DESPERATE FOR MAGIC

Monologues for Teen Actors

By Chambers Stevens

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DEDICATION

"Desperate for Magic" is dedicated to the memory of Norma Joyce Stevens Chambers.

STORY OF THE PLAY

In 12 incisive monologues Chambers Stevens has mined the hearts, soul and psyches of today's teenagers.

This play was made possible by The Tennessee Arts Commission's Ingram Fellowship and the Tennessee Art Foundation. *Desperate for Magic* was first produced by The Nashville Shakespeare Festival. In Los Angeles, it was produced at Theatre Geo and won the Backstage Garland Award.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Desperate for Magic originally was written as a one-man show. Dressed in black pants and a black T-shirt, I played all of the characters, male and female. Very few props were used. And there were no costume changes. The transitions between scenes were done with lights and I had to convey the character changes using only my body.

Since the original production other directors have added actors to play the different characters. Sometimes girls have played the guys' parts and vice versa. Some directors have used a lot of costumes. Some have kept with the original intent.

Let your imagination be your guide,

Chambers Stevens

MONOLOGUES

1. BEGIN - *(M or F)* The power of magic and of dreams.
2. POWER - *(M or F)* Sweet dreams with a subliminal tape.
3. HAPPY - *(M)* A dealer pushes big dreams.
4. FAME - *(F)* Becky Rice dreams of fame!
5. BABYSAT - *(M)* Dreams of Little League and more.
6. DRUNK - *(M or F)* Depending on a higher power.
7. SPELLING - *(F)* Sicily Morningstar can d-r-e-a-m.
8. VOMIT - *(F)* Wendy's dream of a perfect body.
9. SHY - *(M or F)* Dreaming of a perfect world.
10. SOUL - *(M)* White Boy dreams of gettin' soul.
11. DEAF - *(M or F)* The power in silence.
12. GRADUATION - *(M or F)* Tomorrow's dreams...and reality.

1. BEGIN

(The LIGHTS come up to reveal a stool at CS. The ACTOR enters, sits on the stool and begins.)

ACTOR: When's the last time you thought about magic? Remember when you were a kid and you dreamed about being a sorcerer? Like Merlin. Or a superhero. Or maybe you females out there wanted to be Samatha from "Bewitched." Remember that? When you thought anything was possible. You looked at Spiderman and said, "Yep, someday I'll be able to shoot webs out of my hands and climb a building." And you looked at Captain Kirk and said, "Yep, someday I'll be able to fly a space ship." And then you watched "Star Wars" and you heard about the Force. And you knew like Luke Skywalker, you had this magical force in you and that someday you would use it to defeat evil throughout the galaxy. Well, today is someday. And there's still evil out there. What happened? If you're like me you went to school and your teacher called you a dreamer. And your relatives said, "Be realistic." Or maybe you went to church and your preacher said, "Yes, there was Magic, but only Jesus and a couple of prophets could really do anything good, so forget it." So you put away your childish things and that was that. Right? Right.

Unfortunately for me, I told one more person about my dreams of magic. My mom. I told her about how I had this force in me and how I thought I could be a superhero and all kinds of wild things. And you know what she said to me? Nothing. She just smiled and nodded like everything I had just said was true. That was a lousy thing to do to a kid. 'Cause from that moment on I went from believing in magic to being <u>obsessed</u> with magic; not pulling a rabbit out of a hat or changing a scarf into flowers. I was never any good at those cheap tricks. No, I wanted to be like the great illusionist, Harry Houdini.

I wanted to float in midair, walk through brick walls, escape from big ole tanks of water while being hung upside down. You know, things that would really come in handy for show and tell.

So one day I'm reading one of my Spiderman comics and there on the back cover is an ad, "Sell Seeds for Prizes." See, you could sell packages of vegetable seeds and win all kinds of things. They had pictures of go-carts, chemistry sets, x-ray glasses. And there in the corner was a picture of a book, "The Secrets of Harry Houdini." I sent in my little seed coupon and within a week I was in business.

Every day after school I went around the neighborhood pawning off my little packages of watermelon, cucumber and Big Boy tomato seeds. I had a great sales pitch. I'd walk up to those potential weekend gardeners and I'd tell them how great homegrown vegetables taste. My angle was, these vegetables must be good, even kids like them. But if that didn't work I'd say, "Don't be a weenie, buy some zucchini." That always got them. No one likes to be called a weenie by a 10-year-old seed salesman.

And when I sold my 450th package of seeds - thank you very much - I sent in my money for "The Secrets of Harry Houdini." And in six weeks I got a package. A small, shiny, red book that held the secrets of the master. I was so excited! I'd been planning for weeks all the magical things I would do. First, I'd fly a couple of times around the neighborhood. Then I'd saw my annoying little brother in half. And then I'd turn invisible and watch my baby-sitter, who lived up the street, take a shower.

The book was fascinating. It told all about Houdini's life, and like the title promised, even had the secrets to his tricks. To my little fourth grade eyes some of the secrets were pretty erotic.

Like when he would go to a new town and do his infamous handcuff escape trick, he'd have the local policemen strip search him to make sure he wasn't secretly carrying a key. Then just before they would put him naked and handcuffed into a jail, Houdini's wife would give him this long and passionate good luck kiss and with her tongue slip him a paper clip. I read the whole book in an hour! When I'd finished it, I sat on my front porch and a wave of emotion hit me. And I started to cry. It wasn't that the book was a phony. They were the real secrets to Houdini's tricks. It's just those tricks weren't magic. They were just "tricks."

But then just as I was about to throw the book away, I noticed there was a one-page epilogue I hadn't read yet. It told a story about how one night, toward the end of Houdini's life, he had a dream, about a young boy who attempted one of his illusions, but without the mirrors and tricks. And it worked! Supposedly, Houdini dreamed this with such detail that the next day on stage, he tried the same illusion himself, an illusion he had been doing for 40 years, but this time without the tricks. And it worked for him, too! Houdini said his whole life he had searched for "real magic." And that night he'd found it.

See, Houdini knew from people that study dreams, Carl Jung and people like that, that all the people you dream about are all really just a part of you. And everything they can do, you can do. Because dreaming is just the way your mind searches for possibilities. So Houdini said the little boy he had dreamed about was just the magical part of him! This blew me away. Real magic. I mean think about it. Late at night when our heads hit that pillow and we dream of this elaborate play, we're every character, every actor all searching for magic!

THE END

End of Freeview

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