

Accordion Shambolic for the Dead Teenage Angel (weepingly)

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### Cast of Characters

<u>DR. FELIX MCSPITHY:</u>	The eccentric quack doctor and patriarch.
<u>DOROTHY MCSPITHY:</u>	The step-daughter and bride-to-be. About 16.
<u>GRAHAMOTHY MCSPITHY:</u>	The son. Same age as DOROTHY.
<u>TODD OF GOD:</u>	The minister.

### Scene

The McSpithy living room and basement.

### Time

A pleasant spring morning.

ACT I

1: DR. FELIX, DOROTHY, GRAHAMOTHY

*Lights up on the McSpithy living room.*

*DR. FELIX, DOROTHY, and GRAHAMOTHY.*

DR. FELIX

Now, Dorothy, stop your pouting. I may have tolerated an unhappy fifteen-year-old step-daughter, but I shall not tolerate an unhappy wife.

DOROTHY

Is that why you killed my mother?

DR. FELIX

For the last time! I did not kill Priscilla. Your mother was a peerless companion. But she had an illness that defied the curative properties of my patent medicines.

GRAHAMOTHY

Just like my mother, before she died and you married Priscilla.

DR. FELIX

Eleanor, too, simply had an incurable sickness. Alas, alack. Call me unlucky to be twice a widower, but how fortunate I am to have met a third perfect mate.

*He kisses DOROTHY on the forehead.*

DR. FELIX

You're very sweaty. I'll get you some of my patented sweating-powders after we say our wedding vows.

DOROTHY

Great.

GRAHAMOTHY

It was all your terrible medicines that killed our mothers. You're not a good doctor.

DOROTHY

He's not a doctor at all. He's an illiterate megalomaniac with a chemistry set. God, Grahamothy, you're so stupid.

GRAHAMOTHY

Well, Dorothy, I'd rather be stupid than engaged to my step-dad.

*DOROTHY hates this and starts to protest, maybe violently/physically.*

(CONTINUED)

DR. FELIX

Okay! Let's put a pin in this. I want everyone on their best behavior for Reverend Todd.

GRAHAMOTHY

Reverend Todd?

DOROTHY

They let him out of prison?

DR. FELIX

The prison is overcrowded, so the board lowered the standards for good behavior.

GRAHAMOTHY

Lowered too far, I'm sure.

*Knocks.*

DR. FELIX

That's him. Now behave! Or it'll be nothing but chicken-bone soup for a fortnight.

*DR. FELIX exits.*

2: DOROTHY, GRAHAMOTHY

*DOROTHY and GRAHAMOTHY sit and brood separately for a moment. They look at each other. Then they're upon each other, ferociously making out and grabbing and petting and etc. GRAHAMOTHY pulls away first.*

GRAHAMOTHY

Oh, you are really sweaty.

DOROTHY

Guess why.

GRAHAMOTHY

Diabetes?

DOROTHY

No.

GRAHAMOTHY

Nuptial nerves?

DOROTHY

No. I'm not nervous at all. Guess why. Grahamothy, guess.

GRAHAMOTHY

Why you're not nervous, or why you're so sweaty?

*She reveals a flask.*

DOROTHY

I went into his laboratory downstairs and raided the liquor cabinet. I've been drunk since breakfast.

GRAHAMOTHY

Oh my god.

DOROTHY

This is the only way I can bear it. If I don't marry him, I'll have to leave Somerset County forever.

GRAHAMOTHY

But maybe that would be best. You're strong. You could make a new life for yourself in the big city.

DOROTHY

In Pittsburgh? But Grahamothy, I couldn't bear to be so far away from you. I've made up my mind. I'm not going to lose you, no matter what it takes. Have some, it helps.

*She passes him the flask. He takes a big swig, but quickly hides it as DR. FELIX and TODD return.*

3. DR. FELIX, TODD, DOROTHY,

GRAHAMOTHY

DR. FELIX

Todd, you remember my son, Grahamothy?

GRAHAMOTHY

Hello.

TODD

Salutations, young man.

DR. FELIX

And my fifteen-year-old step-daughter, Dorothy. Well, step-daughter for now. Heh.

TODD

Yes, I remember. So sorry to hear about Priscilla. This must be very difficult for you.

DOROTHY

You have no idea.

TODD

There, there. Now then, let's get to it. Dr. McSpithy, where's the lucky lady you'll be marrying today?

*Probably a very uncomfortable silence as they realize he doesn't know.*

DR. FELIX

Well, Todd--you remember my step-daughter, Dorothy.

TODD

I do. Hello. There, there.

DR. FELIX

So let's get on with it.

TODD

You don't mean--

DOROTHY

Oh yes, Reverend Todd. He means.

GRAHAMOTHY

We were surprised too, but we've come around to the idea.

TODD

I'm not sure I'm comfortable with this.

DR. FELIX

Now, Todd--

DOROTHY

(bigger and more obnoxiously)

NOW, TODD. I know this looks like I can't possibly give impartial consent. That my step-father has undue leverage, and no young lady of fifteen years would ever want to go through with this.

TODD

You summarize my objections exactly. You're very wise.

DOROTHY

But I promise I want this. The alternative is too much to bear.

TODD

The alternative?

DR. FELIX

I'm sure she means "living a live apart from her true love."

(CONTINUED)

TODD

That's you?

DOROTHY

Yes, exactly. So let's get this over with and get you back on the road ASAP.

TODD

I do have a meeting with my parole officer later. She'd be happy to hear that I'm serving the community again.

DOROTHY

So we're all in agreement.

GRAHAMOTHY

Great. Well, you're right, maybe this is the only way to bear it.

*He drinks from the flask.*

GRAHAMOTHY

Oh, hell, it doesn't help. I used to be miserable, but now I'm miserable and drunk.

DOROTHY

You've got nothing to feel sad about. Neither do I, of course. Give me that.

*She tries to drink from it and finds it empty.*

DR. FELIX

Dorothy!

DOROTHY

If I'm old enough to get married, I'm old enough to have a drink. Come on, Grahamothy, let's get some more from downstairs and have a toast.

TODD

I think a nuptial toast is a capital idea.

DR. FELIX

(relenting)

Well--I guess it couldn't hurt. There's champagne in the--

DOROTHY

(exiting)

I know!

*DOROTHY and GRAHAMOTHY exit for the laboratory.*

4. DR. FELIX, TODD

TODD

How about some music, too?

DR. FELIX

How festive. Let's go and fetch instruments.

*TODD and DR. FELIX exit in another direction.*

5. DOROTHY, GRAHAMOTHY

*The stairs, or the downstairs laboratory, or something. DOROTHY examines a bottle.*

DOROTHY

Look, this one has notes. "Induces a catatonic state. The patient will appear as dead for several hours."

GRAHAMOTHY

What if I took it? If they thought I was dead they wouldn't go through with it. I could buy you time.

DOROTHY

That's not enough. He'd be twice as resolved when the time came again. It has to be me.

GRAHAMOTHY

And what will I do?

DOROTHY

Convince him that this never would have happened if he hadn't arranged this wedding.

GRAHAMOTHY

Okay.

DOROTHY

"Patient will awake upon extreme provocation, such as very loud noise." So once you get him real low in the pits of despair, wake me up, and the lesson will stick.

GRAHAMOTHY

How can you be sure? I've buried two mothers thanks to this idiot's medicines. What if you never wake up?

DOROTHY

This is the only chance we have: I need you to be brave enough to lose me for a while. If you lose me forever, remember that I love you.

(CONTINUED)



GRAHAMOTHY

Okay.

DOROTHY

And enjoy his despair, if you can.

GRAHAMOTHY

If I can.

DOROTHY

And don't let him help. If he starts trying to help, he might actually kill me.

*They kiss some more.*

DOROTHY

Your health. Ha-ha.

*She slams down the little vial (or whatever) of poison.*6. DR. FELIX, TODD*Back in the living room, DR. FELIX is playing a loud, joyful song on the accordion. (Can you play it with one hand while you use the puppet on the other? I have no idea if that's possible)*

TODD

I was still having doubts, but this accordion music has really soothed my soul.

DR. FELIX

O, people will dissemble, and institutions fail, but music, friend, is ever faithful. I love my work, and I love getting paid, but even more than either do I love making music.

*GRAHAMOTHY enters, hero-carrying the "dead" DOROTHY.*7. DR. FELIX, TODD, GRAHAMOTHY,DOROTHY

GRAHAMOTHY

Stop the music! No! No, Lord, Jesus, why? In all of Pennsylvania no family suffers such as ours! Dead, Father! Dead!

DR. FELIX

Dorothy! Sweet, fifteen-year-old teenage angel, no! What happened?

GRAHAMOTHY

She went past the champagne, straight for your medicines and powders. She swallowed anything with a skull on the bottle.

DR. FELIX

It might not be too late. I may have something that can help her.

*DR. FELIX starts looking in his pockets.*

GRAHAMOTHY

No, it's definitely too late. Check her pulse.

*DR. FELIX and TODD both check her pulse.*

TODD

She's dead.

GRAHAMOTHY

It's so sad! Why!

DR. FELIX

Why didn't you stop her?

GRAHAMOTHY

I tried. I couldn't. Desperation made her strong.

DR. FELIX

(a bit flippant)

You must not have loved her enough.

GRAHAMOTHY

I promise you I did.

DR. FELIX

You're right. I'm so sorry, my son! I must cherish my last remaining family all the more. Come to my bosom.

GRAHAMOTHY

Oh, Father. If only this all had never happened!

DR. FELIX

Yes. If only I had kept better locks on my dangerous medical experiments.

GRAHAMOTHY

True, but also--

TODD

If only we had held the service at the courthouse instead of here in your home.

(CONTINUED)

GRAHAMOTHY

If only. If only lots of things. But *one thing* most of all--

DR. FELIX

It's no use speculating. Sometimes terrible things just happen. We carry on about what we might have done, but disasters find a way. They're like... happiness-seeking missiles. (Missile noises & gestures:) Pew, pew, pew.

TODD

Mmm. You, too, are wise. Perhaps some more accordion music would comfort us.

GRAHAMOTHY

No! No music. I'm trying to remember what she said right before she collapsed. Oh: "If only my step-father had never tried to force me into marriage."

DR. FELIX

She said that?

GRAHAMOTHY

Absolutely.

DR. FELIX

This is terrible. Horrible.

GRAHAMOTHY

Are you feeling pretty bad?

DR. FELIX

Bad beyond description.

GRAHAMOTHY

Would you say it's the very pits of despair?

DR. FELIX

This family has lost so much. If not for you, Grahamothy, I'd have nothing left to live for.

GRAHAMOTHY

What about your work?

DR. FELIX

It couldn't save Priscilla. It couldn't save Eleanor. Now it's taken Dorothy.

TODD

What about your music?

(CONTINUED)

DR. FELIX

Music is love, but it can't raise the dead.

GRAHAMOTHY

You were so afraid of losing her, and now you have.  
That's very ironic. It's the kind of thing that could  
really impart a lasting lesson.

TODD

Wise.

*GRAHAMOTHY goes to his father.*

GRAHAMOTHY

Now would be the time for accordion music.

*A mourning song on the accordion. Perhaps "Amazing  
Grace" or "My Immortal," something kind of  
over-the-top and shambolic. Maybe get the audience  
to sing along. As the song makes its crescendo,  
she returns to life.*

TODD

By all the Grace of American Jesus!

DR. FELIX

Dorothy!

GRAHAMOTHY

It's a miracle!

*DOROTHY tries to stand up. It doesn't happen.*

DOROTHY

I'm still drunk.

TODD

More importantly, still alive! Praise be!

DR. FELIX

Oh, my little pompadour, I can't believe how cruel I've  
been.

DOROTHY

That's right. This marriage plot was a serious breach  
of boundaries.

DR. FELIX

It was, it was.

DOROTHY

And instead of trying to sequester and control your  
children, you should let them seek out new experiences,  
and command their own destinies.

(CONTINUED)

TODD

Death has made you wise. Like Jesus.

DOROTHY

And you should be patient. You're a wonderful man, and someday someone will choose freely to join you in marriage.

TODD

I'll be there when that happens.

DOROTHY

It's important that we be allowed to choose our own partners.

DR. FELIX

Of course.

*DOROTHY and GRAHAMOTHY are holding hands.*

DR. FELIX

Wait, I--

TODD

No, man. See how happy they are. What tyrant could deny them? Not me, man. No, no, not me.

*DR. FELIX isn't so sure. DOROTHY and GRAHAMOTHY are face-talking and kissing and chatting cute little nonsense with each other. DR. FELIX begins to play on the accordion, to soothe his soul.*

*Blackout.*

*End of play.*