOUISE M

I'm not sure. I remember being afraid. I pretended to be sleeping, trying to breathe slowly, so if there were burglars they'd take what they wanted and leave us alone.

BOYLE

Now, Mrs. Marshall, think very carefully. What was the next thing that happened?

LOUISE M.

I don't know. I've tried to remember, but it's all blank.

BOYLE

After you found yourself in the yard, what happened?

LOUISE M.

I could hear Tommy in the house yelling, 'help me, won't anybody help me.'

LOUISE M.

I tried to get into the house. The door was locked and Mattie, Mrs. Edwards, our housekeeper came and opened it. I rushed in. Tommy was on the floor in the hall next to the telephone table. There was blood all over his pajamas. He looked up at me and said, "Why did you shoot me?" I shot my husband and didn't remember.

BOYLE

Where was the gun?

LOUISE M.

I don't know. I was shaking so badly Mattie put a robe over my shoulders and then she picked up the phone and called our family doctor.

BOYLE

What happened then?

LOUISE M.

The next thing was the house was full of people, neighbors who had heard the shots, ambulance attendants, our doctor, and the police. Someone asked if burglars had gotten into the house. They were taking Tommy to the hospital. I wanted to go with them.

BOYLE

Did you go with your husband?

LOUISE M.

No. Captain Kronauer wouldn't let me. He wanted to ask me a few questions. I wanted him to ask me later, but he said no.

BOYLE

What questions did the police captain ask?

LOUISE M.

He has already testified.

BOYLE

I'd like to hear what you remember.