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'Magnum,' he wrote

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ANGELA Lansbury, whose CBS series "Murder, She Wrote" is a Top 10 hit, doesn't really need to make a trip to Hawaii tonight to pay a visit to "Magnum, P.I." but the Tom Selleck series, fighting to beat out "Dynasty," could use a boost. Tonight's "Magnum" (9:30 p.m., CBS) is the opening segment of what in the trade is called a cross-over. Lansbury's "Murder" character, Jessica Fletcher, gets involved in a "Magnum" mystery, and the stars and plot switch over for a conclusion on Sunday night's "Murder" episode.

While both Lansbury's Fletcher and Selleck's Magnum are attractive people, the mystery is simply not that riveting. When Magnum's sidekick, Jonathan Higgins (John Hillerman), is run off the road, one of his passengers is convinced someone's trying to kill her. She refuses Magnum's help and sends for her friend, the mystery writer Jessica Fletcher. Magnum is upset over not handling the case, and waits for his "rival," whom he presumes is a man, to show up. Eventually, he learns that not only is she a she, but a famous female at that. As usual, Lansbury is her charming self, and when she's chatting away, or just on camera, it's fun. Otherwise it's a padded, weak story line.

So much for cross-overs. I have nothing against them if the plot is good, which is not the case here, except one star always appears to be upstaged. And nobody could upstage Lansbury!

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