

EYE-SPY, PI

By Max R. Bever

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CHARACTERS

MAGGIE EYE-SPY	our intrepid and heroic Private Investigator
HARRY SPY	our heroine's wacky but lovable husband
MISS MAYBERRY MARBLESHAM,	a haughty and currish old dame
SERGEANT SHARON SNOOKER	a no-nonsense detective
BUTLER	a very proper butler
MAID	a very proper maid
FLAPPER BECKY	the leader of the Flapper Four
FLAPPERS	the rest of the Flapper Four
COP #1	the good cop
COP #2	the bad cop
BAND LEADER	likes music
AND EVERYONE ELSE, our assorted party guests, dancers, and police officers (double casting is suggested).	

TIME & PLACE

This play takes place today and tonight at Miss Mayberry Marblesham's mansion ballroom.

PROP LIST

Set Props: Chairs, Platters, Books, Fabrege Eggs, Candy Dishes, Rugs, Busts, Portraits, etc.

- MAGGIE:** Scene 1 – Bike Helmet, Casual Shirt, Pants and Sneakers
Scene 2 – Top Hat, Suit Coat w/ Tail, Collar Shirt, Tie, Slacks, Dress Shoes
Personal Props: Olive Jar w/ Olives, “diamond pits”
- HARRY:** Scene 1 – Collar Shirt, Jeans, Sneakers
Scene 2 – Party Dress, Wig, Fake Bosom
Personal Props: Martini Glass
- MAYBERRY** Scene 1 – Dressing Gown, Furs, High Heels
Scene 1 – Ball Gown, Wrap, High Heels
Personal Props: Rings, Jewelry
- SHARON &:
COPS** Police Uniform (Slacks, Shirt, Hat)
Personal Props: Flashlight, Handcuffs
- BUTLER:** Tuxedo, Colorful Shirt (Tango Sequence), Black Tango Hats (Tango Sequence)
Personal Props: Rose (Tango Sequence)
- MAID:** Maid Uniform, Colorful Dress (Tango Sequence) Bird of Paradise Feathers (Tango Sequence)
Personal Props: Olives
- FLAPPER BECKY &
FLAPPERS** Flapper Dresses, Garter Belts, Stockings, Cloches
- BAND LEADER:** Tuxedo
Personal Props: Conducting Wand
- PARTY GUESTS:** Party Wear (Suits, Tuxedo, Gowns)
Personal Props: Drink Glasses, Monocles, Purses, etc.

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SCENE 1

AT RISE: The curtain opens on a lovely ballroom, with fine furniture, rugs, busts, portraits; all the eclectic mix of a mansion. There are police officers scouring the room, searching all the nooks and crannies of the stage. MISS MAYBERRY MARBLESHAM enters stage left, a grand British dame wearing furs and a look of disdain for everything else. SHE is followed by SERGEANT SHARON SNOOKER, a no-nonsense police woman.

MISS MARBLESHAM: Sergeant Snooker, I really don't see why any of this is necessary. Do I really look like a jewel thief to you? Good heavens, I've been here, right here, all day long preparing for my grand ball tonight! (***notices the officers searching her bookcase***) You! Officer butterfingers! Watch your way around those (***over-pronounced***) "Fab-er-ge" eggs!

SGT. SHARON: I'm sorry, Miss Marblesham, but the call to the station reported that the getaway car from the robbery drove right here to this residence.

MISS MARBLESHAM: What kind of car was it, Sergeant?

SGT. SHARON: Radio said it was a black sedan.

MISS MARBLESHAM: Black sedan, gracious, all my drivers use black sedans. All my friends' drivers use black sedans. It could have been anyone. Do you know how many black sedans are in this town, Sergeant?

SGT. SHARON: I understand, but—

MISS MARBLESHAM: No, I'm asking, how many?

SGT. SHARON: Oh, well, I don't know—

MISS MARBLESHAM: What else don't you know, then, Sergeant? (***to officers***) I swear, if one book is misplaced, I will have my cook mix you in with the morning jam!

SGT. SHARON: Listen, Miss, I'm sorry, but we have to check your place out. You read the warrant.

MISS MARBLESHAM: Well then, may I at least ask who called you with this ridiculous story?

SGT. SHARON: I'm sorry, I can't give out that information.

(MAGGIE EYE-SPY enters stage left, our pretty heroine of pluck and determination. SHE crosses to SGT. SHARON.)

MAGGIE: Sergeant, that car in the driveway was the one I saw, I know it.

SGT. SHARON: Aw, jeez, not you. If I knew it was you who called the station, I would have told them all to forget it. How did you get in anyway?

MAGGIE: I jumped the gate, found a side door.

MISS MARBLESHAM: And who are you?

MAGGIE: **(extends hand)** Maggie Eye-Spy, Private Investigator.

MISS MARBLESHAM: **(recoils from hand)** And may I assume that you are my accuser?

MAGGIE: Assume away. Sergeant, I saw that car pull into this driveway through those iron gates not one hour ago. I was downtown, on the job, and getting a donut, when I heard the alarms to the jewel depository across the street go off. So I looked, and three figures all in black ran into the black car with a big black bag, ostensibly the diamonds. So I hopped on my bike and chased after them.

SGT. SHARON: Aw, jeez, your bike? Did you even get a license number at least?

MAGGIE: Well, no, I got a few bugs in my eyes along the way, but I always kept that car in my sight, and followed it right here.

MISS MARBLESHAM: Sergeant, this is ludicrous, relying on some shoddy information from this bicycle messenger.

MAGGIE: Hey, I'm no bike messenger, I'm—

SGT. SHARON: She's a pest. Listen, Miss Marblesham, I'm sorry about this, this is probably just a big mistake.

MISS MARBLESHAM: I should say so.

MAGGIE: Sergeant Snooker, I am one hundred percent positive that that car came here, and no car has left since then. Those diamonds are absolutely still in this house.

(COP #1 and COP #2 approach.)

COP #1: No sign of the diamonds or any robbery material anywhere in this place, Sarge.

MAGGIE: What?

COP #2: We've been over every square inch with white gloves.

MAGGIE: Are you sure?

SGT. SHARON: Of course they're sure. I apologize greatly, Miss Marblesham.

MISS MARBLESHAM: Well, you should. I plan on pressing full charges for improper search against your department. And I want all of your badge numbers.

(HARRY SPY enters stage left, our heroine's goofy but lovable husband.)

HARRY: Hey honey, I just got your message.

SGT. SHARON: Aw, jeez, not you too.

MISS MARBLESHAM: Who is he now?

SGT. SHARON: Her idiot husband.

HARRY: ***(to MISS MARBLESHAM)*** Hi, Harry Spy, nice to meet you. ***(extends hand, to which MISS MARBLESHAM recoils)*** I brought the car. I couldn't find a spot, so I parked in the grassy area by that big fountain with all the naked guys. I think I might have hit a peacock.

MISS MARBLESHAM: How dare you! Why, I never -- Butler!

(The BUTLER enters stage right, very proper and very British, and rushes to her side.)

BUTLER: Yes madam?

MISS MARBLESHAM: I don't want either of these two people seen anywhere near this estate for the rest of their natural lives. Please memorize their faces immediately.

(The BUTLER jiggles his head, quickly memorizing their faces.)

BUTLER: Done!

(The BUTLER exits quickly.)

MISS MARBLESHAM: Now, if all of you would please leave, I need to finish preparing for my ball tonight. You all will be hearing from my lawyers. Farewell. ***(looks at HARRY)*** I expect a replacement peacock by noon tomorrow.

(MISS MARBLESHAM exits with a flourish..)

SGT. SHARON: ***(to the COPS)*** All right guys, you heard the lady, pack it up, let's get out of here! ***(points to MAGGIE)*** You have exactly five seconds to leave my sight forever.

MAGGIE: Sergeant, you can't leave yet! You can't let her get away with it! That car came here, I know it.

SGT. SHARON: Yeah, yeah. How many calls like this have I gotten this year? This week even! Twelve? Fifty?? Look, you're not a cop, so stop trying. You will never be on the force as long as I'm alive, and you are also the worst PI I have ever seen. And now you have the

richest woman in the tri-county area breathing down our necks. Get out of her house, and if I catch you anywhere near these premises, I will be ready with these handcuffs, happy to take you away myself. **(to COPS)** Wrap it up, guys!

(SGT. SHARON leaves stage left.)

HARRY: Yeesh, what was that all about?

MAGGIE: What did it sound like, Harry? A threat. I was just so sure I saw that car come here. And I was right at those gates, no one else came out. Those diamonds are here, I can feel it, smell it even.

(HARRY looks around, then sniffs deep, then shrugs.)

HARRY: Hey, I believe you. When have I known you to be wrong? Well, except when you thought the grocer was a bank robber. Oh, or the time yesterday when you thought that grandmother next door was the Hillside Strangler.

MAGGIE: Thank you, that makes me feel so much better.

HARRY: Sorry. But hey, I think you're right. There's something about this place that's just not right.

MAGGIE: Yeah. **(sighs and sits down in a nearby chair)** I was just downtown, and I was thinking to myself: is this what my life is? Private investigating? Jealous husbands hiring me to follow around their wives to the market to buy their groceries? So while I was snapping photos of Mrs. Johnson buying her half-and-half, that's when the robbery hit across the street. I heard those alarms, and it was like a sign. I've got the detective blood in me, I know it. I just need to prove it, one big case to crack wide open to prove to that Sergeant Sharon Snooker that I have what it takes. And this is it, Harry, I can feel it. Right here in this house. I just have to find those diamonds, they must be stashed away someplace airtight. Harry? Harold!

(HARRY snaps back to attention after drifting off and looking up at the ceiling.)

HARRY: Huh?

MAGGIE: Were you even listening?

HARRY: Oh, sorry, I was distracted by that big shiny chandelier. **(points up)**

MAGGIE: Sometimes, I swear, you're just a child.

HARRY: **(petulant)** Hey, I have feelings, I'm not a child, I'm an adult— Oo, look, chocolates!

(HARRY reaches into a candy dish on the table nearby, gobbles some down.)

MAGGIE: Game, set and match. Oh, and by the way, if I had the car this morning, I could have followed that black sedan a bit faster, took some photos while I was at it. Do you have any idea how hard that is on a four-speed?

HARRY: ***(mouth full)*** Sorry, the audition ran late. Good one today. I'm definitely qualified for this role. Shocked Onlooker #4. ***(poses, looks shocked into distance)*** I think it went well.

MAGGIE: If I could just figure out where she could hide those diamonds where the cops couldn't find them.

HARRY: ***(more chocolate in his mouth)*** So, why would she rob a diamond joint anyway? Looks like she's literally loaded.

MAGGIE: Hmm. Well, this all could just be her front. Less likely to be a suspect, easier for her to sell the jewels off.

HARRY: Ah, I see.

(HARRY tries to throw a chocolate in his mouth, misses, and hits MAGGIE with it.)

MAGGIE: Ouch!

HARRY: Sorry.

MAGGIE: I just need to do a little research on this Marblesham. She does have that party tonight. Maybe that's where all her buyers come in.

HARRY: Neato.

MAGGIE: I've got to get back in here tonight to have a look around.

HARRY: How are you gonna do that? That Butler's got our Polaroid in his head now.

MAGGIE: I'll find a way.

HARRY: Can I come?

MAGGIE: You? No. No, no, no.

HARRY: But—

MAGGIE: No.

HARRY: I—

MAGGIE: No.

HARRY: But we're a team. I need the practice acting, anyway.

MAGGIE: Harry, I love you, but you have a tendency to—

(HARRY leans on the table, knocks a silver platter onto the ground with a great crash.)

MAGGIE : . . . make a scene wherever we go.

HARRY: Come on, Mags, it will be like old times, when you first opened up the PI business. I used to come along on all your stakeouts. You know, until you asked me not to anymore. We could get costumes!

MAGGIE: I'm sorry, but I'll need to be on my own, undercover, incognito. This is my big chance.

(COP #1 enters stage left.)

COP #1 : Hey, the Sarge says if you're not out of here in five seconds, she'll – well, without the swear words it's really just a couple verbs and a few prepositions.

MAGGIE: We were just leaving.

HARRY: For now.

(MAGGIE elbows him in the stomach, and HARRY spits a chocolate out at COP #1.)

HARRY: Sorry.

COP #1: It's all right. Hey, you're Maggie Eye-Spy, right?

MAGGIE: ***(proud)*** Yes I am.

COP #1: I was there that night you screwed up our stakeout on the Stinelli Sisters.

MAGGIE: Oh. My rope ladder broke. It wouldn't have if someone could have tied a proper knot.

HARRY: Hey, I'm sorry. If that knot was good enough for my shoes, it should have been good enough for that ladder.

COP #1: Eye-Spy, huh? How'd you get a name like that?

MAGGIE: It's hyphenated. From marriage.

HARRY: Yeah, I'm Spy and she was Eye. It was just fate, I guess.

COP #1: Or just bad luck. Come on you two, let's go.

(They all leave. The lights fade and the curtain goes down.)

SCENE 2

At RISE: The curtain comes up on the same ball room, now with many party guests dressed to the nines. They are an odd assorted bunch, with garish colors and accessories; they mingle with food and drinks. After a few moments, the BUTLER enters to the middle of the room, followed by the MAID who stands silently at his side. HE announces:

BUTLER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, may I welcome you to the grand estate of Miss Mayberry Marblesham, in celebration of her glorious return from the Congo. Tonight's entertainment will consist of the mistress's usual performing animals, culminating into a forty minute didgeridoo solo by our gracious hostess. **(the MAID whispers into his ear)** I would like to take this time to remind our guests that if you stick your tongue to the ice sculptures, they will indeed stick. So that experimental mystery has been solved for you. And now, without further ado, may I introduce our hostess and most humble benefactor, the wonderful and beautiful and not a day over forty-five, Miss Mayberry Marblesham.

(There is applause as MISS MARBLESHAM enters to the middle of the room, big fake smile, basking in the attention. SHE is wearing a flashy and colorful dress and hair sticking up to the sky.)

MISS MARBLESHAM: Thank you, thank you very much for attending tonight on this most splendid of evenings. I am so very happy to welcome you all into my home. I would also like to take this opportunity to squash any rumors that might be passing through these cavernous halls tonight. Yes, the police were here earlier today, but it was all a terrible misunderstanding, a case of mistaken identity. So I would like to put that horrible business behind me. **(deadly serious)** I mean it. **(then false cheer)** So I expect no trouble of that kind at all tonight, so please, everyone enjoy themselves. Let the music begin!

(SHE gives a grand pose as the guests applaud, and the chamber music begins. MISS MARBLESHAM exits the stage, and the guests begin to mingle. After a few seconds, MAGGIE comes on stage left. SHE is undercover and dressed as a man, with a coat and tails, top-hat, cane, and a paste-on mustache and sideburns. The effect is not so very convincing. SHE crosses slowly stage right through the party, cautious, checking the place out. SHE takes a drink from a table and tries to fit in during this, HARRY has also entered stage left, also undercover and dressed as a woman, in a horribly gaudy dress, enormous fake bosom, bad wig, and garish makeup. The effect is even less convincing. HE also takes a drink, and silently strikes up a chat with a fellow guest. HE lets out a high pitched, loud laugh in his attempt to be womanly. At this, MAGGIE's eyes widen, instantly recognizing; SHE swivels around and rushes over to HARRY. SHE taps the other Guest on the shoulder.)

MAGGIE: ***(her male voice)*** Excuse me, may I cut in here?

(The Guest shrugs and leaves, and MAGGIE smacks HARRY upside the head, knocking his wig off balance.)

MAGGIE: What are you doing here??

HARRY: ***(fixing his wig)*** Ow! Careful, you'll get put away for domestic abuse.

MAGGIE: What did I ask you? To stay home, leave this to me, I needed to be on my own.

HARRY: I know, I heard you. I just wasn't listening.

MAGGIE: And, Holy Cow, what are you wearing?

HARRY: It was the only dress in the closet that fit me, the old Bridesmaid dress for your cousin Josephine. Now that was a big girl.

MAGGIE: You look absolutely ridiculous. What did you do, trip into my makeup compact?

HARRY: Well, your mustache is crooked, sir!

MAGGIE: So's yours!

HARRY: I just shaved this morning, I'm baby-butt smooth. By the way, no man would be caught dead in that tie.

(MAGGIE checks her tie, loosens it, takes it off, and throws it over HARRY's head like a lasso.)

MAGGIE: It's yours!

(SHE tightens it, beginning to choke him, swirling him around the stage in the process.)

HARRY: Ack! Um, you seem to be causing a scene, dear.

MAGGIE: Really? I thought the "woman" with the baritone voice was already doing a good job of that.

(MAGGIE climbs on HARRY's back in the process, spinning herself around. This has gathered some of the guests' attention throughout.)

HARRY: Now they're just thinking we're doing a new kind of dance.

(MAGGIE hops off HARRY's back, spins him around one more time, ending with a flourish. The watching guests all applaud, to which the pair awkwardly bows. The BUTLER enters, followed by the MAID at his side with a trophy. HE presents it to the couple.)

BUTLER: Congratulations, I hereby award YOU with the "most atrocious dancers award" for this evening.

MAGGIE: *(male voice)* Uh, thanks.

BUTLER: *(an aside)* It's a very coveted award tonight, you know, very competitive. I'd watch yourself in the parking lot.

(The BUTLER and MAID exit. One of the watching guests eyes the winning pair jealousy, performs a ballet leap, stumbles, gets up, leaps stumbling off stage. Two other guests eye the trophy, crouch and snap, a la West Side Story, walking off stage and stumbling over each other.)

MAGGIE: What an odd party.

(SHE takes the trophy, tosses it offstage. A cat screech is heard, and MAGGIE double takes.)

MAGGIE: I didn't know they had cats in here.

(The BUTLER comes on stage again, followed by the MAID.)

BUTLER: I'm afraid to announce that Fifi the piano playing wonder-cat has been injured and will not be performing tonight. The doctors say she may never play the piano ever again and has even forgotten how to meow. In Fifi's place, we have two gerbils playing the drums, named Itty Bitty and Scott. *(the MAID whispers into his ear)* I'm now told that Fifi had eaten Itty Bitty and Scott previous to her injury. Subbing in will be a grass snake named Chamberlain on the tambourine. *(the MAID whispers again in his ear)* And I'm told he's not very good. Hard to do without digits of any kind.

(The BUTLER and MAID exit.)

MAGGIE: This place just keeps getting weirder and weirder.

HARRY: *(fixes his fake bosom)* You're telling me.

(HARRY is still toying with his bosom, until MAGGIE notices and grabs his hands to stop him.)

MAGGIE: Now where's that Miss Marblesham? I should see if I can charm any information out of her. Got to find those diamonds.

HARRY: What dirt did you dig up on that daffy doozy?

MAGGIE: Nothing, she's clean. Seemingly. But I went down to the library to do a little research. I checked the date of every jewel robbery to take place around here, and every time, the same day, she had one of these big parties for herself. Sounds fishy, right? I

knew it. She must have a crew of thieves to hold up the jewel place, probably her own servants, they run back here, she has her buyers come to the party, she sells off the hot goods right away so there's no evidence left, and the police are left to go in circles. It's all brilliant really. But now I'm onto her. I'll crack this case yet. I just have to find those diamonds before she gets rid of all of them.

(During this, MISS MARBLESHAM has entered the stage, this time flanked by her four FLAPPERS, her pretty and young but stone-faced and unmoving bodyguards. They form a perfect square around MISS MARBLESHAM at all times.)

HARRY: ***(points)*** Well, you better watch out, because there's your full-figured fancy now.

MAGGIE: Ah, the frail-fingered floozy's got her four flappers with her.

HARRY: Four flappers?

MAGGIE: Four flappers. They're her personal bodyguards for these kind of events.

(While MISS MARBLESHAM chats with a woman, a man with a drink tries to approach her on the left. The two FLAPPERS, machine-like, turn him sharply in the opposite direction, then kick him in the seat of his pants to usher him off. Another man with food approaches MARBLESHAM from the right side, and the other two FLAPPERS take the food, slap him hard so HE spins and keeps walking in the opposite direction.)

MAGGIE: Well then, it doesn't look like I'll get even close to her dressed like this. She must have something against men.

(MAGGIE notices HARRY absentmindedly scratching himself.)

MAGGIE: I wonder why. Anyway, Harry, listen, if you're here, you're gonna have to help.

HARRY: I've got your back, babe.

MAGGIE: See if you can go over there and distract some of those flapper guards for me. ***(smudges some of his lipstick)*** That shouldn't be so hard.

HARRY: All right, I will, but remember, we're a team now. You go, I go, anywhere. Except for the bathroom, because I'm not really so comfortable—

MAGGIE: Just go!

HARRY: ***(starts moving)*** And those ladies were really upset with me that last time.

(HARRY bumps into FLAPPER BECKY.)

HARRY: **(falsetto)** Oh, I'm sorry dear, I didn't see you there. Please forgive me.

FLAPPER BECKY: You're forgiven. For now.

HARRY: Please do excuse my clumsiness. I'm Eliza Doolots. And you are?

FLAPPER BECKY: **(pause)** Becky.

HARRY: Heavens, what a lovely name, my sister's name. Tell me Becky, what are all of you nice girls doing in a place like this?

FLAPPER BECKY: Working making money for college. Parents want me to be a molecular biologist.

HARRY: How. . . interesting.

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