

UNTITLED
CALAMITY JANE
PLAY

By
Kati Frazier

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

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UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

*For the trans and gender-nonconforming kids:
We've always been here. Don't let anyone tell you different.*

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

Land Acknowledgement

The playwright would like to acknowledge and honor the Lakota, Dakota, Cheyenne, Nakota, Arapaho, Crow, Comanche, Apache and the many additional Indigenous communities of the lands where Calamity Jane lived and roamed, particularly Owáyasuta (also known as Deadwood) and the sacred site Pe'Sla in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

The violence committed against these peoples and the theft of this land, is more than just a backdrop to Calamity Jane's story. These acts are the atrocities at the heart of the American notion of the "Wild West."

The playwright has committed to donating a portion of all compensation received to the Pe'Sla Recovery Fund. The Fund supports the return of the sacred site Pe'Sla in the Black Hills of South Dakota to the tribes of the Lakota Nation, ensuring that the Lakota people can protect and access the land known as 'The Heart of Everything.' Learn more and donate at <https://iltf.org/>

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

Untitled Calamity Jane Play was originally produced by Rising Sun Performance Company at the 14Y Theater, NYC in February 2023. The production was directed by Akia Squitieri. The cast was as follows:

Calamity.....Maya Jasmin Kurokouchi
Jane..... Ayesha Saleh
Madame Moustache.....Josephine Pizzino
Wild Bill/Pioneer 5.....Giordano Cruz
Charles.....Luis Feliciano
Steers/Pony Express Rider.....Michael Hagins
Society Lady 1/Pioneer 4/Other Jane 3/Charles Swing.....Michael Pichardo
Roberta/Saloon Girl 1/Society Lady 2/Pioneer 3.....Laura Lamberti
Burke/Other Jane 2/Pioneer 1.....Jackie McKenna
McCall/Dime Museum/Saloon Girl 2/Pioneer 4/O. Jane 1...Bryant L. Lewis
Calamity/Moustache Alternate/Swing.....Maera Daniel Hagage
Jane/Ensemble Alternate/SwingMary Sheridan

Production Stage Manager: Callie Stribling; Assistant Stage Manager: Rose Tablizo; Assistant Director: Zahra Budhwani; Set by Miriam Eusebio; Lights by Jess Clapper; Props by Laine Diep; Sound by Jorge Olivio; Costumes by Tiffini Minatel-Schreiber; Fight direction by Michael Hagins; Dialect coach: Monica Blaze Leavitt; Technical Direction: K8 August; Production Assistant: Briana Carril; Line Producers: Miriam Eusebio and Sean Gordon; Set Support: Katrina Skidmore, Laine Diep, Judd Lear Silverman; Run Crew: Laine Diep and Kristen Hoffman; Social Media: Jennifer Iris Rivera; Graphics: Rachael Langton; Community Outreach: Frederica Borlenghi, Sean Gordon, Ivan McGill

During the development of *Untitled Calamity Jane Play* additional artists were involved, including: Mateo Moreno, Rick Benson, Lluvia Almanza, Tara Moses, Azizi Bell, Zarra Kaahn, Audrey Lang, Chelsey Smith, Sean Phillips

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

Untitled Calamity Jane Play received its 2nd production at Carroll College in Helena, Montana. It was directed by Kim Shire. The cast was as follows:

Calamity.....	Brooke McClenning
Jane.....	Lexi Larsen
Madame Moustache.....	Victoria Abel
Wild Bill.....	Jules Reger-Brown
Charles.....	Andrew Devine
Roberta/Society Lady/Pioneer/Captain Egan.....	Rachael Smith
Burke/Saloon Girl/Pioneer/Other Jane.....	Kadee Melton
Steers/Society Lady/Pioneer/Other Jane.....	Aidan O'Neill
Jack McCall/Society Lady/Pioneer.....	Zofia Lampkin
Dime Museum Guy/Pioneer/Epidemic Patient.....	Raye Charney
Dancing Girl/Pioneer/Pony Express/Husband Dorset.....	Andrew Bralick
Pioneer/Dancing Girl/Other Jane.....	Jennika Stokes
Pioneer/Saloon Girl/Dancing Girl/Epidemic Patient.....	Lori Sibbett
Pioneer/Husband King/Doctor/Dancing Girl.....	Tommy Derden
Pioneer/Saloon Girl/Husband Wilson.....	Winter Snow

Stage Manager: Mary Williams; Assistant Stage Manager: Teddy Harman; Assistant Director: Abigail Merz; Movement Coach: Mokey McNeilly; Costumes by Alyx Gage; Lighting by Jordan Bowman; Sound Design by Clare Jose; Set by Julia Harris; Props by Sabrina Malecek; Master Carpenter: Kaden Connor; Carpenter: Elaina Patten; Crew: Sara Myers; Wardrobe Supervisor: Deandra Shackelford; Production Manager: Julia Harris

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CAST

CALAMITY, Woman or TGNC person. POC or other systemically marginalized body; not indigenous or black. The rugged, sauntering, swearing historical figure: Calamity Jane. Larger than life.

JANE, Any race, played as a cis woman. The imaginary, femme, cowgirl caricature version of the historical figure: Calamity Jane. Larger than life.

MADAME MOUSTACHE, Woman or non-binary person, any race. A legend of the west in her own right. Actually has a mustache.

CHARLES, Man or non-binary person, any race. Calamity Jane calls him Jack.

WILD BILL, BIPOC performer of any gender. Ghost of Wild Bill Hickok

ROBERTA SOLLID, a historian from the 1950s

BURKE, One of Calamity Jane's husbands

WILLIAM STEERS, One of Calamity Jane's husbands

JACK MCCALL, Known for murdering Wild Bill Hickock

THE SOCIETY OF BLACK HILLS PIONEERS (PIONEER 1-5)

DIME MUSEUM GUY

SALOON GIRL 1 and 2

SOCIETY LADY 1 and 2

OTHER JANE 1-3

Roles should be double-cast, with a cast of 7-12. Example cast of 8:

1. Calamity
2. Jane
3. Madame Moustache
4. Wild Bill/Pioneer 5/Other Jane 3
5. Charles/Jack McCall/Society Lady 1/Pioneer 2
6. Steers/Pioneer 4/Dime Museum Guy/Saloon Girl 2
7. Roberta/Saloon Girl 1/Society Lady 2/Pioneer 3/Other Jane 1
8. Burke/Pioneer 1/Other Jane 2

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

TIME: The span of Calamity Jane's life: 1854-1903. Also today. Also eternity.

PLACE: Multiple locations across the West including Deadwood, Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, etc. But also, we never leave Madame Moustache's Bar.

NOTES:

Unless otherwise specified, all roles may be played by any race or gender. Specifications of gender, race, and identity are about the dynamics of privilege in the play, not historical accuracy.

When double-casting across gender remember that a male-identified actor can wear a dress and be funny at the same time without the joke being that a man is in a dress. Be aware of the difference.

“/” in the middle of a line, means the next line starts, interrupting and overlapping whoever is talking.

“/” at the beginning of a line indicates a moment to step on a prior line.

“—” at the end of a line indicates the thought continues—possibly in another line—or at least they intended to say more.

“—” at the beginning of a line indicates that this line is a continuation of another character's line.

Lines placed side by side are meant to be spoken simultaneously.

The phrase “All Janes” includes Calamity.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

Madame Moustache's bar/saloon. Bar, tables, saloon doors. A chalkboard over the bar reads: "TONIGHT ONLY: Darling and menace of the west Calamity Jane." The chairs are stacked on the tables and the lights are dimmed.

AT RISE: THE SOCIETY OF BLACK HILLS PIONEERS enter, gather in a hubbub. PIONEER 1 goes to the chalkboard, wipes it off and updates it to read "TONIGHT ONLY: the Society of Black Hills Pioneers." He claps the dust off his hands, calling the attention of his colleagues.

PIONEER 1. Gentlemen, y'all know why we're here. *(Group murmurs in agreement.)*

PIONEER 2. Well, let's get down to business then.

PIONEER 1. All right, boys. We've got a decision to make.

PIONEER 3. Out with it.

PIONEER 1. We've been tasked with the responsibility, yet again, of burying an old timer, an icon of the Black Hills. Our fellow pioneer/—

PIONEER 3. *(Interrupts, raspberries.)* Pbbbt- Pioneer?

PIONEER 4. Pioneers! Ain't that who we are?

PIONEER 3. We weren't the first to discover nothin'

PIONEER 4. But it's on the board...

PIONEER 1. /Can we focus, please!?

PIONEER 2. Y'all know why we're here! *(Beat.)* How are we gonna bury Calamity Jane? *(A breath of silence, more murmurs, combative.)*

PIONEER 5. In dirt under the goddam ground I reckon.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

PIONEER 2. Somethin' 'bout this ain't sittin' right with me.

PIONEER 3. /We ain't in the business of burryin' common whores.

PIONEER 1. I think you mean sex workers, and Calamity Jane weren't a / sex worker—

PIONEER 4. —well she ain't nothing now

PIONEER 2. Nah, Calamity Jane was raised in a brothel, / by a madame.

PIONEER 5. Nah! Her pa was a Colonel. She grew up on the fort, stealin' horses / and learning to rope and fight.

PIONEER 3. All I know is she was a good fer nothin' mooch—

PIONEER 2. She raised hell her whole dern life.

PIONEER 3. — she raised hell her whole dern life.

PIONEER 5. She raised hell her whole dern life.

PIONEER 4. /and some folks called her / a cowgirl,

PIONEER 5. —a cowboy.

PIONEER 1. —a pioneer,

PIONEER 2. —a pioneer,
—an outlaw,—

PIONEER 3. —an outlaw,

PIONEER 5. —a solider, a scout,—

PIONEER 3. —supposedly a legend of the West.

PIONEER 4. /They say she served under Custer.

PIONEER 3. /Never earned an honest living in her life.

PIONEER 1. She robbed / stagecoaches.

PIONEER 5. Stole the hearts of half the girls in Deadwood—

PIONEER 2. Earned her keep as a whore—

PIONEER 1. /sex worker!

PIONEER 4. /She married her way through a list of the shadiest outlaws of the West.

PIONEER 3. /She couldn't make a livin' faster than she'd drink it away.

PIONEER 4. /They say she was something altogether different,—

PIONEER 2. —she was sort of a niche taste

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

PIONEER 5. /It wasn't her right, / in Deadwood there weren't never enough women to go 'round.

PIONEER 2. —in Deadwood there weren't never enough women to go 'round. They say she'd pull a pistol on the johns if they stepped outta line,

PIONEER 2. — carrying on like that— **PIONEER 3.** That's what it was: **PIONEER 5.** — carrying on like that—

 whiskey,
that's what did her in. that's what did her in. that's what did her in.

PIONEER 4. And after she desecrated Bill's good name—

PIONEER 1. We gotta clean up her mess. **PIONEER 3.** We gotta clean up her mess?

PIONEER 2. It still ain't sittin' right with me.

PIONEER 1. Don't matter how it sits. She's one o' ours.

PIONEER 4. Can't none of us disagree with that.

PIONEER 3. I suppose you're right. We done this before.

PIONEER 4. What'd we do when we burried Wild Bill?

PIONEER 1. *(Flipping through papers.)* Ah, uhm plain casket, favorite revolver in his hand, his best buckskin suit.

PIONEER 2. It ain't the same, we ain't never buried a lady before.

PIONEER 5. /and I say we ain't burying a lady now.

PIONEER 4. He's got a point.

PIONEER 2. We can't bury a lady in a Buckskin suit. *(CALAMITY enters, preferably in a buckskin suit. She has a cage around her head. We'll see it again towards the end of the play and it'll make more sense then. The Pioneers scatter, exit. A sound in the distance, a playful, haunting whistle; it's STEERS. Calamity turns her head, listens, turns to the bar.)*

CALAMITY. Whiskey! *(Calamity struggles with the cage, removing it from her head. A sound: the whistle again.)* Anybody here? Come on! Don't people drink no more? Moustache, what's goin on, you here?! *(MADAME MOUSTACHE enters, behind the bar.)*

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

MOUSTACHE. I'm coming, Jane.

CALAMITY. There she is! (*Calamity discards the cage.*) Whiskey please, Madame Moustache.

MOUSTACHE. One Calamity-water, coming up.

CALAMITY. You want to hear the story? (*Moustache pours a whiskey for Calamity and then keeps bustling about. She pulls down chairs, wipes down tables.*)

MOUSTACHE. Of course I do, Calamity. I always want to hear the story. I am just, ah, a bit busy. (*Calamity downs the drink, slams her empty glass on the table.*)

CALAMITY. I see. Too busy with yer poker game in the back?

MOUSTACHE. Don't worry about what goes on the back, cherie. High stakes we hide in the back, but the celebrities? We keep you out front.

CALAMITY. I go where I please.

MOUSTACHE. You go where I let you go, and don't you forget it, eh? (*Notices the changed chalkboard.*) Look at zis. They misspelled "colonizers" (*She wipes away "Society of Black Hills Pioneers"*) You see, I am always fixing everything. It takes work to keep all this from falling apart. (*Moustache corrects the chalkboard so it reads: TONIGHT ONLY: Jane's Problematic Origin Story*)

CALAMITY. Quit yer fussin' and sit with me. I know you want to hear the story.

MOUSTACHE. You don't need me here to tell it. You've told this story a million times. it doesn't change.

CALAMITY. Of course, it changes! You just ain't listening.

MOUSTACHE. I listen plenty.

WILD BILL. (*Appearing out of nowhere.*) I want to hear it. (*WILD BILL plucks a bottle of whiskey from behind the counter.*)

CALAMITY. Bill.

WILD BILL. Let's hear it. (*Wild Bill finds a chair.*)

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CALAMITY. Aint I told you this one, Bill Hickok?

WILD BILL. I didn't say I ain't heard it before. I said I wanted to hear it now.

CALAMITY. Really? Well... all right then. *(Suddenly she's a bit shy, her footing uncertain.)* So, ah, the story. The story of how I got my name. *(Calamity takes a deep swig from the bottle. JANE appears behind them, perhaps just in silhouette at first, shadowing Calamity.)* It was the fall of 1873, we were ordered out to Fort Sanders to quell a Lakota uprising.

WILD BILL. Uprising? That what we're calling it now?

JANE. General Custer didn't want me to go on the campaign. He said he needed me at his side. But I tol' Custer. If I'm needed, I'm needed. I wanna fight, not just scout.

CALAMITY. While we were out, we had numerous skirmishes. Six soldiers were / killed—

JANE. —twelve lives lost in the first attack—

CALAMITY. —and a few more were wounded / bad before we returned to the post—

JANE. By the next strike, I saved them all, by distracting their party. Ya see, whenever the Lakota saw me ride a horse standing on my hands— *(Jane does a handstand.)* Well, they got a little distracted.

CALAMITY. We thought we'd lost them, that the worst is over. Then/...

WILD BILL. Standing on your hands?

CALAMITY and JANE. What?

WILD BILL. You saved what, twenty men or so, by standing on your hands?

JANE. By gum, of course I did! / You think I'm a liar?!

CALAMITY. Did I say that?

WILD BILL. You said you distracted your adversaries by riding your horse standin' on yer hands.

JANE. ONE-HANDED!

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CALAMITY. Well, if that's what I said, that's what I fuckin did, Bill.

WILD BILL. All right.

CALAMITY. I thought you wanted to hear my story?

WILD BILL. Fine! Fine, so you're safe...

CALAMITY. That's what we thought. We're only a mile and a half from our post, and we're ambushed! Arrows are flying, whizzing over our heads. At least two got stuck in my hat. One nicked my favorite jacket.

Jane is dancing, bouncing, dodging the arrows, she acts out the story.

CALAMITY. Now I'm riding in advance of Captain Egan. I hear a shot behind me. I turn in my saddle and I see that Egan is shot through with an arrow, and he's starting to fall. I don't hesitate. I turn my horse and gallop back with all haste to his side. I got there just in time to catch him as he was fallin'. Right into my lap. *(Wild Bill lets out a chuckle.)*

MOUSTACHE. Janey—

CALAMITY. I lifted him onto my horse / and...

MOUSTACHE. —and you galloped away to safety!

CALAMITY. I'm the one tellin' this story, Madame Moustache.

MOUSTACHE. What? You're already sharing the spotlight. *(Gestures to Jane.)*

CALAMITY. I ain't even talking to you, Moustache!

MOUSTACHE. Then who are you talking to?

CALAMITY. Bill, of course.

MOUSTACHE. And where is he?

CALAMITY. What in dern hell are you talking about? You know Wild Bill Hickok is right... *(Calamity turns to where Wild Bill was seated. He is gone.)* God damn.

MOUSTACHE. Poof. Gone. You are seeing ghosts Calamity.

CALAMITY. Nah... Why'd a ghost haunt another ghost?

MOUSTACHE. Oh? Is that what you are now? Just a spirit? Well, you know Jack killed Bill long, long before you or I kicked ze bucket.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

(Jane bolts up.)

JANE. JACK MCCALL! *(JACK MCCALL enters, poses dramatically.)*

CALAMITY. I know... of course I know... I 'member how McCall shot him. *(Jane and McCall shoot each other a look, a standoff.)*

MOUSTACHE. Do you need another drink, darling?

CALAMITY. I think old Bill woulda wanted me to drink one. In his honor. *(Jane stalks McCall about the room.)*

MOUSTACHE. He was a respectable man... I think he would of wanted you to pay your tab, too, Cherie.

CALAMITY. Don't hold yer breath.

MOUSTACHE. Worth a try.

CALAMITY. Lord knows what Bill really woulda wanted. McCall made sure we'd never find that out.

MOUSTACHE. Now, now... *(Jane and McCall are picking up speed, McCall gets nervous, stumbling over things.)*

CALAMITY. That little fucker—

JANE AND CALAMITY. —shot the greatest cowboy who ever lived—

CALAMITY. —who the hell
did he think he was?

JANE. Who the heck do you
think you are?

(They chase! Jane follows McCall, leaping over tables.)

JANE. I chased him down the streets of Deadwood on foot. In the stage door of a saloon and across the stage of dancing girls, across the roof of the hotel! He stole a horse, so I stole one too, *(McCall leaps onto a chair as his horse, Jane does the same.)* but, I caught up to him on the other side of town, hopped on back of his horse *(Jane climbs from her chair onto his shoulders, carefully, like climbing from one galloping horse to another.)* So, he hopped off and took off running again! *(McCall runs, Jane on his shoulders.)* But no matter where he ran, he couldn't shake me. *(McCall is growing weary. Jane leaves his shoulders.)* FINALLY! He tripped all over himself, trying to cut through a butcher shop and ended up cowering under

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

me on the floor as I held a meat cleaver in the air! (*That is exactly the tableau JANE and MCCALL give us.*) HANDS UP MCCALL! (*McCall holds his hands up, Jane waits a beat, enjoys herself, then.:*) Git up you varmint.

CALAMITY. It ain't fair... Bill deserved more time... (*McCall rises slowly, eyes locked with Jane.*)

JANE. March! (*Jane marches him around the stage, a dramatic cross with his arms in the air.*)

MOUSTACHE. Don't dwell on it. Tell me how ze story ends.

CALAMITY. What? After I caught McCall?

MOUSTACHE. No, no, forget McCall (*McCall disappears, Moustache waves him away.*) Finish ze story you tell your ghosts. You rescued Captain Egan, and?

CALAMITY. I ah... I pulled him onto my horse, and we got away. Led the troops out of the ambush. And when we make it back to the fort, when Egan recovers, he says to me, —

CALAMITY & JANE. —“I name you 'Calamity Jane,' the heroine of the plains.”

CALAMITY. I have borne that name until the present time. (takes a drink)

MOUSTACHE. It's a good story.

CALAMITY. Good enough fer another drink?

JANE. (*Saunters back to the bar.*) Sarsaparilla, make it a double.

MOUSTACHE. That's not a thing. (*Moustache pours both Calamity and Jane new drinks. Calamity is having whiskey, of course. They down them in sync.*) You know... I may have heard... that you were off in Texas when Bill died?

JANE. ... But... But, I caught McCall...

CALAMITY. Might've been in Texas... might've been.

JANE. I said, I caught McCall.

MOUSTACHE. (*Dismissing Jane.*) Of course you'd say that, sweetheart.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CALAMITY. It don't fuckin matter where I was. Bill shouldn't have gone out like that. Not in the back.

MOUSTACHE. Calm down, Janey.

CALAMITY. Where's he at?

MOUSTACHE. Where?

CALAMITY. Where'd they bury him?

MOUSTACHE. They moved him. He's up in Mount Moriah now.

CALAMITY. *(Nods, slow.)* Then that's where I want to be buried.

JANE. Right by his side

MOUSTACHE. Sure, Janey.

CALAMITY. He was the best cowboy... the best man I ever knew.

MOUSTACHE. Ummm

CALAMITY. If I could just rope like him, shoot like him... command that kind of respect. I want to earn that gravesite. I wanna ride alongside him—

JANE. —forever, rest with him forever—

MOUSTACHE. It is a lovely notion darling.

CALAMITY. Yes... when my time comes, I want to be right there, In Mount Moriah. In the same earth as the greatest cowboy who ever lived.

Suddenly: the sound of a horse. a mailbag is thrown onto the stage.

MOUSTACHE. Ah! Mail's here. *(Moustache goes to fetch the bag, Jane following her excitedly.)*

CALAMITY. The fuck—we were having a sentimental moment!

JANE. You know, I used to ride for the pony express!

MOUSTACHE. Of course, you did.

CALAMITY. Bill always used to say I was uniquely qualified to deliver the mail because I couldn't read none of it.

MOUSTACHE. *(Sifts through the mail, absently.)* He did? But you didn't meet Bill Hickok until Deadwood, and he died just a few weeks—

JANE. /Bill was a sweetheart, he always did love to tease / me...

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CALAMITY. A sweetheart? He could be ruthless, hard. He was a man that did what had to be done.

MOUSTACHE. What do we have here? *(Pulls a large bundle of letters tied together from the mailbag. She reads.)* “Please deliver these letters to my daughter, Janey, after my death. Signed, Calamity Jane... Hickok... *(She turns to Calamity and Jane.)* Which one of you took Bill’s last name, hmm?

CALAMITY. What?! *(The Society of Black Hills Pioneers rush the stage, pushing Calamity and Moustache out of the way. Jane stays put, reading the letters greedily, like a lovestruck teen with a Tiger Beat magazine.)*

PIONEER 2. Gentlemen and cowpokes, we’ve got to deal with the request.

PIONEER 1. /The request—

PIONEER 3. /Yes, the request—

PIONEER 4. /That request— *(A beat.)*

PIONEER 3. It is the request of a dying man.

PIONEER 2. /Woman.

PIONEER 4. Woman, right.

PIONEER 1. Is there a precedent?

PIONEER 2. Of course, there ain’t!

PIONEER 3. If someone like Wild Bill Hickok had asked / for—

PIONEER 2. /Wild Bill Hickok sure as hell didn’t ask.

PIONEER 4. He never woulda asked.

PIONEER 1. Let’s not allow our personal feelings to interfere with our duty, men. Now Calamity Jane asked to be buried ‘longside Bill Hickok. And we / gotta—

PIONEER 4. /It’s all bullshit.

PIONEER 1. What?

PIONEER 4. Wild Bill was a friggin’ gentleman.

PIONEER 3. He was a cowboy.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

PIONEER 4. A gentleman amongst cowboys. A dignified presence. A man who would not have stooped.

PIONEER 3. /Stooped?

PIONEER 2. –Deigned

PIONEER 3. /Deigned?

PIONEER 4. –Lowered hisself to such a, a—

PIONEER 3. /Lowered hisself?

PIONEER 2. He was too good for a woman like her, and he knew it!

PIONEER 3. Come on!

PIONEER 1. That may be true, but Calamity Jane is one of ours and we ain't gonna talk about her like that!

PIONEER 3. Maybe he didn't have no use for her in his life! That ain't the matter in question.

PIONEER 2. I ain't gonna disrespect Bill, now.

PIONEER 4. What are you gettin' at?

PIONEER 3. Might be fun is all. (*Wild Bill wanders in, he start sifting through the letters.*)

PIONEER 1. This job ain't about fun.

PIONEER 3. It won't hurt nobody.

PIONEER 2. Agnes.

PIONEER 4. He's got a point.

PIONEER 2. Agnes.

PIONEER 1. So, mayhaps we give her that wish? Bill was a generous man after all.

PIONEER 2. What about Agnes?!

PIONEER 4. Who's Agnes?

PIONEER 2. His wife. (*Wild Bill finds the letter he was looking for and smiles, opens it. Jane goes to the chalkboard and corrects it to: TONIGHT ONLY: A Love Story.*)

WILD BILL. This is a letter I wrote my wife. (*Pioneers scatter.*)

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

WILD BILL. (*whistful, pensive.*) “Agnes, Darling. If such should be we never meet again. While firing my last shot I will gently breathe the name of my wife— Agnes... and with wishes even for my enemies I will make the plunge and try to swim to the other shore.

JANE. (*Steps out, giddy.*) Ooo, but listen, listen to this (*Clears throat, reads.*) “My Dear Daughter Janey. I will tell you some things about your father that you should know. I met Wild Bill Hickock in 1870. I heard a bunch of outlaws was planning to kill him and I set out to warn him—”

WILD BILL. /Warn me? You just tagged along when my party was leavin’ Fort Laramie. You didn’t say shit about outlaws, ‘bout the only thing I remember you sayin’ is ‘Where’s the whiskey?’

JANE. No! There were outlaws! (*back to the letter.*) “Bill hid me behind the door while he shot them. They hit him, cut open the top of his head, but Bill still killed them all. I’ll never forget the sight of him with blood running down his face while he used 2 guns.

WILD BILL. Well, that part does sound like me.

JANE. “I nursed him to health several days and then while on the trip to Abeline we met Reverend Sipes and Warren and we was married.

(*Wild Bill bursts out laughing.*)

CALAMITY. What the fuck is this?

JANE. “When I lost Bill, I lost everything I ever loved— Except you, my sweet daughter. (*Wipes away a dramatic tear.*) I gave your father a divorce so he could marry Agnes Lake.

CALAMITY. What the fuck are you doing? I didn’t write this. (*Snatches the letter, Jane and Calamity struggle over it, Jane tries to keep reading as they struggle*)

JANE. “I have so much to tell you, darling, but I don’t seem to be able to connect it correctly.

CALAMITY. Cut it out! Bill and I didn’t get married, and we sure as hell didn’t have no daughter.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

JANE. “Remember, my Janey. His name will never die as long as the sun shines.

CALAMITY. GODDAMMIT I SAID I AIN’T GOT NO DAUGHTER.
(Calamity throws the letters to the ground. At the same time THE DAUGHTER suddenly appears. The Daughter is not an actor or a person, maybe she is a child’s dress suspended from the ceiling, a mannequin, something symbolic that can move and leave. BURKE appears alongside her, his head dipped and face hidden.)

MOUSTACHE. Janey! Mon Cherie, you are back!

CALAMITY. Oh, goddammit. *(Beat.)*

MOUSTACHE. *(Clears throat.)* I said, Mon Cherie, you are back! *(Beat, They are all waiting on Calamity to pick up a queue. Maybe a little firm.)*
Cherie?

CALAMITY. I can’t tell this one yet—

JANE. *(Elbows in, if Calamity won’t tell the story she will.)* I’m back!

MOUSTACHE. Ok, Jane! It has been years! Deadwood was not the same without you.

CALAMITY. She ain’t even real! This is very bad timing—

MOUSTACHE. –and who is he? Who is this darling little girl?

BURKE. *(reaches out to shake Moustache’s hand)* Nice to meet you, name’s/—

CALAMITY. Can’t we do this one later?

MOUSTACHE. /Husband? Oh my my, it has been a long time, Calamity. And this little Cherie!?

JANE. Don’t she look just like me? This is my daughter, / my little girl...

CALAMITY. NO. SHE AINT. Come one, Moustache. You know that ain’t the same thing as the girl she’s reading about.

MOUSTACHE. But look at that little girl, she came from somewhere. No?

CALAMITY. Not from me.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

MOUSTACHE. Oh, I know. She iz what, 7, 8 years old? Weren't you with that other Texan 8 years ago?

That whistle again. Steers slides in beside Burke.

CALAMITY. I swear, Moustache. I didn't have no daughter. Not really. Not with neither of 'em.

JANE. *(Scoffs, annoyed), Maybe you didn't. (Jane marches toward the husbands but Calamity grabs her arm, protective. She's eyeing Steers, he's dangerous.)*

CALAMITY. Stay back. I didn't even write none, so I don't know who those stupid letters are supposed to be going to.

JANE. MY Daughter! *(The Daughter disappears.)*

CALAMITY. I didn't have no baby with none of these fools. This is more husbands on stage than anyone can bear, Moustache!

MOUSTACHE. ...You're right. *(Steers and Burke leave, Moustache waves them away. Wild Bill can stick around.)*

CALAMITY. That's a little better. You had me shakin' in my boots fer a minute.

MOUSTACHE. Drink up, Mon cœur. I know what will make you both feel better. *(CHARLES enters, summoned by Moustache. He's dignified, somber, but kind.)*

CHARLES. Are you dead yet, Calamity?

CALAMITY & JANE. Jack! *(Both give him a big bear hug.)*

CHARLES. You don't look so dead yet.

CALAMITY. Bill will have to wait a while longer to see me.

CHARLES. *(Pulling out a pocket-knife.)* The law requires us to see that people are dead before we / remove—

CALAMITY. *(Stops him.)* Woah. No, not that story.

CHARLES. *(Puts the knife away.)* Then which story do you want? *(Jane whispers in Calamity's ear excitedly, then in Moustache's.)*

CALAMITY. *(Mischievous.)* How old are you now?

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CHARLES. In my 30s, I imagine.

CALAMITY. Be seven years old again.

CHARLES. Seven? *(With a running jump, Jane leaps at Charles and they fall into a game of leapfrog. After the first leap Charles instantly becomes seven years old, his body his demeanor his posture, he fidgets, he giggles.)*

CHARLES. It's so great when I get to play with you Mrs. Calamity!

CALAMITY. Calm down, calm down, Jack! You're driving me plum crazy! *(Charles and Jane both stop playing, nudging each other as they try to stand still, like caught children.)*

CHARLES. Sorry! Sorry, Mrs. ah, Mrs. Calamity.

CALAMITY. It's all right Jack.

CHARLES. Mrs. Calamity. When, when's my ma coming back?

CALAMITY. Now you know, that ain't a certain thing.

CHARLES. *(Holds up five fingers.)* Is it this many days?!

CALAMITY. Oh, I don't reckon it'll be that soon.

WILD BILL. What're you doing Jane?

CALAMITY. What's it look like?

WILD BILL. What's his ma doin', leavin' him with you? *(beat)* Woulda been better left to his own devices.

CALAMITY. There ain't no one else. I watched his brother and his sister die; he was the only one I could save. I've been helpin' his ma ever since. She had to go back east, bury her Pa.

WILD BILL. Times must be desperate if you're all she's got / to..

JANE. Hush up! The kid's buried enough folks. She knows if anything happens I'm a nurse. I'll take care o' him. *(Suddenly, ROBERTA appears. Somehow she is always in the way. She's juggling textbooks and notebooks and pens. Glasses teeter on the edge of her nose.)*

ROBERTA. Excuse me, so sorry, um *(Clears throat, reads.)*

“Protestations of Calamity's devotion, good-will and ability as a nurse

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

come from almost as loud a chorus of commentators as the acclamations she has received as an outstanding roisterer and swearer.

CHARLES. Hello ma'am.

WILD BILL. Who's this? That 'daughter' o' ours, Janey?

JANE. This ain't our daughter.

CALAMITY. it's a fucking historian.

ROBERTA. (*Introducing herself, briefly.*) Roberta Sollid. And you're Charles Robinson, right? Calamity Jane calls you Jack.

CHARLES. Yes ma'am!

ROBERTA. (*Bringing her research materials to him.*) Now, Charles, the most colorful picture of the woman's work as a nurse in the 1878 epidemic appears in Bennett's Old Deadwood days. (*She fumbles, switching between books.*) "There were a half dozen patients when Dr. Babcock went to the cabin, when he asked for help no one would go with him.—"

JANE. Those good fer nothin...

ROBERTA. "—but when he went back, he found Calamity Jane there. 'What are you doing here?' he asked.

JANE. "Somebody's got to take care of 'em. They can't even get 'emselves a drink of water. You tell me what to do doc, and I'll stay here and do it.

ROBERTA. "He warned her, that she'd probably get the smallpox,

JANE. "I know. I'll have to take that chance. I can't leave them here to die all alone.

CHARLES. Smallpox, like my little sister?

CALAMITY. Dammit, 'Berta do you gotta tell this one? (*She separates Roberta and Charles, but Roberta doesn't stop talking.*)

ROBERTA. "There was no question that they would and he told her so. But he looked at her clear olive skin and the firm contours of her face and chin and reminded her that it was not only disease and death she risked. With women of Calamity Jane's sort, beauty was almost important as life

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

itself. It was their stock in trade. Beauty and bravery were Calamity's best assets. It was doubtful if she would ever lose her courage but, without her beauty, what would she do with her life?"

MOUSTACHE. Seriously?

WILD BILL. All right now, Roberta, I think that's enough.

ROBERTA. *(Shuffling again, digging out a newspaper clipping.)*

Interestingly, a newspaper account the same year remarked "the old madam was not generous with her when she cast the die which mould her"

JANE. 'scuse me?

WILD BILL. Mrs. Sollid, I said that was enough. We heard you.

ROBERTA. "Close observation of existing pictures of her show that she was plain and mannish, in fact—

WILD BILL. /I said, that's enough! *(Wild Bill leads Roberta off the stage.)*

CALAMITY. Now Jack, you don't pay women like that any mind. You listen to me.

CHARLES. Yes'm...but Ms. Calamity?

CALAMITY. Need somethin', Jack?

CHARLES. I'm awful cold.

CALAMITY. Cold? Well go put on warmer clothes, kid.

CHARLES. These... these are the warmest clothes I got.

CALAMITY. *(Rather dumbly looking around for some way to help.)* Oh, well, I ah . . . *(Looks into her own whiskey glass.)* Well, here, this always warms me up...

JANE. *(Swoops in.)* I've got a better idea— *(Like some kind of magic trick, Jane suddenly has a cozy looking red wool blanket. She wraps Charles up in it, almost gracefully.)* That'll warm you right up.

CHARLES. Thank you, Mrs. Calamity.

CALAMITY. Here, I know. You wanna hear a story?

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CHARLES. Yeah! (*Charles, yes, I know, he is played by a grown man, but he does in fact sit on Calamity's lap.*)

CALAMITY. All right now, so. The story of how I got my name. You see, I—

CHARLES. I know that one!

CALAMITY. Did I already tell you that story?

CHARLES. (*Giggles.*) Like a million times!

MOUSTACHE. (*Laughs.*) I told you—

JANE. (*Taking over.*) All right then! Did I ever tell you how I was a scout?

CHARLES. What? No!

JANE. Oh yeah, for General Custer. I was with him on many a campaign.

CHARLES. NUH UH!

JANE & CALAMITY. What do you mean, NUH UH?

CHARLES. You couldn't have been a soldier.

WILD BILL. You weren't a soldier, Jane. I was the soldier, a spy for the Union, a Marshall, a Sheriff. While you were, what? A cook in Moustache's whore house/...

JANE. /LANGUAGE!

MOUSTACHE. /Excuse moi! This is not just a brothel! It is a fine establishment. We also serve drinks and there's poker in ze back.

CALAMITY. Shut up. I said, I was a soldier.

CHARLES. But, but yer a girl. Girls can't be soldiers.

WILD BILL. (*Chuckles.*) Out of the mouths o' babes.

CALAMITY. Oh really? Am I a girl?

CHARLES. Yeah, you... ummm...

CALAMITY. You think I'm a girl, Jack?

CHARLES. (*Ponders.*) Ummm . . . I mean . . . probably?

CALAMITY. Well. You are not alone in that opinion, kid. That's why I didn't enlist the way you're s'posed ta. They'd be out marching, I'd find

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

where they were camping, and just show up. Blend in. I'd go miles with 'em, days, maybe weeks 'fore any of the soldiers would even mention to me that they didn't quite remember me bein' with them at the start.

CHARLES. Did they catch you!?

CALAMITY. Oh, I'd tell 'em the truth! They'd all heard a Calamity Jane. I don't know if you know, Jack. Being so young, but I got a bit of a reputation.

CHARLES. Ma said you got more than a bit of a repu-repa... retation. She says you—

CALAMITY. /Wait. Jack... why are you shivering?

CHARLES. It's... it's awful cold Mrs. Calamity. *(Calamity again looks a little ill-equipped to help, but Jane swoops in again.)*

JANE. *(To Calamity.)* Give me your coat. *(She does. Jane swaps the blanket for Calamity's buckskin coat. In an ideal world, despite Charles being played by a grown man, the coat is magically too big for him.)*

MOUSTACHE. It is ze worst winter Deadwood has seen since man set foot.

WILD BILL. Well, since white men set foot here.

JANE. I'll have something fixed up fer ya in a second. Ok, Jack? *(Scuttles off with the blanket to get to work.)*

CHARLES. Thank you, Mrs. Calamity. Can I... Can I hear about when you was a scout? *(While Calamity speaks, Jane does something magical with the blanket. Somehow it becomes a pair of pants, or overalls.)*

CALAMITY. Well, one time. We'd been marchin' for days. It was the hottest summer we'd seen in a long time. And no sign of 'em. The party we were trying to find was long gone and we're tired, when finally we come to the most beautiful cool-lookin' lake we ever seen. Well, no body waited for orders to stop. The soldiers couldn't help themselves. They started hollerin' and stripping down. The shore was covered in everybody's clothes and a heap of soldiers dove straight in the water.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

Naked as the day they were born. (*Charles giggles, Jane brings Charles the overalls as they continue to talk, he steps into them.*) And well, I'd been marchin' too, ain't I? I couldn't wait to get in that water. So, I stripped down and I dove in with 'em, biggest splash you ever seen! ...But that might a been a mistake.

CHARLES. (*Looks at her blankly.*) Why?

CALAMITY. Now Jack... Your ma told you yet about how girls and boys get d'frent parts?

CHARLES. (*Gets it, gasps.*) Oooooohhh!

JANE. Now, now, don't get nasty.

CHARLES. /What'd they do?

JANE. Ooo! I know this one! They tried to yell at me but they just couldn't stop blushin'! Eventually the men they found my clothes and agreed to at least escort me to the next town. The next day, marchin', they couldn't stand to watch a lady walkin' for so long. I rode the rest of the way into Deadwood on their shoulders! (*Charles giggles.*) You feeling a little warmer, Jack?

CHARLES. Oh yes ma'am, these are awful nice—

CALAMITY. (*Darker. Interrupting their cheer.*) That ain't what happened.

CHARLES. Are you alright Mrs. Calamity?

CALAMITY. Sure, the soldiers just laughed and hollered, but the officers. Well, they pulled me up short. They yelled some shit at me 'bout wearin' a dress, and they yanked me out the water. Tied me by my hands to a tree, and the next day made me march along behind them with nothing but my boots on.

CHARLES. ...Mrs. Calamity...that sounds awful mean.

CALAMITY. A lot of things in this life are mean, Jack. You still cold?

CHARLES. ...a little bit.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CALAMITY. *(Slams a hand on the bar.)* Whiskey. *(Moustache pours one, Calamity picks it up, puts it to Charle's lips.)*

CALAMITY. Just a tiny sip, it'll warm ya.

JANE. Wait a minute!

CALAMITY. Just, don't tell yer ma.

WILD BILL. I swear, they should have left 'im to his own devices, you're underestimat' him. When I was his age, I was already a better shot than you, Calam.

CALAMITY. *(Warning.)* Bill.

CHARLES. *(Recovers from his little sip of whiskey.)* Thank you, Mrs. Calamity

CALAMITY. Of course, Jack. I'm always gonna take care of you. If I let you freeze to death, who would I tell stories to? *(The Society of Black Hills Pioneers flood the stage.)*

PIONEER 2. Charles Robinson!

CHARLES. *(Pops up as an adult again, the coat and red pants fall off of him into a heap.)* How can I help you Gentlemen?

PIONEER 2. It's about Calamity Jane.

CHARLES. Calamity?

PIONEER 3. Yes, Calamity Jane.

CHARLES. Is she dead yet?

PIONEER 1. Well...yes.

CHARLES. *(a beat, Charles looks at Calamity.)*... Oh. *(Calamity disappears.)*

PIONEER 2. And as we understand it, you've taken over your father's business.

CHARLES. I have.

PIONEER 3. Buryin cowboys, that's honorable work.

PIONEER 1. Honorable

PIONEER 2. /Important

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

PIONEER 3. /Humbling

CHARLES. I suppose.

PIONEER 2. –And we’ve got some questions about the best way to handle an unusual case.

PIONEER 1. /Strange, yes

PIONEER 3. We’ve got to make it look acceptable.

CHARLES. Oh dear. Was she mangled somehow?

PIONEER 2. Mangled?!

PIONEER 1. /Oh no! Of course not!

CHARLES. Oh, was it disease? Does she appear disfigured somehow? There are a lot of new techniques—

PIONEER 3. No, no, she isn’t disfigured.

CHARLES. Then I don’t under/stand...

PIONEER 1. We just need your expertise on how to make it look...appropriate.

CHARLES. Appropriate?

PIONEER 2. You’re the expert, this is your field. We trust your knowhow. We ain’t never had this sort of situation before.

CHARLES. Gentlemen. I’m sorry, you’ll have to be plain with me. What has you concerned?

PIONEER 3. Are ye slow, undertaker? *(Beat.)* She’s a woman. *(The Pioneers all look at each other and sigh, concerned.)*

CHARLES. Oh...well...Gentlemen, I’ll see what I can do to make her seem... appropriate?

PIONEER 2. That’s all we ask.

CHARLES. *(The Pioneers begin to disband, Charles lingers.)* But can I ask... *(The Pioneers stop, turn to face him.)* What did she die of? *(Calamity enters.)*

CALAMITY. WHISKEY! *(The Pioneers scatter.)*

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

MOUSTACHE. *(Pulls out the bottle but doesn't pour.)* Janey, I hate to nag. But your tab...

CALAMITY. Madame Moustache! You know I'm good fer it.

MOUSTACHE. No, no I am running a business here.

CALAMITY. I can tell you a story.

MOUSTACHE. If we are trading, let's make it skill for skill, eh? You tell a story, I show you a little poker, There's this new one they're playing called Texas Hold 'em—

CALAMITY. I can't drink poker.

MOUSTACHE. I can't spend stories.

CALAMITY. *(Rummages through the mailbag, pulls out a small parcel.)*

Ok, ok. So, you see Moustache, I got these pictures I'm selling.

MOUSTACHE. Pictures?

CALAMITY. Yeah.

MOUSTACHE. Pictures of what?

CALAMITY. Of me!

MOUSTACHE. *(Not biting.)* Of you?

CALAMITY. *(Pulling out some trading card sized photos of herself.)*

Now, I can cut you a deal. Normally I get 50 cents for just one of these, but if you give me a whiskey er two—

MOUSTACHE. I do not recall ever seeing your face on money, Cherie.

CALAMITY. No, no, ya see. What I'm offering here is a trade.

MOUSTACHE. Jane. You're running out of credit. I accept gold, I accept United States currency. I do not accept trading cards, eh?

CALAMITY. All right, All right. Hold on. *(Charles has been watching this from across the stage, uncomfortable. Calamity crosses to him, they are somewhere else. He is an adult.)*

CHARLES. Hello there, Ms. Calamity.

CALAMITY. Jack! How have you been? *(She hugs him.)*

CHARLES. It's late.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

CALAMITY. Is it? You know, I don't pay attention to—

CHARLES. How much do you need?

CALAMITY. Hold up now. Just because I come calling doesn't mean.

CHARLES. It's late. I know.

CALAMITY. Can I come in?

CHARLES. I don't think that's such a good idea.

CALAMITY. I ain't never gotten to sit and visit with yer wife. I wanna see if yer little girls look like you did when / you was—

CHARLES. Ms. Calamity. I'm sorry... It's not a good idea.

CALAMITY. I can come back. I didn't realize it was so late. The girls are probably asleep.

CHARLES. They are but... Calamity. I'd rather you meet me in town if you need something. You don't want to meet my girls.

CALAMITY. No, I like children.

CHARLES. I'd just rather... I'd rather... My wife and I try very hard to make sure the girls are only around good influences. Role models. It's hard to raise children right in Deadwood, especially young girls.

CALAMITY. I see.

CHARLES. I'm sorry, Ms. Calamity. You know I owe a lot to you.

CALAMITY. I... I understand, Jack.

CHARLES. I want to help you. *(Charles pulls out some money.)*

CALAMITY. It's not that I only come here for yer money, Jackie.

CHARLES. I know. *(Calamity takes the money, weakly.)* Take care of yourself, Jane. *(Charles disappears.)*

CALAMITY. You...you take care, Jack... *(Walks weakly to the bar.)*
Whiskey.

MOUSTACHE. Mon cherie, I don't know if right now is the best—

CALAMITY. *(Slams the cash on the bar.)* /I said, I want a whiskey. *(Moustache pours her a whiskey)* Leave the bottle. *(Moustache does not leave the bottle.)* I said leave the bottle.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

MOUSTACHE. You can't afford a bottle.

CALAMITY. Don't tell me what I can and can't—

MOUSTACHE. (*Getting down to business*) /You know who can afford bottles? Card players. But Janey, you refuse to learn to play ze game.

CALAMITY. The hell you talkin' about?

MOUSTACHE. Sit. (*Updates the chalkboard again "TONIGHT ONLY: Jane Bluffs".*) I said: sit. (*Calamity sits at a table, Moustache sits across from her.*) Now, I give that poker lesson, huh?

CALAMITY. Fine, fine, Where are the cards?

MOUSTACHE. It's not about ze cards. Just look at me. Look me in ze eyes. (*Calamity leans back and just looks.*) Ask me where I was born.

CALAMITY. Alright. Where was you born?

MOUSTACHE. (*Well-rehearsed.*) Paris, France, 1830. My father was Monsieur Dumont, famous for his French patisserie and beloved of the aristocracy. I was my father's jewel, his darling little girl but I came out West because I wanted... real jewels.

CALAMITY. ...huh.

MOUSTACHE. Now your turn: Janey, tell me did you ever have any children?

CALAMITY. I told you, I don't! She don't know shit, she's just... the idea of me. She doesn't know, not really... Look at me, Moustache. I don't have no daughter.

MOUSTACHE. I don't believe you.

CALAMITY. Well fuck you, I don't believe you. I know you ain't French. You was born in New Orleans.

MOUSTACHE. /I didn't say it wasn't true. I said I don't believe you. This is the difference. This is poker. When I lie: they believe it.

CALAMITY. I don't care what people believe. I ain't gotta prove it to you. I know what's true.

UNTITLED CALAMITY JANE PLAY

MOUSTACHE. Do you know, Janey? Who was your mother? Did you marry Wild Bill? Does the government owe you a pension for when you served under Custer, or... is that just another fun story... a tall tale to tell over drinks?

CALAMITY. I... Moustache.

MOUSTACHE. See, ze problem with you is that you cannot keep your damned lies straight. Maybe you are right, maybe you are telling the truth. I'm not so sure I can read the poker face of someone who doesn't even know when they are lying.

CALAMITY. Is your mustache even real?

MOUSTACHE. Is your name even Jane?

CALAMITY. Of course, it is!

MOUSTACHE. Oh? Me too, darling. (*Calamity huffs, Moustache leaves the table.*) You're so cranky. I can't teach you anything when you're cranky.

CALAMITY. (*Defensive, getting worked up.*) You can't teach me nothing, 'cause you don't know what you're talking about. I know who Calamity Fuckin' Jane is—

I had glory days. God damn glory days Moustache.

MOUSTACHE. Sure, Janey, I know, I know.

CALAMITY. I marched with General Custer!

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