

PERUSAL SCRIPT

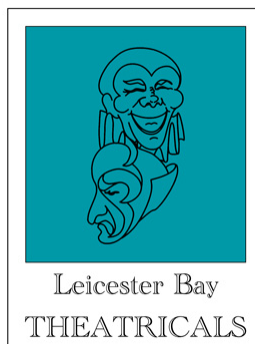
BEFORE

NEVERMORE

A Poe Adventure

A Musical by
Meg Phillips Crespy

Book, Music and Lyrics by
Meg Phillips Crespy



Newport, Maine

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Before Nevermore: A Poe Adventure

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Characters -- 1M 1F 2either

EDGAR ALLAN POE -- A poet. Melancholy with a dramatic streak. (M)

NEVERMIND -- A raven. Not inclined to take orders. (F)

AUGUSTE DUPIN (pronounced DooPAN) -- A detective. Brilliant, but lacking social skills. French. Outrageous accent. Played by the same actor as POE. (M)

DR. DUMMÉ (pronounced DooMAY) -- The villain. Aspires to world domination. (M or F)

NEPTUNE -- A lackey. Not the brightest bulb in the box. (M or F)

Setting: Philadelphia and the Delaware coast, 1841

Before Nevermore: A Poe Adventure was produced by Talking Horse Productions in September 2015. It was directed and music directed by Ed Hanson. The cast was as follows:

POE/DUPIN: Bill Baer

NEVERMIND: Dianna Long

DUMMÉ: Dana Bocke

NEPTUNE: Shawnda Robson Salazar

MUSICAL NUMBERS

#1 -- ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT -- Poe

#2 -- THE FIRST MYSTERY IN HISTORY -- Dupin

#3 -- EL DORADO -- Neptune

#4 -- SIDEKICK'S LAMENT -- Neptune

#5 -- ONCE UPON A MID-DAY -- Poe & Company

Author's note: For discussion/educational purposes, this script contains story elements from, or allusions to, the following Poe works:

The Raven

Manuscript in a Bottle

The Purloined Letter

The Gold Bug

Murders at the Rue Morgue

El Dorado

The Cask of Amontillado

The Pit and the Pendulum

Descent Into the Maelstrom

The Telltale Heart

Hop Frog

The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Award-winning playwright Meg Phillips Crespy has been commissioned by academic and regional theaters to write incidental music, plays and musicals for production. Her play “Mostly Sweet” was highlighted in NYC’s 2013 Cherry Lane Theatre Tongues series, and “The Zenith Escape” (composer) won the 2017 National Jackie White Children's Playwriting Contest.

BEFORE NEVERMORE A Poe Adventure with Book, Music and Lyrics by Meg Crespy. 1M, 1F and 2 actors of either gender playing 5 characters. Several fluid settings between Philadelphia and the Delaware coast. 1840s Costumes. -- *(Suitable for Professional, Amateur and Educational theatres for Children and Youth, TYA)* BEFORE NEVERMORE is a mashup of Poe tales including *The Gold Bug*, *The Purloined Letter* and *The Pit & The Pendulum*. Aided by a raven named, Nevermind, Poe investigates a mysterious paper that was found in a bottle, creating history’s first detective fiction along the way. With a dash of audience participation, a bumbling villainous duo, jokes for young and old, and five delightful songs, this show points to many of the masterworks created by Edgar Allan Poe, and gives a humorous look into the process of how a story is discovered. **Order # 3194**

A note about sound effects:

Recorded sound effects are preferable, but if a sound system is not available, most effects can be omitted. Those that are central to the action (e.g., the beating heart) should be achieved with practical effects offstage. [SFX are from North Village Recording: Tim Hanson, producer.]

- 01 - Blowing Wind (Forlorn And Lonely)
- 02 - Running Water (River) Followed By Splash
- 03 - Second Splash Bigger Than First
- 04 - Ocean Waves On A Beach Seagull Cry
- 05 - Orangutan Screeching Howling Breaking Glass
- 06 - Dripping Water Dungeon Sounds
- 07 - Repetitive Swooshing (Pendulum)
- 08 - Forest Sounds (Birds)
- 09 - Whistling Sound Rock Falling Landing
- 10 - Cave Sounds Echo Water Dripping
- 11 - Whooshing Sound Hot Air Ballon Fire Up
- 12 - Wind And Rough Ocean Waves
- 13 - Beach Sounds

These sound effects are FREE OF CHARGE, but you must order them from us and they will either be available for download (sent with your production package) or on a CD; at our discretion.

Before Nevermore: A Poe Adventure

(At rise:)

[**SOUND EFFECT 01:** Wind blowing, a little forlorn.]

(The stage is sparsely furnished including a chair and writing table. On the writing table is a bottle with a paper in it, a bottle of ink, and a piece of paper.

POE enters, sits down, heaves an exaggerated sigh, then picks up a pen, dips it in the ink and begins to write – then looks up at the audience and begins to sing while writing:)

SONG #1: Once Upon a Midnight

POE:

ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT DREARY, WHILE I PONDERED WEAK AND WEARY
OVER MANY A QUAIN AND CURIOUS VOLUME OF FORGOTTEN LORE—
WHILE I NODDED, NEARLY NAPPING, SUDDENLY THERE CAME A TAPPING,
AS OF SOMEONE GENTLY RAPPING, RAPPING AT MY CHAMBER DOOR!

(NEVERMIND step onstage, raps, then exits quickly.)

“Tis some visitor,” I muttered; here I opened wide the door—

DARKNESS THERE AND NOTHING MORE.

BACK INTO THE CHAMBER TURNING, ALL MY SOUL WITHIN ME BURNING,
SOON AGAIN I HEARD A TAPPING SOMEWHAT LOUDER THAN BEFORE.

OPEN HERE I FLUNG THE SHUTTER. IN, WITH MANY A FLIRT AND FLUTTER,
STEPPED A GRIM AND ANCIENT RAVEN WANDERING FROM THE NIGHTLY SHORE

(NEVERMIND enters and regards POE, who addresses her:)

Tell me, Raven, what your name is! What’s your name? I do implore!”

QUOTH THE RAVEN,

NEVERMIND: Nevermind.

POE: Excuse me?

NEVERMIND: Nevermind. That’s my name.

POE: I was hoping for something that rhymes.

NEVERMIND: I have an uncle named Nevermore.

POE: Excellent! Fetch him at once, and you may go.

NEVERMIND: No can do. He ate some poison berries and died.

(She strikes a “frozen-dead” pose).

We sold him to the hatmaker.

POE: *(trying to usher NEVERMIND out)* I don’t mean to be rude, but I need to finish this poem.

NEVERMIND: Actually, that’s why I’m here. I can’t help noticing that everything you write is sad.

POE: Not true! Some of it is scary.

NEVERMIND: And is that how you want to be remembered? Edgar Allen Poe: sad, scary writer?

POE: You know, I think I’ve seen your Uncle Nevermore on Mrs. Peabody’s hat.

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(He strikes the frozen-dead pose)

NEVERMIND: Don't change the subject. What about that new piece you've started, about the great French detective Auguste Dupin, and his scientific method of solving mysteries?

POE: Do you think the public is ready for it? It's a big change from my other stories.

NEVERMIND: That's why it's perfect! We're living in the modern world of 1841! *Everything* is changing! Just think what's been invented in your lifetime! Morse code...Electric doorbells...

POE: *(thoughtful)* Sewing machines...

NEVERMIND: Dental Floss!

POE: *(getting caught up in the excitement)* Steam shovels!

NEVERMIND: Graham crackers!

POE: Bigger and better hot air balloons!

NEVERMIND: That's the spirit!

POE: But my poem...

NEVERMIND: Poem-schmoem! Write your detective story!

(Grabs paper off desk)

POE: Give that back or I'll sell *you* to the hatmaker!

(NEVERMIND grabs the paper-in-a-bottle from POE's desk.)

NEVERMIND: What's this?

POE: Leave that be! It's the only thing I have from my father.

NEVERMIND: *(peering through the glass)* Looks a like a map. Where does it lead?

POE: How should I know? I've never looked.

NEVERMIND: So it's a mystery? Time for an adventure!

(She opens the bottle and stuffs the poem in next to the map.) To the river!

POE: Stop, you craven raven!

(A brief chase ensues. They exit and cries/chase sounds continue, with)

[SOUND EFFECT 02: running water, splash]

(then)

[SOUND EFFECT 03: splash]

(DR. DUMMÉ enters.)

DUMMÉ: *(breathing in happily)* Ah, nothing like the sea air when you're hatching nefarious plans.

POE: *(Offstage)* Dratted bird!

(DUMMÉ begins to exercise – squats, lunges, etc.)

NEVERMIND: *(offstage)* Come back! You'll float all the way to the Atlantic Ocean!

(The commotion ends.)

[SOUND EFFECT 04: Ocean waves breaking on a beach; maybe a seagull.]

(DUMMÉ finishes exercising – perhaps with a yoga pose - and calls off:)

DUMMÉ: Neptune!

NEPTUNE: *(scurries in)* Yes, Dr. Dummy!

DUMMÉ: Neptune, how many times have I told you?! It's Dr. DooMAY. Not Dummy. DooMAY!

NEPTUNE: Sorry.

DUMMÉ: Let's review my evil plan. (1) Subdue two idiots (B) Steal a treasure, and (third) take over the

world!

(Makes a gesture of triumph: arm bent at the elbow, fist raised in the air. Looks at NEPTUNE who looks back blankly.)

Have you forgotten again? My gesture of triumph should always be followed by ominous music!
(Demonstrates)

DUNH-DUNH-DUNH!!!

NEPTUNE: Oh, right, sorry, Dr. Doomee... Doomah...

DUMMÉ: DooMAY!

NEPTUNE: Doomay. Try the gesture of triumph again.

DUMMÉ: –and (third) take over the world!
(Makes gesture of triumph)

NEPTUNE: Dunh-dunh-dunh!

DUMMÉ: Is that the best you can do?

NEPTUNE: I have a cold.

DUMMÉ: Next time it had better be much, much louder... or I will banish you to the moon using my bigger and better hot air balloon!
(Peers offstage)

Who is that coming up the beach? Ah, Neptune, the plot thickens!
(Exits)

NEPTUNE: Oh, drats, I don't want to go to the moon!
(Has an idea, turns to audience)

Say, could you help? Join in on the omi-nominous music? Here, it goes like this.
(Makes gesture of triumph)

Dunh-dunh-dunh!! Now you try. Wait for Dr. Dummy...

DUMMÉ: *(offstage)* DooMAY!

NEPTUNE: Er, wait for Dr. DooMAY to make the gesture of triumph--
(Gestures; audience responds)

Now all together....
(Gestures, joins the audience)

DUNH-DUNH-DUNH!! Say, that's pretty good!

DUMMÉ: *(offstage)* NEPTUNE!!

NEPTUNE: Coming, Dr. D!
(NEPTUNE hurries off. POE enters, carrying the bottle in one hand, head in the other hand, grimacing. POE has amnesia and has transformed into DUPIN, complete with an exaggerated French accent.)

POE (as DUPIN): Oh, my poor 'ead! Oh, zees terrible Fraunch accent!
(He realizes what he's holding)

Oh! A manuscript in a bottle!
(Opens the bottle, pulls out the paper.)

Two manuscripts! A poem... Ugh, so sad...
(Tosses it away)

and – Mon dieu! This is not a manuscript—it is a pirate’s treasure map!

NEVERMIND: *(entering)* Did someone say pirate?

(She crosses in and tries to climb on POE’s shoulder.)

DUPIN: Desist! You are not a parrot.

(Looks her over)

You’re a raven!

NEVERMIND: In the flesh! Well, the feathers.

DUPIN: And I am not a pirate! I am a detective.

NEVERMIND: I thought you were a poet?

DUPIN: *(crossly)* Do I know you?

NEVERMIND: I’m Nevermind

(This elicits no recognition. She strikes the Uncle-Nevermore-on-the-hat pose. Still nothing.)

Zounds! You must have been knocked on the head and lost your memory.

DUPIN: My memory is perfect! Beginning five minutes ago, that is. Curiously blank before that. But I do remember that I am Auguste Dupin... the greatest detective in the world!

NEVERMIND: You don’t say.

DUPIN: Oh yes, I am très fantastique. In fact, someone should write down my adventures.

NEVERMIND: *(cooly)* Why should anyone do that?

DUPIN: Because, mon ami, it would be the first tale of mystery... in the whole of western history!

SONG #2: The First Mystery in History

DUPIN:

THE FIRST MYSTERY IN HISTORY, IT WOULD NOT COME AMISS YOU SEE,
FOR EVERY ART CAN START A REVOLUTION.
AND THE READERS WILL KEEP READING ‘TIL
THEY’VE STRAINED THEIR BRAINS AND HAD THEIR FILL
OF STRIVING TO ARRIVE AT THE SOLUTION.

(Spoken, in rhythm)

Someday the rest will imitate
What started with Dupin the Great
With plots revolving and evolving many a keen-eyed master maven
Little gray cells that detect
The suspect who is most suspect

NEVERMIND:

And all because of you?

DUPIN:

Of course! It’s elementary, my dear Raven!
MYSTERY! SUCH HISTORY!
WE’LL MAKE A START WITH THIS STORY –

AND FROM THE MAP WE'LL TAKE OUR MEASURE
TILL WE FIND THE PIRATE'S TREASURE!

(Spoken interlude)

NEVERMIND: So that mustache...

DUPIN: Mustache?

(Feels face)

Oh!

NEVERMIND: It's just that you look less like a detective and more like, say, a *poet*.

DUPIN: Sacre bleu, you are right! No doubt, it is a false mustache from my latest disguise. One moment.

(DUPIN rips the mustache off in a dramatic gesture – stands smiling for a moment, then reacts as the pain hits)

NEVERMIND: *(drily)* Well done.

BOTH:

THE FIRST MYSTERY IN HISTORY

DUPIN:

SOMEDAY THEY'LL REMINISCE OVER ME:

NEVERMIND:

“THIS SLEUTH BEGAN, FORSOOTH, A REVOLLOOTHION!”

BOTH:

AND THE READERS WILL KEEP READING ‘TIL
THEY’VE STRAINED THEIR BRAINS AND HAD THEIR FILL
OF STRIVING TO ARRIVE AT THE SOLUTION!

NEVERMIND: By gum, you're right! You should *definitely* write down your mystery adventures!

DUPIN: Me? Don't be ridiculous. I'm a detective, not a writer.

NEVERMIND: But—

DUPIN: Now, do you see that inn?

(Points off through 4th wall. NEVERMIND nods)

There is a vacancy on the third floor.

NEVERMIND: How do you know?

DUPIN: Because, mon ami, It is the only room without a candle burning in the window. Do you have any money?

NEVERMIND: I'm a raven. No pockets.

DUPIN: Quel dommage – if we had money, we could rent a room in which to study the map, then get dinner at that tavern.

(Points in different direction.)

NEVERMIND: Dinner? I'm your bird. Wait here.

(Exits quickly.)

DUPIN: *(peering at the restaurant, thoughtful)* Hm, judging by the column of smoke, we should avoid the meat pies...

(Offstage, a loud squawk and a voice.)

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VOICE: (*offstage*) Get off me, you foul fowl!

NEVERMIND: (*enters and tosses a bag of coins at DUPIN*) Let's eat.

(*DUPIN and NEVERMIND exit. DUMMÉ enters, followed by NEPTUNE.*)

DUMMÉ: Did you hear that, Neptune?

NEPTUNE: Yes! Avoid the meat pies!

DUMMÉ: A pirate's treasure map! We could sneak in their window, seize the treasure, and take over the world!

(*Gesture of triumph; NEPTUNE and audience do music. DUMMÉ nods approvingly*)

Not bad, not bad. I won't banish you to the moon in my bigger and better hot air balloon... yet.

NEPTUNE: But their room is on the third floor. How will we get up there?

DUMMÉ: A visit to the zoo will solve our problems. And then, the treasure shall be mine!

(*Gesture of triumph; NEPTUNE and audience do music*)

Better all the time. Now, I'm off to the zoo, and you go procure some treasure-hunting supplies.

NEPTUNE: Will do, Dr. Dummy.

(*Exits before DUMMÉ has a chance to respond.*)

DUMMÉ: One of these days, Neptune... to the moon!

(*DUMMÉ exits in the opposite direction. DUPIN and NEVERMIND enter and cross from one side to the other.*)

DUPIN: And so, Nevermind, to solve a mystery, one should always ask "what has occurred now, that never occurred before?"

NEVERMIND: Yeah, yeah. Let's eat.

(*They exit. NEPTUNE enters, moving slowly under the weight of treasure-hunting accoutrement. DUMMÉ enters opposite and they meet mid-stage.*)

DUMMÉ: Good work, Neptune. As for me, I have liberated the *Simia Flammeus*, commonly known as the orange orangutan, who is waiting for you in the bushes there.

(*Points offstage left*)

NEPTUNE: Is it dangerous?

DUMMÉ: Of course. So stay calm and whatever you do, don't say the word

(*Glances off left; pulls NEPTUNE far stage right and stage-whispers behind his hand*)

"banana." The beast will go mad and destroy everything in sight. Do you understand?

NEPTUNE: Yes, Dr. D.

DUMMÉ: What are you not to say?

NEPTUNE: Ba-

(*DUMMÉ clamps a hand over NEPTUNE's mouth.*)

Mn-N-nn.

DUMMÉ: Right. Don't forget. Now get to work. I'll be waiting at our secret base.

(*Exits*)

NEPTUNE: (*nervously*) An orangutan! That's a monkey, right? How scary can a little monkey be?

ORANGUTAN: (*offstage*) Ook!

(*NEPTUNE crosses to the edge of stage left, looking offstage at a spot about 18 inches off the ground.*)

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NEPTUNE: *(while crossing)* Hello, little monkey, let me see how...

(Falters, starts looking up)

...cute...

(Keeps moving head up until at eye level with the orangutan – about 8 feet off the ground)

...you are. And also big. Nice monkey.

ORANGUTAN: Ook.

NEPTUNE: I'll just stay here, then, and you climb through that window

(Watching offstage; looks up higher)

Oh, good job! Good monkey!

(Dismissively)

And to think Dr. D thought you might go bananas!

(The ORANGUTAN goes berserk, screeching and howling as we hear)

[**SOUND EFFECT 05:** breaking glass, crashing wood, general mayhem.]

NEPTUNE: Yikes! Er, say, do you see a map up there?

(The map drops onto stage from above. NEPTUNE grabs it and exits as fast as the treasure-hunting gear will allow; while exiting, says)

Thank you!

ORANGUTAN: OOK!

(NEVERMIND and DUPIN enter. NEVERMIND is rubbing her belly and groaning.)

DUPIN: I told you to avoid the meat pie.

(They see the room (possibly the 4th wall))

NEVERMIND: Zounds! What happened to our room?

DUPIN: Someone has broken in!

NEVERMIND: Where's the bed?

DUPIN: There, and there. And there.

NEVERMIND: Just look at this mess!

DUPIN: You see what is here, yet you miss what *is not* here.

NEVERMIND: The map! It's gone!

DUPIN: *(nods calmly, surveys the room)* Clearly this was the work of an orange orangutan.

(NEVERMIND looks at DUPIN sidelong and they exit. DUMMÉ and NEPTUNE enter from different directions and meet.)

DUMMÉ: Neptune! Did all go according to plan?

NEPTUNE: Er...mostly. Here's the map.

DUMMÉ: Excellent!

(Studies it)

The Secret Island of El Dorado, eh?

NEPTUNE: El Dorado? Golly, that song is so popular right now; they're singing it in all the taverns.

(Sings mournfully, to the tune of "Desperado")

EL DORADO, WHY DON'T YOU DROP YOUR DEFENSES?

'CAUSE THE MAELSTROM COMMENCES...BEFORE TOO LONG, NOW...

DUMMÉ: Stop, please, before my ears begin to bleed.

NEPTUNE: Sure, boss. Anyway, I like the version my mother used to sing better.

(Opens mouth to sing but is interrupted by DUMMÉ.)

DUMMÉ: The pressing question is, where do we hide the map?

NEPTUNE: Oh, I know this one! A secret hidden cave, right?

DUMMÉ: (Aside) I would be better off with the orangutan.

(To NEPTUNE)

The map's owners will be searching far and wide, which means...

NEPTUNE: You should hide it in the safest place you can find!

DUMMÉ: Unless my foe is the sort who would *expect* me to hide it there. In which case...

(Looks at NEPTUNE thoughtfully.)

Come along, Neptune. Let us hide the map... and lay a little trap for our enemies.

(They exit. NEVERMIND enters, scanning for the map. NEPTUNE re-enters.)

NEPTUNE: *(Woodenly reciting a script)* Hello, weary traveler. I wish to give you. A gift. Drink it, and you will be refined.

DUMMÉ: *(Offstage)* Refreshed!

NEPTUNE: Refreshed.

(She holds out her hand to give NEVERMIND a bottle and realizes her hand is empty.

She looks panicked. DUMMÉ storms on, gives NEPTUNE the bottle, and exits,

muttering. NEPTUNE hands the bottle to NEVERMIND, smiles weakly, and rapidly exits.

DUPIN enters, lost in thought.)

DUPIN: Judging by the story of the zookeeper...

(Sticks finger in mouth, holds it up)

...and with the wind from the northeast...

(Nods)

Clearly the map was purloined by the nefarious Dr. Dummy!

DUMMÉ: *(offstage)* DooMAY! It's DOOMAY!!

DUPIN: Did you find it, Nevermind?

NEVERMIND: No map, no orangutan, no nothing! But

(Peers at bottle)

here's some Amontillado to revive us.

(They drink.)

DUPIN: If only I had looked more closely at the map. I know the treasure is on El Dorado Island... but where is the island?

(Silence for a moment. They begin to sing, mournfully, a little groggy. NEPTUNE sneaks onstage and watches them.)

NEVERMIND and DUPIN: EL DORADO... WHY DON'T YOU DROP YOUR DEFENSES...

(They trail off, realizing something is wrong.)

DUPIN: Oof, I feel terrible!

NEVERMIND: Ugh, me too! That meat pie...

DUPIN: Never mind, Nevermind! Where did you get this bottle of Amontillado?

NEVERMIND: (*spies NEPTUNE and points*) From her.

DUPIN: We have been drugged!

(Smells bottle)

Montresor berries! In no time at all, we shall be fast asleep.

(Staggers to feet)

You fiend! I shall –

(Abruptly falls asleep, standing up.)

NEVERMIND: For the love of God! Montresor!

(Falls asleep. NEPTUNE pokes them and they sleepwalk offstage. NEPTUNE follows.)

[**SOUND EFFECT 06:** dripping water/dungeon noises.]

(DUMMÉ enters.)

DUMMÉ: Mwah ha ha hah! MWAH ha ha HA haha HAH! ...They're right, laughter is good for the soul.

(DUPIN and NEVERMIND enter, sleepwalking, perhaps snoring softly. They are prodded along by NEPTUNE, who pokes them into place with broom, brandishing it as if it were a pitchfork.)

DUMMÉ: Really? A broom?

NEPTUNE: The bristles are very sharp.

DUMMÉ: Just tie them up beneath the pendulum. Quickly.

(NEPTUNE winds a rope around DUPIN and NEVERMIND while DUMMÉ fiddles with some controls (could be onstage or just off.)

[Optional **SOUND EFFECT 07:** repetitive swooshing sound.]

(DUMMÉ looks up and swings his head back and forth, following the arc of a large pendulum high above. Laughs evilly again. The sound wakes DUPIN and NEVERMIND, who shout simultaneously as they awaken.)

DUPIN: Lenore!

NEVERMIND: I don't want to be a hat!

DUPIN: Where are we?

NEPTUNE: (*dramatically*) The Pit... of Disrepair!

(DR. DUMMÉ opens mouth, about to correct NEPTUNE, changes mind, sighs)

DUMMÉ: Best that you not know the real name of this dungeon. Not that you will escape, of course.

Which is why I shall give a detailed account of my plan to *take over the world!*

(Gesture of triumph; NEPTUNE and audience do music)

DUPIN: Ominous music!

(To NEVERMIND.)

This can only mean–

NEVERMIND: (*to DUPIN*) –Dr. Dummy!

NEPTUNE: (*correcting NEVERMIND*) DooMAY.

(To DUMMÉ, proudly.)

Pretty good, huh boss?

(Trips over broom.)

DUMMÉ: Indeed, I am Dr. Dummé. It is I who purloined your map leading to the secret Island of El

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Dorado. On that island is a tall, tall, extremely tall tree. It's very tall. Neptune, you shall climb to the top.

NEPTUNE: I'm afraid of heights.

DUMMÉ: At the top of the tree is a branch, and at the end of the branch is a skull. Neptune, you shall drop a stone through the skull's left eye socket.

NEPTUNE: Left eye socket. Got it.

(Taps right eye.)

DUMMÉ: *(sighs, holds up left hand)* Regard, Neptune, *this* is your left hand. See? You can make an "L" with it.

(Demonstrates.)

L for Left.

NEPTUNE: *(holds up right hand)* "L."

DUMMÉ: *(crosses to DUPIN)* Excuse me.

(Removes a ring from DUPIN's left hand.)

Neptune, put this on your left hand – no, the other left.

DUPIN: You cannot take that! It is my wedding ring!

NEVERMIND: You're married??

DUPIN: *(as surprised as anyone)* Apparently.

DUMMÉ: Ahem. If I may continue? Neptune will drop the stone through the skull's LEFT eye socket.

(NEPTUNE proudly holds up right hand, then quickly switches it to left)

When the stone lands, it will point the way, 500 paces off, to a cave... and in that cave – the treasure! As for you two –

(Points up; they look up and swing their heads back and forth, following the arc of the pendulum.)

DUPIN: A pendulum!

NEVERMIND: With a blade on the end!

DUMMÉ: A very sharp blade. And as the pendulum drops lower and lower... it's so long, sleuth and bye bye, birdie! Neptune, check those knots, then meet me at the balloon launchpad, where continues my ascent to power!

(Gesture of triumph; NEPTUNE and audience do music)

Very nice.

(Exits)

DUPIN: I must admit, I like the idea of my own music. Sort of a "Dunh da da DAH!"

NEPTUNE: *(indicating audience)* You could ask them to help.

DUPIN: Do you think they would?

NEPTUNE: *(to audience)* What do you think?

(Nods)

You just need a gesture.

DUPIN: Oui. Something like...

(Tries to gesture, but the ropes are in the way. To NEPTUNE)

Perhaps you can gesture for me?

(NEPTUNE tries several gestures, but DUPIN is not satisfied. Finally...)

NEPTUNE: Here, show me.

(Unties DUPIN's arm.)

DUPIN: Like this.

(Makes gesture of intent: elbow bent, similar to DUMMÉ's gesture, but instead of a fist, it's a finger pointing upward.)

Dunh da da DAH!

NEPTUNE: Ooh, that's nice.

(Gets the audience to help; they practice. To DUPIN:)

Here, try it again!

DUPIN: And now, my avian companion and I shall make our brave escape!

(Gesture of intent.)

Dunh da da DAH!

NEPTUNE: *(joining in)* Dunh da da - ACK!

(NEVERMIND and DUPIN, who have freed themselves from the ropes, pounce on NEPTUNE.)

DUPIN: Watch her, Nevermind!

(NEVERMIND grabs the broom and brandishes it at NEPTUNE.)

First, I shall take back my ring

(NEPTUNE hands it over.)

and then...

(Paces, thinking.)

The map.

NEVERMIND: *(looking at the pendulum, pointing up)* Hey, boss...

DUPIN: A clever thief like Dummé would surely hide it in the last place his enemies would look. Only a great fool would look in the most obvious place.

NEVERMIND: I searched far and wide.

DUPIN: But Dummé knows I am not a great fool; he would have counted on it; so clearly I can choose to look in the most obvious place.

(Pulls the map from inside NEPTUNE's coat.)

NEVERMIND: Inconceivable.

NEPTUNE: Please don't take the map! I can't face Dr. D without it.

DUPIN: *Alors*, I shall let you keep the ring so you are not empty handed.

(Takes NEPTUNE's right hand and slips on the ring.)

Now make haste before we are sliced to ribbons!

(They run toward the exit, DUPIN and NEVERMIND one way and NEPTUNE the other. NEVERMIND starts to go after NEPTUNE, looks at the pendulum, and rethinks it. They all exit.)