

"Merlinsky"

Screenplay By

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"Merlinsky"

FADE IN:

EXT. "HOLLYWOOD" SIGN - DAY

The CAMERA PANS across the sign, from "H" to "D" - it's a bit run-down, but still the proud calling card of a city built on dreams. After the last "D", the PAN continues, and we find... more letters: an "L", an "A", an "N" and yet another "D", to spell out the word "HOLLYWOODLAND". A sudden flash of light turns the whole scene white, then negative, as if an atomic bomb exploded.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

An old-fashioned hand-painted sign announces "The Great Merlinsky", with appropriate flourishes and curlicues. HARRY MERLINSKY, a tall, thin con man sporting suspenders and a beat-up fedora, is running a street show "con game", and the ten or twenty PEOPLE in his audience look up at the Hollywoodland sign in wonder. Their faces are illuminated by the glare. Harry refuses to be stopped by the interruption, and sets his jaw.

HARRY

It's just another publicity stunt to attract househunters up into those godforsaken hills, folks. Let's get back down to business. Where's the ace of spades? Card number one, two or three? Larry, Moe or Curly? Nixon, Haldemann or Ehrlichman? (pause, perplexed) Wait a minute, that's a little ahead of this time, ain't it?

INT. TROLLEY ON THE BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

JAKE TIMMONS, an athletic boy in his late teens, looks out the trolley window and sees Harry's act. Picking up a small suitcase, he gets off the trolley.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

Jake moves up to stand at the back of the crowd, craning his neck to watch Harry's show.

Harry points at a WOMAN, in the front row of the crowd.

HARRY
(continuing)
Madame, may I examine the contents
of your handbag?

The woman obliges, and Harry rummages through the handbag - looking up, he notices the crowd watching him.

HARRY
(continuing,
offhand)
This ain't part of the act, I just
wanted a stick of gum.

Harry, disappointed, doesn't find any gum, and tosses the handbag back to the woman.

HARRY
(continuing)
Next time, let's come prepared,
huh?

Harry pulls out a deck of cards, looks over the crowd, and tosses the cards to MAN #1, in the front row.

HARRY
(continuing)
You with the moustache! Catch!
Separate the red cards from the
black cards - it's a simple job -
don't screw it up! In the
meantime...

Harry pulls, out of his bag, a mechanical, expandable-collapsible accordion-like device with a rubber hand on its end. He "shoots" it into the crowd, hanging it in front of Jake.

HARRY
(continuing)
...I need a fresh victim, ah, a new
volunteer. You, young man, you in
the back. Shake hands!

JAKE
Me??!

HARRY
Yeah, you in the ten-dollar suit!
You just volunteered!

JAKE

Oh, no!

HARRY

Oh, yeah! Get yer fresh face and yer youthful gullibility up here. We'll see what we can do to corrupt ya. What's yer name, and where ya from?

The crowd parts, and pushes Jake to the front.

JAKE

Jake Timmons, from St. Louis!

HARRY

St. Looey, eh? They'll stamp your passport down at the corner, after the show.

The crowd APPLAUDS, loving it.

Harry sets up a shell game on a table to the side, arranging three over-sized "walnut" shells in a row, a few inches apart from each other.

HARRY

(continuing)

Here we have three garden-variety walnut shells...

Harry looks up in surprise as the crowd reacts to the huge size of the shells.

HARRY

(continuing)

I didn't say whose garden it was, did I?

Harry becomes absorbed in setting up the shells.

HARRY

(continuing)

A good friend of mine got these for me. He was a little nuts...

Harry examines one of the shells.

HARRY

(continuing)

And these were big nuts... they were hell to crack.

Harry turns to Man #1, with the cards:

HARRY
(continuing)
Ya got the red cards separated from
the black cards, yet?

MAN #1
Yes.

HARRY
(to Man #1)
Now throw out the aces and the
queens.

Harry looks over at Jake.

HARRY
(continuing)
Lessee here, we need something else
for this shell game... Ah, here it
is...

Harry pulls a red rubber ball from behind Jake's ear;
Jake is bewildered and delighted. Harry continues, to
the crowd:

HARRY
(continuing)
This is an old game. You've all
seen this one, haven't ya? The con
man - that's me - tricks the
rube...

Harry indicates Jake with a small motion of his head.

HARRY
(continuing)
...that's him - into guessing which
shell the ball ain't under, after a
few fancy moves, like this.

Harry demonstrates the shell game, then turns to Jake
and hands him the ball.

HARRY
(continuing)
But this game is different, 'cause
this time you get to "Con The Con
Man." (pause) I developed this
into a radio quiz show, but it
didn't fly - nobody but me ever
won.

Harry hands the ball to Jake and steps away. His back is to Jake and the shell game table. Harry faces the crowd, and continues, to Jake:

HARRY
(continuing)
Okay, take the ball and place it under one of the shells. Make sure you remember which one it's under.

HARRY
(continuing, to the crowd)
Everybody see it?

CROWD
Yes!

Harry, still facing the crowd, to Jake:

HARRY
(continuing)
Okay. Now mix 'em up, mix 'em up... not too fast, we don't wanna lose anybody here.

Jake moves the shells around. Harry continues, to the crowd:

HARRY
(continuing)
Okay, everybody know which one the ball's under?

Crowd responds with mixed yesses and noes.

HARRY
(continuing, exasperated)
You guys wanna run a shell game, ya gotta pay attention. Now lissen up, lissen up...

Harry looks back toward Jake:

HARRY
(continuing)
If a pig and a half eats a pie and a half in a minute and a half, how long does it take for a talking horse to read the New York Times? (pause) Remember where the ball is? Don't show me.

Harry smiles, and turns back to the crowd.

HARRY
(continuing)
I'm tryin' to mix him up, but he's
doin' a helluva job on his own...

EXT. "HOLLYWOODLAND" SIGN - CONTINUOUS

Another dazzling flash of light illuminates the sign,
which again turns negative.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

Harry clenches his teeth and mutters, under his breath:

HARRY
(continuing)
I'm gonna hafta deal with that
joker, sooner or later...

JAKE
What?

HARRY
(to Jake)
Nuthin', kid, nuthin'.

Harry continues in a louder voice, facing the crowd, to
Jake:

HARRY
(continuing)
Alright, show 'em where the ball
is.

Harry's tone is sarcastic, as he knows Jake is
confused:

HARRY
(continuing)
If you hafta lift up all three
shells, go ahead, go ahead...
(pause) Okay, show 'em the first
one, put it back. (pause) Show
'em the second one, put it back.
(pause) Show 'em the third one,
put it back.

Harry lets the crowd know he's losing patience with
them:

HARRY
(continuing)
Now, one more time, everybody know
where the ball is?

CROWD
(resounding)
Yes!

Harry smiles and turns back to the table and Jake.

HARRY
Now, it's got to be under this one
(points at first shell), this one
(points at second shell), or this
one (points at third shell).
Don'tcha just love the suspense?!

Harry looks out in the crowd to harass Man #1, still
struggling with the cards:

HARRY
(continuing)
All the aces and queens gone?

MAN #1
Yes.

HARRY
Then separate the face cards from
the number cards.

Harry turns back to Jake:

HARRY
(continuing)
Remember which one the ball was
under?

JAKE
Yes.

HARRY
Don't show me. It was this one,
right?

Jake smiles and nods. Harry lifts the shell, as the
crowd applauds.

Jake melts back into the crowd, and Harry points at
him.

HARRY
(continuing)
Whaddaya say we give him a hand,
folks, give him a hand.

The crowd applauds.

Harry pulls a rubber hand from the bag, mock "offers" it to Jake, who doesn't see it as he returns to the crowd. Harry throws the hand over his shoulder, then starts to put the shells back in his bag, one at a time, revealing an identical red ball under each.

The crowd reacts to each shell.

Harry then reaches into the bag to pull out a bowling pin.

HARRY
(continuing)
Found this in the alley out back.
(pause) Saved it from a fate worse
than death - being hit by a gutter
ball...

The crowd groans.

Harry examines the pin, then remembers Man #1:

HARRY
(continuing)
Have you finished separating the
face cards from the number cards
yet?

MAN #1
(long-suffering
voice)
Yes...

Harry lets the crowd in on the con:

HARRY
Kept him busy, didn't I? He
thought I was actually gonna use
those cards.

Harry admonishes Man #1:

HARRY
(continuing)
What the heck am I gonna do with a
deck with no aces and queens?

Harry waves the man off, dismissing the idea, then reaches for the bowling pin again. As he looks down the street, he sees something that rattles him. He takes off his fedora, lays it on the ground, and starts packing up his kit.

HARRY
(continuing,
hurriedly)
Folks, I'm sorry, the bowling pin will hafta wait until the next show, just down the street here, in a half-hour. If you enjoyed yourselves, you can show your appreciation in a concrete way by droppin' something in the hat. And I don't mean gum wrappers!

The crowd starts to disperse, some dropping money into the hat. Jake walks up to Harry.

JAKE
I wish I had seen more of your show - you're good! I'd love to learn how you do all that stuff.

HARRY
Glad ya liked it, kid - maybe we can set up some lessons for ya.

Harry looks out of the corner of his eye, down the street, and starts packing his things in a rush.

HARRY
(continuing)
Look, kid, can ya do me a favor?

JAKE
Sure!

HARRY
Take the money in that hat, put it in your pocket, and limp down the street, that way.

Harry points in the opposite direction from the one that's been bothering him.

JAKE
I can't take your money!

HARRY

It's just temporary, sport - I'll catch up with ya later. And if anyone chases ya, run.

JAKE

What do you mean?

HARRY

You know, run, as in walking very fast. Now take the cash and get going, and do a good limp.

Jake hesitates, then picks up the money, grabs his suitcase, and limps off down the street. From the other direction, OFFICER FINN, a fat, sweating policeman, walks up to Harry.

FINN

Harry, if I've told you once, I've told you a million times; if you want to do this for money, get a permit.

HARRY

Joe, I'm not doing it for money - it's for charity. See, there's no money in my hat - I gave it all to that crippled kid.

FINN

An accomplice, eh?

Finn heads after Jake.

FINN

(continuing, to Jake)

Hey kid, come back here, I want to talk to you.

Jake looks around, confused.

HARRY

(yelling)

Run, kid, run. He thinks you stole it!

Jake, frightened, takes off running. Harry finishes packing, and lights out the other way. Finn, seeing he's been had, starts in one direction, then the other. He clearly doesn't like the prospect of running in the heat, and shrugs, mopping his brow.

EXT. VINE STREET - ONE HOUR LATER

Jake strolls aimlessly down the street, carrying his suitcase and looking in restaurant windows - he's hungry.

Unseen by Jake, a hooked cane slides out of an alleyway and around his neck, yanking him into the alley.

EXT. VINE STREET ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Harry's in the alley, much to Jake's surprise.

HARRY

You can't just mosey on down the street like that - ya gotta keep an eye out for that fat butt flatfoot!

JAKE

Sorry, Mr. Merlinsky.

HARRY

You can call me Harry. What didja say your name was?

JAKE

Jake Timmons, sir.

HARRY

Ya gotta loosen up, Jake, if you're gonna be my apprentice.

JAKE

Your apprentice?!

HARRY

Ya hafta keep an eye on your wallet, too.

Harry hands Jake's wallet back to him.

JAKE

(astounded)

How'd you do that? When do I start? Being your apprentice, I mean? Can we eat first? What...

HARRY

One at a time, one at a time, kid. (pause) I know a diner right up the street - we can strap on the old feed bag and keep outta sight until Officer Finn goes home.

Jake pulls some coins out of his pocket.

JAKE
Here's your money...

HARRY
That'll be your first paycheck -
you earned it. Besides, when I
dipped yer wallet, a moth flew out.

JAKE
I'm gonna get paid?!

HARRY
(smiling)
If ya play your cards right, I
might even be persuaded to cook ya
a hot supper tonight.

JAKE
That would be swell!

HARRY
You don't have a place to stay
either, do ya?

JAKE
Well...

HARRY
That's okay, kid, I got a couch you
can sleep on.

JAKE
Why are you helping me out like
this?

HARRY
Let's say I knew you'd step off
that trolley today and start
helping me out... now let's go get
some grub.

EXT. SIDE STREET IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NEAR DUSK

Jake, carrying his suitcase, and Harry, carrying his
kit, walk slowly up the tree-lined street; both look
bushed.

HARRY
How long ya plannin' to stay in
town?

Jake looks troubled.

JAKE

I came here to find my fortune.

Harry pulls some money out of his pocket and looks at it.

HARRY

We did okay for three shows, but this business won't make ya rich, kid.

JAKE

(stubborn)

Well, I can't go back to St. Louis.

Jake has a certain finality in his voice that stops Harry from pursuing this further.

HARRY

My little shack is over yonder.

Harry points out a medium-sized stone mansion, vaguely medieval, and largely overgrown with vines and weeds.

JAKE

You live here?

HARRY

No place like home.

JAKE

This place looks haunted.

HARRY

Nah, the ghosts all left. Couldn't stand my snoring.

JAKE

It still looks creepy.

HARRY

(fake sincerity)

But it's real comfy inside.

INT. HARRY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Harry enter the front door - as they do, Harry notices that the area around the lock looks slightly blackened.

HARRY
(continuing,
mumbling)
So! He knows...

JAKE
What?

HARRY
Oh, nuthin'. C'mere, I wantcha to
meet someone.

Harry pulls Jake into a large room whose walls are lined with books, ancient tomes, from the floor to eight feet up. A stuffed alligator hangs from the high ceiling, and the furniture is draped with sheets. In the middle of the room, standing on a wooden perch and facing away from Harry and Jake, is a stuffed OWL. Or is it? A deep voice booms from the general direction of this owl.

SOCRATES
Harry, what have you dragged in
this time?

JAKE
(frightened)
Wh-hoo-hoo said that?

The owl's head swivels to face Harry.

SOCRATES
Is he making fun of me?

Harry leads Jake over to the perch.

HARRY
Jake, I'd like ya to meet Socrates.
He's older than dirt.

JAKE
This bird talks?

SOCRATES
(drily)
I was about to ask the same
question about you, buster.
(pause, offended) And Harry - you
can lose those wisecracks about my
age.

HARRY

Sorry, old timer. Wouldja tell Jake the story about that king ya used to hang out with?

SOCRATES

You mean the kid who pulled the sword from the stone?

HARRY

That's the one.

JAKE

He knew Arthur?

SOCRATES

I know all the biggies, kid. Let me tell you about the wizard who introduced me and Artie...

As Jake and Socrates chat, Harry slips off to the kitchen.

INT. HARRY'S KITCHEN - TWO HOURS LATER

Jake wipes his mouth with a napkin, and Harry smokes a cigar, his fedora pushed back. Socrates grooms his feathers, while sitting on a perch next to the table.

JAKE

You're quite a cook, Harry.

SOCRATES

And my rodent al dente was done to a "T". What kind was it?

HARRY

Rat. I got it outa one of the basement traps.

SOCRATES

I don't know what it is - but lately the cellar rats are more succulent than usual.

HARRY

I'm glad everybody's full. Jake, are ya ready for one more performance?

JAKE

We're going back out on the streets?

HARRY

Nah - I want you to see the Magic Castle.

JAKE

What's that?

HARRY

A private club for magicians. I do a gig over there once in awhile.

SOCRATES

That's where he shows his real stuff.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE "PALACE OF MYSTERY", BACKSTAGE - ONE HOUR LATER

Scenic backdrops, curtain cables and lighting equipment dominate a small, typical behind-the-scenes area. AUDIENCE SOUNDS come from the other side of the curtain. A pretty, young, blonde production assistant, CONNIE BERRIGAN, rushes around with a clipboard, doing a last-minute check on performance details. As she turns away from the lighting control board, she bumps into Jake.

CONNIE

(softly)

If you're going onstage tonight, you'd better get dressed. We're almost ready to start.

JAKE

Oh, I can't do that stuff. I'm here with Harry... er, the Great Merlinsky.

CONNIE

You are?! He's the best magician I ever saw!

JAKE

And you probably see a lot of them...

CONNIE

Yeah, I have to do quite a bit of their set-up.

JAKE

It must be fascinating work.

CONNIE

Usually. But some of these guys just use magic to cover up the fact that they're basically jerks...

Connie snuffles, and pulls a handkerchief out of her back pocket. The handkerchief is tied to many others, all in a rainbow of hues.

CONNIE

(continuing)

See? This is the Amazing Crisco's idea of humor.

JAKE

(chuckling)

It is kind of funny...

CONNIE

Not if you're allergic to nylon.

She sneezes, and pulls harder on the series of handkerchiefs - more and more keep coming out of her pocket, until finally, a fair-sized nylon heap sits on the stage floor, and she gets to the end of the chain.

JAKE

Let me untie yours for you.

CONNIE

That's so sweet of you. (looking at watch) Oh, I'm running late - my name's Connie.

They shake hands. Connie turns to check the special effects control board.

JAKE

And mine's Jake. Can I help you with anything?

CONNIE

I think Merlinsky's using the trap door for his vanishing volunteer tonight. Could you make sure the release is working?

JAKE

Where's that?

CONNIE

Right over there.

JAKE

Alright, I see the door. Where's the release?

CONNIE

It's the black nail upstage.

She points, and Jake pushes a nail, opening the trap door. He closes it again.

JAKE

Okay, this works. What else?

CONNIE

Ah, let's see - Crisco will use this cable for flying... and I guess that's about it. Let's get the emcee and enjoy the show.

Jake is ecstatic at being included in Connie's routine, and wriggles like an eager puppy. He follows her to the dressing rooms.

INT. PALACE OF MYSTERY - FORTY MINUTES LATER

Harry stands on the small stage, winding up his act. He's in a tuxedo, but still wears his fedora; beside him is a large, person-sized box.

HARRY

...I need a fresh victim, ah, a new volunteer. Madame, would you be so kind as to help me out?

A pretty woman in a low-cut evening gown, TERRY, hesitantly steps up to the stage.

TERRY

How can I help?

HARRY

(ogling)
Just by standing there and looking gorgeous...

Terry's embarrassed, and the AUDIENCE giggles.

HARRY

(continuing)
...actually, I need you to step inside this box for a moment. What's your name?

TERRY

Terry.

Harry opens the front door of the box.

HARRY

Terry, if you'll just jump in here,
I'll have you back in your seat in
no time.

INT. PALACE OF MYSTERY, BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Connie watch Harry's act from the wings, with
rapt attention.

CONNIE

He'd better maneuver that box over
the trap door before he starts
this.

JAKE

Uh oh, she's in the box. He can't
move it now.

CONNIE

We'd better get the emcee ready to
go out there - Merlinsky's going to
embarrass himself.

JAKE

(disillusioned)

And his act was going so well...

CONNIE

At least I'll do his smoke...

On stage, Harry gestures at the closed box, with Terry
inside. Backstage, Connie flips a switch on the
special effects board, and a puff of smoke shoots out
of the top of the box. Harry opens the box with a
flourish, to show the audience.

ANGLE ON AUDIENCE

Every person in the audience simultaneously draws a
sharp intake of breath - they're shocked.

ANGLE ON BACKSTAGE

Jake and Connie dread what they will see.

ANGLE ON HARRY

Harry turns the box from side to side, to show that...
it's empty.

INT. HARRY'S MANSION - ONE HOUR LATER

Jake's pacing the floor, struggling to stay awake, and reading one of Harry's books. Socrates sits on his perch. Harry enters the front door, still dressed in his tux.

JAKE

(confused)

Who are you? You keep strange sorcery books, you perform magic without any tricks, and you live with a talking owl...

SOCRATES

(bristling)

I'll have you know that I am not just some empty-headed chatterbox...

HARRY

Hold the phone, hold the phone... I'll 'fess up - Jake, I did that stunt just for you.

JAKE

Why?

HARRY

Because I need yer help. (pause)
A fellow wizard is makin' a nuisance of himself, and I was hopin' that we might team up to set him straight.

JAKE

So you're a wizard...? (pause)
...but what can I do to help?

HARRY

Just like I said before - you'll be my apprentice.

JAKE

Whoa! Learning a con game trick is one thing; real magic is something else.

HARRY

Lemme see that book.

Jake hands the book to Harry. Harry turns a few pages, CHANTS a stream of foreign words, and the sofa rises three feet off the floor. Jake, round-eyed, walks in back of it, looks under it, waves his hands over it, and looks at Harry. Harry CHANTS a few more words, and the sofa returns to the floor.

JAKE

(awed)

You really are a wizard...

HARRY

Aw, it's nuthin' you can't do.
Chant along with me.

Harry INTONES the chant slowly, and Jake STUMBLES badly over the words. The sofa stays put.

JAKE

I knew it. There's no way I could do that.

HARRY

You gotta say it with feeling.

Jake CHANTS with Harry again, a bit more smoothly, and the sofa rises a foot off the floor. Harry walks over to a closet, pulls out a few blankets and sheets, and tosses them to Jake.

JAKE

But what about the couch?

HARRY

It'll be the best night's sleep you ever had; you're lying on a bed of air! Enjoy...

Harry exits to his bedroom. Jake walks around the couch, puzzled but exhausted. He finally shrugs, throws the bedclothes up on the cushions and crawls up after them.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - THE NEXT MORNING

The Victorian-style mansion exudes an aura of quiet mystery. Harry and Jake enter the front door.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - TRAVELING - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake enter an anteroom "study"-type area. Harry WHISPERS a few words into a stuffed owl perched on a bookcase, and a hidden panel slides open. The two wander through a maze of passageways lined with magic memorabilia, and finally enter a small library.

HARRY

Here's a good place for you to wait.

JAKE

Where are you going?

HARRY

I gotta make some travel arrangements - there's a big magic pow-wow I don't wanna miss.

JAKE

Should I stay at your house?

HARRY

Absolutely! Be nice to Socrates; I'm sure you two can... wing it!!

Harry jabs Jake in the ribs, then walks to the library door.

JAKE

When's your trip?

HARRY

Tomorrow. Take a look around the stacks - I'll be back in five minutes.

Jake browses among the books, and bumps into... Connie, who is leaning against a shelf and reading.

JAKE

(delighted)

Hi!

CONNIE

(the feeling's mutual)

Hi! (whispers) Did you find out how Harry did it?

JAKE

You're not going to believe this,
but I slept on a flying couch last
night.

CONNIE

(skeptical)

You're kidding. He did that, too?

JAKE

Yep. He must be a real wizard,
Connie. He's got a talking owl.

CONNIE

(laughing)

Now that's a hoot!

JAKE

You should see his house - he's got
a magic library bigger than this
one.

CONNIE

(scoffing)

Come on, Jake, these books were
donated by over a hundred
practicing magicians.

JAKE

If you don't believe me, you should
come over. He'll be gone tomorrow,
and I can introduce you to
Socrates.

CONNIE

Socrates?!

JAKE

...the talking owl. He looks a lot
like that one back in the entryway.

CONNIE

(incredulous)

Jake...!

Harry enters the library, and walks over to Jake and
Connie.

JAKE

Harry, do you know Connie?

HARRY

Sure do - she does a heck of a job
setting up my tricks.

CONNIE

Not that you need any set-up...

Harry smiles a secret smile.

JAKE

Did you make your travel plans?

Harry makes an exaggerated effort to ensure Connie hears:

HARRY

Yep. I'm cuttin' out tomorrow morning at nine, and I'll be gone for two days.

CONNIE

You're going to the Arcana conference, then?

HARRY

You bet! Wouldn't miss it for the world.

INT. HARRY'S MANSION - THE NEXT DAY

A tentative KNOCK sounds at the door. Jake dashes eagerly to answer it, stops himself at the last second and counts to ten, then opens the door. Connie stands on the step.

JAKE

I'm glad you could make it! Come on in.

CONNIE

The hardest part was walking from the street to the door. This place looks creepy.

JAKE

But it's really fun! Connie, I'd like you to meet Socrates.

The owl blinks at Connie from his perch.

CONNIE

He doesn't chatter much for a talking owl.

SOCRATES

(drily)

And you chatter quite a bit for a perfect girl.

Connie is dumfounded, and slightly embarrassed; Jake turns beet red.

JAKE

(mumbles)

Socrates, give me a break...

CONNIE

(recovering)

So there really is an owl named Socrates...

SOCRATES

(mimicking)

So there really is a girl named Connie...

JAKE

Okay, that's enough - this could get out of hand. Connie, come and see the books.

Jake shows her the bookcases full of magic texts.

CONNIE

The Necromicon, the Cabbalah, Blacke's Magick... Jake, he has an incredible collection here. And this one is a first edition - hand-printed back in the 1800's.

JAKE

It's the one Harry used to get the couch off the floor.

CONNIE

There's a levitation spell in here?

JAKE

Yeah. He made me try it two nights ago.

CONNIE

How did you do?

JAKE

The couch went up a little ways, but that was only because Harry chanted with me.

CONNIE

How do you know you can't do it by yourself?

JAKE

I tried this morning, and nothing happened.

CONNIE

You know, performance magic is mostly believing in yourself - and I'll bet real magic is just the same.

JAKE

I could never do real magic.

CONNIE

(softly)

I believe you could.

JAKE

You do?

CONNIE

Sure - now, where's that spell?

Jake takes the book, and flips through the pages.

JAKE

This is the one Harry used.

CONNIE

Try it.

Jake looks uncertainly at her; she has a strange glint in her eye. Jake slowly CHANTS the unusual words; Connie rises five feet in the air, and lies there horizontally. Her mouth drops open, Jake's mouth drops open, and Socrates looks appalled.

SOCRATES

Now you've done it.

CONNIE

He certainly has! Jake, come over here.

Jake walks nearer; Connie takes his head in her hands and kisses him tenderly. Jake is slightly stunned, and looks blankly around.

JAKE

Maybe I should try again, and see
if that was a fluke.

SOCRATES

(deadpan)

Fabulous idea.

Jake CHANTS the words slightly quicker, and... he
floats up beside Connie. They LAUGH and nervously hug
each other. In the clinch, Jake drops the book.

JAKE

Uh oh.

Both make comical, but futile, swiping motions at the
floor; their bodies remain at the five-foot level.

CONNIE

Does this mean we can't get down?

JAKE

Let me see if I can remember what
Harry said to lower the couch.

Jake tries a series of CHANTS, changing one phrase at a
time, but nothing is working. At one point, the couch
rises up to their level.

CONNIE

(giggling)

Looks like you have the levitation
spell down pat.

Jake frowns, and tries a few more CHANTS. On the third
one, Socrates and his perch float up into the upper
reaches of the room.

SOCRATES

(giving up)

This is sublime.

JAKE

(hopefully)

Maybe the spell will wear off.

SOCRATES

Harry once had all of the furniture
up for a week, while he cleaned and
dried the carpet.

Connie and Jake look helplessly at each other, then
decide to make the best of it.

CONNIE

Maybe we can move around by
flapping against the air.

SOCRATES

(ironic)
Novel technique.

Connie tries a swimming motion, and starts moving
toward the kitchen.

CONNIE

All right!! This works! Jake,
I'll get us all some food, and you
keep trying to remember the reverse
spell.

EXT. HARRY'S MANSION - THAT NIGHT

Harry hurries up the walk, his fedora jammed down
tight. In the picture window, Connie and Jake perform
a water ballet in mid-air. They swoop, turn, do
somersaults, and wind up in a dreamy kiss. Harry
smiles to himself, and opens the door.

INT. HARRY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Connie and Jake are oblivious to Harry's entrance;
they're still locked at the lips. Almost every object
that is not nailed down is floating in mid-air with
them.

HARRY

Ahem!

Jake and Connie hurriedly break their embrace. They
both go spinning across the room - Connie runs into the
floating couch, and Jake bumps into Socrates, causing
an explosion of owl feathers. Connie regains her poise
first:

CONNIE

Mr. Merlinsky, Jake learned how to
use the levitation spell.

HARRY

I can see that...

Jake tries a hopeful smile, indicating all the floating
objects.

JAKE

And I've been practicing.

HARRY

No kiddin'.

Harry picks up the dropped book, and puts it on a shelf.

SOCRATES

Harry, would you mind getting me back down?

HARRY

Logged enough flight time today, have ya?

SOCRATES

Harry, please, I've lost an abundance of dignity already.

Harry CHANTS a phrase; Socrates and all the other hovering items in the room, except Jake and Connie, drift to the floor.

JAKE

Something tells me we're not going to get off easy.

HARRY

(soberly)

Jake, ya have a knack for this - I could tell as soon as ya got off the trolley. But after today, we don't have a heckuva lotta time to teach ya all ya gotta learn.

JAKE

What do you mean - after today?

HARRY

There was some pretty heavy-duty sorcery at Arcana...

Harry's voice drifts away - he's lost in thought.

JAKE

Harry, I hate to bring this up...

HARRY

What's eatin' ya?

JAKE
(cautiously)
Can you bring us... down, now?

HARRY
(light-hearted
again)
Okay, but when I walked in, you
guys looked pretty happy with your
predicament - sorta like you were
walkin' on air!!

Jake and Connie exchange embarrassed smiles. Harry
CHANTS a phrase; Jake and Connie slowly return to the
floor.

JAKE
So what is it that I have to learn?

HARRY
(suddenly serious)
Look, I gotta teach you one spell
immediately, just so you can stay
alive.

JAKE
(gulps)
To stay alive? Harry, I don't
think...

HARRY
Connie, keep Socrates company.
Jake, come with me.

Harry pulls Jake through the kitchen, and out the back
door.

EXT. HARRY'S BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake hurry into a huge yard, overgrown with
weeds. It's a bright, moonlit night, and a run-down
gazebo stands in the far corner, a hundred yards away.

JAKE
What's this all about?

HARRY
You hafta learn telekinesis.

JAKE
Tella whatsis?

HARRY

It's how you move yerself around,
in case you're attacked. Now watch
closely...

Harry CHANTS a phrase, and disappears, with a POPPING
sound.

JAKE

Harry?

HARRY (O.S.)

Over here, Jake.

Harry is standing by the gazebo, in the far corner of
the yard. He CHANTS a phrase, almost inaudibly, and
Jake disappears.

ANGLE ON HARRY AND THE GAZEBO

Jake appears suddenly next to Harry, with a loud POP.

JAKE

(confused)

What happened?

HARRY

Telekinesis! You were over there;
now you're over here.

JAKE

Hey, that's pretty neat...

Abruptly, a bright flash of light illuminates the
entire backyard, and the whole scene turns negative.
Harry pulls Jake quickly to the ground.

ANGLE ON HARRY'S MANSION

The building implodes, with a great ROAR. Flames and
bright lights shoot out of every crack that appears;
this is not your everyday detonation.

ANGLE ON HARRY AND JAKE

They lie on the ground, uncover their heads, and look
up toward the wreckage. Their expressions are mixtures
of horror and sorrow.

JAKE

(continuing)

Connie!

HARRY

Connie, and my old friend
Socrates...

JAKE

(in a rage)
Who did this?

HARRY

(hopeless)
That wizard I told ya about... his
name is Laszlo. We gotta get outta
here before he finds us.

JAKE

(stubborn)
We should stay and fight.

HARRY

If we don't scam in ten seconds,
we'll be mincemeat.

A bright flash of light turns their faces negative.
Jake is terrified.

JAKE

Let's go!

Harry quickly CHANTS a spell.

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Harry POP into the middle of a vast expanse
filled with otherworldly-looking Joshua trees. The
twenty-foot tall plants look oddly like misshapen old
men in the bright moonlight. However, the most
significant change from the previous scene is the
background din; here there is no sound. The desert is
almost completely noiseless, but for a slight WIND.
Stately granite monoliths act as silent sentinels.

HARRY

Why just get outta town, when ya
can go to another planet?

JAKE

Where are we?

HARRY

This is the Mojave Desert. That's
Lost Horse Mountain, and my Uncle
Ralph's cabin is over here.

JAKE

The wind is the only sound...

HARRY

Sometimes it gets so quiet up here,
ya find yourself strainin' to hear
a noise - any noise. Listen!

After fifteen or twenty seconds, Jake looks puzzled:

JAKE

I'm starting to hear this roaring
in my ears.

HARRY

Yeah - I talked to a sawbones about
that - he says it's the sound of
blood pumpin' through yer veins.
Ya listen long enough, you'll start
hearin' yer pancreas.

JAKE

The wind doesn't just blow through
your hair up here, it blows through
your soul. God, I miss Connie...
(pause) why was she in that house,
and not me?

Jake's face contorts, as he starts to sob. Harry puts
an arm around him.

HARRY

I know who did it, and I'm gonna
make him pay.

JAKE

(sniffling)

So it was that Laszlo guy?

HARRY

Yeah, he's been doggin' my tracks
for too long. He's lookin' for a
tussle, and I'm gonna give him one.
(pause) But he's a mighty powerful
wizard - I'm gonna need your help.

JAKE

(fiercely)

After what he did to Connie, you
can count on me.

HARRY

Now we know you have the power,
it's high time you started your
real apprenticeship. For now,
let's hit the sack - you begin
tomorrow mornin', bright and early.

They head toward Uncle Ralph's shack.

INT. UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN - NEXT MORNING

"Plants of the High Desert" is the title of a book Jake is flipping through. Behind him, the door is open, shining light on Harry's sleeping face. Harry rubs his eyes, squints at the door, and wrinkles his nose from side to side, with MUSICAL SFX. Abruptly, the door SLAMS shut. Jake jumps, and looks suspiciously over at Harry, who has again closed his eyes and is smiling.

JAKE

Did you do that?

HARRY

(mumbles sleepily)

Musta been the wind.

JAKE

There's no wind today... get up,
you lazy bum - there's a whole
forest of Joshua trees waiting to
wave to you.

Jake opens the door again - an enormous desert vista unfolds, full of the strange-looking plants. Harry crawls out of bed, yawning and scratching his butt. He carefully dons his fedora; his boxer shorts have playing cards printed on them.

HARRY

I don't see 'em movin' - looks like
they've been waitin' for thousands
of years.

JAKE

It says in this book that they're
members of the lily family.

HARRY

They remind me of my great-uncle
Ralph, when he was gettin' old and
crippled.

Harry hunches his body, mimicking the nearest tree.

JAKE

So this is Ralph's cabin?

HARRY

Yeah, he left it to me when he kicked. I come up here every now and then just to bark at the moon.

JAKE

(kidding)

When does my first lesson start, oh great Merlinsky?

HARRY

Don't get uppity, kid. You'll wind up as snake bait.

Harry nods his head, and Jake turns into a kangaroo RAT. The rat hops warily out the door, and is greeted by HISSING and RATTLING.

EXT. UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN - JAKE/RAT'S VIEW - CONTINUOUS

A sidewinder RATTLESNAKE looms enormous, coiling his body sideways toward the CAMERA.

ANGLE ON RAT AND SNAKE

The chase is on - hopping for his life, Jake/Rat heads for the nearest Joshua tree. The snake is in hot pursuit. At the crucial moment, Harry sweeps the snake off into the tumbleweeds with a broom. The rat changes back into Jake, who is hopping mad.

JAKE

What was that all about? He nearly got me!

HARRY

(matter of fact)

That's just a taste of what's to come. And it was today's first lesson.

JAKE

(still angry)

And just what was the lesson?

Harry goes nose to nose with Jake.

HARRY

When you're dealin' with a wizard, never get reckless.

Harry turns to walk away, and Jake CHANTS a phrase. Harry rises into the air, looking startled. He looks back at Jake, and for a moment, two strong wills clash. After an instant, the tension passes, and they both break up LAUGHING.

EXT. YUCCA FLATS - DUSK

Harry and Jake walk down a hill onto the main drag of a one-horse desert burg, with a dry-goods emporium, a grocery and a few other small, dusty shops.

HARRY

Yucca Flats - my kinda town.

JAKE

What a name!

HARRY

It's the sorta place ya can always count on for a few yuks.

Harry elbows Jake, who looks distressed.

JAKE

Why did we walk ten miles through the desert, when you can do that tele-whatsis?

HARRY

We can't do magic around town - it sends out strong vibes that a wizard can pick up on.

JAKE

(looking around)

There's another wizard out here?

HARRY

There's a couple of 'em, but I only trust one.

JAKE

So where are we going now?

HARRY

To go play detective.

Jake steps in a wad of bubble gum, resulting in a stretchy gob hanging off his shoe.

HARRY

(continuing)

Nice work so far. You're a natural
gumshoe.

Jake's fed up with the puns, and chases Harry down the street, hesitating intermittently to hop and scrape his shoe.

EXT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - THIRTY SECONDS LATER

Harry stops running, out of breath, just as Jake catches up with him. They both look up at the bar's sign - the "S" characters are formed out of rattlesnakes.

JAKE

(dubious)

You're going in here?

HARRY

I knew you'd like it. C'mon.

Harry pulls Jake in the door.

INT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - CONTINUOUS

A rough-looking CROWD of grizzled hombres look up from their beer and cactus juice to check out the newcomers. Slowly, the room falls SILENT. The bartender, SNAKE, is a mountain of a man with a shaved head, a boa constrictor around his neck, and rattlesnakes tattooed on his forearms.

SNAKE

Harry, how the hell are ya?

HARRY

Snake, you old reptile!

Harry runs across the crowded barroom, jumps up on the bar, and wrestles Snake's bald pate into a headlock. The boa looks sleepily up at Harry's face and yawns, showing large fangs. Harry opts for discretion; he unlocks Snake's neck. The crowd goes back to their drinking. As Harry sits on the bar, trying to determine the best method of backing away from the boa, Snake points to the thick, clear glass that serves as a bar surface.

SNAKE

Didja see the new snake pit I put
in under the bar?

Harry looks down through the glass into a nest of rattlers. One is coiled to strike at his heinie; as the snake makes his move, Harry rockets off the bar.

SNAKE

(continuing)

Still touchy about snakebite,
Harry?

HARRY

Nah, just didn't wanna give the big
fella heartburn.

Harry rubs his posterior ruefully, then motions for Jake to come over.

HARRY

(continuing)

Snake, I'd like ya to meet Jake.

SNAKE

Welcome to Yucca Flats, Jake. What
brings you guys to town?

HARRY

I'm looking fer Annie.

SNAKE

She usually stops by a bit later.
Can I get you boys something to
drink?

HARRY

How 'bout a beer and a
sarsaparilla?

SNAKE

Coming right up.

Snake serves the beverages - Harry takes the glasses and leads Jake over to a table next to the fireplace, where mesquite logs burn brightly.

HARRY

Jake, ya never told me the reason
you left St. Looney.

JAKE

(evading)

It's no big deal.

HARRY

C'mon - if yer gonna help me whip Laszlo, I gotta know why. Ya got any folks?

JAKE

(hesitates)

...no...

HARRY

...which means at least one's around, and yer not real fond of ...him? ...her?

JAKE

My mother died a year ago, and I don't have a father.

HARRY

Raised by yer mom?

JAKE

Just leave it alone, Harry.

HARRY

But Jake...

Jake SLAMS his hand on the table, and runs out the door. The crowd takes note. Harry follows Jake outside.

EXT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - CONTINUOUS

HARRY

(continuing)

Jake, I'm sorry. I'll back off. Can ya forgive me?

Harry extends his hand; Jake balks at first, then finally shakes it. Harry puts an arm around his shoulders. Out of the darkness, a tiny, wizened raisin of a WOMAN materializes.

HARRY

(continuing)

Annie!

ANNIE

Harry, it's been such a long time!

Harry and Annie hug, then hold each other at arm's length.

HARRY

Too long... it's great to see ya again. (pause) Annie, I'd like ya to meet Jake.

JAKE

It's a pleasure, ma'm.

Annie takes his hand, closes her eyes briefly, then gives both Jake and Harry funny looks.

ANNIE

Am I interrupting something?

HARRY

I think we just finished up. Come inside - lemme buy ya a beer.

Harry opens the door for Annie - on the way in, Jake looks at Harry quizzically; Harry just holds up his hand.

INT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Harry, Annie and Jake sit by the fire. Annie is reading Harry's palm.

ANNIE

So you're in danger...

HARRY

Deep shit, Annie.

ANNIE

Laszlo has found you again.

HARRY

Second time this century. Question is, how do I get rid of him?

Annie turns to Jake, who's rubbing his eyes - sleepiness and the mesquite smoke are getting to him.

ANNIE

May I touch your palm?

Jake reluctantly holds out his hand. Annie takes it, and closes her eyes.

ANNIE

(continuing)

This young man could be your key, Harry. Teach him all you know.

HARRY

I intend to.

Annie opens her eyes, and releases Jake's hand.

ANNIE

Jake, your mother sends her best wishes...

JAKE

(wide awake)

Mom?

ANNIE

...and she says not to blame your father too much. He just can't drink. She sounds like she's happy now.

JAKE

(flabbergasted)

What?

ANNIE

(deliberately)

You left home because the world outside seemed to hold unlimited possibilities. It is full of promise - never doubt that.
(pause) Pay attention to Harry, he'll help you on your way. And if you lose track of him, come see me.

Annie cocks her head, listening for... what? Nothing seems amiss.

ANNIE

(continuing)

I've got to go now, but remember, Jake - don't dwell on revenge.

On her way out, Annie pauses to whisper to Harry:

ANNIE

(continuing)

This one will perform great deeds.

HARRY

I know. Take care, Annie.

EXT. HILLS OUTSIDE YUCCA FLATS - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Harry and Jake trudge slowly up a rocky, cactus-strewn hill. The lights of the town can be seen over their shoulders, and moonlight brightens their way.

HARRY

If ya ever run across Annie again,
she's one ya can trust.

JAKE

She's the wizard you were talking
about?

HARRY

One and the same. Her powers run
more toward seein' the future,
rather than movin' things around.

JAKE

So there are different varieties of
wizard?

HARRY

Yeah. I knew one guy, a long time
ago, who could move through time.
Backwards, forwards, sideways - you
name the year, he could getcha
there.

JAKE

Did you ever travel with him?

HARRY

When I came here. Laszlo can do
it, too, fer short jumps. That's
how he tracked me down.

As Harry and Jake walk over the crest of the hill, three burly MEN accost them. One grabs Harry, another grabs Jake, and the third, BIFF, threatens Harry:

BIFF

Hand over your money!

HARRY

Hard to do, while your pal has me
in an armlock.

BIFF

Where's your wallet?

HARRY

The usual, dimwit.

Biff slugs Harry in the gut. Jake lunges, but his captor has a firm hold.

JAKE
Harry, do the whatsis...

HARRY
(panting)
I can't do anything, while he's holding me...

BIFF
Shaddup, the both of ya. One more time, smartmouth, where's your cash?

HARRY
My hip pocket, jerkface!

Biff punches Harry's stomach again, and takes his wallet.

JAKE
Harry, can I try something?

HARRY
(gasping)
Give it yer best shot.

Jake CHANTS the now-familiar phrase, and everybody starts floating. In the confusion, the men release Jake and Harry.

BIFF
What the heck...?

Jake swims around expertly, retrieves Harry's wallet, and kicks Biff in the face, on his way by. BELLOWING, Biff goes spinning away; Jake's rebound takes him over to Harry, who is doubled up in mid-air.

JAKE
One of these days, you have to teach me the phrase that gets us down.

Harry CHANTS slowly, painfully - he and Jake glide down to the ground. The other three remain suspended. Jake puts Harry's arm around his shoulder, and the two hobble off.

EXT. UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN - NEXT MORNING

Jake POPS into the front "yard" of the shack, next to a chaise lounge where Harry reclines with a beer. Harry's ever-present fedora is complemented with a pair of shades, and a loud Hawaiian shirt. Jake POPS onto the top of a small pile of granite monoliths a hundred yards away, then POPS back, next to Harry. The following POP takes him further afield, then back to the yard again. The telekinesis sequence is repeated, much in the manner of a piano student practicing scales, and the POPS start taking on a familiar, coffee-commercial beat.

HARRY

Okay, knock it off, knock it off...
(mutters) Sounds like it's time
for a damn coffee break...

Harry studies the beer in his hand.

HARRY

(continuing)
...or somethin'...

Jake sits down in the sand next to the chaise.

JAKE

How are you feeling?

HARRY

(lopsided grin)
Top of the heap!

JAKE

Were you serious last night?

HARRY

(mock horrified)
I didn't ask ya to marry me, did I?

JAKE

Stop joking... you said you
couldn't do magic, while they held
you.

HARRY

Yeah, I don't perform well under
pressure.

JAKE

But it didn't seem to affect me.

HARRY

You're gonna be a wizard to reckon with, Jake. I'm proud of ya.

Jake doodles in the sand for a few seconds.

JAKE

I visited the scene of the crime - those three bandits are gone.

HARRY

(worried)

You sure ya looked in the right spot?

Jake holds up a small white card.

JAKE

A Magic Castle card fell out of your wallet last night.

Harry stands up, and starts pacing nervously.

HARRY

We gotta be on the lookout. Looks like Uri joined our little squabble.

JAKE

Uri is the wizard you don't trust?

HARRY

He's a loose cannon. Ya never know which way he'll go off.

JAKE

What harm can he do?

Harry whirls on Jake.

HARRY

If he gets word about us to Laszlo, we're shit outta luck.

Jake slumps, then waves toward the cabin.

JAKE

Another exploding house?

HARRY

Or worse.

A shadow drifts over the scene, and a FLAPPING of wings on the top of the cabin heralds the arrival of a large bird. A deep, familiar voice calls down:

SOCRATES

This is quite the dismal homecoming. Are you two going to mope around all day?

HARRY

Socrates! Yer a sight for sore eyes!

SOCRATES

Your alliteration is touching - however, all I want to know is: how did your eyes become sore?

JAKE

It's just his way of saying we're awfully glad to see you, Socrates!

SOCRATES

Nice area you picked out. I sampled a few of those delicious hopping rats on my flight out... their necks break with such a satisfying "snap"...

Jake rubs his neck and eyes Harry.

JAKE

(gingerly)

Socrates, could you possibly hunt some other animals for awhile?

HARRY

Jake, I'm not gonna change ya into anything Socrates might chow down on. (pause) Socrates, tell me - how did ya get out of the house back in Hollywood?

SOCRATES

When I heard you were teaching Jake a survival skill, I concluded it might be informative to observe...

HARRY

...so ya flew out the door behind us.

SOCRATES

Precisely.

JAKE
(hopefully)
Did Connie follow you?

SOCRATES
I'm afraid not. She was engrossed
in a book when I left.

JAKE
So she's really gone...

Jake wanders away, disconsolate. Harry glances up at Socrates and shrugs his shoulders.

EXT. LOST HORSE MINE - LATER THAT DAY

Jake climbs a slight hill to the mine entrance - there are some dilapidated, rickety buildings on the hill, housing old, rusted mining machinery. Socrates glides over and alights on the corner of the building nearest the tunnel mouth.

SOCRATES
I wouldn't go in, if I were you.

JAKE
Harry said his uncle mined for gold
down there. Maybe a few nuggets
are still lying around.

Jake walks in the mine.

SOCRATES
(sighing, to
himself)
Kids these days... (to Jake) Wait
for me!

Socrates flies in the tunnel and lands on Jake's shoulder.

JAKE
Why are you coming?

SOCRATES
I can't let you go in here by
yourself. Besides, my hearing is
better than yours. I can tell if
any of the timbers are giving way.

Jake takes a flashlight out of his pocket, and turns it on. The mine has seen better days - minor dirt slides partially block the tunnel every ten feet or so.

JAKE

This is a great old place!

SOCRATES

If you're looking for the latest in
a tomb...

Socrates flies on ahead, and perches on a shoring
timber.

JAKE

Your night vision is better than
mine - do you see anything shiny?

SOCRATES

As long as you persist in flashing
that light in my eyes, everything
looks shiny.

Socrates' eyes bug out slightly, and seem to spin. His
timber CREAKS - Socrates FLAPS over to Jake's shoulder,
and shivers.

JAKE

I wonder how far down this goes?

SOCRATES

(sarcastic)

Since you have to know, shall I go
and find out for you?

JAKE

That's a thought! You could fly
down and not disturb anything!

The timber CREAKS again.

SOCRATES

All right. Two things you must
promise me.

JAKE

What are they?

SOCRATES

First, if I do your errand, we'll
leave this deathtrap...

Jake hesitates for a second, then nods.

SOCRATES

(continuing)

...and second, do not touch that
timber while I'm gone.

JAKE
You've got a deal.

ANGLE TOWARD THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL

The silhouettes of Jake and Socrates are outlined against the bright sunlight at the tunnel's entrance. Socrates flies toward, and past, the CAMERA, down into the mine.

As we ZOOM IN to Jake's face, a huge spider drops on a thin filament from the tunnel ceiling. Jake's flashlight flickers and dies; he shakes it a couple of times as the spider lands on his head.

JAKE
(continuing)
What the heck...?

Jake swats at his face, and instinctively dodges away from the intruder - BANGING right into the shoring timber. Small clumps of dirt THUD onto the floor, and the timber CREAKS ominously.

JAKE
(continuing)
Oh, no...

The timber SPLINTERS, and more dirt falls to the floor.

JAKE
(continuing,
yelling)
Socrates, get back up here!

A full-fledged CAVE-IN obscures Jake's silhouette.

ANGLE ON JAKE

He tries to quickly decide - what can he do? He runs for the mine entrance, just as the whole shaft collapses in an EXPLOSION of dirt and debris. Jake watches in dismay, from a safe distance. As soon as the RUMBLING quiets down, he runs over to the pile of dirt, and tries to clear away what must be tons of material. He's distraught - at one point, he paces, babbling:

JAKE
(continuing,
frantic)
I really need Harry's help...
Socrates...

Stopping the decapitated-chicken routine with an obvious effort of will, Jake takes time to think it through.

JAKE
(continuing)
Harry's too far away - Socrates
might run out of air...

Another RUMBLING, deep in the ground, focuses Jake's thoughts:

JAKE
(continuing)
...and he might be crushed by
another cave-in. I've got to get
down there and find him.

Jake futzes with his flashlight until it starts working again, then CHANTS and POPS out of existence.

INT. MINE SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

Jake POPS into an open portion of the tunnel. CREAKING timbers surround him.

JAKE
(continuing)
Socrates?

The roof gives way with a ROAR. Jake CHANTS and POPS out of that section.

INT. MINE SHAFT, FURTHER DOWN - CONTINUOUS

Jake POPS into the top of a huge pile of dirt, and starts sliding down it.

JAKE
(continuing)
Socrates?

As Jake and the pile of dirt slide, a timber SNAPS, and another CAVE-IN starts. Jake CHANTS and POPS out again.

INT. MINE SHAFT, WAY DOWN - CONTINUOUS

Jake POPS into a large chamber, where old pulleys are attached to a set of decrepit wood braces. Socrates sits calmly on one of the pieces of wood.

JAKE
(continuing)
I've been looking for you!

SOCRATES
(drily)
I could hear your progress all the way down. Is there any portion of the shaft you've left unravaged?

JAKE
Well... here?

Wood braces SNAP - Socrates picks up something in his beak, and flies over to Jake's shoulder. Jake CHANTS, and they POP out of sight, just as the roof COLLAPSES.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Socrates POP into the area in front of the mine.

SOCRATES
(garbled)
Hold out your hand.

JAKE
What?

Socrates bends his head and drops a shiny object from his beak down into Jake's shirt pocket.

SOCRATES
I picked you up a souvenir.

Jake fishes through the pocket, and pulls out... a small gold nugget!

EXT. CACTUS PATCH - MORNING

Jake POPS into the middle of a garden of cholla cacti - desert plants growing two or three feet tall, consisting of two-inch-long, egg-shaped segments and covered in half-inch spines. The plants glow bright yellow in the morning sunshine - the effect is positively electric. A few seconds later, Harry POPS in.

JAKE
Last one's a rotten egg!

Harry promptly changes into a huge egg, much to Jake's surprise. The egg immediately transforms back into Harry, whose expression swings between admiration and disgust.

HARRY
Yer gettin' good at this,
pardner... but what's that stink?

JAKE
I guess I did say rotten egg...

HARRY
Phew! Let's get upwind... watch
out for those cholla grenades.

Some of the small segments making up the cacti lie piecemeal on the ground. Jake accidentally kicks one, and lets out a HOWL.

JAKE
It went right through my sneaker!

HARRY
Pick it off, and watch where yer
goin'. (pause) Didja bring the
book?

Bending over to remove the cactus spines with one hand, Jake holds up an old, heavy text with the other.

JAKE
Right here...

HARRY
(solemn)
Jake, it stands to reason that you
can probably do things I can't.

JAKE
Like performing magic while
someone's got ahold of me?

HARRY
Right. I never could learn to use
the spells in that book - mebbe you
can.

Jake examines the book more closely - it's entitled "Time Travel". He opens the book, and walks through the cactus field as he reads. Abruptly, another JAKE (#2) silently materializes in the spot Jake #1 just vacated, and looks at the wandering, reading Jake #1 in wonder. Harry does a double-take (of course).

Jake #2 looks quizzically at Harry, who motions for silence by putting a finger to his lips. Jake #1 walks back to the spot he's just left, still reading. He doesn't see Jake #2, and Jake #2 has to scurry to get out of his way. Jake #1 looks up from the book to Harry.

JAKE #1

I don't think this is going to work.

HARRY

(smirking)

Try it.

Jake #1 looks for a particular passage in the book, moving his finger down the page, then looks up at Harry and MUMBLES a spell. He winks out of existence. Jake #2, now the only Jake in the scene, is amazed.

JAKE

How come I could see him... I mean "me", and he... I mean "I"... couldn't see me... or was it the other way around?

HARRY

(chortles)

Ya just ran smack up against one of the loco side effects of time-hoppin'!

JAKE

You mean the contradiction part of it?

HARRY

Yeah, an M.D. was the first guy to tumble to it. When he did what you did, I hear they named it after him.

JAKE

Oh?

HARRY

Yeah, with two doctors runnin' around, they called it a "paradox"!

Jake MOANS; he walked right into it. Harry pulls a newspaper from under his arm and shows Jake an article.

JAKE

Ostrich races?!

HARRY
(half-joking)
It's somethin' I wanted to see
before I die - but I keep missin'
it.

Jake looks at the newspaper closely.

JAKE
Harry - I hate to break this to
you, but you missed it again. This
Ostrich Derby was two weeks ago.

HARRY
But now, you can get us there!

Harry lets this sink in; the idea slowly dawns on Jake.

JAKE
Hey, that's right, I can...
(pause) What's going on behind
that rock?

Jake points to a small cloud of dust - a fedora drops
out of sight.

HARRY
It's probably just us, comin' back.
C'mon, let's go!

Harry grabs Jake's arm, CHANTS a spell and they POP out
of sight.

EXT. VACANT LOT, INDIO - CONTINUOUS

As Harry and Jake POP into a clump of milkweed, a huge
cloud of butterflies scatter.

JAKE
What now?

HARRY
I moved us to a deserted spot near
the Derby - you take us back
thirteen days.

JAKE
I'll give it a shot.

Jake UTTERS a spell from the "Time Travel" book he
carries. Harry and Jake shimmer, then disappear.

EXT. DESERT, INDIO - CONTINUOUS

Huge mountains appear in the background, where houses used to block them. Harry and Jake fade into the scene, look around and scratch their heads.

HARRY

Those hills look familiar...
(pause) ...we're still in the same spot, we just went back too far!
Lemme see that book.

Jake hands Harry the book, and points to a line as Harry reads.

JAKE

I said that spell.

HARRY

Ohhhh! This is the one for thirteen centuries, not days. Say this one, and throw in that correction.

Harry points out two places in the book, as he hands it back to Jake. Jake CHANTS again, and the two shimmer out of sight.

EXT. VACANT LOT, INDIO - CONTINUOUS

The shadows are different, but the butterflies are the same; a cloud of them disperse as Jake and Harry appear.

JAKE

We got back to the future!

HARRY

Let's see if we got anywhere... or anywhen... close to the Derby.

Harry checks the paper under his arm, then leads Jake out to the street, and down the block to a grocery store, which has a newspaper rack out front. Harry checks the date above the headlines.

HARRY

(continuing)

Looks like we're a week early.

The GROCER walks out of his store, carrying a stack of fresh papers.

GROCER

That's last week's edition - the
new ones came out this morning!

Rejoicing, Harry buys one - he and Jake rush down the
street.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - A HALF-HOUR LATER

Huge signs proclaim "INDIO DATE FESTIVAL" and "OSTRICH
DERBY THIS AFTERNOON". CROWDS of people stream under
the archway entrance to the grounds. A carnival
atmosphere prevails: cotton candy, stuffed animals,
etc.

EXT. OSTRICH CORRAL - CONTINUOUS

A CLOSE-UP of a veritable forest of long necks, bobbing
around nervously, slowly PULLS BACK to reveal the
competitors in the upcoming spectacle. "Chariots of
Fire"- or "Ben-Hur"-type MUSIC swells in the
background, as the jittery ostriches strut around the
corral.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

It's a small set of bleachers, but it's filling up
fast - MIGRANT WORKERS, FARMERS and LOCAL TOWNSPEOPLE
crowd in to root for their favorite bird. VENDORS walk
through the crowd, selling popcorn, sodas and fake
ostrich feathers. Jake and Harry sit up in a corner;
Harry's as excited as a kid.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to
welcome you to the Indio Date
Festival Ostrich Derby!

The crowd CHEERS.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(continuing)

Just to briefly acquaint you with
the ancient sport of ostrich
racing, these birds are hitched to
a chariot, much like you would a
horse, but that's where the
similarity ends.

ANGLE ON FAIRGROUNDS TRACK

On the quarter-mile oval dirt course, three sets of ostrich-chariot conveyances are being led to the starting line, at the beginning of the near straightaway. The ostriches are skittish, and their HANDLERS have a hard time keeping them on the ground.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(continuing)

Ostriches do have wings, but they cannot fly more than a few feet. Although it looks like they're trying to prove me wrong today...

The crowd LAUGHS and a few people point at a particularly obstreperous bird.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(continuing)

Through trial and error, its been found that ostriches will not respond to a bit, like a horse. So, in order to steer an ostrich chariot, you have to understand that an ostrich will shy away from an area he can't see. (pause) Our chariot drivers have brought the highly specialized equipment they need in order to block the vision of their steeds on either side of their heads.

Three COWBOY-types walk on the track, carrying ordinary household brooms. As the crowd reacts with LAUGHTER, the cowboys smile and brandish the brooms in the air, like conquering heroes. They mount their chariots, and the handlers let go - the race is on!

It soon becomes apparent that steering an ostrich is an inexact science at best - one chariot gets turned around, and starts heading off the track, despite the best efforts of the driver, with his broom, and the handler, who simultaneously tries to grab the bird's neck, and stay out of the way of his powerful feet.

The other two birds head for the end of the straightaway, with minor detours - one wants to fly into the crowd, only being restrained by the weight of the chariot he drags. The people in his intended path, despite two protective railings, decide that a seat further back in the bleachers might be a wise idea.

The third bird runs, more or less in a straight line, directly toward a ten-foot wall at the end of the straightaway - he pays no attention to the broom blocking his vision on the right side of his head. Rather than starting a left turn to stay on the oval track, the hapless ostrich runs smack into the wall, and unsuccessfully attempts to scale it. A crowd of handlers converge on the would-be escapee; it's all in a day's work for them.

The crowd, after a stunned silence at the apparent randomness of it all, TITTERS nervously, then gets into the spirit of the event.

The next round of competition involves clowns and funny hats on the ostriches, with pretty much the same inconclusive race results.

Over "Keystone Kops"-type MUSIC in the background, a MONTAGE of CAMERA SHOTS captures the zany bedlam of ostriches, chariots, brooms, thrills, spills, and a cowboy riding bareback on an ostrich headed straight for a wall.

ANGLE ON HARRY AND JAKE

Jake is laughing, and Harry's having the time of his life - until he spots a face in the crowd.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

The MAN Harry sees is in profile; he does not look toward Harry. We get a fleeting impression of a swarthy face, with bushy black eyebrows and a black handlebar mustache, wearing a dark homburg.

ANGLE ON HARRY AND JAKE

Harry climbs over the back railing of the bleachers, and motions for Jake to follow him, never taking his eyes off the man. The two clamber down through the girders to the fairgrounds below, and hustle off through the crowd.

EXT. VACANT LOT, INDIO - TEN MINUTES LATER

Harry and Jake, out of breath, run into the milkweed, again scattering butterflies. Harry CHANTS, and they POP out of existence.

EXT. DESERT CACTUS PATCH - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake POP into the patch, and Harry promptly backs away to avoid one cactus, only to back into another. He YELLS, and jumps up and down. Jake pulls a few of the egg-shaped cholla sections off the back of his pants.

JAKE

Stop yelling, and "watch where yer goin' "!!

HARRY

Ouch! I deserve that...

Both Harry and Jake are still out of breath, and slowly recover, as they walk to a nearby set of rocks.

JAKE

So who was that guy?

HARRY

I didn't stop to get a crystal clear view, but it looked like Laszlo.

JAKE

Do you think he's on our trail?

HARRY

I doubt it, but I didn't wanna take any chances. Laszlo thinks he finished us off, back in Hollywood.

Harry and Jake reach the set of rocks, and Jake pulls the time travel book from under his arm.

JAKE

Let's see... a little less than thirteen days...

HARRY

Make sure ya get the right one - I don't wanna end up on a Buck Rogers spaceship...

Jake CHANTS, and they fade out of the lengthening afternoon shadows.

EXT. SAME DESERT SCENE, MORNING SHADOWS - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake fade into the same piece of desert, behind a rock, except the time of day is obviously morning, instead of afternoon. They duck down in back of the rock, and peer out.

HARRY

(continuing)

Looks like you hit it right on the nose, pardner - there's two of you and one of me, over there.

JAKE

This time travel is really confusing.

HARRY

I don't know if we'll have much room in Uncle Ralph's shack tonight...

JAKE

What do you mean?

Harry leans back against the rock and starts counting on his fingers.

HARRY

Well, with a grand total of three of you, and two of me... lessee, in a poker hand, they'd call that a full house!!

Jake pushes Harry over, as he laughs, and they scuffle on the ground, raising a huge cloud of dust. As they see what they're doing, they both stop, in a panic.

JAKE

They'll see us... we'll see us...

HARRY

Wait a minute, let's think this through...

Harry brushes himself off and puts his fedora back on. He peeks up over the rock toward the cactus patch, then drops back down to the ground.

HARRY

(continuing)

I think this is our cue...

Harry and Jake, behind the rock, listen to the other
Harry and Jake, speaking in the cactus patch:

JAKE'S VOICE (O.S.)

What's going on behind that rock?

HARRY'S VOICE (O.S.)

It's probably just us, comin' back.
C'mon, let's go!

Behind the rock, Harry beckons to Jake.

HARRY

Okay, they're outta here... we're
outta here... everybody's outta
here. I'm beat - let's go back to
the shack and get a nap.

INT. HOLLYWOOD WAX MUSEUM - DAYS LATER

Pools of light illuminate typical scenes of famous
Hollywood characters, in this unworldly, dark and quiet
museum. Velvet ropes and stanchions separate the wax
figures, in their lighted settings, from the visitors,
who wander in dark walkways. There are very few real
people in the museum today.

A young GIRL, in silhouette, pauses by the Charlie
Chaplin display. As the "Little Tramp" character, the
wax figure wears a bowler hat, carries a cane, and
stands impishly in the middle of a train-yard set.

The girl moves on, and we DOLLY to follow her - she
moves to the Mae West display. Mae's wax replica wears
a provocatively gaudy gown, and stands in an old-time
saloon.

The girl walks away, after a minute, and a mustachioed
MAN, wearing a homburg, follows her.

The next display shows Harry Houdini, standing inside
an open trunk, and victoriously holding aloft an
assortment of manacles and chains. The girl pauses to
read the descriptive plaque in front of the diorama,
and the man moves close to her.

MAN

He was a magician like no other...

ANGLE ON GIRL AND MAN

The girl is... Connie! And the man appears to be... the same gentleman who scared Harry at the Ostrich Derby! Connie looks up warily at the man, then decides he seems harmless enough.

CONNIE

I once worked with a magician who might have challenged him.

MAN

Once?

CONNIE

(suddenly evasive)

Once.

The man produces a business card from thin air and hands it to Connie. It throws off sparkles, as she takes it.

MAN

Please be my guest at the Magic Castle next week - and see my performance.

CONNIE

(reading the card)

I've heard of you - and I'll be the stage manager at your show.

MAN

We'll be working together, eh? An even greater incentive for me to endeavor to impress you.

Connie warms slightly, now that she knows the man's a magician.

CONNIE

Why try to impress me? I've seen all the tricks of the trade.

MAN

(cryptically)

Have you ever seen magic without tricks?

CONNIE

(noncommittal)

Once.

MAN

How about this?

He SNAPS his fingers and points at Connie; her feet rise two inches off the ground. She looks around, afraid someone will see, and she appeals to the man with her eyes - she finally returns to the floor.

CONNIE

Once. (pause, deep breath) I had a boyfriend who studied with Merlinsky.

MAN

Whatever happened to my friend Harry?

CONNIE

You didn't hear? He died in an explosion... (under her breath) ...along with Jake.

Unseen by the man, Connie's lip starts trembling, and her eyes fill with tears.

MAN

(pensive)

Harry wouldn't have been foolish enough to get caught in an explosion... are you sure about this?

Connie gets a grip on her emotions, with a visible effort.

CONNIE

The police never found any bodies, but they're both gone.

The man scowls for a moment, then his eyes light up. He strides toward the exit, calling over his shoulder:

MAN

Thank you, young lady. I'll see you next week.

Connie looks puzzled, then walks away, throwing his business card in a trash can.

ANGLE ON BUSINESS CARD

Six letters glow in the darkness of the museum -
L-A-S-Z-L-O.

EXT. DESERT - NEXT DAY

Harry leads Jake, as they walk through the Joshua trees toward a small mountain of granite monoliths. Jake carries climbing rope, looped over his shoulder, and both men wear gloves, on this bright sunshine-y day. Harry wears the inevitable fedora.

JAKE

Where are we going today?

HARRY

To brush up on our climbin' skills - Hidden Canyon is over yonder, and we're gonna get a bird's-eye view!

JAKE

It looks more like a mountain than a canyon.

HARRY

Wait'll we get up on top.

The "foothills" of this mini-mountain are easily scaled - Harry hops from one huge boulder to another, like a mountain goat. Jake follows, hesitantly at first, but with mounting enthusiasm and recklessness. After several leaps, he slips on some loose rocks and falls a short distance. Harry is at his side in a flash.

JAKE

Guess I'm not much good at this.

HARRY

Get up - yer not hurt. There's a trick to it. Ya have to use your head - but not too much.

JAKE

That sounds like a quote.

HARRY

(thoughtful)

Yeah, I thought a lot of the guy who first got me up on the rock face.

Harry helps Jake to his feet, and they start to do some serious climbing - clawing for nearly-invisible handholds, edging along sheer fifty- and one-hundred-foot drops, wedging into tiny crawl spaces between huge rocks.

JAKE
(gasping)
So who was this guy?

HARRY
My mentor. If I was you, he was
me.

JAKE
And he taught you about climbing?

HARRY
He taught me everything I know.

JAKE
Magic?

HARRY
And how to live a good life.

JAKE
Sounds like quite a guy.

HARRY
He's the one that's trying to kill
us.

Jake is shocked - he loses his balance and nearly slips off the rock surface. Harry grabs his shirt, just in time. They hang precariously for a few seconds, then Jake regains his footing.

HARRY
(continuing)
I could let ya fall two feet, but
two hundred is "too" much.

JAKE
Thanks - you saved my life.

HARRY
(wry)
Just like Laszlo used to save mine.

Harry ties the climbing rope around both Jake and himself, and moves upward again.

JAKE
How come he changed?

HARRY

Search me. (remembering,
ironically) He used to get this
guy, Herbie Wells, to take us on
jaunts back into history. Ah, the
good ole' days...!

Harry continues to climb upward, into a "chimney"
formation, between two rocks.

JAKE

So...?

HARRY

Jake, I dunno. We got stuck once -
Herbie's machine was in the shop
for awhile. So we started living
in the past. I met Socrates; and
King Arthur, when he was a boy.

JAKE

King Arthur?

HARRY

Yeah, by that time, I knew enough
tricks to get a gig as his tutor.
(smiles) He thought I was a hot-
shot wizard - it doesn't take much
to fool a little kid.

JAKE

(marveling)

You tutored King Arthur!

Jake and Harry climb a bit more.

HARRY

Laszlo wandered off, but every so
often he'd come back with a new
trick. (pause) When he learned
how, we started hopping forward in
history, a few years at a time. We
couldn't get all the way back to
the twentieth century, 'cause
Laszlo got tuckered out, after each
jump. (pause) He had to rest up
for a few months, every time.

JAKE

What about Herbie?

HARRY

Herbie kept looking for us, in his machine, but we weren't where he left us off, and he lost track of us.

Harry and Jake stop to rest.

JAKE

Did you keep in touch with Arthur?

HARRY

Yeah, funny thing - Arthur was living in real time, while I kept hopping forward. So he kept getting older, and I stayed the same age. (grinning) He never could understand that. (pause) He did a heckuva job pulling that country together, but then, things started going to hell in a handbasket.

JAKE

I've heard this story - it was his illegitimate son, wasn't it?

HARRY

(sarcastically)

Yeah, and guess who was putting little Mordred up to it? I lost touch with Laszlo for a coupla years, but I kept hitching short rides forward with other wizards who had the power. By the time I ran into Laszlo again, he had really become a nasty dude.

JAKE

So he was behind Mordred?

HARRY

Yeah. One day Herbie showed up. I could see the handwriting on the wall for Camelot; so I gave Arthur some cock-and-bull story about being enchanted by a wood nymph, and had Herbie drop me off here.

JAKE

But you never found out why Laszlo is after you?

HARRY

All I know is, he's attacked me
twice in this era, and once back in
Camelot.

They continue climbing up the rock chimney - when Harry emerges, there's a quick tug on Jake's end of the rope, and Harry disappears. The rope is slack for a few seconds, then Jake is forcibly hauled up to the top of the chimney, scratching for a handhold to stop the pull of the rope. As Jake emerges into the sunlight, he realizes that Harry has fallen off the side of the rock, and Jake will follow him unless he thinks quickly.

JAKE

Harry - hang on!

Jake wedges the rope in a crack, gingerly unties himself, and ties a large knot to keep the rope from slipping out of its mooring. Hoisting himself up to the top of the rock, he finds a place to dig in, and starts dragging Harry slowly up. The fedora appears over the edge of the rock, followed by a scraped-up Harry - he flashes a big grin at Jake.

HARRY

Ain't this fun!?

INT. MAGIC CASTLE "PALACE OF MYSTERY" - CONTINUOUS

The showroom is empty, except for Laszlo and Connie, who are running through his performance on the stage. They are working out lighting cues and blocking for his upcoming act.

LASZLO

You said Harry Merlinsky died in an
explosion?

CONNIE

Yes. By all rights, I should've
died, too.

LASZLO

How's that?

CONNIE

Harry took his apprentice, Jake, out in the back yard to teach him a new trick, just when I realized I was very late for work. I rushed off, without even saying goodbye. When I was halfway down the street, the house blew up.

LASZLO

Did they ever figure out the cause?

CONNIE

Not that I know of.

Laszlo turns away from Connie and smiles.

LASZLO

Harry and I were the best of friends. I'm sorry to see him go.

Connie checks some lights, while Laszlo drags a large trick box to the middle of the stage.

CONNIE

How did you meet him?

LASZLO

I was his teacher - he learned all he knew about magic from me.

CONNIE

You must have been a good instructor - he was passing on some of his knowledge to Jake.

Still with his back to Connie, Laszlo looks alarmed, but regains his composure quickly.

LASZLO

Was he studying real magic?

CONNIE

Yes. Jake was a fast learner.

LASZLO

You know, Connie, something tells me that Harry and Jake may have escaped that explosion.

CONNIE

(suspicious)

What do you mean?

LASZLO

When I was out at the Date Festival a couple of weeks ago, I caught a glimpse of someone who looked like Harry. That fedora of his is hard to miss. There was a young boy, freckles and dark hair, with him - a boy about your age.

CONNIE

(excited)

That sounds like Jake!

LASZLO

They left before I could talk to them - do you think Harry might have a place out in the desert?

CONNIE

Not that I know of.

Laszlo sets up a small stuffed animal in the middle of the stage and turns to Connie.

LASZLO

I've got a stunt that's quite an eye-catcher - it's sort of my signature trick. Tell me what you think of this.

Laszlo SNAPS his fingers, and points at the animal. After a bright flash of light, the whole scene turns negative. The stuffed animal disappears, leaving only a small, faintly-smoking pile of ash. Connie's eyes widen, and her mouth forms a small "o".

CONNIE

I think I've seen that trick before.

LASZLO

(menacing)

Would you help me check the hinges on this box, Connie?

Connie backs away from him, frightened.

CONNIE

I've got to get some props... out back...

Laszlo steps toward her and follows her, step for step.

LASZLO

You don't think I need your
cooperation to get you into a box,
do you?

He SNAPS his fingers and points at Connie; she
disappears.

ANGLE ON THE BOX

Connie reappears, in the box, and the door SLAMS shut.
Laszlo padlocks it.

CONNIE (O.S.)

Let me out of here!

LASZLO

In due time, Connie. You've just
become my bait for some much bigger
fish!

Laszlo strides into the wings, backstage, picks up the
house telephone, and dials.

LASZLO

(continuing)

Hello, Uri? You haven't by any
chance seen Harry Merlinsky up
around the desert, have you?

Laszlo listens for awhile, punctuating the other's
conversation with sporadic "Hmmm"'s and "Uh-huh"'s.

LASZLO

(continuing)

Three common thieves? Floating in
mid-air? Uri, that sounds like
Harry's handiwork. I'll send some
men up there right away.

Laszlo hangs up and walks back over to the trick box.
He SNAPS his fingers and points at it, making it rise a
few inches off the ground. He maneuvers it backstage,
placing it in a corner, against the wall.

LASZLO

(continuing,
chuckling)

Connie, you just sit tight. The
cavalry will be here in no time.

Laszlo walks away LAUGHING, while THUMPS shake the box.

EXT. HIDDEN CANYON - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake stand on top of the enormous pile of monoliths they've just climbed, and survey the view; it's a two-square mile area, completely surrounded by piles of huge stones.

HARRY

Now you can see why they call it
Hidden Canyon.

JAKE

It's almost like some giant decided
to barricade his front yard with
these huge rocks!

HARRY

Over there's a secret entrance.
Cattle rustlers used to drive a
herd in here, one steer at a time,
and wait for the heat to die down.

JAKE

This is a great place!

HARRY

Yep. (looking down) I don't wanna
go down the same way we came up.
Lemme show ya the quick way.

Harry throws a loop of rope around a tall rock outcropping, wraps the rope around his waist, and rappels briskly down, inside the canyon. Jake looks doubtful, but gamely wraps the rope around himself, and starts down the cliff. By the time he's half-way down, he's having the time of his life. When he arrives beside Harry, he hands over the rope, and Harry quickly flips it, so that it slides off the outcropping at the top of the cliff.

JAKE

Yikes! If I'd know it came off
that easily, I'd never have tried
this.

HARRY

That's why I didn't show ya
beforehand. (pause) C'mon, let's
go see Skull Rock.

Jake coils the rope around his shoulder, as the two traipse off across the badlands.

EXT. SKULL ROCK - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

A twenty-five foot tall monolith has been sculpted by sand, wind and heat, until it vaguely resembles a death's-head. Jake and Harry stare back at the unseeing eye sockets in silence. Jake is getting more and more uncomfortable.

JAKE

It reminds me of my mother.

Harry is surprised, but he doesn't push it.

HARRY

Oh?

JAKE

(flat)

My father was drinking, when he picked her up at work. (pause) She scrubbed floors at night. (pause) My father escaped the car wreck without a scratch. (pause) He never went to see her in the hospital. (pause) I watched her waste away from internal injuries. (pause) Her face was like that, when she died.

Harry puts his arm around Jake's shoulders. They stand in silence, staring up at the rock. Unseen by them, THREE MEN step out from behind another rock. TEX, JOE BOB and BILLY are unsavory-looking ranch hands.

TEX

Howdy, Harry. Long time, no see!

JAKE

(to Harry)

Who are they?

HARRY

Just some cowboys I met at the Arcana conference. This shit-kicker here earned the nickname "Tex" Arcana. He seemed to enjoy hog-tyin' people and stringin' them up.

TEX

Aw, shucks, Harry - it was just a little innocent fun...

HARRY

(cold)

How many survived, Tex?

TEX

A few got lucky - your pansy
magician friends cut 'em down.

While Tex is talking, Joe Bob and Billy throw lassos around Jake and Harry. Jake tries to fight his way out, but is yanked roughly against a rock and knocked cold. Harry is beside himself; he struggles to get over to his protege.

HARRY

Jake!

Despite his efforts, Harry's rope is pulled ever-tighter, and Tex steps down to slip a noose around Harry's neck.

HARRY

(continuing)

Up to the same old tricks, I see.

TEX

(murderously)

Harry, after the way you degraded me, I'd love to string you up right now. But - the boss wants to see you first.

HARRY

The boss?

TEX

Laszlo sent me - seems he's got a little filly by the name of Connie back at the Castle. That name ring any bells?

HARRY

Connie? She died when Laszlo blew up my house.

TEX

Wrong again, pardner - she left the front way, while you two snuck out the back.

From high in the sky, a large pair of wings beats down on Joe Bob, who holds the lasso securing Harry. Socrates scratches at the man's eyes.

JOE BOB

Tex, shoot this damn bird!

TEX

Joe Bob, I can't get a clear shot... (frantic) Harry's dangerous if he gets loose - don't let go of that rope!

Joe Bob releases the rope to deal with the owl. In the confusion, Harry works himself loose, CHANTS a phrase, and the three cowpokes float in the air.

TEX

(continuing)

Harry, you can't get away with it. I got a gun, this time.

Tex FIRES at Harry, who ducks behind a rock. Tex takes aim at the unconscious Jake.

TEX

(continuing)

Put us down, or the kid gets it.

HARRY

If it's down you want, it's down you get.

Harry CHANTS a phrase, and all three cowpokes drop painfully to the rocks. Their weapons are jolted from their hands, and Harry CHANTS again. Now, the weapons float far above their heads.

HARRY

(continuing)

Laszlo was nice enough to send you boys out here - I feel like I should send you back gift-wrapped!

Harry CHANTS again, and one of the ropes, of its own volition, ties Joe Bob and Billy together, ending with a bow knot. They POP out of existence. Meanwhile, Tex's rope ties him in a complex pattern.

TEX

What the hell is this?

HARRY

You're a special guy, Tex - I thought you deserved macrame.

Tex POPS out, too. Socrates flies over to Harry's shoulder.

HARRY
(continuing, to
Socrates)
Nice work, old man.

SOCRATES
Knock off the age jokes, and see
what's wrong with Jake.

Harry kneels to examine the wound, just as Jake comes to.

JAKE
What happened? Who's the other owl
with you, Socrates? And how come
there are two of you, Harry? You
been time traveling without me?

HARRY
I think you got a mild concussion,
Jake. Let's head back to the
shack.

INT. UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN - HALF-HOUR LATER

Jake's head is bandaged, and both he and Harry look
spiffy in tuxedos.

JAKE
Okay, we're all dressed up. Where
do we go?

HARRY
To the Magic Castle - but we have
one stop in the past, if you feel
up to gettin' us there.

JAKE
Where to... I mean when to?

Harry checks a calendar on the wall, counting up days.

HARRY
Lessee, we've been out here in the
desert just under six weeks...
(pause) Ya hafta promise me you
won't say anything when we get
there - I don't wanna interfere
with the past this time - it's too
tricky.

JAKE
Alright.

HARRY
(insisting)
...no matter what ya see...

JAKE
Okay! Okay!

HARRY
Let's try the time and distance
hops together - you take us back
exactly forty days, and I'll handle
the location.

Harry and Jake CHANT their different chants
simultaneously; they start to fade out of the scene,
then POP - they're gone.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HARRY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake POP into the street, and rush to hide in
back of a large oak tree, just as another Harry (#2)
walks up to the front door. Through the window, Connie
and another Jake (#2) can be seen doing their aerial
ballet.

JAKE
It's not enough that I get my head
busted open - you're going to make
me watch Connie get blown to bits
again?

HARRY
Shh! This is when ya gotta keep
yer yap shut.

JAKE
(softly)
Connie!

Harry claps his hand over Jake's mouth - Connie has
walked out of the front door, and runs down the street
with a book under her arm.

HARRY
(whispering)
So - she did get out - and she
borrowed one of the books. I hope
she puts it to good use...

The mansion IMPLODES, as before, and the bright light
turns negative. Harry MUMBLES, and he and Jake POP out
of the scene.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake POP into the parking lot. The flash of the implosion is dying down. Harry takes his hand off Jake's mouth.

JAKE
Connie's alive?!

HARRY
Yup. While you were unconscious,
Tex spilled the beans - Laszlo has
her in the Castle.

Jake turns toward the building entrance, but Harry restrains him.

HARRY
(continuing)
Not now, Jake - forty days from
now.

Jake CHANTS before Harry can stop him. They fade out.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake fade back in. There's a different set of cars in the parking lot.

HARRY
(continuing)
Now, any sorcerer within a mile
knows we fell for Laszlo's bait.

JAKE
(contrite)
Ooops.

HARRY
That's alright - I couldn't think
of a better way to get here in a
hurry - but let's be cagey from now
on, okay?

JAKE
You got it. Let's go find Connie.

HARRY
Remember - Laszlo will probably
shoot first, and ask questions
later.

INT. PALACE OF MYSTERY - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Harry and Jake poke around backstage, in the empty theater. Laszlo's trick box is over in a corner, and there's a fun-house mirror near it.

JAKE

We've been all over the Castle -
where do you think she is?

HARRY

Laszlo wanted us to come here - he
would've hid her somewhere in the
building.

Jake ambles over to the box, and checks the padlock. It's not closed, so he takes it off, opens the box, and looks inside. Satisfied that it's empty, he closes it again.

JAKE

I thought she might be in there.

INTRUDER'S P.O.V., MOVING TOWARD HARRY

Harry is making faces in the fun-house mirror - the box and Jake can be seen, in the reflection, behind him. As Harry turns toward the CAMERA, he recognizes the intruder, with a look of disgust.

We hear the SNAP of fingers, off-screen, and Harry CHANTS quickly. An arm and finger extend from the intruder's point of view, and point at Harry, just as Harry and Jake POP out of the scene.

ANGLE ON BACKSTAGE

Laszlo points toward the fun-house mirror, where Harry used to be. The box in the corner IMPLODES in a bright flash of light, and the scene turns negative. Afterwards, a pile of blackened rubble sits smoking in the corner.

LASZLO

(infuriated)

Drat! (philosophical) However, it
was a well-executed bank shot.
(pause, looks at box) Now that
Harry's here, I won't be needing
that girl, anyway.

Laszlo strides offstage, without another backwards glance.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE, HOUDINI ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Jake POP into an empty room dominated by a large circular table, surrounded with thirteen chairs. Houdini memorabilia are scattered all around.

JAKE

Whew! That was close!

Harry's deep in thought, chin in hand, and Jake strolls around the room, looking at pictures and artifacts.

JAKE

(continuing)

Hey, this is Houdini's door knocker!

Harry still doesn't respond - Jake's getting antsy.

JAKE

(continuing)

I really didn't get a good look at Laszlo.

Harry moves over to the door and peeks out. The SOUNDS of people eating - silverware CLINKING and soft CONVERSATION - drift in.

HARRY

Looks like you'll get a close-up view - here he comes, across the dining room.

Harry stands behind the door, and pulls Laszlo's jacket down over his arms, as he walks through the door. Harry keeps a hold on Laszlo from behind.

LASZLO

(venomous)

Harry! So nice to see you again!

HARRY

(furiously)

Spill it - why d'ya still wanna hot-flash barbecue me?

LASZLO

Harry, you and I were once the best of friends.

HARRY

Don't butter me up, sport.

LASZLO

When we traveled back to Arthurian Britain, things got a little desperate. We were each thrown on our own resources.

HARRY

We made out okay.

LASZLO

But you made the fatal mistake of interfering in my relationship with Morgan Le Fay.

HARRY

Morgan? She was a free spirit - and a hell of a sorcerer.

LASZLO

I was quite smitten with her.

HARRY

But she wasn't "smitten" with anybody - whenever she was in Camelot, we'd always paint the castle red.

LASZLO

(angry)

She was teaching me the Old Knowledge, and you distracted her from that.

HARRY

Is that why you turned her son, Mordred, into such a little snot?

LASZLO

(self-righteous)

Mordred did his duty.

HARRY

(hurt)

And why didn't you do yours? I was your apprentice, and you turned on me.

LASZLO

(bored)

You hampered my plans, Harry. And you're still in my way.

Behind his back, from the folds of the jacket that restrains him, Laszlo SNAPS his fingers. The coat disappears. Harry tries to hold Laszlo's arms, but it's a vain struggle.

Another SNAP is heard; a bright flash appears where Harry once was, and the scene turns negative. A tiny pile of smoking ash is all that's left behind. Laszlo looks down on the ash with disdain.

LASZLO

(continuing)

He always thought he was superior to everybody. Maybe he could learn faster - but he's not better than me anymore!

Laszlo LAUGHS a cruel laugh and turns to deal with Jake, who is still in shock. Laszlo SNAPS his finger, and Jake wakes up to his predicament.

In SLOW MOTION, Laszlo's arm raises to point at Jake. The door to the room swings open simultaneously, and Connie bumps into Laszlo from behind.

Jake is in mid-CHANT, but falters when he notices Connie. Laszlo's ill-aimed flash lights up Jake's left forearm, but Jake manages to POP out of the scene, just as the room polarizes to negative.

EXT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Annie waits patiently on the sidewalk outside the saloon, holding a bucket of water.

Jake POPS into the scene - his left sleeve is afire, and he futilely swipes at it, with his other arm. Annie douses the burning arm with water - Jake passes out, and falls to the ground.

Presently, a couple of mean-looking two-legged desert rats exit the saloon, and tiny Annie bullies them into carrying Jake for her.

INT. ANNIE'S COTTAGE - NEXT MORNING

Jake lies in a single bed, still unconscious, and sweating profusely. The sun shines through a curtained window, and falls on his face. His arm is bandaged, and the old dressings from his concussion are still wrapped around his head.

JAKE'S P.O.V.

A red haze swims with tiny dark notes; nothing is distinct, except a RINGING sound, somewhat like an over-inflated basketball bouncing in an echo-proof room.

Harry's smiling face appears, only to flash negative and disappear.

ANGLE ON JAKE

Jake sits up suddenly, eyes wide, and GROANS.

Annie enters the room with a wet rag, and blots Jake's forehead.

JAKE

(muddled)

How did I get back here?

ANNIE

You were in shock, and under attack - you came to the nearest safe place you could remember.

JAKE

Am I safe here?

ANNIE

What did Harry say about me?

JAKE

He said I could trust you.

ANNIE

So trust me, already.

JAKE

Did I jump to the Sidewinder, on the first night I met you?

ANNIE

Yep. I knew you'd surface out there - that's why I up and left you and Harry inside, that night.

JAKE

(anxious)

I've got to warn them not to go back to the Magic Castle!

ANNIE

There's plenty of time for all that.

JAKE

(fading)

Connie walked in - I've got to go back to save her...

ANNIE

But first, you need some rest.

INT. ANNIE'S COTTAGE - THAT EVENING

In the kitchen of this small, homey cottage, many small varieties of potted cactus sit on the windowsills, countertops, and on the table. Annie sponges off and dresses Jake's burn, while he sits and winces.

ANNIE

With your powers, you can go to any point in time and space.

JAKE

Fat lot of good that'll do me - Harry's gone now.

ANNIE

Which means you've got to stop Laszlo by yourself.

JAKE

I wish I could.

ANNIE

You can... in fact, I can teach you some of his secrets.

JAKE

(impatient)

I should be doing something right now - warning Harry, fighting Laszlo, rescuing Connie...

ANNIE

(chiding)

There's no rush... so stop worrying, and start giving some thought to plotting this out - you've got to take a hand in shaping your own destiny.

JAKE

Shaping my destiny...?

ANNIE

You have the tools to do practically anything you desire - do you want to use them like Laszlo?

JAKE

(appalled)

No way.

ANNIE

Then you have to find a way to stop him without destroying him.

JAKE

But he kills everything in his way!

ANNIE

And if you kill him, you become like him.

JAKE

(taken aback)

Oh.

ANNIE

Something else to think about is your activating mechanism.

JAKE

My what?

ANNIE

Harry taught you the classic method, with chanting, but Laszlo employs a snap and a point. You can turn that in your favor.

JAKE

That's right - I remember Harry used other ways - he once changed me into a rat with a nod.

Jake nods, and POPS outside the back screen door.

JAKE

(continuing)

And he once shut the door to the cabin with a wrinkle of his nose...

Jake wrinkles his nose from side to side, with MUSICAL SFX, and POPS back into the kitchen.

ANNIE

That's the idea!

JAKE

Whew! All of a sudden, I'm beat.

ANNIE

You're still healing - get a good night's sleep, and start fresh in the morning.

INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - DAYS LATER

Jake's bandages are off, and his shirt is mended; only a slightly red forearm and a small pink scar over his eyebrow remind us of his ordeals. He reaches to get an apple out of the pantry, as Annie comes in the back door.

JAKE

Catch!

Jake pitches the apple toward Annie, and it sails over her head. Another Jake (#2) materializes outside the door, catches the apple, and tosses it around the side of the cottage, to where another Jake (#3) is waiting. Jake #3 throws the apple out front, to a newly-appeared Jake #4.

Jake #4 swivels to fire the apple to Jake #5, on the opposite side of the cottage from Jake #3. Jake #5 pretends to tag out a base runner before rifling the apple back to Jake #2, who is still standing outside the back door. Jake #2 gently tosses the apple up to Annie, who catches it and takes a bite out of it.

ANNIE

Who will remember Tinker to Evers to Chance, after they see Timmons to Timmons to Timmons?!

Jake #1, standing by the pantry, winks and fades out of the scene. The only Jake remaining is #2, outside the back door.

JAKE

Annie, you've shown me how to do what I have to do, and I think I sense a departure soon.

ANNIE

So your precognition is finally starting to kick in...

JAKE

It's not completely clear, but I can see a little ways into the future.

ANNIE

That's all you need right now - it'll get stronger as you use it.

EXT. ANNIE'S COTTAGE - THAT NIGHT

Jake is dressed in his newly-repaired tuxedo. Annie stands on her front step and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

JAKE

I can't thank you enough for all you've done.

ANNIE

If you can stop Laszlo, the whole sorcery community will thank you.

JAKE

Okay. I'm off. Wish me luck.

ANNIE

Godspeed.

Jake nods, and POPS out of the scene.

INT. OUTSIDE THE HOUDINI ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake POPS into the dining room, much to the surprise and delight of the DINERS seated at their meals. A flash of light and a ROAR come through the half-open door, startling the whole crowd. Jake reaches inside, and pulls Connie out.

CONNIE

Jake! But didn't Laszlo just... destroy you in there?

JAKE

Don't believe everything you see. He only winged me.

Laszlo looks around the door, seeing Connie and Jake, and SNAPS his fingers. Jake nods; he and Connie POP out of the scene. Laszlo carries his finger oddly - it's obviously loaded, and he wonders what to do with it. A querulous VOICE comes from a lady in the dining room:

LADY (O.S.)

I love the show, but this meat is too rare.

Laszlo pivots, and points his finger. A filet mignon flashes brightly, on the plate in front of the surprised LADY, and her plate turns negative. She stares down at a pile of ashes.

LASZLO

(matter-of-fact)

Not rare any more, is it, bitch?

The lady's mouth works silently, in consternation, as Laszlo strides out of the dining room.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Connie POP in behind one of the shelves, and immediately kiss.

CONNIE

I'm so glad you're safe!

JAKE

I spent a long time thinking you were dead - you've got to go hide somewhere, so he can't get to you again.

Laszlo strides into the library. Jake nods; he and Connie POP out of the library.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE ANTEROOM "STUDY" - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Connie POP in, to the surprise of the HOSTESS, standing behind a podium-console-desk construct. The hostess tries to take it in stride:

HOSTESS

Do you have reservations this evening?

JAKE

(smiling)

No, but I'd appreciate it if my...
date... could temporarily hide
behind your desk.

HOSTESS

But...

JAKE

It's okay - we're with Merlinsky,
and it's part of the performance.

HOSTESS

That explains it.

Jake ushers Connie behind the desk, over her protests:

CONNIE

Jake, this is not necessary...

JAKE

Connie, I just want you out of the
line of fire. I'll be next door,
in the bar.

He kisses Connie, and POPS out of existence.

HOSTESS

Boy! Nothing like kiss-and-run...

INT. MAGIC CASTLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jake POPS in, leaning on the bar railing. He checks
his tie in the mirror behind the bar. The BARTENDER
does a double-take:

BARTENDER

(mutters)

I've gotta get a job in a regular
bar.

JAKE

If a guy in a homburg and mustache
shows up, it might be wise to duck
down until the excitement is over.

BARTENDER

What kind of excitement are we
talking about?

Jake nods and POPS out, just as a flash lights up the spot where he stood. The ROAR and resulting negative lighting effects terrify the bartender. Jake POPS in at the other end of the bar, and calls out:

JAKE
Something like that.

BARTENDER
Gotcha.

The bartender immediately ducks behind the bar. Laszlo slowly descends the grand staircase toward the bar, measuring his opponent.

LASZLO
Looks like precognition to me.
You've been busy, my boy.

JAKE
Jake Timmons is the name. I don't
think we've been properly
introduced.

Jake advances toward Laszlo, his right hand extended. Laszlo extends his right hand as if to shake, but instead, SNAPS his fingers and points. The usual flash and ROAR finds Jake - not there. He's halfway up the stairs that Laszlo has just left. Jake loosens his tie.

JAKE
(continuing)
It got a little warmish at the
other end of the bar, Mister...?

Laszlo spins on his heel.

LASZLO
Laszlo - the name is Laszlo! A
name you'll remember until the
moment you die!

Laszlo SNAPS his fingers and points up the staircase, but where once there was one Jake, now there are two: one higher up, and one lower down on the steps. The flash and ROAR miss harmlessly. The lower Jake (#2) slides down the bannister and taunts:

JAKE #2
Are you trying to hurry the
"moment" of my death, just so I
won't have time to forget your
name, Lazy?

LASZLO

Laszlo - I said the name is Laszlo!

Laszlo fires once more, but the number of Jakes increases again, and he's surrounded by them. He doesn't know which one to destroy, and a look of defeat fleetingly passes over his features, only to be replaced by a look of pure malevolence. He SNAPS his fingers, and... disappears.

The Jakes fade out one by one, until only one is left. He surveys the room carefully.

JAKE

It looks like it's all clear,
bartender - I think he gave up.

When no-one appears, Jake leans over the bar.

JAKE

Are you okay?

A fist shoots up and SMACKS squarely on Jake's jaw; he drops to the floor, knocked out. The bartender rises from behind the bar, rubbing his knuckles.

BARTENDER

Sorry, kid, but Laszlo pays me a
lot of money to do things like
that.

Laszlo reappears beside Jake's unconscious body.

LASZLO

(crisp)

Not any more, I don't.

Laszlo SNAPS his fingers and points at the bartender; the flash and ROAR signal yet another hapless victim. Laszlo looks down toward Jake, and SNAPS his fingers one more time.

CONNIE (O.S.)

You wouldn't kill a defenseless
man, would you, Laszlo?

ANGLE ON THE BAR

Connie stands behind the bar, directly opposite Laszlo, with her hands on her hips. As Laszlo raises his arm to point at her, she blinks once, and disappears. Laszlo's bolt of destruction shoots across the bar, into the mirror, and rebounds with a searing flash and a mighty ROAR.

After the barroom turns negative, all that's left of Laszlo is a big pile of ashes. Jake has been conscious long enough to see Connie's stratagem, and cranes his neck to look for her behind the bar.

CONNIE (O.S.)
(continuing)
I'm here, Jake.

Connie materializes beside Jake, and they find comfort in each other's arms.

EXT. HARRY'S MANSION - NEXT MORNING

Jake and Connie sit in the backyard gazebo, holding hands and looking forlorn. The wreckage of Harry's house is strewn around them, in the weak late-winter sun. Jake picks up a book from the seat beside him, and thumbs idly through it.

JAKE
So you taught yourself telekinesis.

CONNIE
When I thought you and Harry were murdered, I swore I'd find whoever did it...

JAKE
(weak chuckle)
Just like me.

CONNIE
...and I knew I'd need to protect myself.

Jake reaches around Connie's shoulders and gives her a squeeze.

JAKE
You protected us both.

A whisper-like BEATING of wings grows louder, and Socrates lands on the railing of the gazebo.

SOCRATES
She saved us all, hotshot.

JAKE
(surprised)
Socrates?! But how...

SOCRATES

(cross)

I'm tired of you and Harry popping around to God-knows-where and who-knows-when, and leaving me behind.

JAKE

Socrates, I'm sorry to have to be the one to break this to you...

HARRY (O.S.)

Nah, Jake, lemme break it to him.

Jake and Connie turn, mouths wide open, to see Harry standing on the other side of the gazebo.

HARRY

(continuing)

...but what is it I gotta tell him?!

Jake jumps up to give Harry a hug, and Connie kisses his cheek.

CONNIE

How did you ever survive?

HARRY

I took a page outta Jake's book - when things got toasty, I took off for Annie's.

JAKE

Did you get hurt?

HARRY

Laszlo fried my leg pretty good... but Annie's a top-drawer medic.

CONNIE

Harry, I haven't seen you in over a month, and I have something to return to you.

Connie picks up the book from the gazebo seat.

CONNIE

(continuing)

I borrowed this without asking - I hope you don't mind.

Harry indicates the wreckage of the mansion with a gesture.

HARRY

Mind? Ya did me a favor - ya saved
my favorite book of spells.

Harry opens the book, and a slip of paper falls out.
He picks it up, glances at it, and hands it to Connie.

HARRY

(continuing)

Looks like ya left some notes in
here.

Connie, puzzled, stares at the paper, and suddenly
remembers.

CONNIE

Harry - this was a message for you!
About a week ago, there was a call
for you at the Castle... (reading)
...a Morgan L. Fay wanted to meet
you on the San Pedro breakwater at
high tide on the vernal equinox.

HARRY

(brightening)

Morgan Le Fay is in town?! Hot
dog! What's today? When's high
tide? Let's get this show on the
road!

Harry SNAPS his fingers; he, Jake, Connie and Socrates
all POP out of the back yard.

EXT. SAN PEDRO BREAKWATER - CONTINUOUS

Jake, Connie and Socrates POP in on the huge pile of
rocks. Socrates winds up in mid-air, and has to FLAP
his wings, to get himself over to Jake's shoulder.

SOCRATES

I keep telling him to give me some
warning... (pause) ...but I guess
it's better than being left behind.

JAKE

I just wish he wouldn't snap his
fingers - that gives me the
willies.

Harry POPS in, reading a small booklet, and munching on
a stick of dried meat.

HARRY

Sorry - I had to stop off at a surf shop to get the tide tables. Anybody wanna piece of shark jerky?

JAKE, CONNIE & SOCRATES

(wincing, in unison)

No, thanks!

Harry looks at his watch.

HARRY

It's 11:15 on the equinox, and high tide's at 11:45, so we'll just...

Harry starts to snap his fingers, but Jake grabs his hand.

JAKE

We'll wait - 'cause if you snap your fingers one more time, I'll personally knock you into the middle of next week.

HARRY

(smiling)

And you're just the guy to do it - sorry, fella!

CONNIE

What will you do from here, Harry?

HARRY

Morgan probably wants to take me to Avalon.

CONNIE

(incredulous)

You mean the mystical Celtic island of blessed souls?

HARRY

Nah - out on Catalina Island, the main town is called Avalon. Bill Wrigley built a casino over there, with his chewin' gum money. (snaps his gum) It sounds like a good spot for a high-roller con game!

JAKE

You once told me you came from another time - do you ever want to go back?

HARRY

Mebbe some day... (pause)
Television is big, where I come
from, and I always thought I'd make
a good actor. Could ya see me
playin'... oh, say, a judge?

Harry strikes a serious pose, and holds it while
everyone looks at him curiously.

JAKE, CONNIE & SOCRATES

(in unison)

Nah!

Everyone LAUGHS together - just then, a heavy fog
starts to roll in, and a barge appears out of the mist.
Harry peers at the robed FIGURE on the deck.

HARRY

You guys wait for me here.

Socrates flies beside Harry, as he walks down the
breakwater and steps onto the barge. Harry joyously
hugs the WOMAN in the robes. They talk with animated
gestures, but their conversation is inaudible. Jake
turns to Connie:

JAKE

I think Harry needs to go away for
awhile. What are your plans?

CONNIE

I'll keep on working at the Magic
Castle, I guess. And you?

JAKE

(hesitant)

I think we could make a pretty good
team, you and I. (pause) I mean
professionally, of course.

CONNIE

(smiling)

Of course.

They kiss.

JAKE

Between the two of us, there's a
lot of magic.

CONNIE

A whole lot.

They kiss again, long and lingering.

JAKE

But first, I've got to make a trip
back to St. Louis. There's some
unfinished business with my
father...

CONNIE

Alright.

JAKE

Maybe you could come with me...

CONNIE

I'd like that.

Harry steps off the barge, with Socrates on his
shoulder.

HARRY

I think I'm going to Avalon.

Jake looks at Connie.

JAKE

And I think we're going to
St. Louis.

Harry smiles broadly, and hugs them both.

HARRY

I wish you guys the best of luck.

SOCRATES

And may your cellar be full of
rodents.

HARRY

(scolding)

Socrates, that's downright
raunchy...

SOCRATES

(arrogant)

It's an old benediction, sacred in
the annals of owl history.

Harry turns away from Jake and Connie - stepping onto
to the barge, and waving over his shoulder.

Socrates' head swivels halfway around, facing Jake and
Connie.

CONNIE

Bye, guys!

Everyone waves and ad-libs GOODBYES. The mist thickens, as the robed woman raises her arms. The barge glides off, without a sound, or apparent means of locomotion, and vanishes into obscurity. As the fog gradually clears, no boat of any kind is visible on the water. Jake looks quizzically at Connie.

JAKE

I wonder if they ever decided which
Avalon they were going to?

ANGLE ON THE BREAKWATER

The CAMERA ZOOMS OUT, as Connie shrugs, and they slowly make their way back to land.

THE END