MAGIC ISLAND

By David Meyer

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SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

Maxwell the Magnificent, the famous magician, has just completed a grueling world tour. His entire production company has returned to Max's private island estate to store away props, collect final paychecks and head for home.

It is here, while checking over props, that Max comes to the reluctant realization that his continuous bad luck on the tour was by design. Someone has been trying to ruin his act with sabotage! He contacts his old friend, Inspector Jerry Doody, and hits upon a plan to uncover the guilty party. The entire troupe will be confined to the island and a special command performance featuring highlights of the tour will be presented.

Through Max's illusions and the Inspector's detective work, the culprit is finally revealed among some mystifying magical illusions.

The play is a light whodunit with several major magical illusions and a number of minor magical bits. The work includes easy-to-follow directions for all the magic and allows for the addition or deletion of bits, at the director's discretion.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Flexible casting: *This script as written has l2 males and 9 female parts. The show can be done with up to a maximum of l7 male parts and 4 female parts or up to a maximum of l4 female parts and 7 male parts. Walk-on extras can be used as police officers in Act III, if desired.*

MAXWELL: *(Principle Part)* The Amazing Maxwell is a renowned magician, wealthy and successful, a showman who came up through the ranks to make it big. He lives well on his private island. He is demanding and coarse with little concern for others. Despite his temperament, he is occasionally likeable.

HARRY CHRISNER: *(Medium Part)* Agent to Max. A hustler. He is a slick and bullies his way around. The part is fully adaptable and can be male or female (Harriet called "Harry.")

LAUREN GYTIS: *(Medium Part)* Niece to Max. Young, pretty, a bit flighty and naive. Likes to use her charms to gain her ends.

DOROTHY MAY TREKS: *(Small Part)* Best friend to Lauren. Also flighty and naive. Goodhearted, attractive but more plain than Lauren.

DON PERRIE: *(Medium Part)* Stage Manager to Max. Stuffy, conceited, full of himself. Sharp dresser. Acts like a king maker. Disliked by Harry and just about everyone else. Does his job well for Max.

HERB GARDNER: *(Small-Medium Part)* Middle-aged caretaker of island. A bit grumpy, slow, shifty. In his late forties with graying hair and a slight limp.

LILLY GARDNER: *(Small-Medium Part)* Wife of Herb. Housekeeper of the mansion. Seems a bit unfriendly. Hiding something. Noisy. Middle-aged. Well built, powerful type.

STANLEY GARDNER: *(Small-Medium Part)* Son of the caretakers. He is also employed to help maintain the island. Fancies himself as royalty. He likes to be addressed as "Earl."

MIDGE: *(Medium Part)* Cousin who feels wronged by Max. Adaptable part.

BERTHA and ERNESTINE: *(Medium-Large Parts)* On-stage assistants during magic shows. They are part of Max's entourage. Young and pretty, but coarse, rough city girls. Innocent, naive, gum chewers when it comes to business and the magic act. The parts are fully adaptable and can be male or female. (Bertha called "Bert" and Ernestine called "Ernie.")

ARTHUR SENCRAFT: *(Medium Part)* The owner of a toy and games company who wants Max to endorse his products. There's a lot of money is at stake. Part can be male or female (Artista) and is adaptable to any physical type. Middle-aged.

DR. DENNIS DRILLER: *(Medium Part)* Personal medical attendant to Max. Advises on physical dangers of some of the more dangerous tricks. Middle-aged, professional person. Part can be male or female (Denise).

ADAM ZAPPLE: *(Small Part)* Interested in buying island. Age 20 to 40. Part is adaptable in physical appearance. Part can be male or female (Eve).

JERRY DOODY: *(Large Part)* Local police inspector. Old friend of Max. Contacted to look into sabotage. Middle-aged, average.

CLARE FURLANDIN: *(Small Part)* Max's private pilot and all around go-fer. Part can be male or female. Age and physical characteristics are adaptable.

HILLARY BEAN: *(Small Part)* Aunt to Max and mother to Lauren. Imposes herself on everyone. Feisty, bullish and demanding. Not liked but tolerated for family peace. Resents Max for his success but will still impose on him at any opportunity. Preferred female part but can be played as uncle, if necessary.

KNOLLA CONTENDRE: *(Small Part)* Process server that hunts down Max to serve him court papers. Part can be male (Knoles) or female.

BUCK BENDER: *(Small Part)* Black sheep of family. Nephew to Max, cousin to Lauren. Crass, brazen, obnoxious. Comes uninvited to island. He smells a dollar to be grabbed. Max dislikes him, but he is family, along with Midge. In his late 20s.

CLYDESDALE: *(Large Part)* English manservant to Max. He's upper crust and snobbish but also goodhearted and a faithful, trusted friend to Max. Age is near Max. Physical appearance is adaptable.

CORA GABLES: *(Small Part)* Real estate lady determined to sell the island. Pushy, almost rude. Can be male (Carl). Age and appearance is adaptable but should be professional and business-like.

SYNOPSIS

Act I: Present day, mid morning.
Act II: Later that day.
Act III: The next day, near midnight.

THE SET

The workshop of Maxwell the Magnificent is the converted servants' quarters on the grounds of his private island estate. He is a wealthy, successful magician, who desires privacy. The main room of the workshop is cluttered with devices and gadgets as well as tools and building materials. There are several pieces of furniture about, some mementos, and props and poster advertisements of past performances. Among the devices in the shop are the box for cutting a subject in half; a booth for making one disappear; and a trunk, chains, locks, handcuffs, swords and various other basic ingredients in a magic act. UPS, standing on end, is a coffin-like box with chains and locks around it.

(SEE PRODUCTION notes at end for complete instructions on magic devises.)

ACT I

(AT RISE: The stage LIGHTS are on half. Enter SL CLYDESDALE, the butler, wearing his uniform of long tails and white gloves. He carries a feather duster. He turns up the lights and begins to look about calling, in his British, upper-crust, well-bred manner.)

CLYDE: Sir ... Oh sir ... *(HE looks about, checking in the trunk, disappearing booth, boxes, and lastly the "coffin." He rattles the chains, pulls a large key ring from his coat pocket and searches through the hundreds of keys on it. He selects one and opens the padlocks at the top chain and bottom chain, he pulls out six nails, three on each side and removes the cover. Inside is MAX in a strait jacket with tape across his mouth and a blindfold on.)* Oh ... there you are. Will you be joining us in the main house for dinner, sir, or shall I instruct Mrs. Gardner to serve you here in your workshop? *(MAX mumbles and moans.)* Very good, sir. *(CLYDE begins to leave. MAX starts moaning and mumbling loudly. He is trying to get Clyde's attention. HE bangs his head against the wood box. Clyde comes back over to him.)* Do you require assistance, sir? *(More mumbling and head nod "yes.")* Very good, sir. *(CLYDE removes the blindfold. MAX has a look of fright on his face and shakes his head "no" in anticipation of what's coming. Clyde gives a slight smile.)* Now, now, sir ... where is our backbone? Stiff upper lip, what. Ready ... *(Ripping off the tape!)*

MAX: *(In pain.)* Nooooo!

CLYDE: That wasn't so bad now, was it?

MAX: I think you enjoyed that.

CLYDE: Hardly, sir.

MAX: I've told you a hundred times not to do that. Undo my hands and I'll take off the tape!

CLYDE: I shall endeavor to remember that, sir ... for our next occasion.

MAX: Clydesdale, would you mind ... *(Indicates the strait jacket HE would like help in removing.)*

End of Freeview

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