

"Doc Holliday's Gal"

Playwrights

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The gunfight at the OK Corral has been done to death... but maybe you've never seen it from a woman's point of view.

Synopsis: Doc Holliday spends quality time in Tombstone with his Hungarian paramour, Mary Katherine Horony (a/k/a Katie Elder or Big Nose Kate), during the final hours before the gunfight that launched a passel o' movies (Wyatt Earp, etc.). Based on a true story.

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CHARACTERS

Kate (1850-1940)	A handsome woman with a somewhat prominent nose, in her early thirties. She speaks with a slight Hungarian accent.
Doc (1851-1887)	A slight, pale man who is also in his early thirties. He drawls like a Georgia peach.

SETTING

A room in Fly's Boarding House, Tombstone, Arizona Territory. It contains a simple bed, nightstand, folding screen, chair, footlocker, nickel-plated revolver, holster, walking stick and shotgun.

TIME

Wednesday afternoon, October 26, 1881.

SCENES

Scene 1	Early afternoon
Scene 2	An hour later
Scene 3	Twenty minutes later

SCENE 1

(Kate is sleeping. Doc sits on the other side of the bed, nearly dressed. He's slowly turning the chamber of his nickel-plated revolver. It makes a loud clicking noise that wakes Kate.)

KATE

(Sleepy)

Do you mind?

(Doc smiles, and leans over for a kiss. She obliges and wraps him in a big hug.)

DOC

Sair-et-lek, Kate, tel...

KATE

(Teaching)

Tel-yes see-vem-bowl. I love you too, Doc. (Pause)
Is that so hard to say in English?

DOC

The words mean something to you, don't they?

KATE

Yes. But I always wonder if they mean anything to you.

(She gets up and walks behind a folding screen, to get dressed. Doc starts clicking his revolver again.)

DOC

I just wanted to... (Pause) We'll do something you like to do, when...

(Pause. Kate leans out from behind the screen, to finish his sentence.)

KATE

...this is all over? The worst part is the waiting.

DOC

The landlady said Ike Clanton was looking for me.

(Unnoticed by Doc, Kate covers her mouth in shock. But she composes herself before she steps out into the room, still only half dressed.)

KATE

Here?

DOC

Downstairs. She wouldn't let him up. Said his head was bandaged.

KATE

So he never went to sleep?

DOC

Probably drank all night.

(He coughs spasmodically, then sips from a silver flask. Kate stares at him. The coughing continues for a while, then eventually dies down.)

KATE

I wonder if that other cowboy is still mad about the last hand you won.

(They both laugh. Doc coughs a bit.)

DOC

What did I bluff with?

KATE

Not much. Two deuces and a one-eyed jack.

DOC

He had me beat. Chickened out.

(He drops a thick wad of bills on the nightstand.)

KATE

He could afford it.

DOC

But can I?

(Doc is distracted again. Kate strides over to him, and grabs his lapels. She lifts him nearly off the floor.)

KATE

Why in tarnation did we come back to this shit-hole town?

DOC

Morgan asked me to. You were there.

KATE

You don't owe anything to those Earps.

DOC

Wyatt's my friend. My only friend. And now he needs me. (Sighs) I warned you to stay in Tucson.

KATE

And wait for them to ship you back in a pine box?

DOC

There might be enough for oak.

(He points at the wad of bills. Kate lets go of his lapels, smooths them down, and grins. Doc grins back.)

KATE

Huh. You owe me that, for last night.

DOC

I still have to pay? I thought we had an understanding.

KATE

The understanding is this: I keep an eye on the other card players, laugh at your shitty jokes, and put up with your incredibly bony ass... (She slaps his butt) ...while you TRY to make it worth my while.

(She picks up the pile of cash, tucks it into her cleavage, and sashays back behind the screen.)

DOC

I wuz robbed.

KATE

You just got the best deal of your life.

DOC

Hm. You may be right. (Glances out the window, sighs) I guess it's time to have a look around.

(Kate comes out from behind the screen,
still not quite fully dressed.)

KATE

(Casually)

Why not wait for Wyatt? Or Virgil?

DOC

I'll be fine.

(He picks up his walking stick and
exits. Kate covers her face with her
hands. Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(Kate is now dressed, and sitting
on the chair. She's leaning
over and looking outside, down
at the street. Her head
nervously jerks from right to
left. She hears footsteps
outside in the hall, and rushes
over to meet them. Doc enters,
chuckling to himself. Kate
adjusts her mood to match his.)

KATE

Now what did you do?

DOC

Nothin' much. Just teased the Clantons a little.

KATE

You're playing with fire.

DOC

It's fun. The Earps are riding roughshod over the
Clantons. Beat the crap out of a couple of 'em.

KATE

Even if those Earps all had badges, that wouldn't make
them into angels, you know.

DOC

I know.

KATE

They choose which laws to enforce, and when to enforce them.

DOC

I know!

KATE

They're able to grab big money with their grubby little hands only because Virgil's the marshal.

DOC

DAMMIT WOMAN, I KNOW!!

KATE

Meanwhile, the Clantons are actually good for business in this godforsaken town.

DOC

You're siding with the Clantons?!

KATE

No. But it's not very easy to tell the good guys from the bad guys.

DOC

It's simple: my friends are the good guys and their enemies are the bad guys.

KATE

Simple as that, eh?

DOC

(Lying brazenly)

Simple as that.

KATE

(Smiling, calling his bluff)

You're full of shit.

DOC

(Laughing)

That's what I like about you, Miss Katie Elder. You're almost as astute as me.

KATE

(Fawning)

Ooo, Doctor Holliday, you have such a high-falutin' vocabulary. Please use smaller words, so that a simple, uncultured girl from a hick little town like Bu-da-pesht can understand you!

(She simpers and bats her eyelashes at him. Doc is amused, but then something outside the window alarms him.)

DOC

I'll teach you a few things, if we get back to Tucson. But right now, I've got to step outside for a minute.

(Doc runs out. Kate is stunned, and quietly repeats his words.)

KATE

"IF we get back to Tucson"?

(Blackout.)

SCENE 3

(Kate is again sitting nervously at the window. An old footlocker is open on the bed. She's holding a couple of photographs, but the main object of her attention is outside, down on the street. She again hears footsteps outside in the hall, and rushes over to meet them. Doc enters. He's nervous, too, but his anxiety is now in sharp contrast to the calm demeanor that has suddenly come over Kate.)

KATE

(Nonchalant)

Anything happening?

DOC

Not much.

(He strides over to the window, and peers outside. Kate is no longer interested in the street scene, and she exhales a sigh of relief, behind Doc's back.)

KATE

It's cold out there. Close the window.

DOC

Okey-doke.

(Doc does nothing except study the street. Kate notices the shotgun he's now carrying beneath his long coat.)

KATE

What happened to your walking stick?

DOC

Virgil traded me for this. He doesn't want to spook the townsfolk, or the Clantons.

KATE

You can't...

DOC

(Suddenly yelling)

Kate, the Wild West is dying. Just like me.

(Doc continues to look out the window. Kate momentarily covers her mouth, behind his back.)

KATE

You're not dead yet, you old fool.

(Doc turns around and smiles at her.)

DOC

Ten years ago, the Georgia doctors gave me three months to live.

KATE

You know you can't trust those medical quacks, DOCTOR Holliday.

DOC

(Pleading)

Katie, I can't stand the idea of wasting away in some hospital. I want to die with a smoking gun in my hand.

KATE

And I want to die in my lover's arms.

(Doc sizes her up, then cradles her face in his hands.)

DOC

You think you can manage that?

KATE

Sure as hell gonna try.

(She's on the verge of tears. Doc avoids her fierce stare, and turns away, to look out the window.)

DOC

A hundred years from now, what will they think of this time, this place? Or will they remember it at all?

(Kate hugs him from behind.)

KATE

They will wish they could have lived with such passion, such an appetite for life.

DOC

Appetite for death, you mean.

KATE

They will remember your friendship with Wyatt, and they'll conveniently forget the bad things, the petty things. They will see you two as gods.

DOC

Gods? Ha!

(Doc's laughter stops suddenly, when he notices that Kate is silent. She's still behind him, and now rests her head lightly upon his shoulder.)

KATE

And if they remember me, it will be only because you loved me for a little while.

(Doc's attention is drawn outside the window again. He sees something down in the street, and turns to leave. But Kate's arms are still around him, so he stops, and speaks gently.)

DOC

It's time, Kate. I have to go.

KATE

I know. I know.

(She finally lets him go. After a quick kiss, he exits. Kate weeps briefly, then walks to the window. After a deep breath, she leans out. Within the space of thirty seconds, thirty SHOTS ring out, unevenly spaced. After the first shot, Kate ducks back inside the window, and drops to the floor. Her hands cover her ears. At each successive shot, she becomes more and more distraught. At the end of the volley, tears run freely down her face. After a long pause, she hears footsteps coming down the hall. She wipes her eyes, and stands up, as if to face a firing squad.)

KATE

(Continuing)

Who will they send? Wyatt? Virgil? The barkeep?

(She puts on a brave face, waiting for the footsteps to arrive. It's Doc! Kate smiles broadly, and tries to hug him. Then she becomes concerned, as Doc limps over to sit on the bed.)

KATE

(Continuing)

Are you wounded?

DOC

Just a bruise. Damn holster saved me.

(Doc puts his face in his hands, and his shoulders begin to shake.)

KATE

What's wrong?

DOC

That was awful. Just awful.

(Kate kneels at his feet, caressing and hugging him. Blackout.)

CURTAIN