

# **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.

CC: *(Continued.)* He will win, and he will face an adversity unlike anything an American president has ever had to face. *(Pause.)* You're probably wondering what that adversity is. Well ... I can't tell you. Because ... I don't know. *(Points to the sky.)* "They" don't tell me *that* much. The only thing that matters is that McCurry will make the right decision and humanity will be saved.

*(LIGHTS black out, and as CC continues talking, the stage is set up for the next scene at Thomas Jefferson High School. A SPOTLIGHT illuminates CC. CC pulls out a party horn and blows it.)*

CC: Hooray! But none of this concerns me. My job was to pull Cooper Clawson's life out of the toilet just so that he could be standing here at this moment, and believe me, it wasn't easy. But does he thank me? No! You see, fate decided that this was what would happen. It was inevitable. Well ... almost inevitable, as long as I kept him in line. But he fell off track and nearly set off a cataclysmic series of events. Cooper Clawson almost didn't go to law school, causing Randolph McCurry to be executed, causing someone else to become president, who would then make the wrong decision about this mysterious future adversity, thus causing the world to literally go "ka-blew-eee"! Look. In order to fully understand the living heck I had to go through, we need to go back in time.

*(ENTER the FURIES.)*

CC: All right, ladies, do your thing.

FURIES: And then ... *(Singing.)* ... "There was a total eclipse of the sun."

*(Nothing happens.)*

### **End of Freeview**

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