Piper & Prejudice

By Tony Howell

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DEDICATION

To my theatre students, past and present, who convinced me to try writing in the first place, are always willing to work on and read through multiple drafts of the scripts and always celebrate with me every time another one is published. Thank you to each and every one of you.

STORY OF THE PLAY

This modern retelling of the Austen classic places the entire story in an upper-class restaurant. The Bennett sisters are now four waitresses whose world is turned upside down by the arrival of the restaurant owner, a very rich but unlikeable man who seems to bring doom with him. As Piper fights for those she believes in, she comes to realize that she may have been prejudiced against the wrong characters and too proud to admit that she has misjudged nearly everyone. The modern setting allows for easy costuming and props, and focuses on the major relationship moments from the original novel.

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

May 16th, 2015, Central Noble High School in Albion, IN with the following cast: Colton Conrad, Kati Lee, Acacia Miel, Rachel Flory, Katie Hatch, Ashlyn Fields, Nick Jones, Jarod DePew, Devon Troutner, Jay Thompson, Tricia VanGessel, Wendy Staton, Zach Robinson and Dominik Cavelage

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 7 w, 2 flex.)

GRACE STEWART (f): Shy waitress, good friend of Piper.

MARIA JOHNSON (f): Waitress who often goes unnoticed.

CHLOE COOPER (f): Waitress who is always getting into trouble.

PIPER MATTHEWS (f): Waitress who is independent.

CHARLIE LUCAS (m): Restaurant's chef.

JUDE REMINGTON (m): Owns Remington's, hard to like but a good guy.

COLLEEN MCDONALD (f): Jude's personal secretary.

GAVIN WINDSOR (m): Jude's stepbrother, likeable but bad.

COLE JAMESON (m): New manager, long-time friend of Jude.

ZANE SPENCER (m): Jude's best friend.

SYBIL WINDSOR (f): Gavin's mother, Jude's stepmother.

MADISON STANFORD (f): Determined to be Jude's fiancée.

OFFICER WALKER (flex): Police officer.

OFFICER HARRISON (flex): Police officer.

SETTING

The show can be staged in several ways. Remington's is a high-class restaurant so a more realistic setting would have a large window with the name painted on the window (backwards as we are inside) on stage right. Downstage of the window is the front door with a hostess podium and a counter with cash register. The counter should be placed so the audience can see behind it, while actors on stage cannot. In the center of the back wall is a swinging door into the kitchen area, while stage left in the back is a hall that leads to the back door, bathrooms and other areas of the restaurant. The rest of the stage contains tables of varying sizes. Tablecloths, centerpieces, table settings and nice chairs complete the look. In the beginning the centerpieces are plastic flowers, but for the second scene those are changed out to something classier, perhaps electric candles, while the tablecloths are switched out for something classier as well. Alternatively, the show can be staged with little more than a counter, tables and chairs.

COSTUMES

Everything is modern, and in the original production nearly everything was pulled from the actors' own wardrobes. The majority of the men can wear suits and the officers can be staged as plainclothes men in trench coats. The waitresses can wear black skirts and white shirts except for the party scene. Madison and Sybil are dressed in upscale clothes. Piper carries a purse with a book inside. When characters enter from outside they wear coats.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE CHLOE, GRACE and MARIA enter talking. They take off coats and put away purses as they converse.)

GRACE: I don't believe it!
MARIA: It's true. I heard it myself.
GRACE: But it can't be true!

(PIPER enters, takes off her coat and listens.)

MARIA: Gavin told me straight out last night while we were closing. He said it could happen as soon as today and it was completely out of his control.
GRACE: There must be something we can do!
PIPER: What's going on?
CHLOE: You haven't heard?
PIPER: I just got here, Chloe, so no, I haven't heard.
GRACE: It's Gavin.
PIPER: What about Gavin?
CHLOE: He's being fired.
PIPER: What?
MARIA: *(To CHLOE.)* That's not what he said. Here, let me tell her. You're messing it all up!
CHLOE: I am not. You said—
PIPER: What is going on?
MARIA: Gavin said that his stepbrother is coming to check things out because the restaurant hasn't been making enough profit. And it might happen as soon as today.
PIPER: His stepbrother? The one that owns this restaurant?
GRACE: The one that owns the entire chain of restaurants.
MARIA: Yes, that one. Now, be quiet and let me tell her what he said. Gavin told me that when Jude -- that's the stepbrother, Jude Remington -- well, anyway, when Jude got here, there would be big changes and he didn't want us to get upset or anything and that he wanted us all to know how much he's enjoyed working with us and that he would never forget us.

CHLOE: There. Doesn't it sound like he's getting fired? We're going to have a new manager, and who knows what kind of terrible person we'll get this time.
GRACE: Oh, poor Gavin.
PIPER: It doesn't necessarily mean that Gavin is getting fired.
CHLOE: He's enjoyed working with us and he'll never forget us? What else could it mean?
PIPER: It could mean that we're getting fired.
CHLOE: What?
GRACE: Oh, no! I never thought of it that way.
PIPER: Or that the restaurant is being closed down and we're all getting fired.
MARIA: Just my luck. I finally get a job I can stand and now we're all getting fired.
PIPER: I didn't say it was going to happen, I'm just saying it's a possibility. It could be Gavin. It could be us. It could be the restaurant. Maybe it's nothing. This Jude fellow just wants to check things out, right? It's hard telling at this point what's going to happen.
GRACE: Of course! I'm sure Jude is just coming to help us get things on track. I mean really, who would be mean enough to fire his own brother?
CHLOE: Stepbrother.
GRACE: Still.
MARIA: And remember, maybe he's not firing his stepbrother. Maybe he's firing us.
PIPER: This is ridiculous. We're getting all worked up and we don't know a thing yet. We should just do our jobs and not panic until we know something for sure. Maria? Why don't you hang up our things while we get started.

(EVERYONE hands coats and purses to MARIA who heads out to the back. PIPER goes and grabs a tub of silverware and paper napkins and takes them to a nearby table to start wrapping them. CHLOE starts filling salt and pepper shakers, and GRACE starts putting out placemats and wiping down tables.)

End of Freeview

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