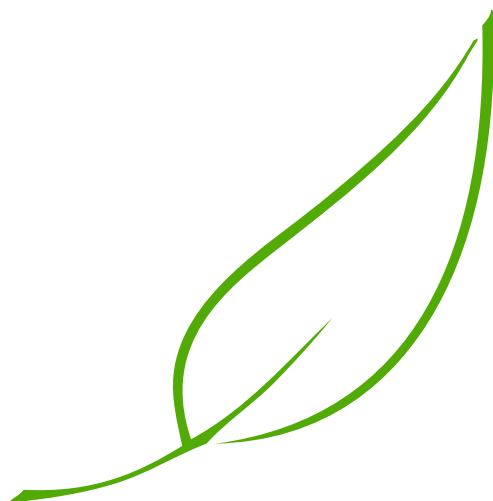


STAGECOACH

by Robert L. Crowe



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Scene: A trail in the old west. Two chairs are on the set. At the open, Gabby is standing on a chair to indicate that he is higher than the ground level.

Cast: Gabby (m) and Rocky (f)

GABBY: *(shakes imaginary reins as if driving a team of eight.)* Hee-yaw. Giddy-up there. We gotta be in Sacramento by next week!

ROCKY: *(Rocky jumps out with a pistol pointed at Gabby)* Halt! Or I'll shoot!

GABBY: Whoa! *(pulls on reins stop the horses, slows down somewhat)* Whoa! I said "Whoa!"

ROCKY: Stop the horses or I'll shoot you between the ears!

GABBY: I'm trying, I'm trying! Whoa! *(finally in place)* Whoa! There we are! Whata ya want?

ROCKY: *(mumbles something that sounds like "robbery")*

GABBY: What?

ROCKY: *(mumbles again)*

GABBY: I cain't understand ya. If you don't speak-up I'm going to go on. Maybe if you take off the mask it would help.

ROCKY: *(removes imaginary mask)* I said, "This is a holdup!" And I said it more than once! And I mean it!

GABBY: Why ... why ... you're a girl!

ROCKY: You sound like my mother. I ain't no girl. I'm a woman. W-O-M- *(not sure how to spell it)* M ... O ... N. Woman!

GABBY: Wait a minute. I been robbed a lot but I ain't never been held up by a girl *(Rocky points imaginary pistol at him and cocks the hammer)* Woman.

ROCKY: This is the first step to equality in the west. Those Eastern women get to vote. Around here we get the money. Now, where was I?

GABBY: Robbery.

ROCKY: Yeh! And I mean it. Jump down off that stage where I can see you better, and no funny stuff. *(Gabby jumps down off the chair)* Now, stand still. *(she holsters the pistol and gets a rope)*

GABBY: Whata you doin'?

ROCKY: *(she is preparing her lasso. She swings the loop in the air and ropes Gabby, then pulls the rope tight.)* Just makin' sure you don't interfere with this robbery. *(draws her pistol again and yells into the stage coach)* OK. All you passengers! Get out! And hold those hands up real high so I can see them. Out! *(pause)* I said OUT! *(to Gabby)* Whatsa matter. They foreigners?

GABBY: We ain't got no passengers, you mesquite-headed ninny. That's why no one is comin' out!

ROCKY: Oh. *(pause)* What'd you call me?

GABBY: A mesquite-headed ninny.

ROCKY: What's that?

GABBY: That's a person who orders people out of a stage when there ain't no people. Now, how 'bout getting me out of this rope.

ROCKY: I guess that'd be OK. *(un-ropes him while keeping the gun pointed)*

ROCKY: Why ain't there any people? Usually there's a few rich travelers on a stage.

GABBY: We had some passengers when we left Abilene. One got off at Sagebrush because he couldn't stand talking to the others. We got held-up at Saltwater Flats and one dude joined the robbers. That left one fella who had a lot of money hidden in his suitcase. We stopped so he could bury the money. When we started up again he got worried, so he got out and went back to sit by the money so he could remember where it was ... and he's still there I 'spect. You might want to got back down the trail 'bout a day and see if he's still there.

ROCKY: Don't try any trickery with me! I ain't fallin' for that old trick! Anyhow, the coyotes and scorpions probably got 'im by now. I'll jist stay here. A bird in the bush is worth two ... *(pause)* you know what I mean.

GABBY: Yeh, I do. ‘Cept a passenger in the bush with the money ... is worth more than no passengers.

ROCKY: (*thinks a moment*) I told you not to try any trickery with me! Now ... Get back up on that stage.

GABBY: (*stands on the chair*) You gonna let me go?

ROCKY: (*she holsters the gun*) No, you ... you ... ninny! Throw down the strong box!

GABBY: I cain’t.

ROCKY: Why not?

GABBY: I ain’t strong enough.

ROCKY: (*pause*) What if I help you?

GABBY: Well, that’d be OK, I guess. If we get it down how are you gonna git it on your horse? That horse of your’s looks a little scrawny, anyhow.

ROCKY: Hmmmmmm.

GABBY: You’d be better off stealing the stage. That way you wouldn’t have to move the box until you get to your hideout. You got a hideout?

ROCKY: Not yet.

GABBY: Well, you better hurry. And you’d better have a good hideout ‘cause the Marshall will be looking for the missing stage. These things are hard to hide.

ROCKY: Let me think on that a minute. Keep your hands where I can see them. You got a shotgun up there?

GABBY: Yep. But it ain’t loaded.

ROCKY: Not loaded! Why ain’t it loaded?

GABBY: ‘Cause one time near Yuma City the roads were so bad that the bumps caused both barrels to fire. The horses got scared and went out of control, the passengers thought it was a robbery and threw all of their belongings out the windows, the noise was heard by some Indians who chased us for 47 miles. Since then I just keep the shells in the boot in the back.

ROCKY: I don’t trust you, you sidewinder. (*draws gun*) Git back down here. (*Gabby jumps down.*) You carrying any freight?

GABBY: Yeh, I got a big thing in the boot.



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