THE MILLION-HEIRS

By Delmar Burkitt

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STORY OF THE PLAY

It's the turn of the century and the late Mr. Asbury has willed each of his three grown children a million dollars—with a few conditions! Talkative William must not speak one word; shy Margaret must perform on stage; and Joseph must fall in love and marry. And the conditions must be met in seven days at a country inn under the scrutiny of the scheming attorney and the family butler, who will become rich themselves if the children fail.

Also at the inn are several lovely (and lonely!) young ladies who'd like a chance to marry; their pushy mothers; a traveling showman; a circuit riding preacher; a country hick; the butler's long-lost daughter; and several other characters interested in love and money. Put this group together and you've got comedy that's priceless. Song suggestions included.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

Scene 1 - office of Morton Ticlok, Saturday evening
Scene 2 - that same evening, on a road not far away
Scene 3 - later the same evening, at the inn
Scene 4 - Ticlok's hotel room
Scene 5 - late Saturday night in a barn loft
Scene 6 - pre-dawn hours Sunday morning at the inn

Act II

Scene 1 - early Thursday morning, in the barn loft
Scene 2 - same morning, at the inn
Scene 3 - in a lonely pasture field
Scene 4 - Ticlok's room, Thursday afternoon
Scene 5 - Thursday night, at the inn
Scene 6 - late Thursday night, outside the inn
Scene 7 - another spot outside the inn
Scene 8 - Ticlok's law office, Saturday evening

CAST OF CHARACTERS
9m, 15 w
(in order of appearance)

MARS TRENT..... butler of the deceased
MORTON TICLOK..... attorney of the deceased
MARGARET ASBURY..... daughter of the deceased
JOSEPH ASBURY..... son of the deceased
WILLIAM ASBURY..... another son
HAL HENKEL..... traveling entertainer
MISS MINNIE..... widely-traveled singer
WOODROW P. WITHROW. a local man
BEVERLY HAVERLY..... waitress at the inn
MELVINA PARK..... restaurant customer
JOSHUA PARK..... her husband
BEULAH HAVERLY..... owner of the inn
BARBARA HAVERLY..... housekeeper at the inn
WALTER..... the town drunk
BETSY HAVERLY..... inn cook
WIDOW BROWN..... trying to catch a man
ELVIRA BROWN..... the pretty daughter
LEONA BROWN..... the domestic daughter
ELEANOR BROWN..... the shy daughter
ELOUISE BROWN..... the daughter who can cook
POLLY TROUT..... a stranger at the inn
HENRY FINMAN..... circuit riding preacher
HAZEL WITHROW..... Woodrow's wife
CINDY WITHROW..... their daughter

Extras may be used as restaurant customers. The parts of Hazel and Cindy may be eliminated, if necessary.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I
Scene 2: "Dixie" sung by Miss Minnie with Hal on an instrument, as a harmonica, and Woody on a jug.
Scene 3: Notes as Hal tests the piano; later "Careless Love" sung by Miss Minnie with Hal on the piano.
Scene 6: Casual piano playing by Hal, then "I'll Give My Love an Apple," first verse by Hal, second verse by Hal and Margaret, first verse again by Margaret alone.

ACT II
Scene 5: "I'll Give My Love an Apple" (same as practiced) played by Hal on the piano and sung by Margaret.

SONG SUGGESTIONS: As the play takes place at the turn of the century, folk songs, or songs from the crinoline days or gaslight era are appropriate. Other song suggestions for "Dixie," include "The Paw-Paw Patch," "When Johnny Comes Marching," and "The Horse Named Bill" lyrics to the tune of "Dixie."

Substitutions for "Careless Love" could be "Sweet Betsy from Pike," "Green Grows the Laurel," "The Girl I Left Behind."

Substitutions for "I'll Give My Love an Apple" could be "As I Roved Out," "Father Grumble," and "Shenandoah."

ACT I

(AT RISE: The office of attorney Morton Ticlok. HE is seated at his desk reading a document. MARS, the butler of the late William Asbury, stands behind him reading over his shoulder.)

MARS: You know, Mr. Ticlok, that's just like Mr. Asbury, God rest his soul, to write a will like that. He could never do anything the simple way.

MORTON: William was not a simple man. Everything he did was a planned, exciting event. What about that funeral?

MARS: I must admit I've never been to a funeral where the corpse was standing up.

MORTON: Everything was done just the way he requested. He had set aside five thousand dollars just to cover the expenses of that ceremony.

MARS: And how did you say they did his eyes? They looked so alive.

MORTON: Mr. Pike said he'd never done anything like that since he got his embalming license. He had to remove Mr. Asbury's real eyes and replace them with glass ones. They surely looked real.

MARS: And that man who spoke sounded just like William's voice. It was just too much, a bit unsettling.

MORTON: Did you notice there wasn't a tear shed?

MARS: Come to think of it, you're right. I thought the people in this area liked Mr. Asbury.

MORTON: Don't you see, Mars, it's not that they didn't love and respect William Asbury. It's just that they were in awe of the whole affair.

MARS: Wait until his three children hear this will. They also will be in awe. I've never seen or heard anything like it.

MORTON: And the nice thing about the will is that you and I have the strong possibility of making ourselves rich.

MARS: Shouldn't they be here? It's not like an Asbury to be late and it's already past 6:20.

MORTON: I believe I hear voices outside. Now remember, you've never heard this will before. Be surprised at the right times or they may grow suspicious.

MARS: After serving as Mr. Asbury's butler for the past 38 years, believe me, I know how to act. There never lived a more dramatic man on this earth.

(Knock at door)

MORTON: Please, come in. Oh, my dear Margaret, do come in. *(MARGARET, WILLIAM JR., and JOSEPH enter.)* Joseph and William, please make yourselves comfortable. Take their wraps, Mars. Pour them some tea.

MARS: Yes, Mr. Ticlok.

MARGARET: Oh, such a fuss, Mr. Ticlok.

JOSEPH: Good evening, Morton. Thank you, Mars.

(Wraps are removed and tea is served.)

WILLIAM: Hello, hello, we're sorry we're late, we had a bit of trouble catching the horse. Papa never had any trouble with him. It's twenty past six.

MARS: Let's see, one lump of sugar for Joseph, two for William's, and none for Margaret.

MARGARET: Papa always said I didn't need any more sugar because I was sweet enough.

MARS: Truer words were never spoken.

WILLIAM: It's just like that old horse knows Papa is dead. He's just decided that he'll never cooperate with anyone again.

JOSEPH: William, don't bore them with made up stories. You never were any good with animals.

WILLIAM: That's not true, Joseph. I remember an old brown dog we had when I was a lad. He followed me everywhere I went. Papa named him Tag because he tagged along with me everywhere I went.

MORTON: Well, I guess we're about ready to proceed with our purpose for being here.

End of Freeview

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