

"HAPPY TRAILS"

Written by

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(Lights up on an old western saloon. LULABELLE the barmaid, who has seen better days, is wiping down the bar. The OLD PROSPECTOR ENTERS. He's rugged looking in dusty jeans, flannel shirt, vest and boots. He crosses to Lulabelle. It's important that both characters speak in a slow, laconic western drawl.)

LULABELLE

Howdy stranger.

OLD PROSPECTOR

How do ma'am?

LULABELLE

Welcome to The Old Saloon.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Old Saloon?

LULABELLE

Old Saloon. That's what we call it around here. The Old Saloon

OLD PROSPECTOR

Why's that?

LULABELLE

Because it's a saloon and it's old. Folks around here ain't big on imagination.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Nice to see a friendly face. Especially a pretty one.

LULABELLE

(flattered)

Lemme introduce you around. Over there, that's Old Tex.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Old Tex?

LULABELLE

We call him Old Tex 'count of he's from Texas and he's old.
Now that galoot at the back table, That's Old Monte.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Old Monte?

Old Monte. We call him Old Monte 'count of he's from Montana
and he's old.

OLD PROSPECTOR

And what do they call you, pretty lady?

LULABELLE

(flirtatiously)

They call me Lulabelle.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Why's that?

LULABELLE

Cause it's my name.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Nice to meet you Miss Lulabelle. Folks just call me the Old
Prospector.

LULABELLE

The Old Prospector?

OLD PROSPECTOR

The Old Prospector.

LULABELLE

Why's that?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Count of I'm a prospector and I'm old.

LULABELLE

Don't think I've seen you around these here parts before.

OLD PROPECTOR

Never been around these here parts before.

LULABELLE

Could explain why I've never seen ya.

OLD PROSPECTOR

This your place, Miss Lullabelle?

LULABELLE

Me? I just work here from time to time. During the day, I'm the local schoolmarm.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Me sainted mother is a schoolmarm.

LULABELLE

Do tell.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Everybody calls her the Old Schoolmarm

LULABELLE

The Old Schoolmarm?

OLD PROSPECTOR

The Old Schoolmarm, on account she's the schoolmarm and she's old.

LULABELLE

When I'm not school marmin', I moonlight as the town floozy.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Town floozy?

LULABELLE

Town floozy. You try livin' on a school teacher's salary.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Mmmmmm... I'll have to tell Mom about that. She's always lookin' to make a little extra money.

LULABELLE

Looks like you could use a drink, cowboy.

OLD PROSPECTOR

I am a might parched.

LULABELLE

Name your poison.

OLD PROSPECTOR

You got any Old Crow?

LULABELLE

Sorry.

OLD PROSPECTOR

How about Old Turkey.

LULABELLE

Fresh out.

OLD PROSPECTOR
What do you got?

LULABELLE
(Blows the dust off
a bottle)
Just this.

OLD PROSPECTOR
What is it?

LULABELLE
No idea. Just know it's old.

OLD PROSPECTOR
Sounds good to me.

(Lulabelle pours a shot)

OLD PROSPECTOR
Here's lookin' at you, Miss Lulabelle.

LULABELLE
(again flirtatiously)
Speakin' a lookin'. You in town lookin' for anything in
particular or are you just... lookin'?

OLD PROSPECTOR
I'm lookin' alright. Lookin' for the Lollypollymolly.

LULABELLE
The Lollypollymolly?

OLD PROSPECTOR
You've heard of it.

LULABELLE
Can't say I have.

OLD PROSPECTOR
Everybody's heard of The Lollypollymolly. The richest gold
strike in the history of the west.

LULABELLE
Doesn't ring a bell.

OLD PROSPECTOR
There were some called it the Mollypollylolly.

LULABELLE
Never heard of that one, either.

OLD PROSPECTOR

And there were some called it the Comstock Gold Mining Company, a subsidiary of Anderson and Sons, A Limited Liability Corporation. Like I say, there were some called it that, but not many.

LULABELLE

Why's that?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Sounded silly. Been lookin' for that mine goin' on twenty five years, now.

LULABELLE

That's a mighty long time.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Came close once, I did. At least, I thought I did.

LULABELLE

What happened?

OLD PROSPECTOR

I was told the secret to the location of the Pollywollydoodle rested with Old Man River.

LULABELLE

Old Man River?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Old Man River.

LULABELLE

The Mississippi?

OLD PROSPECTOR

The Mississippi? No, no... Old Man River. He was a prospector back in the day. Called him Old Man River count of his name was River and he was old.

LULABELLE

So, what makes you think the Hollywollydoodoo is here in New Skunkville?

OLD PROSPECTOR

New Skunkville?

LULABELLE

This here booming metropolis you just rode into is called New Skunkville.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Why would anyone call a town New Skunkville?

LULABELLE

Old Skunkville was already taken. Like I said, imagination ain't exactly a growth industry around here.

OLD PROSPECTOR

I've searched high and low for that mine. Looked darn near everywhere there was to look. The way I figure, the Mellowhellodolly has to be around here somewhere.

LULABELLE

Why's that?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Process of elimination.

LULABELLE

Meaning?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Meaning, I looked everywhere else. This is all that's left. The last desolate spot in the middle of a thousand square miles of nothin' but nothin'. Cold, barren, deserted, a wasteland. A place that no one in their right mind would think of lookin'.

LULABELLE

Ever think of workin' for the Chamber Of Commerce? They could you use a man with your gift for hyperbole.

OLD PROSPECTOR

High?

LULABELLE

...Perbole. Means exaggeration.

OLD PROSPECTOR

High... perbole. I'll have to remember that. High... perbole.

LULABELLE

You ever consider that maybe the story of the Jollyhollywally is just an old wives tale?

OLD PROSPECTOR

(thinks about it)

Can't say I have. Although, I did have an old wife once.

LULABELLE

Do tell.

OLD PROSPECTOR

She wasn't old when I married her.

Imagine not.

LULABELLE

Just got that way. Over time.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Happens.

LULABELLE

You ever been married Miss Lulabelle?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Came close a few times.

LULABELLE

Never met the right hombre?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Like I said, came close.

LULABELLE

What happened?

OLD PROSPECTOR

There was Old Cal. We called him Old Cal on account of he was from California and he was old.

LULABELLE

What happened to him?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Hanged for stealing horses. Then there was Old George. We called him Old George cause he was from Georgia and he was old.

LULABELLE

What happened to Old George?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Shot, rustlin' cattle.

LULABELLE

Probably better off without 'im.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Then there was Old Phil. Called him Old Phil count of he hailed from Philadelphia and he was Old.

LULABELLE

Hanged?

OLD PROSPECTOR

LULABELLE
Nope.

OLD PROSPECTOR
Shot?

LULABELLE
Nope. Ran off with a young heifer from the B Bar B spread.

OLD PROSPECTOR
The rancher's daughter?

LULABELLE
No. A young heifer.

OLD PROSPECTOR
It was different with me and Linda Jane Betty Sue Mary Jo.

LULABELLE
How many wives did you have?

OLD PROSPECTOR
Just Linda Jane Betty Sue Mary Jo.

LULABELLE
That's a lot of names.

OLD PROSPECTOR
She was a lotta woman. When me and Linda Jane Betty Sue Mary Jo first met we was like two rabbits. Courtin' and sparkin.'

LULABELLE
Courtin' and sparkin'?

OLD PROSPECTOR
Yeah, courtin' and sparkin'. That's a colorful western double entendre for pitchin' hay, ridin' the pony express, doin' the dose eee doe, headin' 'em off at the pass...

LULABELLE
I get the picture. What happened between you and Linda Jane Betty Sue Mary Jo?

OLD PROSPECTOR
Like I said. One day we was courtin' and sparkin' and the next thing you know I'm starin' down the barrel of a shotgun. It was ugly.

LULABELLE
I imagine so.

OLD PROSPECTOR

And by that time, so was she. That's when I hear tell about the Follygollywally. I told her I was through. I was headin' out to find my dream. I gotta ride through that wide open country that I love, I told her. Don't fence me in. That's when I saddled up Old Yeller...

LULABELLE

You saddled up a dog?

OLD PROSPECTOR

No my horse. I call him Old Yeller on account he was yeller and he was old. Like I said, I saddled up Ole Yeller and headed west to make my home on the range. Y'know where the deer and the antelope play?

LULABELLE

Heard tell.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Ever see deer and antelope play?

LULABELLE

Can't say I have.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Me neither. Seen a lot of deer and antelope. Never seen none of them playin'.

LULABELLE

Ever thought of settlin' down? There's a lot of ranches around here could use an experienced hand.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Not for me. I may look like an old cowhand from the Rio Grande. But truth is my legs ain't bowed and my cheeks ain't tanned.

LULABELLE

I was wonderin' about that.

OLD PROSPECTOR

I'm a cowboy who never saw a cow. Never roped a steer 'cause I don't know how. Sure ain't a fixin' to start in now.

LULABELLE

Yippee ki yo, ki yay.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Couldn't have said it better myself.

LULABELLE

What happens if it turns out the Pollygollywobble ain't around here?

OLD PROSPECTOR

I'll just keep tumblin' along with the tumblin' tumbleweed. I know it's out there.

LULABELLE

The tumbleweed?

OLD PROSPECTOR

The Pullywoollybully. Just gotta keep lookin'. Climb every mountain. Ford every stream.

LULABELLE

Follow every rainbow?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Rainbow? What's a rainbow got to do with it? You follow every rainbow, all you get is wet.

LULABELLE

I meant, you know, a rainbow. Pot o' gold. Never mind.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Everyone's gotta have a dream. It's what gets you up in the mornin'. That and havin' to pee. You gotta dream, Miss Lullabelle?

LULABELLE

Me? All I want is a room somewhere. Far away from the cold night air. With one enormous chair.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Sounds lovely. Well, Miss Lullabelle, it was nice talkin' with you.

LULABELLE

Leavin' already? You just got here.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Gotta ease on down that road.

LULABELLE

You sure I couldn't interest you in another drink, a home cooked meal, a schoolmarm who knows her p's from her q's.

OLD PROSPECTOR

That another one of them colorful western double entendres?

LULABELLE

It is if you want it to be.

OLD PROSPECTOR

That's mighty temptin'. But, there's a gold mine out there with my name it. Or somebody's name on it.

LULABELLE

If you ever change your mind.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Look at it this way, Miss Lulabelle. No matter what trails we ride, now matter what rivers we cross, no matter what mountains we climb.. No matter...

LULABELLE

You might want to skip the geography lesson before my dress goes out of style.

OLD PROSPECTOR

You and me, Miss Lulabelle...

LULABELLE

You and me? What about you and me?

OLD PROSPECTOR

You and me. We'll always have...New Skunkville.

(Starts to exit)

LULABELLE

Bye Old Prospector.

OLD PROSPECTOR

Just call me Louise.

LULABELLE

Louise?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Louise.

LULABELLE

Why Louise?

OLD PROSPECTOR

Cause I'm from Louisiana.

LULABELLE

Happy trails, Louise.

(Louise exits.)

CURTAIN