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Dramatic Publishing

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

by

AURAND HARRIS

A One-act adaptation of the full length play,

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

by **AURAND HARRIS**

A dramatization from the story by

C.S. LEWIS

Optional music by

WILLIAM PENN



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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C.S. LEWIS

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THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

A One-Act Play
For Three Men and Three Women*

CHARACTERS

UNCLE ANDREW
AUNT LETTY
DIGORY
POLLY
QUEEN JADIS
ASLAN

TIME: 1880.

PLACE: England and Other Worlds.

*The play can also be performed with a cast of four: with the same actor playing both Uncle Andrew and Aslan, and the same actress playing both Aunt Letty and Queen Jadis.

(MUSIC NOTE: The right music is important in the play to bridge scene transitions and for magic effects. An excellent musical tape, composed by William Penn especially for the play, may be obtained from the publisher.)

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

(NOTE: The three different sets are only suggested so they can be changed quickly. The action of the play never stops.)

SCENE: There is magic music before the curtains open.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: We see the attic study in a London townhouse in the year 1880. Only the back wall is needed with a door leading to downstairs. On the wall is a luminous zodiac and a large framed picture of a lion's head. There is a table on which is a skull, spectacles, books, and a box with large yellow and green rings. UNCLE ANDREW stands by the table, dressed in a magician's robe and hat, wearing white gloves. He is white-haired, an elderly gentleman, comic, cunning and eccentric. At the moment he is devilishly happy as he sprinkles glitter on the box of rings.

UNCLE ANDREW. Ah...ah...they are beginning to glow! The magic is beginning to work. Yes...yes! (He holds up two rings.) Yellow rings and green rings. Magic rings that can take you into other worlds! (He laughs wickedly as he puts the rings in a box.) Yes. All is ready. (He looks at the glowing zodiac.) The stars are in the right position. (He holds up skull.) It is time for me to do...the Great Experiment!

AUNT LETTY (off). Andrew!

UNCLE ANDREW. Yes...a voice calls to me. A voice far away.

AUNT LETTY (*off*). An-drew!

UNCLE ANDREW. Oh, speak, voice of the unknown. I am listening.

AUNT LETTY (*off*). ANDREW KETTERLEY! I am calling you.

UNCLE ANDREW (*coming back to reality*). It is Letty, my sister's voice.

AUNT LETTY (*off*). Andrew! Answer me, or I am coming up to the attic.

UNCLE ANDREW. Oh, no. No! (*He quickly hides robe and hat, off at side.*) Don't come to the attic. I am busy. Wait! The rings! She must not see the magic rings. (*He covers the box with a cloth.*)

AUNT LETTY (*off*). I know you are in the attic, Andrew. I can hear you talking to yourself. (*UNCLE ANDREW turns on the lights, a wall bracket, and the room is bright.*)

(AUNT LETTY, an English matron, enters. She is prim and proper, full of authority and energy, a bit comic. There is nothing out of the ordinary about UNCLE ANDREW as he greets her, except his white hair, which is indeed wild.)

UNCLE ANDREW. Yes, Letty, I am here. Please come in.

AUNT LETTY (*panting*). You know the stairs make me short of breath. (*Sternly.*) Now! What is all this noise and commotion you are making in the attic?

UNCLE ANDREW (*excited, mysteriously*). I am doing an important experiment.

AUNT LETTY. You must stop this foolishness at once. Here in the attic all hours of the day and night.

UNCLE ANDREW. There is a couch (*Indicates off L.*) in the back. I lie down. I take naps.

AUNT LETTY. We must keep the house orderly. Yes—and *quiet*. Our sister, bless her soul, is very sick, lying in bed, right in the room below. (*Makes up her mind.*) I am going to lock up the attic!

UNCLE ANDREW. No! No, Letty.

AUNT LETTY. Yes, I will lock up the attic while she is here.

UNCLE ANDREW. But, Letty, I am on the verge of a great discovery.

AUNT LETTY. We must do all we can to help our sister. I thought when I brought her and Digory here to my house, that I could nurse her, bring her back to health. But she grows weaker...doesn't eat.

UNCLE ANDREW. She asked for some grapes.

AUNT LETTY. Grapes? No, it will take a *special* fruit to help her. A fruit of life—from another land.

UNCLE ANDREW. What about the new pills?

AUNT LETTY. Pills won't help her. She has lost faith.

UNCLE ANDREW. Faith?

AUNT LETTY. She has lost the loving of living. If there were something to give her hope...(*She sniffs, holding back her tears. She picks up the cloth, uncovering the rings and dabs her eyes and nose.*) Well, I have tried, and tears won't help her. What are these green and yellow rings?

UNCLE ANDREW (*shouting*). DON'T TOUCH THEM!

AUNT LETTY (*stiffly*). I have no intention of touching them. I am looking for Digory. Have you seen him?

UNCLE ANDREW. You do not allow the boy to come to the attic.

AUNT LETTY. Poor little lad. Uprooted from his home, watching his mother grow weaker. Last night he said to

me, "Aunt Letty, I wish I were a doctor so I could make my mother well again." Bless his little heart.

UNCLE ANDREW. I dare say he is next door, playing with Polly.

AUNT LETTY. Yes, he said they were going to go—exploring. Well, it is time he washed up for dinner. And you, too, Andrew.

UNCLE ANDREW. Yes, Letty.

AUNT LETTY (*stopping at the door at back*). Rings? Why are you making green and yellow rings?

UNCLE ANDREW. They are part of my great experiment! Oh, Letty, I shall soon be the talk of London. I shall be knighted by Queen Victoria. I shall—

AUNT LETTY. It is time for dinner. Wash your hands. And please, Andrew, please try to comb your hair. (*She exits at back*.)

UNCLE ANDREW. Ah, you think I am a foolish old man, but you will see. I am about to discover the mystery of other worlds! (*He turns off bright lights. Only an eerie light spots the table. He laughs and holds up a ring.*) Yes, with these rings, I hold the secrets of the universe! (*He listens.*) What is that? It sounds like footsteps in the passage under the roof. Someone is opening the little door, coming in, under the rafters. (*He quickly hides in the shadows at side, L.*)

(*In the stillness, DIGORY, a charming, energetic young boy, with a great curiosity, enters, R. His face is lighted by the candle he carries. He looks about cautiously, then beckons to POLLY, a pretty, vivacious young girl, with a mind of her own. She follows DIGORY in, also carrying a lighted candle.*)

DIGORY. It's all right, Polly. No one is here.

POLLY. But someone has been here. We've made a mistake.
This is not the attic of the *empty* house.

DIGORY (*holding up the candle and looking around*).
Look...a zodiac...and a picture of a lion...and...look at the
strange things on the table! I wonder what they are for?

POLLY. It is not polite to be so curious.

DIGORY (*holding up the skull*). What is this?

POLLY. A skull! Of a dead man!

DIGORY. Here is a book. (*Reads title.*) "Old Magic and New
Magic." (*Picks up glasses.*) And a pair of spectacles. (*He
suddenly realizes where he is.*) Polly?

POLLY. Yes, Digory?

DIGORY. We did make a mistake. Do you know where we
are?

POLLY. No.

DIGORY. This is Aunt Letty's house.

POLLY. Your Aunt Letty's house?

DIGORY. Yes, where I am staying. (*Speaks mysteriously.*)
We...are in...Uncle Andrew's...secret attic.

POLLY. Are you sure?

DIGORY. Yes. These are his reading glasses.

POLLY. Papa says your uncle is a bit crazy.

DIGORY. Magic books. (*Amazed.*) My Uncle Andrew is a
magician!

POLLY (*whispers*). Digory...look.

DIGORY. Where?

POLLY. In the corner. (*Points to UNCLE ANDREW standing
in shadows.*) It's a ghost. I see its white head.

DIGORY. It's a demon. I see its eyes. (*Shouts.*) RUN! Run to
the passage.

UNCLE ANDREW (*turning on the bright lights and stepping forward as POLLY and DIGORY start off R*). Don't shout. And don't run. Your mother is resting in the room below.

DIGORY. Uncle Andrew!

UNCLE ANDREW. Good afternoon, Miss Polly...and Digory. (*Smiles with an idea.*) I am glad...yes, very glad you both are here...(*Speaks mysteriously.*)...in the attic.

POLLY. Glad?

UNCLE ANDREW (*thinking aloud, his voice quivering with excitement*). Two children...delivered to me...on the eve of my Great Experiment. Yes! You have been sent to me.

DIGORY (*nervously*). No. We were exploring the passage that connects the houses under the roof.

POLLY. And we thought this was the empty house.

DIGORY. And we came to explore.

UNCLE ANDREW (*whispers*). You were sent...by magic.

DIGORY. I don't believe in magic. Come on, Polly.

UNCLE ANDREW (*slyly*). Wait. If you stay, I can help you...to explore.

DIGORY. Explore? What?

UNCLE ANDREW. Miss Polly, before you leave, I would like to give you a present.

POLLY. Me?

UNCLE ANDREW (*with gloves on, motions to box*). Would you like a ring, my dear?

POLLY. Do you mean a yellow or a green one?

UNCLE ANDREW. Not a green one! But, yes, a yellow one. Choose any yellow ring you like.

POLLY (*delighted*). Well...I choose...this one.

DIGORY. Don't touch it, Polly!

POLLY (*drawing back in fear*). Why?

DIGORY. It may be...magic!

UNCLE ANDREW. But you, Digory, you said you did not believe in magic. Come, hold out your hand, my dear. I will put the ring on your finger. (*POLLY holds out her finger. UNCLE ANDREW's excitement grows with expectation.*) Now...is the moment I have waited for!

POLLY. What moment?

UNCLE ANDREW. The magic moment!

DIGORY (*fearfully*). Polly?

POLLY. Shh!

UNCLE ANDREW. Now I will say the words. One...two...three...GO! (*He puts the ring on POLLY's finger. There is a loud "swishing" sound as flight music begins. Stage lights dim out as, at the same time, a strobe light comes up. POLLY, in whirling rhythmic movements, "dances/swims" slowly across front of the stage and exits. The stage lights come up at once as the strobe light and music dim out. DIGORY and UNCLE ANDREW stand exactly where they were.*)

DIGORY. What happened? Where's Polly? She disappeared! Polly! Where is she?

UNCLE ANDREW (*shouting in triumph*). Polly is gone!

DIGORY. Gone?

UNCLE ANDREW. Vanished!

DIGORY. Vanished?

UNCLE ANDREW. She has gone out of this world! My experiment has succeeded! I will be the master of time! The master of other worlds!

DIGORY. What have you done? Where is Polly?

UNCLE ANDREW. She has gone to another place.

DIGORY. Where? How?

UNCLE ANDREW (*with mad excitement*). It all began with old Mrs. LeFay. Just before she died, she gave me a little

box and made me promise I would burn the box...unopened.

DIGORY. Did you?

UNCLE ANDREW. Certainly not.

DIGORY. But you promised her. You should keep a promise.

UNCLE ANDREW. Little boys should keep a promise, yes.

But great magicians like me, we are free from common rules.

DIGORY. Where is Polly?

UNCLE ANDREW (*continuing dramatically*). The box contained something precious...something that had been brought from other worlds.

DIGORY. Other worlds?

UNCLE ANDREW. And when I opened the lid I found—

DIGORY. What?

UNCLE ANDREW. Little packages of dust. Each packet of dust was from a different world—which, in the right form, could draw you back into that world. I have made rings from the dust.

DIGORY. And you gave Polly a yellow ring.

UNCLE ANDREW. Yes! And the magic worked! Now, we will see if we can get her back into this world.

DIGORY. But how?

UNCLE ANDREW. A green ring should draw her back.

DIGORY. Good. (*Realizes something.*) But Polly doesn't have a green ring. How can she get one?

UNCLE ANDREW. Someone must go after her. Someone who wears a yellow ring and who takes *two* green rings to bring them both back.

DIGORY. Then do it! Put the ring on and bring her back.

UNCLE ANDREW. My boy, a great general never fights at the front in a battle. He is too important. He might be killed. No. He sends...a soldier.