

Movies & Languages 2015-2016

Magic in the Moonlight

About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	W. Allen
YEAR / COUNTRY	2014 / USA
GENRE	Comedy
ACTORS	C. Firth, E. Stone, M. G. Harden, E. Atkins



PLOT

In 1928, a globally famous magician, Wei Ling Soo, a.k.a. Stanley Crawford performs in front of a crowd in Berlin with his world class magic act. Later in his dressing room he is greeted by his old friend and fellow magician Howard Burkan. Howard convinces Stanley to go with him to the south of France where a rich American family, the Catledges, has apparently been taken in by a clairvoyant and mystic, Sophie. Howard says he has been unable to uncover the secrets behind her tricks and he admits that the more he watched her the more he believed she really has supernatural powers. So basically he would like Stanley, who has debunked charlatan mystics in the past, to help him prove she is a fraud. The film takes off from here and the plot thickens with problems of love, friendship and deception.

Woody Allen wrote and directed the film. It is Allen's 48th film and as with previous films it reflects his humorous cynicism and existential anxieties.

LANGUAGE

Standard English, Standard American English, some French.

GRAMMAR

Modal Verbs: Obligation

MUST and HAVE TO

In the present **must** is used when the obligation comes from the speaker. **Have (got) to** is more common when the obligation comes from someone else, often a law or rule. For example:

I must stop smoking. (I want to)

I've got to stop smoking. (Doctor's orders)

In Italy, motorcyclists have to wear a crash helmet. (This is the law)

In the future and the past **have to (had to, will have to)** is the only way of expressing obligation. For example:

There was a bus strike last week so Walt had to walk to work.

If they move to the country, they'll have to buy a car.

MUSTN'T and NEEDN'T / DON'T HAVE TO

Mustn't expresses a negative obligation (the action is forbidden).

Needn't and **don't have to** indicate that there is no obligation. For example:

You mustn't drink smoke in the classroom. (forbidden)
You don't have to have a licence to ride a bike. (no legal obligation)
You needn't wash up. I'll do it later. (no obligation)

SHOULD and OUGHT TO

Should and **ought to** are interchangeable and are used when the obligation is not so strong. Often they express advice or duty. For example:

You should write to your family more often.
I ought to stay home and study tonight.

NEED

In the present tense **need to** expresses a weaker obligation than **have to** or **must**. It is used mainly in questions and negative sentences. For example:

Need I really study modals again?
You needn't finish painting the house if you're tired.
In hot weather you need to water the flowers every day.

VOCABULARY

To debunk: to expose the falseness of something or another way of perceiving it	Swindler: a person who uses fraud or deceit to gain money
Sundries: miscellaneous small articles, details, or items	Phony: false or misleading
Serendipity: the fact or possibility that you find something that you were not actually looking for	To be smitten: in the case of the film it means to be infatuated romantically with another person
Occult: secret, matters regarding the agents of supernatural agencies or some knowledge of them	Séance: a spiritualist meeting to receive spirit communications from dead people
Drizzling: salivating with enthusiasm and anticipation	Busywork: doing things that have no clear objective
Charlatan: a fraud, a faker	Nostrum: a medicine without scientific proof of its effectiveness
Humbug: a hoax or deception, nonsense	Stumped: baffled, frustrated in understanding something
To pamper: to treat a person or thing with excessive care and attention	“Jenny dropped you”: Jenny left you, ended your relationship
To badger someone: to harass or annoy consistently	Amiss: out of place in given circumstances
The plot thickens: the plot gets more intense and complicated	Kalamazoo: city in southwest Michigan, U.S.A.