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EASTER EGGS
By Miriam Gallagher

C H A R A C T E R S

MAGICIAN
MABEL
OWEN
LUCY
DIANA
ROBIN
MRS. LOCKETT

S E T

The action of the play takes place in Mabel's Magic Party Place and can be played on a bare stage with USC. opening (through black curtains) and SR. and SL. entrances.

(PLAY opens with MUSIC in B/G. Then a magic puff & bang. MUSIC fades. LIGHTS up. MAGICIAN waves wand, watched by MABEL in vivid kimono/dress and matching turban, dangling earrings, bracelets. THEY laugh. USC. SHE puts balloons & streamers on table. MAGICIAN wears vivid kimono/gown, and has matching pedlar's bag. HE holds up an Easter egg)

MAGICIAN. *(waves wand over egg)* Fizz wisshoo! This is a magic Easter egg. Inside I've put a pearl. Whoever chooses this becomes a brave and happy boy or girl. Peace and joy will go with them and all disasters vanish. The pearl of wisdom will be theirs as *(waves wand over egg)* Dread and woe I banish! *(MABEL puts magic egg on table, gives him another egg. HE holds this up)* But those who pick the empty egg choose dread and pain and woe! Disappointment, fear and grief be theirs for evermore!

(As MRS. LOCKETT ENTERS DSR. MAGICIAN places egg on table covers both with cloth, disappears USC. Mabel laughs, then greets MRS. LOCKETT. She wears a fur coat, looks rich and a bit vulgar. She talks fast in a posh accent glances around)

MRS. LOCKETT. *(suspicious)* So this is Mabel's Magic Party Place?

MABEL. *(proud)* Yes it is *(takes her arm)* Now Mrs. Lockett who is coming?

MRS. LOCKETT. My baby girl, Sweet Birthday Lucy *(counts on fingers)* Robin, Owen and Diana. Sam and Jason have got measles. Thanks be Lucy didn't catch them *(sniffs)* At Cub scout games germs are bound to congregate!

MABEL. *(interrupts)* That's fine

MRS.LOCKETT. I've got some crackers for the *(pauses)* darlings and special Easter eggs out in the Daimler *(moves to go, stops)* The cake is iced with raspberry and -

MABEL. *(interrupts)* Yes

MRS.LOCKETT. Oh good! Is the magician here?

MABEL. Yes

MRS.LOCKETT. Oh good! *(doubtful)* The cake is....?

MABEL. *(takes her arm)* Come and see !

(MABEL leads her off SL. ENTER SR. OWEN, a Scamp (seven yrs.) firing catapult. HE peers after his "shot", sniffs, comes DS.)

OWEN. *(to Audience)* Ma made me come to Lucy's birthday. Little piglet. AND her mother, Mrs.Lockett! *(mimics)* "Wash your hands Boys! Little Robin, Sit near Lucy! Move UP Owen!" *(sighs)* Grown-ups really are the END! *(malevolent)* Like Mr.Lockett. He got lucky. Lots of money in his pocket.He's got about a million factories belching smoke all over cities *(darkly)* Poison for the trees and people *(pauses)* Teacher says Pollution's wicked.

(As MABEL and MRS.LOCKETT ENTER SL. OWEN hides USR.)

MRS.LOCKETT. *(turns to MABEL)* I want no horse play - but lots of smiling. Lots of goodies for My Darling *(pauses)* AND the other children too. BUT guests must yield to Birthday Lucy

MABEL . You needn't fear for any child who comes to Mabel's

MRS.LOCKETT. *(suspicious)* What will happen at the party?

MABEL. *(cheery)* You never can be sure with magic

MRS.LOCKETT. *(looks alarmed)* And the magician....?

MABEL. *(takes her arm)* Come and see!

(MABEL leads her through USC. Opening. OWEN comes DS.)

OWEN. When Teacher spoke at Parents Evening ALL about the smoke from factories Lucy's father didn't listen *(proud)* Then she pointed to my picture - Best and blackest in the classroom. Bursts of smoke and people CHOKING - AND for baby eating Liga milk is jet black in his bottle *(mimes spitting out milk, then matter of fact)* That's the best bit for Pollution - Getting babies with their Liga!

(As MABEL and MRS.LOCKETT ENTER USC. OWEN hides USL.)

MRS.LOCKETT. *(cross)* Puffs and bangs may sound like fun but Lucy's rather shy and gentle *(mutters)* Magic spells...

MABEL. *(smiling)* There'll be plenty of surprises

MRS.LOCKETT. Yes but are they safe?

MABEL. *(smiles)* A celebration *(a beat)* is fun - Not safe. A child must see there's more to Life than rules

MRS.LOCKETT. But children can be cruel - little monsters - Tear each other limb from limb. I've seen it happen *(OWEN grins)*

MABEL. *(cheery)* Why don't we take that chance?

MRS.LOCKETT. *(aghast)* At Lucy's party? *(OWEN is delighted)*

MABEL. Fun is what the kiddies long for *(laughs)* Peanuts buns

MRS.LOCKETT. *(interrupts)* It's not the Zoo!

MABEL. *(patient)* I thought you said a Celebration

MRS. LOCKETT. *(pauses)* Yes *(glances around, moves to go)*

MABEL. I'll see you off then Mrs.Lockett. You needn't fear

(MABEL takes MRS. LOCKETT off DSR. OWEN aims catapult, comes DS.)

OWEN. Mrs. Lockett's coat is made of FUR! *(pauses)* As Teacher didn't tell the parents of the little baby minkies slaughtered for their coats all furry, I told this news to Lucy's mother- AND her FACE, all lipstick smiling became as grim as Black Pollution and *(smiles)* Her eyes were simply blazing! *(matter of fact)* Then Teacher took her to the corner where you go if you've done something *(scuffs floor with shoe)* Out in the yard I got a belting from me ma *(in disbelief)* for HELPING Teacher!

(CHILDREN'S VOICES heard. MABEL enters DSR. with CHILDREN in party clothes. LUCY is large and lumbering, DIANA petite, ROBIN a wee fellow. OWEN secretly sticks out tongue at LUCY)

MABEL. Here you can play any game. The choice is yours. I'll fix the treasure hunt. When it's time you'll hear a magic noise

ROBIN. Like what?

MABEL. Just listen hard and later there'll be magic spells

(MABEL goes USC. decorates stage with balloons etc. LUCY chases DIANA off SL. Their voices heard off-stage. BOYS are DS.)

OWEN. Only girls believe in magic

ROBIN. Boys do too

OWEN. You're a sissy. Magic is for girls

MABEL. *(stops, turns)* What's that I hear? What was it? Someone not – believe in magic? Who?

ROBIN. *(quickly)* I do. We all do *(OWEN glares at him)* even Lucy

MABEL. *(gentle)* Cos if you don't Mabel's Magic Party Place is not for you. Rainbow magic only works if you believe

(SHE ensures eggs are hidden by cloth on table, EXITS USC.)

OWEN. Come on!

(As GIRLS ENTER with balloons, BOYS chase them, OWEN grabs LUCY'S balloon. SHE chases him, bursts balloon, scaring ROBIN and DIANA)

OWEN. Bursting balloons! That's just for babies. You'll not scare me

DIANA. *(timid)* Let's play Tell -a -Story

LUCY. Bags start

OWEN. Why?

LUCY. Because it is my birthday Stupid. I must get my wishes

DIANA. You'll wish later blowing out your candles. Now let's all have fun

OWEN. That means us as well as you

LUCY. Belt up Owen!

ROBIN. I'd like to start

LUCY. *(cuffing him, HE cries)* Belt up! It's not your party

OWEN. You'd best belt up or else *(goads her, aided by ROBIN)*

LUCY. *(pushes them off)* Oh belt up Boys! You're a disaster at My magic birthday party

OWEN. We'll draw lots

(ALL pick streamers. ROBIN, picks shortest one, wins. ALL sit)

ROBIN. I win *(brave)* Me first *(showing off)* Once

LUCY. There

OWEN. Was

DIANA. A

ROBIN. Big

LUCY. Huge

OWEN. Ugly

DIANA. Scary

ROBIN. Giant

LUCY. Who

OWEN. Gobbled and gobbled and gobbled

DIANA. Boys

ROBIN. Girls

LUCY. And

OWEN. People

DIANA. Yummy

ROBIN. He

LUCY. Growled

OWEN. Greedy

DIANA. Guts

(THEY laugh, share sweets. During rest of story MAGICIAN unseen seen by CHILDREN, peers out USC. from time to time)

ROBIN. Who *(glancing around)*

LUCY. Will

OWEN. I

DIANA. Gobble
ROBIN. Today?
LUCY. And
OWEN. He
DIANA. Rubbed
ROBIN. His
LUCY. Big
OWEN. Belly *(ALL laugh)*
DIANA. Full
ROBIN. Of
LUCY. People
OWEN. Best
DIANA. Of
ROBIN. All
LUCY. He
OWEN. Loved
DIANA. Eating
ROBIN. Young
LUCY. Juicy
OWEN. Children *(THEY all grimace UGH!)*
DIANA. He
ROBIN. Got
LUCY. Fatter
OWEN. And fatter
DIANA. Till he burst *(THEY giggle)*
ROBIN. Full

LUCY. Of

OWEN. Little juicy –

(MAGICIAN EXITS USC. MAGIC NOISE. As EXEUNT USC. OWEN pulls LUCY'S hair. Her hair ribbon falls. MRS. LOCKETT ENTERS SR.with basket)

MRS.LOCKETT. Good Lord! The magic's started *(yells heard)* Was that Lucy? *(sees ribbon)* I knew they'd tear each other limb from limb. Little piglets - Always gobbling They get plenty. I ask you is plenty not enough? *(holds up eggs)* Wooden eggs for looking at instead of gobbling *(sighs)* An Easter birthday rolls two celebrations into one. Simpler too for Lucy's Daddy. His head so full of business worries. Factory workers making trouble! Such a fuss! At least they've GOT jobs not like some. Lucy seldom sees her Daddy. His life is simply FAR too full for celebrations!

(As MAGICIAN ENTERS USC. MRS.LOCKETT stares at him. HE gets wand from bag. LIGHTS flicker as HE does spell)

MAGICIAN. *(waving wand)* Fizz wisshoo! *(after inscribing circle on stage with wand, suddenly whirls around facing MRS. LOCKETT)* Oh ho! Who's there?

MRS. LOCKETT. It's me. Mrs. Lockett, Lucy's mother *(over to him)* Now then I want the minimum of puffs and bangs. The children must be fed at five and leave at seven.Lucy's rather shy and gentle so she MUST win at guessing games

MAGICIAN. *(amazed)* Who are you talking to?

MRS.LOCKETT. To you of course

MAGICIAN. Good Madam! I am not your servant. I make magic

MRS. LOCKETT. *(cross)* Yes I know and you're employed to do my bidding for the afternoon

MAGICIAN. Oh ho! Not so!

MRS.LOCKETT. *(amazed)* Not so! I have paid you *(hard)* At the going rate and you will do my bidding *(stares)* Obey my rules!

MAGICIAN. Madam, you can't buy magic!

MRS.LOCKETT. *(protests)* but I have PAID you

MAGICIAN. *(interrupts)* Do not interfere !

MRS.LOCKETT. *(splutters)* Interfere! Why, I am in charge here

MAGICIAN. Not now!

MRS.LOCKETT. What?

(LIGHTS Flicker. MRS. LOCKETT is alarmed)

MAGICIAN. *(waves wand)* Now this space *(inscribes a circle around her on stage)* is magic ONLY if you are a child!

MRS.LOCKETT. *(protests)* Not so!

MAGICIAN. You must become a child or *(waves wand)* Go!

MRS.LOCKETT. *(horrified)* Become a child! Oh no!

MAGICIAN. Then *(whips off cloth uncovering Easter eggs)* Choose the pearl of wisdom! *(recites)* One of these eggs is magic. Inside I've put a pearl. Whoever chooses this becomes a brave and happy boy or girl –

MRS.LOCKETT. *(protests)* I don't want to be a boy or girl *(pauses)* I'm a grownup

MAGICIAN. Then choose the pearl of wisdom - if you dare! *(recites)* But those who pick the empty egg choose dread and pain and woe. Disappointment, fear and grief be theirs for evermore! *(As she hesitates)* Choose!

(SHE picks an egg. He shows her it's empty. SHE tries to escape)

MAGICIAN. You must become invisible *(waves wand)* Disappear!

(Scary MUSIC/BLACKOUT. SHE disappears. LIGHTS up. CHILDREN laugh playing Blind man's Bluff. ROBIN catches DIANA amid squeals. SHE catches OWEN who ties scarf around LUCY'S eyes)

LUCY. Ouch! that's too tight

OWEN. You must be really blind to make it work

LUCY. That's not fair

DIANA. It's not a game of "Fair" silly!

ROBIN. It's a game of risk

OWEN. Come on! Now!

(HE whirls LUCY around, OTHERS giggle, SHE tries to catch them. OWEN signals creeping off SL. THEY go. LUCY is alone, stretches out arms to catch someone. LIGHTS flicker)

MRS.LOCKETT. *(whispers off, in other world voice)* Lucy, Lucy!

LUCY. *(stops suddenly)* Who's there?

MRS.LOCKETT. Leave this magic place at once. It's full of risk and strange adventures. I know because I'm trapped

LUCY. *(wrenches off scarf)* What? My mother? She can't be here. Not at my party

MRS.LOCKETT. *(fading)* I'm trapped inside a spell

LUCY. A spell!

(LUCY looks around confused. CHILDREN ENTER SL. DIANA shakes HER)

DIANA. Hey! you look as if you've seen a ghost

LUCY. What happened?

ROBIN. Probably a magic spell

(MAGICIAN & MABEL ENTER USC. As HE waves wand, MUSIC, LIGHTS change/ CHILDREN stare as MABEL whips off cloth to uncover eggs)

MAGICIAN. *(waving wand over eggs)* Fizz whisshoo! *(recites)* One of these eggs is magic. Inside I've put a pearl. Whoever chooses this becomes a brave and happy boy or girl. Peace and joy will go with them and all disasters vanish. The pearl of wisdom will be theirs as *(waving wand)* Dread and woe I banish! *(pauses)* But those who pick the empty egg choose dread and pain and woe! Disappointment, fear and grief be theirs for evermore!

(CHILDREN in turn pick an egg, Robin and Diana eagerly, LUCY slowly, OWEN hesitantly . MABEL covers eggs, pauses, uncovers eggs for each child. THEY'RE excited when MABEL shows the pearl each time from inside the chosen egg. LIGHTS flicker)

MAGICIAN. The pearl of wisdom will be yours as *(waves wand)* Dread and woe I banish! Peace and joy will go with you and all disasters vanish!

(MABEL gives each CHILD a shiny Easter egg from her pocket. MUSIC fades. LIGHTS change)

DIANA. Can we play hide and seek now?

MAGICIAN. Off you go *(smiles)* For Life's a game of hide and seek. The search is all that matters - and the mystery

ROBIN. Come on!

OWEN. (to LUCY) Who's a scaredy cat?

(LUCY chases him. CHILDREN run off SR. with eggs, laugh. Voices off playing hide and seek (counting) Then "I'm coming to get you!" MAGICIAN and MABEL laugh. As HE packs bag & EXITS USC. SHE goes extreme SL. Voices off fainter. LIGHTS dim as MABEL brings birthday cake with seven lighted candles, puts it on table USC. SHE inspects cake, then EXITS USC. Scary LIGHT on cake. Scary MUSIC faint Voices of CHILDREN in B/G, through which we hear a whisper)

MRS. LOCKETT. *(whispers in other world voice)* Lucy! Lucy!

(Scary MUSIC builds to crescendo. A magic puff & bang. BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)

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