

TANGLED WEBBS

A Farce
By Michal Jacot

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Tangled Webbs

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*Dedicated to my mother and father,
who taught me to see the humor
in just about anything.*

The playwright, Michal Jacot

STORY OF THE PLAY

Tangled Webbs is a farce about a wealthy and eccentric family, the Webbs. In the midst of preparing for oldest brother Alex's wedding, a surprise shows up in the form of Donald Webb, a long-lost brother given up for adoption years ago. Not wanting to split the Webb family fortune with yet another heir, greedy sister Rhonda schemes to oust Donald from his new-found family. What follows is a hilarious, dizzying parade of quick entrances and exits as the cast of off-beat characters vie for their place in the family. Adding to the cast is a dimwitted lawyer, Alex's sweet-as-sugar fiancée with a few surprises of her own, and a cranky old butler who is sure to steal the show. A surprise twist ending will make *Tangled Webbs* a delight for audiences.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 M, 3 W)

MRS. ERNESTINE WEBB: Matriarch of the incredibly wealthy Webb family of Boston, a widow. She is in her 50s, spry for her age, and like many in her family, a bit eccentric. A well-dressed society matron.

ALEX WEBB: Her eldest son, 30 years old. Handsome, well dressed, befitting the image of the successor to the Webb empire. Not terribly eccentric, but at times a bit slow in the head.

FENWICK: The butler. He is a doddering, walking corpse, about six years older than the average sequoia. He moves slowly, but has a quick wit, and especially enjoys needling Rhonda.

RHONDA WEBB: Only daughter of the Webb clan, 25 years old. Pretty, but snobbish and acid-tongued, and extremely greedy.

MILLICENT SWEET: Alex's fiancée. Cute, pert, always smiling and cheerful. The perennial Pollyanna. She dresses in modest styles and is the epitome of the word "cute." She is a constant thorn in Rhonda's side.

ELWOOD WEBB: Youngest of the Webb children, about 22, good-looking. Elwood is wildly insane, living happily in a world of space wars and rocket ships. He is treated with condescending good humor by the others, although he carries a slightly wild look about him.

CHARLES CANTERBURY: Attorney. About 50, with graying temples. He wears a dark suit and carries with him an air of good breeding and taste.

DONALD DESMOND (WEBB): A Webb brother between Alex and Rhonda, lost from the family since birth. He is 28, and handsome. He dresses casually and has an easy-going personality.

TIME: An afternoon in June.

PLACE: The Webb family mansion in Boston.

SETTING

(See set design last page.)

The spacious living room of the Webb family mansion. DSR is a door that leads into a study, next to that is a large armchair and hassock. Over the chair hangs a large portrait of a stuffy-looking old gentleman. USR is the main entrance that starts with two steps going down offstage, presumably to the downstairs section of the house. At the back wall there is a large window with a window box in front of it. At the SL end of the back wall there is another stairs, this one with two or three stairs going up, a platform, then more stairs at a right angle to the first ones leading off to the upstairs rooms. On this platform we see a door leading into a closet. In front of the stairs there is a bookcase and a stocked bar. USL there is an archway. DSL we have an exit that leads to a solarium. DSC sets a fancy couch with an end table on either side. If desired, several floral bouquets for the wedding ceremony may decorate the room.

PROPS

FENWICK: Several cups of coffee/hot chocolate,
newspaper.

MILLICENT: Two suitcases.

ELWOOD: Shoe box, sandwich.

CHARLES: Briefcase, homemade space helmet.

RHONDA: Bottle of pills, large book, heavy figurine, pistol.

DONALD: Beanie with tin foil coated clothes hanger,
motorcycle helmet made to look like space helmet, toy ray
gun, sandwich.

MRS. WEBB: Blue pin, earrings, tire iron.

ALEX: Jumper cables.

SOUND EFFECTS

Doorbell (pause) doorbell.

Buzzing of a fly.

Sound of motorcycle approaching, running over something,
the receding.

Loud thud followed by groan and body falling to floor.

ACT I

(AT RISE: MRS. WEBB enters from main entrance, followed by ALEX WEBB, her eldest son. She wears a long, fashionable dress. Alex is dressed in a tuxedo.)

ALEX: Is everything ready, Mother? Are all the preparations made?

MRS. WEBB: Please calm down, Alex. There's nothing to get alarmed about.

ALEX: Alarmed? Mother, in one hour I shall be getting married! Married, right here in this room!

MRS. WEBB: I know you're getting married, dear. You did invite me. All of the necessary details are taken care of, except for a few incidentals. I shall tend to them right now.

ALEX: My wedding will be in one hour and you haven't worked out the details yet? Mother, I'm ashamed!

MRS. WEBB: Well, why on earth did you insist on having the wedding here, Alex? You have broken tradition, you know.

ALEX: Yes, Mother. So you've told me.

MRS. WEBB: *(ALEX mouths the words silently behind his mother.)* Every generation of the Webb family has seen its eldest son married at the Covington Church for the last 130 years. Now you insist on having the wedding take place in our own house. A most unusual way of doing things, I must say. *(There is a pause. He mouths the words, "MOST unusual, Alex.")* MOST unusual, Alex.

ALEX: Look, Mother, we've argued about this before. Let's not bring it up today, of all days. All right?

MRS. WEBB: Very well. But I still think it is most unorthodox. What will the other members of the Society Club think?

ALEX: I don't care. Millicent and I wanted a small simple wedding. There's no place we'd rather have it than right here, in the very house my family has lived in and built a fortune in for the last two centuries. Not at the Covington Church, not at the corner pizza joint, nowhere else but here.

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MRS. WEBB: At least you did ask the Covington Church minister to perform the ceremony. It eases my social conscience, even though none of our family has ever met him. He took over old Reverend Tittlewell's place, which means, I suppose, that he is a competent enough minister.

ALEX: He was highly recommended, Mother.

MRS. WEBB: Still, having the wedding here looks rather cheap. We are Webbs! We can lease St. Paul's Cathedral for your wedding! We could hold the reception in Times Square! What will the Society Club think? They will probably spread rumors that we are going broke and could not afford a luxurious wedding for you. Oh, dear.

ALEX: Don't worry about what those stuffed shirts think. You're beginning to sound like Rhonda, the way you worry over money and social position.

MRS. WEBB: Don't talk about your sister like that! She is a wonderful girl. A true Webb.

ALEX: Rhonda's single driving emotion is greed, and you know it. If you'll pardon the expression, she'd sell her own mother if she thought she could turn a profit.

MRS. WEBB: I protest this attack on Rhonda in her absence.

ALEX: Shall I wait until she comes into the room to tell her what a money-grubbing witch she is?

MRS. WEBB: Alex! That will do!

ALEX: All right, all right. Not another word will be said about her. Where did she get that from, anyway? Certainly not from you. You've always been free with the Webb fortune, giving it out to charities and such. Was Father like that? Was he generous, kind, sensitive? Or was he like Rhonda?

MRS. WEBB: (*Moves to picture hanging over armchair*) Ah... your father. Alex Iverson Webb III. He single-handedly managed the Webb fortune, turning it into the financial empire it is today. Then...one day...my poor Alex was killed in a tragic automobile accident.

ALEX: Mother, Dad went crazy one day. You know that. The strain of running Webb Enterprises got to him, and he snapped like a twig.

End of Freeview

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