

[7.7]A Tsar Is Born

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Directed by Pamela Fryman

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Review {Mike Lee}

As a general rule, my least favorite episodes are the ones that trade on Frasier and Niles's snobbery for the humor. This one is the exception because it manages to do so in such an original way, both in the raising of their conceit, and in their delicious comeuppance at the end. It also features a nice insight into the brothers' relationship with Martin, as well as one of the smoothest-running plots I've seen and a couple of memorable interludes, especially the hilarious one with Daphne's wedding dress. **A**

Transcript {nick hartley}

Act One.

Scene One - Café Nervosa.

Frasier enters the café to find Roz at one of the front tables surfing the net on a laptop. Frasier sits with her.

Frasier: Hello, Roz.

Roz: Hey.

Frasier: Oh, what are you up to?

Roz: Oh, they put in phone jacks so you can go on-line. I was just talking to this guy who sounds really great. [*Frasier sighs as if the idea is absurd*] What? I'm a very busy person, how else am I going to meet people?

Frasier: It just seems so impersonal, Roz. God, what ever happened to human contact? Engaging people, face to face, eye to eye.

Roz: [*points out Martin at counter*] There's your dad.

Frasier: Don't let him see me! [*turns away as Martin crosses to the table*]

Roz: Hey, Marty.

Martin: Hey, Roz.

Roz: Hey.

Martin: What you been up to?

Roz: Oh, just surfing the net.

Frasier: Hi, Dad.

Martin: [*ignoring his son*] You know, I never got into that net stuff.

Roz: Really? You really ought to give it a try. It's a great way

to stay in touch with your friends and your family.

Martin: Family? Gosh, you know, that's nice to know that some people still care about their family.

Frasier: Dad, please!

Martin: Well, I gotta go. I'm going night-fishing with Duke - and Eddie, of course! I wouldn't leave Eddie, you don't turn your back on your family!

Martin exits the café.

Roz: What is that all about?

Frasier: Oh, our Cousin Dodie's wedding was last week. Oh, excuse me, Cousin Dodie's "weddin'!" A western theme. On the response card it asked for our chili preference: mild or "kick ass!" Anyway, Niles and I told her that we had a conference to attend at the Therapist's Guild.

Roz: There is no Therapist's Guild, is there?

Frasier: No. Dad found us out.

Roz: Wait! Didn't you have a Therapist Guild conference on Alice's last birthday?

Frasier: [*changing the subject*] The point is, it struck a nerve with Dad! [*then*] I'm sorry, Roz, it's just that he thinks we're ashamed of his family, it's been an issue with him for years, and now he hasn't spoken to me for days. Thank God, I don't have to deal with this tonight. I've already ear-marked a fine bottle of Chateau Beychevelle.

Roz: Oh, hot date?

Frasier: No, Niles is coming over to watch "The Antiques Roadshow" with me.

Roz: [*mocking*] I guess you'll be coming in late, tomorrow!

Frasier: It's our favorite show, Roz.

Roz: Party!

Frasier: All right, that's enough.

Roz: Whoo!

Roz carries on mocking Frasier as the picture FADES TO BLACK.

Scene Two - Frasier's Apartment.

The lift doors open outside Frasier's apartment. Niles and Frasier step off of and cross to the door. They are carry wine and nibbles.

Frasier: I think the roadshow is from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania tonight. Amish country!

Niles: Ooh, quilts!

They enter the apartment.

Frasier: I'll cork the wine, Niles, you set up the cheese cakes.

However they are startled when Martin enters from the kitchen with some nachos and a can of beer.

Frasier/Niles: Dad!

Frasier: I thought you were going night fishing with Duke?

Martin doesn't reply as he nestles in his chair with the remote.

Frasier: Oh, for God's sakes, you can't keep this up forever, Dad. [*no response*] Well, all right, fine. I hope you don't mind, but Niles and I are planning on watching a television show.

Martin: Oh, really? Well, I'm surprised you don't have a conference to go to!

Frasier: Dad, we said we were sorry about Dodie's wedding.

Niles: Yes, and we did send her a baby gift.

Martin: Well, Duke cancelled out on me. You can have the TV in an hour. I just want to watch my game show.

Frasier: Oh please, not a game show?

Martin: Hey, I happen to like it, all right? People bring in all their junk from the attics and these experts tell them what it's worth.

The brothers realize that this summary is very similar to the show they are about to watch.

Frasier: Are you talking about "The Antiques Roadshow?"

Martin: Yeah.

Frasier: Well, that's the program Niles and I are going to watch!

Martin gives a look of disbelief, so do the brothers.

Niles: I'll just check outside and see if the world has ended.

Niles enters the kitchen to set up the cheese cakes as Frasier heads to the couch opening the wine.

Martin: Well, if you want to watch it, no one's stopping you.

Frasier: Well, wonderful. [laughs]

Martin turns on "The Antiques Roadshow."

Presenter: [v.o.] And you have no idea what this writing desk might be worth?

Woman: [v.o.] No, my husband bought it at a garage sale.

Frasier: That's a lovely piece. I'd say it's Sheridan.

Presenter: At auction, this would bring in more than eight thousand dollars.

Martin: Whoa-ho-ho! Ca-ching!

Niles enters with the cheese.

Woman: What about this chair? Is it an original too?

Niles: It certainly looks it.

Martin: Ah, no, they always do this. Set 'em up on the first one and then lower the boom on the second one.

Niles: I think that carving looks authentic.

Frasier: So does the inlay.

Martin: No, no, no!

Presenter: I'm sorry to say this chair is a reproduction, worth at best one hundred and fifty dollars.

Woman: Oh, what a shame.

Martin smiles at the disbelieving boys.

Martin: Keep watching, boys. You'll get the hang of it.

DISSOLVE TO:

Scene Three - Frasier's Apartment - Later.

The three Crane men are getting very friendly at last. Niles is sat on the floor with a wine glass in his hand. Frasier's sat on the coffee table with a wine glass. Martin is in his chair with a can of beer. "The Antiques Roadshow" is still running.

Presenter: [v.o.] But the real clue here is the veneer.

The Crane men, playing their drinking game, all shout out "veneer!" and

take a swig of their drinks.

Presenter: And now for some background information on the beautiful city of Harrisburg.

Martin: Mute!

Frasier and Niles laugh as Martin turns the sound off. Daphne enters with a green box.

Daphne: Evening, all. [*they greet her*] Wow! I don't see the three of you watching the same show very often. What's going on? Pavarotti jumping the Grand Canyon?

Martin: It's "The Antiques Roadshow." What you got in the box?

Daphne: Oh, it's Donny's mother's wedding gown. He wants me to wear it at the wedding. What if I don't like it?

Frasier: Daphne, if you want to try it on, we'll be glad to have a look.

Martin: Just go put it on.

Daphne exits with the box to her room.

Frasier: Dad, Dad, turn it up. [*he does*]

Sara Briggs: But the real masterwork is the unique art deco headboard. It features a variety of veneers.

They all shout out "veneer!" and sip.

Sara Briggs: Mahogany veneer...

Once again.

Sara Briggs: Burlled walnut veneer...

Yet again they swallow another swig.

Sara Briggs: And zebra wood veneer.

For the final time they take one last drink.

Sara Briggs: And now back to our...

Frasier: [*recovering*] Oh God... next week we gotta pick a different word. Need another bottle of wine, Niles.

Martin: Yeah, me too, I love these educational shows.

Frasier enters the kitchen with the old bottle of wine as Niles also brings in Martin's old beer cans. Frasier gets a new bottle as Niles gets another beer from the fridge for his father.

Frasier: You know, I can't get over Dad. It seems this little rift between us has been mended.

Niles: Can you believe he used the word "craftsman," and he meant the architectural style, and not the rotary sander?

Frasier: You know, that's uncanny.

Niles: Well, you heard him.

Frasier: No, not that, you just said "rotary sander."

They go back into the living room.

Frasier: Dad, did we miss anything?

Martin: Nah, just some bozo with a credenza who doesn't know a Biedermeier from an Oscar Meyer.

They all laugh. The theme music for the show's end plays.

Presenter: That's it for this week. See you next time on "The Antiques Roadshow." Next Saturday the roadshow will be here in Seattle.

Martin: Oh!

Presenter: Viewers can bring their treasures to the convention center for a free appraisal.

Martin: We oughta go, that'd be great.

Frasier: Well sure, Dad.

Niles: That does sound like fun.

Martin: Yeah, I'm going to go and have a little root around in our closet. I bet I can find a nice little [correct pronunciation] *objet d'art* they'd be interested in.

Martin exits to his room, leaving his sons gobsmacked again.

Niles: It's as if that panhandler I gave money to was a genie granting all my wishes.

Daphne: Would you marry me in this?

We see that Daphne has entered. She is wearing the "wedding gown." It consists of white go-go boots, a fluffy white veil and very little else. In fact, just a white miniskirt connected to a tight white bra by flimsy suspenders. Niles nearly faints.

Frasier: [whispers] How much did you give him?

Niles: It's attractive, Daphne. It's a bit unorthodox.

Daphne: Yeah. That's what I think.

Daphne picks up the phone and calls Donny.

Daphne: Donny, I've just put your mum's wedding dress on. A mini-skirt? It's obscene! You can see my... What? No, I took the green box. [laughs] No problem, then. Bye. [hangs up] I took the wrong dress. This is from his mother's third marriage in 1968 in Las Vegas.

Daphne starts laughing along with Niles. Daphne bends down trying to control her laughter. Niles peers over her and down her bra without her noticing.

Daphne: Can you believe people used to actually dress like this?

Niles: I wish I had a picture of it for whenever I needed a laugh. [tries to follow her to her bedroom]

Frasier: Niles!

Niles walks back sighing in fantasy.

FADE TO:

A TSAR IS BORN

Scene Four - The Antiques Roadshow.

Martin and Frasier are hanging around the set. Martin is holding a rather ugly pewter clock consisting of a small round dial set in the middle of a hideous bear.

Martin: This bear clock's been in the family for generations, I can't wait to see how much it's worth. Do you think they'll put a dollar figure on it?

Frasier: Sounds about right.

Martin: Very funny, but you know, your grandpa passed this down to me

and someday, when I'm gone, it'll be passed on to you.

Frasier: Dad, please, I don't even want to think about that day.

Martin: You know, I've got to see if I can go and get this baby appraised.

Martin goes off to the appraisers as Niles enters.

Niles: I am so sorry, but on the way in I had the most amazing celebrity sighting: Hans Dietrich.

Frasier: [*thrilled*] The loveseat expert?

Niles: The very same. He's much smaller in person than on television. He's that big. [*holds a hand up to the bottom of his neck*]

Frasier: Get out!

Martin: Boys, come over here, they want to put me and the clock on TV.

Frasier: Good Lord, we can't appear on TV with that hideous thing.

Niles: Everyone we know watches this program.

Frasier: Thank God he didn't bring along that dreadful mounted jackrabbit's head with the antelope horns.

Niles: The Jackalope! Texas's answer to the Minotaur.

Martin: So what do you think of that, boys? They said they've never seen anything like it.

Frasier: Dad, you know, this could go either way.

Martin: Oh, I know. I'm not going to act like one of those saps I make fun of. Doesn't matter if it's worth two dollars or two thousand, I'm just gonna say, "That's pretty much what I figured."

The director shouts that tape is rolling so Niles and Frasier back off out of view from the camera. The bear clock is on a table in front of the camera. Martin and the appraiser are standing around the table.

Martin: [*calls to boys*] Guys, which one of you wants to come and hold this?

Frasier: No, no, Dad. We wouldn't dream of it.

Niles: This is your moment.

Director: Everybody ready? Action.

Appraiser: So, Martin, what can you tell us about this pewter clock?

Martin: [*playing to the camera*] Well, it is a clock set in the stomach of what appears to be a bear.

Appraiser: Actually, it's much more than that. It's Russian, made in the mid-nineteenth century.

Martin: That's pretty much what I figured.

Appraiser: Actually, it's a stunning piece. It was made by André Krogyn, who worked for Tsar Alexander II.

Martin: That is pretty much what I figured.

Appraiser: I don't know if you're descended from the Romanovs, Martin, but all of Krogyn's known bear clocks were done exclusively for the Romanov family and are now in the Hermitage Museum.

By now, Niles and Frasier, baffled by the findings, have walked into camera view and are standing alongside Martin.

Appraiser: Martin, you may be surprised to learn that this clock at auction would easily bring \$25,000.

Martin: [*excited*] Ca-ching!

He laughs and claps his hands excitedly, but Frasier and Niles calm him into acting reserved again.

Frasier: What he means is, that's pretty much what we figured.

Frasier reaches out and strokes the bear clock like a favorite

possession while he and Niles smile into the camera.

End of Act One.

Act Two.

Scene One - Frasier's Apartment.

Martin, Niles and Frasier enter the apartment with the bear clock in hand.

Frasier: After you, Dad.

Martin: Thank you.

Frasier: So, you know, Dad? I've been thinking, we should find an appropriate place for this clock. How about right here on this console? [*puts it on table behind sofa*]

Martin: Oh, I get it! It doesn't look quite so bad to you guys now that it's worth twenty-five grand. Oh, I could kick myself for not bringing that Jackalope!

Martin exits to the kitchen as Niles and Frasier give a look at each other.

Niles: What an amazing day, eh?

Frasier: It certainly was. You know, Niles, I was meaning to ask you about something. Remember the appraiser said something about the bear being from Russia, dad being part of the Romanov family?

Niles: Yeah, yeah, you know, that struck my ear too.

Frasier: Yes, although I don't seriously believe there's any real chance of that.

Niles: [*half-heartedly*] No, of course not.

Frasier: [*dragging it out*] It's a long shot.

Niles: It's possible.

Frasier: Although we do have the bear.

Niles: I know.

Martin enters back from the kitchen.

Frasier: Oh, Dad. Niles just reminded me of something I completely forgot. When the appraiser mentioned that the bear was from Russia...

Martin: Oh, yeah. Well, it probably got passed down through your great-great grandmother. She was from Russia.

Frasier: A-ha, he said something about the Romanov family?

Martin: Oh, yeah, that, eh? Are you sure you want to hear about this?

Niles: [*no question*] Yes, Dad.

Martin: Well, I guess you would have found out anyway after I died... We're royalty.

Frasier and Niles are ecstatic.

Martin: But I didn't want you to grow up spoiled, so I abdicated and took a job in Seattle on the police force. [*the brothers realize his joke*] It was kinda hard giving up that royal way of life, but I think maybe it's the swans that I miss most.

Frasier: Very funny, Dad. Point taken. Sherry, Niles? [*crosses to sherry*]

Niles: Please.

Martin: I'm sorry to disappoint you. I know you'd rather be anything else in the world except Cranes!

Frasier: Dad! Now that is just not true, we are proud to be Cranes. It's just innocent curiosity.

Martin: Well, I gotta go call Duke. But don't get excited, he's not a real Duke.

Martin exits to his room as Frasier brings the sherries across to Niles.

Niles: Well, we stepped in it that time.

Frasier: Yes, what the hell is wrong with us? Asking whether we are related to the Romanovs. We just got past this whole Crane shame thing.

Niles: We should have known it'd just upset him.

Frasier: Yes, and for what? Trying to find some distant connection to royalty.

Niles: Even if we can prove it, what do we have?

Frasier: Huh, a story to tell at parties.

Niles: An occasional seat at a state dinner.

Frasier: Some meaningless title. It's insane.

Niles: Ridiculous... destructive.

Frasier: Still, there is this grandmother.

Niles: I'm right behind you.

Frasier: You know, Niles, given our new pride in the Crane name, perhaps it would behoove us to research our family tree.

Niles: Actually, in a way we'd be honoring Dad.

Frasier: Yes, of course we wouldn't need to tell him.

Niles: No.

Frasier: Just a few hours on the internet, a trip to the library, we could sketch in the entire family tree.

Niles: And if there should happen to be a connection [*breathless with glee*] to the Romanovs...

Frasier: Well, what harm is there in that?

[*N.B. Famous last words.*]

Frasier: It is amusing to contemplate, isn't it, Niles? You, me, Dad - all part of an ancient noble family.

Martin then bursts out his room holding the jackalope to his forehead and chasing Eddie into the kitchen, showing off the true noble spirit of the Crane family.

Martin: Okay Eddie, the jackalope's gonna get ya! The jackalope is gonna get ya!

FADE TO:

Scene Two - Café Nervosa.

Frasier is surfing the internet and tracing his family tree at the window seat as Roz enters wearing a red dress with a silk shawl.

Roz: Hey, Frasier. How's the research going?

Frasier: Oh, sit down, Roz. I'll bring you up to speed.

Roz: No, thank you. [*sits on another table*] I'm meeting someone.

Frasier: Good God! Not one of your internet dalliances?

Roz: It's just coffee, okay? Listen, this guy's totally legit, he e-mailed me his picture. [*holds it up*]

Frasier: A picture? Oh, for God's sakes, Roz, what can you learn from a picture? The man's probably a lunatic, a psychopath... [*looks at picture*] Oh, he's a pretty boy.

Roz: Yeah.

Frasier: Wait... I know this photo. It's the cover of this month's Bidwell's catalogue!

Roz: Are you sure?

Frasier: I'm positive, I ordered those socks and driving shoes!

Roz: How could someone do this?

Frasier: Well, it's probably some insecure would-be Romeo trying to lure you into a meeting.

And then, as if in response to his description, in pops Noel.

Noel: Hello, Frasier.

Frasier: Noel.

Noel: [to Roz] What have we here? An empty seat next to yours. May I?

Roz: No! Of all the dumbass things you've done to get me to go out with you, e-mailing me this picture is just the most moronic!

Noel: But, Roz-!

Roz: Forget it, buddy!

The man in Roz's photo enters Nervosa and watches the scene, as Roz backs Noel into the counter, hitting him with the picture.

Roz: I ought to take your mouse cord and wrap it around your nerdy little neck until your eyes pop out like champagne corks!

Noel: [looks at picture] But I didn't send you this.

Roz: Yeah right, then who did?

Noel: My guess would be... [points to man] that guy.

Roz turns and gasps. The man leaves, disappointed with her.

Roz: Oh my God! Oh, Noel, I'm so sorry. [gathers her things]

Noel: How sorry?

Roz: Not that sorry.

Roz exits chasing after her date as Niles enters.

Niles: I just saw the Bidwell's guy!

Frasier: Yes. [Niles sits] Well Niles, how goes the research?

Niles: Oh, I think you're going to be very pleased. According to this catalogue of Russian antiquities, the bear clock was last seen in Moscow in 1879.

Frasier: Well, hold on to your fur hat, Niles. I just discovered that our great-great grandmother emigrated from Russia... 1879!

Niles: My God, it's all coming together. I can practically picture the scene.

Frasier: Yes.

Niles: Our great-great grandmother, smelling revolution in the wind...

Frasier: Secretly slips away in the black Russian night...

Niles: Taking the bear clock with her to remind her of better days.

Frasier: Yes! The ticking hands of time counting down her return, her royal power merely hibernating. [Frasier's mobile sounds, he answers] Yes? Yes, yes, I'll hold.

Niles: Who is it?

Frasier: It's Dr. Myshkin. He's an attaché at the Russian embassy, also an expert on the Romanovs. [to phone] Yes, Dr. Myshkin. This evening would be fine. About seven o'clock. Yes, I live in the Elliot Bay Towers. I'll see you then. [hangs up] He has some important information for us. My God, Niles, this is it. The final link to our royal past. I'm going to issue a press release!

Niles: Not before I shout it from the rooftops! [notices Martin entering] Here's Dad, hide everything!

They quickly clean things off the table and shut the laptop as Martin enters.

Martin: Hey guys, I thought I'd find you here. You know, you just missed seeing yourselves on "The Antiques Roadshow." [*They fake noises of disappointment*] And you know, the phone's been ringing off the hook, everybody wants to buy that bear clock.

Frasier: You're not thinking of selling it, are you?

Martin: You're damn right I am! Some guy just offered me twenty-six thousand for it. I'm gonna buy me a big, honking fishing boat, with a Wave Pounder 450 and a fun deck. Good for fishin', crusin', or just plain tubin'! [*laughs*]

Niles: Did you hear that Frasier? We can go tubin'. [*Mouths to Frasier "Do Something!"*]

Frasier: You know, Dad, perhaps Niles and I could sell the clock for you. I mean, we do know the antiques world and you know, we could get you more than twenty-six thousand.

Martin: Oh!

Niles: I should think at least thirty thousand.

Martin: Huh. You know, maybe I will let you boys handle this.

Frasier: Wise move, Dad.

Niles: Yeah, we'd hate to see you get manipulated.

Martin leaves the cafe as Frasier and Niles exchange congratulatory grins.

FADE TO:

MYSHKIN ACCOMPLISHED

Scene Three - Frasier's Apartment.

The doorbell sounds. Niles and Frasier answer it to Dr. Myshkin.

Myshkin: Dr. Crane.

Frasier: Dr. Myshkin, please. Come in. This is my brother, Dr. Niles Crane.

Niles clicks his heels and bobs his head in his version of a communist salute.

Myshkin: [*spots clock*] Oh, there it is.

Frasier: Please, have a look. [*he does*] Is it authentic?

Myshkin: Without a doubt. [*Frasier gasps*]

Niles: Frasier...

Frasier: I know.

Then Daphne enters from her room with the laundry.

Frasier: Daphne, you know, there is some caviar on the ice in the kitchen. Now would be the appropriate time, if you would, please?

Daphne: [*sarcastic*] Oh, I am so sorry. Here I am, dawdling with the laundry when it's ten minutes into caviar time!

Daphne exits to kitchen.

Myshkin: As I mentioned, I have some information which should be very interesting to you.

Frasier: Yes, yes, please make yourself comfortable. Do tell, tell.

Myshkin: [*holds up a book*] This is a copy of the diary of Princess Sonia Romanov, daughter to Tsar Alexander II. At eighteen she fell in love with a commoner, an American. [*Niles mouths "Our grandmother" to Frasier*] Their union, of course, was forbidden, but Sonia decided to give everything up for love.

Frasier: *Quel elegance.*

Myshkin: She enlisted the aid of a scullery maid, who smuggled money, clothing and this bear clock out of the palace.

Niles: [*thrilled*] She would elope to America!

Myshkin: Yes, that was her plan, but when Sonia found her way to the train station under the cover of night, the scullery maid absconded with everything, including the clock.

Niles: Servants!

Frasier: There's a back aching for the lash!

The camera then cuts to Daphne who has already entered the room with the caviar. She gets the wrong end of the stick.

Daphne: I'm moving as fast as I can! [*slams caviar down and exits*]

Frasier: Now, tell us. How did we get our clock back?

Niles: Yes, tell us, how did Great-Great-Grandmamma retrieve it?

Myshkin: [*confused for a moment, then*] Uh, Drs. Crane... your ancestor is not the princess, your ancestor is the scullery maid.

Silence as Frasier and Niles absorb this bombshell. Then Myshkin stands and picks up the clock.

Myshkin: Well, on behalf of the Russian people, I thank you for retrieving this for us.

Frasier: You mean, you're just going to take it?!

Myshkin: Well, its rightful place is in the Hermitage Museum.

Niles: But this clock has been in our family for generations...

Frasier: Niles. [*Frasier motions him to cover the front door, he does*]

Myshkin: Dr. Crane, we could settle this in the courts, but you wouldn't win. Do you really want this to come out in the press?

Frasier: Well, do you really expect us just to let you walk out of here with a precious family heirloom?!

Myshkin: Did I mention that your ancestor, before she married a Noah Crane in 1882, worked as a prostitute in New York?

Beat.

Frasier: Enjoy your bear.

Niles steps aside letting Myshkin out. As the door is opened we find Martin just entering.

Martin: Oh, hello.

Myshkin: Dr. Profiry Myshkin.

Martin: [*shaking hands*] Marty Crane. I see you've got the clock.

Myshkin: That's right. Good evening, all.

Martin: Bye.

Myshkin and the clock disappear forever.

Martin: You sold it! I hope you got a good price.

Frasier: Gee, Dad, I hope you didn't buy a boat.

Martin: No, I was thinking about it and then I thought, oh hell. We've been getting along so well... [*to Frasier*] And you don't like fishing. [*to Niles*] And you get seasick. Why not get something we can all enjoy, you know?

For a moment they look hopeful.

Martin: So I bought this! [*holds up a picture of an RV to the boys*]

Niles: [*covering with mock excitement*] A Winnebago!

Martin: Yeah!

Frasier: A big one!

Martin: Thirty-three footer, with air suspension and power jacks. Thirty thousand used, but you got that much for the clock, right?

Frasier: Of course. [*Niles looks at him sharply*]

Martin: Oh, that's great. We can go anywhere. You know, the first place I want to go is Elmo, Nebraska. We got a whole mess of cousins down there! [*exits to kitchen*]

The boys slump down on the couch and pick up some drinks.

Frasier: Well... we're out fifteen thousand each.

Niles: And we have to take long trips in a Winnebago.

Frasier: And we're not Romanovs. We're descended from thieves and whores.

Pause.

Niles: You know, I remember reading that Henry James once had a liaison with a Russian prostitute in New York.

Frasier: I'm right behind you.

They clink glasses once again.

End of Act Two.

Credits:

Niles is sipping sherry on Frasier's sofa as Daphne enters the living room dressed once again in the revealing bridal outfit. She climbs up on the coffee table and begins an enthusiastic rendition of the frug, the swim, and other 60's dances. Niles beams and sips his sherry.

Suddenly Niles wakes up from a nap on the sofa, and looks around eagerly to find Daphne, who isn't there. He drains the dregs of his sherry from a glass on the coffee table, and settles back down to try recapturing his enticing dream.

Guest Appearances

Guest Starring

ROBERTSON DEAN as Dr. Myshkin
 PATRICK KERR as Noel
 NEAL LERNER as Appraiser
 GRACE ROWE as Stage Manager

Synopsis {kathy churay}

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE - CAFE NEVOSA - DAY

(Frasier, Roz, Martin)

Roz is seated at a table typing on a laptop computer as Frasier comes over to her table. Since the cafe has installed phone jacks, she's been chatting online and is becoming a big fan of meeting people that way. Frasier complains that it seems so impersonal and that people should talk face to face, but changes his tune abruptly when he spots his father and attempts to hide. Martin sees them anyway and comes over to greet Roz warmly and pointedly ignore Frasier. Roz tries to sell him on the virtues of chatting with family and friends on the computer, and Martin agrees that one doesn't turn one's back on family. He bids Roz goodbye, still without acknowledging Frasier, and goes off to get ready for an evening of night fishing with Duke.

Roz asks Frasier what the problem is with his father. Frasier explains that Martin is still angry at Frasier and Niles for making an excuse not to go to their cousin Dodie's recent Western-themed wedding. Martin thinks the boys are ashamed of their family and hasn't spoken Frasier for days. Frasier is looking forward to not dealing with Martin that evening; Niles is coming over to watch the Antiques Road Show on public television.

SCENE TWO - FRASIER'S APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

(Frasier, Niles, Martin, Daphne)

Frasier and Niles arrive at the apartment with cheese and wine, looking forward to their evening of television, only to find Martin preparing to watch his favorite gameshow -- which turns out to be the Antiques Road Show. All three of them are flabbergasted to realize they like the same show, but they settle in and start making guesses about whether the antiques show will turn out to be real or not. Predictably, Martin proves better at figuring out the pattern of the show than either of his sons.

DISSOLVE TO THE APARTMENT - LATER

The three Cranes are still watching the show and having a rather good time at it, too. They have begun a friendly drinking game where they each down a large swallow from their wineglass or beer can each time the word "veneer" is mentioned. Just then Daphne arrives home with a large box under her arm. It's Donny's mother's wedding gown, and Daphne is apprehensive about looking at it for fear she won't want to wear it. Martin suggests that she try it on for them to look at, and she exits to her room. The men return to drinking and watching their show, where a discussion of wood surfaces nearly finishes them off. They decide to take a break from drinking and the boys go to the kitchen to replenish the supply of beer and wine.

Frasier and Niles remark at how engrossed their father has become in the antiques show. It's as if their father has picked up some of their polish, and the rift between them has been mended.

The boys return to the living room just in time to hear the end of the show, and the announcer saying that the show will travel to Seattle the following week. All three Cranes exclaim over the exciting news, and Martin rushes off to his room to see whether he can unearth any "objets d'art." Niles remarks that he had given some money to a panhandler earlier in the day, and it's as if all his wishes are coming true.

Another wish is apparently granted as Daphne enters the living room wearing white go-go boots, a short bridal veil, and a white satin wedding dress that consists of a miniskirt and midriff-baring top held together with flimsy suspenders. Niles's jaw drops. Daphne can't believe that Donny wants her to wear such a thing, and she gets him on the phone to tell him so. It turns out Daphne has grabbed the wrong dress, and Niles shares a laugh with her while surreptitiously ogling her in the skimpy outfit. She returns to her room to take the dress off, nearly followed by an entranced Niles until Frasier brings him back to earth.

SCENE THREE - EXHIBITION HALL - THE FOLLOWING WEEK - DAY

(Frasier, Niles, Martin, TV host)

The hall is filled with hopeful people and their precious heirlooms as Martin waits his turn with an ugly antique bear clock. His father passed it on to him, and Martin promises Frasier that someday it will be his. Frasier feigns enthusiasm as Martin heads off to find an appraiser for the clock. Niles arrives just in time to hear Martin calling them over to the appraiser's table. The producers want to put Martin on the show. The boys are reluctant to appear on camera with the hideous clock and leave Martin alone to his moment of glory.

Their interest is piqued as the host informs Martin that the bear clock was made by a famous Russian artisan who worked exclusively for the Romanovs. The clock is sure to be worth at least \$20,000 at auction. Meanwhile, the boys creep closer and closer to the camera as the host mentions the Russian royal family, and they finally end up side by side with Martin, looking into the camera with their best impersonation of imperial dignity.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE - FRASIER'S APARTMENT - AFTER THE ANTIQUES SHOW

(Frasier, Niles, Martin)

Frasier polishes a cozy spot for the precious clock on the console directly behind the sofa as Martin goes off to the kitchen for a beer. Frasier and Niles start to discuss the antique show host's mention of the Russian royal family, and before long have half-convinced themselves that they are Romanovs. As Martin returns to the living room they inquire delicately about the possibility, and Martin goes along with them for a few moments before bursting their bubble. They did have a great-great-grandmother from Russia, but that is as close as they will ever get to royalty. Unfortunately, the boys will have to be content with being mere Cranes. Martin exits to the bedroom.

Frasier and Niles can't believe they've gotten into their father's bad graces again by showing a lack of enthusiasm for the family, but their guilt is short-lived as they return to speculation about a possible connection to the Romanovs. They resolve to do just a little bit of research on the sly to check out their Russian ancestor.

SCENE TWO - CAFE NERVOSA - DAY

(Frasier, Roz, Noel, Roz's Date, Martin)

Frasier is seated near the window doing research on a laptop computer as Roz enters in a slinky outfit. She informs Frasier that she's meeting a man at the cafe, and he begins to take her to task for meeting one of her "Internet dalliances." Roz retorts that this guy is a catch, and shows Frasier a picture he sent her. Frasier recognizes it immediately as the photo of a male model from the front of a recent mail order catalog, and Roz is crushed to think that someone is trying to lure her into a meeting.

Enter Noel Shempsky, who attempts to seat himself at Roz's table. Roz goes ballistic and begins beating Noel about the head and shoulders with the photograph, accusing him of e-mailing her the picture so she will go out with him. Noel protests that he didn't send the photo, and points out the model who has just entered the cafe looking for Roz. Roz apologizes hastily to Noel and takes off after the model, who has fled after watching her mistreat Noel.

Niles comes in to sit with Frasier and to exchange research reports. Apparently the clock was last seen in Russia just shortly before their great-great-grandmother emigrated. The brothers nearly hyperventilate over the fantasy of their grandmother's romantic escape from Russia. Frasier answers a call on his cell phone from Dr. Myshkin, a Russian expert who has agreed to meet Frasier to provide some interesting information about their family. They arrange for him to come to the apartment that evening, and as they hang up, Frasier and Niles frantically hide the research materials when Martin enters the cafe.

Martin tells them that people have been calling with offers to buy the famous clock, and he waxes enthusiastic about his plans to sell it and buy a large boat. The boys are alarmed at his plan to sell their only hope of nobility, and offer to sell it for him for more than he's been offered. Martin agrees, and heads back home

SCENE THREE - FRASIER'S APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

(Frasier, Niles, Dr. Myshkin, Daphne, Martin)

Dr. Myshkin arrives from the Russian embassy to examine the clock, which he pronounces absolutely genuine. Frasier asks Daphne to serve the caviar in celebration, and they sit down with Myshkin to learn the story of their family's connection to Russia. But the story isn't what they'd hoped. It turns out that their grandmother was a servant who absconded with her mistresses's valuables one night, and Myshkin informs them that the rightful place for the masterpiece is in the Hermitage museum. Frasier protests, but Myskin adds that they surely wouldn't want it generally known that their grandmother had been a prostitute in New York before marrying their ancestor, Noah Crane. Defeated, Frasier allows Myskin to leave with the precious clock.

Martin arrives home just in time to see Myshkin's departure. He is elated that the boys have sold the clock, and smugly informs them that he has decided against buying the boat. Frasier and Niles's sighs of relief are cut short when Martin reveals that he has spent \$30,000 to buy a Winnebago motor home, so that they can all take lots of vacations together. He exits triumphantly to the kitchen, and Frasier and Niles realize glumly that they have just spent \$15,000 each for the privilege of Winnebago vacations with their father. Their only comfort is Niles's recollection that Henry James once had a liaison with a Russian prostitute in New York, and they toast to the possibility of even that bit of reflected glory.

FADE OUT.

CREDIT TAG

Niles is sipping sherry on Frasier's sofa as Daphne enters the living room dressed once again in the revealing bridal outfit. She climbs up on the coffee table and begins an enthusiastic rendition of the frug, the swim, and other 60's dances. Niles beams and sips his sherry.

Suddenly Niles wakes up from a nap on the sofa, and looks around eagerly to find Daphne, who isn't there. He drains the dregs of his sherry from a glass on the coffee table, and settles back down to try recapturing his enticing dream.

END OF SHOW

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