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Dramatic Publishing
THE SORCERER’S APPRENTICE

A Folktale

Adapted by

LOUIS LIPPA

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(THE SORCERER’S APPRENTICE)

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THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

A Play in One Act
For 2 men, 1 woman, 4+ children (any gender)

CHARACTERS

THE SORCERER

THE APPRENTICE

THE CONSCIENCE of the Apprentice (female)

STREET URCHINS, who become BROOMS and MOPS

THREE GHOSTS (played by the same actor who plays the Sorcerer)

PLACE: The Sorcerer’s shop.

TIME: Three hours before midnight.

Approximate running time: 45 minutes

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SCENE: The SORCERER's shop. Skulls, bones, bubbling potions, cobwebs, et al. UC, on a raised platform, an ornate throne. On a table beside the throne a large, dark book clearly marked in gold letters, MAGIC WORDS. All is mystery.

The APPRENTICE is asleep on a pile of straw in a corner of the room. His CONSCIENCE sleeps nearby. STREET URCHINS huddle asleep in another corner. Sound of distant thunder. Lights rise dimly. The SORCERER sits on his throne brooding. More thunder and lightning.

SORCERER (ominously, to the audience). Who am I? I—am a sorcerer! What is this place with all these skulls and bones? This is a sorcerer's shop. (On his feet.) What is a sorcerer? What does he do? A sorcerer is like a magician—only greater than a magician. A sorcerer can do anything a magician can do, and can do even more than a magician can do. A magician can't raise his right hand and make thunder and lightning—but a sorcerer can!

(Raises his right hand. Thunder and lightning. The APPRENTICE wakes up suddenly and cringes with fear.)
The CONSCIENCE and STREET URCHINS also wake up, though not frightened.)

SORCERER. A magician can’t raise his left hand and make sunshine and singing birds—but a sorcerer can!

(Raises his left hand. Sunshine and singing birds. Now the stage lights are up full. The CONSCIENCE and STREET URCHINS yawn and stretch. The APPRENTICE is looking for the birds. The SORCERER continues.)

I can wiggle my fingers and say magic words and the broom goes up in the air. (He does so pointing to a broom. The broom flies up into the air. EVERYONE gasps.)

I can wave my hands over my head and say more magic words and the broom goes down over there! (The broom does so. More gasps.)

I am a sorcerer. I can do anything. I can even—DISAPPEAR!

(Thunder and lightning. A spotlight on the APPRENTICE holding on to his CONSCIENCE. Lights rise on the SORCERER who now is standing at the opposite side of the stage—or anywhere else above and beyond!—holding the magic book. During the following, the APPRENTICE becomes brave enough to leave his corner and carefully approach the SORCERER. His CONSCIENCE tugs at him trying to prevent him from getting...
into trouble. The APPRENTICE breaks free. The SORCERER indicates the magic book.)

SORCERER. I’ve learned my secrets from this book. It has all the magic words. No one else may take a look.

( The APPRENTICE has his finger inside the book. The SORCERER slams it shut. The APPRENTICE yelps in pain and hops about holding his finger. )

It’s a secret book for sorcerers. It tells what magic words to say—to turn the nighttime into day. It even has a word, “dobble-dobble-deeze,” for making other people SNEEZE!

( He points at the APPRENTICE who breaks into a fit of sneezing, propelling him around the stage. )

But just as important as dobble-dobble-deeze, is the magic word “dobble-dobble-DOP”! That’s what makes the sneezing STOP!!

( He points at the APPRENTICE who abruptly stops—caught in the middle of a sneeze. )

It’s all in this book, all the magic words. The secret book of SORCERERS!

( The STREET URCHINS lie down in their corner as the SORCERER returns to his throne and the magic book. The APPRENTICE starts sneaking up on him to take an-
'other peek in the book. His CONSCIENCE tugs at him to hold him back.)

CONSCIENCE. Apprentice, where are you going?
APPRENTICE. Take a peek in the magic book.
CONSCIENCE. No, no! You’re not allowed to do that.
APPRENTICE. Will you let go of me!

(The APPRENTICE pulls away and approaches the SORCERER. He tries to peek in the book. The SORCERER whacks him on the head. The APPRENTICE yelps holding his head and hurries back to his corner of the room. CONSCIENCE tries to console him, but he pushes her away.)

Leave me alone—pest! (CONSCIENCE sits sadly in her corner. The APPRENTICE, rubbing his sore head, crosses down to the edge of the stage and complains to the audience.)

I am the Sorcerer’s Apprentice. What is a sorcerer’s apprentice? A sorcerer’s apprentice is somebody like me—who is learning to be—a sorcerer. And it’s not fun! Because while I’m learning to be a sorcerer, I have to do a lot of things around here I don’t want to do. Sweep and mop the floor, wash dishes, put out the trash—I’m just a slave!

CONSCIENCE. Oh, stop complaining. The Sorcerer gives you three meals a day, doesn’t he?
APPRENTICE. Crumbs! That’s what he gives me!
CONSCIENCE. He does not. What did he give you for lunch yesterday?

APPRENTICE (trying to remember). Uh—I don’t remem-ber.

CONSCIENCE. Two Double Whoppers from Burger King, three Big Macs from McDonald’s and four apple dump-lings from Wendy’s. And after all that, you had some-thing else.

APPRENTICE (dumbly). What?

CONSCIENCE. An upset stomach! I warned you, didn’t I? But no—you never listen to me.

APPRENTICE. Go away! Shoo! Mind your own business! I wasn’t talking to you, anyhow! Scram! (He has chased his CONSCIENCE away, then returns to the confidence of the audience.) She’s my conscience. Always telling me what to do. Drives me crazy. (He growls at his CONSCIENCE. She growls back. He distorts his face at her. She does the same. He turns back to the audience.) Anyway, as I was saying—I’m just a slave around here. I get treated like dirt! (Whispers to the audience, referring to the SORCERER behind him reading the magic book.) Especially by him. He never teaches me anything.

CONSCIENCE. How can you say that? The other day he spent three hours trying to teach you some simple magic and you couldn’t remember any of it.

APPRENTICE. You call that magic? A few card tricks that any dumb magician can do? I want to do the big stuff like—like— (He gets carried away.) —turning a dog into a cat! Or—or—a cat into a mouse! Or a mouse into—into—a cockroach! Like making myself ten feet tall! A hundred feet tall! A thousand— (Walking around as though he’s a thousand feet tall he bumps into a wall,
hurting his nose. He whimpers.) I broke my nose! I’m bleeding! Help me, Conscience!

CONSCIENCE. Oh, stop it! You’re not bleeding and you didn’t break your nose.

APPRENTICE. I didn’t?

CONSCIENCE. No. Now stop acting like a baby and listen to me. Are you listening?

APPRENTICE. OK, OK, I’m listening! Talk!

CONSCIENCE. Let me give you a piece of advice.

APPRENTICE. I thought so!

CONSCIENCE. You can’t learn to do the big magic unless you first learn to do the little magic. It’s like learning to read and write in school. First come the little words, then come the big ones. How can you get to second grade unless you go through first grade first?

APPRENTICE. I can skip!

CONSCIENCE. Only if you do your homework—and you don’t.

APPRENTICE (jumping about angrily). I told you to mind your own business! Get out of here! Big nose! (The CONSCIENCE retreats but hangs around. The APPRENTICE returns to the audience.) As I was saying, I’m just my master’s slave. Why do I take it?

CONSCIENCE. He’s bigger than you.

APPRENTICE. I don’t care. He can’t tell me what to do. I’ve had enough! I—I—

SORCERER (a booming voice). APPRENTICE!

APPRENTICE. Whoaaa!

SORCERER. Mop the floor!

APPRENTICE (scurrying about). Yes, sir! Mop the floor! Just what I was about to do! Mop the floor! Where’s the
mop? *(To the audience.*) Who's got a mop? Anybody around here got a mop?

CONSCIENCE. *There's* a mop!

APPRENTICE. Where?

CONSCIENCE. Right there! In the corner!

APPRENTICE. Where? Where?

CONSCIENCE *(pointing).* There! In the corner!

*(Maybe the audience helps her out. Finally, the APPRENTICE grabs the mop and mops frantically.)*

APPRENTICE. Gotta mop the floor! Get my work done! Mop, mop, mop! *(He notices the SORCERER isn't looking.*) He isn't looking. I can relax. Whew! I'm exhausted. Boy, do I hate work. *(He leans on the mop handle.)* Why should I do all the work around here while he sits on his big—you know what—and gives me orders? I won't take it anymore. I've had it! *(The mop slips out from under him. He takes a pratfall. He's on the floor.)* I have half a mind to quit.

CONSCIENCE *(confidentially, to the audience).* He already has half a mind.

APPRENTICE *(on his feet).* I told you to mind your own business! *(To the audience.*) What a pest! Someday I'll get even with her. Someday I'll get even with everybody. Just you wait! Someday—someday—

*(He yawns and stands day-dreaming leaning on his mop. CONSCIENCE watches him, turns to the audience.)*

CONSCIENCE. Daydreaming again. He does that all the time.
(The stage lights change. Dream music floats in as the APPRENTICE daydreams.)

APPRENTICE. I’m an apprentice now, but someday—
SOMEDAY—I’ll be the greatest sorcerer who ever lived! Someday—someday—I’ll be a sorcerer just like him—only BETTER! Someday I’ll have a long white beard just like his—only BIGGER! Someday when I’ve learned all the words a sorcerer’s supposed to know, I’ll wiggle my fingers and raise my hand and step on his big toe! I’ll pull his beard, then disappear, and where I am he won’t know! (He laughs hysterically.) AH-HA-HA! He’ll look high, he’ll look low! Where to find me he won’t know! (He stops laughing.) Someday I’ll have a sorcerer’s shop just like this—only better! Better! Someday I’ll own a magic book just like his—only bigger! BIGGER! Someday when I’m a sorcerer I’ll do just as I please! I’ll point my finger at everybody, and everybody will sneeze! And that’s the way it’s going to be—DOING JUST AS I PLEASE!!

(He points at everyone, CONSCIENCE, SORCERER, STREET URCHINS and even at the audience. He runs about gleefully through the aisles of the theatre laughing and dancing. Everyone starts sneezing as he points to them. Hopefully, soon the whole theatre is sneezing. The APPRENTICE is mad with power.)

Dobble-deeze! Dobble-deeze! I’ll make EVERYBODY SNEEZE! Dobble-dop! Dobble-dop! Everybody sneezing STOP! STOP, STOP, STOP!!
(He is back on the stage laughing and dancing with the mop. He falls. He lies on the floor, rolling with laughter. Finally he stops laughing. He gets to his feet and hugs the mop. He sighs dreamily.)

APPRENTICE. But most of all—someday when I am fully grown—you know what? YOU KNOW WHAT! I’m going to have an apprentice of my OWN! MY OWN!

(The APPRENTICE is laughing and jumping about. The SORCERER shouts. Dream lights go out.)

SORCERER. APPRENTICE!!!
APPRENTICE (as the mop slips out from under him). Yes, sir! Yes, sir!
SORCERER. Are you doing your work or are you daydreaming again?
APPRENTICE (hustling about). Oh, I’m doing my work! Yes, sir! Very busy apprentice!
SORCERER. Don’t let me catch you daydreaming again! Do you hear?
APPRENTICE. Yes, sir! Perfect hearing! No problem! Love my work! Love it!

(He hustles about the shop pretending to mop, trying to look busy. CONSCIENCE decides to have some fun with him. She gestures to the audience not to tell as she sneaks up behind the APPRENTICE and follows him about. He stops, suspecting someone is behind him. But when he turns, CONSCIENCE also turns so that she’s still behind him. The APPRENTICE is puzzled. He looks at the audience. He scratches his head. CONSCIENCE
puts her finger to her lips gesturing to the audience. The APPRENTICE shrugs his shoulders and goes about his work, mumbling and complaining to himself. CONSCIENCE follows closely on his heels. He turns. She turns. He looks behind, she ducks. He moves away, she follows behind and in step with him. He stops suddenly. She collides with him. He falls forward, sprawling to the floor.)

CONSCIENCE (helping him to his feet). Ohh, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean—
APPRENTICE. Will you go away and leave me alone!
CONSCIENCE. But I’m your conscience. I can’t leave you alone.
APPRENTICE. Well I don’t want a conscience. Especially a conscience like you. Now get away from me. I have work to do.
CONSCIENCE (following him). But you need me! I’m supposed to give you advice!
APPRENTICE. I don’t want your advice! I don’t want anybody’s advice! Go away!
CONSCIENCE. But I’m your friend! I can keep you out of trouble.
APPRENTICE (brandishing mop). I don’t want you to be my friend! Stop bothering me! Scat! Out! Out!

(CONSCIENCE gets away from the APPRENTICE’s mop. She sits dejectedly on the edge of the stage. The APPRENTICE mops his way back to his pile of straw and lies down. CONSCIENCE looks back at him. APPRENTICE makes a face at her. CONSCIENCE turns to the audience.)