

Pearl Synopsis

ACT ONE

Before the curtain opens, the elegant and beautiful Victoria Pearl, with grace and appreciation, welcomes her audience to Miss Pearl's Parlor. She is interrupted when a lovely young woman Emma Grace appears carrying a note of introduction. Emma Grace's father had just died and she is destitute. Because Emma Grace has no experience at all being with a man, Pearl offers her a job as a cook.

The curtains open to the song *The Cowboys Are Coming to Town*. The girls are excited, rushing around getting ready to greet the cowboys and show them a good time. Frank Pickrell drops by to report on the dismal progress of the Santa Rita drilling project in Big Lake, Texas. Betsy is especially excited to see Danny again and is disappointed when he later tells her he wants to spend time with Heather. Seeing a new face, Pearl learns that the boys have put their money together to treat Tommy Lee to his first sexual experience with a woman. The songs *Speak Easy* and *This Night Ain't Over* are sung.

Tommy Lee sees Emma Grace tending to different chores and is instantly taken by her. They spend the entire evening by the river together. It is love at first sight and they sing *It Happened Tonight*. Knowing the couple spent the night together Dusty asks Tommy Lee if he got his "birthday present" after all. To defend Emma Grace's honor, Tommy Lee hits his best friend.

The next Monday the girls are reading on the porch and sharing some girl talk. Victoria sings the *Ballad of Suzy Poontang* telling the true story of a Chinese girl in Chicago. Mozella reads in the newspaper that after a year and a half of drilling, the Santa Rita has finally hit the pay! When his father asks how his birthday went, Tommy Lee proudly announces he has found the woman he is going to marry at Miss Pearl's Parlor. When Tommy Lee asks how you know when it is the right girl, Jed sings *If Texas Was a Woman*. His mother overhears the conversation and is concerned.

Miss Pearl receives a business proposition from Ella May Comstock. Ella May is an interesting woman who has saved \$2.00 for Pearl to give her Henry an education on how to find "the magic button" that will send her into sexual euphoria. After accepting one of the dollars, Pearl finds Henry and carefully explains to him how to please Ella May and sings *A Woman is Like a Violin*.

Tommy Lee's parents Jed and Marybelle come to Miss Pearl's Parlor to meet Emma Grace. Marybelle is delighted to learn she is only Mozella's helper and sings *She Cooks! She Cleans!* Tommy Lee proposes to Emma Grace and together they sing *You Make Beautiful Love With Your Eyes*.

Happy Harvey, a good friend to the "Lady Pearls", shows up and tells the audience the story of the time his father took him to Miss Hattie's Bordello to become "a man". There he meets Sugar who sings *Deep Pockets* to him. When Sugar starts taking off her clothes Harvey tells her his secret... he prefers men. Sugar comes up with an idea to make a lot of racket, with her

screaming, “Ride ‘em cowboy” and Harvey yelling, “Yeah, Baby, Yeah!!” His father is satisfied and Harvey gets the reputation of “treetop lover”!

The girls all go to Big Lake on the train with 1000 other people to see the Santa Rita spew oil like a timely geyser. They celebrate and sing *The Train* song. Madeline and Aunt Rosey, two women from New York who had invested in the oil venture, arrive to celebrate the Santa Rita coming in. After the big party Pearl goes outside for her nightly visit with her mare. Aunt Rosey tells the story of her husband Joey, a racketeer who moved his girlfriend in next door then was shot and killed, leaving her a wealthy widow. Ginger sings *The Last Time*. When she is finished Sarah tells Heather that the most handsome man she had ever seen had told her to give Heather a note at midnight. The note is from Heather’s ex-boyfriend, a gangster who tried to kill her in Chicago. He has found Heather to kill her and to get to his vengeance on Pearl for rescuing her. Heather becomes hysterical. Mozella is crying and telling everyone Tony liked to cut up women. Everyone is frantic. Katie cocks her gun and goes looking for Pearl.

ACT TWO

The audience is sitting in the dark. Only crickets can be heard. Then they hear Tony screaming at Pearl to open her eyes or he is going to cut them out. Two loud rifle shots and two loud boos from a rifle are heard. The sound of crickets... Katie appears before the curtain and tells the audience she has shot a snake by the river. All is well and Pearl is safe. Pearl has decided to take the girls to church the next Sunday because she is grateful for her fate.

After church Pearl finds Betsy singing *The Man I Love* and crying. Pearl sings *Nobody Hears When She Cries* in counter harmony. Betsy tells Pearl she misses her family but is too ashamed to go home. Pearl advises Betsy to write her family and let them know she is safe.

There is a knock at the door; four women from the church have come to call. Three are hostile. Susan, the schoolteacher, is curious and complimentary. The women tell Pearl that they are not welcome at the church. Pearl assures them she will not return. As the women are leaving Pearl sees her girls and realizes they are a family of women just trying to survive. She roars at the departing women so loudly that one of them wets her pants. On Pearl’s insistence the girls each tell their sad story of how they had come to be at Miss Pearl’s Parlor. The girls sing *If You Could Wear My Slippers*. The women leave with a different attitude.

Susan the school teacher asks if she can stay. Pearl tells her that the church women need a good old fashion treatment for female hysteria and sings *Doctor Gedderhoff* Susan asks Pearl if sex is bad because she is having tingly feelings when she sees the father of one of her pupils whose wife recently had passed. She is sexually frustrated but wants to be a good girl. Susan sings *Promised Land*. The girls all assure her she is perfectly normal and they drink champagne and give a glorious toast to Pearl.

The curtain closes. Various characters appear between scene changes. They offer dialogue to keep the audience enlightened to the movement of the story. Marybelle informs the audience that Emma Grace and Tommy Lee had a beautiful wedding and it is Redbird's birthday party.

The girls and Happy Harvey are gathered for Redbird's birthday party. Redbird receives a letter that says her Aunt Gertrude has choked on a chicken bone and she is able to move home to be reunited with her brothers. Betsy gasps when Mozella opens the door and sees Johnny Wayne who has loved her since the second grade standing there with flowers. He has come to take her home. When she asks Pearl what to do, Pearl tells her that Johnny Wayne has been waiting long enough. Betsy goes upstairs to gather her things. Tommy Lee and Emma Grace walk in. Emma Grace feels nauseous and runs to the bathroom. Mozella announces Tommy Lee is going to be a daddy and runs after her. Lucy says it's time to get the party started. Everyone is sad as they say goodbye to Betsy.

Ginger starts the upbeat finale song *We've Got A Cure For the Blues*. During the song Susan, Frank Pickrell, Jed, Marybelle and the cowboys show up dancing and singing along. Encore song is *Santa Rita Boogie* with everyone on stage.