With Regard To Cooper Clawson's Conscience

A twisted modern-day Pygmalion

By Bryan Starchman

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DEDICATION

For my sisters.

To Anita, who helped me grow up,
To Teena, who helped me stay young.

STORY OF THE PLAY

We've all heard the story of the geek who turns chic, but wouldn't it be interesting if the popular kid was forced to become a geek for the good of mankind? Well, that's exactly what happens in this hilarious farce. Cooper Clawson is destined to become a geek, but when his conscience, C.C., decides to take a well-deserved vacation, Cooper is suddenly freed from his inhibitions and becomes the coolest kid in school. Now C.C. must figure out a way to turn Cooper back to the way he was because the fate of the world depends upon it. Full of physical comedy, quick one-liners, and creative supernatural twists, "Cooper Clawson" is sure to be a hit with your theatre group.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: A busy city street in the year 2025 at the corner of Fate and Destiny. The Metropolis City Courthouse steps are in the background.
Scene 2: Thomas Jefferson High School, twenty years earlier. Back at courthouse steps in the year 2025.
Scene 3: Original scene at the courthouse steps in the year 2025.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11 m, 7 w, 5 flexible, extras)
(6 m, 5 w, 1 flexible with doubling)

TELLY VISION: Newscaster.
CAMERA PERSON
RANDOLPH MCCURRY: Future president of the United States; heavily bearded, exhausted.
COOPER CLAWSON: Super-cool high school senior; wears a black leather motorcycle jacket, tight blue jeans, and wraparound sunglasses.
C.C.: Cooper's conscience.
THE FURIES: Three female singers decked out in 1960s bebop sequin dresses.
MINER: Wears a floppy hat and carries a gold-mining pan.
NILES: A geek.
RUPERT: A geek.
BILLY: A jock.
WYATT: A jock.
ALISON: High school student.
TRACY: High school student.
VERONICA VIXEN: Homecoming queen; a gorgeous preppie.
THE TEMPTATIONS: Fame, Fortune, Love, and Power; four flashy guys in blue sequin jackets.
WAITER or **WAITRESS**
HELENA or **HANK:** Rupert's conscience.
VINNIE: A conscience in training.
EXTRAS: Crowd at the courthouse and high school students.

OPTIONS FOR DOUBLING

Male roles:
Niles, Rupert, Billy, and Wyatt as members of The Temptations
McCurry / Miner / Waiter / Vinnie
Female roles:
Alison, Tracy, and Veronica as members of The Furies.
Camera Person/Helena

PROPS

Microphone
TV camera
Box of chocolates
Greeting card
Party horn
Script
Floppy hat
Miner's pan
Sign that reads, "Thomas Jefferson High School"
Bank of lockers
Stool
School books
Handkerchief
Comb
Envelope
Letter
Box of Tic Tacs
Remote control
Pair of thick eyeglasses, for Cooper
(4) chairs
8-track tape
Card table/poker table
Deck of cards
Cigar, for Vinnie
Lighter or matches, for Vinnie
Wads of cash, for Cooper
Handful of jewels, for Cooper

SPECIAL EFFECTS

"For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" recording that sounds like it is coming from a greeting card.
1970s disco/funk music
Recording of Furies' "yodeling" song

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A busy city street in the year 2025 at the corner of Fate and Destin, with the Metropolis City Courthouse steps in the background Enter TELLY VISION, a newscaster, with his CAMERA PERSON.)

TELLY: *(Facing the camera.)* In three, two, one. This is Telly Vision live on the scene where Randolph McCurry has just been freed from death row. Any minute now, Mr. McCurry and his lawyer Cooper Clawson should be appearing on the courthouse steps directly behind me.

(COOPER CLAWSON, a well dressed but slightly awkward professional type, appears on the steps with RANDOLPH MCCURRY.)

TELLY: Here they are now. *(TELLY runs up to the steps with his microphone.)* Mr. Clawson! Mr. Clawson! What do you have to say?

COOPER: I want everyone within the reach of my voice to acknowledge that the justice system does work. Today justice was served. This man was on death row for three long years, convicted of a crime he did not commit. He paid a debt to society that he never owed, but now he is free to continue his life of charity and good work.

(ENTER CC, Cooper's conscience, whom no one can see but COOPER.)

COOPER: I'd like to thank my wife for standing by my side. I would like to thank my defense team for their hard work and persistence against adversity. But, most importantly, I would like to — *(COOPER freezes.)*

CC: Go on. Go on! Say it. *(SHE grabs COOPER'S mouth and moves it up and down.)* Thank you, CC. Thank your old buddy and pal CC.

COOPER: *(HE thaws.)* Thank this great man, Randolph McCurry, for having faith in my abilities.

CC: Hold it!

(EVERYONE freezes except CC.)

CC: Wait just a minute! That's just like you, Cooper, always forgetting the little guy. If it wasn't for me, you'd be nothing today. You owe everything to me! How soon they forget. Forty years of work, building you up for this very moment, and what do I get?

(CC grabs a box of chocolates from one of the SPECTATORS onstage and throws it offstage.)

CC: Box of chocolates?

(CC slaps another SPECTATOR on the back.)

CC: Pat on the back?

(CC grabs a greeting card out of another SPECTATOR'S hands.)

CC: A little Hallmark card that plays an irritating prerecorded ditty when I open it up? *(HE opens the card, and "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow" tune rings out until he throws it off the stage.)* No. I get nothing. Nothing!

(CC turns to the audience and takes a deep breath. She puts her arm around RANDOLPH MCCURRY.)

CC: See this man? This is Mr. Randolph McCurry, philanthropist and all around "good guy." Three years ago, the police found a bum on his front steps — a dead bum, with a knife stabbed through his chest. They threw the book at McCurry, and he got put on death row until this man, Cooper Clawson, public defender extraordinaire, was able to prove McCurry's innocence. In two years, McCurry will run for president.

End of Freeview

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