

# Hocus Pocus 2

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a short play

By Andrew Briedis

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

DANI DENNISON, 26

MAX DENNISON, 33

TIME AND PLACE

A House in Salem, Massachusetts, on October 31st, 2011.

SCENE 1

*LIGHTS UP on a bedroom. A bed sits center stage. A door leads off right, alongside an old drum set. Situated on stage left are two large shutters concealing a closet.*

*KNOCKING is heard from the other side of the door. No answer.*

DANI (OFFSTAGE)

Max...?

*The knocking persists.*

DANI (OFFSTAGE)

Max!

*Still nothing. After a moment of silence, the door finally opens to reveal DANI, 26. She holds a small carry-on suitcase and is disheveled from travel.*

*She looks around. Max isn't there.*

DANI

Fucking jerkface.

*She drops her suitcase and walks over to the bed. She sits... For a while... Maybe too long... Giving up, she exhales, rolls her eyes, and pulls out her phone.*

*She holds the phone for a moment. She doesn't want to have to make this call, but she dials anyway.*

*She holds it to her ear, and waits. Quietly, we hear a ringtone emanating from the closet. It's "I Put A Spell On You" by Nina Simone.*

DANI  
(under her breath)

What the...?

*The ringtone abruptly stops.*

*Without making a sound, Dani stands and slowly walks to the closet. In one fluid motion, she FLINGS OPEN the shutters of the closet to reveal MAX, 33, hiding inside. He's dressed head-to-toe as Disney's Peter Pan... with tights.*

MAX  
(deflated)

Boo.

DANI  
That's seriously your ringtone for me?

MAX  
It's a really great cover! Anyway, whatever, it's awesome to see you, too.

*He hugs her. It's awkward. A ritual seldom practiced.*

MAX (CONTD)  
Hey, where's your costume?

DANI  
(laughing)  
Oh, I'm not going to that.

MAX  
Come on! The Town Hall party is actually really fun when you're drunk and not being chased by witches. And besides, you said you'd go.

DANI  
No. I said I would stop by here because I was in Boston. So, what is it? Why did you need to see me so bad?

*Max stands back and proudly shows off his costume.*

MAX

Well...?

*Dani is confused.*

DANI

What.

MAX

Peter Pan. With tights.

DANI

Congratulations?

MAX

Look, I know I promised we'd do the Wendy and Peter Pan thing when we were kids, but like – well, you know – and then we never got to do this.

DANI

Jesus, Max, that was seventeen years ago. Let it go.

MAX

I just... I wasn't the best brother after that. And I'm sorry.

*She knows he doesn't mean it.*

DANI

What do you want, Max?

*He stands in silence for a moment, struggling with how to explain what he needs. Then, as if someone else has jumped into his body, he starts hastily digging beneath the bed.*

MAX

Okay, don't be mad –

DANI

Real promising start –

MAX

(still digging)

– but I found something, and I think it’ll... I mean, if the two of us, together, do it right... we can –

*Max pulls out a GIGANTIC SPELL BOOK, tattered with age.*

DANI

What the fuck, Max!

*He opens it.*

MAX

I just need to show you –

*Dani GRABS it from him.*

DANI

Why the hell do you have this?!

MAX

When the Sanderson house burned down last year?

DANI

You’re not making any sense.

*Max grabs the book back.*

MAX

Let me finish!

(manic)

Okay, so after it burned down, I went there, and it’s the only thing that survived because it’s like, immune to fire, remember? So, I took it. And I’ve been reading it over and over again, for months, and there’s a lot of handwritten stuff in the margins. Mostly jokes and stuff like that – you know, for a mass murderer of children, Winifred Sanderson was actually pretty hilarious – so anyway, I came across the spell that brought them back. Not the one that brought Billy Butcherson back as a zombie. That was just crazy. I’m talking about the actual spell that brought the witches back from the dead as actual human beings. And I figured it out that the spell worked because they were siblings, and they had some sort of weird sibling power thing going on, so I think that if I have you, then you and I together can maybe –

DANI

Mom's dead, Max.

*Silence.*

MAX

But, no, you're not listening -

DANI

She's dead. She died seventeen years ago. She's not coming back.

MAX

You've been a real bumner since you moved back to LA.

DANI

It's just a lot right now. You're a lot. All of this is a lot. I mean, I've been here for about six minutes total so far and I've found you in the closet trying to scare me while dressed in some costume that you promised you'd wear for me on the Halloween that ended up being the day our mom died instead, so -

MAX

(proudly)

But it still fits!

DANI

And we haven't seen each other in two years, but you expect me to show up like everything is cool and casual so we can sit down for a good old fashioned family séance?!

MAX

It would actually be more of a resurrection, but -

DANI

Look, I appreciate all of this, if it's just some sort of twisted olive branch you're extending... but you got me here. So, you can drop the act. Put down the book. Change out of...  
(motioning to his costume)

That. And I'll meet you downstairs if you want to talk.

*She moves to leave.*

MAX

How do you do it?

*She stops.*

DANI

Do what?

MAX

Move through life like mom never happened?

DANI

I was nine. I mean, when I was eight, I was chased by a zombie, saw a cat die twice before turning into a literal ghost, and then watched three grown women explode in front of me. I was conditioned pretty early on for scary shit.

MAX

I'm not talking about actually watching mom die. I'm talking about everything after. I feel like you somehow just... skipped missing her.

DANI

I miss mom every day.

MAX

That's not what I - I guess it's just different.

DANI

No. That's always been the problem between us. You think it's different. You think because you knew her longer, you can have some sort of say in what her opinion of everything would have been. You didn't support me dropping out of art school to pursue blogging because "Mom hated America Online." You were against me moving to LA because "Mom thought traffic was the worst." You didn't come to my wedding because "Mom wouldn't have liked Chris."

MAX

She wanted me to look after you!

DANI

Look. After. Not manage.

MAX

Don't act like I didn't save your life once.



DANI

Yes. Once. And that was amazing. I love that I have a brother who is willing to risk his life for me. I just need him to every now and then not be afraid for me to risk mine.

*Max sits on the bed. He takes off his Peter Pan hat and nervously pulls at his hair before clasping his palms over his face.*

*Dani sits next to him.*

MAX

I just don't get how you can be off living your life, and dad can be off with Tara in that condo with all those cats he's into now?

DANI

Something happened in this house with me and dad. Mom died, you went to college, and something happened between us that you were forced to miss. And I'm sorry. You were dealt a shitty hand. We were all dealt a really shitty hand. But I'm sorry you didn't have anyone to play it with.

MAX

I'm sorry I kept trying to save you.

DANI

I didn't need you to keep being my hero, I needed you to keep being my brother.

*Max grows silent as he slowly flips through the spell book.*

MAX

You know, I didn't really want to try and bring her back...

DANI

Yeah, you did. And that's fine. But look, I'm here now.

*She reaches over, takes his hand, and closes the book.*

DANI (CONTD)

We're the closest thing we've got to her.

*Max squeezes her hand. She takes a moment, and then squeezes back.*

MAX

I'd really love it if you came tonight. I want you to meet someone.

DANI

Who?

MAX

This girl I maybe might marry one day?

DANI

I've already met Allison.

MAX

(laughing)

It's not Allison. No, Allison is already very married.

DANI

Really?

MAX

Yeah... Remember Ice?

DANI

No!

MAX

Yeah, apparently he got deviated septum surgery and now owns, like, sixteen startup companies.

DANI

You're such an idiot.

MAX

No, for real! He's a pretty cool guy now.

*Dani takes a deep breath and then stands.*

DANI

Okay, I'm going to find one of mom's old blue nightgowns and curl my hair or something, so just give me ten minutes.

*She moves to the door.*

MAX

Hey –

*She turns.*

MAX

I think mom would be really happy right now.

DANI

I know she would. But that's not why I'm doing this. I'm doing this because I want to.

MAX

Thank you.

DANI

(smiling)

Sure... Jerkface.

*She leaves.*

*Max pauses to take in the moment before picking up the spell book again.*

*He opens it and tries to rip out a page. To his surprise, the page comes loose with ease. He tears out another one. Then another. Then another. He continues tearing out pages until he starts ripping them in half. Glee takes over, and he begins throwing the pieces into the air. He repeats this action over, and over, and over, to a SLOW FADE.*

*END OF PLAY.*