

# MAXWELL'S MADNESS

Darkly Comic Drama — 6 to 18 Episodes

## LOGLINE

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*A once-promising Manchester architect spirals over two decades from comfort into poverty, obsession and illness anxiety — while the friends who've carried him for years must decide whether to save him, section him, or finally walk away.*

## SERIES OVERVIEW

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**Maxwell's Madness** is a character-driven, blackly comic drama set in and around Manchester, following Maxwell (aka Max) George from 37 to 56 as his life steadily unravels. A former heroin addict turned architectural draughtsman, Max starts with a flat, a studio in the Northern Quarter and enough equity to feel almost middle-class secure — until a Maserati he can't afford, a "pump and dump" share scam and a disastrous kidney operation strip away his money, status and health insurance.

Over the next 15+ years he drifts between subsidised housing, a grim assisted-living block and cheap rooms in Da Nang, Vietnam, becoming addicted not to drugs but to doctors, tests and worst-case scenarios on Google. He is convinced he's dying: every ache is a tumour, every bureaucratic letter a death sentence, every friend who sets a boundary a traitor. The show's engine is the clash between how bad Max's life really is — and how much of the damage is heartbreakingly self-inflicted.

## WHY IT'S DIFFERENT

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Max is not an inspirational survivor. He's sharply funny without trying to be, catastrophically jealous, volatile, and often his own worst enemy — a male anti-hero whose primary addiction is *grievance*. Everything he says lands somewhere between tragic and hilarious, creating constant tension for his two closest friends, Phil and Ian, who never know whether to laugh, comfort him, or hang up. The show lives tonally where *Fleabag*, *BoJack Horseman* and *It's a Sin* overlap: brutally honest, grounded in working-class reality, and punctured by moments of shocking, uncomfortable comedy.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS AND WORLD

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The story is refracted through the people still trying to love Maxwell long after he's become almost impossible to help.

- **Phil**, the responsible friend keeps writing letters to benefits officers, funding holidays and talking Max down off the ledge.
- **Ian**, the mischievous expat in Vietnam is the only one willing to confront Max's absurdity head-on, skewering his self-pity with brutal humour — whilst remaining generous in funding and time.
- **Alisha**, Max's successful sister in Ireland is torn between long-simmering resentment and a sense of duty that eventually brings her back for a last-ditch intervention.

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Their world is recognisably real: cramped Manchester flats, NHS waiting rooms, Narcotics Anonymous basements, grim assisted-living corridors with “old people smell,” chaotic trips to Vietnam that briefly lift Max out of his funk before he drags the drama back in.

## THE HOOK — THE INTERVENTION AND THE ENDINGS

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The series builds towards a New Year's Day 2026 intervention, when Phil, Alisha, Damon and Ian (on Zoom from Da Nang) confront Max in his tiny assisted-living apartment. He must either seek psychiatric help for hypochondria and re-engage with recovery — or lose their support entirely.

Two potential final outcomes are on the table:

- A **shocking, immediate outcome** in which Max, having secretly sourced a gun through an NA contact, kills himself in front of them moments after the intervention.
- A **slower-burn version** in which, after one last round of manipulation and collapse, Max is finally “committed” when every informal support system has failed.

Both choices allow the show to land as a bold, conversation-starting limited series about the limits of friendship and the cost of one man's refusal to change.

## FORMAT AND FIT

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- Designed as a long-form 3 series drama, comprising minimum 18 x 1-hour episodes.
- Primarily UK-set with recurring Vietnam storylines, offering an authentic, international flavour without major production overhead.
- Ideal for premium scripted buyers looking for grounded, performance-driven drama with a distinctive, risky voice and a central role actors will fight to play.

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