

MR A'S AMAZING MAZE PLAYS

ALAN AYCKBOURN

First performed at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round, Scarborough in 1988.

SUZY lives in a small cottage with her mother and her dog, Neville – her father went up in a hot air balloon one day and never came back down. Except for missing SUZY's father they are all quite happy, until the suave Mr Accousticus moves into the mysterious old house across from their cottage and sweeps Mother off her feet.

Mr Accousticus hates noise, and since his arrival Neville has lost his bark and their friend and neighbour, Mr Passerby, has lost his operatic voice.

While Mr Accousticus is having supper with Mother, SUZY and Neville plan to get into his house and search for Neville's bark and Mr Passerby's operatic voice. They creep through the garden and along the path till they reach the big front door. Neville pushes it open and they find themselves in a dark hallway. At this point in the play it is up to the audience to choose which course SUZY and Neville should take, and the search sequence begins.

In this scene SUZY and Neville have found their way into Mr Accousticus's Music Room. From there they progress to the Dining Room and then on into the Conservatory.

Published by Faber & Faber, London

Suzy

[SUZY and Neville enter the Music Room] This must be the music room. Look, a piano. *(She tries a few notes)* Well, I think it's a piano. Here's a harp. *(She tries a few notes – Neville finds a tin whistle)* What have you got there? A whistle? *(Neville tries to blow it)* Sshh! Let's try that door. It's the only way out of here. *(She tries it, but it is locked)* What's this say? *(She reads something on the door)* 'I won't let you in to dine. Eat my food or drink my wine/Taste my breakfast, sip my tea/Til you've sung a song for me.' Oh, terrific! Does that mean we have to sing to open the door? I suppose it does. You can't sing, can you, Neville, poor old thing. Wait a minute. I can't think of any songs. I know – what about the one that Mr Passerby always used to sing . . . ?

(She sings) Early one morning . . .
Just as the sun was rising . . . that's it . . .
(SUZY has difficulty in remembering the words)

I heard a maiden singing in the valley below.

Oh, don't deceive me,

Oh, never leave me,

How could you treat a poor maiden so?

(At the end of all this the door opens) Look, Neville, it worked! Come on, then. Dinner is served. *(SUZY and Neville enter the Dining Room)* I wouldn't like to eat in here very much. Not on my own. And it's so dusty. You'd get mouthfuls of fluff. *(They examine things on the table)* Ugghh! Well, it doesn't look as if anyone's even been in here for years, let alone eaten in here. On we go then. We could try those windows. They seem to open and lead to somewhere. Yes, it's full of huge plants out there. It's like a jungle. I think it's what they call a conservatory. Shall we go out there, Neville? It looks rather dangerous . . . What have you found, then? Oh, yes. It's a little concealed door. It's painted like the wall so you hardly notice it. Oh dear. Another choice. Which way shall we go then? Through this door? . . . Or through the French windows and into the jungle? . . . *(SUZY and Neville step out through the windows and into the conservatory)* I hope there aren't any wild animals in here . . . Like tigers. Or snakes. I don't like snakes at all. It is very thick, the undergrowth, though. You can hardly see where you're going. Neville? . . . *(Neville has somehow lost sight of SUZY. And now SUZY has lost Neville)* Neville? Don't be silly, Neville. Don't play games. We haven't got time for that. If Mr Accousticus comes back while we're here, we're in real trouble. Neville . . . Neville? *(They prowl about for a bit. Then Neville leaps out at SUZY, mistaking her for someone else. They roll about)* Neville, stop it! It's me! It's me! Neville! *(Neville stops attacking her)* Don't ever do that again. I thought you were a tiger . . . Now, how do we get out of here? If we ever do get out. What's that in the corner over there? It looks like a door . . . *(She moves over to it)* Yes, look, Neville. It's the door to a lift. Come on, let's try the lift . . .