ACT 1
PROLOGUE

OVERTURE

CD track 9

Magpie Mac comes on stage with the magpies. He starts to address the audience with great drama as the rumbling music is heard right at the end of the overture.

MAGPIE MAC

When magpies top the turrets here
The manor stands for ever!
The turrets and the birds are one,
Their fate is bound together.
These magpies watch us all below,
But should they choose to fly,
They take good fortune with ‘em, so,
BEWARE! The time is nigh!
Aye, BEWARE! The time is nigh!

The magpies perform an angry dance to the following music (see p.68 for suggested choreography).

MAGPIE DANCE

CD track 10

Lord and Lady Pica enter and watch the last part of the dance. After the applause, the magpies disperse in groups but stay on the stage, close enough to be threatening to Lord and Lady Pica. They should stay bird-like – hand-waggling is essential to create a fluttery, edgy atmosphere. Magpie Mac comes forward to speak to Lord and Lady Pica.

LORD PICA

Whatever is wrong with the magpies today, Mac?

MAGPIE MAC

Maybe they think that you’re not the rightful heir to Magpie Manor, me lord.

LORD PICA

(Indignantly) How dare you! The Manor is rightfully mine!

MAGPIE MAC

Have you forgotten your cousin Percy, your uncle’s long-lost son and heir?

LADY PICA

But Percy was disgraced during the war – 1917 wasn’t it? He was then declared ‘missing presumed dead’. He’s never been heard of since. It broke his father’s heart.

LORD PICA

(Sarcastically) And anyway, what do magpies know about the laws of inheritance may I ask?

The magpies edge a little closer in a slightly threatening manner.

MAGPIE MAC

Never, ever mock the magpies, me lord. Learn to respect ‘em like your old uncle did, God rest ‘is soul.

LORD PICA

Respect them? They’re birds! What utter nonsense. It’s the 1920s you know, not the Middle Ages.
The magpies edge even closer.

**LADY PICA**
Steady on old bean, remember the legend!

**MAGPIE MAC**
Aye, me lady, remember the legend! *(With much drama)* 'If the magpies leave the Manor, then Magpie Manor’s DOOMED!'  

*Magpie Mac stomps away followed by the magpies.*

**LORD PICA**
*(Sighing)* The Manor’s doomed anyway according to the bank manager. What’s to be done, my dear?

**LADY PICA**
Gather the clan – we need a plan!

### SCENE 1

**The plan**

All of the family (except for Rupert, Honey and the flapper girls) gather to hear the plan. Mr Fortune and his clerks, Scribble and Blot, are also on stage. Lord and Lady Pica are seated, talking to Mr Fortune, but everyone else stands grouped, whispering and miming.

**LADY PICA**
*(Standing)* So the clan has gathered, but as usual we’re waiting for our fashionably late daughters.

Everyone tuts and shakes their heads. *Then the five flapper girls burst in excitedly.*

**MIMI**
Morning everyone!

**FIFI**
Ooh, don’t you look gloomy!

**MINTY**
You look as though someone’s pinched the family silver!

**TRIXIE**
Cheer up!

**BUBBLES**
Look at all this lovely space – let’s dance!

**SCRIBBLE & BLOT**
Good idea!

*Scribble and Blot rush forwards to join in with the singing, dancing flapper girls.*

**Song 1. THE MAGPIE RAG**

*CD track 1/11*

Everybody else (except for Lord and Lady Pica and Mr Fortune) join in to sing and dance in character from ‘Flap those arms’ etc.

**LADY PICA**
*(Clapping her hands for quiet)* Stop, stop everyone, we must be serious. Listen to your father!

**LORD PICA**
Magpie Manor is in grave financial trouble. Mr Fortune has come to tell us about his plan to save the Manor.

**MR FORTUNE**
Good morning everyone. I am honoured to be here. I’m sure you’ve all heard that I have taken over the bank from Mr Deed of Dunn, Dark and Deed. So tragic about his ‘little accident’! So… let’s get on. Where are my assistants?
SCRIBBLE & BLOT

Here Mr Fortune!

BLOT

He’s Scribble.

SCRIBBLE

And he’s Blot.

BLOT

What do we do?

SCRIBBLE

(Aside to audience) Not a lot!

They both laugh.

MR FORTUNE

I apologise, Lord Pica. I fear their days are numbered.

BLOT

Mine’s number 8!

SCRIBBLE

Come in number 8, your time is up! (They laugh)

MR FORTUNE

(Sternly) Moving on.

LORD PICA

Let my family introduce themselves, Mr Fortune. Here are my daughters.

MIMI

I’m Mimi and I simply adore the Charleston.

SCRIBBLE

Did you hear that Blot? I can do the Charleston you know.

He starts to Charleston and Mimi runs over to join him.

FIFI

I’m Fifi the flapper girl. (She flaps over to Scribble and Blot)

TRIXIE

I’m Trixie and I love Dixie. (She flaps over to Scribble and Blot)

BLOT

Lucky old Dixie!

MINTY

I’m Minty, queen of the cocktail scene!

She sashays over to Scribble and Blot with her empty glass.

BUBBLES

(In an airy-fairy way) And I’m Bubbles. Boo-boo-be-doo!

SCRIBBLE

Boo-boo-be-doo to you too!

GRANDMAMA

(Banging her cane and shouting) What are they saying? What’s going on?

BLOT

Who’s that?

MIMI

It’s our Grandmama.

FIFI

She’s stuck in the last century!

TRIXIE

She’s pretty old.

MINTY

She’s pretty deaf.

BUBBLES

And pretty dotty!

LADY PICA

(Shouting) Ah, dear Mama! Come and meet Mr Fortune. He’s come to help us.
Grandmama makes a beeline for Mr Fortune and peers closely at him.

**GRANDMAMA**: Help us? Do I know you? Have you come to take some of these gals off our hands? If you’re looking to marry for money though, you’re in the wrong place!

**LADY PICA**: No, no, Mama! You’ve got the wrong end of the stick.

**GRANDMAMA**: *(Looking at her cane in surprise)* No, I always use it this way! Where’s my daughter Lettice?

**SCRIBBLE**: *(Aside to the audience)* In the sandwiches?

**BLOT**: Nah, it’ll be cucumber all the way here!

**SCRIBBLE**: Remember yer manners at the Manor, Blot!

**BLOT**: Little finger up, lift your cup, take a sup!

**LETTICE**: *(Limply)* Here I am Mama. Good morning Mr Fortune *(she offers a limp hand)*. Bunny’s here too.

**SCRIBBLE**: Chuck him a carrot Blot!

**BLOT**: I think he prefers lettuce.

**SCRIBBLE**: He’s already got Lettice!

**BUNNY**: *(Walking over to Mr Fortune)* Warren’s the name – but you can call me Bunny – and these are my two daughters. As you can see we’re a tad short of sons and heirs!

**HI**: I am Hyacinth, Mr Fortune, but you can call me ‘Hi’.

**SCRIBBLE & BLOT**: *(Waving and using high voices)* Hi Hi!

**LO**: And I am Lobelia, but you can call me ‘Lo’.

**SCRIBBLE & BLOT**: *(Waving and using low voices)* ’ello Lo!

*Hi and Lo hold up their ‘Votes for all women’ poster.*

**HI & LO**: Give the vote to ALL women we say!

**LO**: Can we count on your support for women’s rights Mr Fortune?

**BUNNY**: *(Sternly)* This is neither the time nor the place for all that nonsense.

**HI**: Really father, women have the right to be heard!

**LO**: I bet you wouldn’t stop us from having opinions if we were your sons!

**LETTICE**: Calm down and get off your high horse, dear!

**SCRIBBLE**: Help ’er down from ’er ’orse, Blot!

**BLOT**: Can’t, she’s too high!
They giggle at their own joke and high-five each other. Cousin Rupert and fiancée Honey Devine can be heard approaching as Rupert says the next line.

RUPERT Come on Honey, we’re late as it is! Mind you don’t trip over your feather boa.

MIMI It’s Cousin Rupert!

FIFI Who’s he talking to?

GRANDMAMA Young Rupert did you say? With a woman?

Rupert and Honey enter.

ALL It’s Honey Devine, the movie star!

RUPERT Hello everyone, this is Honey Devine the movie star.

ALL We know!

RUPERT I’m so frightfully happy! I’ve planned this special moment to share with you all. (He takes out the ring case and engagement ring from his pocket)

Rupert and Honey duet with lots of ham acting in order to make this a fun song to perform. It should be saccharine-sweet as Rupert proposes to Honey. The rest of the cast look on in disbelief.

Song 2. HONEY DEVINE CD track 2/12

HONEY Oh Rupee, of course I’ll marry you!

Everyone reacts to the news and then Honey continues in a brash way, trying to be sweet.

HONEY Why, hello everybody. Whoever would have thought that li’l ol’ me would marry into the English aristocracy, living in a castle with a moat an’ all? Lady Honey has a certain ring to it, don’t you think? Just wait till I tell the folks back home!

HI Well, don’t get too excited Miss Devine! Dear Cousin Rupert is Lady Pica’s cousin, not Lord Pica’s cousin!

LO Which means that Cousin Rupert will never be a lord, so forget the title!

HONEY Oh my! No title? How disappointing!

GRANDMAMA Oh dear, it sounds to me as though young Rupert has been elevating his position somewhat!

RUPERT I… I… well… I never said…

SCRIBBLE Here, stand on this! (He fetches a stool)

BLOT That’ll help you ‘elevate your position’ me ol’ mate!