

MEDICINE SHOW

Oni Press talent search script
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by

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PAGE ONE

Panel 1

Wide establishing shot of a dusty FRONTIER TOWN, circa 1880. A handful of TOWNSPEOPLE lazily go about their day.

CAPTION: ARIZONA, 1881.

Panel 2

The silence is broken when a large and ornate COVERED WAGON pulls into town, throwing up a cloud of dust in its wake.

Panel 3

Two men (LASALLE, 40s and PETEY, teenager) sit at the buckboard, driving the wagon and surveying their new surroundings. LaSalle's clothes peg him as a bit of a dandy, while Petey is dressed like an extra from Oliver Twist.

LASALLE: WHAT DO YOU THINK, KID? EASY PICKINGS?

PETEY: EASY AS THEY COME.

Panel 4

LaSalle throws back a CURTAIN covering the back of the wagon. The interior is stuffed with CRATES.

Panel 5

Small panel -- the lid is lifted on a crate, revealing a dozen BOTTLES packed in straw.

Panel 6

Worms-eye view of a wide and elaborately lettered BANNER being hung between two tall posts. The sign reads:

MEDICINE SHOW

[credits]

PAGE TWO

Panel 1

Big panel. This is The Show. The one the entire town has been waiting for. LaSalle is regal, posturing, preaching to the eagerly converted.

LASALLE: LAAAAAADDIES AAAAAAANNND GENTLEMENN!

LASALLE: MAY I HAVE THE VERY PINNACLE OF YOUR FINE AND VALUABLE ATTENTIONS, PLEASE, FOR THIS: DR. WILLIAM T. LASALLE’S REMARKABLE SCIEN-TASTIC SHOW OF MIRACLES!

Panel 2

Wide panel. LaSalle continues his well-rehearsed tirade. He’s clearly on fire this time, gesturing grandly.

LASALLE: FEAR NOT, GOOD CHRISTIANS, MY MIRACLES ARE NO CHALLENGE TO THE GOOD LORD, ONLY AN ATTEMPT TO PROLONG THAT GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL: LIFE!

LASALLE (cont): YES, FRIENDS, THIS TONIC OF MY OWN HUMBLE INVENTION WILL PROVE INVALUABLE TO THE SICK, THE FEEBLE, THE CRIPPLED, AND THE BROKEN-HEARTED.

SFX(crowd): HAHHAHAHA

Panel 3

LaSalle from behind, silhouetted. The awe-struck crowd stared at him in ... well, awe. LaSalle holds a bottle of his Miracle Tonic.

LASALLE: ... AND WOULDN’T YOU JUST LOVE TO SEE HOW IT WORKS?!

Panel 4

Lasalle looking pointedly at Petey in the crowd.

LASALLE: MIGHT I HAVE A VOLUNTEER?

PAGE THREE

Panel 1

Petey, posing as a cripple, joins LaSalle on stage.

OFF: AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE, SON?

PETEY: WILLIAM, SIR. WILLIAM JONES.

Panel 2

The crowd watches, captivated, enthralled, eating this shit up, while Petey looks wobbly.

LASALLE (OP): AND YOU HAVE AN AFFLICTION, IS THAT RIGHT, YOUNG WILLIAM?

PETEY: YESSIR.

Panel 3

Wide panel, longer view of the show, seen from the back of the crowd. LaSalle is over Petey--who is acting wonderfully feeble--and giving his speech.

LASALLE: WELL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I AM HERE TO TELL YOU THAT THERE IS HOPE FOR THIS YOUNG MAN!

Panel 4

Out in the crowd, the town SHERIFF [a weather-beaten man in his fifties - think William Holden in THE WILD BUNCH, only meaner] watches the show with the rest of the townspeople. His face shows nothing but contempt and outrage at what's happening on stage, in sharp contrast to the grinning buffoons surrounding him.

PAGE FOUR

Panel 1

Pete is downing the concoction with one hand, while still holding onto his cane with the other, as LaSalle smiles to the crowd. Very big, very theatrical.

LASALLE: IN THE BRIEFEST OF MOMENTS, FRIENDS, YOU WILL WITNESS A TRANSFORMATION! FOR THIS MIRACULOUS ELIXIR HAS THE POWER TO GRANT EVEN A POOR SOUL LIKE THIS ONE THE STRENGTH OF TEN MEN!

Panel 2

Small panel: Pete’s cane hits the floor.

SFX: K-KLAK!

Panel 3

Med shot: Pete's body goes stiff, his eyes wide, shoulders pulled up to his neck, his mouth agape. Like someone doing a mean-spirited impersonation of an Olivier death scene.

Panel 4

Widen out as Petey takes a few feeble steps across the stage. The crowd is in shock.

CROWD MEMBER 1: OH, MY LORD!

CROWD MEMBER 2: WILL YOU LOOK AT--?

CROWD MEMBER 3: HE--HE’S WALKIN’!

Panel 5

Pete staggers around the stage while LaSalle produces a crate of his tonic.

LASALLE: ISN’T THAT FANTASTIC, FOLKS! ISN’T THAT AMAZING! ISN’T THAT A BARGAIN, AT ONLY TWO DOLLARS A BOTTLE!

Panel 6

A cluster of hands thrust upwards into the frame, holding fistfuls of dollars.

PAGE FIVE

Panel 1

Big panel, running along the bottom of the page, widescreen. The frenzy begins. LaSalle is handing out bottles and collecting money. The crowd fights to get to the front, desperate to be a part of this miracle. Suddenly, someone yells from the unseen back of the crowd.

VOICE(O.P., burst): HEY, DOC!

Panel 2

The sheriff stands next to a boy in a wheelchair (research 19th century chairs). The boy's body is contorted in a way that suggests cerebral palsy. The sheriff is holding a shotgun.

SHERIFF: WHAT SAY YOU TRY THAT TONIC A' YOURS ONE MORE TIME?

Panel 3

Close on the child.

No dialogue.

Panel 4

The sheriff looks deadly serious.

SHERIFF: ON MY BOY.

Panel 5

LaSalle reacts.