

The Case of the Missing Magician

SHOWRUNNER LAUREN

Hello, detectives! Showrunner Lauren here. Before we get into today's very special mini-mystery, a quick bit of news! As you may or may not know, we are currently crowdfunding for season 2 of Fawx & Stallion through the end of April. We are currently at 44% of our goal at the time of this recording, which is *amazing*, but we still have a ways to go to reach our goal at the end of the month. On that front, we have a lovely donor who has offered to match donations this week up to \$750—so if you've been holding off for the opportune moment, now is the time! If we hit \$500 of that, we will release Archie's recipe for his Lotta Matcha Focaccia, and at \$750 we will release an additional sticker to all of our \$30 and up tiers—so please, if you are able to donate to the show, please do so at the link in our show notes, and if you aren't, please consider helping us spread the word about the campaign and the show, or leaving us a review!

And now, on to the fun stuff! To celebrate our crowdfund, we decided to run what we call a Solve-A-Thon—we ran a series of five polls on our social media accounts over the weekend so that you, the listeners, could help us craft a mystery—we asked you to select a client, a crime, a location, an object, and a clue, which you so generously did. Then, on Sunday and Monday, we wrote this mini-mystery, and last night, Tuesday, we recorded it with the fantastic Jeremy Thompson, who plays Hampton Fawx. Today, it arrives to you, hand crafted by the listeners, for the listeners, the result of a marathon of deduction! We hope it tides you over to season 2!

THEME MUSIC

HAMPTON

Ah ha, there we are! Now, Madge told me it was silly to record our cases for posterity, but I think it's a fun archive project—and will potentially be useful for the records books and biographers some day. So with that in mind, I give you: The Case of the Missing Magician!

(to himself:)

Note to self, work on title.

It was last Tuesday evening, on the 21st of September. Madge and I were settling in for our nightly post mortem on the day's events, for quality control purposes, when we

received a knock on our door. Imagine my surprise when I opened the door to find a herculean giant in full clown face.

Normally, this would terrify any sensible person, but luckily that's not me. His name was Velvet, a child's birthday clown, and he had come to 224B because he believed his co-worker down at the Waterloo Water Waxi—a children's birthday event space that also functions as an active water taxi in the off season—had gone missing. The Great Fugazi was his name, and unlike Velvet, he was a child's birthday *magician*.

As Velvet explained, it had been three three-year-old's birthday parties since he'd seen his friend. The Great Fugazi was a real favorite around the children's birthday circuit, always getting loads of bookings sometimes up to years in advance! He was famous for his signature half mask and cape that he'd been wearing since the 1850s, as well as the fact that he had never changed his act once in over 30 years in the field. That's right, not one new card trick, not any updated bits of crowd interaction, not *one single* illusionary innovation. At this point, though, it didn't matter if the form had evolved—it turns out nostalgia was part of the draw—parents all over London were enchanted by the idea of their children being entertained by the exact same performer they were, with the exact same tricks.

But then one day, at Little Forrest Herrington's Polite Pirates Themed 6th birthday celebration, he surprised everyone by attempting not only one, but *three* new tricks! And word on the children's entertainer circuit was, they were not received very well.

Well, personally, this level of professional embarrassment after a 40 plus year career would be enough to make anyone run into the woods for good, myself included. But that's not what happened.

No, The Great Fugazi kept showing up and doing appearances. Now, I know what you're thinking: didn't Velvet allude to Fugazi's *disappearance* earlier? Well this is where the mystery went from Run of the Mill, to run of the *Fawx & Stallion* mill. Yes, this magician *has* been here the whole time, performing his magical, nautical, juvenile tricks. But Velvet, believes, from his curly hair to his rubber nose, that this magician is *not* his friend.

Luckily, we went to a performance at the Waterloo Water Waxi the very next day, thanks to one of James's friends from Archie and his classical-music-and-opera-enthusiasts-only

poker league I apparently wasn't invited to. Turns out this poker-playing friend Monty Marcgomery was holding a birthday party for his 14 year old son Marc Moncgomery, who had recently become enamored with the illusory arts of stage magicians and insisted upon engaging The Great Fugazi for his party, despite his three previous Beethoven costumed play-a-thons. So in walked Madge, James, myself, and our gargantuan painted jester, Velvet, to Waterloo Water Waxi to take in the show.

Side note: His act? Not for me. Not that I don't see the merit, or genuine skill I'm sure it takes to excel at his act, but let's just say you're going to have to wake up *very* early in the morning to get a magnetized cane past me. The Card Waterfall punctuations between tricks, very sharp. Didn't need the Flute overture, though. Really messed with the whole tone—do we need a musical element in magic? Feels like a bit much.

Anyway, the problem was, before we could meet The Great Fugazi, he was gone. Luckily James was able to introduce us to Monty Marcgomery who, in addition to being the father of the birthday boy, happened to know The Great Fugazi from that same themed gentlemen's poker league James was a benefactor of and that, again, I was not invited to.

Monty explained to us Fugazi had been a staunch believer in the “If it isn't broken, why try to do anything better” dogma, until fairly recently when he suddenly wanted to start branching out. He particularly noted the new flute solo Fugazi was entering to. According to him, the 6th movement is entirely necessary and really ties the piece together. The overgrown children chanting angrily for an encore involving some trick called “the Levitating Tween” begged to differ.

As Monty left to schmooze with the guests, Velvet turned to us telling us, not discreetly I might add, how there was no way The Great Fugazi would ever end an act without the Levitating Tween. He'd been levitating them for over 40 years! And that's when it hit me. Velvet... Was telling the truth.

Not that we ever doubt the word of our clients—previous examples notwithstanding—but it's healthy to enter into every occasion with a healthy dose of cynicism—previous examples very much *withstanding*—especially when it involves birthday parties. And it wasn't that I knew The Great Fugazi, it wasn't that I knew what he looked like or how he was as a man, no, it was purely because of my artistic hunch that there's no way a man who's been doing this professionally for over 40 years could get by doing the act I had just seen. And I mean that semi-respectfully.

But then, then dear listeners, the real truth revealed itself, because it was at that moment Monty Marcgomery asked his 14 year old boy how he'd liked the show. And it was only so plain to see that this bespectacled boy, who had come in enamored with the illusory arts, had not been impressed the way that Monty had hoped. Which is all to be expected when you'd probably booked a 14th birthday party when your son was still in diapers, but no. Monty Montgomery wasn't disappointed with Marc Marcgomery's dislike of the magic...but with his dislike of the *flute*.

And then it all made sense. Parents love when you love what they love, it's genetic. My father never recovered the three successive blows that were my ambivalence to cricket, candlemaking, and miniature townscapes made of yarn. So I recognized the disappointment gleaming in Monty Marcgomery's eyes.

From there, the pieces fell into place. As it turns out, according to James, Monty is quite the poker player in those weekly games, again, I had no idea about. In fact he'd been bragging just earlier this week that he'd finally beaten an opponent of great stature, and when asked what he'd won he apparently said "Not money, something so much more than money" which James also added, seemed strange at the time, but he'd decided not to read too much into it.

You'll remember, of course, Monty's love for classical music, hence his involvement in James's very exclusive club. You'll remember Marc's previous three Beethoven-themed birthday parties—a composer known for his flute-centric compositions—and his recent turn towards the magical versus the musical. This only leaves us with one, very simple conclusion: Monty simply wanted to share an interest with his son. He knew, we assume, that Marc had a birthday around the corner. So Monty challenges Fugazi in a game of cards in Southbank, and he wins. For a week, he *becomes* Fugazi, and attempts to create an act that reminds his son of the only thing more impossible to believe than the Levitating Tween: that the flute can be cool, too.

Now, Monty assured us he and Fugazi would switch back after the week was out and that he really didn't think anyone would notice. But he didn't count on Velvet. And he didn't count on us, Fawx & Stallion & Stallion. And while today our dastardly villain was more just a sad dad, and our mystery was more a fun anecdote and reminder that all children inevitably grow away from us, we can still classify the Disappearance of the Great Fugazi as a crime... of fashion.

Beat. Lets it land.

Alright, alternative ending.

Option 2: We can still classify the Disappearance of the Great Fugazi as a crime... of passion.

The End....

I think I like the second take better.

CREDITS

This episode was written and directed by Ian Geers and Lauren Grace Thompson. Hampton Fawx was played by Jeremy Thompson. Our theme music was composed by Baldemar. Find us, and information on our crowdfund, on all socials @224bbaker, or on our website 224bbaker.com. If you've enjoyed what you've heard today, please consider supporting the show and its artists—we'll see you again very soon!