

**Clothes Call**  
**-or-**  
**Caught In The Fabric of Your Lies**  
by Patricia Middleton

CAST:

Chantilly Lace - our heroine from New York City

Levi Wrangler - our hero who runs a small farm

Hugo Boss - our villain and the owner of Hidden Valley Ranch

Velvet Velour - Hugo's daughter, a spoiled brat

Rick Rack - a hot-headed ranch hand who has his ups and downs

Doc Martens - a down-to-earth ranch hand who is the strong and mostly silent type

Chuck Taylor - a goofy ranch hand who's always playing around

Belle Bottoms - kind and motherly owner of the Burlap Gap Boutique

Minnie Skirt - young and cheery salesclerk at the Burlap Gap Boutique

Polly Esther - strait-laced schoolteacher

OPTIONAL: Extras to attend the dance as musicians or other town folks

SUMMARY: Chantilly Lace moves to Burlap Gap to be the new cook and housekeeper for ranch owner Hugo Boss. When she meets Levi Wrangler, who owns the farm next door, and it's love at first sight. But Hugo Boss wants his daughter, Velvet Velour, to marry Levi so he can add his farmland to his spread. Can Hugo stymie the star-crossed lovers? Does Levi manage to hold on to his home while losing his heart? Can Chantilly see through Hugo's fibs and fabrications? Will Hugo's ranch hands agree to wearing fringed fancy duds to the big square dance? Find out in this mod, madcap Midwest melodrama!

## ACT 1

### SCENE 1

SETTING: Burlap Gap, Oklahoma, summer of 1965. The counter of Burlap Gap Boutique, a humble clothing store that features fashions way past their prime. A mannequin or dress form is clothed in what was the hottest trend for a 1950's grandmother. BELLE and MINNIE are chatting with their customer, POLLY. They are all dressed in rather dowdy floral print day dresses. MINNIE sports a kinky scarf in her hair or around her neck. POLLY wears a summer hat and gloves and carries a small purse.

BELLE: (holds up a drab frock) What about this one?

MINNIE: (feigning enthusiasm) It's a lovely color.

POLLY: But does it say "teacher"? You know my policy, only one new dress per school year.

BELLE: You could teach anything in this dress.

MINNIE: (aside) Especially Sunday school.

POLLY: I don't know...

SOUND CUE: Heroine theme

TILLY: (enters, a professional-looking young woman carrying a small suitcase and demure blouse and pencil skirt) Good morning.

BELLE: Good morning.

MINNIE: Hi.

POLLY: Hello.

BELLE: May we help you?

TILLY: I don't mean to interrupt. You were here first.

POLLY: Thank you, but I can't decide if this dress is a pass or a fail.

TILLY: I think I'd pass.

MINNIE: (nodding) It's a fail, for sure.

POLLY: (points to the mannequin) Do you happen to have this one in gray?

MINNIE: No. That would be terrible! How about something in yellow or orange?

TILLY: Or fuschia!

BELLE/POLLY/MINNIE: (stare blankly at TILLY)

TILLY: It's a bright pink.

POLLY: No, thank you! I find neutrals suit me best.

BELLE: The customer is always right.

MINNIE: Maybe we can find one in burlap.

BELLE: Minnie!

MINNIE: Sorry.

TILLY: Pink is my favorite color. I'm looking for some new dresses. Something suited to housework.

MINNIE: You've come to the right place!

BELLE: We have a wonderful selection of aprons. (she and MINNIE pull items and load them into TILLY'S arms)

POLLY: You wouldn't happen to be the new housekeeper for Hidden Valley Ranch?

MINNIE: Housedresses.

TILLY: That's right! I'm Chantilly Lace.

BELLE: Sweaters.

POLLY: I'm Miss Polly Esther.

MINNIE: Nightgowns.

POLLY: I teach school.

TILLY: Pleased to meet you.

BELLE: Stockings.

POLLY: These ladies are Miss Minnie Skirt and Miss Belle Bottoms, who owns the store.

TILLY: (struggling to see above the growing stack of items in her arms) How do you do?

BELLE: How do you do?

MINNIE: And shoes! (she tops the pile with a pair of ugly black pumps)

BELLE: (adding a string of pearls around TILLY's neck) There! That'll be just what you need to survive that rancid ranch.???

TILLY: Excuse me?

BELLE: Now, now. Let's let Miss Lace judge for herself.

POLLY: You'll see what we mean, Miss Lace.

TILLY: Tilly, please.

POLLY: Tilly.

TILLY: And since it is a ranch, I don't think I'll be needing these. (she indicates the pumps and pearls, which MINNIE and BELLE reluctantly remove from the pile)

BELLE: No new shoes?

TILLY: Do you have any cowboy boots?

MINNIE: Cowboy boots?

POLLY: For cleaning house?

TILLY: I'm sure I won't be indoors all the time.

BELLE: Even so. Watch your back at that place.

POLLY: We suspect not everything is as it seems.

MINNIE: Yeah, it won't be a picnic up there. The last housekeeper only lasted 3 days. Made like a banana and split.

TILLY: (squares her shoulders and lifts her chin) I'm a hard worker. It'll take more than filthy floors and dirty dishes to scare me.

MINNIE: Still – I'd change out of those city duds before you head up there.

TILLY: Good idea.

BELLE: The dressing room is this way.

TILLY: Thank you. (exits)

BELLE: Poor thing.

MINNIE: She has no idea what she's getting into, does she?

POLLY: (confused) A house dress?

MINNIE: No, a nightmare.

BELLE: Hidden Valley Ranch. And its owner. (ALL shudder)

POLLY: Let's hope she makes the grade.

MINNIE: You-know-who will try to cut her down to size.

POLLY: (sighs) That is her pattern.

BELLE: She'll try to take the starch out of her, alright. But Tilly seems cut from a different cloth.

## ACT 1

### SCENE 2

SETTING: The living room of a ranch house, garishly decorated with lots of leather, brown and white cow hides, longhorns, and a hideous portrait of Hugo Boss' father, Pappy Boss. Doors lead to the kitchen DR and Hugo's office DL. A hallway arch UC leads to the front door to UL and bedrooms UR.

SOUND CUE: Knocking

TILLY: (from offstage) Hello?

SOUND CUE: Front door opening and shutting

SOUND CUE: Heroine theme

TILLY: (enters, now wearing a house dress and cowboy boots and carrying her suitcase and several boxes from the boutique) Hello? Is anyone home? (wanders around, inspecting everything) Hello? (opens the kitchen door) Kitchen. (shuts the door and goes to the office door, trying the handle) Locked.

SOUND CUE: Unlocking door

TILLY: (scurries away from the office door) Oh!

SOUND CUE: Villain theme

HUGO: (enters from the office door closing it quickly behind him. He is dressed in a smoking jacket, cowboy hat, bolo tie and an enormous belt buckle) You're here! Howdy! I'm Hugo Boss, owner of the Hidden Valley Ranch. (crushes TILLY's hand in a handshake)

TILLY: I let myself in. I hope you don't mind.

HUGO: Not at all! Answering the door will be one of your many duties. I'm a terribly busy man with a terribly large ranch that's terribly in need of a housekeeper! (he laughs in her face)

TILLY: (aside) And he's terribly in need of a breath mint.

HUGO: Welcome, my dear! Remind me of your name again?

TILLY: Chantilly Lace. But I go by Tilly.

HUGO: Tilly! What a lovely name.

TILLY: Thank you.

SOUND CUE: Vamp theme

VELVET: (enters from the hallway wearing a frilly day dress, Mary Janes, and a big bow in her hair, even though she is too old for such an outfit) Who's here, daddy?

HUGO: Velvet, this is our new housekeeper. Tilly, this is my daughter, Velvet.

VELVET: Velvet Velour Boss.

HUGO: Named for her dearly departed mother.

TILLY: Oh, I'm sorry for your loss.

VELVET: She's not lost. Just departed.

HUGO: Uh – that's right. Said she couldn't stand the heat.

VELVET: So she got out of the kitchen. Daddy says she went to Alaska.

HUGO: There's no place like Nome.

VELVET: What?

HUGO: It's just an expression, bunny.

TILLY: Well, I'm happy to be here. I was wondering –

VELVET: (inspecting TILLY'S attire, sarcastic) Nice shoes.

TILLY: I didn't realize Hidden Valley Ranch was so far from town. Good thing I'm used to walking. (glances down at her boots) They're broken in now. I would have hailed a taxi, but I didn't see one.

VELVET: A taxi? In Burlap Gap? (gives a derisive laugh) What planet are you from?

TILLY: New York City. (to HUGO) As you saw on my resume, I don't have any experience with farms, but -

HUGO: Ranches. We raise cattle, not corn.

TILLY: My mistake.

VELVET: (snorts) City slicker.

HUGO: You do know how to cook?

TILLY: Yes, sir. I can cook, clean, sew - anything you need done.

HUGO: Anything?

TILLY: Anything to keep the house tidy and the workers fed.

VELVET: How about starting with the laundry? I'm nearly out of unmentionables.

HUGO: You'll find the washtub in the pantry and the clothesline is in the side yard.

TILLY: I beg your pardon?

VELVET: (loudly, as if TILLY is deaf) Wash the clothes! Dry them! Iron them!

TILLY: You don't have a washing machine? Or a dryer?

HUGO: Those new-fangled electric contraptions? Just a waste of money.

VELVET: Hand wash, only!

TILLY: But I don't know how to -

HUGO: It's simple! Women have been doing it for hundreds of years! (takes a deep breath as if to explain, then realizes he can't) I'm sure you'll figure it out.

TILLY: Those details are a little muddy. But I do want to make one thing clear.

VELVET: The windows?

HUGO: They could use a good cleaning.

TILLY: I will do the windows. The one thing I won't do is lie.

HUGO: You won't lie?

VELVET: Why not?

TILLY: Honesty is the best policy.

HUGO: Exactly right! Why, I've been saying that for years!

VELVET: You have? (HUGO nudges her sharply) Oh, sure you have.

TILLY: I hope that I can expect the same truthfulness from you.

HUGO: (he and VELVET cross their fingers behind their backs) Why, of course!

VELVET: (simultaneously) Sure!

HUGO: (indicates portrait) My father, Pappy Boss, died twenty-two years ago, but he taught me right from wrong. (aside) And he taught me which one gets you more money! Soon, my silver tongue is going to bring in the biggest pile of silver this state has ever seen! (evil laugh)

VELVET: (eying TILLY) How old are you?

TILLY: (gives real age)

VELVET: How tall are you?

TILLY: (gives real height)

VELVET: How much do you -

HUGO: That's enough, Velvet. Our new housekeeper needs to get busy. (to TILLY)  
You'll want to put your things away. There's a cot in the kitchen.

TILLY: In the kitchen? But you said I'd have a bedroom and -

HUGO: Oh, you will. After your probationary period is up. Shouldn't take more than a year or two.

TILLY: (hesitates, but accepts this) I see. Thank you, Mr. Boss.

HUGO: Please, no need to be so formal. Call me Boss. I have an open-door policy with all of my employees, so feel free to come to me with any questions or concerns any time. (exits to the office and slams the door behind him)

SOUND CUE: Locking door

TILLY: Speaking of questions, I was wondering -

VELVET: Kitchen's over there.

TILLY: Oh, thank you. If I needed to ask about -

VELVET: Don't call me, I'll call you. (exits through hallway)

TILLY: Well. That was interesting. (looks skyward) I know, I know. Work hard, gain their trust, then ask the questions.