



Magic Man

Ron Base

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A charming novel of old Hollywood, first loves, and man with a touch of magic

A mysterious young man named Brae Orrack arrives in Venice, California, in 1928, claiming to be a magic man who can turn stones to bees. Brae also comes carrying a curse. He says he will die unless he can find true love---and find it soon. Is he a con man or is he telling the truth? With Brae, it's hard to tell. Like Elwood P. Dowd and Harvey, Brae, with his old-fashioned charm and ease, invites the reader to embrace just a little bit of magic.

Desperate for rent money, Brae agrees to become the chauffeur-bodyguard for a spoiled young actor named Frank (Gary) Cooper, whose womanizing ways always seem to land him in trouble. Entering the glamorous world of early Hollywood, Brae falls for a gorgeous, spunky world traveler named Nell Devereaux, who also happens to be the lover of a powerful Cuban dictator. Finally, he has found the love that will save him. Or has he?

Brae quickly learns that love does not come easily. New York gangsters, bootleggers, Hollywood producers, and homicidal dictators conspire to complicate Brae's life at every turn. He befriends a young hood named George Raft, saves the life of movie star Clara Bow, and outwits a family of killers in Key West, Florida. He deftly maneuvers his way out of all sorts of life-threatening situations, but time is running out and Brae must somehow win Nell and save his life. Yet even in Hollywood, skepticism of a "magic" man runs high, and Brae battles conventional reality---not to mention his own impending mortality---at every turn.

Ron Base writes a witty, charming tale of a man desperately in search of his destiny. *Magic Man* is part fable and part adventure, a love story about the impossibility of love.

"Beautiful women and gangsters, movie stars and dictators all rub shoulders in this delicious tongue-in-cheek debut set in 1920s Hollywood.... Base works his own magic as he crisply choreographs the entrances and exits of his large cast. There will be thrills aplenty before we are done, and disillusionment, but never defeat for the resilient Brae. A page-turner, spiffy and irresistible."

---*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"Inventive and evocative...There's something for everyone: humor, mystery suspense, nostalgia and, of course, a little magic."

-- *Publisher's Weekly*

"What a rich and vivid portrait of Hollywood as the talkies came in and the magic of the silents ebbed away. Ron Base's naïve romantic young hero leaves a trail of mayhem and chaos in his wake. There are mercilessly funny portraits of Gary Cooper, George Raft, Clara Bow, and many others."

---John Boorman, director of *Deliverance*, *Excalibur*, *Hope and Glory*, and *The Tailor of Panama*

"It takes off with relentless speed, refusing to permit us to catch our breath. Never boring, *Magic Man* makes for an entertaining and engrossing tale...If (Base) sometimes relies too often on writer-director David Mamet's tried technique, where nothing ever appears as it seems, then we are the lucky, breathless

recipients."

-- *The Edmonton Journal*

"Superbly crafted...I read it in one sitting...Base kept me guessing to the very end. Luring the reader into believing that a typical Hollywood climax is in store, I was caught completely off guard by Base's end game. Scheduled to make its way into bookstores later this month, *Magic Man* is a gripping narrative that surprises right to the very last page. Bravo."

-- *Hour Magazine* (Montreal)

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