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SF PERUSALS

THE MAGISTRATE

An Original Farce in Three Acts

BY

A. W. PINERO

SAMUEL  FRENCH

LONDON
NEW YORK TORONTO SYDNEY HOLLYWOOD

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THE MAGISTRATE

First played at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, London, on 21st March 1885, with the following cast of characters—

MR. POSKET } (Magistrates of Mulberry Street Police	*Mr. Arthur Cecil*
MR. BULLAMY } Court).	*Mr. Fred Cape*
COLONEL LUKYN (from Bengal—Retired).	*Mr. John Clayton*
CAPTAIN HORACE VALE (Shropshire Fusiliers).	*Mr. Fred Kerr*
CIS FARRINGDON (Mrs. Posket's Son by her first marriage).	*Miss H. Eversfield*
ACHILLE BLOND (Proprietor of the "Hôtel des Princes").	*Mr. Chevalier*
ISIDORE (a Waiter).	*Mr. Delane*
MR. WORMINGTON (Chief Clerk at Mulberry Street).	*Mr. Gilbert Trent*
INSPECTOR MESSITER }	*Mr. Albert Sims*
SERGEANT LUGG } (Metropolitan Police).	*Mr. Lugg*
CONSTABLE HARRIS }	*Mr. Burnley*
WYKE (Servant at Mr. Posket's).	*Mr. Fayre*
AGATHA POSKET (late Farringdon, *née* Verrinder).	*Mrs. John Wood*
CHARLOTTE (her Sister).	*Miss Marion Terry*
BEATIE TOMLINSON (a Young Lady, reduced to teaching Music).	*Miss Norreys*
POPHAM.	*Miss La Coste*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

THE FAMILY SKELETON!

At Mr. Posket's, Bloomsbury.

ACT II

IT LEAVES ITS CUPBOARD!!

Room in the Hôtel des Princes, Meek Street.

ACT III

IT CRUMBLES!!!

SCENE 1.—The Magistrate's Room, Mulberry Street.

SCENE 2.—At Mr. Posket's again.

THE MAGISTRATE

ACT I

SCENE.—*At* MR. POSKET'S, *Bloomsbury.*
(See Ground Plan of Scene.)

At the rise of the CURTAIN, BEATIE TOMLINSON *is discovered playing the piano; as she finishes the air,* CIS FARRINGDON *enters door* L.

CIS. Beatie! *(Goes* C.)

BEATIE *(rises and comes down to* CIS). Cis dear! Dinner isn't over, surely?

CIS. Not quite. I had one of my convenient headaches and cleared out. *(He takes an apple and some cobnuts from his pocket and gives them to* BEATIE.) These are for you, dear, with my love. I sneaked 'em off the sideboard as I came out.

BEATIE. Oh, I mustn't take them!

CIS. Yes, you may—it's my share of dessert. Besides, it's a horrid shame you don't grub with us.

BEATIE. What, a poor little music mistress! *(Sits on armchair by fire,* R.)

CIS. Yes. They're only going to give you four guineas a quarter. *(Sits on corner of table* L.C.) Fancy getting a girl like you for four guineas a quarter—why, an eighth of you is worth more than that! Now peg away at your apple. *(Produces a cigarette-case and takes out a cigarette.)*

BEATIE *(munching her apple).* There's company at dinner, isn't there?

CIS. Well, hardly. Aunt Charlotte hasn't arrived yet, so there's only old Bullamy.

BEATIE. Isn't old Bullamy anybody?

CIS. Old Bullamy—well, he's only like the Guv'nor, a police Magistrate at the Mulberry Street Police Court.

BEATIE. Oh, does each police court have two Magistrates?

CIS *(proudly).* All the best have two. *(Leaves table and crosses* C.)

BEATIE. Don't they quarrel over getting the interesting cases? I should.

CIS (C.). I don't know how they manage—perhaps they toss up who's to hear the big sensations. There's a Mrs. Beldam who is rather a bore sometimes; I know the Guv always lets old Bullamy attend to her. *(Striking a match.)* But, as a rule, I fancy they go

half and half, in a friendly way. (*Lighting cigarette.*) For instance, (*going over to* Beatie) if the Guv'nor wants to go to the Derby he lets old Bullamy have the Oaks—and so on, see ?

(*He sits on the floor, comfortably reclining against* Beatie, *and puffing his cigarette.*)

Beatie. Oh, I say, Cis, won't your Mamma be angry when she finds I haven't gone home ?

Cis. Oh, put it on to your pupil. (*Looking up into her face.*) Say I'm very backward.

Beatie. I think you are extremely forward—in some ways. (*Biting apple and speaking with her mouth full.*) I do wish I could get you to concentrate your attention on your music lessons. But I wouldn't get you into a scrape !

Cis. No fear of that. (*Blowing smoke into the air.*) Ma is too proud of me.

Beatie. But there's your stepfather.

Cis (*laughing*). The dear old Guv'nor ! Why, he is too good-natured to say " Bo ! " to a goose. You know, Beatie, I was at a school in Brighton when Ma got married—when she got married the second time, I mean—and the Guv'nor and I didn't make each other's acquaintance till after the honeymoon.

Beatie. Oh, fancy your stepfather blindly accepting such a responsibility. (*Gives him a cobnut to crack for her.*)

Cis (*taking the nut*). Yes, wasn't the Guv'nor soft ! I might have been a very indifferent sort of young fellow for all he knew. (*Having cracked the nut with his teeth, returns it to her.*)

Beatie. Thank you, dear.

Cis (*resuming*). Well, when I heard the new dad was a police magistrate, I *was* scared. Said I to myself, " If I don't mind my Ps and Qs, the Guv'nor—from force of habit—will fine me all my pocket-money." But it's quite the reverse—he's the mildest, meekest—— (*The door* L. *opens suddenly.*) Look out ! Someone coming !

(*They both jump up—as* Beatie *jumps up she scatters the nuts that are in her lap all over the floor—and rush up to the piano.* Cis *throws his cigarette away in the fireplace and sits at piano, playing a simple exercise very badly.* Beatie *follows and stands behind him, counting.*)

Beatie. One—and two—and one—and two.

(Wyke *appears at door* L., *mysteriously closing the door after him.*)

Wyke (*in a whisper*). Ssss ! Master Cis ! Master Cis !

Cis (*rising and coming down*). Hallo—what is it, Wyke ?

Wyke (*producing a decanter from under his coat*). The port wine what you asked for, sir. I couldn't get it away before—the old gentlemen do hug port wine so.

CIS. Got a glass?

WYKE. Yes, sir. (*Produces wineglass from his pocket.*)

(CIS *holds the glass while* WYKE *pours wine into it.*)

(*Pouring it out.*) What ain't missed ain't mourned, eh, Master Cis?

(CIS *takes the wine up* R.C., *towards* BEATIE; BEATIE *comes down at back of armchair by fireplace.*)

CIS (*as he turns up*). Here you are, Beatie dear.

BEATIE. The idea of such a thing! I couldn't!

CIS. Why not?

BEATIE. If I merely sipped it I shouldn't be able to give you your music lesson properly. Drink it yourself, you dear, thoughtful boy.

CIS. I shan't—it's for you.

BEATIE. I can't drink it!

CIS. You must.

BEATIE. I won't!

CIS. You're disagreeable!

BEATIE. Not half so disagreeable as you are.

(*They wrangle up stage* R.C.)

WYKE (*up* L.C., *behind table; aside, watching them*). What a young gentleman it is! and only fourteen! Fourteen—he behaves like forty!

(CIS, *who is drinking the wine himself, chokes;* BEATIE *pats him on the back.*)

Why, even Cook has made a 'ash of everything since he's been in the house, and as for Popham——!

(WYKE *has gradually got by door* L., *sees someone approaching.*)

(*Suddenly.*) Look out, Master Cis!

(CIS *returns to piano, places the wineglass on the top of it;* BEATIE *counting as before;* WYKE *retreats from door and pretends to arrange curtains by window* L.C., *concealing the decanter behind him.*)

BEATIE. One and two—and one and two—and one, *etc.*

(*Enter* POPHAM, *door* L.)

POPHAM. Wyke, where's the port?

WYKE (*vacantly*). Port?

POPHAM. Port wine. Missus is furious.

WYKE. Port?

POPHAM (*pointing to decanter which she catches sight of*). Why! There! You're carrying it about with you!

WYKE (*as if surprised*). Why, so I am! Carrying it about with me! (*Crosses to door* L.) Shows what a sharp eye I keep on the

Guv'nor's wines. Carrying it about with me! Missus will be amused.

(*Exit door* L.)

POPHAM (*aside, eyeing* CIS *and* BEATIE). There's that boy with *her* again! Minx! Her two hours were up long ago. Why doesn't she go home? (*Aloud.*) Master Cis, I've got a message for you.

CIS (*rising from piano and coming down* C. *to* POPHAM). For me, Popham?

POPHAM. Yes, sir. (*Aside to him,* L.C.) The message is from a young lady who up to last Wednesday was all in all to you. Her name is Emma Popham.

CIS (*trying to get away*). Oh, go along, Popham!

POPHAM (*holding his sleeve*). Ah, it wasn't "Go along, Popham," till that music girl came into the house. I will go along, but—cast your eye over this before you sleep to-night. (*She takes out of pocket-handkerchief a piece of printed paper which she hands him between her finger and thumb.*) Part of a story in *Bow Bells*, called "Jilted, or, Could Blood Atone?" Wrap it in your handkerchief—it came round the butter.

(*She goes out door* L.; CIS *crosses to the fire and throws the paper into the grate.*)

CIS. Bother the girl! Beatie, she's jealous of you!

BEATIE (*coming down* L.C.). A parlourmaid jealous of *me*—and with a bit of a child of fourteen!

CIS (*going towards her*). I may be only fourteen, but I feel like a grown-up man! You're only sixteen—there's not much difference—and if you will only wait for me, I'll soon catch you up and be as much a man as you are a woman. (*Lovingly.*) Will you wait for me, Beatie?

BEATIE. I can't—I'm getting older every minute!

CIS (*desperately, going into* R. *corner*). Oh, I wish I could borrow five or six years from somebody!

BEATIE. Many a person would be glad to lend them. (*Goes down to* CIS, *lovingly.*) And oh, I wish you could!

CIS (*putting his arm round her*). You do! Why?

BEATIE. Because I—because——

CIS (*listening*). Look out! Here's the Mater!

(*They run to piano—he resumes playing, and she counting as before.*)

BEATIE. One and two—and one—and two, *etc.*

(*Enter* AGATHA, *door* L.)

AGATHA (*advancing to* L.C.). Why, Cis child, at your music again?

CIS. Yes, Ma, always at it. You'll spoil my taste by forcing it, if you're not careful. (*Plays another run.*)

AGATHA (*going towards piano*). We have no right to keep Miss Tomlinson so late. (*Crosses to fireplace*, R.)

BEATIE (*nervously*). Oh, thank you, it doesn't matter—I—I—am afraid we're not making—very—great—progress.

CIS (*winking at* BEATIE). Well, if I play that again will you kiss me ?

BEATIE (*demurely*). I don't know, I'm sure. (*To* AGATHA.) May I promise that, ma'am ?

(*She sits in chair in recess up* R. CIS *joins her and puts his arm round her waist.*)

AGATHA (*sharply*). No, certainly not. (*Aside, watching them.*) If I could only persuade Æneas to dismiss this protégé of his and to engage a music master, it would ease my conscience a little. If this girl knew the truth, how indignant she would be ! And then there is the injustice to the boy himself, and to my husband's friends, who are always petting and fondling and caressing, what they call, " a fine little man of fourteen ! " Fourteen ! Oh, what an idiot I have been to conceal my child's real age ! (*Looking at the clock on mantelpiece.*) Charlotte is late, I wish she would come. It will be a relief to worry her with my troubles.

(MR. POSKET *is heard outside, off* L.)

POSKET (*outside door* L.). We smoke all over the house, Bullamy, all over the house.

AGATHA (*aside*). I will speak to Æneas about this little girl, at any rate.

(*Enter* POSKET *door* L., *smoking a cigarette, followed by* BULLAMY.)

POSKET. Smoke anywhere, Bullamy—smoke anywhere.

BULLAMY. Not with my bronchitis, thank ye.

POSKET (*beamingly at* AGATHA). Ah, my darling !

BULLAMY (*producing a small box from his waistcoat pocket*). All I take after dinner is a jujube—sometimes two. (*Offering box.*) May I tempt Mrs. Posket ?

AGATHA. No, thank you. (*Crosses* L.C. ; *as she does so she treads on one of the nuts which have been scattered over the room—annoyed.*) How provoking—who brings nuts into the drawing-room !

POSKET (*seeing* BEATIE). Miss Tomlinson still here ? (*To* BEATIE.) Don't go, don't go. Glad to see Cis so fond of his music. (*Referring to his watch, goes over to fireplace, followed by* BULLAMY.) Your sister Charlotte is behind her time, my darling.

AGATHA (*sits in chair* R. *of table*). Her train is delayed, I suppose.

POSKET. You must stay and see my sister-in-law, Bullamy.

BULLAMY. Pleasure—pleasure !

POSKET. *I* have never met her yet, we will share first impressions. In the interim, will Miss Tomlinson delight us with a little music ?

BULLAMY (*bustling up to piano*). If this young lady is going to sing she might like one of my jujubes.

(BEATIE *sits at the piano with* CIS *and* BULLAMY *on each side of her.* POSKET *crosses to* AGATHA; *as he does so he treads on a nut.*)

POSKET (C.). Dear me—how come nuts in the drawing-room.

(BEATIE *commences to play a piece of music very softly.*)

(*To* AGA, *who is in deep thought.*) Of what is my darling thinking so deeply? (*Going nearer to her, treads on another nut.*) Another! My pet, there are nuts on the drawing-room carpet!

AGATHA (*rousing herself*). Yes, I want to speak to you, Æneas.

POSKET. About the nuts?

AGATHA. No—about Miss Tomlinson—your little protégé.

POSKET. Ah, nice little thing.

AGATHA. Very. But not old enough to exert any decided influence over the boy's musical future. (*Looking up.*) Why not engage a master?

POSKET. What, for a mere child?

AGATHA (*looking away*). A mere child—oh!

POSKET. A boy of fourteen!

AGATHA (*aside*). Fourteen!

POSKET. A boy of fourteen, not yet out of Czerny's exercises.

AGATHA (*aside*). If we were alone now, I might have the desperation to tell him all!

POSKET. Besides, my darling, you know the interest I take in Miss Tomlinson; she is one of the brightest little spots on my hobby-horse. Like all our servants, like everybody in my employ, she has been brought to my notice through the unhappy medium of the Police Court—over which it is my destiny to preside. Our servant, Wyke, a man with a beautiful nature, is the son of a person I committed for trial for marrying three wives. To this day, Wyke is ignorant as to which of those three wives he is the son of! Cook was once a notorious dipsomaniac, and has even now not entirely freed herself from early influences. Popham is the unclaimed charge of a convicted baby-farmer. Even our milkman came before me as a man who had refused to submit specimens to the analytic inspector. And this poor child, what is she?

AGATHA. Yes, I know.

POSKET. The daughter of a superannuated General who abstracted four silk umbrellas from the Army and Navy Stores—and on a fine day too! (*Crosses to fireplace.*)

(*The music ceases, group up stage breaks up.*)

BULLAMY (*coming down to* POSKET). Very good—very good!

POSKET (*turning*). Thank you—thank you!

BULLAMY (*aside to* POSKET, *coughing and laughing and popping a jujube into his mouth*). My dear Posket, I really must congratulate you on that boy of yours. (*Shakes hands with him.*) Your stepson. A most wonderful lad. So confoundedly advanced too.

POSKET (*rubbing his hands, delightedly*). Yes, isn't he? Eh!

BULLAMY (*confidentially*). While the piano was going on, just now, he told me one of the most humorous stories I ever heard. (*Laughing heartily and panting, then taking another jujube.*) Ha, ha, bless me, I don't know when I've taken so many jujubes!

POSKET (*aside to* BULLAMY). My dear Bullamy, my entire marriage is the greatest possible success. A little romantic, too. (*Pointing to* AGATHA.) Beautiful woman!

BULLAMY. Very, very. (*Looking at her through eyeglass.*) I never committed a more stylish elegant creature.

POSKET (*warmly*). Thank you, Bullamy—we met abroad, at Spa, when I was on my holiday.

(*Enter* WYKE *with tray, on which is sugar-basin, milk in milk-jug, four cups and saucers, spoons, etc. Goes first to* AGATHA, *who takes a cup.*)

BULLAMY (*facetiously*). I shall go there next year.

POSKET. She lost her first husband about twelve months ago, in India. He was an army contractor.

(WYKE *comes to them with tray,* BULLAMY *declines,* POSKET *takes a cup.*)

BEATIE (*standing with* CIS *at piano*). I must go now—there's no excuse for staying any longer.

CIS. What the deuce shall I do?

POSKET (*pouring milk out*). Dear me, this milk seems very poor.

(WYKE *hands tray to* BEATIE *and* CIS. CIS *takes a cup.*)

When he died, she came to England, placed her boy at a school in Brighton, and then moved quietly about from place to place, drinking—— (*Sips tea.*)

BULLAMY (*with concern*). Drinking?

POSKET (*putting his cup on mantelpiece*). The waters—she's a little dyspeptic.

(*Exit* WYKE *with tray* L.)

We encountered each other at the *Tours des Fontaines*—by accident I trod upon her dress——

BEATIE. Good night, Cis dear.

CIS (*to* BEATIE). Oh!

POSKET (*advancing to* AGATHA). I apologized. We talked about the weather, we drank out of the same glass, discovered that we both suffered from the same ailment, and the result is complete happiness.

(*He bends over* AGATHA *gallantly; she looks up.*)

AGATHA. Æneas!

(*He kisses her; directly afterwards there is a sound of a kiss from up stage* R.C., CIS *kisses* BEATIE, POSKET *and* BULLAMY *both listen, puzzled.*)

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