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## **Family Plays**

# **The Enchantress of Ipswich**

**By  
Beverly Sturgill**



# The Enchantress of Ipswich

**Drama.** *By Beverly Sturgill. Cast: 9m., 9w., with doubling.* It is 1692 and New England is consumed with witchcraft fever. A magically wise grandfather and his enchantress granddaughter brilliantly contrive to save the village of Ipswich from the terrors of nearby Salem, and all ends happily. In the summer of this year, little Ipswich is caught up in superstition. Grandfather, the Wise One, and his granddaughter, Megan, an Enchantress First Class, come from the Glen in the Land of Faerie to help the village. Soon entangled in the dishonesty and prejudice of the villagers, the unlikely pair are resolved to use their good magic only as necessary; Megan, not used to humans and short on temper, complicates the situation. Eventually, out of many turns of plot, the villagers learn a valuable lesson about bigotry, and the love story of Megan and Nat ends happily, thanks to the wise magic of Grandfather. A delightful adventure story for all. *Two settings: at Faerie Glen and the village common of Ipswich. Costumes of the time. Approximate running time: 2 hours. Code: E67.*

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## **CHARACTERS**

### **THE MAGICAL PEOPLE**

Grandfather - The Wise One

Megan - his granddaughter - Enchantress First Class

Wilda - a disobedient enchantress, always causing trouble

### **THE TOWNSPEOPLE OF IPSWICH**

Sarah Ingersoll - owner of the Ipswich Inn

Nathaniel Ingersoll - her son

Magistrate Dudley - Mayor of Ipswich

Elizabeth Dudley - his wife

Bridget Dudley - his daughter

Peter Dudley - his son

Constable Cheever - assistant to the magistrate

George Corwin - member of the village council,  
brother to Elizabeth

Martha Croley - resident of Ipswich

Timothy Croley - her son

Robert Stone - minister of Ipswich

Rachel Stone - his daughter

Joanna Sheldon - hired girl, friend to Rachel & Anne

Anne Williams - friend to Joanna & Rachel, orphan

Samuel Tompson - friend to Nat

Note: By doubling all roles may be played by 9 males and 9 females.  
Ideal for appropriate age casting.

**TIME** - - 1692 New England

**PLACE** - - the Village of Ipswich

**SETTINGS** - - A Faerie Glen in the woods  
The Village Common of Ipswich

Costumes of the Time.

ACT I

SCENE 1

*(As the curtain opens, it is early morning in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Samuel is sitting on the bench D. L. whittling. Timothy Croley & Peter Dudley are standing next to him. Sam is in his late teens. Tim and Peter are age 10. Peter is excited about the dice he has just made and is showing Timothy.)*

PETER: It took me half the night to carve them.

TIMOTHY: Let me see.

PETER: What do you think, Timothy?

TIMOTHY: They're beautiful.

SAMUEL: *(Reaches over and takes them.)* I couldn't have done a finer work of making these dice. Thank ye, Peter.

PETER: Give them back!

SAMUEL: Shame. Reverend Stone has no use for anyone who plays with dice, especially a magistrate's son.

PETER: He's not in Ipswich, remember. The minister's at the witchcraft trials in Salem.

SAMUEL: Ah yes, the trials. Well then, he wouldn't mind our having a little game or two to while the time away.

TIMOTHY: Think Nat would like to play?

*(Walks over to the inn, Sam follows.)*

SAMUEL: We'll soon see. *(Shouts.)* Nat, come out here. We be wont to show you something.



NATHANIEL: *(Coming out of inn.)* Well, well, if it isn't the village gadabout, and what mischief are ye planning today?

SAMUEL: I made these dice.

PETER: . . . but I made them!

SAMUEL: *(Shaking finger at him.)* Peter, what are we going to do about all these lies ye be telling lately? Anyway, Nat, how'd ye like to win some schillings from me?

NATHANIEL: I don't think so. I've never won anything from you. You cheat.

SAMUEL: Be a sport. I challenge ye to a game. Peter, Tim, you can be the judge as to who cheats.

TIMOTHY: Some fun!

NATHANIEL: Make it a fast one. If my mother finds me out here playing dice, she'll increase my chores tenfold.

*(Sam goes down center, draws out circle with toe. As he is doing this, George Corwin has entered and is watching. He is now standing directly behind the boys. They do not see him.)*

SAMUEL: To make it fair, the dice have to stay within this circle. Nat, ye may have the first try. Tim, Peter, one of you be on each side of the circle. I think we be ready now to begin the game.

*(They are down on the ground now. Corwin is the only one standing.)*

CORWIN: Naughty, naughty, naughty! Here, 'tis 1692 and you lads think you can get away with anything. The minister leaves for one week, puts me in charge, and just because ye think I'm stupid.

SAMUEL: . . . stupid? . . . not George Corwin! *(They all look at each other and shake heads yes.)*

CORWIN: *(He's too busy lecturing to see their action.)* Yes, stupid. Ye believe I will let you do anything. Now, what do ye have to say for yourself?

NATHANIEL: Want to play?

CORWIN: Certainly not!

SAMUEL: We play for money.

*(Holds out coin, waves it in circle. Corwin's eyes follow it. When Sam puts it on ground, George quickly kneels beside him.)*

CORWIN: Money? *(He looks around.)* All right, but just one little game. *(Takes dice.)* Here's my coin. *(Puts down gold coin.)*

SAMUEL: A gold coin! That's a lot of money. *(He whispers to the other boys.)* He won't have that for long.

TIMOTHY: Oh no, look who's coming.

PETER: My father! Run!

SAMUEL: I think we'd better . . .

NATHANIEL: Get out of here.

*(Sam grabs his coin, they run off stage right as Constable and Magistrate Dudley enter. Corwin is on ground shaking dice, totally unaware he is all alone.)*

CORWIN: I hear thee rattling, little dice. Rattle a lucky number for poor George Corwin. *(Throws dice.)* Ah, hah!

MAGISTRATE: Inspecting the village green, Corwin?

CORWIN: Ah, no sir, I ah . . . I ah . . .

*(The Magistrate starts to laugh, as does the Constable, ominously. Corwin, relieved, begins to laugh also.)*

MAGISTRATE: Speak when you are being addressed, you nit wit.

CORWIN: No, sir, I mean, yes sir. I found a coin. Yes, a coin right here in the sand. *(He replaces dice with a coin in his hand.)*

CONSTABLE: In the sand? I don't believe you, George.

CORWIN: Well, actually I found it in the treasury.

MAGISTRATE: The treasury? Corwin, you know what we did with the Ipswich Village money.

CORWIN: No, your royal magistrate, I don't know.

CONSTABLE: Oh, but you do! You were there when we took all the money from the village treasury, every single coin. *(Constable now has Corwin nose to nose as he speaks to him.)*

CORWIN: Every single coin? I guess ye must have forgotten this one.

MAGISTRATE: *(Swings Corwin around so he now has him nose to nose.)* Then we invested every bit of it in a cargo ship to bring back riches from the West Indies, except for the coin you stole.

CONSTABLE: *(Pulls Corwin back to him.)* We don't want the village to know about our little venture, Corwin. That gold coin would make people suspicious.

*(Pushes him away, he falls.)*

CORWIN: *(He gets up.)* Oh, it's a secret. Sssshhh . . .

MAGISTRATE: Now, we're going to get the money back, of course . . .  
with a little interest for us.

*(He slaps Corwin on the back so hard that he is on  
ground again.)*

CONSTABLE: 'Tis true, and we will keep that gold coin to remind us,  
huh, Corwin.

*(Takes coin, slaps Corwin on back just as he has gotten  
up. He is on ground once more.)*

MAGISTRATE: *(He takes coin from Constable.)* Ah yes, if there is  
anyone in Ipswich who deserves to be rich, we are the  
ones. Stand up, Corwin! Why are ye always on the  
ground?

*(Sarah Ingersoll comes out of inn. Sarah and her  
husband own it. In those days, an inn was much like a  
general store, in addition to being a haven for travellers.)*

SARAH: There ye be, Magistrate Dudley.

MAGISTRATE: Ah, good morning, Sarah. When will Captain  
Ingersoll's ship be in from England?

SARAH: My husband should be sailing into the bay within the  
month. Speaking of ships, this letter just came for ye.

MAGISTRATE: *(Big smile on face.)* Ah, the letter.

SARAH: *(Holding up letter to see if she can see what it says  
through paper.)* 'Tis from some shipping line. Let me  
see . . . it says . . .

MAGISTRATE: (*Snatching letter from her.*) Never mind what it says. I am perfectly capable of reading my own postage, Madam.

SARAH: Then do it! Have ye seen Nathaniel?

MAGISTRATE: I haven't time to keep watch over your son. If he were mine, it would be the whipping post for him at least once a week.

SARAH: (*Bristling.*) Well, he's not and I will thank ye to take care of the village affairs and not mine, Magistrate Dudley.  
(*She stomps into inn, slams door.*)

MAGISTRATE: That woman offends me. (*Opens letter.*)

CONSTABLE: I don't think she likes you either. Well, how much money have we made?

MAGISTRATE: No, it can't be! Oh no . . .

(*Constable guides distraught Magistrate to bench.*)

CORWIN: Here, let me help you.

MAGISTRATE: (*Moaning.*) We're ruined. What are we going to do?  
(*Hands letter to Constable.*)

CONSTABLE: (*Reading letter.*) It is with deep regret we must inform you that your ship, the Dolphin, was lost in a storm off the coast of the West Indies. That means . . .

MAGISTRATE: We have lost everything . . . the ship, the cargo, the village treasury.

CORWIN & CONSTABLE: . . . the village treasury?

CONSTABLE: Oh, no.

MAGISTRATE: How do we pay back the money we have taken? How?

CORWIN: I know. We could all work.

MAGISTRATE: Very funny.

CORWIN: Double the taxes.

CONSTABLE: They are already doubled.

MAGISTRATE: Enough! Come, let us go into the church and . . .

CORWIN: . . . kill ourselves!

MAGISTRATE: Come up with a plan to replace all that money.

CONSTABLE: I fear for our lives if the village discovers what we've done.

MAGISTRATE: I haven't been in this much trouble.

CORWIN: Since the last time. Don't worry! George Corwin is here to save the day. I will become a highway robber and rescue damsels in distress and ask for rewards. *(He is brandishing imaginary sword.)* I can . . .

MAGISTRATE: *(Is on top stair of church.)* Corwin, come in here.

CORWIN: Coming.

*(As they exit into church, Peter tiptoes in.)*

SAMUEL: Be they gone? *(Sam, Tim, & Nat hide by side of inn as Peter looks.)*

PETER: . . . gone. You can come out.

SAMUEL: Are the dice where we left them?

PETER: They seem to have disappeared.

TIMOTHY: That ends all our fun.

PETER: Now what is there to do?

NATHANIEL: You could help me with my chores.

SAMUEL: And ruin the day altogether. No thank you, Nat.

SARAH: Nat! Nat, am I hearing your voice out there?

NATHANIEL: Hide me quick before she sees me.

*(The boys stand in front of him as Sarah comes out the door.)*

SARAH: All right, where is he? I know Nat's out here somewhere.

SAMUEL: 'Twas my voice you heard, Mistress Ingersoll. We sound very much alike.

SARAH: As soon as he comes out of hiding, tell Nat he is to finish his work right now. Any delay and there will be twice the chores to do.

*(Mistress Elizabeth Dudley comes sweeping in. Her daughter, Bridget, is close behind. Bridget sinks onto the bench by the tree.)*

BRIDGET: Mama, must ye walk so fast? You know how it wearies me to follow at such a fast pace. Don't take too long because I'm feeling faint.

ELIZABETH: Sarah, don't go away. I need to talk with thee. Here, Bridget, take these smelling salts I have in my purse.  
*(She is finding them.)*

SARAH:           *(Sighs.)* I was hoping to get through the day without a visit from the Queen of Ipswich.

*(Peter see his mother, nudges Tim.)*

PETER:           Ye were asking how I come by so much money. Watch and I'll show ye how to get rich fast.

ELIZABETH:      *(Has given salts to Bridget, looks around.)* Has anyone seen Magistrate Dudley?

PETER:           *(Tugging at her sleeve.)* Mother.

SAMUEL:          I think he's in the church with the Constable and Corwin.

*(Nat is standing behind him so he won't be seen by his mother.)*

ELIZABETH:      Will someone tell him his wife is out here waiting to speak with him.

PETER:           Mother!

ELIZABETH:      *(Without even looking at him.)* Peter, don't bother me. Here's a schilling. Go buy something.

*(Peter holds up coin triumphantly, shows to Tim.)*

Well, who's going to deliver my message?

*(No one moves.)*

SAMUEL:          *(Knowing if he moves, Nat will be discovered.)* There's a ketch in my leg.

TIMOTHY:         *(Standing next to Sam.)* Mine too.

ELIZABETH:      Never mind, you lazy louts! Peter, tell your father I need him.



*(Peter runs into church. She walks over to Sarah.)*

ELIZABETH: Good morning, Sarah.

SARAH: What is it you need, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH: Sarah, it is not permissible for you to call me by my first name. I am the Magistrate's wife, remember.

SARAH: Forgive me, I should have known better. Good day, Mistress Dudley.

ELIZABETH: That's better. I have so many purchases to make. I brought you this list myself. *(She hands Sarah her list which is so long it almost reaches the floor.)*

SARAH: And how do ye intend to get everything on this list home? You'll need a horse and cart.

MAGISTRATE: *(Comes out of church, followed by Corwin & Peter.)*  
Elizabeth, my dear, you were looking for me?

PETER: *(Tugging on his sleeve.)* Father.

ELIZABETH: Indeed I was. I am shopping and need more money.

PETER: Father.

MAGISTRATE: Don't bother me, Peter. Here's a schilling. Go buy something.

*(Hands him Corwin's gold coin without realizing it. Peter is ecstatic, runs and shows Tim.)*

My love, you spent a great deal yesterday. Money does not grow on trees.

CORWIN: . . . or cargo ships.

MAGISTRATE: (*Laughs.*) What a silly thing to say, Corwin. Give her some money.

CORWIN: But there be none. It's all sunk.

ELIZABETH: Sunk?

MAGISTRATE: He means it's all sunk in big bags in the treasury, my dear. Lend her some money, Corwin. I left mine at home.

CORWIN: (*Reproachfully.*) I have so little.

MAGISTRATE: The littler the better.

(*Corwin gives what he has.*)

There you go, sweetheart.

ELIZABETH: That will not begin to buy what I need.

MAGISTRATE: Then ask for credit. I haven't time to be bothered. I have urgent business at hand.

CORWIN: Yes, he does. He certainly does. Any hand will do if it has mon . . .

MAGISTRATE: (*Slaps hand over his mouth.*) Come, my bag of wind of a brother-in-law.

(*They exit.*)

ELIZABETH: (*Shouting.*) Just wait till I get you home, husband.  
(*Speaks in a sickening sweet voice.*) Sarah, dear, with so little money to buy all that I need, I'm sure you'll allow me all the credit I need. Oh dear, where did I put my list?

SARAH: You gave it to me, Mistress Dudley.