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Mr A's Amazing Maze Plays

A play

Alan Ayckbourn

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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MR A'S AMAZING MAZE PLAYS

First performed at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round, Scarborough on 30th November, 1988 with the following cast:

Suzy	Kerry Peers
Neville	Adam Godley
Mother	Victoria Carling
Father	Richard Brain
Mr Accousticus	Roger Forbes
Mr Passerby	John Branwell
1st Narrator	Graeme Eton
2nd Narrator	Philip Fox

Directed by Alan Ayckbourn
Designed by Michael Holt
Lighting by Mick Thomas

Subsequently performed in the Cottesloe Theatre at the Royal National Theatre on 4th March, 1992 with the following cast:

Suzy	Judith McSpadden
Neville	Adam Godley
Mother	Georgie Glen
Father	Richard Long
Mr Accousticus	Glyn Grain
Mr Passerby	John Branwell
1st Narrator	Graeme Eton
2nd Narrator	James Simmons

Directed by Alan Ayckbourn
Designed by Roger Glossop
Lighting by Mick Hughes
Sound by Freya Edwards

Suzy
Neville, her dog
Mother
Father
Mr Accousticus
Mr Passerby
1st Narrator
2nd Narrator

The action takes place in and around Suzy's cottage and in Mr Accousticus's house

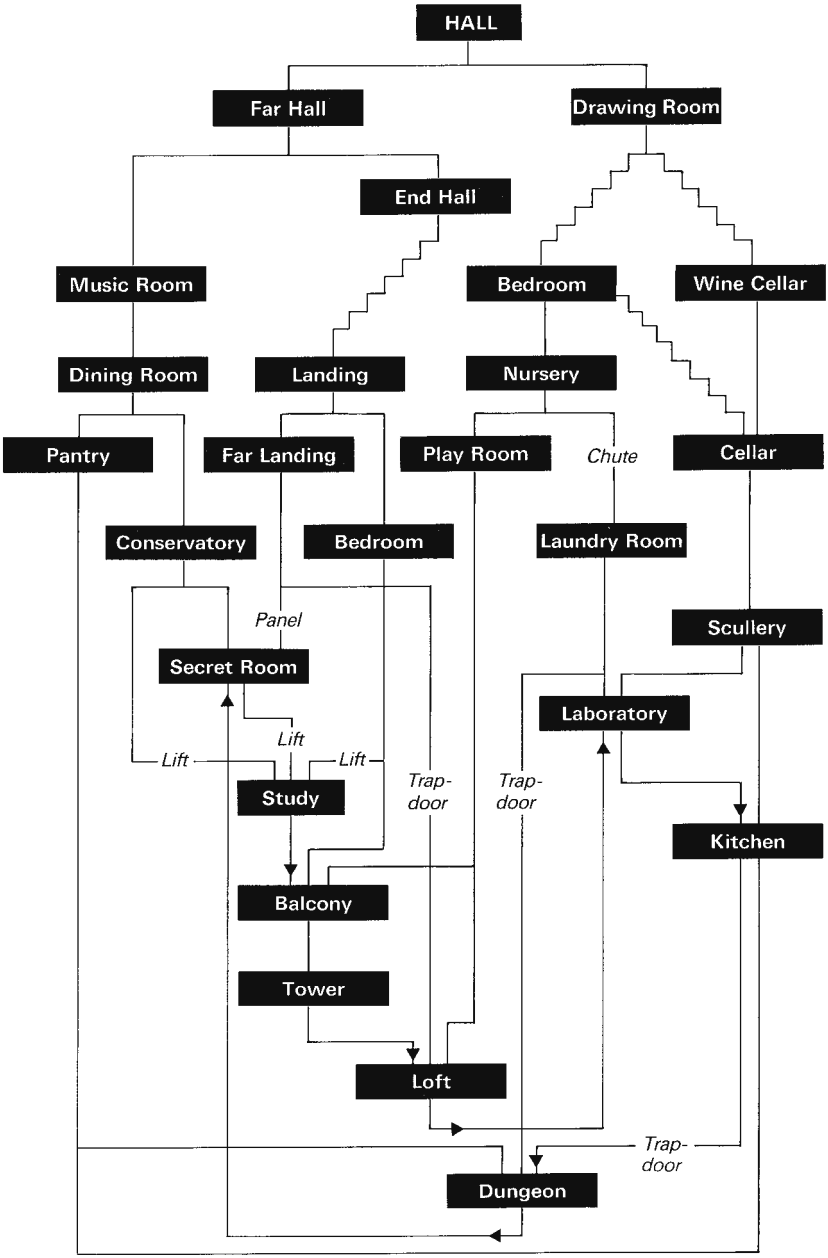
Time — the present

Other plays by Alan Ayckbourn published by Samuel French Ltd:

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Absurd Person Singular
Bedroom Farce
Chorus of Disapproval
Confusions
A Cut in the Rates
Ernie's Incredible Illucinations
Henceforward ...
How the Other Half Loves
Intimate Exchanges Volume 1
Intimate Exchanges Volume 2
Joking Apart
Just Between Ourselves
Living Together
Man of the Moment
Mixed Doubles (with other authors)
Mr Whatnot
Norman Conquests
Relatively Speaking
The Revengers' Comedies
Round and Round the Garden
Season's Greetings
Sisterly Feelings
A Small Family Business
Suburban Strains
Table Manners
Taking Steps
Ten Times Table
Time and Time Again
Tons of Money (revised)
Way Upstream
Wolf at the Door (adapted)
Woman in Mind

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HALL
Far Hall
Drawing Room
End Hall
Music Room
Bedroom
Wine Cellar
Dining Room
Landing
Nursery
Pantry
Far Landing
Play Room
Chute
Cellar
Conservatory
Bedroom
Laundry Room
Panel
Scullery
Secret Room
Laboratory
Lift
Lift
Lift
Trap-door
Trap-door
Study
Kitchen
Balcony
Tower
Loft
Trap-door
Dungeon

ACT I

The set consists of multiple levels and steps which can be used to represent many different places

The two Narrators enter and greet the audience

1st Narrator This is the story of a girl called Suzy.

Spot on Suzy

2nd Narrator Suzy didn't think of herself as very brave but in this story she turns out to be very brave indeed.
1st Narrator Suzy didn't think of herself as very special either, but in this story she turns out to be very special indeed.
2nd Narrator And that's the story we're going to tell you today.
1st Narrator Suzy lived with her mother in a small village somewhere quite near here.

Spot on Mother

2nd Narrator Suzy's mother was very kind. But because she had to go out to work in a biscuit shop every day to earn the money to feed them both, and because she had to spend the rest of the time cooking and washing and looking after Suzy, she was often very tired ——
1st Narrator — although Suzy would help her mother whenever she could. Well, when she remembered to.
2nd Narrator You see, Suzy used to have a father but not anymore.
1st Narrator When she was still very young he'd taken part in a balloon race. Only something had gone wrong with his balloon and instead of coming down at the end of the race, he'd gone up and up and up and up and nobody's ever seen him again.
2nd Narrator Suzy often thought about her father and felt very sad. But because she'd been so young when he'd gone, she could hardly remember him anymore.

1st Narrator Suzy's mother missed him, though. Sometimes, when she was in bed, Suzy could hear her crying. And that made Suzy sad all over again.

2nd Narrator Suzy had no brothers and sisters ——

1st Narrator — and although she went to school, she didn't have any really special friends.

2nd Narrator Because although her mother worked very hard all day, they still didn't have very much money. And most of the other children at her school were rather rich and their parents didn't like them to play with children as poor as Suzy.

1st Narrator So for a long time she was very lonely. Which worried Suzy's mother because she was, as we've said, very kind.

2nd Narrator So her mother saved up some money, secretly, and one day, when it was Suzy's birthday, she brought her a very special present.

Mother enters carrying a small shoebox with holes punched in the lid. She gives it to Suzy

1st Narrator Suzy couldn't think what it could be.

Suzy opens the box. A small puppy (a glove puppet) sticks its head out of the box

Suzy (*delighted*) It's a puppy!

2nd Narrator Suzy was overjoyed.

Mother Now look after him, Suzy. He's your very own puppy and you must take extra special care of him because he's very small.

Suzy I'll take care of him for ever and ever ——

1st Narrator — said Suzy.

2nd Narrator Because, truthfully, he was a very, very small puppy indeed.

Mother What are you going to call him?

1st Narrator — asked her mother.

2nd Narrator And Suzy thought and thought and thought. She thought of Fido ——

Suzy No ...

1st Narrator — and she thought of Fred ——

Suzy No ... (*She shakes her head at all the following suggestions*)

2nd Narrator — and she thought of Rags ——
1st Narrator — and Rastus ——
2nd Narrator — and Rover ——
1st Narrator — and Spot ——
2nd Narrator — and Smudge ——
1st Narrator — and Prince ——
2nd Narrator — and Patch ——
1st Narrator — and Dylan ——
2nd Narrator — and Digby ——
1st Narrator — and Lucky ——
2nd Narrator — and Lupus ——
1st Narrator — and Bonzo ——
2nd Narrator — and Bones ——
1st Narrator — and nothing seemed to fit.
Mother Well, he has to have a name ...
2nd Narrator — said her mother.
1st Narrator And Suzy said ——
Suzy I know ...
1st Narrator
2nd Narrator
Mother } (*together*) What?
Suzy I'll call him Neville.
1st Narrator
2nd Narrator
Mother } (*together*) Neville!
Suzy Neville.
Mother I don't think that's a very good name for a puppy, dear.
Suzy He's my puppy, you told me he was, and that's what I want to call him.
1st Narrator And so Neville he was called.
2nd Narrator It was certainly a very strange name for a very small dog.
1st Narrator From that day on, everywhere that Suzy went, Neville went. He was so small she could even take him to school with her in the box and hide him in her desk.
2nd Narrator Until, that is, he started eating her pencils and her school books and then they were both sent home.
1st Narrator Neville liked eating.
2nd Narrator He liked sleeping, too ...
1st Narrator But best of all, he liked eating. He ate everything. Shoes and chairs and curtains and cushions.

2nd Narrator But he never tried to eat Suzy ——
1st Narrator — because she was very gentle with him. When Suzy was at home, Neville would sit in her pocket all day, just happy to be with her.
2nd Narrator And at night he would sleep in his box at the foot of her bed.
1st Narrator As the months went by, Neville kept eating and eating and growing and growing.
2nd Narrator So that very soon he had stopped being a puppy and became a small dog.

Mother crosses with a bigger cardboard box

1st Narrator And Suzy's mother brought her home a bigger box for Neville to sleep in ...
Suzy (*speaking as she goes*) Here we are, Neville ... Here's a lovely new box for you ...

Suzy exits

2nd Narrator Very soon after that, Neville stopped being a small dog ——
1st Narrator — and grew into a very big dog indeed.

Suzy staggers back on with a huge box, crosses, and exits on the other side

Suzy (*speaking as she goes*) Here you are, Neville ... Here's a lovely new box for you ...

Suzy returns without the box

2nd Narrator Until finally there was no room in their tiny cottage for Suzy and her mother and Neville all to sleep there.
1st Narrator And Suzy's mother said ——
Mother Suzy, Neville is going to have to sleep in the yard from now on.
Suzy Oh ...
Mother I'm sorry, I'm not having that dog in the house at night. He's far too *big*.

Suzy But Mum, what if it rains?
Mother If it rains he can sleep on the porch.
Suzy But Mum, what if it's cold?
Mother Then we'll find him something warm to sleep on. I know. He can have that old cellulellular blanket.

Mother exits into the house

2nd Narrator Actually, what Suzy's mother meant to say was cellular blanket. She was quite clever really, but for some reason she often got words wrong.
Suzy (*calling*) Neville, come on, boy. Out here then, Neville, come on.

Neville enters. He is a very big dog indeed

1st Narrator He was a sort of Old English Wolf Boxer.
Neville Woof!
Suzy Come on, Neville.
Neville Woof!
Suzy Shhh! That's enough.

Neville jumps up and puts his paws on Suzy's shoulders and licks her face. She is knocked over by the weight of him

Neville! Don't do that!
2nd Narrator And he did have a magnificent bark!
Neville (*loudly*) Woof!
Suzy Ssshhh!
1st Narrator Though it was sometimes rather loud.
Neville (*quieter*) Woof!
Suzy Ssshhh!
Neville (*very quietly*) Woof!
Suzy Now, Neville, you're going to have to sleep out here tonight.

Neville whimpers. The Lights change to an evening effect

Yes, well, I'm sorry. That's the way it has to be.

Neville whimpers again

Now, don't be silly. I'll come and sit out here with you until you're asleep.

Another moan from Neville

A big dog like you can't be frightened of the dark. And you're just under my window so I won't be far away.

A resigned noise from Neville

Mother comes out of the house with a blanket

Mother Here you are, Neville. Here's a nice warm cellulellular blanket for you.

Suzy Can he have a hot water bottle?

Mother No, of course he can't. Whatever next? Whoever heard of a dog sleeping with a hot water bottle? Don't be so silly, Suzy.

Mother enters into the house

Suzy (*softly, to Neville*) If it gets cold in the night, I'll bring you a hot water bottle, Neville.

Neville licks her

Now settle down, Neville.

Suzy spreads out the blanket for Neville to lie on. Neville crawls underneath it and appears at the other side, with just his nose sticking out. Suzy sits beside him

The Lights change during the following to a sunlight effect

1st Narrator As they sat together in the back yard and watched the sun set, they saw the moon rise and all the stars come out.

2nd Narrator And they did what they often did. They both stared up into the night sky to see if there was any sign at all of Suzy's father, who was probably still up there in his balloon.

1st Narrator But there was nobody in sight.

Suzy (*sadly*) Nobody.

Neville howls softly

2nd Narrator And Suzy started remembering the last time she had seen her father. It was the day he'd set out to take part in The Great International Balloon Race.
1st Narrator It had been a lovely day. The sun had been shining. The band was playing.

Band music is heard

2nd Narrator The crowds were cheering.

Crowds are heard cheering

1st Narrator A perfect day for The Great International Balloon Race.

Mother joins Suzy as part of the crowd

Mother gives Suzy one of two small Union Jacks. They both wave their flags and cheer

2nd Narrator And here comes Suzy's father now.

Father enters, dressed in a flying jacket, leather helmet and goggles. He looks a real hero

The crowd goes wild. He waves to them cheerfully

1st Narrator He was very, very popular with the crowd.
2nd Narrator They loved him.
1st Narrator But nobody loved him more than Suzy and her mother did.

Father embraces Mother

Father Goodbye, old love. See you soon.
Mother (*tearfully*) Be careful, Jack, be careful.
Father Don't you worry about me. I'll be home by tea-time.

Father embraces Suzy

Suzy Goodbye, Dad ...
Father Goodbye, Suzy. You look after your mother, now. Tell her to stop worrying.
Suzy Dad, I ——

A cannon sounds

Father Right, here we go. Goodbye, then.

The crowd roars. Father climbs aboard his balloon. Suzy calls to him but her voice is barely heard above the crowd

Suzy (*calling*) Dad ... Dad ...
Father Bye ...
Mother Goodbye, Jack. Goodbye ...
Suzy Dad ... Dad ...

Father disappears in the balloon

Mother and Suzy keep waving and calling until he's out of sight. When he's gone they both walk away. The crowd sounds fade and the Lights change back to the evening effect

Mother exits

Suzy resumes her seat on the porch with Neville

2nd Narrator And Suzy, although she shouted as loud as she could, never got the chance to tell her father how much she loved him.
Suzy Dad ...
1st Narrator And now he was up there somewhere in his balloon and maybe she'd never see him again to tell him. She sat there on the porch remembering all this and suddenly felt very sad.
2nd Narrator And as it grew really dark, Neville fell asleep and Suzy very gently covered him up and tiptoed back into the house, so as not to wake him.

Suzy exits into the house

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