

Tina Latigo Rides to the Rescue

Sherry Piros



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ArtAge Publications

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TINA LATIGO RIDES TO THE RESCUE

A Radio Play

by

Sherry Piros

CAST

Several voices can be double cast.

HOST: Introduces and closes the play. Also trains the sound effects people.

GAIL JENKINS: The original writer, a young woman.

NARRATOR: Guides the listeners to changes in place and time.

THE MUSIC DIRECTOR: Cues and leads the musical lead-ins. Song titles are suggestions.

TINA LATIGO: The heroine, a strong Western woman.

LISETTE FONTAINE: Tina's sidekick, with a French accent.

MOLLY EDWARDS: Mother of Betsy and Clare, a ranch woman.

BETSY: A young daughter. Later in the story, she's a young woman.

CLARE: Younger daughter. Later in story she's a young woman.

MR. STEWART: A neighbor riding through.

MR. GRIPPEN: The unctuous and nasty banker.

RANDINE: A newcomer to the area. A young woman who speaks with a Southern accent.

RUBY: An unsophisticated woman friend of Betsy's.

HOTEL MANAGER: A man who runs the hotel.

STAGE DRIVER: A salty Western character.

BILLY: In First Commercial, a young boy.

SUSIE: In First Commercial, a young girl.

MOTHER: In Second Commercial, a mature woman.

KATHY: In Second Commercial, her young daughter.

BETTY: In Second Commercial, another young daughter.

CLYDE JEFFERS: Station Manager in the 1940s.

Place

A radio studio.

Time

The present.

Production Note:

Part of the fun in this show is audience involvement with sound effects. Sometimes audience members will be too eager to make sounds, and sometimes they will be too caught up in the story to realize it's their turn. The re-cue suggestions, which frequently add to the fun, are included in the stage directions, but feel free to make up your own promptings. If tables are not already in the audience, small tables/tv trays (etc.) can be set up for the sounds of shoes, horses, and wood being dropped. They include:

1. Three or four pairs of hard-soled shoes. Cowboy boots would be appropriate but not necessary.
2. Two to four clipboards that make a sharp "shooting" noise when the clip is fanned, without paper on the board.
3. Four to eight large plastic drink cups, used upside down in a da-da-DUM pattern for horses' hoof beats.

4. Some plastic that is stiff enough to make noise when crinkled in someone's hands. Plastic wrap for food is too quiet.
5. Some paper. Any kind will do.
6. A few small pans, a couple of china or crockery cups and saucers, and a few pieces of tableware.
7. Several large washers.
8. A small piece of wood – used as the sound of something dropped and for a knock on the door.
9. Music box. This will be operated by the Music Director.
10. Poster board squares with song titles written on them for the Music Director.

Setting: Chairs for everyone in the cast are on center stage. Two microphones, if possible, are downstage center. There is a table on stage right on which are placed the sound-effect objects before they are described. It is also for collecting the items at the end of the play. The Music Director's song-title posters can be located there, too.

HOST: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to station W-S-W-E, your sweeet sound in the country. Today we pay tribute to the heyday of radio dramas in the 1930's and 40's with a rare script found in our archives. Along with the script, there was a letter written by the young female author and the response to it by the station manager. We think you'll appreciate the significance of the show more if the letter and follow-up note are shared with you.

However, right now, we have a small problem. Our Foley, also known as the sound effects person, called in sick today, so we need you to fill in and produce the sounds that brought radio stories to life.

(To a group of 2, 3, or 4 people) For instance, would you be the Shoe People? Every time you hear the narrator or the characters say things like walk or run or sometimes it might be just the words come, go, or hurry, you will make sounds with the shoes on the table top for walking. Okay? Let's practice. Ready? Listen for your cue. She heard his footsteps on the porch. (pause to practice) Very good.

Well done. Please decide as a group who will make the sound when only one person walks.

(To another group of 2 or 3) And would you be the Gun People? We are not using cap guns. It's more effective to use clipboards. Just fan your hand over the clip so it snaps like a gun. (*Demonstrate*) Okay? Any time you hear words like *shots* or *gunfire*, you be ready. Let's practice with a cue such as: The men stepped around the corner and ran into a *hail of bullets*. (*Pause to practice*) Good job. Another cue might be: In the dark, a *shot* rang out. (*Pause to practice*) Good work. (*Or if too many sounds*) It's important to listen to the cues for one or more than one shot. Your group, too, will want to decide who will make the sound for one shooter if needed.

Next we need some Horse People. (*To a group of 2 or 3*) Here are your horse hooves. These are just soft drink cups. They make good horse hoof noises. You know the rhythm: One, two, THREE. One, two, THREE. (*Pause for practice*) Well done. Cue lines might be *Hyah*. or *Giddy-up* to indicate start and *Whoa*, to indicate stop. Ready to practice with a cue? The stagecoach started down the road. (*Pause to practice*) He galloped into the sunset. (*Pause to practice*) Good. Well done. When horses are mentioned, one or two of you please add a whinny or two. Let's practice that, too. (*Pause to practice neighing*) Good work.

Our last group of substitute Foleys is the Miscellaneous Noise People. (*To a group of four or more*) This plastic is for crackling fire or frying food noises. Just move it in your hands. The lines will be something like: At dawn, he was up cooking breakfast. Sure, crinkle all you want. (*Pause for practice*) Good.

If people are cooking or eating, move the pan on the table or scrape dishes with silverware or clink a cup into a saucer. Would you practice, please. (*Pause to practice*) Nicely done. For all references to paper, tear or move pieces of paper together. Practice time for you. (*Pause to practice*) That's good. This (*holding up wood*) is for knocking on a door or when something is dropped. Would you practice that, please. (*Pause to practice*) Good. When the actors speak of coins, drop these washers on the table or, when they are counted, drop them into your hand. If you'd practice now...(*Pause to practice*) That sounds good.

The last sounds involve everyone in the audience. When you hear references to birds or chickens, please make tweeting, chirping, or clucking sounds. Let's hear how you sound. (*Pause for practice*) Well done. In addition, before our Foley got sick, he had taken our music library home with him to do some sorting, so we

have a Music Director (*That person waves hand or stands*) who will lead you in humming a few bars of music between scenes. He/She will also indicate when to stop humming. Let's try it out. (*MUSIC DIRECTOR holds up a poster with "Home on the Range" written on it. MUSIC DIRECTOR starts the humming, and then, like a choir director, motions with hands to stop*) Very good. You are in good voice today. The Music Director will also be operating the music box sound effects. (*MUSIC DIRECTOR allows a few notes of music to be heard*)

Now let's put all the sounds together for a quick rehearsal. Ready? Just follow your cues: The cowboy galloped up to the door of the saloon. (*Pause for horse sounds*) He dismounted and walked to the door of the saloon. (*Pause for shoe sounds*) He drew his gun and fired, (*Pause for gun sound*) But he was cut down in a hail of bullets. (*Pause for gun sounds*) Outside the saloon, Mrs. Jones tore open the paper-wrapped bundle of fabric. (*Pause for paper sounds*) Then she fried the bacon (*Pause for frying sounds*) and sat down to eat. (*Pause for eating sounds*) Then she got up to count her money. (*Pause for money sounds*) Well done. You sound like you're ready just in time to start the show.

HOST: WSWE, your sweeeeet sound in the Midwest is on the air in 5...4...3...2...

NARRATOR: Good afternoon and welcome to the WSWE's Old-Time Radio Program. We have a terrific show today. But before we begin, we have a letter we'd like to share with you. It was dated August 2, 1931.

GAIL: Dear Station Manager of WSWE, enclosed is a script about the Old West. I wrote it to go on your *Old-Time Radio Program*. I put a lot of action and drama in this to make it like your other shows. But unlike those, I also included women in this script. Many of your listeners are women, you know. All the women in my family tune into your show every week. My heroine is Tina Latigo. (I named her after my sister Christina.) She has a sidekick named Lisette. Together they help other women get justice in the Old West. Please read it and let me know if you would like to use it on your show. Thank you. Sincerely, Gail Jenkins.

NARRATOR: And now, here is the radio drama she wrote. Episode one: *Tina Latigo Rides to the Rescue*.

(*The MUSIC DIRECTOR holds up the sign for "Home on the Range." She starts humming and cuts it off after about the first eight measures.*)

NARRATOR: It was a day in early spring on the Edwards ranch, located east of the town of Box Elder. The sun was shining. Birds were singing. *(Pause for bird sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: Many, many BIRDS were singing. Outside the BIRDS were SINGING.)* Molly Edwards was frying bacon for breakfast. *(Pause for frying sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: She was FRYING bacon. It was just about to sizzle. Any minute now.)* Just then she glanced out the window and saw someone with a team and buckboard coming up the lane to the house. *(Pause for horse sounds. If no sounds, re-cue suggestion: Yup, it was a buckboard pulled by two HORSES. Coming up the lane.)*

MOLLY: Girls. Someone's coming up the lane in a wagon.

BETSY: Who is it?

MOLLY: Don't know yet. Finish your oatmeal, girls. *(Pause for eating/dishes sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: I said, eat the oatmeal in the DISHES, girls. Those nice DISHES.)*

CLARE and BETSY: Yes, Mama. *(Pause for eating/dishes noises. If none: re-cue suggestion: We're EATING now, Mama. We're EATING our oatmeal.)*

CLARE: I'm done now. Can I run to meet him?

MOLLY: Best stay here till we know who it is.

BETSY: I think it's Mr. Stewart, Mama.

MOLLY: Mr. Stewart? Oh, you're right. Let's go see what he wants. *(Pause for shoe sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: Let's WALK out and see what he wants. Here we go, WALKING outside.)*

MR. STEWART: Morning, Mrs. Edwards. Let me stop the horses. Whoa. *(Wait for horse sounds stopping. If sounds continue, re-cue suggestion: Whoa! STOP, horses! Stop!)*

MOLLY: Morning, Mr. Stewart. What brings you out this way?

MR. STEWART: Well, when the Postmaster heard I was heading to Willow Springs, he asked me to drop off this package. It's for you.

MOLLY: Thankee kindly, Mr. Stewart. Would you like to come in for some coffee?

MR. STEWART: Reckon I'd better keep movin.' Thanks just the same.

MOLLY: Give my regards to your wife.

MR. STEWART: Will do. Say howdy to Sam for me.

MOLLY: I surely will.

MR. STEWART: Giddyup. *(Pause for horse sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: Giddyup! Come on, horses, let's get MOVIN'.)* Good-bye, Ma'am. Good-bye, girls.

MOLLY, BETSY, and CLARE: Good-bye.

MOLLY: There he goes, way down the trail. *(If necessary, cue the Horse People to stop with Those horses are fast! I CAN'T EVEN HEAR them anymore!)*

BETSY: What's in the package, Mama?

MOLLY: I don't know. Let's take it into the house and find out. *(Pause for shoe sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: Let's WALK into the house. Here we go, WALKING into the house.)* Girls, take the paper off the package, please. *(Pause for paper sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: You might have to TEAR the paper off.)*

CLARE: Here's an envelope with your name on it, Mama.

MOLLY: I'll open it. *(Pause for paper sound. If none, re-cue suggestion: Sometimes when I open a letter, the PAPER makes noise. Maybe it will now. When I OPEN the letter.)* It's a letter from Grandmother. She has sent us some things. She's giving me the family Bible. Clare, there's a parasol for you. And Betsy, she sent you a music box.

BETSY: It's just a plain, old music box. Do you want to trade, Clare?

CLARE: No.

BETSY: I'm older. I should have the parasol.

MOLLY: Your grandmother writes, "Tell Betsy she should never give the music box away."

BETSY: Why?

MOLLY: I don't know. She just says it will be a real comfort to you in bad times.

BETSY: Bad times? Like when I fell in the cactus?

MOLLY: No, probably something more serious than the cactus.

BETSY: Like when I had a toothache?

MOLLY: No, probably not a toothache either.

BETSY: Like when I got sprayed by the skunk?

CLARE: Now that was a real bad time.

MOLLY: I think she means a music box will help you feel better *inside*.

BETSY: Inside.. What good will that do me?

CLARE: I'm glad I got the parasol.

BETSY: Mama, the bacon. (*Pause for frying sound. If none, re-cue suggestion: That bacon sure is a-poppin' and a-spittin'.*) I think it's burning.

MOLLY: Oh, my goodness. Quick, Betsy, take the pan off the cook stove. (*Pause for pan sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: The PAN, Betsy! MOVE it off the stove!*)

(*MUSIC DIRECTOR holds up a sign for "Home on the Range," starts the humming and cuts it off after about eight measures.*)

NARRATOR: Years passed. Some of them good, but some of them were hard. Especially the recent ones. Molly and Sam have passed away. They're buried together on the ridge overlooking the stream, leaving Betsy and Clare to run the ranch with the help of some hired hands. And then the drought started. In fact, for the past three years, there's been no rain to speak of. Today Betsy is talking to the banker about the impending mortgage payment. The one she couldn't pay.

BETSY: Am I to understand then, Mr. Grippen, that you will not extend the mortgage deadline?

MR. GRIPPEN: I'm sorry, Miss Edwards. We've already extended it twice for you. It's against bank policy to do it again for someone in your situation.

BETSY: And then the bank will take our ranch. Is that correct?

MR. GRIPPEN: How else could the bank stay in business, Miss Edwards? But, don't worry. I plan to buy your ranch from the bank. You have a nice little place there.

BETSY: Our ranch is not for sale. My parents homesteaded those acres. Clare and I grew up there. It's ours.

MR. GRIPPEN: I don't think there's any way you can keep it. You don't own anything else of value, do you?

BETSY: Just the horses.

MR. GRIPPEN: Want to sell me the horses? I'll need them to work your ranch.

BETSY: No, of course not. And you won't be working our ranch.

MR. GRIPPEN: Since you're so attached to the place, I'll allow you and your sister to live...oh...in the barn.

BETSY: You're disgusting, Mr. Grippen. And that's the nicest thing I can say about you.

MR. GRIPPEN: You seem to have lost your sense of humor, Miss Edwards. That was merely a banking joke.

BETSY: I didn't hear anything funny.

MR. GRIPPEN: Yes, well. I'm a busy man. If there's any way the Box Elder Bank can help you in the future, let us know.

BETSY: If you'd help me right now, I wouldn't need your help in the future. Good day, Mr. Grippen. I was hoping for better from you.

MR. GRIPPEN: And I was hoping for a payment from you. Good afternoon, Miss Edwards. I'll show you out.

BETSY: Oh no, you won't. I can find my own way out. *(Pause for shoe sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: I can do my own WALKING. I'm WALKING right out of here.)*

CLARE: Betsy. Over here. *(Pause for shoe sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: WALK over here, dear sister. You're over THERE and I'm over HERE.)*

BETSY: Well, there's no help from the bank.

CLARE: What did Mr. Grippen say?

BETSY: He didn't say anything we wanted to hear.

CLARE: Did you say all the right words?

BETSY: Yes, and a few of the wrong ones.

CLARE: Well, what'll we do?

BETSY: We'll think of something, Clare.

CLARE: I wish I knew what it was.

BETSY: Come on. Get in the carriage. Let's go home. Giddy-up. *(Pause for horse sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: HORSES, we're going home. Giddy-up.)*

NARRATOR: Will Betsy and Clare be able to make the payment, or will the banker take over their ranch? We'll find out after this word from our sponsor.

(MUSIC DIRECTOR holds up sign for "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain," starts the humming and stops it after about eight measures.)

(FIRST COMMERCIAL)

BILLY: Hi there, Susie. I've got a riddle for you. What's the one thing that's good for your body and good for your brain?

SUSIE: That's easy. Eating.

BILLY: Hah. You think you're so smart, but you're wrong.

SUSIE: All right, Billy. What's the answer?

BILLY: Fishin'.

SUSIE: Fishin'?

BILLY: Yup. Fishin'. Think about it. My legs exercise when I walk to the river and wade into the water, and my arms exercise when I throw out my line and pull in the fish.

SUSIE: Yeah, and then you just sit around.

BILLY: But that's when I'm exercising my brain.

SUSIE: Now you're spoofin' me.

BILLY: Ain't neither. I'm thinkin' when I'm sittin' 'cause I has to outsmart the fish.

SUSIE: Ooooo, and outsmarting a fish is sooo hard.

BILLY: It shore is. But you wouldn't know. You're always reading books and stuff.

SUSIE: Billy, why don't you just go fishing.

BILLY: I'm a-goin' right now. And when I gets back, I'll be smarter 'n stronger then you.

SUSIE: Oh, Billy.

BILLY and SUSIE: Brought to you by the National Fishing Foundation.

NARRATOR: And now, back to our program.

(The MUSIC DIRECTOR holds up a sign for "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain," starts the humming and cuts it off after about the first eight measures.)

NARRATOR: Three days later, two women from the church pay a social call on Betsy and Clare. One of the women is new to Box Elder and so Betsy and Clare

had made a ginger cake to serve with coffee. *(Pause for dishes sounds. If none, re-cue suggestion: Betsy and Clare served coffee in CUPS and the cake on PLATES.)*

RUBY: So, Miss Dawes, how do you like our Western cooking?

RANDINE: I declare, this is the most delicious cake I've ever had the pleasure of eating.

RUBY: Shucks, Miss Dawes, Betsy and Clare ain't no fools when it comes to cakes. Their mama was one of the best cooks in the territory.

CLARE: I was a mite nervous about how it would taste. The butter was starting to sour.

RANDINE: Sour butter? In the cake I'm eating now?

RUBY: Aw, don't you worry none. There's enough ginger in there to cover any sour taste. You cain't tell, kin ya?

RANDINE: I'm afraid I wouldn't know about covering "sour" things.

RUBY: Shucks, cooking ain't that hard, dearie. Most likely you kin be taught.

CLARE: Yes, Miss Dawes. I could teach you.

RANDINE: Why, thank you for the offer. I'll consider it.

RUBY: Now, let's get down to brass tacks about why we're here, Betsy and Clare. We've heard about your troubles with the bank. What can we do to help?

BETSY: Nothing, thanks. We've got to ride our own horse, same as you.

RUBY: I know it ain't none of my business, but how much do you owe?

BETSY: We've got to come up with \$150 in the next two weeks.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!