DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

A Comedy in Two Acts

by
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SYNOPSIS

From crazy chicken suits to high tea and crumpets, the hilarity never stops in this rollicking farce. Poor Bobby Philips is racing the clock as high school graduation approaches. In addition to his three part-time jobs (including one at Fried Chicken World), his falling grades, and his threatened scholarship, he's worried sick about his sister, Emily. She's addicted to PBS dramatizations of 18th century English novels and lives in a refined and graceful world of her own imagination. Everyone thinks she is a nut.

Enter Bobby's arch nemesis "Death Wish" Hooper, the school thug who is about to ask Emily to the prom as a practical joke. Bobby tries to warn their parents, but they're too busy to care as they turn his room into a spa. (It seems they *weren't* kidding when they said they wanted him out of the house the day of graduation!)

Frantic and flummoxed, Bobby, along with Katie, the atypical girl next door, and "Rat" Ramon, who is Hooper's toady, watch in amazement as Emily gently but surely turns Death Wish …er… we mean Alexander into a proper gentleman. But in the process, he's not the only one who grows up in this over-the-top comedy for teens.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 4 w)

BOBBY PHILIPS: An 18-year-old studious workaholic, soon to graduate from high school. He is under pressure from his parents, not to excel, but to simply leave home. He is worried about not getting his hoped-for scholarship to college, and also worried about his sister.

EMILY PHILIPS: His 16-year-old sister. She is serene, gracious, speaks with the elegance of, and behaves like, a character in a Jane Austen novel. Seems to have no idea it is the 21st century.

DOUG PHILIPS: Their father. He is a machinist in a belt buckle factory and bluntly makes it known to his children that he wants them out of the house. Like his children, he and his wife are also in their own little world.

LOUISE PHILIPS: Their mother. She works in a bowling alley. Like her husband, wants the kids out of the house.

ALEXANDER "DEATH WISH" HOOPER: The high school bully. Grungy and threatening, about as charming as his nickname implies. Has tattoo on his forehead.

MORTON "RAT" RAMON: His even lesser cool toady.

KATIE: The girl next door, with tattoos, piercings, and multicolored hair, but still the girl next door. She is Bobby's oldest friend.

MRS. KELLY: An unconscious elderly woman; non-speaking role.

SYNOPSIS

Act I

Scene 1: A Tuesday afternoon in May, present day.
Scene 2: Several hours later.
Scene 3: The following Tuesday afternoon.

ACT II

Scene 1: Several hours later.
Scene 2: The evening of the prom.
Scene 3: Weeks later. Graduation day.

SETTING

The living room of the Philips family, an average home in a small town. There are stairs at back wall leading to the second-floor bedrooms. SL is an open doorway leading to the kitchen, up SR is the door leading to the outside. The furnishings are simple and ordinary. There is a couch and coffee table facing the audience, easy chairs with tables beside them left and right of the couch. A TV remote is on the coffee table and is often picked up and used by Doug Philips, but he points it in the direction of the audience, because the TV, like Emily's 18th century world, is imaginary.

COSTUMES

In addition to the characters' normal, current-day clothes, the following costumes will be needed:

-Empire-style dress and formal gown for Emily
-Chicken suit, tuxedo, graduation robe, mortarboard for Bobby
-Leather jacket, earrings, plaid sports jacket, ball cap, tuxedo, nice jeans, oxford shirt for Death Wish
-Black suit and chauffeur's cap for Rat
-Prom dress for Katie

PROPS

Tea set on coffee table
Lumber
Needlepoint
Tool belt and sander
Folded handkerchief
Safety goggles
Folded letter
Congratulations banner
Large duffle bag
Backpack
Paper lunch sack
Screw gun
Tray of petit fours, small plates etc.
Corsages (2)
Cake for graduation
Gym bag

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: EMILY stands at the open front door, bidding goodbye to guests who have just left. She is dressed in an empire-style dress, walking and speaking with careful elegance. There is a tea tray on the coffee table with a teapot, cups and saucers, sugar, etc., cakes and biscuits, and four cups left among the coffee table and end tables by the easy chairs which the departed guests had used.)

EMILY: *(To the departing guests.)* Good bye, ladies. Thank you so much for coming. Dear Mrs. Kelly, do be careful of the begonias.

(LOUISE PHILIPS enters, looking with bewilderment at the departed guests and around the living room at the remains of the tea party. EMILY, ever cheerful, briskly kisses her on the cheek.)

EMILY: Mama! *(Which SHE pronounces "MaMAA" with the accent on the second syllable.)* I wasn't expecting you for another hour.

LOUISE PHILIPS: The pinsetter busted at the bowling alley again. Charlie let me knock off for the day. Hey, are them those soup kitchen people?

EMILY: *(Cheerfully clearing the tea things away.)* Why, Mama, what ever do you mean?

LOUISE PHILIPS: Look, Emily, your father and I told you a hundred times, we don't want you to keep inviting every Tom, Dick and Harry into this house when we're not home so you can give them our food. And that Kelly woman's a roaring drunk. I hope she didn't find your father's beer; he'll throw a fit after last time. *(SHE grabs a hunk of cake off EMILY'S tray and shoves into her mouth.)*

EMILY: Mama, you know it's my weekly "at home" day, the day when I receive visitors.

LOUISE PHILIPS: Look, this tea party crap was cute when you were five and you entertained your stuffed animals. Now you're 16 and you're still playing this little make-believe game, only you moved on from Mr. Scruffy the teddy bear to Mrs. Kelly the lush. I worry about you. You're too young to be so completely nuts. It didn't happen to your Aunt Christine until she was 40.

EMILY: *(Taking the tea tray to the kitchen.)* Dear Mama, do not trouble yourself. Those ladies may not be crème de la crème shall we say, but I daresay that they are as typical as this provincial town has to offer, n'est-ce pas? *(Exits.)*

LOUISE PHILIPS: *(Uncomprehending.)* Uuhhhh, yeah.

(BOBBY enters door SR, wearing a chicken suit, carrying a school backpack.)

BOBBY: Mrs. Kelly's lying all over the front lawn again. I forgot it was Tuesday.

LOUISE PHILIPS: I don't know what's gonna happen to that sister of yours, Bobby. I don't know how she's going to take care of herself. I mean, other than making tea and lemon squares, that she does fine. And scones *(Which SHE pronounces to rhyme with bones)*. She's real good at making those.

BOBBY: *(In a rush and preoccupied.)* Emily doesn't call them scones. *(To rhyme with bones.)* She calls them scones. *(To rhyme with buns.)*

LOUISE PHILIPS: She also thinks it's 1809. You going to listen to her, or to your mother? At least I know what day it is. Mrs. Kelly is passed out on my crabgrass, so it must be Tuesday.

BOBBY: I can't stay. I'm working an extra shift at Fried Chicken World. Three of the kitchen crew have botulism. They were eating the food again.

LOUISE PHILIPS: *(Brightening.)* Oh, that works out nice for you.

BOBBY: You bet it does. I can really use the money. I just came home to drop off my books before I go to work.

End of Freeview

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